

McLeod Cooperative Power NEWS

February 2014

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Official publication of



www.mcleodcoop.com

Plan to attend the 2014 Annual Meeting

The Cooperative's Annual Meeting is planned for Tuesday, April 8, at the Pla-Mor Ballroom in Glencoe. Please note this change in location from last year. Doors will open at 8:30 a.m. for members wishing to visit with Co-op employees at the

load management, exede high-speed internet, or MainStreet Messenger booths. The business meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. Lunch will follow the meeting. Mark your calendars for April 8.

Distributed Generation should be fair to all members



Electric cooperatives throughout Minnesota have helped our members embrace new technology. Our power suppliers are meeting all mandates enacted in recent years by state government, including providing 25 percent of our energy from renewable sources by 2025. The Minnesota renewable energy standard is one of the most aggressive in the country, and while the price for that energy is higher than traditional sources, we are well on our way to meeting those goals.

There have been new efforts in recent years to expand the use of renewable technologies like solar and wind, which are generally called distributed generation. We support the use of new energy technology, however, when implemented on our system, we also must consider how those technologies will impact rates and reliability for all members. We will help our members install distributed generation if that's their desire, but we also need to ensure the decision of one member doesn't negatively affect their fellow members.

Let's be clear: cooperatives are member-owned and member-governed organizations. We work with members to use energy wisely and pursue projects our

members want to see. We've worked with members to install wind turbines and will work with members to install solar panels. But we feel those installations should be sized to the load they serve, rather than a large wind turbine or solar installation providing more energy than a home or business uses.

Secondly, there are numerous costs that all cooperative members and utility customers pay for, such as the lines and poles we all depend on. So when a member's distributed generation system provides more electricity than they use, it's sold back to us, the local cooperative. Those costs are borne by our fellow members, but the seller still benefits from the use of the lines and poles at no additional cost.

We encourage our state legislators, regulators and policy makers to keep these issues in mind when considering new legislation about net metering and distributed generation. We encourage any new legislation to take the impact on all members into account, and ensure that no undue costs are placed on members who either choose not to install distributed generation or who simply cannot afford to do so.

Satisfaction survey will be in your next bill

Please complete and return by March 14 for a chance to win a \$100 credit

The Cooperative would really like to know how satisfied you are with your electric service. Every few years we send a satisfaction survey to our members to request your opinion. We want your feedback. This is your chance to let us know how you feel about your Cooperative.

All MCPA members will receive a survey in their electric bill in mid-February. Please fill out the survey form. Seal it and put it in the U.S. mail. It is a postage-paid mailer and will go right to the company tabulating the surveys for us.

If you put your name and phone number in the space provided and return your survey by March 14, you will be entered in the drawing for a \$100 electric bill credit.

This survey provides important information to the Cooperative. It shows us how satisfied you are with your rates and service compared to previous years. It shows us where improvement may be needed. It gives you an opportunity to tell us what additional services you would like to see us offer. It helps us meet your needs better. So, please take a few moments and complete your survey.



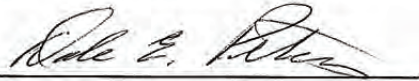
McLEOD COOPERATIVE POWER ASSOCIATION
GLENCOE, MINNESOTA
NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE MEMBERS

TO THE MEMBERS OF McLEOD COOPERATIVE POWER ASSOCIATION:

You are hereby notified that the Regular Annual Meeting of the Members of the McLeod Cooperative Power Association will be held at Pla-Mor Ballroom, 1904 9th Street East in the city of Glencoe, County of McLeod, State of Minnesota, on April 8, 2014, at 10:00 a.m. to take action upon the following matters:

1. The reports of officers, directors and committees.
2. The election of directors of this association for director districts numbers 1, 2 and 3. The polls for the election of directors will be opened at the meeting place at 8:30 a.m. and will be closed at 10:15 a.m. on the date of the meeting, for voting by members who have not returned their ballots by mail.
3. To transact any other business which may properly come before said annual meeting or any adjournment thereof.

