

NPEC's 28th annual meeting



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Great turnout for NPEC's 28th annual meeting

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) held its 28th annual meeting on June 11 at the North Star school in Cando. Some 116 members registered and received a weather station gift for attending. The membership visited with each other while enjoying a broasted chicken meal prepared by The Q Restaurant, which served 229 meals in one hour.

The meeting kicked off with a beautiful rendition of the national anthem performed by a quartet of North Star students selected for the Northern Musicians European Aboard Tour. We were pleased to have guest speaker Kaitlyn Erickstad, a North Star High School student, share her experiences as an Electric Cooperative Youth Tour delegate in the summer of 2023.

The business portion of the meeting reflected on highlights through 2023, including cooperative finances, reliability, system improvements, upcoming projects and updates from our power suppliers. Reports

were presented by President Tracy Boe, General Manger Seth Syverson and Treasurer Randy Simon.

One of the primary purposes of the business meeting is the election of three board members. The cooperative received four qualified petitions. Members had the option to mail their ballot or cast their vote at the meeting. Congratulations to incumbents Tracy Boe (District 1), Randy Simon (District 2) and Judy Geier (District 3), as they were reelected to serve another three-year term on the board of directors. NPEC thanks Jim Harmon for his interest in running for a seat on the NPEC board of directors.

Following the election, three students were recognized for their achievements. Wyatt Berg and Lindsey Nyhagen are winners of a Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship and Sean Freund is the winner of the 2024 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

Wrapping up the 28th annual meeting, the names of three member dependents were drawn for a \$1,000

luck-of-the-draw scholarship. Congratulations to winners Ethan Gast, Carrington, Ty Mehlhoff, Tuttle, and Sophie Garr, Carrington. After adjournment, cash door prizes totaling \$550 were raffled to members in attendance.

NPEC directors, management and employees thank all members and guests for attending this year's annual meeting. We value your interest, and participation is a key element to the co-op's success. We hope to see you at next year's meeting! ■



Members visit while enjoying a meal prepared by The Q Restaurant, which served 229 meals.



Guest speaker **Kaitlyn Erickson** kept the membership invested in her speech and photos from the 2023 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.



General Manager **Seth Syverson**, left, and President **Tracy Boe**, far right, congratulate the three seniors whose names were randomly drawn for a luck-of-the-draw scholarships. Each student won a \$1,000 scholarship to their school of choice, and include, left to right, **Ethan Gast**, **Ty Mehlhoff** and **Sophie Garr**.

NPEC hires summer help

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) has hired two temporary apprentice lineworkers for summer help. Jacob Reimche and Tanner Voeller began working for the cooperative in May to help NPEC through its construction season.

Reimche, originally from Bottineau, is working with the Jamestown line crew under Foreman Beau Bredahl. Reimche, who graduated from lineworker school at Bismarck State College (BSC) in 2024, is also in the National Guard. In his spare time, he enjoys fishing, hunting and the outdoors. He is most looking forward to learning more about the lineworker's truck.

Voeller, originally from Minot, joined the Cando line crew under Foreman Randy Thomson. A 2024 spring graduate of the lineworker program at BSC, Voeller is looking forward to learning the trade and meeting new



Jacob Reimche



Tanner Voeller

people. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting, fishing and being at the lake.

NPEC is glad to have these two join our crews! ■

NPEC director achieves credential in today's electric utility competencies



Northern Plains Electric Cooperative President **Tracy Boe**, right, presents **Lori Carlson** with her certificate of completion for the Credentialed Cooperative Director program.

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative Director Lori Carlson recently received the Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

An ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors, requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills and a solid knowledge of the cooperative principles and business model. Electric co-ops in North Dakota have a commitment to work through North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives and NRECA to sharpen this body of knowledge for the benefit of their electric cooperative consumer-owners.

The NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director Program requires attendance and demonstrated understanding of the basic competencies contained in five core courses: director duties and liabilities, understanding the electric business, board operations and process, strategic planning and financial decision making. ■

Easy weekend projects

As the autumn air turns crisp, it's time to make sure your home's air leaks are sealed properly to keep winter winds away. Sealing air leaks can be an easy weekend project.

