

CIRCUITS

NEWS FOR DAKOTA ELECTRIC MEMBERS



Photo depicts a previous SoCore solar project for Dairyland Power, La Crosse, Wis.

Dakota Electric members to receive dedicated solar energy

More renewable, solar energy will be flowing to Dakota Electric members.

Dakota Electric Association, along with its power supplier Great River Energy, is pleased to announce a joint solar project that will provide dedicated solar power directly to Dakota Electric's membership. The 1-megawatt (MW) solar array will be built along Highway 61 in Marshan Township by SoCore, a leader in solar energy development and construction.

"We are pleased to announce this significant project," said Greg Miller, president and CEO of Dakota Electric. "It is solar connected to our grid for the sole benefit of our members."

Dakota Electric collaborated with Great River Energy to build this project, which will directly benefit the cooperative's membership. The output from this renewable solar project will offset the need to receive electricity from fossil fuel sources, assuring 1 MW of clean, renewable electricity to the member-owners of Dakota Electric.

"Electric cooperatives continue to lead the way in efforts to develop distributed solar energy systems. We're delighted to partner with Dakota Electric Association in further support of renewable energy leadership by local cooperatives," said Jon Brekke, vice president and chief market officer at Great River Energy.

The project is 50 times larger than a previous project built by Great River Energy on behalf of Dakota Electric that is located in Farmington at the intersection of Denmark and County Road 50.

"We have wanted to add large solar projects to our wholesale power mix for some time and are glad that we can now announce this project," Miller said. "We are already in the process of trying to permit another megawatt of solar for a total of 2 megawatts."

This 1-MW solar project includes approximately 3,600 solar panels on 5 acres of land and will provide enough electricity to serve about 150 average residential members.

Preliminary work will be done on the property this fall with construction taking place in late winter. The co-op expects to energize the solar array in the spring. A dedication event will be held once the project is completed.

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Upcoming events

Board Meeting	Nov. 17, 8:30 a.m.
Thanksgiving - office closed	Nov. 24-25

November 2016



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Keeping the electric grid safe for members and cooperatives

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) is not a household name at dinner tables across the country but it certainly is commonplace in the electric utility industry.

NERC is a regulatory authority responsible for ensuring the reliability of the bulk electric system in North America. To ensure our members continue to receive secure and reliable electric service, utilities like Great River Energy, wholesale power supplier to Dakota Electric Association, work with NERC and other utilities to develop reliability standards related to physical and cyber security, among other things.

Cyber security

Great River Energy is working with utilities, government agencies and other organizations to address the rising risk of cyber attacks and taking reasonable precautions to prepare for a cyber attack. NERC has developed effective, mandatory cyber security standards to help protect the bulk electric system and Great River Energy has committed to compliance since the rules were introduced in 2005.

The organization conducts periodic cyber intrusion scenario drills, which allow Great River Energy to test emergency response plans and communication protocols.

Physical security

Threats like natural disasters, vandalism and terrorist attacks also are high on the list of topics being discussed among regulators, government officials and utilities. With that, reliability standards for maintaining the physical security of substations and power lines have become more stringent. Great River Energy is committed to compliance and taking steps to help bolster the security of its facilities and infrastructure.

Most recently, Great River Energy implemented new security procedures that add an additional level of scrutiny to those who can physically enter Great River Energy facilities deemed “critical infrastructure” by NERC. Employees in certain positions also were required to complete additional training.

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.

- The size of the grant is based on household size, income, fuel type and energy use.
- Funds are available for renters or homeowners.
- The energy assistance program runs from Oct. 1, 2016 to June 1, 2017.
- TDD/TYY and translators are available.