Dated at Glencoe, Minnesota this 28th day of January, 2014.



Dale E. Peters, Secretary

Explanation of election process

This is the time of year that we focus on planning for the Annual Meeting as well as the director election process. I believe it is important for you, our members, to understand how this process works and how you can participate in electing a person to represent your district on the MCPA Board of Directors.

The members of McLeod Cooperative Power have, over the years, adopted a democratic and fair process for electing members to the Board of Directors. This procedure is detailed in the Cooperative's Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws. It provides for two names on the ballot, so a director never runs unopposed. It also affords members the opportunity to play a part in the process by volunteering to serve on the Nominating Committee, possibly running for a board seat, and voting to elect candidates from their district.

The Articles and By-Laws allow for each director to be elected by residents of his or her district. This means candidates are elected by their neighbors, usually members living in their township or surrounding townships. Directors are not elected at-large by all the voters from the whole Co-op. This process has served the Cooperative very well.

Members may volunteer to serve on the Nominating Committee for their district. If three members do not volunteer for the Nominating Committee, then the director from that district must find district

members to fill the remaining seats on the committee. The Nominating Committee has the task of selecting two names to appear on the ballot. It is their job to find two qualified candidates even if no one expresses interest to serve. They may choose the incumbent director if running for re-election, any members who express an interest in serving as a director or other members from the district who agree to be a candidate.

Any person who desires to have their name on the ballot, but who has not been selected by the Nominating Committee, can obtain the signatures of 20 MCPA members and submit it to the Cooperative Secretary at least 25 days prior to the Annual Meeting. This is how a member may apply by Nomination By Petition to be a candidate. So using this method, we sometimes have had three or more candidates competing for one seat in a district election.

Director candidates cannot be close relatives of current directors or employees. This protects anyone from having an unfair advantage. Each candidate must be a member in good standing and possess leadership qualities.

All active members in voting districts are mailed a ballot before the Annual Meeting. Members may cast their ballot by mail, return it to the Co-op in person or bring it to the Annual Meeting. Votes are counted by the Nominating Committee under the supervision of the Co-op's legal counsel.

Last day for nominations by petition is March 14

Cooperative members residing in Districts 1, 2, or 3 may petition to have their name added to the slate of candidates for the 2014 director election in their district. To have another name, in addition to the two candidate names selected by the nominating committee, on the ballot, you may file a nomination by petition.

The petition must be signed by 20 or more McLeod Cooperative Power Association electric members residing in your district and it must be submitted to the Cooperative secretary not less than 25 days prior to the Annual Meeting. The last day that a petition can be submitted is March 14, 2014.

The Cooperative secretary shall post at the Cooperative office the names of additional nominations and also persons selected by the nominating committee.

District 1 includes: Winsted, Helen and Bergen Townships in McLeod County, and Victor Township in Wright County.

District 2 includes: Hassen Valley, Sumter, and Penn Townships in McLeod County.

District 3 includes: Acoma and Hutchinson Townships in McLeod County and Ellsworth and Collinwood Townships in Meeker County.

Board of Directors

District 1
Oria Brinkmeier, **Lester Prairie**

District 2
Dale Peters, Secretary-Treasurer
Brownton

District 3
Roger Karstens, Vice President
Hutchinson

District 4
Doug Kirtz, **Hector**

District 5
Allan Duesterhoeft, **Hutchinson**

District 6
Lester Ranzau
Glencoe

District 7
Randy Hlavka
Silver Lake

District 8
Keith Peterson, President
Hector

District 9
Gerald Roepke, Asst. Secretary-Treasurer
New Germany

McLeod Cooperative Power News

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Editor: Sue Pawelk

The McLeod Cooperative Power News is the official member publication of McLeod Coop Power Association and focuses on our members, programs and events.

All member story ideas and comments are welcome.
Send to Sue Pawelk at the address shown.

