

CIRCUITS

NEWS FOR DAKOTA ELECTRIC MEMBERS



Dakota Electric now offers a **residential solar rebate**

Solar energy is becoming increasingly popular. To assist members in recovering the costs associated with installing a solar system, Dakota Electric created a solar production-based rebate program.

The program offers a rebate based on the kilowatt-hour (kWh) production from your photovoltaic (PV) system, as recorded by Dakota Electric's production meter. The incentive is credited on your bill monthly at \$0.08 per kWh produced up to an equivalent rebate of \$0.50 per watt for installed capacity, not to exceed \$4,000.

When you install solar panels through our solar production program, you can:

- Meet some or all of your energy needs with your own renewable energy system.
- Receive a monthly production-based rebate.

For more information and qualifications, call the Energy Experts® at 651-463-6243 or visit www.dakotaelectric.com/residential and click on Programs & Rebates.

Notice to Cogenerators

In compliance with Minnesota Rules Relating to Cogeneration and Small Power Production, Chapter 7835, Dakota Electric Association is required to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers that satisfy the conditions of a qualifying facility.

Dakota Electric will provide free information to all interested members regarding rates and interconnection requirements. An interconnection application is required and subject to approval from the cooperative before a qualifying facility interconnects and operates in parallel with the cooperative's distribution system.

Any disputes over interconnections, sales and purchases are subject to resolution by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission.

For more details

Visit www.dakotaelectric.com or call Mike Plutowski at 651-463-6180.



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Upcoming events

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| New Years - office closed | Jan. 1 |
| Board Meeting | Jan. 29, 8:30 a.m. |

January 2015



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

2015 construction plans

This year's construction work plan is very similar to last year with the majority of time and money being spent on mainline construction, new member construction, underground cable replacement and substation maintenance and repair.

Mainline construction

Three significant road construction projects taking place this year in Dakota Electric's service territory require the cooperative to move or rebuild existing mainline cable. Those projects include the rebuilding of lines along Dodd Road in Lakeville, the construction of an overpass on Highway 52 at County Road 86 near Cannon Falls, and the rebuilding of 195th Street in Farmington.

New member construction

While new member construction continues to be well below levels prior to the economic downturn, Dakota Electric sees a gradual increase that is expected to continue over the next few years. In 2015, the cooperative estimates construction of new lines and connection of service to approximately 760 new accounts.

Underground cable replacement

The need to replace older, failing underground cable contin-

ues to be important in maintaining strong system reliability. Cable installed in the 1960s and 1970s has reached the end of its useful life. By replacing old underground cable lines, Dakota Electric has seen a steady reduction in the number of primary cable failures — from about 100 failures per year to 75 or fewer in the last two years.

Ravenna and Miesville substations

Construction began in 2014 on a new substation in Ravenna township near Treasure Island Resort & Casino. Crews will complete construction this year, which will strengthen power supply and reliability for members in the southeastern part of Dakota Electric's service territory. Once completed, the nearby Miesville substation will be taken out of service to make repairs.

"Dakota Electric's board of directors continues to approve funding for necessary investments in our infrastructure," said Craig Turner, engineering services manager. "Our number one goal is keeping the lights on, and these projects, among many others, will continue to maintain and improve the high reliability our members have come to expect."

Applications being accepted for the 2015 Youth Tour

Dakota Electric will send five local high school juniors or seniors to Washington, D.C. as part of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Youth Tour.

This year's trip will take place June 13-18 and is sure to be an experience of a lifetime.

- Join hundreds of young people from across the country.
- Visit historic monuments and museums.
- Meet with your U.S. representatives and senators.

