

CIRCUITS

NEWS FOR DAKOTA ELECTRIC MEMBERS



Panel discussion at board strategic planning meeting: Preparing for electric utility industry and regulatory changes

Dakota Electric Association's Board of Directors held a strategic planning session in September that included a panel discussion on "Preparing for Electric Utility Industry and Regulatory Changes." The panel discussion focused on potential electric technology, industry and regulatory changes, opportunities and challenges.

The panel provided insights from industry leaders and included Beverly Jones Heydinger, chair of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission; Bill Grant, deputy commissioner for the Minnesota Department of Commerce; and Mike Bull, director for policy and communications for the Center for Energy and Environment.

Observations by the panelists included:

- Many technological advances have increased the implementation of load management and energy efficiency.
- Utilities in our region have established a very robust transmission system.
- Low natural gas prices and good supply support the use of natural gas for electric generation.
- The panelists spoke favorably about how Dakota Electric works with regulatory agencies and about the cooperative's member focus.
- The price of renewable energy has fallen, which supports the increasing use of these energy sources.
- Slow growth in demand for electricity eases the need for more generating capacity.
- Modernizing and increasing the resiliency of the distribution system will receive increasing attention. Utilities will need to replace aging infrastructure while increasing system automation that is more responsive to continuing changes in generation and power flow.
- Utilities need to be prepared to respond to technological changes such as the increasing use of electric vehicles and consumers supplying more of their own energy through distributed resources. The grid will need to be much smarter than it is today.

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Upcoming events

Board Meeting	Nov. 19, 8:30 a.m.
Thanksgiving - office closed.....	Nov. 26-27

November 2015



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



New rates
take effect
Nov. 12

Rate Case Update

Increased rates approved and implemented

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission has approved Dakota Electric's new rates, which will start impacting members with electricity use on and after Nov. 12, 2015.

The first bill members receive with the increased rates will include an insert with details about the rate increase. Members can also visit www.dakotaelectric.com or call 651-463-6212 for more details.

New RTA in effect

The Resource and Tax Adjustment (RTA) is a mechanism that allows Dakota Electric to pass through changes in costs for wholesale power, conservation spending and property taxes be-

tween general rate cases. The base amounts for these RTA factors are set in each rate case. When new rates are implemented, Dakota Electric will start billing new RTA amounts that reflect changes in these costs that have occurred since we filed our rate case in 2014. The RTA for residential members will be 0.28¢ per kWh.

LOWER ENERGY BILLS

Finding ways to save energy is often members' best defense against increasing electricity prices. For energy-saving tips, visit www.dakotaelectric.com or call an Energy Expert® at 651-463-6243.

Beware of utility scams

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 you 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.



panel discussion (cont.)

- Utilities need to continue squeezing greater value from existing investments.
- The biggest challenge will be proper pricing and ensuring rates are appropriate to maintain system reliability and efficiency.
- Cyber and physical attacks or other massive outages are an increasing concern. Utilities must be vigilant about steps to decrease the likelihood of such attacks and be prepared to restore service if they occur.
- Future technology breakthroughs, such as energy storage, could have a big impact on the increased use of resources like wind and solar and become much more common in homes.
- There is increasing member interest in distributed generation such as solar. Members who want these choices rely on the existing grid to manage this process. Many distributed resources are not capable of providing 24-hour support for the consumer. How are costs shared while providing members with the services they want?
- The federal Clean Power Plan requires states to develop implementation plans to reduce emissions in line with the final rule recently issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This will be a significant issue over the next several years. Final plans from states are due to the EPA in 2018.
- The historic model of relying on increasing load growth and energy revenue to maintain infrastructure will no longer work.
- Distribution planning will become increasingly important as members want to take advantage of the grid network that serves them.
- Technologies that have the potential to be game changers include cost effective energy storage.
- The electric industry is experiencing dramatic changes including technological advances, increased customer demands, renewable resource alternatives, aging infrastructure and rate increases.

