



## Storm causes 4,500 members to lose power

A winter storm swept across Nobles Cooperative Electric's (NCE) service territory Wednesday, April 10 into Thursday with snow, freezing rain and wind causing 4,500 members to lose power. With support from contractors and cooperatives in Minnesota and Iowa, NCE was able to restore all of its residential services by 11 p.m. on Wednesday, April 17.

"We are very appreciative to our members for their patience and understanding during this time," said General Manager Adam Tromblay. "All of the crews did a fantastic job returning power to the members and they did it in a safe way. We had zero accidents and injuries. It is no small task bringing in extra crews, communicating with them and keeping them abreast of any hazards or work-related information. Our outage management and automatic vehicle location systems played a key role in helping us restore power as quickly and safely as we did."

The ice storm fell exactly six years to the day that Nobles and Murray Counties were hit by its last major storm in April 2013. The difference between the two storms appears to be in the damage that occurred to the transmission lines across the area. Hundreds of poles from Xcel Energy, ITC and Great River Energy (GRE) were snapped and broken, mainly

going north and south. Once those were repaired and restored, NCE's substations were energized.

Behind the scenes, employees answered calls and Facebook messages, sent updates to the media, prepared food, (506-37-037) bird-dogged the entire service territory, mapped the damage, laundered clothes for the visiting crews, while directors, retired employees and employee spouses delivered food.

Members volunteered by delivering meals, brought food out to linemen, offered their property for equipment drops, plus donated food and beverages.

It's a great feeling knowing that during a difficult time like this our cooperative community came together. Some say it takes a village to accomplish a large task like this, for us it took a community working together.

Even though NCE has restored services to its members, it is going to take some time to get the system to pre-storm conditions. Work will continue on clean up and service work, such as fixing poles and wires. This effort will take months.

NCE appreciates the positive words and praise that they received from members over the course of the outage. We love our members. It is the reason for everything we do.

## Energy saving tip

Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the A/C to run longer than necessary.

*Source: energy.gov*

## Mark your calendar

**May 25..... Electric bills due**

**May 27 ..... Memorial Day**

*Our office will be closed. Linemen will be on call for outages.*



## Win a credit on your bill for finding your location number

Find your location number (as it appears on your monthly electric bill) in this issue and you will receive a \$10 credit. Last month Gene Bertrand, William Jansma and Thomas Mesenbrink spotted their names.



**Manager's Message**



**Powering up after  
an outage**



**2019 Youth Tour  
winners announced**



A word from your General Manager **Adam Tromblay**

## Does Minnesota need an increased Renewable Energy Standard (RES) mandate?

The 91<sup>st</sup> Minnesota Legislature is proving to be an important session for energy issues and your electric cooperative. Since convening on Jan. 8, bills have been introduced to increase the RES mandates for all utilities. This includes the Governor’s 100 percent carbon-free mandate by 2050. But does Minnesota really need to increase the RES mandate? Minnesota Rural Electric Association Director of Government Affairs and General Counsel Joyce Pep-pin said, “We are very concerned about proposals that would derail market forces and ignore the engineering limits of existing technology. Proposals to dramatically increase Minnesota’s RES will turn the current market dynamics on their head by imposing mandates that inevitably push the price of producing renewables higher. Why should every-

body pay higher prices to achieve what the market is already accomplishing?”

The national electric grid is rapidly growing greener. (516-39-017) Reliable and cost-based energy is being delivered with radically lower pollution and carbon impacts. Minnesota, and electric cooperatives, have been frontrunners in implementing renewable energy resources and are proud of the emissions reductions over the past eight years.

The current Minnesota RES is 25 percent renewables by 2025. GRE has pledged to be 50 percent by 2030. Cooperatives continue to voluntarily invest in renewable initiatives without a mandate due to the lower costs of wind, solar and the opportunities provided by new technologies such as battery storage.

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## Restoring power during the ice storm

I want to expand on the cover story with a few more variables and obstacles we faced in the recent storm. This storm brought down more transmission poles than any other storm in the history of our primary wholesale power supplier, (14-30-5) GRE. That is a huge statement since GRE’s footprint covers southwestern Minnesota, where we call home, to the Arrowhead region and everything in between. We are also provided transmission services from Xcel Energy and ITC. Since the majority of our substations were out of power due to the transmission lines feeding them, we had a few entities to coordinate with. All of our transmission partners worked hard to restore services to us, but it takes time to gather the materials and manpower needed in a storm of this magnitude. With hundreds of structures down, the companies quickly pooled resources and brought in help from surrounding states to resume operations.

