

Current Matters



Nobles Cooperative
Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



March 2021
Vol. 13 Issue 3

Frigid winter weather impacts the nation

No rolling blackouts were considered in our area

Historic winter weather drove demand for natural gas and electricity to such an extent that some regions of the country experienced rotating outages. This understandably caught the attention of members concerned about reliability. The following details show our wholesale power supplier, Great River Energy's (GRE's) response to the polar vortex.

Reliability during polar vortex

- GRE's system is designed to provide (28-57-17) reliable electricity in extremely cold weather.

- GRE and Midcontinent ISO (MISO) North performed well throughout the 2021 polar vortex. GRE's facilities of coal, gas, fuel oil and wind performed as planned for extreme weather events.

- The situations in the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), in Texas (ERCOT) and MISO South were much different due to their resources and interaction with the larger grid. SPP initiated the first rolling blackouts in its history, while ERCOT did so for the first time in a decade. For MISO South, it was the second load-shedding event in less than six months.

- At no point during the polar vortex were rolling blackouts considered in

MISO North.

Reliability with additions of renewables

- All GRE power plants, including Coal Creek Station, operated well.

- In the future, we will ensure reliable operations even without Coal Creek Station by maintaining and running peaking plants on both natural gas and fuel oil.

- GRE's peaking capacity supports our planned transition to a largely renewable portfolio, while meeting MISO's requirements. GRE has backup fuels at almost all of its peaking plants that enable operation at all hours.

- GRE's robust demand response programs played an important role during the polar vortex, allowing (40-20-13) member-owners to shave peaks and help ensure reliability while managing costs.

- As the electric system evolves, so will MISO's reliability requirements. MISO has been a leader in establishing and monitoring requirements for utilities that ensure the region has sufficient energy, capacity and transmission. MISO studies the regional grid's needs continuously and GRE is a key part of those discussions.

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Energy saving tip

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips to save energy. Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features that are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use (also known as phantom load).

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) estimates that the average home loses \$200 annually to energy wasted by phantom load.

Source: www.nrel.gov



Mark your calendar

Mar. 17 St. Patrick's Day
Mar. 25 Electric bills due
Apr. 6 Annual Meeting

Find your location number and win a \$10 credit

If you find your location number (as it appears on your monthly electric bill) in this issue, you will receive a \$10 credit.



Manager's Message



Save on energy costs with an ASHP



Proposed changes to articles of incorporation and bylaws



General Manager
Adam Tromblay

OPEN THE TAP TO SAVINGS

Take 50% off water-saving products at [energywisemnstore.com!](http://energywisemnstore.com)

Water-saving products, such as showerheads and faucet aerators, are engineered to use less water without affecting your water stream or pressure. They help you use less water, save energy and lower your utility bills.

Offer valid March 3 through April 28, 2021.

No coupon code necessary. While supplies last.

ENERGY WISE  MN

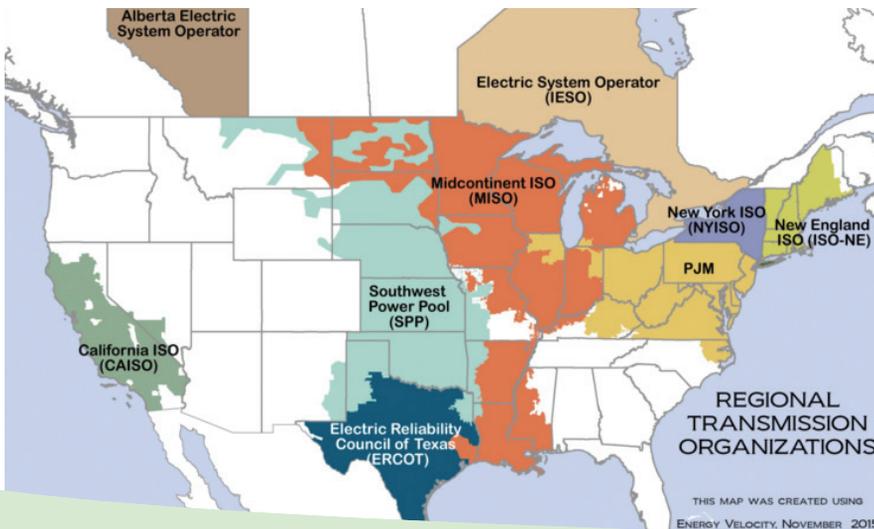
Rolling blackouts: Could they happen here?

The Midwest electric grid looks quite different from Texas, which experienced widespread rolling blackouts in February. Most utilities in Minnesota are part of a (506-37-197) much larger and geographically diverse energy market coordinated by MISO.

