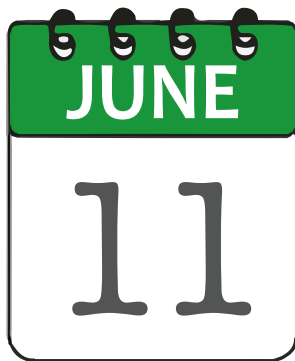


# SAVE THE DATE



NORTHERN  
PLAINS Electric Cooperative

## Annual Meeting Tuesday, June 11, 2024

North Star High School gymnasium  
Cando, North Dakota

Registration/Complementary meal: 5:00-6:00 P.M.  
Meeting: 6:00 P.M.

## Why attend your annual meeting?

- Every member has a voice. Make your voice heard.
- Hear cooperative updates and learn about industry issues and how they affect your electric service.
- Elect three members to serve on the board of directors.
- Enjoy a free meal and door prizes.
- Three \$1,000 luck-of-the-draw college scholarships will be awarded.

More information can be found at [www.nplains.com](http://www.nplains.com).

### Vote by mail

Elections will take place at the annual meeting to fill three positions on the board of directors. However, the membership will be mailed ballots prior to the annual meeting as a voting option. Under the bylaws, no nominations are accepted from the floor at the annual meeting.

A qualified member of Northern Plains Electric Cooperative may become a candidate for election

by submitting a petition no later than April 10. To obtain a petition, members must request forms from our office in either Carrington or Cando or call 800-882-2500 for more options. Mail-in ballots will be mailed to the membership in the middle of May. ■

APRIL 2024

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Lineworkers power life
- Youth Tour winner selected
- Border View Elk Ranch



The Northern Plains Electric Cooperative north crew, left to right, back row, are **Randy Thomson, Bob David**, tree crew, **Stan Pierson, Kevin Larson, Dave Jaeger, Brian St. Germaine, Barry Heisler**, front row from left to right, **Jordan Omlie, Doyle Schwanke, Keaten Mikkelsen, Jon Tandeski, Chris Schroeder, James Rosencrans and Brad Johnson**.



The Northern Plains Electric Cooperative south crew, from left to right, back row, are **Beau Bredahl**, Operations Manager **Josh Cabler, Trevor Wick, Brian Backer, Brad Weninger**, front row left to right, **Shannon Petersen, Jamie Harrington, Laine Hoyt, Tom Moravec and Dustin Peterson**. Not pictured: Leo Halko, Jon Sjostrom and Tom Zink.

## WHATEVER IT TAKES: Lineworkers power life

BY BRITTNEE WILSON

**L**ineworkers have one of the 10 most dangerous jobs in the country. Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) employs 24 lineworkers who work during rain or shine, often in challenging conditions, to ensure you have reliable electricity.

### The danger

Lineworkers have to be aware of their surroundings and the safety of the person next to them. Lineworkers often work on energized power lines. They work with an element of danger that requires concentration, and there is no margin for error. Move just the wrong way or lose focus for a split second, and it could be deadly. The environment compounds the pressure, because when we need power the most is usually when the weather is the worst. Lineworkers often work in storms with rain and wind, during extreme heat and cold, in the dark or on the side of the road next to fast-moving traffic. Yes, it's dangerous, but that's what they are trained to do.

### The physical demand

The daily expectations of a lineworker are physically demanding, but you won't hear any lineworkers complain. They know what they signed up for – loading heavy materials, climbing poles and getting in and out of buckets. When they go places the trucks can't, they might be hiking loaded with 40 pounds of personal protective equipment. But that's the job. Most lineworkers are just glad to be outside.

### The sacrifices

There are some sacrifices to being a lineworker. Lineworkers are often first on the scene of an emergency, seeing devastating car accidents, structure fires and damage from severe storms. They don't know what type of situation they will face or when they will face it. Lineworkers get calls all hours and in the middle of the night, often missing events and family time, but lineworker families are very supportive.

## It's worth it

One thing that makes this job worthwhile is the camaraderie. The line crews are a brotherhood. In this work, lineworkers have to depend on the person beside them in life-or-death circumstances. It's a culture of trust, teamwork and service. It's all about keeping the teammate beside you safe and the lights on for everybody else.

Even when it's cold and wet, lineworkers will work to keep people warm. Lineworkers find satisfaction in hearing someone yell "thank you" from the window

after power is restored or seeing people flipping the light switches on their porches after an outage is restored. No matter how tired our lineworkers are or how long they have been working, they say that feeling always makes it worth it.

