

NEWS

July 2012

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FARMFEST 2012

August 7 - 9, 2012!

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THE Largest Outdoor Agricultural Event in Minnesota!

As a trusted resource with 31 years of proven credibility, Farmfest connects industry leading manufacturers/providers with decision making producers. Visit the Co-op booth #2301 in the Ag tent.

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Show Hours — Tues., Aug. 7 – 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.,
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Thurs., Aug. 9 – 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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- Features highly topical educational and political forums highlighting topics relevant to the issues that face today's farmers.
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- Offers programs and entertainment for the entire family.

Join us for the 31st Annual Farmfest!



Visit us at Farmfest 2012 as we promote electric safety along with other Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives from Minnesota.

Hundreds are killed and thousands are injured each year in the United States as a result of electrically-related incidents. We don't want you to be one of them.

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Ethan Ryberg was our representative on the national Youth Tour



Ethan Ryberg is a student at BOLD High School. From June 16-21, Ethan represented McLeod Cooperative Power on the Washington D.C. Youth Tour. The trip is organized by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Ethan travelled with a coalition of students from Minnesota. In the capital city they joined with students from 42 other states to learn about government, cooperatives, and the history of our country.

When asked about the trip, Ethan's comments were, "It was awesome," and "It was the greatest experience of my life." He really enjoyed visiting the

Newseum and the Smithsonian. The tour participants had a lot of sightseeing jammed into less than a week.

Ethan shared that he came home with a greater appreciation for our elected officials. "I didn't go into it thinking about government but after the trip I have a different perspective; after seeing how difficult the legislators' jobs are," said Ethan.

Ethan is the son of Brian and Sandy Ryberg of rural Buffalo Lake. They are members of McLeod Co-op Power.

See related article and more photos on page 2

Washington D.C. Youth Tour largest ever in 2012

Young people from 43 states spent nearly a week in the nation's capital as guests of NRECA, its member electric cooperatives and their statewide associations.

However, instead of just seeing the sights as tourists, they also spent time talking to members of Congress about important issues affecting their families and the nation's future.

"We have 1,566 of you here this year, with 281 chaperones from co-ops across the country," said Randy Dwyer, NRECA's director of grassroots advocacy, during the Youth Day rally, June 18. "This is the largest Youth Tour ever, and each of you has an important job to do for your families and your communities on Capitol Hill."

The young people joined more than 50,000 high school-aged students who have spent time with lawmakers since 1957 to put a personal face on the benefits rural electrification continues to bring to their communities.

"There are many issues that matter as we move forward as a nation to make sure that we have the electricity we need to be a prosperous and productive country," Dwyer said. "The work these students are here to do is every bit as critical as it was when NRECA assumed sponsorship of the Electric Youth Tour in 1964."

While they wore T-shirts, shorts and jeans much of the week, each of them spent a few hours dressed for business. Instead of just walking around the U.S. Capitol complex, they ventured inside to meet with lawmakers in offices and conference rooms not to hear speeches, but to ask questions and get answers.

"Young people are the future of the nation's electric co-ops, and the time they spent with lawmakers is important to that future," said Brian Cavey, NRECA's vice president of legislative affairs. "We're at a point when very few people can remember the day the lights came on. We need to recapture that passion and that enthusiasm to tell the co-op story."

David Landis, a former Nebraska state senator, has portrayed Sen. George Norris, R-Neb., an early advocate of rural electrification, at dozens of co-op events, including several youth day rallies. This year, he spent more time focusing on the decades-long struggle to bring power to farms and ranches. "Rural electrification was not inevitable," Landis said.

"It was wrung out of the political fabric by strong-minded people who would not give up." Mike Schlappi, a four-time U.S. Paralympics medalist paralyzed by an accidental gunshot at 14 years of age, reinforced the message with his ninth rally appearance.

"They are the future of our country, so I try to inspire them and let them know they matter," Schlappi told ECT.coop. "I share my story with them and hope they can attach it to their lives and create bright futures for themselves and their communities."



BOLD student Ethan Ryberg, and the delegation of Minnesota students he travelled with, are shown at the Lincoln Memorial, meeting with Senator Amy Klobuchar and seeing the sites of Washington D.C. Ethan was the cooperative's representative on the NRECA Washington D.C. Youth Tour.

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All member story ideas and comments are welcome.

