

There's 'snow' place like home for the holidays



Northern Plains Electric Cooperative's board of directors and employees are proud to power your holiday. May your homes and hearts be filled with the warmth of the season.

DECEMBER 2024

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Be prepared for winter storms

BY BRITTNEE WILSON

When a winter storm hits with little warning, it can be challenging to stay safe and warm. Last December, the southern part of Northern Plains Electric Cooperative's (NPEC) system was hit by freezing rain that wreaked havoc for days just after Christmas. The ice buildup on trees and branches resulted in damage to lines, insulators and crossarms, plus more than 120 broken poles. At one time, 1,700 members were without power.

During the storm, NPEC crews had a difficult time traveling to outages and accessing damaged equipment due to the icy road conditions, leaving some members without power for one to five days.

Preparing now for extreme weather events can help keep you and your family safe and comfortable. NPEC suggests members put together an emergency kit in case the power goes out. Recommended items to include in your kit are:

- First-aid kit, medications and prescription drugs.
- Enough nonperishable food and bottled water to last five to seven days.
- Utensils, such as a manual can opener, paper plates and plastic utensils.
- Telephone. If you do not have a landline (not cordless) you may want to consider purchasing a power bank charger for your cellphone and remember to charge it before a storm. Some power banks also come with a solar charging option.
- Flashlight and extra batteries.
- Battery-powered clock and radio.
- Warm clothing and blankets.
- Supplies for alternate heating source, such as a fireplace or woodburning stove. Be sure to properly ventilate and keep a fire extinguisher nearby.

Other actions you can take to stay safe and comfortable are:

- Stay inside and dress warm. If you must go outside, stay away from downed power lines and report them to NPEC.
- Close off unneeded rooms.
- Place draft blocks at the bottom of doors to minimize cold drafts from entering the house.
- Consider investing in a generator. Call the cooperative to find your peak usage before you buy. Be sure you follow the owner's manual for important safety information and tips.

During the December 2023 ice storm event, a member called the office to check the status of her outage. After she was told it would be a while before crews were able to get to her location, she asked me to thank the crews for her and assured me her family was comfortable, as it was her grandson's idea to pitch a tent in their living room. She said it worked great to keep them warm while they slept and her grandson loved "camping" indoors. She had a "roll with the punches" demeanor, which brought light to the situation. Since that phone call, I dusted off my camping tote and made sure all parts to my tent are included, my air mattress has zero leaks and the air pump has working batteries.

Winter weather can be unpredictable and dangerous, and planning ahead can often be the difference between life and death. NPEC is ready for what Mother Nature may have in store, and we want you to be ready, too. If you find yourself without power, NPEC asks you to report it as soon as possible, so our crews can pinpoint problems.

As always, during any power outage, we assure you our crews will work as quickly and safely as possible to restore power to our members. For more winter safety tips, visit www.ready.gov/winter-weather. ■



ICE ON POWER LINES: A WEIGHTY SUBJECT

The added weight of ice on poles can quickly lead to broken power poles and other pole equipment. Ice can also make falling tree branches 30 times heavier and much more likely to break power lines.

For example, on a 300-foot span of 1-inch-thick power lines:

- 1/2 inch of ice adds 281 pounds of weight
- 1 inch of ice adds 749 pounds of weight
- 2 inches of ice adds 2,248 pounds of weight

WHEN ICE MELTS

In addition, melting ice can cause power outages. If ice on the bottom (neutral) line melts before the lines above, it can cause the lines to touch, leading to an outage.

OTHER ICY FACTS

- Damage can begin when ice exceeds 1/4 of an inch.
- One-half inch of ice can cause a line to sag up to 12 inches.
- Pressure can also be caused by a broken tree limb.
- Both ice and melting ice can cause power outages.
- Ice can form around power lines in a teardrop shape. This shape acts as a wing, causing the line to gain lift and rise with high winds. The ice can also break off, causing unsafe conditions on the ground.

Kitsch retires after long co-op career

BY BRITTNEE WILSON

After 37 years with the cooperative and over 40 years in the industry, Rodney Kitsch has retired from a long career of providing power to rural North Dakota.

Growing up in rural Garske, Kitsch understood the value of rural electricity and the cooperative format. After graduating from Devils Lake High School, he enrolled at Lake Region State College, earning a degree in land surveying and civil engineering technology.

His first job was with the N.D. Highway Department as a land surveyor. Kitsch helped plan and design the Highway 2 four-lane project from Lakota to Grand Forks.

He was proud of his work, but Kitsch knew he wanted to work more on the engineering side of his degree. That's when the west called his name and he headed to Mercer County to work on Basin Electric Power Cooperative's Antelope Valley Station for a contracting company.