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Nominating Committee working on slate of director candidates for 2014



Seated l to r: Roger Draeger, Wilbert Becker, Glen Sladek, and Mavis Weber.
Standing l to r: Merle Eggersgluess, Kathleen Hanneman, Janet Dolezal, Charles Mathews, and Francis Burch.

The members of the nominating committee from Districts 1, 2 and 3 met on January 30 and will meet again on February 13 to finish their work of selecting candidates to run for director elections in their respective districts. Serving on this year's nominating committee are from District 1: Charles Mathews of Glencoe,

Mavis Weber of Winsted, and Francis Burch of Young America, District 2: Glen Sladek of Hutchinson, Wilbert Becker of Hutchinson, and Roger Draeger of Brownton, District 3: Janet Dolezal of Hutchinson, Merle Eggersgluess of Hutchinson, and Kathleen Hanneman of Hutchinson.

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Power Line Worker Scholarship Offered

Students accepted into one of Minnesota's three power line technology programs for the 2014-15 school term, may apply for a \$500 scholarship. The Cooperative will award one \$500 scholarship for a local student.

If you are graduating from a high school in McLeod, Renville, Sibley or Carver County or are a resident of one of those four counties, and have been accepted into the line worker program at Minnesota West in Jackson, Minnesota State in Wadena or Rosemount Technical College in Rosemount, you are eligible to apply. Applications and informative career brochures are available by calling the Cooperative at 1-800-494-6272. Applications must be completed and returned by April 17, 2014.

December Outage Summary

During December there were 29 outages reported on the Cooperative's system.

- The largest outage was north of Hutchinson on Friday, December 13 about 11:30 p.m. It was caused by a line conductor that broke. The outage lasted for just over two hours and affected 148 members.
- The second largest outage was on Friday, December 20 at 10:35 a.m. A connector or clamp failed causing 70 members north of Winthrop to be without power for just over one hour.
- The third largest outage was on Friday, December 27 at 4:05 p.m. It affected 42 members south of New Germany. The outage lasted just over one hour and was caused by trees that had grown into the line.

Most outages affect only one or two members. They are frequently caused by small animals, trees in the line, equipment failure, or motor vehicle/machinery accidents. Larger outages affecting hundreds of members at a time are usually caused by transmission outages, storms, equipment failure to substation equipment, or accidents.

Restoration time on weekend and evening outages, when line crews are called out from home, usually take a little longer to get back on than outages when crews are already out working on the project.

Dual Fuel Program was a Great Choice for the Lickfelts

Ryan and Trudy Lickfelt of rural Hutchinson looked at a lot of options when they were getting ready to update their heating and cooling system. Their 2,600 square foot stick-built rambler that they share with their children Cullin, 14 and Kiley, 12, was built in the late 1960's. They had renovated the entire home from top to bottom years ago, but had left their fuel oil furnace and central air conditioner as is.

"At the end of 2012 we made the change," Ryan said. "Fuel oil was getting expensive. The system just wasn't as efficient as we knew it could be, so it was time to make a change."

After talking with friends and the Co-op, they settled on an air source heat pump, supplemented by an electric plenum heater and a new propane furnace as a back-up heating source. The back-up was needed because the Lickfelts went on the Co-op's dual fuel program. The heat pump would heat the home with 200 percent efficient electricity. It's super efficient because an air source heat pump doesn't create heat; it pulls heat from the outside air and brings it into the home. A heat pump is an extremely good source of efficient heat until the outside air temperature gets below about 20 degrees. At that time, the electric plenum heater is used to provide supplemental heat as needed.



This compact unit combined with the air source heat pump unit that sits outside, heats the Lickfelt's 2,600 square foot home for \$150.00 a month on average last winter.



Ryan Lickfelt and his family raise whitetail deer as a hobby. Bottle-fed and raised part-time in the family's home, the deer are tame and friendly. This is Jewel, who will still walk into the house if allowed to.