EAP INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES 2016-17

Household Size	Maximum Gross Income for 3 months
1	\$6,135
2	\$8,023
3	\$9,910
4	\$11,798
5	\$13,686
6	\$15,574



Dakota Electric wins Workplace Wellness Spotlight Award

Denise Hrnrcir, senior benefits administrator at Dakota Electric, knows the challenge of offering employee benefits at a reasonable cost. A decade ago, health insurance costs were on the rise for the co-op and its employees. The co-op made significant changes to its health insurance package and was rewarded on Oct. 9 with HealthPartners Workplace Wellness Spotlight Award for mid-size businesses.

Empowering employees to control healthcare decisions was key to the changes implemented. "We're all like family, so it only makes sense that we'd allow employees to be their own decision makers," said Hrnrcir. "We moved to a health savings account and high-deductible health plan, and focused on employee education and how employees could best use their health insurance to meet their family's needs."

And although the award from HealthPartners is nice, the best reward is increased wellness program participation by employees and lower health care costs for both employees and the co-op.



Employees attend Dakota Electric's annual Wellness Fair. Over 30 vendors participated in the 22nd Wellness Fair in October, which began in 1994 with two vendors. This popular event includes flu vaccinations, biometric screenings and other health and wellness tests and information.

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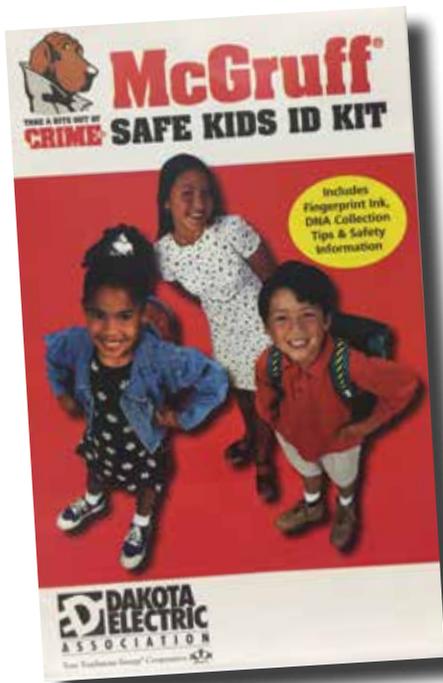
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McGruff safety kits prepare families for the worst



It's our worst nightmare: a missing child. But families can be prepared, thanks to McGruff Safe Kids Identification kits.

Dakota Electric Association provides local law enforcement agencies throughout Dakota County, Northfield and Cannon Falls with McGruff identification kits each year. Police officers distribute the kits to classrooms if a teacher makes a request. A visit by a police officer presents a good opportunity for children to learn about public safety from a respected source.

"The police departments are always glad to get these kits," said Brenda Kadlec, who manages the McGruff safety kits program for Dakota Electric. "They tell me this is an important service Dakota Electric provides to our communities and families. We normally donate about 1,800 kits each year, but this year we've already donated more than 3,000."

The National Crime Prevention Council endorses the McGruff kits, which provide a fun way for children to learn about safety. Each kit contains a personal identification section, complete with fingerprinting kit, to help parents keep an up-to-date file on their child.

McGruff Safe Kids ID Kits are available to teachers through their local law enforcement agency. Teachers should contact their local agency to obtain the kits.

SAVE TWICE ON ENERGY-EFFICIENT LIGHTING

1. First, with a rebate from Dakota Electric on CFL or LED bulbs
2. Second, on lower lighting costs for your home

Visit our website for details: DakotaElectric.com/residential/programs/rebates/lighting_rebates



Contact the Energy Experts®
651-463-6243 • www.DakotaElectric.com

Insulate your electric water heater tank

Insulating your water heater can save you energy and money. Super-insulated electric water heaters with an energy factor of .90 or greater typically do not require additional insulation.

