



BENCO

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



Touchstone Energy

BENCO Electric Cooperative Link

August 2018

North to Alaska! On an Even Grander Scale

Join BENCO Electric Cooperative on a 13 day trip across scenic Alaska, July 12 - 24, 2019

Next year at about this time you could be joining BENCO Electric and Brown County REA on a 13-day trip to Alaska. This once in a lifetime trip begins on July 12 and includes stops at Fairbanks - Denali National Park - Anchorage - Hubbard Glacier - Glacier Bay - Skagway - Juneau - Ketchikan - Inside Passage - Vancouver. The itinerary is as follows:

Day 1 - Depart for Alaska. Motorcoach from BENCO to Twin Cities Airport. Our flight from the Twin Cities is bound for Fairbanks. Overnight hotel in Fairbanks for two nights at the Bear Lodge.

Day 2 - Fairbanks. Our day in Alaska's "Golden Heart City" includes a delightful cruise aboard the Sternwheeler Riverboat Discovery, viewing of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, and a visit to Gold Dredge #8, a historic goldmine operation where you can pan for gold. Get acquainted breakfast at Bear Lodge and lunch included.

Day 3 - Fairbanks/Denali. Alaska Rail from Fairbanks to Denali with beautiful views and commentary as we head to Denali National Park. We will enjoy breakfast onboard. As we approach the park, the views down to the Nenana River are breathtaking! Upon arrival check-in at the charming Denali Princess lodge. Afternoon will be free for optional rafting, helicopter rides or relaxing in the heated jacuzzi. That evening enjoy the Music of Denali dinner show.

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Alaskan Trip Informational Meeting

Monday, September 10, 2018 - 7:00 pm

BENCO Electric Auditorium

Registration opens following the meeting on Monday, September 10, 2018.

(This trip fills quickly and has limited seating.)

RSVP to Chelsea at 387-7963 by September 1st.

Representatives from BENCO, 4-Seasons Travel & Princess Cruise Lines will be available.

CEO Corner



In June, BENCO Electric Cooperative board members and managers met to work on BENCO's two year strategic plan. The following items are the top five priorities that came out of this meeting.

Safety –

Safety was identified as our #1 priority. BENCO continues to focus on improving our safety culture and enhance the safety mechanisms we already have in place. All aspects of safety are important to BENCO employees

and members.

Technology –

BENCO will continue to update the technology we are using to help us improve service to our members. Improvements and enhancements we can make to the technologies used in daily operations include an outage management system, updated mapping and cybersecurity.

Cost Reduction –

BENCO will be looking at ways to cut our costs and still bring safe, reliable service to our members. Areas where we will look to make improvements include: wholesale power cost reduction, voltage control (regulators), load management and reduction of line loss.

BENCO Electric Cooperative Facilities –

We will be evaluating the overall space at the Mankato facility including workspace flow and physical security of the facility.

Disaster planning (Emergency Response Plan) –

BENCO has an emergency response plan in place. We will be evaluating this plan. We will make updates to it as needed.

Having these priorities in place allows our employees to see what direction we are headed and how we can all work together to accomplish them for the good of our members and our cooperative.

Please feel free to stop in at the office or call me if you have any questions or concerns.

Cooperatively yours,



From the Board

Thursday, June 28, 2018

Scott Johnson Presided

The board reviewed and approved:

- The minutes of the May 31, 2018 meeting.
- Capital Credits to estates totaling \$14,495.37.

Chuck Peterson reviewed recent legal work for the Cooperative.

Tim gave the Engineering and Operations Report. He reported on ongoing and upcoming construction projects, recent storms and outages.

The Faribault County outpost facility shell has been completed. The roof will be sealed and electrical work will begin soon.

Gary reported on GRE.

Duane and Blake reported on CTV. CTV held their annual meeting on June 25 and it was very well attended.

Harlan reported on the Cooperative Network.

John reported on MREA.

Reports were given by those directors who attended the GRE Annual Meeting and the CFC Forum.

PCA Update

Actual PCA for July
\$0.0301

Estimated PCA for August
\$0.0334

Estimated PCA for September
\$0.245

The Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) is due to changes in the monthly wholesale rate from our power supplier, Great River Energy (GRE).

