



A&H Guide Service members volunteered their time and SnoBears to provide a fun and accessible way for Lake Region Corporation to bring individuals it supports on an ice fishing venture.

FISHING FOR SMILES Guide service brightens the day

BY BRITTNEE WILSON

If we don't limit out on fish, we are going to limit out on friendship," fishing guide Braden Harder said, capturing the spirit of the day perfectly.

On a March morning, Harder and four other guides from A&H Guide Service volunteered their time and their SnoBears to take a group supported by the Lake Region Corporation (LRC) on an unforgettable day on the ice.

A SnoBear is a winter recreational vehicle designed for ice fishing, complete with built-in latched fishing holes in the floor. It allows anglers to drop a line virtually anywhere through the ice, stay warm and protected from the elements, and move quickly to a new spot in minutes.

With five SnoBears on the ice, the guides provided a safe, accessible environment for eight individuals with disabilities, along with four LRC support staff, to experience the excitement of ice fishing firsthand. For hours, participants baited hooks, set lines and reeled in fish, some independently and others with help from the professional guides.

The energy was contagious. Every time a fish was pulled through the hole in the ice, eyes lit up. Together, the group caught 29 fish, along with something more

meaningful – memories.

The event was organized by Chad Haberstroh, co-owner of A&H Guide Service, along with Mike Anderson. The idea came from a desire to give back to the community of Devils Lake and surrounding area, Haberstroh said.

"We first took out a group from LRC last year, and it was a huge success," Haberstroh said. "We hope to make it an annual thing."

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Cedar Inn Family Restaurant provided a space for the crew to enjoy their freshly caught walleye and to share their fishing stories with one another.

This year's group included individuals with blindness, hearing impairment, traumatic brain injury, autism and wheelchair mobility.

"I feel fishing is one of those things that everyone can do, no matter age or skill level," Harder said. "I'm lucky enough to get to do it often. When Chad asked if I wanted to help take LRC individuals out, I didn't have to think twice. Us guides had just as much, or more, fun as everyone we took out."

Based out of Devils Lake, A&H Guide Service, has been guiding the region's fishable waters for nearly 15 years. With 14 guides, each with their own SnoBear, the service offers a premier ice fishing experience, most often

targeting walleye and perch.

Haberstroh credits the success of the guide service to teamwork.

"A&H is not just one person. It is a team effort. Everyone owns A&H," he said.

But the day didn't end with the fishing. Haberstroh helped coordinate a way for everyone to enjoy their catch and share stories over a hot meal. Owners of the Cedar Inn Family Restaurant, Larry and Joanne Gehrtz, jumped at the chance to help. They donated the space, and provided the batter, fries and drinks so the freshly caught walleye could be cooked and served family-style.

"Seeing others in the community rally around the

people we support was enjoyable and truly humbling," said Alyssa Tofsrud, executive director of LRC. "They were treated no differently than anyone else, and that meant far more than catching any fish."

About Lake Region Corporation

LRC has been a vital part of the Lake Region community for over 42 years. The private nonprofit, community-based organization provides quality vocational, residential and supportive services for people with disabilities. Its mission is centered on promoting the abilities of all people, while supporting independence in everyday life.

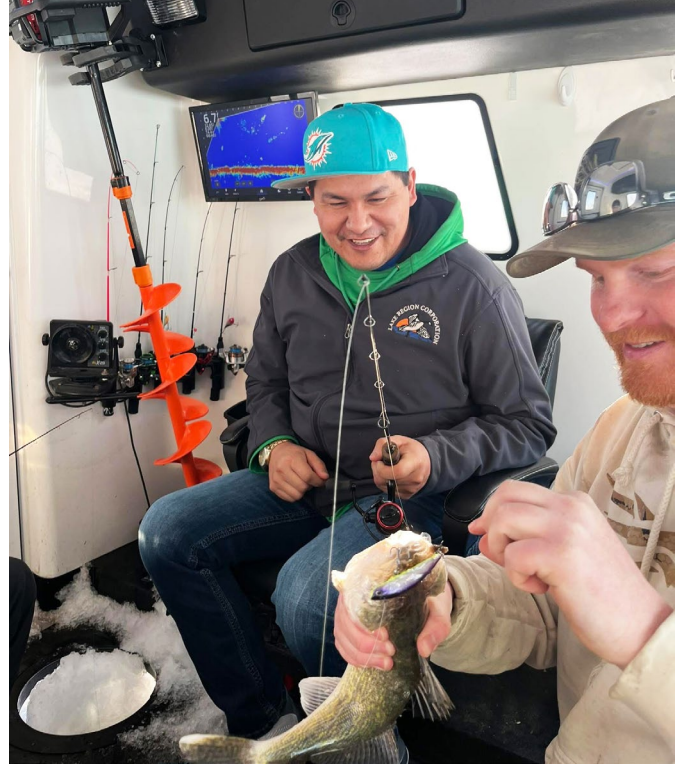
LRC currently support 53 individuals through residential or day/vocational services and employs over 120 people. The organization operates four group homes in Devils Lake, supports individuals living independently, and owns and operates a day care service for over 50 children. Beyond serving the community, the day care creates meaningful employment opportunities for six people LRC supports.