"Dakota Electric's board of directors and management team continually track industry issues to be sure we are well prepared to serve our members' energy needs and service expectations, not only today but into the future," said Jim Sheldon, board chair. "As we look down the road, this panel discussion provides important insights to guide our strategic planning."



L-R: Clay Van De Bogart, board director; Greg Miller, president and CEO; Jim Sheldon, board chair; board directors Jerry Pittman, John DeYoe, Margaret Schreiner, Paul Bakken; Beverly Jones Heydinger, chair of the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission; David Jones, board director; Bill Grant, deputy commissioner for the Minnesota Department of Commerce; Janet Lekson, board director; Mike Bull, director for policy and communications for the Center for Energy and Environment; board directors Paul Trapp, Judy Kimmes, Bill Holton and Ken Danner.

Dakota Electric nominated for national Cooperative Purpose Award

Dakota Electric Association was recently nominated for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Cooperative Purpose Award. The award, new in 2015, recognizes cooperatives for their efforts at improving the quality of life for their members and communities.

"The award will go to a co-op for working with its membership to make outstanding contributions that result in visible, lasting improvements to the quality of life and the purpose of the cooperative in the community," said NRECA President Mel Coleman.

The Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) nominated Dakota Electric because of the cooperative's ongoing commitment to its communities and members.

The application cited volunteer projects by Dakota Electric as well as numerous financial donations to improve its service area. Staff and board members serve on boards and with non-profit groups, and the cooperative organizes volunteers to work at local parks.

"Board members and employees are engaged in improving the quality of life in their communities in many different ways, often taking leadership roles with key organizations," MREA's Board Chair Wes Waller said.

Dakota Electric's economic development efforts were also mentioned, such as the recent work to bring a large data center to Eagan.

"As a member-owned cooperative, giving back to the community is a priority of ours and one of our founding principles," President and CEO Greg Miller said. "All of us at Dakota Electric are honored to be considered for this award."

There are seven nominees from around the country, including Lake Region Electric Cooperative, Pelican Rapids — the only other Minnesota cooperative — and the final winner will be announced at the NRECA annual meeting in February.

Airflow is everything

Adequate airflow helps increase the efficiency of many household systems

In addition to increasing the efficiency of many household systems and appliances, good airflow also helps keep your indoor air clean and healthy. The following tips will help you increase your airflow and air quality.

Furnaces, central air conditioners and heat pumps

- Clean or replace the filter every month during heating and cooling seasons. Even a slightly dirty filter will block airflow and reduce efficiency. Some filters do not need to be replaced monthly. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Air supply and return registers should be vacuumed occasionally and kept free of obstructions, such as furniture and drapes.
- Periodically clean and vacuum the grilles, coils and cooling fans on outdoor central air conditioners and heat pumps. Built-up leaves, grass and cottonwood seeds can cause inefficiency or even compressor failure.
- Keep the furnace intake vent clear of snow, leaves and

other debris.

Room air conditioners

- Check the filter once a month and clean as needed. The filter is usually located just behind the front grille and many are washable.

Refrigerators

- Keep refrigerator coils clean and cool to maintain peak efficiency. Leave a few inches of space between the coils and the wall to allow cooling air to circulate.

Clothes dryers

- Keep dryer filters and vents clean. Clean filters after every load to prevent reduced airflow and increased energy use.
- Do not vent the dryer indoors to gain a little heat in the winter because lint, other pollutants and moisture will also be added to your home.

Bathroom and kitchen fans

- Vacuum bathroom fan grilles and fans as needed to re-

Need help with heating costs?

Apply for the Low Income Heat Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Applications are available for residents of Scott, Carver and Dakota counties on www.capagency.org or by calling 651-322-3500. Residents in other counties may call 800-657-3710.

LIHEAP or the Energy Assistance Program (EAP) helps pay home heating costs.

- Size of grant is based on household size, income, fuel type and energy usage.
- Funds are available for renters or homeowners.
- Energy assistance program runs Oct. 1, 2015 - June 1, 2016.
- TDD/TYY and translators are available.