As part of the dual fuel program, the Lickfelts allow the Co-op to control, or pause, their electric heat during times of high peak electric demand, such as extreme temperatures, people coming home from work and turning on the lights, T.V., etc. That's when the back-up heating source is needed. It automatically starts up when the control period begins. The Lickfelt family doesn't notice when they are being controlled because the whole process is automatic and there is no drop in temperature in the home.

Because they went on the dual fuel program, their electricity rate is about half of what the normal residential rate is. That equates to paying about \$1.68/gallon for fuel oil. At the time the Lickfelts switched to dual fuel, fuel oil was selling at about \$3.60/gallon. As of January 24 of this year, propane is selling for \$4.66 on average in Minnesota. The Lickfelts filled their 500-gallon propane tank once when they switched to the new system at the end of 2012 and haven't filled it since.

"We use very little propane for heating during control," Ryan said. He is pleased that their average monthly heating bill last year was about \$150.

The Lickfelts knew they needed a new



The couple bought a white doe and she gave birth to white twin bucks.

central air unit as well. By choosing an air source heat pump, they got two appliances in one; it also provides central air conditioning in the summer, by reversing the transfer process that takes place in the winter. In the summer, the heat pump pulls heat from the inside of the home and discharges it outside.

"Our old air conditioner was so inefficient and expensive to run, we only turned it on when it was so sticky we couldn't sleep," Ryan said. "Now, the heat pump costs so little to run that we have the air on all the time in the summer."

The Lickfelts have been happy with their system and would recommend it to others.

"I remember when our fuel oil furnace would turn on we'd get so hot, then it would cool off," Ryan added. "Now our home's temperature is much more consistent."

Animals and Power Don't Mix

What do birds, squirrels, and power outages have in common? Animals trigger 11 percent of power outages across the nation. At your Co-op, line workers go to great lengths to keep animals away from electricity.

Animal Attraction

Electricity seeks the fastest route to the ground. Utility pole insulators keep power flowing safely in your neighborhood, but unwitting squirrels offer high-voltage electricity a way around insulators. If a squirrel doesn't jump far enough, a powerful electric current—up to 12,500 volts—makes the squirrel a conduit to the ground. The squirrel does not survive.

If a squirrel's body falls to the ground, the power blinks but stays on. If it falls into equipment, like a transformer, safety measures shut off power and your Co-op sends a lineman to restore power. Squirrels are the main culprit, but they're not alone. Opossums, raccoons, foxes, snakes, birds, and other animals trigger outages, too.

Animal attraction to power infrastructure hurts animals and leaves frustrated Co-op members in the dark. Clean up, recovery, and restoring power costs utilities between \$15 and \$18 million a year, estimates Tyco Electronics, a utility equipment firm.

Grid Guardians

No one wants wildlife hurt. Eighty percent of electric co-ops, public power districts, and public utility districts install animal guards to protect equipment and wayward animals.

Your Co-op has made power reliability a priority for our members. Animal guards are one way to achieve this. They are not foolproof, but the measures help drive down the number of outages caused by animals.

Another option is building habitats to help animals and power safely co-exist.

Osprey and other birds of prey don't use power lines as highways. Instead, they're attracted to poles as perches. Raptors often nest on top of utility poles—a dangerous spot. An osprey's nearly five-foot wingspan can form a conduit between an energized power line and a neutral wire. Like squirrels, these birds may get hurt as high-voltage electricity looks for a path to the ground.

Some generation and transmission cooperatives like Great River Energy, as well as several distribution Co-ops encourage birds to settle on man-made nest platforms.

In some cases, burrowing animals also can chew on underground cables, causing faults that have to be located and repaired. Underground faults are even more time-consuming than overhead faults.



Critters of all kinds can cause a power outage, even a colony of wasps that invade a transformer.



Squirrels are the most common animal to cause a power outage. Protecting wildlife as well as keeping power reliable is the Co-op's goal in installing animal guards.