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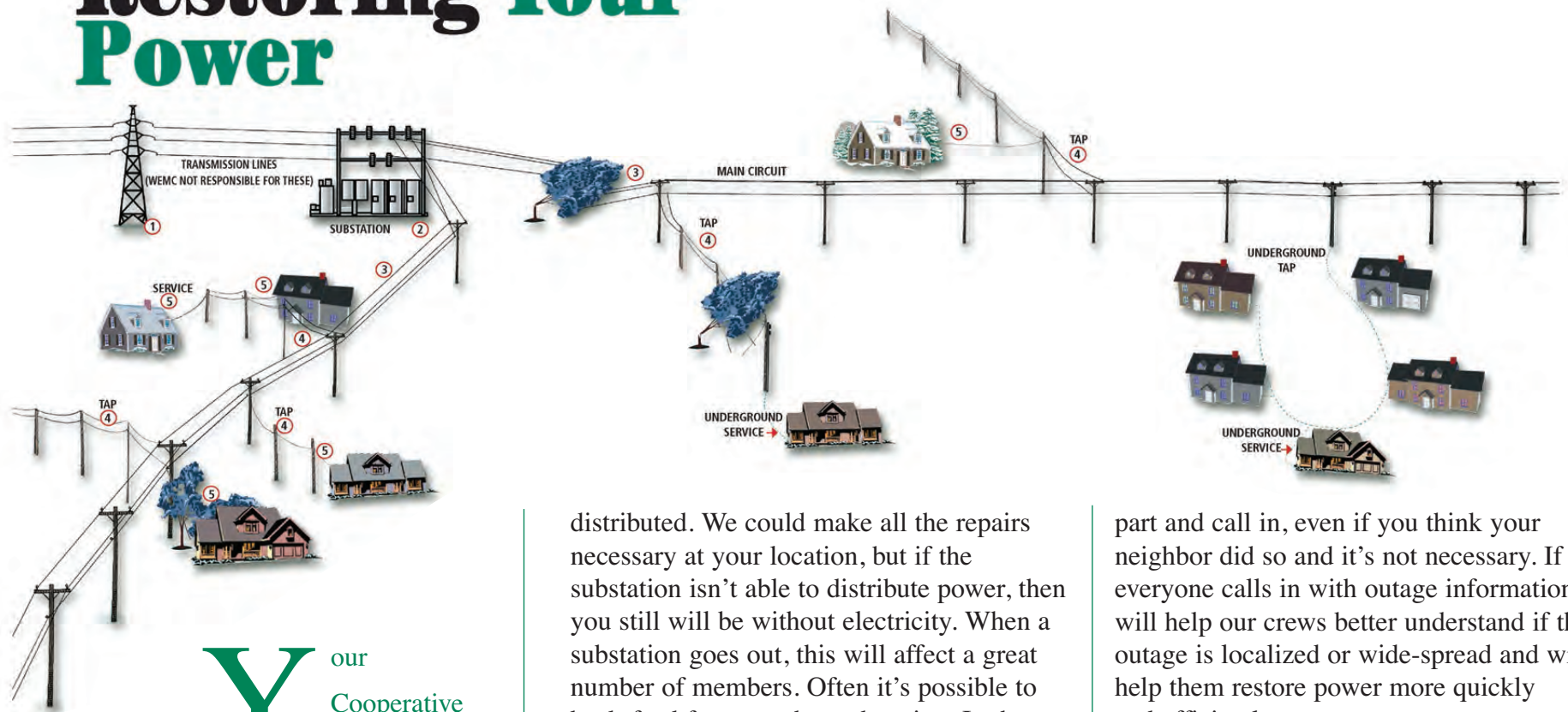
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CAPITAL CREDIT CHECKS THAT CAME BACK IN 2011

We are looking for current mailing addresses of the following former Co-op members who had capital credit checks returned to us by the post office in 2012. These were for 1992 revenue and a portion of 2010 revenue. Please notify our office if you have a current mailing address for anyone listed or you may have the consumer below contact us directly. Thank you for your help.

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Restoring Your Power



Your Cooperative has an

excellent history of safe and reliable power when you need it. However, severe weather like we've experienced these last two summers inevitably leads to outages. When a summer (or winter) storm knocks out power to your home, you may have questions about why it sometimes takes awhile before the power is restored.

There is a systematic power restoration hierarchy that must be followed to restore the most outages in the quickest fashion while maintaining utmost safety for our line crews.