The majority of Minnesota is located in MISO's northern region which includes generating resources using a wide variety of fuel sources and technologies, both conventional and renewable. Power plants in the northern states are also designed to handle very cold weather.

At no point during the polar vortex were rolling blackouts considered in the MISO North region. MISO works aggressively with its member utilities to plan for emergencies, and rolling blackouts are only used as a last resort to prevent more widespread outages.

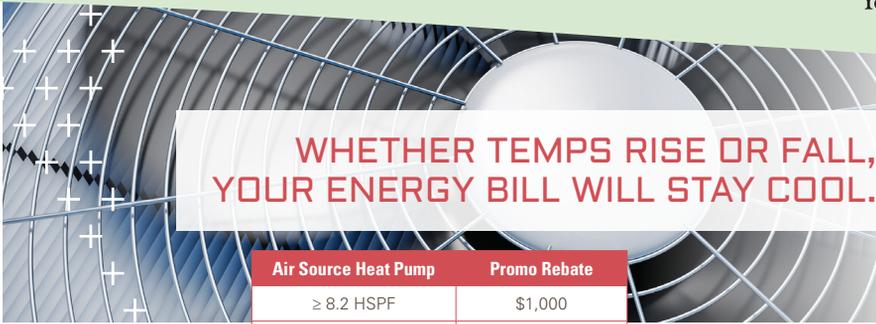
Weather like Minnesota experienced in February certainly presents challenges on the electric grid, but utilities prepare for it. Planning for these kinds of events by NCE, GRE and MISO North helped ensure resources and resiliency practices were ready for the challenge.



Impacts of polar vortex cont. from page 1

More details

- The grid will increasingly be served by wind and solar.
 - This change is being driven by several factors, including economics and consumer preferences.
 - This poses complex challenges to electric system reliability throughout all regions of the country, including the MISO region.
 - With this change, the importance of capacity from fossil fuel generation remains, even while more energy needs are served by renewables.
- As the independent system operator, MISO takes responsibility, along with its members, to maintain electric reliability by ensuring the region's grid has sufficient energy, capacity and transmission.
 - Capacity to meet peak demands is a requirement for MISO members; it is not an option.
 - GRE will continue to meet those capacity requirements.
- As MISO's requirements change, GRE will adapt along with neighboring utilities to maintain reliability.



**WHETHER TEMPS RISE OR FALL,
YOUR ENERGY BILL WILL STAY COOL.**

Air Source Heat Pump	Promo Rebate
≥ 8.2 HSPF	\$1,000
≥ 9.0 HSPF	\$2,000

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS UP TO **\$2,000** REBATE WHEN YOU INSTALL A QUALIFYING, ENERGY-SAVING AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMP!

Air source heat pumps provide **home cooling and supplemental heating**, using **72% less electricity** than conventional air conditioners and furnaces.

Visit energywisemn.com/promotions to learn more about the rebate!

Limited funds are available and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Rebate amounts and programs are subject to change without notice.

A heat pump built for Minnesota winters and summers

Air source heat pumps (ASHPs) have been used for many years in nearly all parts of the United States but, until recently, were not common in areas with extended periods of subfreezing temperatures. However, in recent years, cold-climate ASHP (ccASHP) technology has advanced and now offers a legitimate space heating alternative in colder regions, like Minnesota.

A ccASHP can provide both efficient heating and cooling for your home. When properly installed, it can deliver up to three times more heat energy to a home than the electrical energy it consumes. This is possible because a heat pump moves heat rather than converting it from a fuel-like combustion heating system.

A project recently conducted by the Center for Energy and Environment found that the efficiency of the newest generation of ccASHPs can operate down to minus 13 degrees Fahrenheit (F). The efficiency of these technologies in moderate climates is also two- to three-times more efficient than standard electric heating systems.

Since heat pumps provide heating in the winter and cooling in the summer, (19-17-16) you should be aware of at least two heat pump energy efficiency ratings. The Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) measures cooling efficiency over the cooling season, while the Heating Seasonal Performance Factor (HSPF) measures heating efficiency over the heating season. Given that we are in the depths of a Minnesota winter, let's further explore the heating aspect.

HSPF is a standardized rating used to compare energy efficiencies. HSPF is used by all heat pump manufacturers to indicate efficiency ratings. Like miles per gallon for your car, the higher the HSPF number, the more efficient the system.

Your local electric cooperative provides a variety of incentives and programs. Should you have any additional questions, feel free to contact us at 800-776-0517. Be sure to continue looking for additional ways to improve the energy efficiency of your home, and take advantage of all the rebates we have to offer by visiting us at www.noblesce.coop/rebates.

