



Annual meeting recap

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) held its 26th annual meeting June 14 at the North Dakota Farmers Union headquarters in Jamestown. After members registered and received their gift for coming, the membership visited amongst each other, while enjoying a homemade meal of ham and mashed potatoes, complete with gelato for dessert.

The meeting kicked off with the national anthem performed by NPEC member, Deb Geier, and her daughter, Grace Allmaras. President Tracy Boe led the meeting, with reports presented by President Boe, General Manager Seth Syverson and Treasurer Randy Simon. The business portion of the meeting reflected on highlights through 2021, including cooperative finances, reliability, system improvements, upcoming projects and updates from our power suppliers.

2021 was another successful year for NPEC. The cooperative continued to adapt its operations to provide a safe working environment for our employees and ensuring safe, reliable power for our members. NPEC continued to see growth in new services,

hovering around 1% throughout our territory. Overall energy sales and revenue of the cooperative were not anything to boast about, with both decreasing in 2021 in comparison to 2020. The loss of energy sales from the commercial accounts was a result of the economic downturn due to the pandemic. The warmer winter

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Kaylee Panchot, left, Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship winner, and **Alliana Freund**, Electric Cooperative Youth Tour winner, with President **Tracy Boe**.

resulted in lower electric heating energy sales and the drier summer conditions resulted in less grain drying in the fall. Overall, the necessary year-end margins were adequate to meet our financial targets and covenants of our lenders.

Wrapping up the business portion of the meeting, Boe was proud to report the cooperative's rates remained stable throughout 2021 and the cooperative aims to keep rates firm throughout 2022.

A financial update for the Operation Round Up program was given. In 2021, \$37,800 in grants were



President **Tracy Boe** alongside two students who each won a \$1,000 scholarship in the luck-of-the-draw scholarship contest. Congratulations, **Lindsey Nyhagen** and **Isabella Garr**!

awarded to help 58 individuals, families and local organizations in need. A total of \$864,966 in grants has been distributed on behalf of the membership since 1998.

An election was held to elect one director in each of three districts. Candidates had the opportunity to address the membership before final voting took place. This is the third year the membership had the opportunity to vote through a mail-in ballot or in-person. Congratulations to incumbents Mark Brehm (District 1), David Teigen (District 2) and Curtis



Hanson (District 3), as they were re-elected to serve another three-year term on the board of directors. NPEC congratulates the elected and thanks William S. Dillingham and Larry Nohrenberg for vying for a board position and being active members.

Following the election, two students were recognized for their achievements – Kaylee Panchot, winner of the Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship, and Alliana Freund, winner of the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

Wrapping up the 26th annual meeting, two member

dependents' names were drawn for a \$1,000 luck-of-the-draw scholarship. Congratulations to winners Lindsey Nyhagen, Cando, and Isabella Garr, Carrington. After adjournment, cash door prizes totaling \$550 were raffled to members in attendance.

NPEC thanks all who participated in this year's annual meeting. To take part in the future of your cooperative, we encourage every member to attend your annual meeting. Participation is a key element to the co-op's success. We hope to see you again next year! ■



Mark Brehm



Curtis Hanson



Dave Teigen

The membership elected Mark Brehm, Curtis Hanson and Dave Teigen to serve on Northern Plains Electric Cooperative's board of directors. Each director will serve a three-year term.



Surge protection 101

A power surge is an unexpected increase in voltage, and it can occur from a variety of sources. Regardless of the cause, power surges can majorly damage electronic devices and equipment in your home.

Let's take a look at common causes of power surges and how you can protect your sensitive electronics.

One of the most common causes of a power surge is lightning. Most of us have experienced this during a severe thunderstorm. When lightning strikes an electrical system, the excess current must be channeled somewhere. Sometimes, it's sent through a home. Your best bet is to unplug all unused devices and electronics during severe thunderstorms.

Another common cause of power surges is electrical overload. This happens when devices or appliances are plugged into an outlet that can't handle the required amount of voltage, or if multiple devices are plugged into one outlet through an extension cord. If you're experiencing power surges due to electrical overload, it's time to call a qualified electrician to evaluate your home's circuits and electrical needs.

Faulty wiring in a home can also cause power surges. Damaged or exposed wires can cause spikes in voltage, creating a potentially dangerous situation. If you notice signs of faulty wiring, like visible burns on outlets, buzzing sounds from outlets or frequently tripped circuit breakers, your home may be due for electrical wiring repairs and updates.

Surges can also occur after a power outage. Sometimes, when electricity is being restored and reconnected, it's common to experience a quick surge in current. Similar to advice for a surge caused by

lightning, it's best to unplug sensitive electronics during the outage, then wait to plug them back in after power is fully restored.

Aside from unplugging devices when you suspect a power surge, there are two ways you can take additional precautions to protect electronics in your home.

Point-of-use surge protection devices, like power strips, can protect electronics during most surges. But remember, not all power strips include surge protection, so read the packaging label carefully before you buy, and don't overload the power strip with too many devices. You can also install specialized electrical outlets that offer additional surge protection. Talk to a trusted electrician to learn more.

Another option is a whole-home surge protector, which can help protect your home from larger, more powerful surges. In most cases, whole-home suppressors are connected to your home's service panel and include features like thermal fuses and notification capabilities that indicate when a device has been impacted by a surge. Whole-home surge protection prices vary based on the size of the home and suppressor. Whole-home suppressors should always be connected by a licensed electrician, so consider the cost of installation as well.