Transmission Lines (1):

Transmission lines bring wholesale electricity into our system and to our substations from power generating plants. Your Cooperative doesn't own or maintain transmission lines. The June 17 storm took down several Xcel/Great River Energy transmission lines, cutting power to two area substations. Waiting for those repairs can take some time, since transmission line crews aren't usually local.

Substations (2):

When wholesale power is brought into the substations, the power is stepped down to a lower voltage and then sent out to transformers at homes and businesses. If there is a problem at a substation from a lightning hit or other malfunction, that must be repaired first before electricity can be

distributed. We could make all the repairs necessary at your location, but if the substation isn't able to distribute power, then you still will be without electricity. When a substation goes out, this will affect a great number of members. Often it's possible to back-feed from another substation. In the case of a wide-spread storm affecting several substations, sometimes this isn't an option.

Main Circuits (3):

Main (primary) circuits carry electricity from the substations out to secondary or tap lines. A substation may be able to transfer electricity but if the primary circuits are down, it won't go anywhere. Primary circuits are the backbone of the Cooperative's system. If there is an issue with a primary, this will affect a large number of members.

Tap Circuits (4):

Taps (or secondary) lines connect to the main circuit and carry electricity to smaller numbers of members. Repairs on taps begin after the main circuits are up and functioning properly.

Service lines (5):

These lines are the circuits that bring power directly to your home or business. Repairs to these wires come last, simply because repairing these lines won't do any good if there is a problem in the tap circuits, main circuit, substation or transmission line.

Sometimes it's possible to be without power even when you're neighbor is restored because you are served by two different tap or secondary lines. Plus, your neighbor's repair may have been a simple fix, while yours isn't. The best option is to remain patient. Our crews take their mission very seriously and work hard to restore every member as quickly as possible.

When a power outage occurs, please do your

part and call in, even if you think your neighbor did so and it's not necessary. If everyone calls in with outage information, it will help our crews better understand if the outage is localized or wide-spread and will help them restore power more quickly and efficiently.

Before you call in an outage:

1 Make sure it isn't your own equipment. The Co-op is only responsible for power up to your meter. If the problem is on your side of the meter, calling out a crew will result in a service charge.

2 Check your fuses to make sure they aren't blown. If you have a circuit breaker, look for any tripped breakers. If there is one or more tripped breakers, push the handle to the "off" position before flipping to the "Reset" position.

3 If your meter is on the pole, check both your service panel and any fuses or breakers located below the meter on the pole.

ALWAYS
CALL
BEFORE YOU
DIG




811

One free, easy call gets your utility lines marked AND helps protect you from injury and expense.

**Safe Digging Is No Accident:
Always Call 811 Before You Dig**

Know what's below. Always call 811 before you dig.
Visit call811.com for more information.



Alarming home security statistics



- Home security statistics tell us that tools used are usually simple; a screwdriver, pliers, pry bars and small hammers are the most common.
- Nearly 66% of all burglaries are residential (home) break-ins.
- The highest percentage of burglaries occur during the summer months. July and August are the most frequent months for break-ins.
- Homes without security systems are up to 300% more likely to be broken into.

How do Home Security Systems lessen my chances of being a victim?

- Burglars will usually bypass a home that they believe has a sophisticated burglar alarm system.
- Home security statistics tell us that when the security system's siren goes off, burglars leave immediately without entering the residence.
- They provide peace of mind that an intruder won't be in the residence when children come home from school or residents come home unexpectedly.
- Home Security Systems can also alert for fire/smoke in a residence, water in the basement, sump pump malfunction, low temperature and power outages.

Heartland Security Services is owned by fourteen Electrical Cooperatives in Minnesota and Iowa, including your Cooperative. For more information, you can access their website at: www.heartlandss.com or call their Melrose office: 888-264-6380

If you've been wondering if a home security system makes sense for you and your family, here are some statistics that you should be aware of:

- A home intrusion occurs every 13 seconds. That's 2.5 million each year nationwide!
- 1 out of 3 residential assaults are the result of a burglary.
- Identity theft is the fastest-growing crime in the U.S. and is often the result of a home burglary where thieves obtained your information.
- 85% of break-ins are from non-professionals who are typically more desperate and dangerous.
- Insurance agencies offer discounts up to 20% when a home security system is installed.
- Thieves prefer easy access, typically in the back of a residence through a door or window.