"With the day care, we are combining community service with empowerment," Tofsrud said.

Day services at LRC include a career-focused vocational program that provides hands-on training to prepare individuals for specific jobs. The program operates eight small-group contracts with businesses in the Lake Region, giving participants meaningful work, skill development and real-world experience.

Currently, 15 individuals that LRC supports are successfully employed across the region. One of the contacts is with Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), a power provider for Northern Plains Electric Cooperative.

"This partnership benefits everyone," Tofsrud said. "WAPA gains reliable, dedicated employees for janitorial services and the people we support earn a competitive wage, while building independence and pride in their work."



Fishing guide **Braden Harder** helps unhook one of the 29 walleye caught by the group.

A core purpose of LRC services is to help people remain as close as possible to their family, friends and home communities. Most of the individuals LRC supports are originally from central North Dakota, including the rural communities surrounding Devils Lake, the greater lake region and the Spirit Lake Reservation.

"Every day at LRC, we change lives," Tofsrud said. "By building a workplace grounded in respect, purpose and positivity, we ensure that the people we serve don't just receive care, but live meaningful and fulfilling lives." ■



Join Us

**NORTHERN
PLAINS** Electric Cooperative

ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, June 11

Maddock Community Center
201 Central Ave, Maddock

Registration/Complimentary meal: 5:00-6:00 p.m.

Meeting: 6:00 p.m.

Cooperative announces scholarship winners

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) announces two exceptional high school seniors were selected to each receive a \$1,250 scholarship through Basin Electric Power Cooperative's scholarship program. Together, NPEC and Basin Electric believe strongly in the future of area students and take pride in helping develop future leaders.

The scholarships for 2026 were awarded to Maggie Stegmiller of Jamestown High School and Olivia Follman of Leeds High School. The scholarship was based on academics, extracurricular activities, work experience, community involvement and a written essay, "How does the electricity provided by your electric cooperative improve the quality of life in your community?"

Stegmiller is a senior at Jamestown High School and the daughter of NPEC members Amy and Wesley Stegmiller. She has been involved in various school activities throughout her high school career, including orchestra, yearbook and National Honor Society. Stegmiller plans to pursue her higher education at Minot State University, where she will work toward an accounting degree.

Follman is a senior at Leeds High School and the



Follman



Stegmiller

daughter of NPEC members Kari and Michael Follman. She is involved in many activities, including volleyball, student council, band, FFA and National Honor Society. Follman plans to pursue her higher education at North Dakota State University, where she will major in agricultural and biosystem engineering. ■

Scholarship opportunity for class of 2026



Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) invites member dependents in the graduating class of 2026 to join us for our annual meeting. NPEC strongly believes in the future of area students and takes pride in helping develop future leaders.

Toward that goal, 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 2026, who will be attending college in the fall semester of 2026.
2. Student must be a dependent of an NPEC member. Student will need to register using a guardian's account information.
3. Student must be present to win.

The meeting will be held on Thursday, June 11, at the Maddock Community Center in Maddock. Registration and meal will be from 5-6 p.m. with the meeting starting at 6 p.m. ■

Grants available to nonprofit entities

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

NPEC's board of directors can decide to award up to four grants for a total of \$15,000. 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, a school or a 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), it is eligible to apply for a grant of up to \$2,000 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. More information on this loan program can be found at nplains.com.

