

Grants available to nonprofit entities

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) is excited to partner with CoBank in the Sharing Success matching grant program again this year.

NPEC's board of directors can decide to award up to four grants for a total of \$10,000. Matching funds will be requested through CoBank's Sharing Success program.

To qualify for the grant, an organization must be a certificated 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, school or fire/ambulance department located within NPEC's service territory.

CoBank is a cooperative lending institution that provides loans and other financial services to vital industries throughout rural America, including agribusiness, water, communications and power providers. CoBank is headquartered outside of Denver, Colo.

The Sharing Success program was launched by CoBank in 2012 and was designed to celebrate the vital role cooperatives play in individual communities across the country.

RDFC

Since NPEC is a member of the Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC), we are eligible to apply for a grant of up to \$3,000 to be used to support community-owned entities, nonprofits and community-based projects.

Eligible projects include community-owned businesses (café, grocery store, motel, other); community facilities (ambulance services, fire districts, recreation, hospital/clinic, community center, other); or community-based projects (school/youth projects, other) that benefit rural areas and lead to community betterment.

RDFC makes these funds available so more people become aware of its larger loan program that funds community-based projects and nonprofit entities with low-interest loans.

Contact Cheryl Belle, business manager, at 800-882-2500 with questions or to request an application. The application deadline is June 17. ■



MAY 2024

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Get involved! Join us at the annual meeting

On June 11, Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) will host our annual meeting for you, the members we proudly serve. We always look forward to this event, because it's a great opportunity for our employees to talk with our members and hear what's on their minds.

We hope you'll join us for the annual meeting, which will take place at the North Star school gymnasium in Cando. During the annual meeting, we'll share a few brief business updates on financial reports, recent projects and our power providers. We'll have tasty food from The Q Restaurant, several prizes and scholarship opportunities for students.

Spending time with you and hearing your input on our community's energy future is so important to us. In fact, it's essential, because everything we do is shaped by the members of our community. Consumer needs and changing technology impact nearly every aspect of how we manage and deliver energy to local homes, schools and businesses.

You have a say.

You may be wondering if your opinion really makes a difference. Yes, it does! Gaining guidance and perspective from our members and board helps set priorities for the co-op and guide future decisions. Annual meeting is also a time for members to vote on the co-op's board of directors.

Our board of directors is comprised of nine members who live and work right here in our local service area, so

they are in the best position to know where community investments are most needed. And we hope you'll consider running for the board in the future. We're always looking for folks who care about our community and are willing to serve.

Your electric bill is an investment in our community.

This local input means those closest to the community know its needs and priorities and help direct where co-ops dollars are spent. Every year, we invest funds to make updates to our local system, which helps maintain reliability and grid resilience. Think of it this way: Every time you pay your electric bill, you're actually investing in your community, because all the money we earn stays here in the local community. By making these investments in our local system, we can ensure you have reliable power for everyday life.

Most consumers likely don't equate active involvement with their electric utility with helping their community. But NPEC is not an ordinary utility company. We're a co-op, and our business model is meant to serve the members and the community in which it operates.

Our core purpose and mission are to provide safe, reliable and affordable power. But as a co-op, we're also motivated by service to our community, rather than profits. We hope you'll exercise the benefits of your co-op membership and join us for the annual meeting on June 11. We look forward to seeing you! ■

Scholarship opportunity for class of 2024

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) invites member dependents who are in the graduating class of 2024 to join us for our annual meeting. NPEC strongly believes in the future of area students and takes pride in helping develop future leaders. So, the NPEC board approved three \$1,000 scholarships to be given away at this year's meeting in a luck-of-the-draw format.

Luck-of-the-draw scholarship qualifications:

- 1) Student must be a graduated senior in the class of 2024, who will be attending college in the fall semester of 2024.
- 2) Student must be a dependent of an NPEC member. Student will need to register using their guardian's account information.
- 3) Student must be present to win.

The meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 11, at the North Star school gymnasium in Cando. Registration and meal will be from 5 to 6 p.m., with the meeting starting at 6 p.m. ■



Northern Plains Electric announces 2024 scholarship winner

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) is pleased to announce its 2024 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship winner is Wyatt Berg of Rocklake.

Wyatt is a senior at Mt. Pleasant High School in Rolla and the son of NPEC members, Darrell and Tara Berg. Wyatt is involved in various activities, including National Honor Society, archery, aviation, choir and FFA. He plans to pursue his higher education at the University of North Dakota, where he will work toward a nursing degree.

The scholarship is based on many factors, including academics, extracurricular activities, community involvement and a written essay on the topic, "What challenges face rural electric cooperatives in the coming years and how do you think challenges should be addressed?"

NPEC is honored for the opportunity to play a small part in the education of young adults. ■



Wyatt Berg

Hofmann replenishes amenities to Medina

BY BRITTNEE WILSON



PHOTOS COURTESY TARA KAY PHOTOGRAPHY

“Let’s buy it!” exclaimed Bonnie Hofmann as she and her husband Jacob, drove past a “for sale” sign on the old Medina general store.

At the time, Bonnie had no idea what she would do with such a large building, but she was finally at a place in life where she was able to put her time and energy into something other than being a mom.

Bonnie grew up in rural North Dakota near Keene, where she learned the mindset of “community first.”

Undecided on her career path, she took a break from college and gained some life experience working at a Colorado dude ranch as a chef’s assistant before she moved back to North Dakota. Once home, she started a family, went back to school and graduated with a degree in energy management. Just months after graduation, her son, Oliver, was born with a medical condition, which needed much of her attention.

“Dream jobs went out the window and we went into survival mode,” she said.

Turning dreams into reality

Over the next five years, the Hofmanns traveled to various hospitals to find help for their son. Finally at age

5, Oliver was medically able to go to school and Bonnie was able to have a job other than caregiver.

The mother of four honed into what she enjoyed and factored in what the community of Medina needed before making the ultimate decision to turn the old general store into a child care facility.

“There were a few in-home day cares in Medina, but not enough to meet the demands,” Bonnie said.

With the large size of the building, Bonnie knew she could utilize the space to have multiple businesses, but first wanted to tackle the child care crisis in her community.

Needing financial assistance, Bonnie reached out to every office she could think of.

“I would call one place and they would direct me to someone else, who would then redirect me, until finally I spoke with Cheryl from Northern Plains,” Bonnie said.

To help support economic development in our service area, Northern Plains Electric Cooperative administers a revolving loan fund program made possible with funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

“I presented my business plans to the board of directors and secured a \$75,000 loan for 10 years at 1% interest,” Bonnie said.



With her family by her side, they renovated the general store, giving new life to old bones. Bonnie found many ways to reuse and salvage what she could, including repurposing the original grocery store shelves into toy storage and bringing life back into the maple floors.

After a rigorous process of getting the building up to code, licensed and staffed, the Country Kids Corral day care opened its doors in October 2020.

The first year, the day care started with a small group of kids. Within months, Bonnie couldn't hire staff fast enough. Currently, she has around 25 kids, eight staff members and a waitlist. She also employs her two teenage daughters around school and activities.

When Bonnie deemed the day care to be a well-oiled machine, she set her sights on another dream – opening a café, coffee and ice cream shop.

Through their trials with Oliver, coffee and sandwich shops kept her and Jacob sane. They stepped out of the hospitals for brief moments to indulge in eats from different part of the United States, usually ordering the most unique item on the menu.

Bonnie wanted to bring that feeling of escapement and comfort she found on the road back to her community. As an ode to their namesake, she named the little shop The Farmstead, as Hof means farmstead in German.

“The Farmstead may be small in size, but makes up
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The Hofmann family, left to right: **Kylee, Ava, Jacob, Bonnie, Madison** and front, **Oliver**.

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for in variety,” Bonnie said.

The menu is inspired by Bonnie’s travels and her youth, with items such as artisan sandwiches, salads, soups and breakfast options. Specialty coffees, smoothies, lotus drinks and ice cream are also on the menu.

