



ECE East Central Energy 2011 General Media Kit



Contact us at 1-800-254-7944

ECE's Communications department staff will assist you when you need information on deadline, when there's an emergency or with any story you are writing about electricity. Call us if you are looking for:

- Information on a power outage
- Information on renewable energy and options for members
- Cost comparisons between electricity and other fuels
- Comments on issues in the news that deal with electricity
- Electrical safety tips and information
- What's new in energy efficient appliances, lighting, construction
- Answers to questions your audience may have about ECE and the services we provide.

For energy-saving tips and information, visit eastcentralenergy.com, togetherwesave.com, or energy.gov.

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Help protect our logo

East Central Energy (ECE) is a proud community member with a history of integrity, service and accountability. The ECE logo is the symbol that identifies the co-op and, when affixed to an item, suggests to members their co-op's support or sponsorship. It is critical that ECE's logo not be placed on any advertising, or other printed materials, without verbal or written authorization by a member of the Communications department at ECE. We appreciate your help in protecting the image of ECE through controlled use of its logo. The unauthorized use of the ECE logo is considered a serious legal matter.

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East Central Energy at a glance

Based in Braham, MN, ECE is Minnesota's third largest electric cooperative and a member of the national Touchstone Energy alliance. The cooperative serves all or parts of 14 counties. In addition to its Braham headquarters, ECE has service centers and/or operations centers in Milaca, MN, Finlayson, MN, Superior, WI, Wahkon, MN and North Branch, MN.

General co-op information *(year end 2010)*

Employees: 170

Number of members served: 57,669

Miles of overhead line: 5,426

Miles of underground line: 2,775

Average members per mile of line: 7.03

kWhs sold: 903,850,280

Capital Credits returned to members: Over \$1.1 million

Our partner, Great River Energy

Headquartered in Maple Grove, MN, Great River Energy (GRE) is Minnesota's second largest utility, based on generating capacity. GRE is a generation and transmission cooperative which provides wholesale electric power to 28 member cooperatives, ECE included.

General information *(year end 2010)*

Number of member consumers served: 645,000

Miles of transmission power lines: 4,500

Number of substations: More than 100

Number of power plants: 11

Electricity generated at power plants: 2,800 MW

Power sources: coal, wind, biomass, natural gas





East Central Energy celebrates 75 years in 2011

A 1935 letter to Pine County's newspaper editors planted the seed, and local farmers rose to the challenge.

Combining brainpower and brawn, they built themselves an electric system and started a legacy that has blossomed for three-quarters of a century.

"Building on the Legacy" is the theme for East Central Energy's (ECE) 75th anniversary in 2011.

Originally known as PICK Electric Cooperative, ECE was officially incorporated with the Minnesota Secretary of State on January 13, 1936. Beauford Johnson of West Rock, MN, author of that momentous letter to the editor, was its first general manager.

Imagine the scene in December 1937 at the Carl Peterson farm in Rock Creek, the first to receive electric service. Picture the faces of the Swan Hammer family members who came home from a holiday party to find their radio playing and their new lights aglow.

Electricity changed life in rural America. In the house and in the barn, every chore became easier and was finished faster. Farm families finally had more free time to socialize and get involved in their communities. They gathered around the radio in the evenings, listening to their favorite programs without worry that the battery would die. They delighted in getting cold beverages from the new refrigerator and water from a faucet on the kitchen sink.

Today, most people cannot even imagine life without electricity. Its use has expanded every year since 1949. Consumers discovered televisions, microwave ovens, cell phones, computers, and now electric cars. From the beginning, ECE has made sure its members kept pace with the new innovations, investing in an electric distribution system that started with 80 miles of line and now includes over 8,000 miles.

The challenges of each decade have been met with the same vision, determination, and zeal that started this electric co-operative. Guided by seven co-op principles, neighbors and friends formed a partnership that has flourished. Mergers in 1995 and 2003 expanded ECE's boundaries, strengthened its workforce and brought new members into the ECE cooperative family.

We operate according to the seven cooperative principles:

- Voluntary and open membership
- Democratic member control
- Members' economic participation
- Autonomy and independence
- Education, training and information
- Cooperation among cooperatives
- Concern for community

Building strength and reliability

Driven by a thirst for a better quality of life, local farmers pooled their talents to build an electric system. The poles they set and the wires they strung were the skeleton that supported the life-changing force and the foundation for a brand new electric cooperative.