INDUSTRY News

Clean air in coal country

“Many states rely on computer models to track air quality, but in North Dakota, the Department of Health relies on actual air monitors. These monitors show that the air in Mercer County, N.D., which is home to several power plants and the nation's only commercial synthetic natural gas plant, is as clean as it is anywhere in the state, including Bismarck and Fargo. Both of these North Dakota cities were recognized by the American Lung Association recently as having some of the cleanest air in the United States.

Marie Hoff asserts that “coal kills” (“Natural gas wins, coal loses in 2012,” Page A4, June 23) What I've read about the complexities involved in trying to link exposure to pollution to human health has left me skeptical. So I went another route and contacted the North Dakota Department of Health to see about the longevity of people living in coal country. What I found was that the average length of life in Mercer County in 1980 was 66.1 years, but 30 years later, it had increased to 74.8 years. In Oliver County, home to the Milton R. Young Station and the BNI Coal Mine, the difference is even more dramatic: In 1980, the average age of death was 64.6 years, but that had zoomed to 79 years in 2010.

If Americans really are focused on becoming energy independent, then coal has to remain a part of the nation's energy mix.”

~Signed: Jerry Grosz, Bismarck, N.D.
-Grand Forks Herald

Fly ash for longevity

Believe it or not, the energy that we use to light our homes and the roads that we use every day to travel to our destinations have something in common: fly ash. Fly ash is an end product of the coal combustion cycle that ordinarily would end up in our landfills as waste, but in recent years we have discovered that it can be recycled and applied to transportation construction materials. By adding fly ash to our concrete mixtures, Minnesotans now have more durable roadways that cost less to build.

In Minnesota, fly ash has been used in projects that range from Trunk Highway 169 near Onamia to Highway 14 from Rochester to Mankato to the new 35W Bridge. It's also found in the concrete in the new Twins ballpark, Target Field. Our roads, bridges, airport runways and railway systems are now built with fly ash because it increases the strength of the concrete. Fly ash allows contractors to double the lifespan of roads and build bridges that will stand for 100 years.

Leaders in the energy and construction industries strongly urge our policy makers to swiftly pass a federal transportation bill that includes the fly-ash language. After all, we have critical infrastructure needs, particularly after the devastation caused by flash flooding in the Arrowhead region of the state. Let's make progress in the most common-sense way possible.

Written by, Mark Glaess, General Manager,
Minnesota Rural Electric Association
~Minnpost.com

Simplify home security from this... To this...

Heartland key fobs turn system on and off for easy entrance and activation. Plus, their panic feature quickly calls assistance. Heartland systems can detect smoke, water and temperature changes within your home. Plus, they automatically notify the authorities in the event of an emergency. They can also be customized for livestock, surveillance and medical monitoring. Call 1-888-264-6380 with questions or visit www.heartlandss.com for more information.

Sign up for a monitored system by July 31 and receive a free key fob! (Special not valid with other offers.)

Can stray voltage cause livestock problems?

Stray voltage can cause serious problems in certain confinement livestock systems. Dairymen and hog producers can lose production from their livestock and experience health problems due to small electrical voltages. These voltages are known by several names including tingle voltage, neutral-to-earth voltage, neutral-to-ground voltage, and nuisance voltage. They all refer to low-level voltage between two animal contact points.

The cause of the voltage can be varied and complex. It may be caused by poor load balance, faulty wiring or equipment, improper grounding, or other electrical problems.

One common problem is that the farm operations grow in size, but the electrical service isn't upgraded to grow along with it. Also, electrical systems become obsolete and deteriorate due to improper maintenance.

It must be understood, however, that many factors other than stray voltage may cause behavior, health, and production problems. A careful analysis of all possible causes is necessary if proper corrective procedures are to be found.

A separate section of the National Electrical Code deals with the special requirements for wiring all livestock

buildings. If these are strictly followed and buildings are "up-to-code," the potential for stray voltage problems is greatly reduced. Many older barns have been converted from one use to another and do not meet code requirements. If you are building new livestock facilities, be sure all work is done in accordance with Article 547 of the National Electrical Code.

If you are a member of McLeod Cooperative Power and stray voltage is suspected on your farm, contact the Cooperative. An investigation will be made to determine if a problem is present. Your electrician is also requested to be present so any problems can be noted and corrected. In dairy operations, consulting your milking equipment dealer and local veterinarian is also recommended. They can determine if equipment problems or health problems that may or may not be related to stray voltage are present.