Building specialized pole-top nesting platforms for ospreys and other raptors helps keep these magnificent birds off of dangerous live powerlines.



Animal guards come in all shapes and sizes. Pole-style guards in our area often look like this. While not foolproof, these guards go a long way toward protecting squirrels and reducing outages.

Industry News

More city buildings around the metro are sprouting solar panels

They weren't easy votes, but Crystal has joined a growing number of metro-area cities that are installing solar collectors on municipal buildings in hopes of saving money by using renewable energy that also reduces pollution. The City Council voted 4 to 3 last spring to install about 40 kilowatts' worth of solar panels on the Community Center roof, which began making electricity in July. After seeing how it worked, the council again voted 4 to 3 last fall to install another 80 kilowatts of panels on City Hall and on another building by May, said Public Works Director Tom Mathisen. The projects will cost about \$1 million altogether, with a \$66,000 down payment on the latter two. Champlin has agreed to a similar deal with no upfront costs for \$1.2 million worth of solar equipment that is expected to produce 146 kilowatts when installed on four city buildings by April 30, said City Engineer John Cox. He estimated the panels would produce about 1 percent of the electricity used in the buildings.

The two suburbs will join Minneapolis, St. Paul and about 30 other Minnesota communities that have installed solar equipment on city property, according to Xcel Energy, which provides rebates on modest-sized solar panels. The energy produced by the panels helps Xcel meet a state law revised last year to require utilities to buy or generate 1.5 percent of their power from solar sources by 2020.

But in some cities, going solar, even with generous subsidies, isn't as easy as soaking up sunshine. Some officials question whether fossil fuel emissions from power plants are really warming up the atmosphere enough to cause global warming. Some are dubious about long-term projected savings from using solar energy. Others, like Crystal Mayor Jim Adams, think it is unfair to use state and federal tax dollars or corporate rebates to subsidize a local solar power project. Although the city's \$66,000 down payment is small, Crystal's total solar cost of about \$1 million "is fiscally irresponsible because that money comes from citizens' state and federal taxes and Xcel funds," he said.

~Star Tribune

MREA'S Glaess Retires

After more than 20 years leading the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA), Mark Glaess retired at the end of 2013. Glaess succeeded Leon Barnier as the fourth MREA CEO in 1991.

"These past 35 years representing co-ops and public power districts in Nebraska and Oregon, with the past 22 years in Minnesota, have been among the happiest times of my life," Glaess said in a note to members. "Each of you have inspired me, made me think, and made me laugh, making me ever-so-ever appreciative of, and to, each of you."

Glaess has served on the National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative board of directors and is a past president of the Rural Electric Statewide Managers Association.

As MREA seeks its next CEO, retired East Central Energy CEO Garry Bue is holding the position in the interim.

~Great River News

Spend your July vacation with McLeod Co-op Power

Join us for the Coal Creek Tour July 28-30, 2014. The Cooperative will be hosting a three-day tour via motor coach to central and western North Dakota. Tour stops will include Coal Creek Generating Station and Falkirk Mine and a night in Bismarck. The second night will be spent in Medora, taking in the Medora Musical and eating at the Pitchfork Fondue.

Call to make your reservations today. Double occupancy is \$400 per person or single occupancy \$500. Cost includes two night's hotel, most meals, motor coach transportation, and tickets to the musical/pitchfork fondue. Call the Co-op at 1-800-494-6272 and ask for Katie.



MCPA News Ads — Free want ad service for members. Please limit your ad to nine words. Use the coupon printed below or available at McLeod Cooperative's front desk to submit your ad. Ads will be printed for one month only. Please submit a new ad if you want it published more than one month. Include your name and address, which will be used for identification purposes only. Ads must be received by **February 28** to be included in the March issue. Thank you!