Tips for sealing air leaks

- Test your home for air tightness.
- Caulk and weatherstrip doors and windows that leak air.
- Caulk and seal air leaks where plumbing, ducting or electrical wiring comes through walls, floors, ceilings and soffits over cabinets.
- Install foam gaskets behind outlet and switch plates on walls.
- Inspect dirty spots in your insulation for air leaks and mold. Seal leaks with low-expansion spray foam made for this purpose and install house flashing if needed.
- Look for dirty spots on your ceiling paint and carpet, which may indicate air leaks at interior wall/ceiling joints and wall/floor joists, and caulk them.
- Cover single-pane windows with storm windows or replace them with more efficient double-pane low-emissivity windows.
- Use foam sealant on larger gaps around windows, baseboards and other places where air may leak out.
- Cover your kitchen exhaust fan to stop air leaks when not in use.
- Check your dryer vent to be sure it is not blocked. This will save energy and may prevent a fire.
- Replace door bottoms and thresholds with ones that have pliable sealing gaskets.
- Keep the fireplace flue damper tightly closed when not in use.
- Seal air leaks around fireplace chimneys, furnaces and gas-fired water heater vents with fire-resistant materials.

ABCs of caulking air leaks

Caulk is a flexible material used to seal air leaks through cracks, gaps or joints less than ¼-inch wide. For components that move – doors and operable windows, for example – weatherstripping is the appropriate material.

Before caulking air leaks in an existing home, you will need to detect the leaks and assess your ventilation needs to ensure adequate indoor air quality. In addition to sealing air leaks, caulking can also prevent water damage inside and outside of the home when applied around faucets, ceiling fixtures, water pipes, drains, bathtubs and other plumbing fixtures.

Selecting caulking

Most caulking compounds come in disposable cartridges that fit in half-barrel caulking guns (if possible, purchase one with an automatic release). Some pressurized cartridges do not require caulking guns.



When deciding how much caulking to purchase, consider you'll probably need a half cartridge per window or door and four cartridges for the foundation sill of an average home. Caulking compounds can also be found in aerosol cans, squeeze tubes and ropes for small jobs or special applications.

Caulking compounds vary in strength, properties and prices. Water-based caulk can be cleaned with water, while solvent-based compounds require a solvent for cleanup.

Applying caulk

Although not a high-tech operation, caulking can be tricky. Read and follow the instructions on the compound cartridge, and remember these tips:

- For good adhesion, clean all areas to be caulked. Remove any old caulk and paint. Make sure the area is dry so you don't seal in moisture.
- Apply caulk to all joints in a window frame and the joint between the frame and the wall.
- Hold the gun at a consistent angle. Forty-five degrees is best for getting deep into the crack. You know you've got the right angle when the caulk is immediately forced into the crack as it comes out of the tube.
- Caulk in one straight continuous stream, if possible. Avoid stops and starts.
- Make sure the caulk sticks to both sides of a crack or seam.
- Release the trigger before pulling the gun away to avoid applying too much caulking compound. A caulking gun with an automatic release makes this much easier.
- If caulk oozes out of a crack, use a putty knife to push it back in.
- Don't skimp. If the caulk shrinks, reapply it to form a smooth bead that will seal the crack completely. ■



Chad Bryant, Scott Bryant and Matt Post, left to right, alongside horses Rip and Haze made the 827-mile trek from Walker, Iowa, to St. John, N.D., by covered wagon.

An atypical ride for cancer

BY BRITTNEE WILSON

These days, when you hear about a benefit ride, one would assume an afternoon of motorcycles or ATVs, certainly not a horse-drawn covered wagon traveling across multiple state lines. But that's just what Northern Plains Electric Cooperative member Scott Bryant and his team did while getting a whole community and more to support their cause.

What started as a wild idea between friends turned into eight years of planning a six-week trail ride from Walker, Iowa, to St. John, N.D. When Bryant, who owns a horse ranch in St. John, visited his son, Chad Bryant, in Iowa, he got to know Matt Post, who had a son on Scott's grandson's baseball team.

Scott, who loves to tell stories about his horses and the rides he has taken over the last 30 years, was asked by Matt, "When are you going to bring a pair of horses to Iowa and drive them back to North Dakota?" That's when Chad warned Matt to be careful, because his dad would do it. Chad was right. His dad was willing to take the challenge.

