

CIRCUITS

NEWS FOR DAKOTA ELECTRIC MEMBERS

Dakota Electric's new substation in Ravenna Township was energized on April 1. The substation, located near Treasure Island Resort & Casino, will strengthen power supply and reliability for members in the eastern portion of the cooperative's service territory. A substation transforms high-voltage electricity coming from transmission lines to low-voltage electricity for distribution to member homes and businesses. Dakota Electric now has 30 substations in service.



A delicate balance: Managing reliability with cost

According to Dakota Electric's Safety, Reliability and Service Quality (SRSQ) report reported to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission, the cooperative's reliability numbers continue to be ranked among the best in the nation.

The SRSQ report tracks system reliability, safety performance and service levels. Dakota Electric uses the report to evaluate its performance in key areas in comparison to previous years.

"For system reliability, we use the data to identify ways to better allocate investment dollars by focusing our efforts on minimizing power outages that affect the greatest number of members," said Craig Turner, engineering services manager.

As an example, Turner notes Dakota Electric has improved the way its system is sectionalized by adding more fuses to distribution tap lines. The tap lines branch off from the mainline and provide service to individual members or clusters of residences. This low-cost solution helps isolate failed equipment and minimize the number of members affected by a power outage.

"High reliability is always a top priority for Dakota Electric because it is what our members expect," said Turner. "Our board of directors has been very supportive and continues to approve funding for necessary infrastructure investments."

But those infrastructure investments are

not always low-cost. Major investments, such as substation construction or underground cable replacement, are necessary to maintain system reliability. But Turner admits that managing costs and making system improvements can be a difficult process.

"We look at the cost of improving reliability versus the expected benefit and try to determine if the expense is worth it to our members," he said. "Equipment replacement or construction is expensive, but our excellent reliability numbers show that these expenses are making the system more reliable for our members. We strive for balance and make system changes when they will provide value to our member-owners."

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Upcoming events

Board Meeting	May 28, 8:30 a.m.
Memorial Day - office closed	May 25

May 2015



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Geared up for safety

We often take electricity — and the men and women who provide it — for granted. The reality is, lineworkers answer the call to restore power day or night, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

In scorching heat and arctic blasts, lineworkers suit up from head to toe, protecting themselves from the potential dangers of working around high voltage power lines. The voltage running through those power lines can create an electric arc about four times as hot as the sun's surface, and the human body is one of the best conductors of electricity.

High voltage wires and equipment are a constant danger for lineworkers, but they can also pose a danger to our members. That is why electric cooperatives are proud to be at the forefront of electrical safety equipment development, as well as electrical safety education for employees and members.

Dakota Electric employees participate in all aspects of the cooperative's safety program, according to Safety Director Kevin Fowler. This is especially true of the lineworkers. Fowler says lineworkers help write the safety rules, help with safety and

job skills training, assist in incident investigation and analysis, and participate in ongoing safety education.

"We go above and beyond the bare minimum safety regulations," said Fowler. "We test tools and equipment more than we are required, we provide more personal protective equipment than outside regulations say we need, and our employees have a significant role in forming and maintaining our overall safety program. The direct involvement of our employees gives everyone ownership in our safety program and, as a result, we get fantastic engagement in our safety efforts."

Dakota Electric has always been dedicated to providing safe, reliable and affordable electric service to you, our member-owners. The lengths we go to keep you, your family and our lineworkers safe are a point of pride for us and are never taken lightly.

A lineworker's perspective...



Dale Staiger, Journeyman Lineworker/Crew Chief

At Dakota Electric: 44 years

Tallest pole climbed: 85 feet

Best part of the job: The friends I have made and the way everyone is willing to help each other.

"Power restoration can be slow depending on the severity of the storm, but it's a great feeling to turn the power back on for our members. We do care about how long your power is out, and we will get it on as safely and quickly as possible."



Steve Cole, Journeyman Lineworker/Crew Chief

At Dakota Electric: 28 years

Tallest pole climbed: 65 feet

Best part of the job: Being outside on a nice day

"This is a challenging but rewarding career. We take a lot of pride in keeping your lights on 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year."