While there, a job as a staking engineer at a nearby cooperative became available. Kitsch worked for Oliver-Mercer Electric Cooperative for three years. He enjoyed his job, but still felt he wasn't in the right place, until he found his home at Baker Electric Cooperative in 1986. When a retirement in Baker Electric's engineering department opened a staking job, Kitsch jumped at the opportunity to move to Cando, just 25 miles from his family farm, to work in the rural country where he grew up.

Rolling with the punches

Although Kitsch's title was staking engineer his entire tenure, Kitsch helped where needed. He worked with the marketing department by selling electric heat and low-temperature grain drying to members. He helped with line patrol during extreme weather events and stepped in to help dispatch crews.

"I think it was in 1997, there was a bad snowstorm and I slept in the office for a couple days helping dispatch with the radios," Kitsch says.

That same year, Baker Electric and Tri-County Electric joined to become Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC), resulting in a shift in operations. But Kitsch adapted.

As Kitsch looks back on this career, he says he enjoyed not knowing what his day would bring or what challenges he would face.



Rodney Kitsch retires after a 37-year career with Northern Plains Electric Cooperative.

"It was never boring, that's for sure," Kitsch says.

As Kitsch reminisces on a typical day as an NPEC staking engineer, he says he would answer members' phone calls inquiring about new services in the morning, then head out to stake jobs or obtain easements in the afternoons.

"I remember jumping in the tractor with a farmer that didn't want to stop moving. So, we conducted our business right there while he sprayed," Kitsch says with a laugh.

"Working with the members, that was the best part of the job," he says.

Kitsch also worked closely with the two reservations in NPEC's service area, the Spirit Lake Tribe and the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians (TMBCI). He spent a lot of time in the Belcourt area working alongside TMBCI and the Turtle Mountain Housing Authority, bringing electricity to housing projects, such as the Kent Addition, the Barns and most recently the Belle Apartments.

"Rodney proved to be vital in establishing strong relationships with our members and supporting load growth throughout our service territory," General Manager Seth Syverson says.

Looking toward his future, Kitsch is excited to have more time to spend with his two adult children, Mindy and Ethan, and his two grandchildren in retirement. From everyone at NPEC, we thank Rodney for his years of dedication to the cooperative and wish him the best. ■

Supporting local businesses

This past October, for the fifth consecutive year, Northern Plains Electric Cooperative held a contest to celebrate the local businesses around our service area during Co-op Month. We asked members to write about their favorite locally owned business. Ten entries were drawn and gifted a \$50 gift certificate to the business they wrote about.

We want to thank those members who submitted their entries and shared such nice things about the communities we serve.



Co-ops Love Local contest winners

Hansboro Bar, Hansboro

"New owners and many farmers rely on them for food at noon."

- Rex Parslow, Rocklake

Farmers Union Oil Co., York

"They work hard to provide good service and do it in a friendly way."

- James Fragodt, York

Baldy's Pizza, Rugby

"They try to provide alternatives and gluten free."

- Larry Treleaven, Rugby

Belcourt Drug

"They deliver medicine to your home at no charge."

- Peter Hamley, Belcourt

Route 281 Repair and Convenience, Sheyenne

"Wonderful, friendly service. A young couple starting out and working hard."

- Nyle Myhre, Sheyenne

Miller Meat Market, Heaton

"Quality meats; goes the extra mile to give reasonable price and excellent quality."

- Candice Kreiter, Bowdon

Blooms on 2nd, Woodworth

"The flowers they raise are beyond beautiful! Rare and widely different varieties."

- Vernon and Vicky Struxness, Woodworth

Briss Oil Company, McHenry

"Always extremely helpful. Goes out of way to help."

- Anthony Starkey, McHenry

Heartland Heating & Cooling, Jamestown

"Always comes ASAP when I call. Employees are pleasant and know what to do."

- Nathan Harr, Jamestown

Central City Lumber, Carrington

"Great group of people to work on any project with."

- Chad Albrecht, Buchanan

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**\$1,000
SCHOLARSHIP**

2025 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

*Sponsored by
Basin Electric Power Cooperative,
Northern Plains Electric Cooperative
offers a \$1,000 scholarship
for the 2025-2026 school year.*



WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

High school seniors or college freshman enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time course of study at an accredited, two-year or four-year college, university, vocational or technical school in the fall of 2025. Student's guardian or parent must be a member of Northern Plains Electric.

HOW TO APPLY?

Applications are available for download on our website. Use the QR code below or visit www.nplains.com/scholarship. You can also call 800-882-2500 or send an email to justask@nplains.com to request a printed copy.

**DOWNLOAD
APPLICATION**



Deadline: Jan. 31, 2025
A completed application is required.