East Central Energy's distribution system initially stretched just 80 miles west to east from a single substation in Braham. It served 236 members with central station electricity.

Seventy-five years and countless hours of hard work later, electricity powers 34 substations and hums along over 8,000 miles of

line. More than 57,000 homes, farms and businesses are served in a territory that includes all or parts of 14 counties in east central Minnesota and northwestern Wisconsin.

ECE's Operations and Engineering department is responsible for the design, construction and maintenance of the system. ECE crews have completed the projects included in the 2007-10 plan, prompting the development of the new \$49 million 2011-14 construction work plan. The goal of both plans is to strengthen and solidify the electric system for increased reliability.



Operations highlights *(year end 2010)*

- Improvements made to 40 miles of distribution line
- 375 new services built
- 58 poles repaired or replaced as identified in the pole inspection program
- 311 member line upgrades completed
- 3,400 maintenance service orders completed
- 1,320 line patrol service orders completed
- Power restored to thousands of members during three major storms

A booklet produced for ECE's 25th anniversary gives an idea of how the young co-op handled right-of-way maintenance. Highlights from 1949 say, *"Ill weather brought about the discontinuance of the construction program to find employees devoting their time to clearing right-of-way for next summer's construction, along with clearing existing lines of trees and brush."*

Today, a team of two foresters and a forestry assistant oversee more than 20 contract crews performing vegetation management on a year-round basis. ECE uses an integrated approach which includes routine re-clearing of trees and brush, approved herbicide treatments and hazard tree removal. The program enhances reliable service to members and safety for employees and the public. Just 15 percent of all outages on ECE's system in 2010 were tree or brush related.

Forestry Services highlights *(year end 2010)*

- Tree clearing and pruning completed on over 900 miles of right-of-way
- Herbicide applied to problem brush along 1,100 miles of line
- Hazard trees removed along 1,700 miles of right-of-way
- ECE recognized by the National Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree Line USA Utility® for sixth consecutive year



Building energy awareness

ECE members who recall the day the lights came on can also name the first appliances their family purchased. Topping the list were radios, refrigerators and irons for the house and electric motors to operate equipment in the barn.

By the 1950s, upgrades to the distribution system had made it possible to accommodate larger loads, and the co-op began a dedicated effort to encourage members to buy electric water heaters and electric ranges.

Energy conservation became part of the national vocabulary in the mid-1970s, and ECE initiated programs to help members use energy wisely. Members were introduced to the words, off-peak and load management, in the late '70s and early '80s, and those programs continue to offer value today for participating members and the cooperative.

Energy Services highlights *(year end 2010)*

- ECE had 23,459 members enrolled in load management programs
- 809 Storage Space Heating, Storage Water Heating and cooling systems installed
- The Cycled Air program had 7,441 participants, and 104 members took advantage of the opportunity to revitalize their air conditioning unit through the AC Tune-up program
- ECE awarded 2,144 residential ENERGY STAR® rebates totaling \$108,155
- There were 144 new air source heat pumps installed on ECE's system and 79 new ground source heat pumps for a total of 1,412 air source heat pumps and 852 ground source heat pumps system-wide
- 457 households received energy-saving information from ECE at Operation Community Connect events
- In partnership with community action agencies, ECE contributed \$154,830 to help with weatherization and appliance upgrades in income-eligible homes
- Members purchased 371,300 kWh of renewable energy monthly
- In partnership with Touchstone Energy, ECE introduced togetherwesave.com, a resource that provides easy, affordable energy-saving ideas to members



Nobody Gets Hurt

ECE's goal is to prevent all accidents, and the Nobody Gets Hurt™ campaign reinforces our commitment to that goal. The safety of our employees and the members we serve is our top priority. ECE presents electrical safety in a fun and informative way to schools and community organizations. Visit eastcentralenergy.com or call us to request a presentation.