Casey O'Brien, Journeyman Lineworker

At Dakota Electric: 11 years

Tallest pole climbed: 55 feet

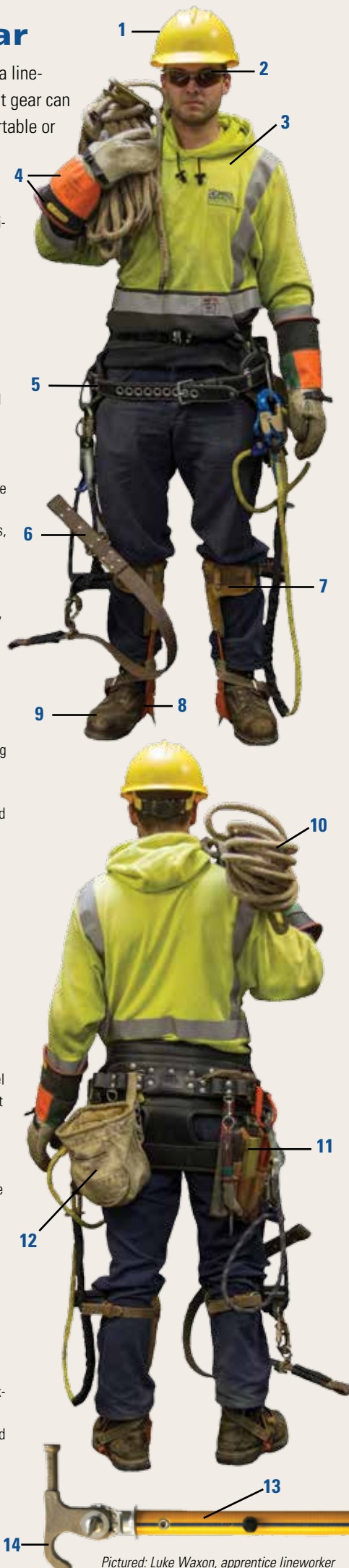
Best part of the job: Being outdoors and working with interesting and unique individuals with a lot of life experience on and off the job.

"Storm work is exciting, dangerous and a lot of hard work with some very long days. Depending on the time of year, we are either wet, freezing or sweating, and at times, all of the above. We appreciate your patience when we're out there restoring power and improving the system. Thank you for all the kind words — and cookies — throughout the years."

A lineworker's gear

When completely ready to climb a pole, everything a line-worker is wearing or carrying serves a purpose. That gear can weigh more than 50 pounds. It is not always comfortable or the easiest to work with, but they wear it and use it without question.

1. **HARD HAT:** A hard hat provides protection against electrical hazards and protects the head from blows and falling objects.
2. **SAFETY GLASSES:** Linemen must wear protective goggles or glasses, whether working on electrical lines or clearing right-of-way. This protects their eyes from loose debris and other hazards, including electrical flashes.
3. **FIRE-RESISTANT CLOTHING:** While our lineworkers do everything possible to prevent them, unexpected electrical arcs can happen. Fire-resistant clothing will self-extinguish, reducing injury due to burns.
4. **INSULATED GLOVES:** Insulated rubber gloves provide protection against electric shock and burn injuries — these are tested approximately every 30 days to withstand 17,000 volts. They are worn inside leather glove protectors, or gauntlets, that protect the rubber against cuts, abrasions and punctures.
5. **EQUIPMENT BELT:** Think of it as the lineworker's suitcase, with clips, loops and D-rings providing the ability to carry virtually every tool he might need when working on the pole.
6. **SAFETY STRAPS:** When a lineworker reaches the top of a pole, he unhooks one end of his safety strap from his lineman's belt, loops the strap around the pole and rehooks it to the D-ring on the other side of his belt. Having "buckled off", he can now safely work with both hands free. Beginning in 2015, a new safety regulation requires lineworkers to also engage a new style safety strap around the pole the entire time they are climbing to prevent falls.
7. **CLIMBERS/HOOKS:** Contoured leg shafts are made of aluminum or steel and hold the gaffs securely in place next to the lineman's boots. Climbers are strapped on just below the knee and also around the boot holding them in place.
8. **GAFFS:** Two-inch razor-sharp steel points on the shaft of the climbers/hooks for climbing poles. Only the tips dig into the wood, helping lineworkers climb more safely and efficiently.
9. **BOOTS:** A raised heel on a lineworker's boot helps keep the climber positioned correctly when climbing, and a steel shank built into the sole provides extra support for the feet when on the pole.
10. **HANDLINE:** Complete with a pulley block, this rope is hung on the pole and is strong enough for any job — from routine hoisting of material to lowering a lineworker to the ground after a poletop accident.
11. **TOOL POUCH:** This bag also hangs from the side of the lineworker's belt carrying the tools he will need while working at the top of the pole.
12. **DITTY BAG:** This canvas bag hangs from the lineworker's belt and literally holds the nuts and bolts (and connectors, etc.) that lineworkers need for any number of jobs.
13. **EXTENDO STICK:** Typically made of insulated, high voltage-tested fiberglass, and extendable up to 40 feet, extendo sticks are just one type of tool that help lineworkers safely perform a variety of jobs while working on energized power lines.
14. **FINGER:** Numerous tools are attached to an extendo stick's universal head. The attachment shown is called a finger and can be used for opening or closing fuses or breakers.



