

# It pays to be a co-op member!

**N**orthern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) is excited to announce we will be giving back a total of \$1,035,000 in capital credits to our members for 2024. NPEC is a not-for-profit organization, meaning we operate at cost. Any excess revenues or margins are returned to our members in the form of capital credits.

In October, active members who earned patronage by doing business with the cooperative in 2009 and portions of 2010 and 2023 will see a capital credit earning applied to their bill if the amount is between \$2 and \$500. If the amount is greater than \$500 or if the member's service is inactive, the refund will be issued by a check in the mail, unless the member participated in one of the cooperative's early payment capital credit buyout programs.

The amount of the check depends on a member's "patronage" or how much electricity the member purchased in those years. In addition, the co-op has made early retirements of \$181,295 to member estates and former members who requested an early buyout at the time they

left the system.

Capital credits are the most significant source of equity for most electric cooperatives. This equity is used to help meet the expenses of the co-op, such as paying for new equipment and repaying debt. Capital credits help keep rates at a competitive level by reducing the amount of funds that must be borrowed.

For more information on capital credits, call 800-882-2500. ■



**OCTOBER 2024**

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North Star High School student **Sean Freund** (middle) alongside two fellow students on the 2024 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. Freund won the essay contest which earned him a seat on an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., last summer, sponsored by Northern Plains Electric Cooperative.

## Write a winning essay and earn the trip of a lifetime!

**N**orthern Plains Electric Cooperative is taking applications for the annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.

The Youth Tour was established with one thought in mind – to inspire our next generation of leaders. Since 1964, more than 50,000 young Americans have taken advantage of this special opportunity offered by their electric cooperative.

It all takes place in June, when hundreds of electric co-ops across the country send participants to Washington, D.C., for a chance to learn about the cooperative business model and a full week of sightseeing.

While in Washington, D.C., participants have a chance to meet with their state’s congressional delegation and discuss issues important back home. Without a doubt, Youth Tour has grown into an invaluable program that gives young Americans an experience that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

If you are a high school sophomore or junior interested in traveling to Washington, D.C., to experience the trip of a lifetime, check out our website, [www.nplains.com/youth-tour](http://www.nplains.com/youth-tour), for details on the application process.

Perhaps you know of an exceptional student who would be a great candidate for the program. If you do, please share the information with them.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour is so much more than a sightseeing trip. Students have repeatedly shared this experience has helped them grow into successful professionals. It has also benefited our local communities. Youth Tour participants return home with a deeper understanding and skillset of what it takes to be leader, and they put these skills to use right here in our communities.

Help us find the next generation of leaders by sharing the Youth Tour experience with a promising student. ■

# ENTER YOUR YOUTH TOUR ERA



FIRED UP @ GETTYSBURG!



HONORING HEROES @ WWI MEMORIAL



**JUNE 15-21, 2025**

**1,800 students.**  
**7 days.**  
**1 unforgettable trip.**

Join us on the adventure of a lifetime. On the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, you'll do it all. You'll explore monuments and museums, meet with members of Congress and get an up-close look at where our country's laws are crafted. You'll stand on the Gettysburg Battlefield, walk the halls of George Washington's iconic 18th-century mansion and witness ceremonies honoring the men and women who fought in uniform for this great nation. For one jam-packed week, you'll be immersed in the cooperative spirit that built and sustains our great nation. And **all expenses are paid** by your local electric cooperative!

*Yeah, Youth Tour hits different.*

**To enter the essay-writing contest:**

- You must be a sophomore or junior in high school.
- You and your parents or legal guardian must be served by Northern Plains Electric Cooperative.

**Essay question:**  
Why is it important to be involved in your community, and how does that prepare you to be a future leader?

**The application deadline is Jan. 17, 2025.**

Email entries to Brittnee Wilson at [brittneew@nplains.com](mailto:brittneew@nplains.com) or mail a hard copy to:  
Youth Tour Essay Contest, P.O. Box 608,  
Cando, ND, 58324-0608.

Questions? Please contact Brittnee Wilson, Northern Plains Electric, at 701-968-3314 during regular business hours.