Day 4 - Denali/McKinley. Join us for a fascinating full day Tundra Tour into Denali National Park. After the tour, depart via motorcoach to the Mt. McKinley Wilderness Lodge where you'll have an evening of leisure.

Day 5 - McKinley/Anchorage. Morning at leisure for hiking or relaxing at this wonderful lodge. Afternoon via motorcoach to Anchorage.

Day 6 - Anchorage/Whittier. Tour of Anchorage. Travel by motorcoach along the shoreline between the Chugach Mountains and the waters of Turnagain Arm to Whittier, where you will board the Coral Princess scheduled to sail at 8:30 pm.

Day 7 - Cruising Hubbard Glacier. You'll see the legendary "blue ice" and experience the thunderous roar of an iceberg "calving" as you stand in awe before majestic mountains and fjords created by these massive rivers of ice. It's a sight, sound and feeling you'll never forget.

Day 8 - Cruising Glacier Bay. Massive glaciers stretch from the ice-draped St. Elias and Fairweather Mountain ranges to sit at the end of majestic fjords. The Muir, John Hopkins and Margerie Glaciers are the most active. A Glacier Bay Ranger Naturalist will be on board to make your experience complete.

Day 9 - Skagway. A full day to explore this gateway to the gold fields and memories of the gold rush of '98. Step back into history at the Trail of '98 Museum, sightsee along the White Pass rail route to the Yukon, or try sportfishing, mountain biking or flightseeing.

Day 10 - Juneau. This is Alaska's Capital. Sightsee and shop in town, or choose from a wide array of optional shore excursions.

Day 11 - Ketchikan. Southeast Alaska's "First City", Ketchikan is as picturesque as they come. The town is built on piles out over the water and clings to the slopes of Deer Mountain. Native culture abounds at Saxman Village and Totem Bright State Park.

Day 12 - Inside Passage Cruising. When you rise this morning check your copy of the ship's newsletter for a full list of activities that are offered. Cruising the Inside Passage this afternoon.

Day 13 - Vancouver. We arrive in Canada's main west coast seaport this morning. After clearing customs we will check in for our flight home to the Twin Cities and motorcoach on to Mankato.



How much does it really cost?

The electric grid requires a large amount of money to build and maintain. This quick quiz puts into perspective some of the average costs to build the system and provide electricity to your home.

How much does an overhead transformer cost?

- A. \$500
- B. \$600
- C. \$850
- D. \$1,500

Answer: B, \$600. Overhead transformers convert the voltage along the power lines to a safe level for your home.



How much does a large bucket truck cost?

- A. \$150,000
- B. \$200,000
- C. \$250,000
- D. \$300,000

Answer: C, \$250,000. BENCO has 11 bucket trucks, eight large and three small.



How much does a padmount transformer cost?

- A. \$1,000
- B. \$1,200
- C. \$1,300
- D. \$2,000

Answer: A, \$1,000. Padmounts have the same function as an overhead transformer, except this equipment is used with underground cable.



Where, Oh Where?

The following is a list of former BENCO Members whose capital credit checks were returned by the post office as undeliverable. Any information you can give us to help locate them would be greatly appreciated. Please contact Lori at 387-7963 or 1-888-792-3626.

R

Matthew D. Rynearson, Winnebago

S

Jim D. Schabert, Litchfield

Gregory W. Scheid, Blue Earth
Daniel L. Schilling, Long Prairie
Sandra K. Simonson, Lakeville
Elden Stanke, Janesville
Mary L. Stevens, Hutchinson
Brian L. St. John, Mankato
Richard F. Sutton, Eagan

T

Larry L. Thisius, Wells
Greg M. Thomas, Mankato
Walter L. Thompson, Mankato

V

Jesse R. Van Berkum, Sioux Falls, SD

Forrest N. Vangsgard, Mankato
Harry Vinge, Albert Lea
Steven J. Van Roekel, North Mankato
Richard Ward, Mankato
Janet B. Wassmaan, Mankato
Darin M. Wilmes, Eagle Lake
Earl E. Woods, Mankato
Robert G. Wright, Mankato
Julie L. Wurmnest, Lake Crystal