Contact Cheryl Belle, business manager, at 800-882-2500 with questions or to request an application. The application deadline is June 15. ■



Employee news

Northern Plains Electric Cooperatives (NPEC) has welcomed new faces to the billing department and line crew this winter.

In February, Ashley Reed was hired as the cooperative's billing assistant. Reed, who has a degree in business administration, has worked in the banking industry for the past 13 years. In her new role, Reed is looking forward to learning new skills and meeting new people. When not working, Reed enjoys spending time outdoors with her husband, Derrick, and their four daughters. She also enjoys cooking and baking.

NPEC announces the promotion of Rebecca Nyhagen to billing supervisor. Nyhagen has been working in the billing department since 2017 and has consistently demonstrated exceptional customer service, teamwork and dedication.

"This promotion is a well-deserved recognition of Becky's hard work and commitment to NPEC," said Business Manager Cheryl Belle.

In March, the cooperative hired Luke Vetter, an apprentice lineworker, to join the Maddock line crew



under Foreman Doyle Schwanke. Vetter, originally from Menoken, earned his lineworker certificate with an associate in science degree from Bismarck State College in 2023. He has logged over 6,000 apprentice hours working for electric cooperatives around the state.

Vetter said he is looking forward to settling into small-town life and getting involved in all aspects of line work. In his spare time, he enjoys farming, hunting and snowmobiling.

Congratulations to Ashley, Rebecca and Luke! ■

Pennies make change

At the March meeting, the Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) Operation Round Up board of directors approved grants totaling \$8,750 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 \$1,020,937 have been awarded to 1400 local charitable causes.

Grants approved in March include:

- Jennifer Gysbers, Cando, medical expenses
- Curtis Hanson, Pettibone, medical expenses
- Mathew Guthmiller, Pettibone, medical expenses
- Mt. Pleasant School District, Rolla, student European music trip
- Tuttle Lions Club, city park playground project
- First Lutheran Church of Sheyenne, furnace replacement project
- Jamestown Regional Entrepreneur Center, women's business conference
- BIO Girls, Wells County, 2026 camp program ■

If you would like additional information about this worthy program, please contact NPEC by calling 800-882-2500 or obtain guidelines or download applications at nplains.com. The board will meet again in June to review applications. The application deadline is May 20.



Operation Round Up welcomes new member

Congratulations to Laura Dease, Munich, for being appointed to the Operation Round Up (ORU) board of directors. Dease fills a seat previously held by Angela Freund, who reached her term limit after serving on the ORU board for six years.

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative's (NPEC) board of directors and employees thank Freund for her dedication to the ORU program by helping disperse grant money to organizations and members in need and supporting the communities in our service area.

The ORU board is comprised of five NPEC members who live across the service area. Dease joins Peg Hendrickson, Rock Lake, Joan Copenhaver, Carrington, Rachelle Williams, Maddock, and Deb Leapaltd, Woodworth.

If you are interested in volunteering to serve on the ORU board, please call Brittnee at 800-882-2500. ■



Call before you dig!

Did you know North Dakota law requires anyone planning an excavation to notify North Dakota One Call at 811 before starting the work? Safe Digging Month is observed in April, but safe digging should be a priority year-round.

Are you planting a tree? Digging a hole for a mailbox? Installing a fence? Remember to dial 811.

Numerous utility lines may be buried on your property,

ranging from electric and telephone lines to water and sewer infrastructure, but North Dakota One Call will help you locate these lines before your project begins.

The first step to any project is safety. Damaging an underground facility can cause injury or even death.

Contact North Dakota One Call, and utility line owners will locate and mark their lines. It's free, it's simple and it's the law.

PRIVATE FACILITIES: WHAT DOES NOT GET MARKED?

