

# CIRCUITS

NEWS FOR DAKOTA ELECTRIC MEMBERS



## Dakota Electric members to receive more renewable energy from newly dedicated solar facility

Dakota Electric Association members are now receiving electricity from a new 1-megawatt solar facility built specifically for the cooperative's member-owners. Dakota Electric's board of directors, along with Great River Energy and SoCore Energy personnel, held a dedication Thursday, Aug. 31 at the solar facility, located on Hwy. 316 south of Hastings.

Unlike a solar garden where members can purchase and own their own panels, this is a utility-scale project. SoCore Energy built and owns the solar facility on behalf of Great River

Energy. Through a power purchase contract with Great River Energy, Dakota Electric purchases all the solar output for delivery to its member-owners. The power purchased from this project reduces the amount of electricity Dakota Electric will need to purchase from non-renewable generation sources and provides a hedge for future wholesale power costs.

"We are pleased to provide this renewable energy resource to our members," Dakota Electric president and CEO Greg Miller said. "This project will add to our existing

- continued on page 2

### Solar Array Quick Facts

- Total panels = 3,906
- Land area is just over five acres.
- 310 watts per panel
- Total capacity is 1 megawatt (1.2 MW DC)
- Panels should produce more than 1.5 million kWh of electricity annually.
- Will produce enough energy to power about 150 average homes.
- Panels are mounted at a 25-degree angle facing south.
- Panels have a 25-year life expectancy.
- The area around the solar panels will be planted with pollinator-friendly plants and will provide habitat for bees and other pollinators.

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### Upcoming events

Cold Weather Rule begins .....	Oct. 15
Careers in Energy Open House .....	Oct. 24
Board Meeting .....	October 26, 8:30 a.m.

October 2017



## Electric school bus begins service in Lakeville

You may have seen the electric school bus in the Pan-o-Prog Parade, on the news, or at the state fair. The bus was making the rounds across the state this summer as it was announced it would be the first all-electric school bus coming to Minnesota. It officially began service in the Lakeville school district last month.

This opportunity was made possible through a collaboration between Schmitt & Sons, Dakota Electric Association and Great River Energy to launch a program that will demonstrate the technology of a battery electric school bus in a cold-weather climate, as well as on longer suburban and rural routes. The information will be used to promote and educate the public on the value of electric vehicle technology.

According to Mike Forbord, operations manager at Schmitt & Sons, the electric bus is running 65 miles a day, which is well within the 100-mile range of the bus. It transports students to and from Lakeville South High School and Impact Academy at Orchard Lake.

"We've looked at other fuel-alternative school buses but haven't seen any additional advantages like we have with this model," said Forbord. "It's a quiet, smooth ride and has the next generation of operational and safety features. It's also very user-friendly for the driver."

Watch for more updates on the electric school bus in future issues of Circuits, including winter weather performance and the school bus driver's perspective.

### Electric Bus Quick Facts

- 100 percent electric
- Recharges in 4-6 hours
- 100 percent wind powered in the Revolt program
- 100-mile range
- Expected savings of \$12,000 annually on operation and maintenance costs over traditional buses.
- Prevents 15 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually.
- Meets or exceeds all Minnesota safety standards. With no noisy engine, musical tones alert students the bus is nearby.



## Solar (cont.)

wholesale renewable portfolio that includes wind, solar, hydro and refuse-derived fuel resources."

Great River Energy's Vice President and Chief Generation Officer Rick Lancaster added, "Dakota Electric is a leader among cooperatives at pursuing solar electricity. And, they are doing it for the right reasons: because their members want it."

Miller says this project is just the beginning of Dakota Electric diversifying into utility-scale solar power. The cooperative is working on permitting another 2-megawatt solar project near Randolph. Construction on that project is expected to start next year.

By the end of 2017, the total solar energy capacity of America's electric cooperatives will be five times what it was two years ago, according to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

This year, cooperatives are on pace to add 480 megawatts of solar, which would bring their total capacity to 873 MW.

Great River Energy and its member-owner cooperatives have collectively developed more than five megawatts of solar generation.



*Dakota Electric Association's board of directors cuts the ribbon on the 1-megawatt solar project.*



# Dakota Electric to host open house for Careers in Energy Week Oct. 16-20

Did you know energy companies are projecting 30-50 percent of their workforce will be eligible to retire in the next 10 years?

The Center for Energy Workforce Development and its members created Careers in Energy Week, Oct. 16-20, 2017, to increase public awareness about energy careers through a concerted nationwide effort.

In celebration of the special week, Dakota Electric will host an open house at its headquarters in Farmington on Tuesday, Oct. 24 from 5-7 p.m.

The event is geared toward high school students and their parents but is open to anyone interested in energy careers. Guests will have a chance to tour the facility and speak with representatives from various Dakota Electric careers, including:

- technician electrician
- electrical engineer
- IT/software developer
- finance
- energy services
- mechanic
- lineworker
- distribution system operator
- human resources
- marketing/communications

Dakota Electric will have drawings for college scholarships for students who attend the open house. Students must be attending college in 2018 to be eligible. Information about the event can be found on the Event Calendar at [dakotaelectric.com](http://dakotaelectric.com), or watch for updates by following us on Facebook and Twitter.

