

The High Line

By Line

January 2017, vol. 23



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Net Neutrality: A Brief Overview

Through the first decade of the twenty-first century, as internet access and internet use grew rapidly, the federal government wrestled with questions about how to regulate broadband and how much regulation it needed. The issue grew more urgent as more and more content became available online and Internet Service Providers (ISPs) developed more ability to control access to content.

In 2015 the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) formally classified broadband service as a telecommunications service, allowing them to enforce rules that guarantee equal access to online content, thus formalizing what is known as net neutrality. ISPs can, and do, charge varying amounts for different speed service levels. But net neutrality rules prevent ISPs from charging for access to different content or services on the internet or from slowing (throttling) access to content or services. For example, an ISP could not slow down access to Netflix in order to discourage subscribers from using that service so they would be more likely to pay for a different online video service, such as one owned by the same ISP. The neutrality rules prevent ISPs from blocking certain types of connections, such as the VPNs that are often used by businesses to remotely access their company's network when employees are out of the office.

Opponents of net neutrality express concern that ISPs will not be able to manage their networks safely and efficiently. Several large technology companies, such as IBM and Cisco, argue that classifying broadband as a telecommunications service will slow expansion of broadband networks by limiting revenue potential. Other groups worry that net neutrality regulations are over-reaching and will restrict innovation and growth in the broadband industry.

In December 2017, the FCC repealed its net neutrality rules. As with most federal regulations, this decision will be debated for some time, both in courts and in Congress. Many of us remember life before the internet. Although ubiquitous today, it is a new service and it will take time for providers, users, and governments to agree on the best way to balance competition with fairness and protection for consumers.

For True North Broadband subscribers, we are not changing how we deliver service or how our consumers can access content. We will continue to provide you with the open and dependable service we always have. True North Broadband supports an open internet that allows users to access the content they want without discrimination. We will not prevent our subscribers from sending or receiving legal content or using legal applications. We do not, and will not, speed up or slow down subscribers' access to websites or online material.

Arrowhead Cooperative undertook the project to build a fiber-to-the-home network in Cook County because of the need for broadband internet service in our community. We take our responsibility to provide a reliable, quality service seriously with fair and clear policies that our subscribers can depend upon. True North Broadband is a service we are proud to provide; It is the same service we rely on for connection at our office, for our technicians in the field, and for ourselves and our families at home.

If you have any questions about net neutrality or about broadband internet access, please contact us at truenorth@arrowhead.coop or 218-663-9030.

YOU get the credit

It's time for you to get the credit —capital credits, that is— for helping build, sustain, and grow your local electric cooperative. At their monthly meeting on December 20th, the Board of Directors approved the distribution of \$336,380.47 in Capital Credits to members from 1991. We expect to be mailing checks to those members at the end of January 2018.

WHAT ARE CAPITAL CREDITS?

An electric cooperative operates on an at-cost basis by annually “allocating” to each member, based upon the member’s purchase of electricity, operating revenue remaining at the end of the year; later, as financial condition permits, these allocated amounts—capital credits—are retired. Capital credits represent the most significant source of equity for Arrowhead Cooperative. Since a cooperative’s members are also the people the co-op serves, capital credits reflect each member’s ownership in, and contribution of capital to, the cooperative. This differs from dividends investor-owned utilities pay shareholders, who may or may not be customers of the utility.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY COME FROM?

Member-owned, not-for-profit electric co-ops set rates to generate enough money to pay operating

costs, make payments on any loans, and provide an emergency reserve. At the end of each year, we subtract operating expenses from the operating revenue collected during the year. The balance is called an operating “margin.” The funds being distributed in January are from margins in 1991. That may seem like a long time ago. However, those funds helped us keep the lid on rates, reduced the amount of money we needed to borrow from outside lenders to build, maintain, and expand a reliable electric distribution system, and covered emergency expenses.

WHO WILL GET CHECKS?

This year, people who were members of the coop in 1991 will receive capital credits retirements through a check in the mail. The margins are allocated based on how much power the member used in 1991 (total kilowatt hours), reflecting their contribution of capital to, and ownership of, the cooperative during that year.

REMEMBER TO STAY IN TOUCH!

If you move or no longer have electric service with Arrowhead Cooperative it is important that you inform the cooperative of your current address, so that future retirements can be properly mailed to you. If you purchased electricity during the years being retired, then you are entitled to a capital credit retirement, even if you move out of the Arrowhead service area.