Please run this ad in the next MCPA News

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P.O. Box 70, Glencoe, MN 55336

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- For Rent
- For Sale
- Wanted

For Sale - Miscellaneous

- Two wood twin headboards \$65/each. Hardly used. 320-587-8232
- Leather theater style rocker recliners w/console \$500 firm. 320-395-2596
- New large power lift recliner, blue cloth material. 507-237-2619
- 96,000 BTU oil furnace tank & acc. Great condition. 952-955-2414
- Peacock feathers \$5/ piece. 320-327-2577
- Black Hills Gold money clip 12k gold on basemetal. 320-587-7292

For Sale - Farm

- Herford beef quarters. No drugs or hormones. 320-587-8711
- 4X5 corn stalk bales \$25. Can deliver 320-224-8600
- Stuck motor from model 60 MH combine BI \$100. 320-365-4870

Wanted

- A.C. Gilbert erector sets or just parts from 1913-1962. 320-587-9249

For Rent

- House for rent. 4 bdrm/ wet bar/Jacuzzi/sauna/ deck \$1,100/month. 320-310-3176
- Club house rentals for events. 320-395-2258
- Branson vacation rental. One bedroom condo \$450/weekly. 320-779-0015

Rebate program for 2014

Ground Source Heat Pumps (controlled or uncontrolled)

Residential \$400/ton

Commercial \$400/ton

Air Source Heat Pump

14.5 SEER \$480

15 SEER \$580

16 SEER or higher \$630

Ductless Air Source Heat Pump..... \$300

Storage Space Heating \$ 40/kW

ECM Motor \$100

ENERGY STAR Dehumidifier..... \$ 25

Storage Water Heating* \$300

ENERGY STAR Refrigerator with recycling of old unit..... \$ 75

ENERGY STAR Freezer with recycling of old unit \$ 75

*Marathon or equivalent energy rated heater that is being installed on the Storage Program.

There is a \$2,000 maximum rebate per member. Rebates are always on a first come, first serve basis so please turn your paperwork in promptly. Rebate forms are available for download from the Co-op's web site. Air source heat pump rebate form should be completed by the installing contractor.

Rebates for high efficiency heat pumps will continue to require installation by a "registered contractor" which has been designated as a quality installer and is listed on the hvaceducation.net web site. A list of all "registered contractors" in Minnesota is on our Cooperative web site at www.mcleodcoop.com. There will be no rebates on central air conditioners in 2014. The Cooperative encourages any member replacing their air conditioner to upgrade to an ENERGY STAR rated air source heat pump.



There will be no rebates in 2014 for dishwashers, clothes washers, or refrigerator/freezer units without recycling.

These want ads are designed to help members buy items from or sell items to other members, or rent their property to members. They are not designed to advertise services or for-profit business pursuits. That is why we do not offer a services column and do not accept advertisements for commercial businesses.

to, any item posted. The party posting any advertisement assumes complete liability for the content of, and all replies to, any advertisement and for any claims against MCPA as a result thereof, and agrees to indemnify and hold MCPA harmless from all costs, expenses, liabilities and damages resulting from, or caused by, any advertisement or reply thereto.

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Herd of Hope for Needy S.D. Ranchers

By Steven Johnson | ECT Staff Writer
Published: January 21st, 2014

On a converted dairy farm in western South Dakota, a helping hand from electric cooperatives is going a long way.

Since an early October storm wiped out nearly 22,000 cattle in the region, the farm has turned into a flurry of bovine activity as a staging ground for Heifers for South Dakota, an all-volunteer program that matches donations of livestock with needy ranchers.

"I don't think anybody had any idea of how big it was going to get," said Tom Brunner, who operates the facility and is a director at Butte Electric Co-op, Newell, S.D., and the South Dakota Rural Electric Association.

"At the start, we figured we'd just get a few head of cattle and go from there. The outpouring of support has just been remarkable," he said.

Almost 180 cattle and calves were at Brunner's feed lot as of mid-January. That's in addition to 714 cattle that have new homes, as Heifers for South Dakota's aims for 1,000 cattle to more than 100 families and individual ranchers.