Z

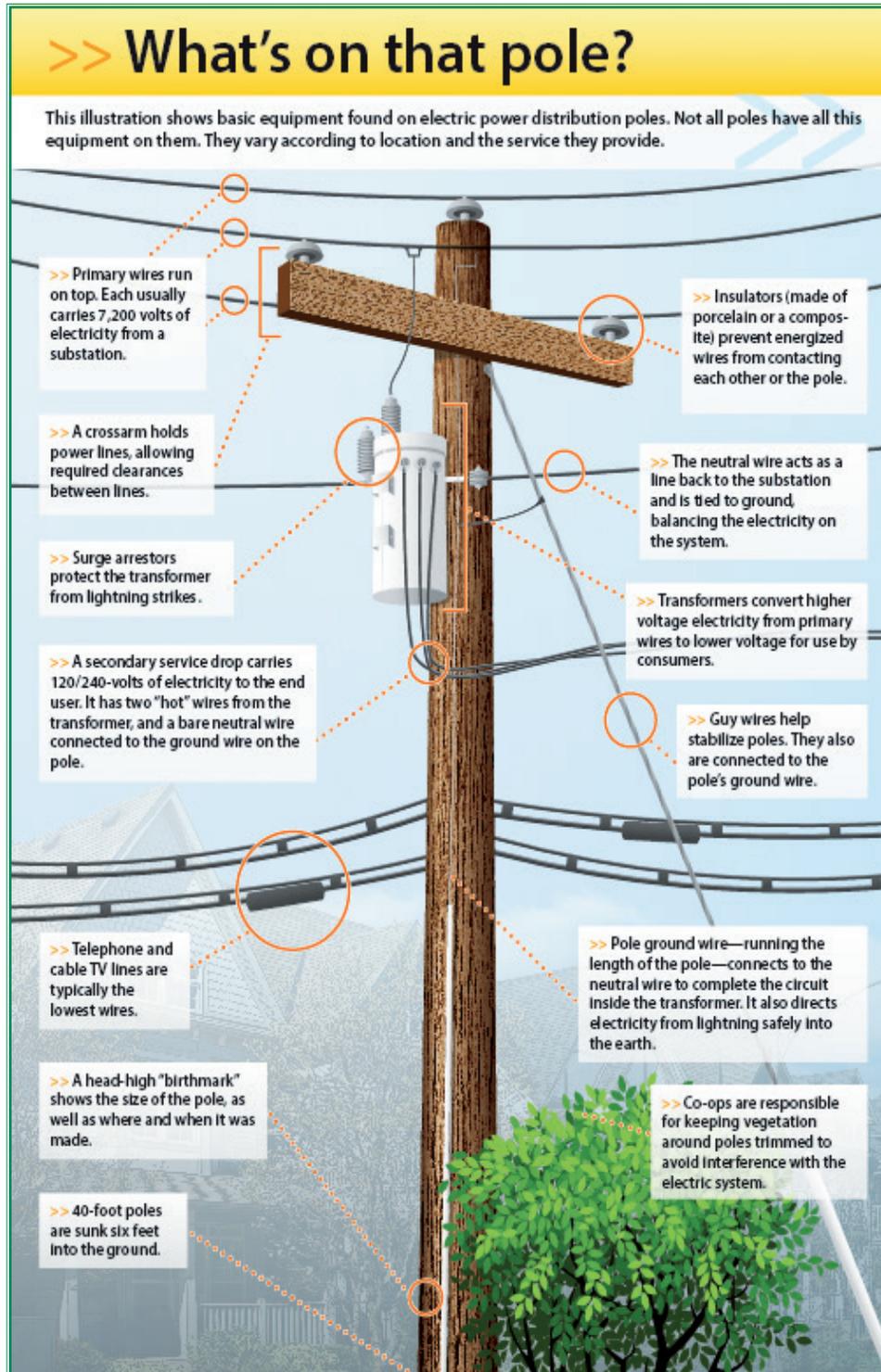
Terry L. Ziesmer, Henderson

Why Replace Utility Poles?