Pictured: Luke Waxon, apprentice lineworker



Rate Case Update

The final step of Dakota Electric's general rate case is the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission deliberation and decision based on the record developed during the state agency review process.

As this edition of *Circuits* was being prepared, the final decision by the Commission was expected before the end of April. A summary of the Commission's decision will be available on Dakota Electric's website at www.dakotaelectric.com.

MORE INFORMATION

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

Pediatrics play room named in honor of Dakota Electric

Fairview Ridges Hospital in Burnsville dedicated a new pediatrics play room to Dakota Electric Association in honor of a donation the cooperative made to the hospital foundation.

Fairview Ridges plays a prominent role in healthcare in this area and is one of Dakota Electric's largest commercial accounts.

Due to an increasing demand in medical services, the hospital recently completed an expansion. Hospital staff gave Dakota Electric's board of directors a tour of the hospital and the new pediatrics area. The children's play room is for hospitalized children and their siblings to use while receiving medical care.



Dakota Electric's board of directors (L-R): Ken Danner, Bill Holton, Paul Bakken, Margaret Schreiner, David Jones, Janet Lekson, Jerry Pittman, Jack DeYoe, Jim Sheldon and Clay Van De Bogart. Not pictured: Judy Kimmes and Paul Trapp.

Get your cooling system ready for summer!

Temperatures will soon be on the rise and now is the time to make sure your cooling system is ready to go! Whether you are looking to buy a new air conditioner or heat pump, or just give your existing one a tune-up, Dakota Electric offers valuable rebates to help you save money.

Tune-up

- A tune-up is the best way to ensure efficient operation of your central air conditioner or air-source heat pump.
- Receive a \$25 rebate from Dakota Electric

Central Air Conditioner

Rebate amounts based on energy-efficiency rating and installation by a registered contractor.

SEER 13-14	\$50
SEER 14.5	\$180
SEER 15	\$280
SEER 16+	\$330

Air-source heat pump

Rebate amounts based on energy-efficiency rating and installation by a registered contractor.

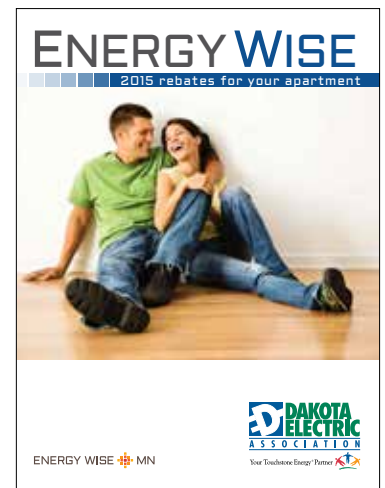
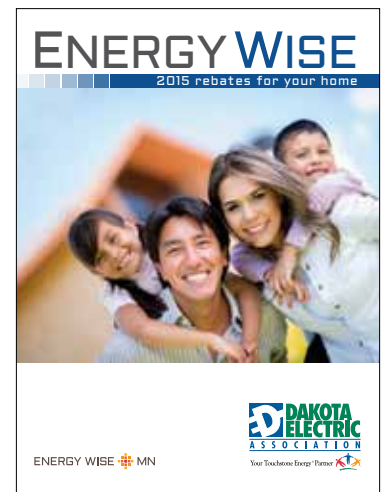
SEER 13-14	\$330
SEER 14.5	\$480
SEER 15	\$580
SEER 16+	\$630

Cycled Air Conditioning®

Participating in the Cycled Air Conditioning program is one of the easiest ways to save on summer cooling costs.

- Receive a \$12 credit on your bill each June, July and August.
- On days when homes and businesses are using a lot of electricity and purchasing wholesale electricity is more expensive, Dakota Electric will cycle your air conditioner condenser on and off in 15-minute increments. The fan will continue to run.

For more information about energy-saving rebates and programs, visit www.dakotaelectric.com or call the Energy Experts® at 651-463-6243.



For complete details/applications on all of Dakota Electric's energy-saving rebates and programs, refer to the rebate booklet mailed to homes and apartments in February. To download a copy, visit www.dakotaelectric.com > Residential > Program & Rebates.

Power outage emergency plan

With the summer storm season approaching, it is a good time to remind members to be prepared for power outages. As much as Dakota Electric tries to keep the power on, there are circumstances that can cause the power to go out for minutes or hours. Do you have a plan in place if you were to lose power? Here are some things to consider:

Dakota Electric's outage line

Have Dakota Electric's outage line in your cell phone or easily accessible to report your outage — 651-463-6201.