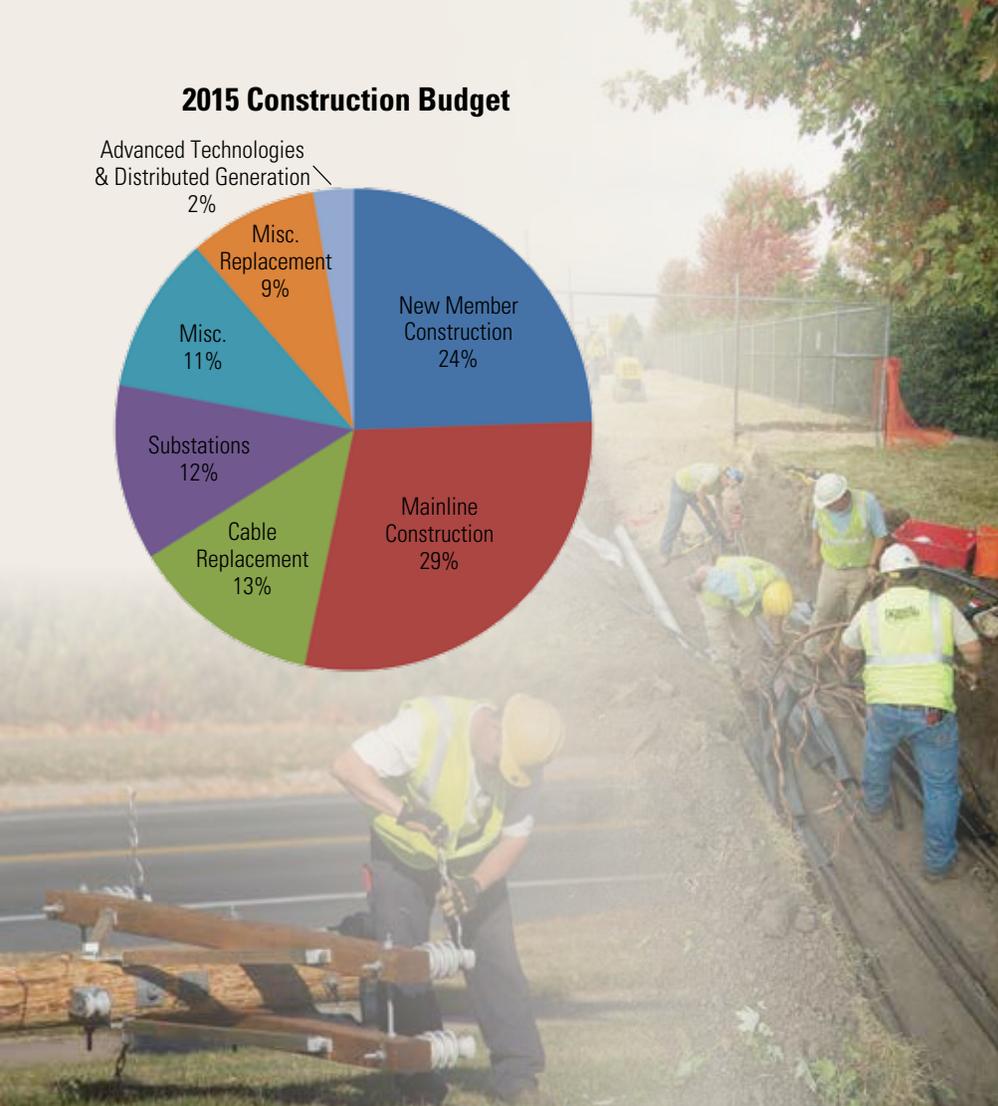
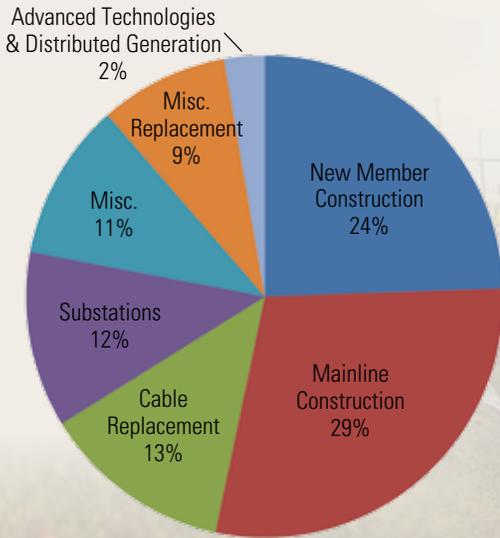
How to apply

Visit www.dakotaelectric.com and click on Safety and Education > Teachers and Kids > Washington, D.C. Youth Tour to download an informational brochure and print an application, or ask your high school guidance counselor for an application.

Application deadline is Feb. 20. Students must be available for an in-person interview in mid-March. Applicants must be members of Dakota Electric Association.



2015 Construction Budget



Rate Case Update

In mid-December an administrative law judge presided over evidentiary hearings for Dakota Electric's general rate case. These hearings, part of the regulatory review process, are similar to a court proceeding. The evidentiary hearing provides an opportunity for the state agencies and Dakota Electric to ask questions about analysis and recommendations related to the Cooperative's requested rate increase.

