

LINEWORKER

-APPRECIATION DAY-

April 13



Journeyman **Jordan Omlie**, with the Cando crew, climbs a pole in the process of a pole changeout.

APRIL 2026

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Lineworkers ready when it matters most

In April, we take time to pause and recognize the brave lineworkers who make it possible to keep the lights on every single day.

When storms impact our communities and outages occur, people may consider it an inconvenience, but our lineworkers see a call to action. Our crews are always ready when it matters most, leaving family dinners, working through the night and heading into challenging conditions to restore power as safely and quickly as possible. That readiness is not accidental. It comes from rigorous training, deep experience and a shared commitment to serving others.

What makes lineworkers especially remarkable is they aren't just restoring power to a system. They're restoring power to their own communities. They live here. They raise their families here. They understand electricity is more than a convenience, but it's essential to daily life, to local businesses, to schools, farms and emergency services. Powering the places we call home is personal to lineworkers.

Electric cooperatives like Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) were built on the principle of neighbors helping neighbors, and our lineworkers embody that spirit every day. They are the first to respond and the last to leave, often working long hours behind

the scenes. At times, serving our neighbors means going beyond our own service territory through a process known as mutual aid. During major outage events, NPEC crews stand ready to assist neighboring co-ops restore power, sometimes close to home and sometimes across state lines. This spirit of mutual aid strengthens all cooperatives and ultimately benefits the members we serve.

We understand any time the lights go out can be frustrating, bringing everyday life to a halt. We are incredibly grateful to our members for their patience and encouragement during these times. Linework is demanding, physical and it can be dangerous. Our crews approach each job with a focus on safety and teamwork. They take pride in their craft and in the trust our members place in them.

On April 13, we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day, but one day is hardly enough. Every day, we thank lineworkers for their service and dedication, which are the backbone of our cooperative.

To our lineworkers: Thank you for your hard work, your readiness and your unwavering commitment to the communities we serve. We are proud to stand behind you and grateful for all you do. ■

Journeyman **Leo Halko**, with the Jamestown crew, is one of 21 lineworkers who participate in yearly safety training exercises.



Student earns trip to Washington, D.C.



Shelby Rolle

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) announces the winner of its 2026 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour essay competition, Shelby Rolle.

In June, Rolle 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.

Rolle, a sophomore at Leeds High School, is one of 14 essay winners representing 13 North Dakota electric cooperatives on this year's Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Rolle earned the free trip to Washington, D.C., by answering the essay question, "As member-owned organizations, electric cooperatives are always seeking new ways to engage their members. What are some ways electric cooperatives can better communicate and connect, especially with students and young adults?"

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. Rolle is the daughter of NPEC member Greg Rolle of Minnewaukan. In her spare time, she enjoys music and spending time with friends. ■

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 change will not be as drastic and 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. ■





HERE COMES THE SUN: **Consider these tips before installing solar**

Installing a solar system is a big decision that comes with upfront costs and long-term considerations. Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) is here to help with five tips to guide your decision.

1. Know your why

Why do you want to add solar? Are you hoping to reduce your environmental impact? Decrease your electricity bills? Understanding your motivation will help

determine if a solar system is the right fit and identify a system that aligns with your goals.

2. Get multiple quotes

Not all solar companies are created equal. Seek a few quotes from reputable local installers. Make sure to look beyond the price tag. Pay attention to system efficiency, warranties and installation timelines.

Keep long-term cost of ownership in mind. While

the panels typically have a long-life expectancy, other components, such as inverters and batteries, will likely need to be replaced around the seven- to 10-year timeframe. These items break down over time, especially in a northern climate.

Although your local electric cooperative does not install solar, its energy experts may have recommendations to help get you started.

3. Size your system to match your usage

When it comes to solar, bigger isn't always better. While oversizing your system may seem like a smart move, it doesn't always pay off. Some of the costs to build and maintain the electrical grid are built into NPEC's retail kilowatt-hour rate. As a result, the extra energy you produce and send back to the grid may be credited at a lower rate. Installing a system that matches your typical energy use will maximize the value of your solar investment.

Also, consider seasonal changes in daylight. The winter months have the shortest peak sun hours and lowest solar intensity, impacting the effectiveness of solar systems.

To help identify your ideal system size, contact NPEC and request a usage profile to determine your monthly kilowatt consumption.

