

LINEWORKER APPRECIATION DAY

APRIL 14, 2025

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*Pictured: Northern Plains
Electric Cooperative
lineworkers **Brad Johnson**
(bottom) and **James
Rosencrans** (top).*

APRIL 2025

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Lineworkers wired for service



Journeyman **David Jaeger** is one of 24 NPEC lineworkers that take pride in serving our communities. Jaeger has been with the cooperative since 2006 and has served the Rugby area since 2011.

In the quiet hours before dawn breaks, while many of us are still nestled in our beds, lineworkers begin their day, often clad in flame-resistant clothing, safety goggles, rubber gloves and thick, heavy boots.

They are the individuals who epitomize dedication to service in its purest form. As we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 14, this is an important moment to reflect on the essential role they play in our daily lives.

Amid towering utility poles and power lines, lineworkers exhibit a strength that goes far beyond the physical. Whether battling inclement weather, troubleshooting technical problems or navigating treacherous heights, lineworkers demonstrate resilience and a quiet determination to keep our lights on, our homes comfortable and our communities connected.

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) crews travel across our 11-county service territory, building, maintaining and repairing parts of our local system. Their extraordinary skills ensure our homes remain connected to the grid, businesses stay operational and emergency services remain accessible with a lifeline that connects us all.

In moments of crisis, when the lights go out and we find ourselves in the dark, lineworkers emerge as beacons of hope. Their swift response restores normalcy, offering reassurance in times of uncertainty. Whether repairing storm-ravaged power lines or ensuring continuity during emergencies, their unwavering commitment illuminates life when we need it most.

NPEC lineworkers also answer the call beyond the boundaries of home. Our crews travel to fellow cooperatives, near or far, when widespread outages occur and additional support is needed. Cooperation among cooperatives is one of our seven guiding principles, and no one embodies this core commitment better than lineworkers.

This month, as we celebrate the remarkable men and women who ensure reliable power, let's recognize their unwavering dedication to the local communities they serve.

The next time you flip a switch, please take a moment to remember those who make it possible – lineworkers, who are wired for service and dedicated to illuminating life. ■



TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Staus selected for Youth Tour



Staus

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) announces the winner of its 2025 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour essay competition, Annabelle Staus.

In June, Staus will join nearly 2,000 students from across the country on a weeklong trip to our nation's capital, where she

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.

"The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow,"

says General Manger Seth Syverson. "NPEC is proud to provide this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to empower the youth of our future."

Staus, a junior 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. Staus earned the free trip to Washington, D.C., by answering the essay question, "Why is it important to be involved in your community, and how does that prepare you to be a future leader?" The annual essay writing contest is open to high school students in their sophomore or junior year whose parents or guardians are members of a participating electric cooperative.

Staus is the daughter of Chad and Jo Staus of Cando. She is active in Family, Career and Community Leaders of America, Students Against Destructive Decisions, National Honor Society, student council, drama club, music, golf, basketball and volleyball. In her spare time, she enjoys playing with her dogs and helping at her parents' local business. ■

BUDGET BILLING

Sign up now 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 monthly 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. ■





Unlock comfort and savings

If you're working on your spring to-do list, consider adding home weatherization to your chores. We typically think about weatherizing our homes during winter months when we are standing next to a chilly window or a drafty exterior door. But weatherizing your home provides comfort and energy savings year-round, especially during summer months when your air conditioner is working overtime.

According to www.energystar.gov, a home with insufficient insulation and air leaks wastes more than 20% of the energy used to heat or cool the home. That's essentially throwing money out the door. Fortunately, most weatherization projects are easy to do yourself and can be completed in a day.

The simplest and most cost-effective weatherization strategies include air sealing around windows and exterior doors.

If you have older windows, air is probably escaping through tiny cracks and gaps around the frame. Do a quick visual inspection. If you can see any daylight around the frame or the windows rattle easily, you likely have air leaks. Also check for any small cracks around the frame that may not be visible with sunlight.

If you suspect you have leaky windows and plan to apply new caulk, be sure to remove the old caulk and clean the area well before application. Caulking materials vary in strength and properties, but you'll likely need a half-cartridge per window.

Silicone caulk is a popular choice and can also be used to seal joints between bathroom and kitchen fixtures. If you have any leftover caulk, use it to seal those areas.

Another effective but simple weatherization project is installing weatherstripping around exterior doors. The most common types of weatherstripping options are V-channel, felt and foam tape. To choose the best type for your home, consider temperature fluctuations and weather exposure. Most homeowners opt for felt or foam tape. Both options are easy to install, but will need to be replaced every couple years, depending on wear and tear. Weatherstripping should be installed around the top and sides of the door.

If you see daylight around the bottom of an exterior door, consider installing a door sweep in addition to weatherstripping. Door sweeps are available in aluminum, plastic, vinyl and felt options.

Weatherstripping can also be installed around windows, typically to the sides of a double-hung or

sliding window, or around the window sash.