MEF, WF, & clothes washers

Clothes washers must meet minimum efficiency standards in order to be ENERGY STAR labeled, including:

Modified Energy Factor (MEF) is a measurement of the energy efficiency of the washer, taking into account the electric energy, the energy to heat the water, and the size of the tub. ENERGY STAR washers must have an MEF of 2.0 or greater.

Water Factor (WF) is the measurement of how much water a particular model uses, related to the capacity of the machine. ENERGY STAR washers must have a WF of 6.0 or less.



Energy efficient ways to wash and dry your clothes

Purchasing an ENERGY STAR qualified washing machine is one way to improve energy efficiency. Machines that meet the ENERGY STAR standards can save up to 7,000 gallons of water a year and \$550 in operating costs over the lifetime of the machine. The reduced gallons of water used will also save energy use from your well pump, your hot water heater, and from your septic pump or sewage ejector pump, if you have one. So there are additional savings available when you use an ENERGY STAR clothes washer.

Clothes washers that meet ENERGY STAR criteria use next-generation technology to cut energy and water consumption by more than 40 percent compared to conventional washers. There are front loaders that tumble clothes through a small amount of water, redesigned top loaders that flip or spin clothes through

a reduced stream of water, and high-speed spin cycles that extract more water so clothes need less time in the dryer.

The average household does about 400 loads of laundry each year, consuming 13,500 gallons of water. Choosing an ENERGY STAR qualified washer is a great way to cut water use in half and reduce your annual utility bill by an average of \$50. Since clothes dryers all use about the same amount of energy, ENERGY STAR does not label them. However, still the best and most energy-efficient way to dry clothes is to hang them outside on the clothes line. Letting the wind dry the clothes is both free and renewable.



exedesm Satellite High-Speed Internet from ViaSat

exede by ViaSat exceeds any expectations you have of satellite technology and speed! This new service, offered by your Cooperative, can even exceed the average DSL speed! If you long for a faster, more satisfying internet experience, this is what you've been waiting for!

exede offers three packages that all have 12 Mbps download speed and 3 Mbps upload speed! The only difference is the monthly usage amount. Call your Cooperative today for more information and/or to get your name on our installation schedule!

Indulge your need for speed with exede. Call today!



Power inverters are a backup option in a blackout

One way to prepare for a blackout is by purchasing a portable generator for several hundred or thousand dollars. Another way to prepare for a power outage is to purchase an inverter. If you just want to keep a sump pump running or food cold for a short outage, you might consider a less expensive, shoe-box-sized power inverter. It can use a car as a generator, converting direct current (DC) from the car's 12-volt battery system into the alternating current (AC) required by most household devices.

Inverters are sold under a variety of brand names by a variety of retailers. They may vary from \$70 to \$200 or more for a unit that puts out more than 1,500 watts. Even most of the smaller units, like the 900-watt inverters, can usually run a sump pump, refrigerator or freezer. If you want to run multiple appliances, you may have to rotate what you plug in. Inverters can also power lights, electronic chargers and many other 120-volt appliances.

You will probably have to keep the car running because if the inverter draws more from its battery

than the alternator can replenish, you will drain the battery. You should connect directly to the car's battery. The cigarette-lighter adapter is not appropriate. You will need to use one extension cord per device that you power.

The smaller inverters can often be hooked up at the time needed. Larger units may need to be permanently connected. Inverters are commonly used by truckers and construction crews to operate microwaves, recharge power tool batteries, and a host of other uses. Just follow label directions when hooking up the inverter, especially if the power source is not a standard 12-volt battery system.

Although an inverter is not a perfect solution, it might be a handy way to get power to one or two critical 120-volt appliances during an outage. If a heavy, portable generator is too much for you to physically move yourself or if you do not have a ready supply of fuel to keep your generator going, an inverter may be an alternative for you.



Importance of a back-up generator

The Cooperative encourages all members to be prepared for any event that could interrupt the electric supply such as an ice storm, tornado, or other catastrophic failure event. The be prepared list includes having a generator available if you might need one. Members who have back-up generators to use following storms are able to cope better through the outage hours.

Rural residents have to assess their personal needs and whether or not they need a generator. The Co-op encourages members to have a portable generator available to use to keep freezers with meat cold and to operate a sump pump and provide basic lighting.