Choose the way you pay!

Pay Online

Dakota Electric's online bill payment allows you to make payments 24 hours a day from anywhere with a computer and Internet access. You can also sign up for mobile bill pay, which makes payment even more convenient.

Budget Billing

Pay the same amount on your electric bill every month, eliminating large fluctuations caused by weather and use patterns.

Automatic Payments

You can pay your bills each month with automatic deductions from your checking or savings account using Dakota Electric's electronic funds transfer program.

Pay in Person

You can also drop your payment off in our lobby or drive-through window at our Farmington office.

Pay by Phone*

With a simple phone call, you can make payments with a credit card, debit card or electronic check 24 hours a day.

Call 888-935-4850.

*An independent service provider will charge a \$3.95 convenience fee for payments made with a credit or debit card.



MORE INFORMATION

Learn more about the rate case at www.dakotaelectric.com. Members can also email rates@dakotaelectric.com or call 651-463-6212.

2015 Energy Efficiency Rebates

Members can view complete rebate details and print a rebate application by visiting either the Residential or Business tab at www.dakotaelectric.com, then choosing Programs & Rebates. Funds are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis and are subject to change without notice. For more information, call the Energy Experts® at 651-463-6243. Watch for your residential rebate booklet or commercial program guide arriving in the mail soon!



| Heating & Cooling | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------|
| Heat Pump Systems | Tune-up | \$25 |
| | Ductless air-source heat pump | \$300 |
| | Air-source heat pump SEER 13-16+ | Up to \$630 |
| | Ground-source heat pump | \$400 / ton |
| Central Air Conditioner | Tune-up | \$25 |
| | Central air conditioner SEER 13-16+ | Up to \$330 |
| Cycled Air Conditioning® | Monthly bill credit for participating heat pump systems and central air conditioners | \$12 ea. June, July and August |
| Electric Thermal Storage Heating System | Installed on ENERGYWISE® storage program | \$25 / kw |
| ECM Furnace Motor | Purchase new furnace with ECM motor or add it to existing furnace | \$100 |

| Appliances | | |
|--|---|------|
| Dehumidifier | Must be ENERGY STAR® rated | \$25 |
| Refrigerator | Must be ENERGY STAR rated. Requires recycling of the replaced unit | \$75 |
| Freezer | Must be ENERGY STAR rated. Requires recycling of the replaced unit | \$75 |
| Working Refrigerator/Freezer Harvest (recycling only) | Does not require purchase of a new ENERGY STAR appliance; must be in working order. | \$75 |

| Water Heaters | | |
|-------------------------------|---|-------|
| Heat Pump Water Heater | Must be ENERGY STAR® rated | \$300 |
| Electric Water Heater | New construction installation: high efficient 105-gallon electric water heater controlled on ENERGYWISE® off-peak program. | \$300 |
| | Replacement of non-controlled electric water heater with high-efficient 105-gallon electric water heater controlled on EnergyWise off-peak program. | \$300 |

| Lighting | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| LEDs | ENERGY STAR® rated (encouraged) | Up to \$5 / bulb |
| CFLs | ENERGY STAR rated | Up to \$1 / bulb |
| LED Yard Light (member-owned) | LED light fixture | \$30 |

| Misc. | | |
|--|--|---|
| Pool Pump Variable Speed Motor | Must be Energy Star rated | \$200 |
| Heat Pump Pool Heater | Coefficient of Performance (COP) of 5.0 | \$400 |
| Electric Vehicle Charger Installation | Level 1 and Level 2 chargers qualify | Up to \$500 |
| Solar Installation | Monthly payment based on kilowatt-hour (kWh) production as recorded by Dakota Electric's production meter. | \$0.50/watt of installed solar, not to exceed \$4K. |

| Commercial & Agricultural Rebates | | |
|---|--|--|
| Custom EnergyGrant <i>For unique, industry-specific projects not covered by other rebates, such as:</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Energy Management Systems (EMS) Energy recovery ventilators Process improvements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data center efficiency improvements Window film |
| Lighting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New construction lighting Retrofit lighting upgrade | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Induction or LED projects LED traffic lights |
| Motors and Drives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Variable frequency drives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Premium efficiency motors |
| Heating, Cooling and Ventilation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tune-ups Ground-source heat pumps Air-source heat pumps | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Central air conditioners Cooling equipment, i.e. chillers, cooling towers, etc. |
| Agricultural | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milking vacuum pump VFD Milk transfer pump VFD Energy-efficient lighting Scroll compressors for bulk tank | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Microzone control systems Waste heat exchangers and frame-type milk pre-coolers VFD for irrigation systems |

Dakota Electric employees raise more than **\$27,000 for local charities**

During the 2014 Dakota Cares Campaign, Dakota Electric employees exceeded their fundraising goal by raising more than \$27,000. Organizations donated to include the United Way®, Community Health Charities®, the Fallen Linemen Organization and other non-profits.