4. Understand the interconnection process

Connecting a solar system to the grid isn't automatic. Your system will need to be reviewed and approved before it can go live. You can visit the "Distributed Energy Resource" section of our website to learn more about our interconnection process and see our frequently asked questions at nplains.com/distribution-energy-resource.

5. Explore tax incentives

If you're serious about going solar, talk to a tax planner. Federal tax credits may be available to members who install solar, wind, geothermal or battery-storage systems at their primary residence. Be sure to consult a tax professional to understand how this credit may apply to your situation.

Installing solar is a big decision. By taking time to understand your motivations, evaluate the investment cost, size your system correctly, navigate the interconnection process and leverage available tax incentives, you'll be better equipped to make an informed decision.

And don't forget to reach out to NPEC early in the process by calling 800-882-2500 or emailing DER@nplains.com. Our team of professionals is here to help. ■

Wilson wins Local Pages Award



*Communications Specialist
Brittnee Wilson was
recognized in February
with the 2025 North Dakota
Living Local Pages Award.*

The Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) board of directors congratulates Brittnee Wilson, our local pages editor, on receiving the *North Dakota Living Local Pages Award* from the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC).

Wilson was recognized at NDAREC's annual meeting in February for her excellence in producing our cooperative's local pages in the areas of content, visual appeal, management and organization. The local pages are the heart and soul of the magazine, and Wilson has excelled in sharing news and information with NPEC's members and community stories. NPEC's local pages reflect a strong commitment to the cooperative's members and the cooperative way of doing business, while striking an intentional balance of cooperative information and community stories, one judge remarked.

Congratulations, Brittnee, on this well-deserved recognition. Your commitment and high standards make a meaningful difference to the cooperative and its members. ■



Tractor technology doesn't always equal safety

As farmers use more equipment with auto-guidance systems, less focus is needed on steering. However, even while using a GPS with auto-steering, farmers need to keep safety in mind and stay focused on their surroundings.

North Dakota's electric cooperatives have had accident reports from farmers who are trusting their auto-guidance systems blindly and hitting power poles and other infrastructure.

Putting safety first requires alertness, focus and knowledge of potential hazards and safety steps. Varying pass-to-pass accuracy levels and potential issues, such as power poles not being correctly plotted in the system, reinforce the need for drivers to stay focused on the location of the farm equipment while in the field and to be ready to take action if necessary.

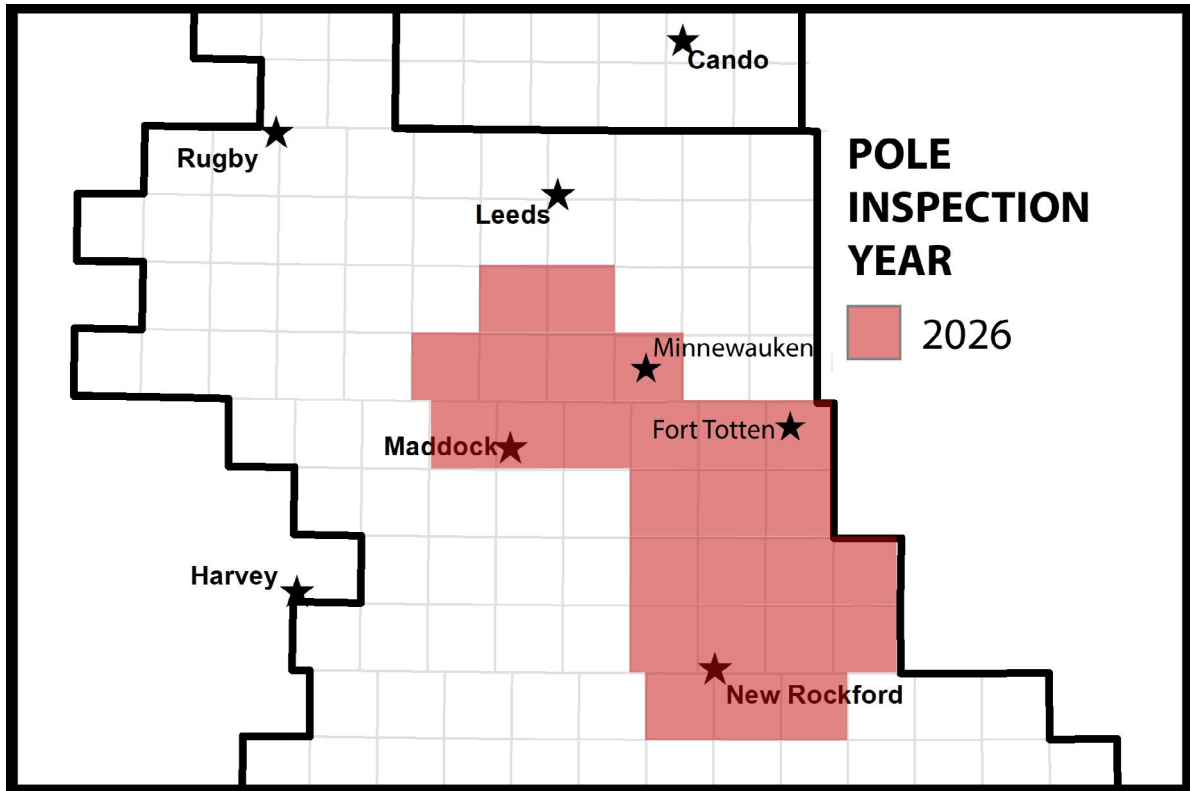
Regardless of the technology used on the farm, remember the following electrical safety tips from Northern Plains Electric Cooperative:

