



# Annual meeting held in Maddock

BY BRITTNEE WILSON

**N**orthern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) held its 27th annual meeting June 13 at the Benson County Event Center in Maddock. After registering and receiving a complimentary gift for attending, members visited with each other, while enjoying a homemade meal of roast beef, mashed potatoes and gravy, complete with gelato for dessert.

The meeting kicked off with the national anthem performed by Alliana Freund, the daughter of NPEC members Patrick Freund and Angela Freund. President Tracy Boe led the meeting, which featured guest speakers, Alliana Freund, who shared her experiences as an Electric Cooperative Youth Tour delegate, and McKade Kleinknect from STAR Energy Services, about considerations for residential solar power.

Reports were presented by Boe, General Manager Seth Syverson and Treasurer Randy Simon. The business portion of the meeting reflected on highlights through 2022, including cooperative finances, reliability, system improvements, upcoming projects and updates from NPEC's power suppliers.

2022 was another successful year for NPEC. The

cooperative was diligent in keeping rates stable throughout the year, with the support of increased energy sales and firm power supply costs. Growth was on par with previous years, as the cooperative completed 123 new services and 45 service heavy-ups. Energy sales increased in the residential, seasonal and large commercial accounts, while there was a slight downturn in small commercial and irrigation accounts.

AUGUST 2023

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President **Tracy Boe** alongside two students who each won a \$1,000 scholarship in the luck-of-the-draw scholarship contest. Congratulations, **Lane Benson**, left, and **Alliana Freund**!

Year-end sales were up 8.68%, which is equal to over 34 million kilowatt-hours. While 2022 was considered a successful year, it wasn't without its challenges related to major weather events and increasing supply chain costs.

A financial update for the Operation Round Up (ORU) program was given. In 2022, \$38,075 in grants was awarded to help 48 individuals, families and local organizations in need. A total of \$900,237 in ORU grants has been distributed on behalf of the membership since 1998.



**Jaylen Anderson**, left, the Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship winner, with President **Tracy Boe**.

An election was held to elect one board director to fill an open seat in each of three districts. The cooperative received three qualified petitions. NPEC bylaws state if petitions have been properly received for each district, there will be no nominations from the floor. Congratulations to incumbents Bruce Olsen (District 1), Curtis Wiesz (District 2) and Lori Carlson (District 3), as they were reelected to serve another three-year term on the board of directors.

Following the election, two students were recognized for their achievements, including Jaylen Anderson,



the winner of the Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship, and Kaitlyn Erickstad, the winning delegate to the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

Wrapping up the 27th annual meeting, two member dependents' names were drawn for a \$1,000 luck-of-the-draw scholarship. Congratulations to the winners, Lane Benson of Maddock and Alliana Freund of Cando. After

adjournment, cash door prizes totaling \$550 were given to members in attendance.

NPEC thanks all who participated in this year's annual meeting. To take part in the future of your cooperative, NPEC encourages every member to attend your annual meeting. Participation is a key element to the co-op's success. We hope to see you again next year! ■



**Bruce Olsen**



**Curtis Wiesz**



**Lori Carlson**

*The membership elected Bruce Olsen, Curtis Wiesz and Lori Carlson to serve on Northern Plains Electric Cooperative's board of directors. Each director will serve a three-year term.*



Northern Plains Electric Cooperative President **Tracy Boe** and General Manager **Seth Syverson** present a donation of \$100,000 to the Towner County Medical Center (TCMC). Left to right are **Tammy Larson**, TCMC CFO; **Ben Bucher**, TCMC CEO; **Boe** and **Syverson**.

## NPEC donates to new medical center

The Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) board of directors has approved a \$100,000 donation to the Towner County Medical Center in Cando.

The donation, which will be distributed at \$20,000 a year for five years, will go toward constructing a 76,000-square-foot critical access hospital and nursing home. The new facility will have a rural health clinic, emergency room, state-of-the-art operating room, 30-bed skilled nursing home, five-bed basic care home and an eight-bed critical access hospital.

Included in the construction is a new football field and a six-lane track, with long jump, triple jump, shot put, discus and javelin fields for the North Star school, as the land for the new facility site was previously the school's football field and track.

"This is not just a project for the hospital and school, this is a project for the community of Cando," said Ben Bucher, chief executive officer of Towner County Medical Center. "We hope this brings attention to the

community of Cando, and inspires current as well as future residents to live here, work here and enjoy the small-town North Dakota life we all love."