The food is mostly homemade with many menu options, including pickled cabbage and onions. Bonnie says their most popular item is the Norwegian sandwich, which is only available as a special due to the amount of time it takes to prepare. She describes it as a culinary journey of braised cabbage, pork roast, house sauce, pickled cucumbers and sprouts skillfully stacked to make your tastebuds sing.

The Farmstead will celebrate its first year open this May. As they continue to work out some kinks with

staffing, Bonnie is hopeful this summer, with the help of high schoolers and her family, she will be able to be open five days a week. Check out The Farmstead’s Facebook page for specials and schedule updates.

Any small business owner wears many hats. With Bonnie first wearing the hat of farmer’s wife, mother and caregiver to a child with medical needs, each prepared her to take on the business world and gave her the skills required to juggle two businesses. Now, with her family beside her rolling up their sleeves and behind her as cheerleaders, she is committed to supporting the community of Medina and the people in it.

“Truly my passion is serving people,” Bonnie said. “Both the Farmstead and Country Kids Corral are a labor of love as I get to interact with all ages.” ■

More about NPEC’s revolving loan fund

The Northern Plains Electric Cooperative revolving loan fund provides business and community project financing in partnership with commercial and other economic development lenders. The objectives of the revolving loan fund are to help create jobs and promote development of rural communities.

Loans can be made to for-profit businesses, not-for-profit organizations and local governments. Projects include, but are not limited to:

- Small and medium-sized business and cooperatives engaged in manufacturing, retail, service and tourism industries.
- Community projects relating to water/wastewater,

health care, education, telecommunications, public safety, recreation and the arts.

- Producer-owned business and cooperatives that add value to agriculture.

Efficient use of energy is encouraged for all projects and is also an eligible activity.

Applicants do not need to be a member/consumer of Northern Plains Electric Cooperative to apply.

For full details of the revolving loan program, visit www.nplains.com and find the information under our “Economic Development” page under the “Member Services” tab or contact our business manager, Cheryl Belle, at 800-882-2500. ■

Discounts offered at Medora

In partnership with the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation, Northern Plains Electric Cooperative is once again making excursions to Medora more affordable for families. This summer, our members are eligible for discounts on tickets, lodging and golf.

Touchstone Energy® members can simply call 1-800-MEDORA-1, book online at www.medora.com or in person and provide the discount code of “Touch 2024” for a 15% discount off the following reservations:

- Tickets to the Medora Musical
- Pitchfork Steak Fondue
- Bully Pulpit Golf Course
- Gospel Brunch tickets
- Old Town Theater shows
- Lodging at Elkhorn Quarters, Badlands Motel, Rough Riders Hotel and Medora Campground

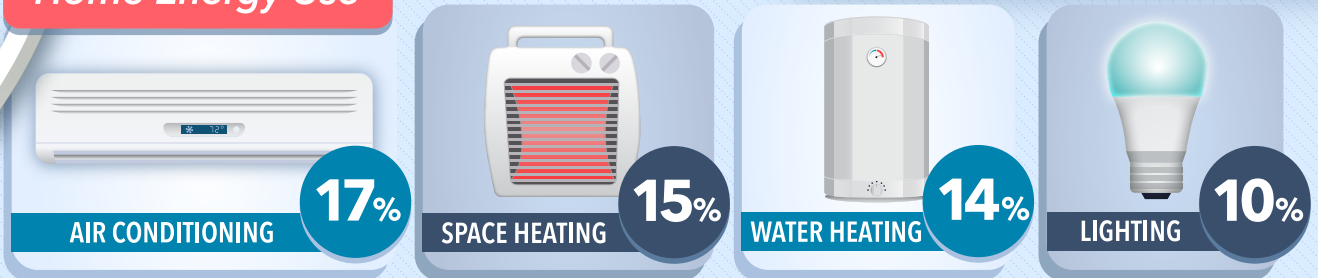
CONNECTED to SAFETY

Making your Home Safe and Efficient

Whether you're **working** from home, **learning** from home or just **spending more time** at home, it is important to make sure your home is electrically safe, secure and efficient. Learn how the **internet of things** and **smart devices** can improve your quality of life and **make your home safer**.