For members with confinement livestock, members who have to pump water for livestock or milk cows, a portable generator is not a convenient option. It should be part of your operation. Power is occasionally interrupted by Mother Nature or could be by some catastrophic event. The Co-op cannot guarantee continuous, uninterrupted power and in the case of large outages, cannot guarantee how long your power could be out. So please talk to your electrician and look into having a back-up generator wired in to meet your specific farm needs.

Dryer Vent Cleaning is an important chore to occasionally take care of

Your dryer is the number one source of fire in the home. Fires originate most frequently from two places: dryer venting and the lint trap. In order to prevent dangerous lint build-up in your dryer, read and follow these tips:

Lint is created in the dryer as water is removed from clothes during the drying process. This lint will build up in crevices deep down inside the lint filter trap, and all along the dryer vent hose.

Excessive lint build up occurs slowly and gradually. You don't realize it is happening. You think that by cleaning out the lint filter after each use you are doing your job and maintaining the dryer. This is not enough.

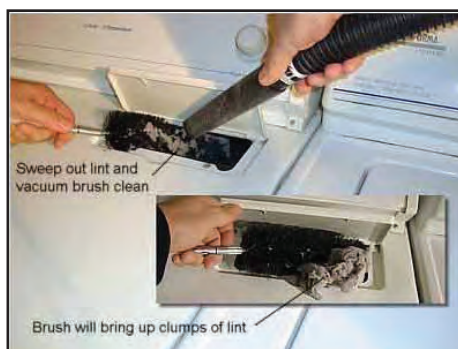
If you notice any of these warning signs, take action immediately to prevent a potentially dangerous situation:

- Clothes take longer and longer to dry
- Clothes don't fully dry
- Clothes are hotter than normal at the end of the drying cycle
- The outside of dryer gets very hot
- The outside exhaust vent flapper

does not open very much indicating low exhaust velocity

- Laundry room becomes more humid than usual
- Burnt smell is evident in the laundry room.

Vacuum Lint Trap Housing Cavity
After cleaning the lint trap, the next area you want to clean is the lint trap



Use Lint Brush to Dig Out Lint Trapped in the Housing and Vacuum Away Any Lint

© 2009 Home-Cost.com

housing cavity; the cavity from which you pulled the screen out. You'll need the long flexible fiberglass handle of a brush kit to get into this area.

- Extend the brush all the way into the bottom of the cavity
- Using a gentle and slight twisting motion, pull out the brush to expose the clumps of lint it has removed

- Using a household vacuum cleaner or shop vacuum, vacuum the brush head clean of any lint
- Repeat this process until there is no more lint that can be removed from the cavity.

Disconnect Sections of Dryer Vent.

Next, disconnect the various sections of the dryer ducting to expose the inside lint for removal.



Some duct cleaning products and approaches try and clean this area from the outside of the home with all of the ducting intact, but if the ducting is accessible, why go through the effort and expense of extremely long-shafted brushes and bags with no guarantee you'll get all the lint? If you just disconnect the vent sections,

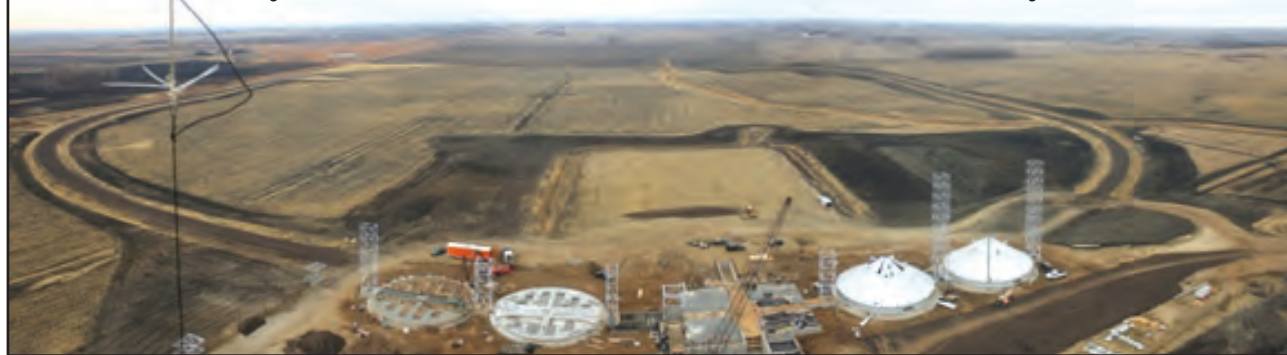
you'll be able to easily and properly clean each section and put it back together correctly.