This is why NPEC joins in celebrating National Lineworker Appreciation Day every April. Due to our lineworkers dedication and sense of service to the community, please join us April 8 and thank a lineworker. ■

# Freund earns once-in-a-lifetime trip to Washington, D.C.

**N**orthern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) is proud to announce the winner of its 2024 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour essay competition, Sean Freund. In June, Freund will join nearly 2,000 students from across the country on a weeklong trip to our nation's capital, where he will visit historic locations, observe the inner workings of our nation's government, meet members of North Dakota's congressional delegation and learn about the important roles electric cooperatives play in their communities, country and world. The all-expense-paid trip is sponsored by NPEC.

"Electric cooperatives do much more than keep the lights on. They're also committed to improving the lives of the members and communities they serve. One of the ways NPEC demonstrates this commitment is through its participation in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour," says General Manager Seth Syverson. "The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow. Youth Tour gives students the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the world around them, while developing leadership skills. We are proud to provide this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to empower their future."

Freund, a sophomore at North Star High School, is one of 18 essay winners representing 15 North Dakota electric cooperatives on this year's Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Freund earned the free trip to Washington, D.C., by answering the essay question, "What moment in American history do you wish you had been a part of and what would you have contributed?" The annual essay writing contest is open to high school



*Sean Freund*

students in their sophomore or junior year whose parents or guardians are members of a participating electric cooperative.

Freund is the son of Angela Freund and Patrick Freund of Cando. He is active in football, baseball, track, weightlifting, Students Against Destructive Decisions, Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, choir and band. In his spare time, he enjoys golfing, fishing, skating, skiing and spending time with his friends. ■



COURTESY PHOTOS BY DIANE NELSON

## Border View Elk Ranch raises majestic animals

BY BRITTNEE WILSON

**C**had Lawler, a second-generation elk rancher, owns and operates the same ranch where his mother grew up near Hansboro in Towner County.

The Lawler ranch, located on the northern plains of North Dakota along the Canadian border, was homesteaded in 1886. Through generations, the Lawlers raised Polled Shorthorn cattle and Columbia sheep, alongside grain farming, later adding Rocky Mountain elk to the ranch. The Lawlers' little slice of heaven was later named Border View Elk Ranch.

For over a century, the Lawlers were avid outdoorsmen and had a true passion for wildlife, which was passed down through the generations, along with a love of caring for their land.

However, as a child and young adult, Chad did not have the desire to work on the family ranch. He obtained a degree in criminal justice before joining the U.S. Army. He served four-and-a-half years of active duty as a field artillery officer, with one 15-month tour in Iraq and one year in the North Dakota National Guard, before leaving due to medical reasons.

Shortly after his service, Chad, who was living in Mandan at the time, found himself making many trips to the family ranch to work with his uncle and the elk herd.

"Something changed after I attended an elk ranch seminar," he says. "For me, elk are therapeutic and majestic. They are smart, inquisitive and notice everything."

In 2010, Chad invested in the family ranch, partnering with his uncle, Brian Lawler. Chad worked closely with Brian for four years until Brian's retirement.

"In the beginning, there was a lot of learning, and the school of hard knocks was a great teacher," Chad says.

Extensive time was spent expanding the genetic base of the herd to get the ranch where it is today. The ranch's Rocky Mountain bull elk are a product of more than 20 years of an intense breeding program that focuses primarily on growing a big and wide 6x6 frame with long tines and a huge mass.

"My Uncle Gerald has been very helpful over the years. His knowledge of genetics and years of experience have been priceless," Chad says.



Chad attributes his success to many family members and one hired hand. In the 10 years Chad has owned the ranch, he has expanded the elk herd from 86 to 300.

### Expansion efforts

To diversify the ranch, elk hunting was added to the mix in 2020, with guided big game hunters each fall.

“It was my goal from the start to be an all-inclusive ranch that includes raising, breeding and hunting,” Chad says.

With hunts custom-tailored, the individual hunters can express their abilities and wants for their hunt, and Chad delivers. The ranch can accommodate those with physical disabilities that prevent them from trekking through rough terrain. A UTV is utilized to transport those to either a ground or tower blind, along with help harvesting the animal.

### Antler benefits

Bulls produce a new set of antlers every year, beginning in early spring. The previous year’s antlers naturally fall off, as new antler growth emerges and begins to develop, usually beginning in March or April.

Most recently, the ranch expanded into selling premium elk antler chews for dogs under the name, Border View Elk Chews. A registered Pride of Dakota company, it offers long-lasting dog bones for aggressive chewers. Utilizing the sheds, these chews are all natural and nutritious with no mess or order. They are a great alternative to plastic chew toys and raw hides.