Heat pumps offer several advantages

Heat pumps, when properly installed, provide members with several distinct advantages:

- When sized appropriately, today's ccASHPs can provide 100% of a home's heating needs down to temperatures as low as zero degrees, which is roughly 90% of all heating hours in Minnesota. If properly set, an ASHP can serve as your primary source for a good part of our Minnesota winters.
- The balance point of your heat pump is the outdoor temperature at which your home HVAC system switches over to its backup heating system, likely set by your installer. If your heat pump can keep your home warm down to 10 degrees F, but your balance point is set to switch over to backup heat at that same temperature, then anytime it's in the 10- to 15-degree Fahrenheit range, you'll be paying more than you should for heat.
- Aren't sure of your ASHP's balance point? Take note of the temperature where your backup heating source kicks in and if it's above 10 degrees F, your balance point may be set too high. If you have already installed an ASHP, you may also want to contact your installation contractor to inquire further and ensure your balance point is where you want it to be.

March Auto Pay Winner
Lyle Drenth

Take a minute to sign up for Auto Pay and you may win a \$25 bill credit. A winner is chosen each month.

Proposed articles of incorporation and bylaw amendments

The Nobles Cooperative Electric Board of Directors is proposing to amend the articles of incorporation and bylaws to bring clarification and improve efficiencies with regard to how the cooperative is run. These amendments bring the articles of incorporation and bylaws into the 21st century. The core concepts of the cooperative remain intact. The full text of the proposed changes will be included with the ballot and notice of annual meeting.

The members of the cooperative originally had capital stock in the cooperative. The cooperative refunded/credited the members who had capital stock some years ago. As a result, the board is recommending that the articles be changed to indicate that the cooperative is operated on a non-stock membership basis. This change does not impact how the cooperative is run or the responsibilities that the cooperative has to its members. Additionally, the proposed changes to the articles more clearly define the duties and responsibilities of the board of directors.

With regard to the proposed changes to the bylaws, the board of directors is recommending: (a) that the qualifications and obligations to become a member of the cooperative be more clearly defined to fit with current practice, (b) that the suspension or termination of services provided by the cooperative is more clear, (c) clarifying voting rights and privileges, (d) clarifying the process for removal of directors, (e) specifying how annual meetings are held and conducted, (f) clarifying the requirements for a quorum, (g) clarifying eligibility for a director and member of the nominating committee, (h) specifying how director meetings are held and conducted, and (i) allowing the use of electronic documents.

Additionally, the board of directors is recommending changes to the language of the bylaws that deals with capital credits. The proposed changes to the language clarify and specify the members' rights with regard to capital credits. The proposed language sets out how the cooperative notifies the members of any capital credit allocations, as well as clarifying how the cooperative allocates and pays capital credits to the members. These changes provide more clarity to the board and the cooperative's members on how capital credits are handled. The cooperative will continue to allocate and pay out capital credits, as long as the board of directors determines that the payment will not adversely impact the cooperative's financial condition. The proposed changes are consistent with other cooperatives around the state.

Again, the core concepts of the cooperative remain intact with the proposed changes. Please watch the mail for your annual report and ballot package.



Nobles Cooperative Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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800-252-1166 or 811

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Nobles County

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General Manager

Adam Tromblay

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Lee York, V. President - 879-3497*

Cindy Hokeness, Sec./Treas. - 478-4965*

Jerry Beckering, Director - 227-4074*

Gary Clarke, Director - 605-201-1903

Gary Sieve, Director - 926-5455*

*Telephone prefix 507

Next Board Meeting

March 18, 2021

This cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Country Cupboard

Amish-Style Baked Oatmeal

Jan VanOort

Fulda

Mix together:

2 c. old fashioned oats	1/3 c. chopped prunes or raisins
1/3 c. or 1/2 c. brown sugar	1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 c. flax meal (optional)	2 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 c. chopped walnuts or pecans	3/4 tsp. salt

Mix together:

3 lg. eggs, slightly beaten	3 c. milk
2 tsp. vanilla	1/2 stick (1/4 c.) melted butter

Combine the two mixtures. Butter 8 x 11.5 x 2" baking dish; preheat oven to 325 degrees. Wash, core and chop 3 c. apples and spread in baking dish. Pour oatmeal mixture evenly over apples, then sprinkle additional 1/2 c. chopped walnuts or pecans over the top. Bake uncovered for about 50 minutes until just set. Serve warm or cold with or without milk. Keeps well in the refrigerator. Make ahead and rewarm in 350 degree oven with pan covered with foil, or rewarm a serving in the microwave for about 20 seconds.

Send your recipes with rice in them to Nobles Cooperative Electric, ATTN: Tracey, P.O. Box 788, Worthington, MN 56187-0788. Entries must include your name, address, telephone number and NCE location number. All entries must be received by March 25. The winning recipe will be featured in the next edition of *Current Matters* and the winner will receive a **\$10 credit** on their electric bill.