The Dakota Cares committee plans several employee events and activities throughout the year to help raise funds for local organizations. Some of the activities in 2014 included a pork chop feed, fajita feed, silent auction, sporting-clays fun shoot and other activities. Employees also have the option to contribute through payroll deductions each year.

"Because of our employees' generous donations, we have been able to raise thousands of dollars each year for worthy causes in our community and it is very much appreciated," said Julie Simonsen, community affairs assistant and Dakota Cares committee chair.



Dakota Electric donates to Farmington and Lakeville school districts

Dakota Electric Association recently awarded \$40,000 in unclaimed capital credits to school districts 192 and 194. The money will help Farmington's project-based inquiry learning program at Gateway Academy and Lakeville's "Engineering is Elementary" curriculum in the district's eight elementary schools.

"We thank Dakota Electric for this generous donation," said District 192 Superintendent Jay Haugen. "You are a major partner in reimagining education and helping students learn through a hands-on approach."

District 194 Superintendent Lisa Snyder agrees. "We are grateful to Dakota Electric for its financial support toward education. Thank you!"



L-R: Ken Danner, Dakota Electric board member; Jay Haugen, District 192 superintendent; Lisa Snyder, District 194 superintendent; Dakota Electric board members Clay Van De Bogart, Judy Kimmes and Jerry Pittman.

Dakota Electric receives Community Leadership Award

The Dakota County Regional Chamber of Commerce (DCRC) recently awarded Dakota Electric Association the Community Leadership Award. The award focuses on businesses that make "remarkable contributions and actions in the community."

Dakota Electric is strongly committed to our local area with decades of involvement in many community organizations.

"A core principle of cooperatives is commitment to community," President and CEO Greg Miller said. "We are honored to be recognized for these efforts."



Economic Development Director Mark Lofthus accepted the Leadership Award from Chamber board member Michelle Engdahl and Doug Baker, CEO of Ecolab.

Utility Scams 101

The scam

Utility phone scams typically involve callers claiming to represent a utility company attempting to trick people into paying them money by threatening to turn off their service. The scammer usually insists the victim pay immediately with a pre-paid debit card (i.e. Green Dot MoneyPak card), which provides them easy access to your money.

What can I do?

Hang Up

If there's any doubt about the authenticity of a caller, hang up and call your utility provider directly to verify your billing and payment status.

Report it

Contact your local authorities and utility provider to report theft or attempted theft due to scams. If the theft was through a Green Dot MoneyPak card, quickly fill out a refund request at www.moneypak.com/refundrequest.aspx to try and stop your money from being transferred.

Beware

Never give out personal information, debit/credit card numbers or wire money as a result of an unexpected or unsolicited call if you cannot validate the caller's authenticity.

Get it in writing

Dakota Electric members will be contacted via U.S. Mail about past due bills before their service is turned off.

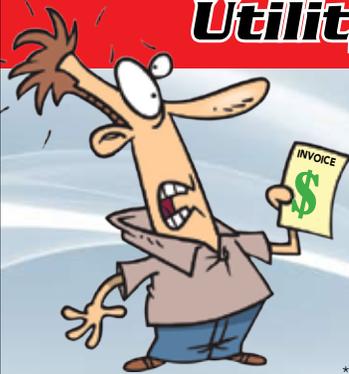
Know your options

Dakota Electric provides many options for payment and never REQUIRES the use of a pre-paid debit card.



Paid Advertisements: For more information about advertising in *Circuits* call 651-463-6270.

Utility Bill High?



IT'S TIME FOR A MORE EFFICIENT FURNACE!

Own a quality **TRANE** furnace for as low as **\$1,890!***
Call for details!

*With system purchase after all rebates and discounts.

Furnace Inspection, Safety Check & Carbon Monoxide Leak Test just **\$89⁰⁰**

Every home should have this done annually!
Not valid with other specials. Offer expires 1/31/15.