You will see these companies and contractors in the area working for a while yet, as they too have to

## May Auto Pay Winner Harvey Larson

Take a minute to sign up for Auto Pay and you may win a \$25 credit on your electric bill. A winner is chosen each month. Members who are already saving time and money with Auto Pay will be automatically entered in our monthly contest.

rebuild line back to what it used to be. They will also be rebuilding some of the lines that give our substations multiple feeds. These were either temporarily repaired or rerouted from other directions just to get us power as quickly as possible.

With the transmission lines and substations down, we worked to assess where the damage was done to our distribution system. The distribution system comes out of the substations into (25-8-75) your homes and businesses. The cooperative can see when the poles are snapped and lines are on the ground visually, but it’s virtually impossible to diagnose all the possible issues a line may have

if it is not energized. The crews did a wonderful job of working the lines and finding a majority of the issues before the substations were energized so we could safely turn on as many lines as possible safely and restore power to our members.

It’s a very complex system to deliver power and I gained a better understanding of it each day.

We can’t thank the membership enough for their understanding and assistance through the storm and to all the crews that came to assist in the restoration. Crews left their families and homes to work for a fellow cooperative working from sun up to sun down. It is a great testament to why being a member of a cooperative is unique and special.



# Powering Up After an Outage

When the power goes out, we expect it to be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm or natural disaster causes widespread damage, extended outages may result. Our line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark:

Please note the difference between what the cooperative is responsible for vs. the transmission utility and member.

## 1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines:

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate. These are provided to NCE members from ITC, Great River Energy and Xcel Energy.

## 2. Distribution Substation:

A substation can serve hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself or if problems exist further down the line. NCE owns and maintains.

## 3. Main Distribution Lines:

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments. NCE owns and maintains.

## 4. Tap Lines:

If local outages persist, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes. NCE owns and maintains.

## 5. Individual Homes:

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issue. Member owns and needs to call an electrician.

# 2019 Youth Tour Winners Announced



2019 Youth Tour winners are Scholarship Winner Massen Kunerth, Youth Tour Winner Kelsey Fuerstenberg, Youth Tour Applicant Paige Madison, Second Place Winner Kaylee Campbell and Youth Tour Applicant Blake Madison. Missing from photo is Third Place Winner Davis Moore.

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## Do we want to pay higher prices to achieve what the market is already accomplishing?

It is important to understand the implications (4-16-33) of a 100 percent mandate before moving forward. A good example is the polar vortex that we all experienced in January. The electricity demand spiked as the temperature plummeted. Unfortunately, wind production plummeted along with the temperature. Uninterrupted electricity was only available because of fossil fuel power plants.

We need to continue to remind our local officials and policy makers to think through these initiatives and mandates carefully. As our industry incorporates greater amounts of renewable energy resource technologies, we need a balanced “all of the above” generation portfolio approach to maintain the affordability, reliability and sustainability of our electric grid.

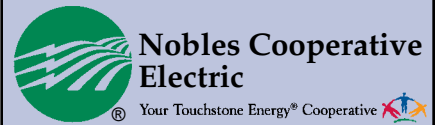
## Country Cupboard Strawberry - Spinach Salad

Donna Nelsen  
Wesbrook

- 1 pkg. spinach, cut tails off
- 1 c. or more, sliced fresh strawberries
- Slices of red onion, separate into rings
- Layer spinach, onion and strawberries in large glass bowl and repeat.
- Dressing:
  - 1/3 c. sugar
  - 1/4 c. milk (If using skim milk, add a little half and half)
  - 1/3 c. mayonaise
  - 2 T. white vinegar
  - 2 T. poppy seed, or to taste

Mix together and add to salad mixture when ready to serve.

Send your favorite **breakfast** recipe 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 May 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.



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### Next Board Meeting

May 23, 2019

*This cooperative is an equal  
opportunity provider and employer.*

