



People's Cooperative Services

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# Highline Hi-Lites



# Operation Round Up®



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Plainview Area Community & Youth Center  
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SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA RURAL EDUCATION AND RESOURCE  
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# C. E. O. Message



Elaine J. Garry  
President / CEO

This month I am going to dedicate this column to a program that is near and dear to my heart. It's the Operation Round Up® program.

Operation Round Up® was founded by Palmetto Electric Cooperative in South Carolina in 1989, and adopted by People's Cooperative Services in August 2002. Operation Round Up® is an incredibly successful way in which we are able to help people in our

community. Through Operation Round Up®, People's Cooperative automatically rounds up a participating member's electric bill to the next highest dollar.

For example, if your monthly bill is \$98.32, we round your bill up to \$99.00. Your donation of \$0.68 goes into a separate trust fund. The most any one member donates is \$11.98 per year (\$0.99 times 12 months). These dollars are returned back into the communities we live in to help non-profit organizations implement their programs. The beauty of this program is that the small donations made by a lot of members can have a significant positive impact.

Operation Round Up® is overseen by an independent Board of Directors. The electric board of directors appoints one member from each of People's Cooperative board districts, which helps assure equal representation across the system. The Operation Round Up® Trust Fund board meets quarterly. The primary duty of this board is to evaluate applications made to the fund and determine how to best distribute the money.

## Operation Round Up® Board

Joan Rose	District 1
Jim Gronvold, Treasurer	District 2
Alvin Grossbach	District 3
Andy Welti	District 4
Kathy Sveen, Chair	District 5
Ruth Earley, Secretary	District 6
Bethany Krom, Vice-Chair	District 7

100% of the donated funds stay within the cooperative's service area. The board reviews applications and distributes between \$1,500 and \$2,500 to area non-profit organizations -- the amount that is collected with only 7% of our membership participating.

This program can be implemented in two different manners. A cooperative can use either a voluntary sign-up or an "opt-out" election form. When your cooperative implemented this program in 2002 a decision was made to use the voluntary sign-up method. In May of 2007, the Board elected to begin using the "opt-out" method where all new members are automatically enrolled in the program. As a result, approximately 1,098 members, or 7% of our total membership, participate in the program.

Our current ORU board of directors is encouraging us to reconsider the initial decision. They would like to see every member of People's Cooperative Services signed up to participate. If you then decide that you do not want to participate, all you need to do is contact the cooperative and ask to be removed from the program. Any contribution that you have made, following this initial "opt-out" period, will be returned to you upon request. We are giving this suggestion consideration and would like to hear from you if you have any concerns.

If we implemented the "opt-out" method of participation and could achieve participation by 70% to 80% of our membership, the amount returned to our communities would increase to about \$15,000 per quarter.

With the possible participation of over 16,000 members, the money raised through Operation Round Up® has the potential to make an overwhelming difference to non-profit organizations, to schools, and to your friends and neighbors. Since 2003 when the first donation was awarded, 35 non-profit organizations have applied and received funds totaling over \$26,000. Small change making a big difference.

Area non-profit organizations are encouraged to apply for Operation Round Up® funds. The deadline for our second quarter of funding is June 30. Applications forms are available by calling People's at (507) 288-4004 or can be downloaded from the PCA website [www.peoplesrec.com](http://www.peoplesrec.com).



Thanks to all of you who already participate in this program. Your donation speaks well of your commitment to your community.

## People's Cooperative Board of Directors

Chair	Vice-Chair	Sec/Treasurer				
Anthony Ebert 288-1868 District 1	Sharon B. Hart 533-4388 District 7	Kenneth E. Wohlers 365-8816 District 2	Robert J. Hoefs 843-2508 District 3	Eugene J. Miller 534-2068 District 4	John F. Nintemann 932-3421 District 5	L. Leo Lentz 289-4424 District 6



# We have an energy challenge, America

*When it comes to finding solutions, we must meet climate change goals while keeping costs down and electricity available. America needs a plan. Immediately. Because we all know that our energy needs keep on growing—every day.*

*Now is the time to have a candid conversation with your elected officials. Together, we can find answers and take action. Start the conversation today at [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop).*



**Our Energy, Our Future**  
A Dialogue With America

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association hosted the association's annual legislative conference and lobbying effort in Washington, D.C., May 4 - 7. Over 3,000 members representing local and state electric cooperatives from 47 states were in attendance.