If you're unsure how to install weatherstripping or apply caulk, check trusted websites such as www.energy.gov for step-by-step instructions and video tutorials.

Another way to improve comfort in your home is by adding insulation. While this is a more costly project and requires a professional's help, it's an effective way to decrease heat flow, which impacts energy use in winter and summer months. Older homes may need additional insulation to either replace older materials or meet newer efficiency standards. Contact a qualified installation specialist if you suspect your home's insulation levels are inadequate.

In addition to saving energy, air sealing can help you avoid moisture control issues, improve indoor air quality and extend the life of your heating and cooling system. Weatherize your home to unlock year-round comfort and savings on monthly energy costs. ■

3 WAYS TO SEAL IN COMFORT

In addition to increased comfort, weatherizing your home is an excellent way to save energy and lower your cooling and heating costs. Here are three ways you can seal in comfort *and* savings.

- 1 Caulk**
Apply caulk around cracks and openings between stationary components like door frames and window frames.
- 2 Weatherstripping**
Install weatherstripping around components that move, like doors and operable windows.
- 3 Insulate**
Adding insulation is an effective weatherization strategy, especially for older homes. Consider additional insulation in areas like an unfinished attic, exterior walls and floors above uninsulated spaces.



Know what's below. Call before you dig.

Planting a tree? Installing a fence? Remember to contact North Dakota One Call first!

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.

**Go online at www.ndonecall.com or call 800-795-0555 or 811.
It's free, it's simple and it's the law.**

The 811 process:

1. Notify

Notify the North Dakota One Call Center by calling 811 or making an online request at least 48 hours before work begins, excluding weekends and holidays.

2. Wait

Wait the required amount of time for affected utility operators to respond to your request.

3. Confirm

Confirm all affected utility operators have responded to your request and marked underground utilities.

4. Respect

Respect the marks. The marks provided by the affected utilities are your guide for the duration of the project. The marks are valid for 21 calendar days. If you are unable to maintain the marks during your project, or the project will continue past your request's expiration date, call 811 to ask for a re-mark.

5. Dig carefully

Dig carefully around the marks. No mechanical excavating can take place within 24 inches on either side of the marked location of the underground facility. If you plan on digging within that 4-foot-wide area, hand digging is allowed, but dig carefully and cautiously. ■



Look up. Look down. Look around.

BY BRITTNEE WILSON

It is the time of year to remind farmers to take extra care when working around electrical equipment. Over the past 10 years, the number of times farm machinery has struck and damaged Northern Plains Electric Cooperative's (NPEC) infrastructure has increased dramatically.

With that in mind, we want to share some safety tips when working near power lines and other electrical facilities.

During times of low commodity prices, farmers are seeking higher yields and seeding as much ground as possible. Sometimes, machinery gets dangerously close to electrical structures. NPEC suggests staying at least 10 feet away from all electrical infrastructure.

Farm equipment, such as cultivators, seeders and combine headers, are much larger today. Many are 80 feet or wider, which makes them more difficult to maneuver. Wind, uneven ground, shifting weight or other conditions can cause one to lose control of equipment. NPEC suggests always lowering equipment extensions to their lowest possible level before moving them or having a spotter.

Make sure all operators are familiar with the

machinery and the risks in a particular field. Know the location of power lines in your fields to make sure you have adequate clearance as you go about your work.

Incidents not only interrupt electrical service, but they can also be costly and could possibly cost a life.

If any equipment you are operating should come into direct contact with a power line, call the cooperative to report it and stay in the vehicle until help arrives. Wait until the electricity is turned off before exiting the equipment.

If you must escape due to a fire, jump far away from the vehicle and land with both feet on the ground simultaneously. Do not touch the exposed vehicle and shuffle your feet across the ground until you're safely away from the affected area – at least 40 feet.

Farmers should also consider having a couple fire extinguishers rated for electrical fires, one in the cab and one outside the cab.

Time is a big factor when farming, but it's important to take a little extra time when working around power lines and poles. NPEC urges farmers to keep our phone number handy. In case of an emergency, call 800-882-2500. ■

NPEC director obtains national certificate



Board President **Tracy Boe** presents Director **Lori Carlson** with the Board Leadership Certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. The certificate program provides advanced learning opportunities to cooperative board members who have already completed NRECA's Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate.

Director Lori Carlson from Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) recently achieved the Board Leadership Certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

The Board Leadership Program is an advanced training series that delves into key aspects of the energy industry and board governance. Topics include risk management, power supply, governance, financials, communications and policy development. To earn the credential, directors must complete 10 credits in these specialized courses, which emphasize critical thinking, open discussions and case studies to equip directors with the skills needed to navigate today's challenges.

"Continuing education is essential in today's evolving energy landscape, and we appreciate Lori's commitment to gaining the knowledge and skills that will benefit our members," said General Manager Seth Syverson.

As the electric utility industry evolves, cooperative directors must stay informed about new developments, governance strategies and cooperative business principles. NPEC applauds Lori for her commitment to serving our cooperative and its members.

Congratulations! ■

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