The facility is expected to open in 2024 and will be served by NPEC. ■



# STAY SAFE ON THE FARM



Overhead power lines are necessary to deliver electricity to hardworking farmers and ranchers, but those same power lines can also be deadly if not treated with respect. This can be a busy time for farmers, but safety, especially around electrical hazards, should always be a priority. Your local electric cooperative urges you to also watch for electrical hazards around the farm or ranch.

## BE AWARE

Farmers and their equipment should always be 10 feet away from power lines on all sides. Field cultivators and sprayers can often reach as high as 12 feet in the air. Practice extreme caution and use a spotter to make sure you stay far away from power lines when you use tall equipment.

If you have purchased new equipment, be aware of antennas or other attachments that may pose new hazards. A newer, bigger piece of equipment may no longer clear a line. In addition, shifting soil may also affect whether or not machinery avoids power lines from year to year.

Power lines also may sag over the years. If power lines on your property are sagging, contact your electric cooperative to repair the lines. Never move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.

Overhead power lines are not the only electric hazard on the farm. Pole guy wires, used to stabilize utility poles, are grounded. However, when one of the guy wires is broken, it can become charged with electricity. If you break a guy wire, call the cooperative to fix it. Don't do it yourself.

"Overhead power lines often fade into the landscape, since we are so used to seeing them," says Josh Cabler, operations manager of Northern Plains Electric. "During harvest, as well as year-round, precautions are needed around power

sources that include overhead and underground power lines."

## FOLLOW THESE OTHER TIPS:

- Look over work areas carefully for overhead power lines and utility poles. Make sure you, your family and employees know the location of overhead power lines, and use routes to avoid the lines when moving equipment. Do this every year, as equipment sizes and soil conditions may change.
- Be aware of increased heights of equipment, especially new equipment with higher antennas.
- Avoid moving large equipment alone. Have someone watch as you move equipment to ensure you are clear of power lines.
- Be extra careful when working around trees and brush; they often make it difficult to see power lines.

## WHAT IF YOU CONTACT A POWER LINE?

- First, DON'T climb out. If your equipment does contact a power line, stay in the cab and call 911 for help. Warn others to stay away and wait until the electric cooperative arrives.
- If you must leave the combine or tractor due to immediate danger, such as a fire, jump as far away as you can, making sure that no part of your body touches the combine or tractor and the ground at the same time. Land with both feet together and hop or shuffle your feet a few inches at a time, making sure to never break contact with the ground or cause separation between your feet.
- Once you're off the combine or tractor, do not go back until your local electric co-op disconnects the power line. ■

**EMPLOYEE NEWS**

**NPEC hires summer help**



**Carson Lovin**



**Garrin Daeley**

**N**orthern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) has hired two temporary apprentice lineworkers for summer help. Carson Lovin and Garrin Daeley began working for the cooperative in June to help NPEC

through its construction season.

Lovin, originally from Devils Lake, is working with the Cando line crew supervised by Foreman Randy Thomson. Lovin, who graduated from the Bismarck State College (BSC) lineworker program in 2019, worked in construction in Spokane, Wash., before joining NPEC. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting and fishing. Lovin said he is looking forward to learning all about NPEC's procedures and its distribution system.

Hailing from Harvey, Daeley has joined the Jamestown crew supervised by Foreman Beau Bredahl. A 2023 spring graduate of the lineworker program at BSC, Daeley is looking forward to contributing toward the communities he is serving. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting, fishing and golf.

NPEC welcomes these men to our crews! ■

**Employees recognized for years of service**

**E**very year, Northern Plains Electric Cooperative expresses appreciation to those employees who have achieved a significant work anniversary. This year, we recognize 12 employees who have put in a collective 200 years of service to the cooperative.

We thank these employees for their commitment to our cooperative and the role they each play in providing our members with safe, reliable and affordable electric service. Please join us in expressing appreciation for their many years of dedicated service. ■