Home Energy Use



AVERAGE YEARLY ENERGY USE BY ITEM *source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

Energy Efficiency Through Smart Devices

Smart refrigerators to **optimize temperature**

Optimize wash/dry times for **lowest energy costs**

Automated HVAC controls

Automated lighting

Remote / automated outlet controls

Prepare your Home for Safe and Efficient Energy Use

Use a **smart plug** or **power strip** to turn off power when devices are not in use

LED light bulbs last longer than traditional bulbs and use 25-80% less energy

Heat only the area you're in with **energy-efficient space heaters**

Utilize **home automation** to control HVAC and lighting systems while not at home

Have an electrician **inspect your electrical system** every 10 years to avoid overloads

Home Electrical Safety Devices

AFCI breakers and outlets protect against arc-faults, which could lead to fires

Grounded outlets protect against electric shocks

GFCI outlets and breakers are required where water and electricity may come in contact and protect against ground-faults

Surge protectors protect against damaging power surges that can destroy electrical equipment



Operation Round Up gives back to our community

At its March meeting, the Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) Operation Round Up board of directors approved grants totaling \$8,875 to help support worthy causes.

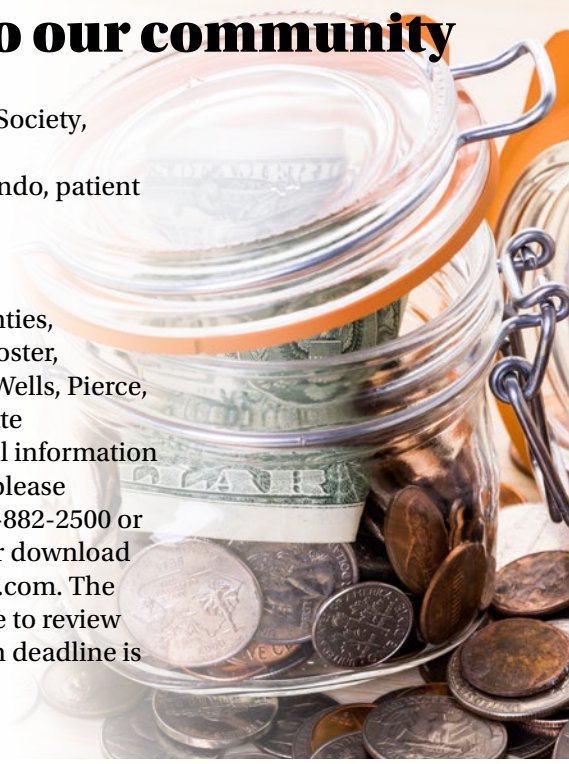
These charitable grants are made possible through the generosity of NPEC members who voluntarily elect to have their electric bills rounded up to the next dollar. The donated amount averages about 50 cents a month for each participating member and raises approximately \$37,000 each year. Since the program's beginning in October 1998, grants totaling \$945,762 have been awarded to 1,307 local charitable causes.

Grants approved in March include:

- Adelia DeArton, Cando, medical expenses
- Courtney and Katie LaRocque, St. John,

- medical expenses
- Towner County Historical Society, restoration project
- Heartview Foundation, Cando, patient emergency care project
- BIO Girls, Harvey, 2024 program expenses
- Area food banks in 11 counties, including Benson, Eddy, Foster, Griggs, Kidder, Stutsman, Wells, Pierce, Ramsey, Towner and Rolette

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 June to review applications. The application deadline is May 20. ■



Play to win contest

\$25 credit

from Northern Plains Electric Cooperative

Congratulations to Diane Graber of Wolford

Diane is our latest winner of a \$25 bill credit for playing the March bill insert word search contest. Members can regularly check bill inserts for future contests.



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Cando, ND 58324

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

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