The ranch, which is served by Northern Plains Electric Cooperative, also uses antlers in the velvet stage. Elk velvet antlers are considered a renewable and eco-friendly resource. During the velvet stage, antlers can grow up to 1 inch per day. Elk antlers are among the fastest growing animal tissue on the planet. Annually, the ranch harvests the velvet antlers, then ships them



**“For me, elk are therapeutic and majestic. They are smart, inquisitive and notice everything.”**

— Chad Lawler

to be freeze dried and made into supplements. Benefits include joint pain relief, decreased inflammation and improved blood circulation, among others.

Even though the ranch has expanded into new adventures, Chad operates it much the same as his forefathers before him. Having lived here for generations, the Lawlers have learned to manage their ranch to survive drought, severe winters, predators and any other obstacles.

Although there can be hardships, the sound of an elk bugle or the sight of calves running through the prairie at sunset melt away a hard day’s work.

More information on Border View Elk Ranch can be found at [www.borderviewelkranch.com](http://www.borderviewelkranch.com). ■



*Border View Elk Chews offers long-lasting dog bones for aggressive chewers.*

## PRIVATE FACILITIES: WHAT DOES NOT GET MARKED?

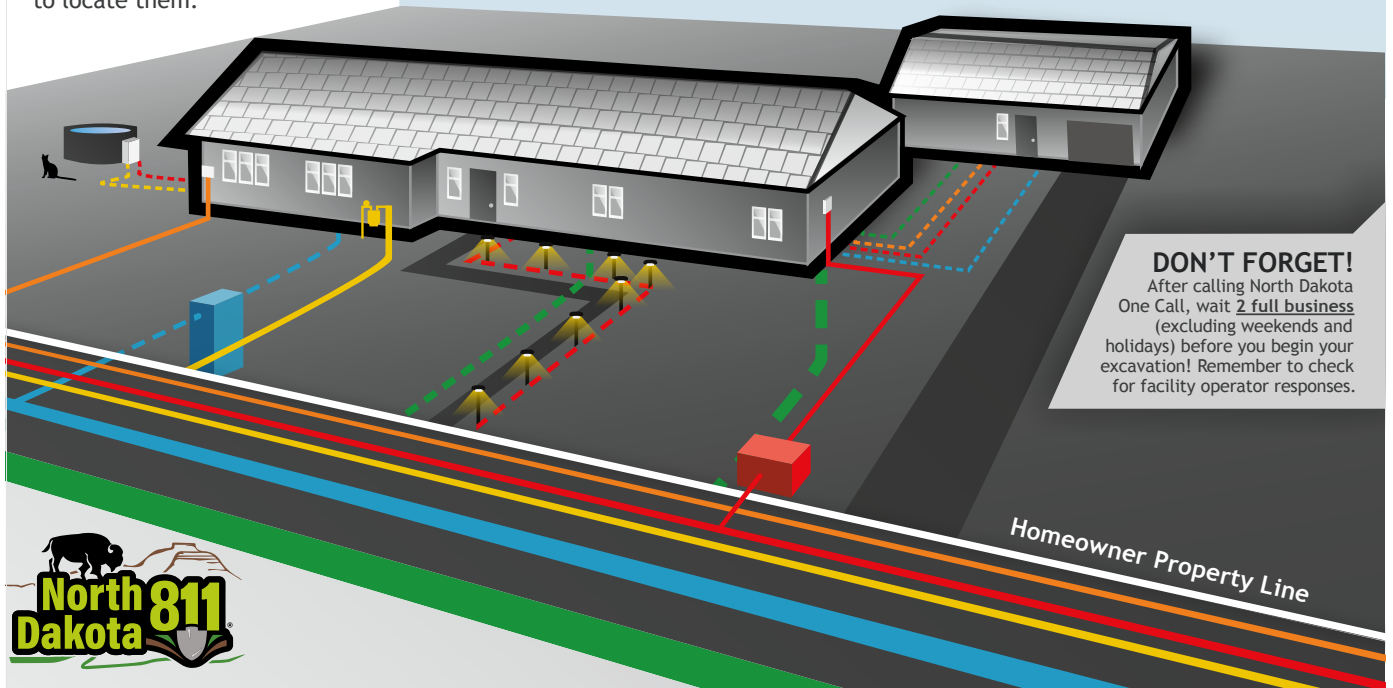
Private underground facilities, such as private utility lines and private distribution networks, do not get marked by facility operators. When a property owner or tenant has any type of private underground facility, they are responsible to locate those facilities or hire someone to locate them.