Be aware

- **Farmers and their equipment should always be 10 feet away from power lines on all sides.**

Field cultivators and sprayers can often reach as high as 12 feet in the air. Practice extreme caution and use a spotter to make sure you stay far away from power lines when using tall equipment. Make sure you, your family and employees know the location of overhead power lines, and use routes to avoid the lines when moving equipment.

- **If you have purchased new equipment, be aware of antennas or other attachments that may pose new hazards.** A newer, bigger piece of equipment may no longer clear a line. In addition, shifting soil may also affect whether or not machinery avoids power lines from year to year.
- **Power lines also may sag over the years.** If power lines on your property are sagging, contact your electric cooperative to repair the lines. Never try to move a power line on your own.
- **Overhead power lines are not the only electric hazard on the farm.** Pole guy wires, used to stabilize utility poles, are grounded. However, when one of the guy wires is broken, it can become charged with electricity. If you break a guy wire, call the cooperative to fix it. Don't do it yourself. ■



Contractors may be in your area

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) has approximately 74,000 poles on about 3,665 miles of overhead line in its system, 2,953 miles of buried cable and serves over 12,307 meters. It takes a lot of moving parts to maintain the reliability of NPEC's system. Much of that maintenance needs to be squeezed into the spring and summer months while construction projects are in full effect.

To improve efficiency, NPEC hires contractors to work on some of the larger power line improvements, including pole testing, pole replacements, meter exchanges, plowing cable and cable locates. NPEC wants to inform our members that contractors may be in your area and they may need to access your property.

Pole testing this spring

NPEC has contracted with WLK Inspections to inspect our utility poles to ensure they are safe. WLK Inspections will conduct a series of tests, including a visual inspection, a sound test and boring inspections, to determine if the pole is in need of treatment or replacement. The testers also take note of potential hazards, such as staples and

nails used to hang signs, as well as signs themselves. These items can pose a danger to NPEC lineworkers. The testing process only takes a few minutes per pole and does not affect your electric service.

This spring, poles in Benson and Eddy counties near Maddock, Minnewauken, Fort Totten and New Rockford are scheduled to be tested. WLK team members will be accessing cooperative distribution lines using pickups and ATVs. Inspectors will be wearing a vest and hard hat and will knock on members' doors when they need to access a members' yard.

Workers' vehicles will be marked with a WLK Inspections logo along with an NPEC logo magnet.

Give us a call

Our team will send automated phone calls to notify members when maintenance will be in their area. To be notified, your current telephone number must be on file. To update your information, please contact our office. If you'd like to confirm whether a contractor working in your area is employed by NPEC, call us at 800-882-2500. ■

You're Invited to NPEC's

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Join us for an open forum where every voice matters. Together, we'll discuss the cooperative's strategic direction, performance and activities.

WHAT ARE THE TOPICS?

- ✔ 2025 Financial Status
- ✔ Future Plans
- ✔ Board of Director Elections
- ✔ Luck-of-the-draw Scholarships



JUNE 11



MADDOCK COMMUNITY CENTER

More information can be found at www.nplains.com



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