Schedule your FREE in-home estimate today!



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The South Metro's Trane dealer for 38 years!



Be safe

Stay clear of downed power lines

NEVER TOUCH A DOWNED POWER LINE. Always assume it is energized and call 911 immediately.

POWERFUL STORMS can damage power lines. If you see a downed power line:

- Stay at least 50 feet away from it and assume it is energized. The ground may also be energized making the entire area extremely dangerous.
- Never touch anything that is touching a downed power line. It is as dangerous as the line itself.
- If a power line falls on your vehicle while you are in it, stay inside your vehicle until help arrives.

Circuits Quick Clips



How much energy are you really using?

Now that the holidays are behind us, are you curious to know how much energy your new appliances and electronics may be using? There's an easy way to find out!

Dakota Electric provides 27 Kill A Watt™ meters through Dakota County's library system. Members may check out a meter to measure power consumption of appliances and electronics to determine the actual cost of power consumed.

Simply plug the meter into a regular 120-volt outlet and plug an appliance into the meter. The unit will project the cost of continued use of an appliance in time periods of hour, day, week, month and year.



For more information:

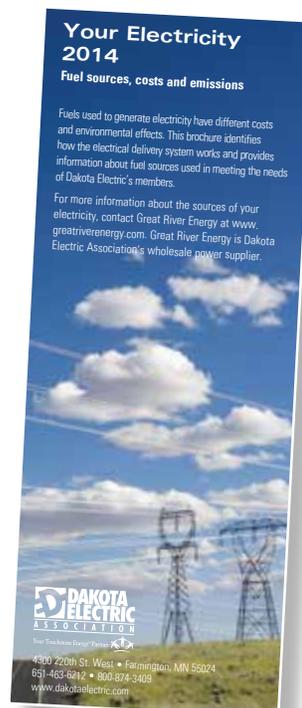
- Visit the Energy Efficiency section at www.dakotaelectric.com.
- Library locations and hours available at www.co.dakota.mn.us/library.

Your Electricity 2014 brochure available

As a cooperative business, one of Dakota Electric's founding principles is to provide members with information about their cooperative.

The most recent information on how the electric generation, transmission and distribution systems work, plus the sources, costs and emissions of fuels used in meeting the needs of Dakota Electric's members, is available by visiting www.dakotaelectric.com > Safety and Education > Electricity 101.

Members may also request a copy of the brochure be mailed to them by calling 651-463-6212.



Stay safe on snowmobile trails this winter

Once the heavy snowfall hits, it may be tempting to immediately hop on your snowmobile and cut loose on trails or seemingly wide open farm fields covered with fresh powder. But even seasoned veterans of this winter activity need to keep a number of safety considerations in mind before heading out on the statewide trail system.

In addition to observing state snowmobile regulations and local laws, be especially careful if driving in a power line right of way. Reduce your speed and always be on the lookout for electrical transformer boxes and guy wires – the cables that anchor power poles. Darkness, fog and deep snow can make them hard to see.

While hazards such as these may present themselves even while riding on marked trails, the importance of staying on designated paths cannot be stressed enough. The groomed snowmobile trail system available across Minnesota includes signs that alert snowmobilers to trail changes. When you venture off these paths, you put yourself and others at risk for coming into contact with objects – such as electrical equipment – hidden under the deep and undisturbed snow.

Immediately contact the local utility or authorities if you see a downed or sagging power line, notice missing or damaged guy wire covers or have other safety concerns regarding electrical equipment along your ride.

Board of Directors

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David Jones
Gerald F. Pittman, Vice Chair

District 2

Janet L. Lekson, MREA Director
Jim Sheldon, Chair
Clay Van De Bogart, Great River
Energy Director

District 3

Kenneth H. Danner, Treasurer
William F. Holton
Margaret D. Schreiner, Great River
Energy Director