EAP INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES 2015-16

Household Size	Maximum Gross Income for 3 months
1	\$5,987
2	\$7,829
3	\$9,671
4	\$11,514
5	\$13,356
6	\$15,198

Sales tax exemption for electric heat

If you are a Minnesota resident, you are eligible for a sales tax exemption on your electric bill from November through April each year **if electricity is the primary source of heat in your home**. To determine eligibility, see the Minnesota Department of Revenue Sales Tax Fact Sheet 157 at www.taxes.state.mn.us.

To apply for a sales tax exemption, download the form at dakotaelectric.com/residential and click on Programs & Rebates > Rebates > Heating & Cooling Rebates > Sales Tax Exemption form (right sidebar). For questions, call 651-463-6212 or email customerservice@dakotaelectric.com.

move dust and lint.

- Clean kitchen range hood filters. They can usually be washed in the dishwasher.

Air vents and registers

- Do not close supply air registers.
- Ensure return air grilles are not blocked by furniture.
- Ensure floor registers are not blocked with rugs, drapes or furniture.

Air exchangers

Heat recovery ventilation (HRV) is a balanced system that provides fresh air for occupants while removing moisture and indoor air pollutants. If your home has an HRV, this system requires periodic maintenance to ensure safe and efficient operation.

- HRV units should have filters cleaned or replaced in the spring and fall. Vent openings on the exterior of the home should also be checked for blockages from snow, debris or insects.

Note: Consult owner's manual prior to performing any maintenance on equipment.



Every month furnace and heat pump filters should be cleaned or replaced.



Vacuum bathroom fan grilles to keep them free of dust and lint.



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If you heat with LP gas, ask about a FREE in-home audit.



To find out more, contact Dakota Electric at 651-463-6243 or visit:

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See Dealer for details.

Offer ends November 30, 2015.
See Dealer for details.



Circuits Quick Clips

Please report streetlights out

If you notice a damaged or faulty streetlight in your neighborhood, please fill out the online streetlight repair form and Dakota Electric will schedule a crew to repair it. You can access the form at www.dakotaelectric.com/residential/service_requests or call 651-463-6287.

Do you want to serve on Dakota Electric's Nominating Committee?

Dakota Electric Association is requesting member volunteers to serve on the Nominating Committee. Members who desire to serve should e-mail Cherry Jordan at cjordan@dakotaelectric.com or call her at 651-463-6252. Requests must be received by the close of business on Dec. 10, 2015 at 4:30 p.m. Volunteer members are drawn by lot for each district (two members from each district and one alternate from each district). Members will be notified of their selection on or about Jan. 5, 2016. The Nominating Committee will meet late afternoon/evening on Jan. 25, 2016, at Dakota Electric's Farmington office to interview candidates for the Board of Directors' election.

Deadline for board candidates is Dec. 10

The following incumbent directors will be seeking re-election to the Board of Directors at Dakota Electric Association's annual meeting on April 28, 2016: David Jones in District 1, Jim Sheldon in District 2, Bill Holton in District 3, and Paul Trapp in District 4. Any member in good standing may seek election for the Board of Directors in the district in which he/she resides. Members interested in seeking election for a director seat should request an application from Cherry Jordan at cjordan@dakotaelectric.com or call her at 651-463-6252. Completed applications must be received at the Dakota Electric office by the close of business on Dec. 10, 2015 at 4:30 p.m. Candidate interviews will be conducted the evening of Jan. 25, 2016.



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Board of Directors

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John (Jack) DeYoe
David Jones, Treasurer
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
William F. Holton
Margaret D. Schreiner, Great River
Energy Director

District 4

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

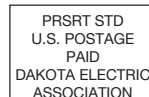


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Greg Miller, President & CEO
Tanya Wolfs, Editor



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Call 651-463-6201 to report your outage.

Contact Us

Member service & drive-up window
7 a.m. – 7 p.m. Monday - Friday
651-463-6212 or 1-800-874-3409
Minnesota Relay Service 711

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

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Underground cable locations
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Tree trimming & street lights 651-463-6287

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