- ELECTRIC
- GAS, OIL, AND PROPANE
- PHONE AND CABLE
- WATER
- SEWER

Customer-owned lines usually include any that serve outbuildings, hot tubs, security lighting, pools, and natural gas grills.

The free locating service available through North Dakota One Call (NDOC) applies **ONLY** to public facility operators. The diagram below shows a variety of utilities, some owned by the utility and some by the homeowner.

Those utilities marked by dotted lines are typically owned by the property owner. Those lines will **NOT** be marked by contacting NDOC. Private locating services will mark these for a fee.



### DON'T FORGET!

After calling North Dakota One Call, wait **2 full business** (excluding weekends and holidays) before you begin your excavation! Remember to check for facility operator responses.

# Call before you dig!

Planting a tree? Planning construction work? Remember to contact North Dakota One Call first! The first step to any project is safety, and damaging an underground facility while you dig can cause injury or even death. Numerous utility lines may be buried on your property, ranging from electric and telephone lines to water and sewer lines, but North Dakota One Call will help you locate these lines before your project begins. Contact North Dakota One Call and utility line owners will locate and mark their lines. These locates do not include any lines you may have installed to your private facilities, such as detached garages, wells or yard lights. Those private facilities are the responsibility of the homeowner and excavator and will not be marked by the utilities.

**For marking of all other underground utilities,  
go online at [www.ndonecall.com](http://www.ndonecall.com) or call 811 or 800-795-0555.**

*It's free, it's simple and it's the law.*

# NPEC meter replacement program

**N**orthern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) serves over 18,000 total meters. To improve efficiency, NPEC implemented a meter maintenance program in 2021. The program's goal was to replace every meter on our system with a new meter over a four-year period.

“The reasons for the meter changes are twofold: the ages of the existing meters and the high meter maintenance costs we are experiencing as they age,” said Scott Buchholtz, NPEC’s IT manager.

In 2021, NPEC started changing meters on the south edge of our service area and moved north, in our service territory, in hopes of completing the meter exchanges for all members by the end of 2024. However, due to a limited supply of meters across the country, the program was delayed. The supply chain issues created insufficient new meter availability, resulting in the pausing of this program in 2022. The program started again in July 2023 and will continue now through 2025.

Members in the counties of Benson, Pierce and southern Towner can expect their meter to be changed out this spring and summer.

“As of this writing, we have enough meters to get up to the city of Cando in the southern part of Towner County, but we are anticipating a meter shipment to arrive this summer that would get us through the city of Cando,” said Operations Manager Josh Cabler.

NPEC expects to complete the meter exchange program in 2025 for northern Towner and all of Rolette counties.

NPEC wants to inform members that those on the list to get their meter exchanged will receive an automated phone call informing them of an estimated timeframe when lineworkers are in their area and will need access to their meter. Most members will notice a short outage while the lineworker is changing the meter and inspecting the meter socket.

## Give us a call

To be informed of when our meter maintenance program will be in your area, your current telephone number must be on file. To update your information, contact our office at 800-882-2500.

Our members’ well-being is our top priority. If you’d like to confirm whether our lineworkers are working in your area, give us a call. Vehicles will be marked with the Northern Plains Electric Cooperative logo. ■



**Play to  
win contest**  
**\$25 credit**  
**from Northern Plains  
Electric Cooperative**

**Congratulations to Marlin Weisenberger  
of New Rockford.**

Marlin is our latest winner of a \$25 bill credit for playing the February bill insert crossword puzzle contest. Members can regularly check bill inserts for future contests.

# Budget billing Sign up through May

Are you having trouble budgeting your monthly bill? If so, budget billing is available to all residential members who have a zero balance and have established a 12-month history with Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC).

Budget billing allows you to pay a set amount, despite the fluctuations in energy usage as seasons change. To determine your budget billing amount, NPEC will average your current and last 11 months of bills. There will be variations each month, but the change will not be as drastic and will make budgeting easier.

If you would like to sign up for budget billing, call NPEC's office to see if you qualify. To sign up, you will need to apply before May 31. Members who do not have electric heat may be able to sign up during the off-season. ■



## CELEBRATE

the Power Behind Your Power.

Lineworker Appreciation Day | April 8



# NORTHERN PLAINS

Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

An equal opportunity provider and employer.

**CANDO OFFICE:**  
609 4th Ave.  
Cando, ND 58324

**OFFICE HOURS:**  
Monday-Friday  
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**CARRINGTON OFFICE:**  
1515 West Main  
Carrington, ND 58421

www.nplains.com  
justask@nplains.com  
800-882-2500

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