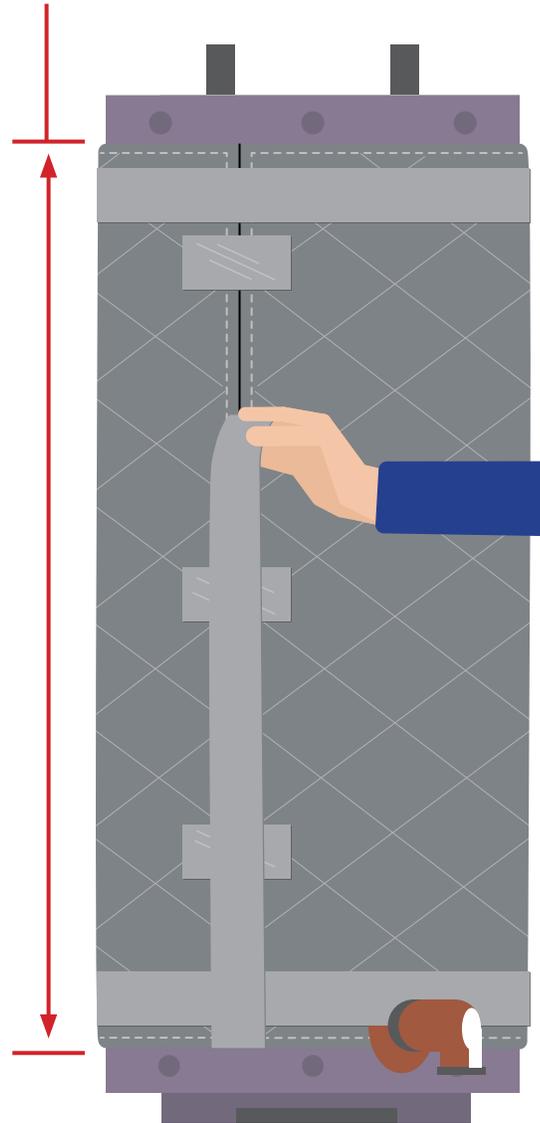
MATERIALS:

- Water Heater Blanket
- Scissors
- Duct Tape

STEPS:

1. Turn off the electric water heater at the breaker panel.
2. Measure the height of the water heater and cut the blanket to fit if necessary.
3. Leave the top of the water heater open.
4. Wrap the blanket around the water heater and temporarily tape it in place. Position the blanket so that the ends do not come together over the access panels on the side of the tank.
5. Mark the areas, then cut holes where controls are located. For electric water heaters, there will be two panels on the side of the tank. Mark the area where the pressure relief valve and pipe are located. This will be a pipe that protrudes from the side of the water heater.
6. Adhere the blanket. Be careful to line up the cut out areas and then tape it permanently in place.
7. Turn the water heater back on.

Cover the whole tank except temperature and pressure (T&P) valve and drain.



Safety Note: Don't set the thermostat above 130°F on the electric water heater with an insulating jacket or blanket – the wiring may overheat.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

Sales tax exemption for electric heat and GSHPs

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 or you have a ground-source heat pump**. 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.



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*In-Home Estimate Needed, Offer Expires November 30, 2016

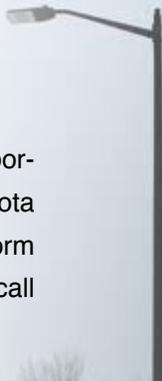


Circuits Quick Clips



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 651-463-6252. Requests must be received by the close of business on December 9, 2016 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 January 5, 2017. The Nominating Committee will meet late afternoon/evening on January 23, 2017, at Dakota Electric's Farmington office to interview candidates for the Board of Directors' election.

Deadline for board candidates is Dec. 9

The following incumbent directors will be seeking re-election to the Board of Directors at Dakota Electric Association's annual meeting on April 27, 2017: John (Jack) DeYoe in District 1, Janet Lekson in District 2, Margaret D. Schreiner in District 3, and Paul Bakken 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 651-463-6252. Completed applications must be received at the Dakota Electric office by the close of business on December 9, 2016 at 4:30 p.m. Candidate interviews will be conducted the evening of January 23, 2017.

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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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