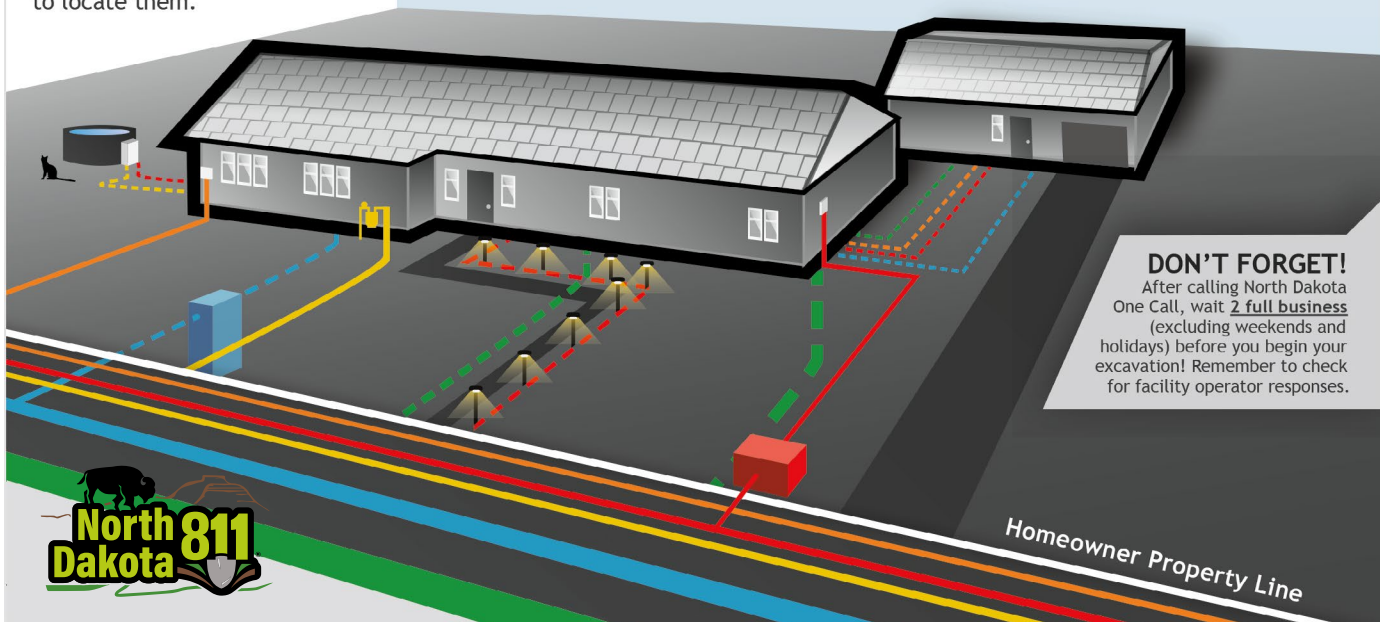
Private underground facilities, such as private utility lines and private distribution networks, do not get marked by facility operators. When a property owner or tenant has any type of private underground facility, they are responsible to locate those facilities or hire someone to locate them.

	ELECTRIC
	GAS, OIL, AND PROPANE
	PHONE AND CABLE
	WATER
	SEWER

Customer-owned lines usually include any that serve outbuildings, hot tubs, security lighting, pools, and natural gas grills.

The free locating service available through North Dakota One Call (NDOC) applies **ONLY** to public facility operators. The diagram below shows a variety of utilities, some owned by the utility and some by the homeowner.

Those utilities marked by dotted lines are typically owned by the property owner. Those lines will **NOT** be marked by contacting NDOC. Private locating services will mark these for a fee.



The 811 process:

1. Notify

Notify the North Dakota One Call Center online at ndonecall.com or by calling 811 or 800-795-0555 at least 48 hours before work begins, excluding weekends and holidays. You can help by white lining your dig site.

These locates do not include any lines you may have installed to your private facilities, such as gas grills, detached garages, wells or yard lights.

2. Wait and confirm

Wait the required amount of time for affected utility operators to respond to your request, then confirm they all have responded to your request and marked underground utilities.

3. 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.

4. 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. ■



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 medora.com or in person and provide the discount code of "Touch 2026" for a 15% discount off the following reservations:

- Tickets to the Medora Musical
- Pitchfork steak fondue
- Bully Pulpit Golf Course (green fees discount will be applied at check-in for tee time)
- Gospel Brunch tickets
- Old Town Hall Theater shows
- Lodging at Elkhorn Quarters, Badlands Motel, Hotel 1883, Rough Riders Hotel and Medora campground ■

NORTHERN PLAINS Electric Cooperative

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