In December, the NRECA Board authorized CEO Jo Ann Emerson to donate \$35,000 to feed cattle at the lot through May. Emerson presented the check at a Jan. 16 ceremony, during a meeting of the South Dakota statewide board.

"I'm very proud that NRECA and Touchstone Energy® were able to lend a helping hand to all those who lost herds in the early fall snowstorm," she said. "This is an inspiring example of neighbor reaching out to neighbor."

HOPE AMID DESPAIR

Mark Hofer, NRECA director from South Dakota, said it's difficult to explain the special attachment that farmers and ranchers have with their land and livestock.

"Whether you call it a farm or a ranch, it's something that these people have dealt with all of their lives. They've taken care of the ranch; it's produced for them. The ranch has taken care of them. It's supplied their needs. Even though it's a physical thing, there still is that bond and that connection," said Hofer, a board member at Central Electric Cooperative, Mitchell, S.D.

The blizzard, named Atlas, ripped at the heart of that relationship. It started Oct. 4, six weeks earlier than the usual pattern, dropped four feet of snow on parts of South Dakota and trapped herds that were grazing in summer pastures.

The animals had not yet grown their winter coats, or headed to more sheltered winter pastures. The ground was still soft, and cattle became stuck in the mud and froze to death amid sheets of snow. Dick Johnson, CEO of West River Electric Association in Wall, S.D., called it "our Katrina."

(This was the storm that you read about in the November issue of MCPA News, when four linemen from McLeod Co-op Power assisted with power restoration efforts in South Dakota).

Horrible as the storm was, the circumstances were even worse. Five days before the storm, livestock disaster assistance programs were thrown into limbo as the Farm Bill expired and the federal government closed.



A flyover near Faith, S.D., shows some of the thousands of cattle that died in a freak October snowstorm. (Photo By: AP Photo/KOTA-TV) Donations of heifers are helping South Dakota ranchers recover from a storm that left nearly 22,000 cattle dead.

The storm struck just as ranchers were preparing to put calves on the market for up to \$1,000 each; the South Dakota Stockgrowers Association put direct and indirect losses from Atlas at more than \$2 billion.

"Ranchers, especially the younger ones, were at the end of summer and looking to sell their calves to pay down their notes. So the storm took the cattle — the factory — and the calves, the production," said Hofer, who outlined the dilemma at the NRECA Board's December 2013 meeting.

Almost immediately, Ty and Rosalie Linger, ranchers in Miles City, Mont., sprang into action. The storm hit during a weekend and, within about 72 hours, they decided to donate one of their best bred heifers and start Heifers for South Dakota.

From that single seed, a field sprouted. A day later, they had pledges of two heifers and a filly. A week later, they were up to 150. "It has been so cool to watch," Rosalie said. "People's faces just light up. God was definitely a huge part of this. We could not have done it on our own."

The Lingers' Heifers for South Dakota has expanded into support from close to a dozen states. The South Dakota Rural Electric Association has contributed another \$5,000 to the cause and Touchstone Energy Cooperatives also have supported it.

That's helped farmers like Jacob and Melanie Rausch in Hermosa, S.D., who were the first recipients of 23 bred cows and heifer calves. Jacob and Melanie lost 44 of their 58 cows, and his family farm lost about 190 cows and 80 calves.

FEEDING THE HUNGRY

Brunner, a former South Dakota legislator, got involved early on when he heard about the relief effort. Several years ago, he turned his dairy farm into a custom feed lot with an Environmental Protection Agency permit to feed 2,000 cattle.

"With my experience in the feed lot business, it looked like they were going to run into a logistical nightmare with all these different cattle, different brands and different ownership," he said.

His lot was ideally situated - to the east were ranchers who suffered losses; to the west were prospective donors. The result - a Grand Central Station for just about all of the donated cattle.

"We pretty much took over his yard for a while," Rosalie laughed.