Building the quality of life

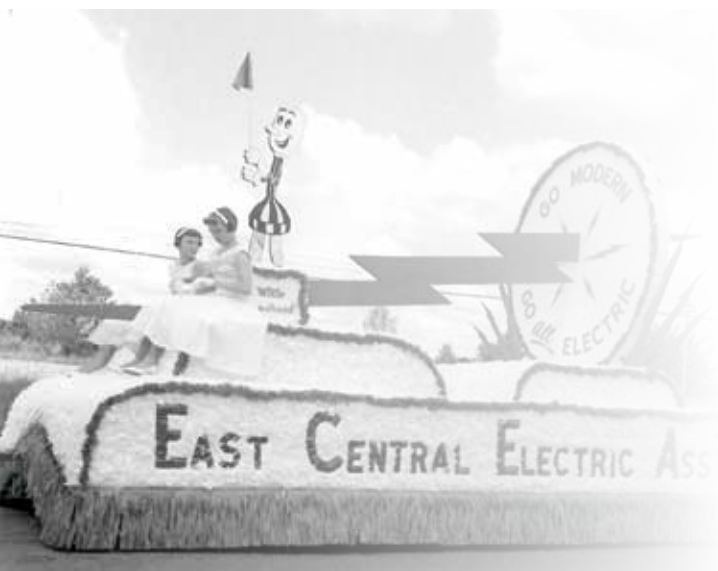
Photographs from the late 1930s show women beaming behind the ironing board with their shiny new electric iron in hand. The radio is shown as the centerpiece in the living room, with families gathered around to hear their favorite programs. Farmers posed with the new electric motors they were using in the barn.

Electricity improved the quality of life, and the REA co-op that distributed it became an invigorating presence on Main Street and a supportive friend to the members and the communities it served.

ECE has demonstrated its commitment to community through the years, working together with members to give back to the communities it serves. This cooperative has been sending high school students to Washington, D.C. as part of the Rural Electric Youth Tour for more than 40 years. Operation Round Up® and Caring Members have provided a way for members to look out for each other and enhance the quality of life where they live. The cooperative's scholarship program has awarded over \$600,000 to help members further their education.

Community Program highlights *(year end 2010)*

- Operation Round Up distributed \$140,722 to help local organizations make a difference in their communities. Since the program began, \$1,227,572 has been poured back into local communities
- Caring Members provided \$13,613 to help 70 ECE families pay their electric bills
- Foley Area CARE received ECE's Touchstone Energy Community Award for its volunteer efforts on behalf of local seniors
- Over 60 ECE-member high school graduates and community college students received scholarships totaling over \$60,000
- Reid Gunderson, Mora, Bret Cuda, Braham, and Brycen Kryzer, Pine City, represented ECE on the Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C.
- ECE members and employees worked together in Project GreenTouch to complete improvements at Father Hennepin State Park, Isle, MN, and Pattison State Park, Superior, WI
- Students at Ogilvie Elementary School teamed up with ECE to celebrate Arbor Day. They planted two trees on their school grounds and learned about safe and proper tree-planting techniques
- Trailview Elementary School in Mora was the setting for ECE's 2010 partnership with the Tree Trust organization and its Learning with Trees program
- ECE welcomed approximately 100 members on three tours to learn about coal-fired electricity generation and renewable energy
- ECE worked with Dakota County Technical College to provide scholarships to its line worker training program



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative *The power of human connections®*

ECE is a Touchstone Energy Cooperative, a national alliance of more than 700 electric cooperatives in 46 states. In 2009, Together We Save, a national energy-efficiency campaign, was launched by Touchstone Energy, providing members with a new resource to help them reduce their energy bill. It inspires members to save energy by demonstrating that simple changes can really add up. The gateway is the website, togetherwesave.com, accessible at eastcentralenergy.com.



Board of Directors

ECE's service territory is divided into six director districts. Two directors are elected by the members in each district. Each director is elected for a four-year term, which expires on a rotating basis. Elections are held annually.



The ECE Board of Directors, back row, left to right, Diane Zimmerman, district 1; Lonnie Johnson, district 2; David Cartwright, district 3; Joe Morley, district 4; Bob Kaeter, district 6; Jerry Tvedt, district 5; Bob Thompson, district 2; Jerry Nelson, district 4. Seated in the front row are David Tellinghuisen, district 6; Jim Haasis, district 1; John Jackson, district 3; and Linda Laitala, district 5.

East Central Energy Service Territory and Director Districts