**Learn more at**  
**[www.nplains.com/youth-tour](http://www.nplains.com/youth-tour)**



Representatives for the Sheyenne Rodeo Club on horseback, left to right, are **Jamie Green**, **Donna Grann** and **Sharon Whitmer**. In the front, left to right, are Northern Plains Electric Cooperative General Manager **Seth Syverson** and NPEC Director **Randy Simon**.

## Northern Plains Electric and partners award \$33,000 in grants

**N**orthern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) recently teamed with CoBank, Basin Electric Power Cooperative and the Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC) to donate \$33,000 to nonprofit organizations who contribute to the communities NPEC serves.

At the June board meeting, the NPEC board of directors approved a donation of \$10,000 to be split among four nonprofit organizations in NPEC's service area. By teaming with CoBank and Basin Electric, NPEC helped the following nonprofits receive

matching donations, resulting in a total of \$7,500 for each organization.

- Sheyenne Rodeo Club, to bring power, lighting and Wi-Fi to the Hendrickson Park Rodeo Arena.
- Medina Booster Club, to help fund the Medina Community Center building project, which is utilized by the school and community for practices and events such as weddings and entertainment.
- Rocklake Rural Fire Protection District, to help purchase new air packs and tanks for the firefighters.



Rock Lake Rural Fire Protection District representatives, left to right, **Danny Krumwiede**, **Jordon Stenson**, **Gerald Stenson** and **Craig Leas** receive a check for the district.

- Cando Park Board, to replace the deck around the community pool.

CoBank, a cooperative lending institution headquartered in Denver, Colo., makes these funds available through its Sharing Success matching grant program. The program was designed to celebrate the vital role cooperatives play in individual communities across the county.

Basin Electric Power Cooperative is a wholesale electric generation and transmission cooperative headquartered in Bismarck that provides electricity to electric cooperatives in nine states, including NPEC.

In addition to these grants, RDFC recently granted \$1,000 to the Sheyenne Rodeo Club, Medina Booster Club and the Rocklake Rural Fire Protection District. As a result of NPEC's membership in RDFC, communities in NPEC's service area were eligible to apply for a grant of up to \$3,000 for community-based projects.

RDFC is a nonprofit corporation that encourages economic diversification and community vitality through the generation of funding that supports sustainable asset building to make more people aware of its larger loan program that funds community-based projects and nonprofit entities with low-interest loans.

NPEC is thankful to have partners like CoBank, Basin Electric Power Cooperative and RDFC who contribute to the communities we serve. ■



Northern Plains Electric Cooperative Director **Mark Brehm**, left, presents a check to Cando Park Board representative **Randy Thomson**.



Northern Plains Electric Cooperative General Manager **Seth Syverson**, left, presents a check to Medina Booster Club representative and **Trevor Wick**.

# Warding off energy vampires and phantom loads

**Y**ou may not have even realized energy vampires lurk in your home. You can see them late at night, those little lights glowing on game consoles, cable boxes and other electronic devices. Energy vampires are appliances that use a small amount of electricity, even when turned off. They're called phantom loads.

On average, these phantom loads, also known as standby power, might be draining energy in your home, resulting in an unnecessary spike on your power bill. But don't worry, with three simple steps you can turn energy vampires into a "Casper the Friendly Ghost" and start saving money and energy in no time.

**Step 1:** Identify the vampires. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the average household has approximately 40 energy vampires in the home costing more than \$100 a year. Some common offenders are appliances and devices designed to be plugged in continuously to maintain settings.

Six common energy vampires you likely have in your home:

- **Cellphone and tablet chargers:** Chargers plugged into outlets continue using energy, even when they aren't charging your device.
- **Kitchen appliances:** Toaster ovens, coffeemakers and microwaves each consume energy when not in use.
- **Cable or satellite TV boxes:** Even when powered off,

