

John Lipke

- 1. Minnesota's current net metering laws allow co-op members who install solar and small wind on their property to avoid paying their fair share for the infrastructure required to provide them with electricity when the sun isn't shining or the wind isn't blowing. Those costs are then shifted onto their neighbors. As more rural electric cooperative members add solar and small wind there is cost-shifting onto others. What do you think about Minnesota's current net metering laws? What role should the state play in deciding how electric co-ops address these members' desire to add renewable energy?**

Like all subsidies or adjustments for a multitude of business interests I believe these will come to an end at some prescribed time in the future. As a agribusiness person at the time I recall looking at wind energy as an investment about 15 or 20 years ago when it was in its infancy. I believe at that time NSP had a great deal to do with writing then current legislation as a trade off in the nuclear waste question. At that time it was an electrical energy problem solved in part by the electrical industry. Like many things the solution at the time was perhaps not perfect.

- 2. Co-ops exist because people in rural areas worked together to form non-profit organizations to serve rural Minnesotans. Now, third party companies have become more active in trying to operate within cooperative territories. These third party companies are looking to take the most profitable customers and leave the cost of maintaining the grid in the rural areas of Minnesota to fewer and fewer rural residents. How do you believe situations with third party companies should be handled?**

To begin with I believe it is incumbent on the specific cooperatives to build a competitive program serving the varied needs of the customers within their territories just like any other small business person in a competitive business. This would eliminate much of the exiting. By in large I think most cooperatives do a good job on this aspect. I am a rural cooperative member and I have not had major differences with my cooperative management. If elected, and you have specific concerns as a cooperative my door would always be open to address your specific needs. I come from a long family line of cooperative supporters. My grandfather went door to door in rural McLeod and Sibley Counties selling his neighbors on the necessity and viability of cooperative power.

- 3. The Minnesota Legislature has implemented or increased mandates of certain renewable generation sources while electric cooperatives have**

continued to integrate and increasing amount of renewable energy into our generation mix. We have also helped consumers save money by teaching them ways to lower their individual demand for electricity. Do you support state mandates on renewable energy and conservation? What role do you think the state should play in determining the mix of energy used by electric co-ops?

Mandate is a strong word. A good solution would be for business and government to meet and come to workable terms on a mutually agreeable energy program. Mandates are also in part based on federal policy and to some degree on individual states natural resources and cost. What is good for one state is not necessarily good for another state. I have no preconceived policy agenda on this issue.

- 4. Minnesota leads the country in the number of stray voltage cases landing in courts. Minnesota has seen an increasing number of questionable cases brought to court due to the increase in consultants looking to benefit financially from a lawsuit. How do you believe these issues should be addressed in Minnesota? What qualifications should people who testify on stray voltage cases have?**

A long time ago a wise judge or attorney pointed out to me that in this country we all are entitled to our day in court so to speak. This does not always seem fair to all parties however the system is the best in the world in most opinions. I would point out here that the consultant doesn't do the suing. The people hire him/her. I believe the qualifications of people testifying on stray voltage cases would come under the perusal of the court.

- 5. In the case of natural disasters, municipal utilities are entitled to a state match during FEMA-declared disaster to help repair damage to electric lines and infrastructure. Co-ops have access to state funds, but only through an application process with their county office that is not guaranteed. What role should the state play in helping rural electric co-ops turn the lights back on after natural disasters?**

From my experience all legislators come together in times of disaster to help with infrastructure based on damage and need. I think for the most part they do a good job in serving as a safety net in times of disaster. If you as a cooperative feel the need for greater attention in this area I would certainly bring your concerns to the table.