Load Management Maintenance Efforts

Arowhead Cooperative’s load management programs are an integral part of managing electric demand on our distribution system. By controlling the time of day these systems use power we avoid purchasing electricity at expensive peak rates. Instead, we are purchasing the bulk of our power at lower-cost, off-peak times which are also when most of the market is providing renewable power.

As part of our commitment to provide reliable service we are conducting field tests and verifications of our load management devices (also called radio receivers) at our members’ service locations. This process helps us ensure our equipment is properly connected and functioning as outlined by the programs.

For those members who are on off-peak or load control programs, please be aware that Arrowhead employees may be on or near your property while

testing the load management radio device. This testing will not interrupt your service. We do not need indoor access to your home or structure; the radio receiver is located outdoors.

Please also ensure that the power is on to the radio receiver at all times. The lights in the upper left-hand corner indicate that the device is powered on. As stated in your agreement, the Cooperative is allowed to inspect the installation and operation of the radio receiver device at all reasonable hours.

If we discover any issues for you, the member, to address we will contact you promptly to discuss them. To assist us, if you need to update your contact information or notify us about any changes to your load management/off-peak service please do so by calling the office.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call us at 218-663-7239.



Winter Bill Help Available

Do you or someone you know need help paying your electric bill this winter? The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule helps homeowners and renters protect and reconnect heat during the winter months beginning October 15.

If you are worried about paying your electric bill on time, contact Arrowhead Cooperative at **800-864-3744 BEFORE** the due date of your bill. You will need to fill out the form in the Cold Weather Law brochure. You can call our office to get a form sent to you. After you return the form to us we can help you make a payment arrangement so that your power does not get shut off.

If you need additional help you can also call the following numbers

Energy Assistance Hotline: 1-800-657-3710

Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA): 1-800-662-5711

Grand Portage Energy Assistance: 218-475-2822

Salvation Army Heatshare: 1-800-842-7279

In order to keep your electricity on you must make a payment arrangement with Arrowhead Cooperative and stay current on your payments. If you are income-eligible, you must also apply for AEOA Assistance. This is true for all residential customers, even senior citizens or families with children.

Please call our office if you have any questions about getting help with your electric bills. We are happy to help you get the assistance you need to stay safe and warm this winter.



We're Proud to Power YOU.

Local, Safe, Reliable Electricity.
For all the ways you live.



Dates to Remember

January 1
January 20
January 25

Office Closed – New Year Holiday
Broadband & Electric bills due
Board of Directors monthly meeting



Winter Safety Reminder

It's time to get out and enjoy winter on the beautiful north shore! We all look forward to our favorite snow sports to keep us active and happy all season long. But remember that dangers can be hidden under the snow. Deep snowfall combined with the piles we accumulate during shoveling and plowing can cover up j-boxes, transformers, and guy wires. When you're skiing, skijoring, or snowmobiling please stay away from power lines and don't use the power right of way as a path. The snow makes it harder to see our equipment and a collision can be deadly. Many wonderful groups in Cook County groom trails for winter recreation. Stay on the trails and stay safe!

Right-Of-Way

Rights-of-way clearing pauses during the winter months. We will resume as soon weather permits. Keep in mind, clearing and hazard tree removal can happen at any time, in any area as needed.

What can you do to help?

- Please be sure the right of way is clear of personal items to ensure the mowers and equipment can pass through with ease.
- Brushing and/or mowing your private right-of-way from the meter to your home, following your electric or fiber line, would be extremely helpful. The suggested width is 10 feet for both overhead and underground services.

Please mark survey pins, septic systems, well heads, wire or fencing with a five foot permanent reflective marker post within the right-of-way, and remove any personal items that may be damaged by flying debris. Arrowhead Cooperative will not accept liability for damage of these items if not notified. If you do not live at your service address, please call the office to inform us of known obstacles in your right-of-way.

Arrowhead Cooperative encourages members to contact the office with any questions or concerns regarding Right-of-Way clearing.



Arrowhead Cooperative True North Broadband

Post Office Box 39
5401 West Hwy. 61
Lutsen, Minnesota 55612-0039
Phone 218-663-7239
Toll Free 1-800-864-3744
Fax 218-663-7850

www.arrowhead.coop
www.truenorthbroadband.com

General Manager: Joe Pandey
Board President: Scott Harrison
Newsletter Editor: Yusef Orest & Sara McManus
Cooperative Board Meeting last Thursday of each month @ 9:00 a.m. with the exception of November and December due to the holidays.