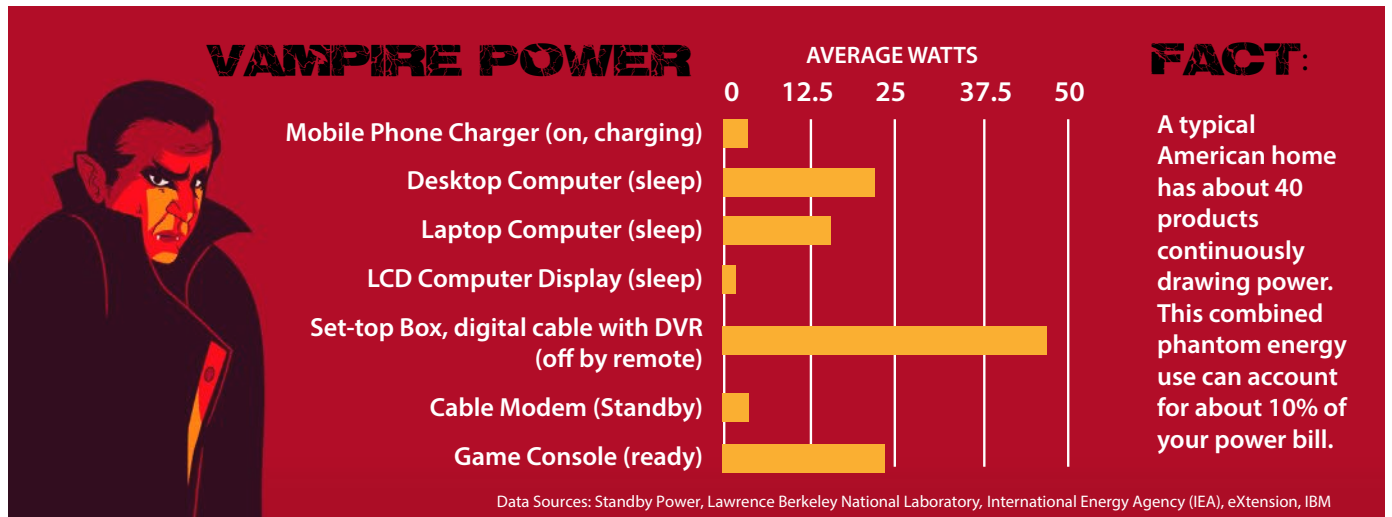
these devices use energy.

- **Computers:** Desktop and laptop computers can zap energy, especially if they aren't in sleep mode. So shut them off and unplug when not in use.
- **Video game consoles:** PlayStation and Xbox consoles use electricity even when they're not running.
- **Televisions:** Televisions are likely the biggest energy vampires in your home and continue consuming energy when they're powered off.

**Step 2:** Defeat the vampires. The easiest way to slay energy vampires is by unplugging your appliances when you aren't using them. If you have a grouping of energy vampires, try plugging everything into a power strip that can turn multiple devices on or off at once. Advanced power strips are a less labor-intensive way to rid your home of phantom power. Advanced power strips prevent electronics from drawing power when they're turned off or not in use.

**Step 3:** Keep a watchful eye. Even after you've identified and defeated the energy vampires, you can continue taking steps to keep the phantom load in your home at bay. Did you know October is also National Energy Awareness Month? It's a perfect time to take some steps to make your home more energy efficient.

Now that your home is free of energy vampires, you can sit back with a bowl of candy and enjoy the season. Happy Halloween! ■



# 5 KEYS TO YOUR COOPERATIVE

By providing electricity to your home, farm or business, electric cooperatives power your daily life. But cooperatives have strong ties to their members in other ways, too.

As we observe Co-op Month in October, electric cooperatives are a true example of grassroots

involvement, because cooperatives are owned and controlled by those they serve.

Look across North Dakota's landscape and you'll notice cooperatives improve our quality of life everywhere. Your electric cooperative is standing behind you each and every day with five key points that set it apart.

## 1. YOU ARE A MEMBER

Electric cooperatives are owned and democratically controlled by their members – the people who purchase the power. With voting power, you have a voice in how your co-op operates by attending annual meetings and electing fellow members to represent you on the board of directors.

## 2. MEMBERS RECEIVE CAPITAL CREDITS

Did you know electric cooperatives return money to their members in the form of capital credits?

An electric cooperative exists to provide its members with electric service on a nonprofit basis. Capital credits reflect each member's ownership in the cooperative. Electric cooperatives do not earn profits. Instead, any remaining revenue after all expenses have been paid are returned to the cooperative's members in proportion to their electric usage.