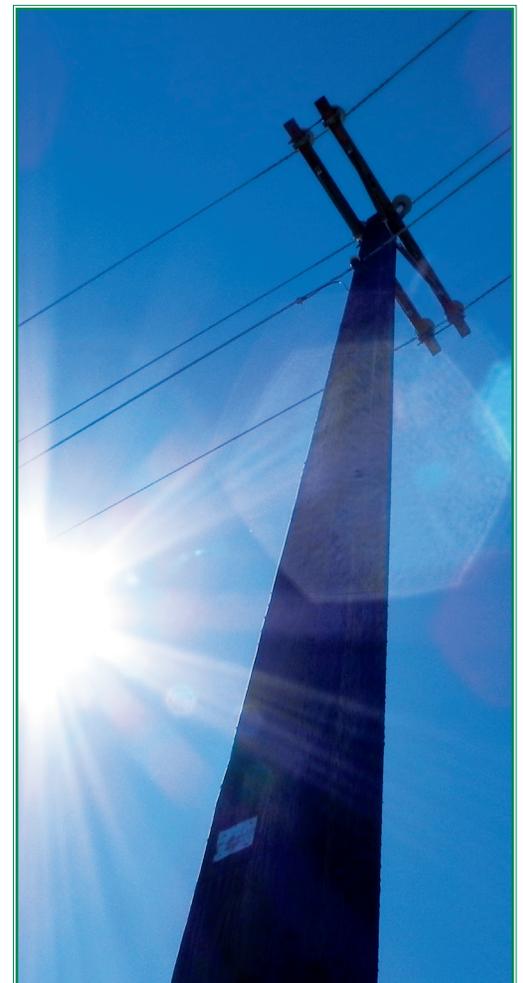
Utility poles are the backbone of our distribution network. They ensure a reliable electric system, which is why we routinely have the poles on our system inspected. Through the year, poles are checked for decay caused by exposure to the elements. Typically, a standard wooden distribution pole is expected to last more than 50 years.

Occasionally, poles are replaced for other reasons besides decay and old age. Weather disasters, power line relocation and car crashes are potential causes for immediate replacement.

Here is a quick breakdown of how crews replace a utility pole:



Replacing a pole begins with crews digging a hole, typically next to the pole being replaced. The depth of the hole must be at least six feet deep. Next, the new pole is fitted with bolts, cross arms, insulators, ground wires and arm braces - all of the necessary parts for delivering safe and reliable electricity. Then, crews safely detach the power lines from the old pole. The new pole is raised and guided carefully into position, and the lines are attached, leaving the new pole to do its job.





Touchstone Energy®

P.O. Box 8
Mankato, MN 56002-0008

What's Cookin' in your Kitchen?

What's Cookin': Microwave Bread Butter Pickles

From the Kitchen of: Darlene Sandmeyer

2 C sliced cucumbers	1/2 teaspoon mustard seed
1 C sliced onions	1/4 teaspoon celery seed
1/2 C white vinegar	1/4 teaspoon turmeric
1/2 teaspoon salt	1 C sugar

Mix all ingredients together and cover. Microwave on high for 7 - 8 minutes. Refrigerate before serving.

You can receive a \$20 credit on your electric bill if your recipe gets printed in the newsletter.
Send your favorite recipes to:
Chelsea, BENCO Electric Cooperative, PO Box 8, Mankato, MN 56002

This newsletter is published monthly by BENCO Electric Cooperative, PO BOX 8, Mankato, MN 56002-0008.

Office Hours: Mon -Fri - 7:30 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: 387-7963 or 1-888-792-3626

Outages/After Hours: 387-7964 or 1-888-792-3626

Kathy Gerber - Member Services Manager
Chelsea Germo - Editor

Board of Directors:

Scott Johnson - President - District 9
Gary Stenzel - Vice President - District 7 - GRE Dir
Harlan Lanz - Secretary - District 2, Coop Network Dir
Marilyn Lynch - Treasurer - District 5
Terry Genelin - District 1
Brad Leiding - District 3
John Wells - District 4 - MREA Director
Blake Meshke - District 6
Duane Ehrich - District 8
Dave Sunderman - CEO
John C. (Chuck) Peterson - Attorney

Board Meetings: The last Thursday of each month - members are welcome to contact directors with items of interest or concerns in advance of the meetings.