District 4

Paul Bakken
Judy H. Kimmes
Paul A. Trapp, Secretary



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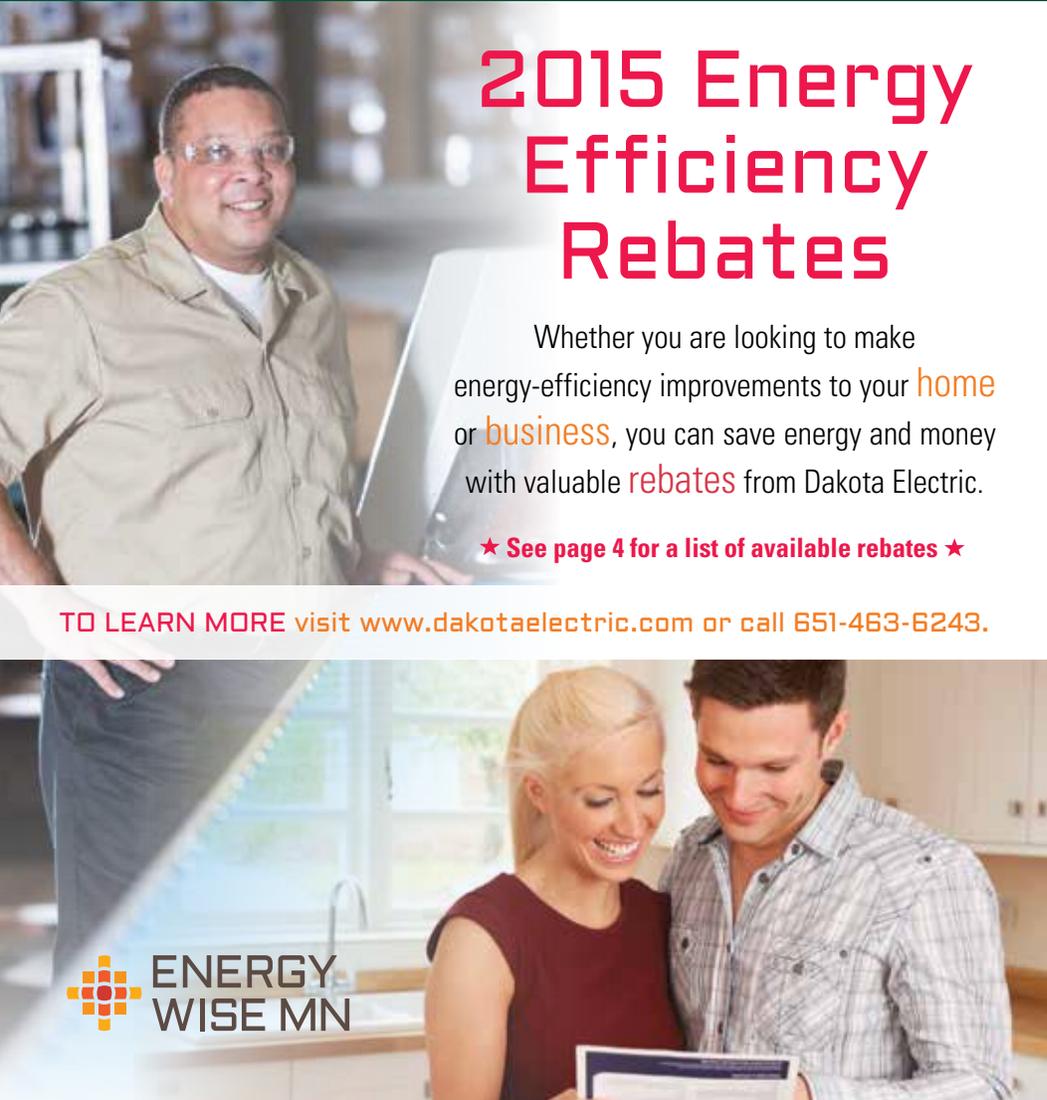
Greg Miller, President & CEO
Tanya Wolfs, Editor



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ASSOCIATION



2015 Energy Efficiency Rebates

Whether you are looking to make energy-efficiency improvements to your **home** or **business**, you can save energy and money with valuable **rebates** from Dakota Electric.

★ See page 4 for a list of available rebates ★

TO LEARN MORE visit www.dakotaelectric.com or call 651-463-6243.



Contact Us

Member service & drive-up window
7 a.m. – 7 p.m. Monday - Friday
651-463-6212 or 1-800-874-3409
Hearing Impaired TDD 651-463-6144

Lobby 7 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday
4300 220th Street West, Farmington, MN 55024

24-hour outage & emergency service
651-463-6201 or 1-800-430-9722

Underground cable locations
Gopher State One Call 811 or 651-454-0002 or 1-800-252-1166

Tree trimming & street lights 651-463-6287

Dakota Electric is an equal opportunity/
affirmative action employer

www.dakotaelectric.com
customerservice@dakotaelectric.com



Program information and offers in this newsletter are
subject to change without notice.