**Brittnee Wilson**  
Communications  
5 years



**Keaten Mikkelsen**  
Lineworker  
5 years



**Tom Moravec**  
Lineworker  
5 years



**Ashten Dewald**  
Engineering manager  
10 years



**Travis Triepke**  
IT technician  
10 years



**Cheryl Belle**  
Business manager  
15 years



**Jill Wright-Van Dyke**  
Office assistant  
15 years



**Todd Hafner**  
IT technician  
15 years



**Brian St. Germaine**  
Line foreman  
25 years



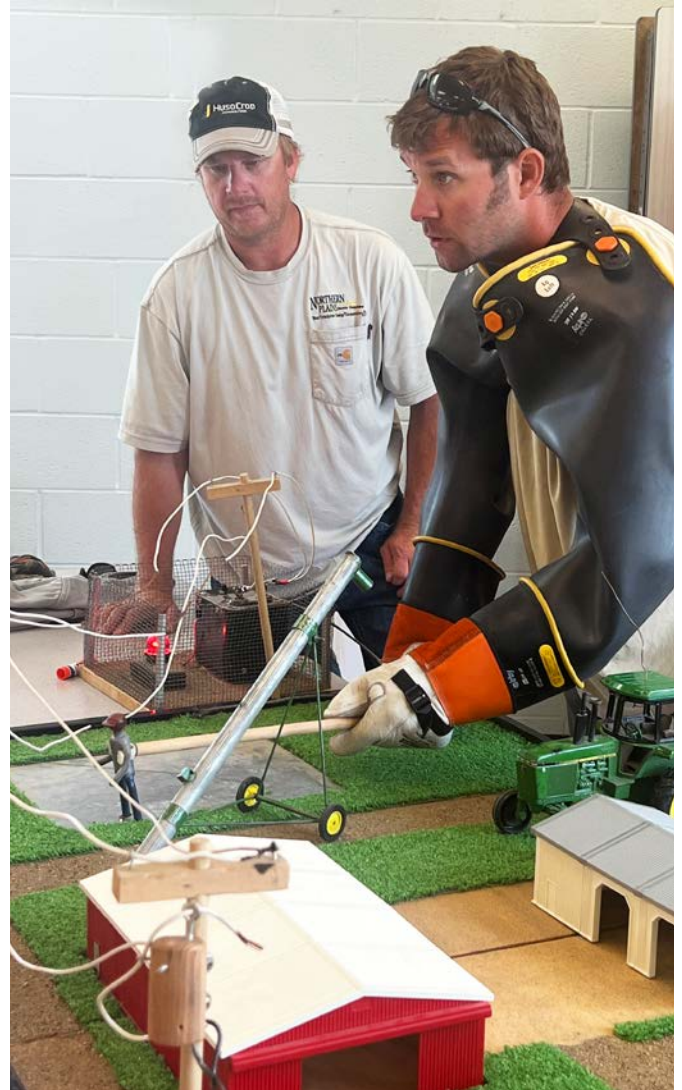
**Tami Aljets**  
Accountant  
25 years



**Scott Buchholtz**  
IT manager  
40 years



**Tom Zink**  
Lineworker  
45 years



Youngsters **Shepherd Gibbens**, left, and **Finlay Murchie**, right, show their excitement when trying on a lineworker's rubber gloves during Northern Plains Electric Cooperative's safety talk.

Cando line foreman **Randy Thomson** looks on as lineworker **Keaten Mikkelsen** demonstrates what would happen if a person contacted an energized line.

## Spreading the word on electrical safety

BY BRITTNEE WILSON

**N**orthern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) took advantage of the opportunity to get in front of youngsters during the Cando Community Library's summer reading program to show the importance of electrical safety, especially on the farm and how lineworkers stay safe on the job.

On June 20, two of NPEC's lineworkers showed over 70 students what special safety gear lineworkers wear to protect them on the job. Using a miniature farm model, complete with working electricity, they demonstrated

what happens to equipment and people when coming into contact with an energized line. The lineworkers demonstrated a couple different scenarios of how kids can stay safe around electricity.

"When programs like these are presented to us, it's an easy yes," said Communications Specialist Brittnee Wilson. "It is very important to Northern Plains to get out into the community to teach anyone, especially children, the importance of electrical safety." ■

# Members' cents go a long way

**A**t the June meeting, the Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) Operation Round Up board of directors approved grants totaling \$8,700 to help support worthy causes.

These charitable grants are made possible through the generosity of NPEC members who voluntarily elect to have their electric bills rounded up to the next dollar.

Since the program's beginning in October 1998, grants totaling \$909,737 have been awarded to 1,265 local charitable causes.

### Grants approved in June include:

- Sharon Ludwig, New Rockford, medical expenses
- Bruce Schley, Cando, medical expenses
- Sharon Neidert, Cando, medical expenses
- Presbyterian Church of Rolla/St. John, purchase of AED machines
- Ramsey County Fair Foundation, new multipurpose event center expenses
- North Star Music Europe trip, students' travel expenses

If you would like additional information about this worthy program, please contact NPEC by calling 800-882-2500 or you may obtain guidelines or download applications at [www.nplains.com](http://www.nplains.com). The board will meet again in September to review applications. The application deadline is Aug. 20. ■



## NORTHERN PLAINS

*Electric Cooperative*

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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