Visit the Minnesota Energy Center's "Get Into Energy" website at [www.energycareersminnesota.com](http://www.energycareersminnesota.com) to learn more about energy careers and energy education opportunities throughout the Minnesota State Colleges and University (MnSCU) system.



**This harvest season,**  
remember to look up and out for power lines.



Winter is coming...

## Here are some energy-saving tips to help you prepare

Fall is great for turning leaves, football, apple orchards and pumpkin spice-flavored everything. It's also a great time to start weatherizing your home for the heating season because those cold temperatures tend to sneak up on us when we least expect it. The following tips will help you prepare:

- Have your **heating system** serviced by a licensed contractor.
- Replace your **furnace filter** monthly, or per manufacturer's guidelines, to keep the system running at peak performance.
- Check your home's **weather stripping** for air leaks around doors, windows, baseboards and wherever pipes, wires and vents enter the house
- Open **shades and curtains** during the day to allow solar heating. Close them at night to retain the day's heat.
- Set your **thermostat** at 68 degrees and be sure to lower the temperature when you go to bed or when you are away from home.

## Avoid disconnection this winter

### Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule begins Oct. 15

Members who fall behind on utility bills can avoid disconnection or be eligible for reconnection between Oct. 15 and April 15 by following the steps outlined in Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule.

Members receive a brochure with their September bill statement (mailed between Sept. 13 and Oct. 7) with program details and contact information for agencies that provide utility payment assistance.

The Cold Weather Rule protects members but does not completely forbid shutoffs. Contact Dakota Electric at 651-463-6212 as soon as you anticipate trouble paying a bill, and we can help you create a payment plan to prevent disconnection. By contacting Dakota Electric and avoiding disconnection, you also avoid paying reconnection fees and a deposit. You must keep your payment plan to qualify for protection.



## Apply for the 2017 Touchstone Energy Award

Help us recognize a business or non-profit organization doing great things in our community!

The Touchstone Energy Community Award allows Dakota Electric to recognize and support local businesses, non-profit organizations and community needs.

In 2017, Dakota Electric will provide up to three awards to local organizations, earning each winner a \$500 cash prize. One local award winner will compete for a statewide award of \$1,000.

### How to apply

The application deadline is Nov. 1, 2017.

Call Brenda at 651-463-6234 or visit [dakotaelectric.com/community](http://dakotaelectric.com/community) for an application and judging criteria.



**2016 Award Recipients:** Winner - Kids 'n Kinship; Runners Up - Eagan Art Festival and River Valley Band of Hastings



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**Co-op Month 2017**

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**We commit to our members because we are owned by our members. We are not-for-profit, which means we are focused on your street — not Wall Street. We invest in the cooperative, our community and you. That's the cooperative difference.**



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\*In-Home Estimate Needed, Offer Expires October 31, 2017

## Download Dakota Electric's FREE Outage App!

**Quick. Easy. Informed.**

Once you have installed the app, you must request a code by visiting [dakotaelectric.com](http://dakotaelectric.com) > Power Outages > Outage App. The code is specific to your account and is required to personalize the app to your residence.








# Circuits Quick Clips

## Members enjoy popular wind farm tours



More than 100 members participated in Dakota Electric's wind farm tours in September. The groups visited McNeilus Wind Farm in Dodge Center and Pleasant Valley Station near Sargeant. Pleasant Valley Station is a natural gas peaking plant that generates electricity during times of high electricity demand.

## 360 Communities receives \$10,000 from Dakota Electric and CoBank



Dakota Electric Association, along with CoBank, one of its lenders, recently donated \$10,000 to 360 Communities. Dakota Electric's \$5,000 donation was matched by CoBank through the company's "Sharing Success" grant program. Dakota Electric's Board of Directors, along with Rachel Hanson of CoBank, presented the check to Jeff Mortensen, CEO of 360 Communities, and Laurie Bolin, development director, during a recent board meeting. Mortensen thanked Dakota Electric's board for the donation and Dakota Electric's support over the years. "Thank you so much for your support, we could not do our work without support from the community," Mortensen said. "We just couldn't do it without you."

360 Communities provides assistance to more than 18,000 individuals each year with a variety of programs throughout the area, including domestic violence shelters, resource centers, food shelves and more.

## Safe At Home Address Confidentiality Program

Safe at Home helps survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and other crimes, and anyone who fears for their safety, by establishing a confidential mailing address and providing a mail forwarding service.

While Dakota Electric needs members' actual addresses to establish and maintain electric service, we use Safe at Home addresses for communicating with members and take special steps to protect Safe at Home participants' addresses.

If you participate in Safe at Home, alert Dakota Electric and provide your Safe at Home mailing address.

To learn more about Safe at Home, contact the Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State at [www.sos.state.mn.us](http://www.sos.state.mn.us) or 1-866-723-3035.





## Board of Directors

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Greg Miller, President & CEO  
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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.

Dakota Electric reminds members to beware of any suspicious phone calls demanding credit card or personal financial information. Dakota Electric does not ask for this type of information. If you receive a call like this, hang up immediately and call Dakota Electric at 651-463-6212 to verify your account status.

**Never give out social security numbers, credit card or banking information to anyone who calls, regardless of who they claim to represent.**

## 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

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  
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Tree trimming & street lights 651-463-6287

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