America's electric cooperatives are making significant investments in clean, renewable energy sources, such as landfill gas, hydro-power, wind, biomass and waste heat. They're also investing in energy efficiency. But renewable energy and conservation alone cannot provide enough power to meet the country's growing demand. Some regions are facing a power crunch and could see power shortages as soon as 2011. *What is Congress' plan to make sure the nation's electric industry can meet this demand?*

This question, among other national energy topics, is of key concern to electric cooperatives.

Right now, there are a lot of "what-if's" surrounding electric power. As a nation, we need to add more generating resources to meet growing electric consumption.

## *Technology is Key in Keeping the Lights On*

As your provider of safe, affordable, and reliable power, it's our job to make prudent, long-term energy decisions that will benefit you and the communities we serve for decades to come. But today those decisions are mixed up with politics like never before. Every question of supplying power is being

**IT'S TIME TO COME TOGETHER AND CHANGE OUR FUTURE.**



impacted by the debate surrounding how best to meet climate change goals. Policy limiting carbon dioxide emissions is becoming more likely, although specifics are still up in the air.

Massive investments in new technology will be required—and soon—to find a balance in meeting both our energy and climate change goals. The Electric Power Research Institute estimates it will take a research investment of \$1.4

billion a year from now until 2030 to develop new technology such as carbon capture and storage for our power plants.

Once we add this advanced technology to the equation, we can develop power plants that burn coal and isolate carbon dioxide emissions. The gas can then be compressed and pumped for permanent storage deep underground. Many experts believe that with the right financial commitment from the federal government, cost-effective carbon capture and storage technology could become commercially available around 2020.

But this is just one potential piece of the puzzle, and until our elected officials agree to increase the necessary funding, uncertainty remains.

At People's Cooperative, we are dedicated to keeping you supplied with reliable and affordable electricity. We are, with electric cooperatives across the country, engaged in a grass-roots campaign called "Our Energy, Our Future" to start a dialogue with lawmakers about critical questions such as technology's role in our energy future. Please visit [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop) to contact your elected officials and add your voice to the campaign.





## Round Up or Not?

Are you still in the dark over Operation Round-Up®? Let's shed some light on it.

Operation Round Up® (ORU) was originally started at Palmetto Electric Cooperative in Hilton Head, S.C. It was designed to gather voluntary contributions from members to assist people or organizations in the communities served by the cooperative with medical care or equipment, food, clothing, housing, etc.

### Q: How does this program work?

A: Each month, members who participate allow People's to automatically round up their electric bills to the next highest dollar. For example, if a member's electric bill is \$61.75, the bill would automatically be rounded up to \$62 -the extra 25 cents would be put in the Operation Round Up® Trust Fund.

### Q: Who will be eligible to receive these funds?

A: Any non-profit organization and/or persons in People's Cooperative Services service territory is eligible to apply for these funds. Applications, are available at the office or online ([www.peoplesrec.com](http://www.peoplesrec.com)). Completed application forms will be given to the ORU board who will evaluate and determine where the funds should go.

### Q: What are the possible uses of this fund?

A: Projects that Operation Round Up® can help with include community service projects, education, medical care and equipment, food, clothing, housing and other

needed services. Examples could include medical equipment for a local rescue or ambulance service, assistance to a daycare facility, or funding to build a handicap ramp.

### Q: Will this money be used to pay delinquent bills or help the campaigns of elected officials?

A: No. These funds will not be used to pay delinquent electric bills, as there are plenty of other charitable services to help with electric bills. Nor, will these funds be used in any way to support or oppose any political candidate, or for religious activities.

### Q: What is the ORU® board of and what are the duties assigned to the body?

A: The ORU® board are cooperative members who volunteer to meet quarterly to evaluate applications made to the fund and determine how to best distribute the money. One member from each PCS board district assures equal representation across the system.

### Q: What if I don't want to participate in this program?

A: We realize not everyone will be able to or have the desire to participate in this program. To opt-out you can call, write, or email the cooperative. An "Opt-Out" form is available online at [www.peoplesrec.com](http://www.peoplesrec.com). This is a voluntary program and all contributions are tax deductible.

## Your Facility Charge Explained

A facility charge is a monthly charge that People's Cooperative Services members pay to help cover the basic cost of bringing electricity to their location. It covers expenses the cooperative incurs regardless of how much electricity is sold. The facility charge covers such things as:

- Trucks, wire, transformers and power poles needed to build and maintain the electric transmission and distribution system;
- Labor to build and maintain the lines;
- Cost of insurance, interest, & taxes.

Because all cooperative members benefit from having reliable electric

service available when they need it, the facility charge ensures that everyone pays their fair share of the basic costs.