Cell phone

If bad weather and strong winds are in the forecast, keep your cell phone charged in case the electricity goes out.

Refrigerator/freezer doors

Keep the door closed as much as possible. Discard perishable foods that have been above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for more than two hours.

Flashlights/batteries

Keep flashlights and new batteries in an accessible location to provide some light and safety.

Backup generator

A backup generator may be an option to power necessary medical equipment or to keep refrigeration for medication. Make sure you follow proper safety guidelines when installing a portable generator (see sidebar), and consult with a licensed electrician to learn more.

Garage doors

Consult your electric garage-door-opener manual and find out how to release the opener in case the power goes out. This will allow you safe and easy access to open your garage door even without power.

Sump pump battery backup

Consider installing a battery backup for your sump pump to better ensure operation if the power is out for a period of time.

Safety

Never go near downed power lines or wires. Power lines can still stay energized even if they are lying on the ground. Call Dakota Electric immediately at 651-463-6201 if you ever see a downed line and keep others away from the area.

Visit our YouTube channel to see a playlist of videos about preparing for a power outage and more at <http://bit.ly/10Cnbtst>.

Make sure we have your current phone number(s) on file!



When you call in to report an outage, Dakota Electric's automated outage call answering system will check to see if the number you are calling from matches a number in our database. If a match is found, the system will tell you if dispatchers are aware of your outage and record your telephone number, call time and address location. If you call from a number that is not recognized in our system database, you will be asked to leave a message, and it will take more time to confirm the affected outage. **Call 651-463-6212 to update the phone number(s) on your account.**

Generator safety tips

Portable electric generators provide a good source of power during electrical outages, but if improperly installed or operated, can become deadly. Follow these tips for safe installation and operation:

- Never plug generators directly into a wall outlet. Power from generators can backfeed along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including lineworkers making repairs.
- If necessary to connect a generator to household wiring to power appliances, have a qualified electrician install appropriate equipment to ensure it meets local electrical codes.
- Make sure your generator is properly grounded.
- Keep the generator dry.
- Make sure extension cords used with generators are rated for the load; free of cuts or worn insulation; and have three-pronged plugs.
- Do not overload the generator.
- Never operate the generator in your home or garage. Generators can produce high levels of carbon monoxide very quickly.



Source: SafeElectricity.org



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gopherstateonecall.org.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**





Circuits Quick Clips

Save on your next purchase of CFL and LED bulbs

Dakota Electric is offering up to \$10 off select GE ENERGY STAR® light bulbs at participating Walmart stores. You can receive up to \$5 off select GE ENERGY STAR light bulbs with a coupon included with bills mailed April 14-May 7. Promotion runs through August 31.



Visit www.energywisemn.com to learn more and enter for a chance to win a \$500 VISA gift card.

Due to the presence of mercury, CFLs must be recycled. In Minnesota, it is illegal to place them directly in the garbage.

Area students earn trip to Washington, D.C.

Dakota Electric is sponsoring five local high school students to attend the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) annual Youth Tour event in June. The students were selected after going through an application and interview process with a panel of judges.

Every year, more than 1,500 high school students from around the country travel to Washington, D.C. for the NRECA Youth Tour. During the week-long trip, students learn about the nation's government and electric cooperatives, meet with their elected officials and make friends with other students from around the United States. Students will tour many of Washington, D.C.'s historic sites, including the Smithsonian, the FBI building and the Vietnam Memorial.

Congratulations to this year's winners!



Jessica Kostecki
Apple Valley High School



Patrick Hartshorn
Lakeville North High School



Megan Smith
Apple Valley High School



Tanner Ruppe
Northfield High School



Samson Ghirmai
Apple Valley High School

FREE Minnesota Twins Youth Clinic coming to Farmington

In partnership with Great River Energy, Dakota Electric's wholesale electric provider, the Minnesota Twins Play Ball! Minnesota Youth Clinic is once again coming to Dakota Electric's area. The clinic is designed to teach basic fundamentals including hitting, fielding and throwing for boys and girls ages 6-16, while also providing participants with positive messages about staying in school and away from drugs and alcohol.

Saturday, May 30

10 - 11:30 a.m. (ages 6-9)

11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. (ages 10-16)

Tiger 1 Baseball Field - Dodge Middle School

Hwy. 50 and Akin Rd. | Farmington

- No registration is required to participate. Just show up on the day of the clinic and be ready to learn and have fun.
- The Twins will provide most of the equipment; however, youth participants are asked to bring their own baseball or softball gloves.

Visit http://mlb.mlb.com/min/community/play-ball_clinics.jsp for more information.



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**Program subject to change without notice.*

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

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Program information and offers in this newsletter are
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