NRECA CEO Jo Ann Emerson presents a donation authorized by the NRECA Board to Shane Labrier of heifers for South Dakota. (Photo By: Brenda Kleinjan)

With several available pens, the cows' progress can be carefully monitored as they are shuffled in and out to their new homes. The NRECA donation will meet costs that can't be covered through volunteer donations of labor or land.

"It's kind of what we do anyway," Brunner said. "We know what we want the cattle to look like in the spring and the kinds of gains we want to make, and so we feed accordingly."

He said the donations have had a measurable effect on distressed ranchers, many of whom were his constituents during his eight years in the state House of Representatives. "They were at the point where they lost enough that the bankers were not going to look favorably on them," he said.

So far, Heifers for South Dakota has sent about \$1.25 million in livestock to strapped ranchers. Rosalie Linger said the drive anticipates delivering another 60 head of cattle during the weekend of Jan. 25.

A rancher in Virginia plans to ship another 40 to the restocking effort, and monetary contributions will help the program buy more high-quality heifers, she added.

Hofer noted much of the relief is going to co-op members, since the affected farms and ranches lie mostly in rural areas.

"It's not an intention to make any rancher whole 100 percent," said Hofer, who plans to keep the NRECA Board updated with pictures that illustrate the progress of the cattle. "But these are co-op people out here and they know other co-op people care about them."

The program still is accepting donations; money will be needed to transport calves in the spring.

New service call rates to take effect March 1

New service call charges were approved by the MCPA Board of Directors at the January meeting. Most miscellaneous fees and service charges did not change from 2013, however some had to be raised to keep up with increases in labor and transportation costs.

The fee to reconnect a delinquent account between 7:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. on a regular business day was increased from \$60 to \$100. Service calls by the line crew for problems that are found to be on the member's side of the meter were increased to \$200 from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday,

\$300 from 3:30 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. Monday through Friday, and \$400 for Sundays and holidays. Electrician time will be billed out at \$59 per hour plus a vehicle charge.

The meter reading fee increased from \$15 to \$25. Because nearly all meters are read by the automated meter reading system, this affects very few members. A few other charges for meter testing at the request of the member, electrical equipment and miscellaneous services also changed. Members may inquire at the Co-op if they have specific questions on service charge changes.

Spring 2014 Scholarships to Ridgewater College

The Cooperative donates funds from unclaimed capital credits to the Ridgewater College Foundation. The Foundation awards scholarships to students from the four-county area served by MCPA. Students have to either have graduated from a high school in one of the communities within our service area or be a current resident of the area.

Students awarded a \$500 scholarship from MCPA this spring are **Shelby May of Willmar, Kimberly Condon of Winsted, Marshelle Dultamel of North St. Paul, Kelly Mickolich of Hutchinson, Aaron Grave of Hutchinson and Currin Elling of Hector.**

Operation Round Up donation applications are being accepted until March 1



Pictured are past recipients of Operation Round Up donations including the Tim Orth Jamboree, American Red Cross and Buffalo Creek BMX



Community and civic groups, emergency responders and other 501(c)3 non-profit organizations are welcome to

apply to McLeod Cooperative Power's Operation Round Up Trust for donation assistance. The trust is able to donate funds to worthy local projects in McLeod, Renville, Sibley or Carver Counties.



Funding is from the generosity of electric cooperative members who round up their electric bills.

Application forms are available by calling the Cooperative at 1-800-494-6272. Applications for funding must be completed and returned to the Cooperative by March 1, 2014.

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NRECA
A Technician Energy Cooperative

High school juniors and seniors have until March 3, 2014 to apply for the Cooperative's Washington Youth Tour competition. One local youth will win an all-expense-paid trip to Washington D.C. June 14-19, 2014 from the Cooperative.

Just call the Co-op at 1-800-494-6272 for an informational packet. Applications must be received by March 3, 2014. Students complete a questionnaire and application to qualify. They need only attend a high school in or reside in McLeod, Renville, Sibley or western Carver County.

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