Members often ask why People's facility charge is higher than in other places, especially big cities. The answer is because of our low consumer density. People's serves an average of five members for each mile of line we own and operate. Compare this to Rochester Public Utilities where the average density is more than 75 customers per mile of line. It is more economical for a utility to serve areas of higher density.

People's Cooperative serves a diverse membership. Some of our members use

a lot of electricity all year long, and some may use electricity only one or two months per year. Whether you use a lot or a little, the cost of getting electric power to your home remains the same. And that is why your electric bill has two separate charges: the facility charge to cover basic costs, and the per kWh charge for the actual amount of electricity consumed.

We hope this brief explanation helps answer your questions about the facility charge portion of your electric bill. Please call us if you have questions.



# People's News

## 2008 National Rural Electric Youth Tour Winner

Kassandra (Kassie) Lewis, a junior at Dover-Eyota High School, is heading to Washington, DC in June after being selected to represent People's Cooperative Services at the 2008 National Rural Electric Youth Tour, June 14-19 in Washington D.C. She is the daughter of Maureen and David Lewis of Eyota.

Eligibility requirements were that the student is currently a high school junior or senior, and the applicant's parent(s) or guardian is a cooperative member. Applicants were required to complete two essay questions, list school and community activities and work experience. Two letters of recommendation were required, one from an instructor, counselor or administrator and another from a church or community leader. Entries were evaluated for completeness, composition, neatness, ability to communicate and their school and community activities.

Kassie's essays, her involvement in school and community activities won her this all-expense paid tour. She will join the more than 1,425 students from 43 states for an unforgettable week in our nation's capitol. Electric cooperatives have been sending students to participate in this unique program since the late 1950s.



## Recipients of Operation Round Up® First Quarter Funds



*Dover Eyota High School Marching Band*

With the community's contributions, DEMA was able to purchase a set of new marching base drums for the school. The donation received from People's Cooperative Operation Round Up® Fund made it possible to purchase a set of marching base drum cases to protect the new base drums purchased from other donations. They will impact student use for many years to come.

If your organization is interested in applying for Operation Round Up® funds, applications are available at <http://www.peoplesrec.com/community/roundup.html> and at the office. Second quarter applications will be accepted until June 30. If you have any questions, please contact Jeff Thompson, Operation Round Up® coordinator (507-288-4004). Two thousand four hundred two.

DEMA was formed for the purpose of furthering the cause of students in band and choir at Dover Eyota High School. The organization aids the high school music program by promoting school and community interests in all band and choir activities. DEMA helps raise funds for equipment, activities, programs and events not provided for in school district budgets.

**Operation Round Up®  
2<sup>nd</sup> quarter funding  
application deadline  
June 30<sup>th</sup>.**



# CFLs are great! Dimmers are great! Together?

## CFLs and Dimmers?

So what about CFLs on dimmers? Wouldn't they be the dream combination of lighting functionality and energy efficiency? Unfortunately, in many cases, the answer is no.

Dimmers work by breaking up the amount of electricity reaching the light fixture. Though invisible to the human eye, the staggered electrical current is actually making the light flicker. This is fine for an incandescent (traditional) bulb, as it simply reduces the amount of heat produced by the filament. Two thousand eight hundred thirty-three.

CFLs, however, do not use heat to produce light. Instead, a fluorescent bulb contains a gas that produces invisible ultraviolet light when excited by electricity. The light hits the white coating inside the fluorescent bulb and the coat-

ing changes it into light you can see. In this process, CFLs regulate power through the tube, which is not compatible with the dimmer's intervals of electricity interruption. So when working with a standard CFL, a dimmer would cause the CFL to dim, and eventually go out altogether. It shortens the CFLs life and, in rare cases, a dimmer operating a CFL could result in fire.



## Compromise and Work-Around

Fortunately, technology is bringing this pair of energy-efficient products together. About forty Energy Star qualified CFLs are specially designed to work with dimmers and say so on the label. These are more expensive than regular CFLs, but reap all the regular energy saving benefits.

Besides price, dimmable CFLs have some other shortcomings: 1) they



only dim to about 20 percent of the rated lumens and when turned down farther they turn off completely, and 2) as incandescents get dimmer the light gets softer -- more romantic you might say -- but dimming CFLs don't share that characteristic.

Be careful about using CFLs in tandem with photocells -- those light-sensitive switches that automatically turn lights

on at dusk. CFLs and photocells sometimes have the same incompatibility problems as CFLs and dimmer switches. The solution: Either ask for a compatible timer (most but not all timers are compatible with CFLs) or buy a dimmable CFL to use with your photocell. Eleven thousand seven hundred one.