Do you have money waiting for you?

The following people have capital credit checks at Northern Plains Electric Cooperative for which we do not have a current address. Please notify us if you have a current address for any of the following people, or if you are entitled to the capital credits in the case of an estate. Please contact us by Jan. 31, 2025, by calling 800-882-2500 and asking for Tami.

Allery, Frieda.....	Rolette	Halvorson, Marion J.	Rugby
Amyotte, Credance	Webster, S.D.	Holbrook, Hazel.....	Hartshorn, Mo.
Ayala, Doris	Belcourt	Hubbard, James F.....	Jamestown
Azure, David L.....	Belcourt	Hulett, Elise.....	Belcourt
Azure, Shawn	Belcourt	Huus, Mark.....	Sykeston
Banic, Becky.....	Preston, Iowa	Jensen, Bryan	Minnewaukan
Bear, Kristen.....	Jamestown	Jetty, Renee	Ft. Totten
Bergeth, Richard	Devils Lake	Keller, Allan	Carrington
Brady, Mike	West Fargo	Kills Plenty, Irvin Sr.	Ft. Totten
Cavanaugh, Priscilla	Ft. Totten	Laducer, Monica	Belcourt
Charbonneau, Mary	Rolla	Laducer, Theresa.....	Rolla
Charette, Greg E.....	Belcourt	LaFromboise, Freyja.....	Fargo
Corum, Dave	Upham	LaFromboise, Larry	Belcourt
Culbreth, Michael.....	Cando	Lafountain, Nicole	Belcourt
Decoteau, Dennis D.	Rolla	Lambert, Dorothy	Ft. Totten
Decoteau, Donald D.....	Belcourt	Laplant, Darrel.....	Binford
Demery, Shadilyn	Rolla	Lavallie, Kylee	Belcourt
Deutscher, Carol	Fargo	Lavallie, Tammy.....	Belcourt
Dionne, Shirley	Rolla	Lawrence, Cletus J.	Woodruff, Wis.
Dockter, Mabel.....	Carrington	Lilley, Tina.....	Belcourt
Duchaine, Christina	Minot	Linstaedt, Seth	Jamestown
Eidfjord Lutheran Church.....	Hannaford	Littlewind, Donelda A.	Ft. Totten
Enno, Lisa N.	Rolla	Littlewind, Sylvester	Ft. Totten
Falcon, Wanda Houle	Bismarck	Longie, Bobby G.....	Dunseith
Gefroh, Gordon.....	Rolla	Longie, Candace	Trenton
Geringer, Sara J.	Pettibone	Maier, Karen.....	Moorhead, Minn.
Gomez, Arlene LoveJoy.....	Langdon	Malaterre, Brenda.....	Belcourt
Goodroad, Jimmy	Pingree	Martin, Jodi	St. John
Gourd, Rosetta	St. Michael	Martinson, Julie	Minot
Greybear, Myron A. Sr.	Ft. Totten	Mathias, Roger	Bismarck
Greywater, Pam.....	Ft. Totten	Nadeau, Sharon C.....	Belcourt
Greywater, Pauline.....	Ft. Totten	Norheim, Edna.....	Jamestown
Guthmiller, Gina	Jamestown	Olson, Elvin.....	Harvey

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Parisien, Natasha Belcourt
 Parker, Renee Rolla
 Peltier, Alicia Belcourt
 Peoples, Ralph Ft. Totten
 Perleberg, William L. Jamestown
 Pierson, Wilma Fargo
 Poitra, Flavia Rolla
 Rabe, Bruce Wolford
 Rath, Shirley Bismarck
 Reopelle, Rylan Belcourt
 Rossman, George J. Sykeston
 Skow, Wes Jamestown
 Slater, Delane Kent, Wash.
 Slater, Lance St. John
 Slaubaugh, Brian E. Wolford
 St. Germaine, Cecelia Belcourt
 Stenson, Ron Brighton, Colo.
 Sturdezant, Lynn Sykeston
 Stutsman, John E. Jr. St. Paul, Minn.
 Tomahawk, Anissa Red Devils Lake
 Thomas, Faye Ft. Totten
 Thomas, Winifred Oberon
 Trottier, Conrad Belcourt
 Walette, Jordan M. Belcourt

Wanous, Samantha Faith, S.D.
 Wilkie, Travis Belcourt
 White, Maria Ft. Totten
 White, Marsha B. Ft. Totten
 Whitley, Leatrice Shakopee, Minn.
 Whitney, Karmen Richardton
 Wilkie, Susan Belcourt
 Wolff, Delmer Jamestown
 Woods, Anne Ft. Totten
 Yellowbird, Jennifer Grand Forks



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