Those capital credits are the most significant source of equity for the cooperative. Equity is used to help meet the expenses of the co-op, such as paying for new equipment to serve members and repaying debt. Capital credits help keep rates at an affordable level by reducing the amount of funds that must be borrowed to grow and maintain a cooperative's existing electric system.

Upon completion of a rotation period, the board of directors will review the cooperative's financial health and can declare a retirement (your cash payment), and a portion of your capital credits are returned to you.

## 3. YOUR COOPERATIVE IS NONPROFIT

An electric cooperative is a nonprofit electric utility owned and controlled by the members it serves. A co-op provides high-quality service at the lowest possible price for its member-owners.

Electric cooperatives developed because many citizens who did not have access to electricity in the 1940s decided to band together and form cooperatives to acquire power. Investor-owned power companies said they couldn't make a profit in areas with a small number of consumers per mile of expensive power line.

Nonprofit cooperatives were a natural solution for distributing electricity in areas where making a profit would be difficult.

## 4. YOU ELECT THE DIRECTORS

Since an electric cooperative is owned by those it serves, members elect their own representatives to the board. Members maintain democratic control of a co-op, which means they elect fellow members to represent them on the board of directors. They operate on the principle of "one member, one vote." So, each member of a cooperative has the same voting power. And, they return profits to their members proportionate to their use of the cooperative.

## 5. YOUR COOPERATIVE CARES ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

North Dakota's electric cooperatives are continually involved in the communities they serve, from offering scholarships to college-bound students to offering grants to community entities.

As one narrator notes in an historical perspective: "When the electric co-ops were born, something much bigger happened. For when we turned the lights on, we helped democratize the American dream for the people, families, farms, ranches and businesses of rural America."

That dream continues as cooperatives help develop the communities they serve.

### COOPERATIVES FOLLOW SEVEN RECOGNIZED PRINCIPLES:

- Voluntary and open membership
- Democratic member control
- Member economic participation
- Autonomy and independence
- Education, training and information
- Cooperation among cooperatives
- Concern for community

### CELEBRATE



# Electric co-ops grow for the communities they serve

October is National Co-op Month, and Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) is joining cooperatives across the United States to celebrate. Co-ops come in all shapes and sizes, but they each have a common goal: to provide goods or services for the members of the co-op.

Electric cooperatives are not-for-profit utilities built by the communities they serve. NPEC’s mission has always been to provide you with reliable power. We care about your quality of life, and because we are locally operated, we’re uniquely suited to meet our members’ evolving energy needs.

Beyond the business of electricity, our employees and directors are equally invested in our local community. Why? Because we live here, too. That’s why we work hard to support local economic development projects, youth programs and scholarships, charitable giving initiatives and additional programs that make our community a better place to call home.

This October, as we celebrate Co-op Month, we’re focusing on the ways “Co-ops Grow” for their members.

- **Co-ops grow communities:** Co-ops help communities grow by promoting economic empowerment, fostering community engagement and supporting the unique needs of co-op members. “Concern for community” is one of our core principles, and being community-focused is essential to everything we do.

- **Co-ops grow together:** Co-ops are all about cooperation, not competition. That’s why electric co-ops work together to share lessons learned, successful strategies and better ways to serve our members. We’re better when we grow together!
- **Co-ops grow tomorrow’s leaders:** Electric co-ops serve as fertile ground for growing tomorrow’s leaders through a variety of youth engagement programs. Whether through school demonstrations, community events or the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program, we’re committed to providing opportunities for local youth to learn and thrive in our community and beyond.
- **Co-ops grow for you:** At NPEC, your satisfaction is our No. 1 goal. It’s why we were formed many years ago to fulfill a uniquely local purpose. We’ve come a long way since then, and your needs continue to evolve. That’s why we’ll never stop growing for you! In celebration of Co-op Month, for the fifth consecutive year, NPEC will sponsor a gift card contest, giving winning members a total of \$500 of gift cards to locally owned businesses in our service area. Contest rules and how to enter will be included in your October bill statement. If you do not receive a physical bill, you can visit our website, [www.nplains.com](http://www.nplains.com), to enter. Only one entry per account. ■



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:**  
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**BOARD & MANAGEMENT:**

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| Secretary/treasurer.....           | Randall Simon, Oberon    |
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