In all cases, check the package details of your CFL bulbs and your dimmer to ensure that they are compatible. Only then can these energy savers come together in your home.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



*A combination of proper insulation, energy-efficient windows and doors, shading, and ventilation will usually keep homes cool with a lower amount of energy use in all but the hottest climates.*

Today's Energy Star qualified CFLs turn on instantly, produce no sound, and are available within a warm color range, as well as cooler color tones. Energy Star qualified CFLs:

-  Use at least 2/3 less energy than standard incandescent bulbs to provide the same amount of light, and last up to 10 times longer.
-  Save \$30 or more in energy costs over each bulb's lifetime. Ten thousand six hundred three.
-  Generate 70 percent less heat, so they're safer to operate and can cut energy costs associated with home cooling.
-  Come in different sizes and shapes to fit in almost any fixture, indoors and outdoors.





# Spotlight on Earth Week

One Earth, one chance - that was the motto behind Triton High School's EARTH (Environmental Awareness and Responsibility at Triton High) organization as they recognized Earth Week 2008.

Throughout the week EARTH held numerous activities to recognize the importance of doing one simple thing to make a green difference. On Earth Day, members organized a "Turn It Out Challenge"

which asked faculty and students alike to become more conscious of the energy they use on a daily basis in the school setting.

Exterior classrooms (those containing a window) were asked to turn off all of their lights for the day while interior classrooms were permitted to use half or one switch of



Triton High faculty (located in Dodge Center) proudly displaying the compact fluorescent light bulbs that they received from People's Cooperative in recognition of Earth Day.

lights in their classroom. In recognition of their efforts, EARTH members awarded the faculty with a compact fluorescent light bulb (CFL) donated through People's Cooperative Services.

EARTH would like to extend a tremendous thank you to People's Cooperative Services not only for their donation to Triton High School, but for their recent donation of CFLs to all of their service members. It only takes a simple action such as changing a light bulb to make one become more aware of what actions they can take in their home to help start a chain reaction. *Together, we can all work to make our world a little greener.*

By: Alli Horejsi, Science Teacher  
EARTH Advisor, Triton High School



## MAY 2008 National Electrical Safety Month

May is National Electrical Safety Month, and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is warning consumers that, unlike a fake purse or watch, counterfeit electrical products could pose the risk of injury or death. The electrical products targeted by counterfeiters apply to those used by both consumers and industry. The list includes but is not limited to: counterfeit circuit breakers, power strips, extension cords, batteries and holiday lights which can

cause fires, explosions, shocks and electrocutions.

Often, manufacturers of counterfeit products neglect to use key components or skimp in the manufacturing process in order to save money. While cheaper prices are passed onto consumers, so too are the dangers. Fake consumer products are not tested for compliance to relevant safety standards. Eighteen thousand nine hundred sixty-six.

## Counterfeit? How do I know?

*Some indicators to watch for:*

- the price is much lower than average
- spelling mistakes on the product or packaging
- products normally sold in packages being sold individually
- shoddy appearance of the product or package
- products (particularly electrical products) that have no name brand



# Air Conditioning Load Management

Cool cash awaits - Sign up by June 20, 2008!

Sign up for our NEW cycled central air conditioning load management program by June 20, 2008 to receive **A ONE TIME SIGN UP INCENTIVE OF \$50**. After you sign up and the load management equipment is installed, People's Cooperative Services will credit your account, **A ONE TIME SIGN UP INCENTIVE OF \$50**. Then a \$5 credit will be applied to your account during the months of June, July, and August.




Looking to save a little cash this summer? Check out our new Cycled Central Air Conditioning Load Management Program! At no charge to you, People's will install a radio receiver on your house or central air-conditioning unit. As the electric peak approaches, our power supplier, Dairyland Cooperative Power, sends a signal to the receiver to turn your air conditioner off for 15 minutes, then back on. The receiver continues to cycle 15 minutes on 15 minutes off through the peak period. Our goal is to keep the amount of electricity used in balance with the amount of electricity generated, which results in a reduced need for future power plants. Load management is energy conservation at work.

**To Qualify** — Any central air conditioning unit (no window, wall, or mini-split units) not previously controlled on our Dual Fuel Program is eligible for the \$50 one time sign up incentive and monthly credit.

**Installation** — You don't need to be present for the installation. However, if you have a locked gate, dog or other issue that would prevent access to your outside air-conditioning unit, please schedule an appointment by calling (507) 288-4004. Forms are available at the office or online <http://www.peoplesrec.com/memberservices/index.html>.

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**People's Cooperative Services**

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