A trip of this magnitude took some time to plan. Scott needed a team of horses that could make the trip, so he purchased a pair of yearling Belgian/quarter horse crosses and secured a covered wagon equipped with a bed and stove. After the duo, Rip and Haze, were trained, they set an embarkment date for May 7 to make the 827-mile trip. They packed the amenities, said goodbye to

their loved ones and away they went.

What started as a trail ride between friends materialized into much more. Shortly before they left, two Bryant family members were diagnosed with cancer. They decided to use their adventure to raise money for Scott's niece, Katie LaRocque, and his sister-in-law, Ramona Langan. A social media page was established to help sell T-shirts and mugs for their cause as well as accept donations.

With Scott and Matt behind the reins, Chad traveled ahead by pickup with a stock trailer holding essentials for the horses. Without a definite daily plan, it was Chad's job to secure a place for the team to camp each night. Since they were traveling in the "Midwest nice belt," that wasn't too difficult of a task.

"We were really fortunate to find people to accommodate us at night. Really fortunate," Scott said. "We always expressed our gratitude and thanked the folks for their hospitality and some of them would in return thank us for staying!"

The time spent on the road bonding with the horses and each other is just what Matt, Scott and Chad wanted, but what they didn't expect were the connections they made with the good people who opened their homes and hearts to them. Many offered a warm meal and a place to sleep indoors.

The team also made connections with people from afar,



A team of horses, **Rip** and **Haze**, were trained for the long haul.

who sent messages and prayers through social media. Almost daily, Matt posted a video or photos to keep friends and family updated on Facebook. The page got attention from strangers and media news outlets wanting to know more about their journey, and it quickly grew to more than 1,400 followers.

Dealing with a frequent amount of wind and rain, the team started their day around 5 a.m. by feeding the horses. After packing, they were ready to hit the road

again, traveling about 25 miles daily, which took roughly seven hours. Along the way, a break around noon allowed Rip and Haze to get some rest. Scott's main priority was making sure the horses were healthy and sound.

Although Matt had to take a short leave from the trail to attend his son's graduation, his seat was not empty, as friends and family joined the voyage for short periods of time to experience the adventure and fun.

After 44 days and roughly 300 hours on the road, the crew was welcomed by a convoy of cars honking and bystanders waving to greet them outside of St. John. In addition, family and friends gathered to surprise the cowboys with a homecoming party to celebrate the end of their journey.

"It was pretty emotional and totally unexpected," Scott said.

The once-in-a-lifetime journey did not come without sacrifice with time away from jobs and family. It took a good amount of resilience to get through bad weather and determination to make the trip count, but the team said it was all worth it. In the end, they collected over \$15,000 for their cause and earned a great a story to tell.

To learn more about their journey, search "Scott & Matt's big adventure" on Facebook. ■

**YOUR
OPINION
MATTERS**

MAGAZINE READERSHIP SURVEY

North Dakota Living will conduct a readership survey in August. If you are randomly selected to participate, Northern Plains Electric Cooperative asks you to take the survey.

Participants will be asked about their media consumption and communications preferences, to describe their magazine readership habits and to provide feedback on all sections of the publication. Demographic questions will provide additional information about our members and trends.

SURVEY METHODS

- **Phone** – If you participate on the phone, the caller will walk you through a list of questions and responses.
- **Text-to-web** – You will receive a text with a link to participate and complete the survey online.

You will only be asked to confirm your name. *North Dakota Living* and its representatives will never ask for your contact information, including phone number, email or mailing address, credit card or banking information, Social Security number or other protected personal information. If you are ever concerned about the validity of a survey or call claiming to be coming from Northern Plains Electric Cooperative, hang up the phone immediately and call us.

Members' cents go a long way

At its June meeting, the Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) Operation Round Up board of directors approved grants totaling \$8,800 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 \$954,562 have been awarded to 1,315 local charitable causes.

Grants approved in June include:

- Terry Gruebele, Pettibone, House fire
- Dakota Children's Advocacy Center, Jamestown, Closet of Caring Project
- Cando Lutheran Church, Boiler replacement
- SMP Health-Ave Maria, Jamestown, Wheelchair-accessible van
- Cando Arts Council, tablecloth project
- Minnewaukan 55 Club, carpet replacement
- Rolette County Public Health District, window replacement/ADA door install
- Can-do Senior Citizens Inc., Cando, bus barn expansion

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. The board will

meet again in September to review applications. The application deadline is Aug. 20. ■



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