To properly disassemble and reassemble the duct sections, proceed as follows:

- Unplug the dryer
- Turn off the gas valve at the dryer (if it is a gas dryer)
- Disconnect the duct joint closest to the dryer
- Gently pull the dryer away from the wall
- Disconnect the remaining sections of dryer duct
- Clean out each section using a brush and vacuum
- Once all pipes are clean, reassemble them in order
- Push the dryer back to the wall and reconnect the vent pipe to the back of the dryer
- Turn gas back on if it is a gas dryer. Plug dryer back into outlet.

Not only will these steps protect your home and appliances from a potential fire, but keeping your dryer clean of lint also will help your dryer function more efficiently, saving you money with each and every use.

Shuttle facility construction on track at United Grain Systems, LLC



The new shuttle facility construction just northwest of Brownton on Highway 15 is moving along on schedule. United Grain Systems, LLC is planning to be operational this fall, loading train cars and shipping grain for area farmers.

McLeod Cooperative Power crews have been busy installing underground cabinets, terminating switching and transformer cabinets and making secondary connections. MasTec, Inc, an underground facilities contractor from Shevlin,



Minnesota, has been installing underground conductor for the facility. Later this month, work should begin on construction of a

substation to serve the United Grain Systems load and provide some additional feeder capacity for other MCPA loads in the area.



Ceiling fixtures require proper air sealing

Light fixtures below an unheated attic must be tightly sealed to prevent air from leaking into the attic space. Air leaks not only waste energy, they are the primary cause of ice dams. Methods of sealing include:

Recessed fixtures. New or retrofit recessed fixtures should have airtight cans and gasket seals. Existing recessed lights can have airtight boxes sealed over them from the attic side.

Flush-mount fixtures. Electrical boxes should be sealed with spray foam around any cracks or openings into the attic. **Caution: Disconnect power to circuit until foam cures!**

Preparation work for CapX 2020 transmission line project has begun

The Brookings County-Hampton transmission line will improve reliability throughout southwest and west central Minnesota and the Twin Cities as well as enable access to new generation, including renewable energy resources in the area. The new line will be constructed from a new substation in Brookings County, South Dakota, to a new substation in Hampton, Minnesota.

The project was granted a Route Permit (docket 08-1474) from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MN PUC) on July 15, 2010 for approximately 175 miles of the 240-mile route, or the sections between the Brookings County, South Dakota substation and the new Cedar Mountain substation in Renville County and between the new Helena and Hampton substations. On February 3, 2011, the MN PUC approved the Minnesota River crossing at Belle Plain. This approval finalized the last segment of the project route between the Cedar Mountain substation (Renville County) and the Helena substation (Scott County).

The segment between the Lyon County and Helena substations will be constructed as a double circuit

transmission line. The other segments will be constructed with double circuit capable structures; only a single circuit will be energized after initial construction.

Single pole steel structures will be used to reduce land impacts. Structures are between 140 and 170 feet tall and will be between 800 and 1,000 feet apart. Typically, a 150-foot right-of-way will be required.

How does this affect all of us?

After the project is completed it will increase reliability and access to power supply for all of those utilities along the construction route between South Dakota and the Twin Cities. It will improve reliability for their members/customers also. Currently, the construction has a direct affect upon the members living along the construction route, as they have been negotiating with right-of-way agents for the project regarding their land. For the cooperatives along the route, like McLeod Cooperative Power, it means that we have to convert many miles of overhead line to underground to make room for the CapX2020 overhead transmission line coming through.



MCPA linemen remove three miles of overhead conductor and poles in Bismarck Township of Sibley County to prepare the way for CapX2020 transmission line project. The overhead line is being replaced with an underground line.

MCPA has already removed three miles of overhead line along County Road 10 near Winthrop (Bismarck Township) and is plowing in underground conductor to replace it. As the project moves east through Sibley County there will be several other areas where MCPA will be doing line conversions to prepare for building the transmission line.

The cost of moving our overhead lines to underground is being paid for by the CapX2020 project owners. It is not a direct expense for McLeod Cooperative Power and its members, but will be a shared expense over time by all who use the new transmission line. Owners of the CapX2020 line projects include Xcel Energy, Minnesota Power, Great River Energy, Ottertail Power Company, Minnkota Power Cooperative, Dairyland Power Cooperative, Central Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, Missouri River Energy Services, Rochester Public Utilities, Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency, and WPPI Energy.