Occasional power surges are inevitable, but by unplugging devices when you think a surge may occur and using additional levels of protection like power strips or whole-home suppressors, you can better safeguard your sensitive electronics and devices.

Contact Northern Plains Electric Cooperative if you have questions about ways to protect your home from power surges. ■

HOME IMPROVEMENTS CAN SAVE YOU MONEY!

Planning a home improvement project this summer? Northern Plains Electric Cooperative can visit with you about the benefits of switching to electric heat.

There are other home energy improvements that will save you money, too.



ADD INSULATION

Add insulation to the attic, crawlspace and exterior walls. In conjunction with air sealing, this will keep your house cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Increasing your home's insulation is one of the fastest and most cost-effective ways to reduce energy waste.



USE SMART TECHNOLOGY

Install and set programmable thermostats that save energy by automatically regulating your home's temperature when you are home, asleep or away. You can save as much as 10% a year on your heating and cooling bills by simply turning your thermostat back 10% to 15% for eight hours.



LET THE SUNLIGHT SHINE

Install more energy-efficient windows, doors and skylights. Air infiltrates into and out of your home through every hole and crack. About 20% of this air infiltrates through openings in your windows, doors and skylights.



REPLACE THE LIGHTS

Install energy-efficient lighting. An average household dedicates 11% of its energy budget to lighting. Using new lighting technologies can reduce lighting energy use in your home by 50% to 75%.

SEAL THOSE LEAKS

Seal air leaks around floors, walls, ceilings, windows, doors and fireplaces with caulk, spray foam and weatherstripping. Warm air leaking into your home during the summer and out of your home during the winter can waste a lot of your energy dollars. The potential energy savings from reducing drafts in a home may range from 5% to 30% per year, and the home is generally much more comfortable afterward.



SEAL THOSE DUCTS

Seal ducts and make sure they are straight and properly connected. Many duct systems are not insulated properly or have gaps or holes where air can leak out. You can lose up to 60% of your heated air before it reaches the register if your ducts are not insulated and they travel through unheated spaces such as an attic or crawlspace.

Is solar right for you?

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) can help provide unbiased information to members considering installing a solar system of their own. Data is being collected, after NPEC and Dakota Valley Electric Cooperative jointly installed a 16-panel solar system at our Carrington office. Information is presented biannually in the center pages of *North Dakota Living* and on our website.



How much electricity is generated?

Since it was installed, the solar system has produced an average of 8,500 kilowatt-hours (KWH) per year, for an average savings of about \$950 per year. Of course, the output varies from month-to-month, with the total energy generation mostly depending on sunny days. Lower numbers have been attributed to equipment failure, broken reflector panels and cloudy days. As you can see in the chart provided, March through June in 2022 shows lower KWH recorded than we normally see during those times of the year. This was related to intermittent issues with the inverters on the panels, resulting in a lower output. An inverter converts the DC power generated from the panels to AC power.

Return on investment

Our geographical location is our biggest downfall when it comes to solar. The limited access to the sun during a good portion of the year can limit the solar panel's output. NPEC is looking at a 20-year return on

its \$19,000 16-panel system. Without the \$10,000 in grants received, the payback period would extend to a 30-year return. Any repairs to the system would extend the payback period. The cost of solar panels, however, has declined by about one-third since 2015.

Taking the first step

Before NPEC members install any distributed energy resource (DER), such as a solar or wind generation system, they are required to follow these steps first:

- 1) Contact NPEC for information regarding the cooperative's policies for interconnection before you make the decision to proceed with anything.
- 2) Complete our application for interconnection of generation systems form and return it to us with the fee. NPEC needs to review and approve the equipment that our members are contemplating to install BEFORE they purchase anything.

For more information, visit www.nplains.com, click on the "Distributed Energy Resource" tab on the homepage or call us at 800-882-2500. ■

Total Energy Generated [kWh]

Year	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total	\$ Saved
2022	324	562	709	643	726	862							3,826	\$421.00
2021	231	590	853	885	997	1063	1036	923	866	607	378	265	8,694	\$957.00
2020	321	678	868	947	1019	1048	1188	1012	818	601	445	329	9,273	\$1,020.00
2019	303	190	879	814	958	942	1138	978	710	474	250	190	7,825	\$861.00
2018	398	593	765	1113	1015	1051	1142	1004	757	584	266	257	8,945	\$984.00
2017	276	538	723	759	905	1016	1208	1011	760	721	426	332	8,675	\$954.00
2016	325	484	831	821	975	1104	991	1042	730	536	440	248	8,527	\$938.00
2015	0	0	0	0	530	961	1065	1019	861	607	413	232	5,689	\$626.00

Employee News

NPEC names new Carrington East foreman

Journeyman Brad Weninger has been hired at Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) as the Carrington East crew foreman. Weninger joined the team in May after Josh Cabler moved to the Operations Department as manager, making the foreman position available.

Weninger earned his associate degree at Bismarck State College (BSC) for power plant technology before earning his lineworker certification in 1996.

The Harvey native, who has 26 years of linework industry experience, lives in Carrington, where he worked as a journeyman lineworker for Ottetail Power Company for 22 years prior to his employment with NPEC.

Weninger enjoys spending time with his wife, Lisa,

and their two children. On the weekends, you can find him hunting, fishing or at his kids' sporting event. He is a volunteer firefighter with Carrington Fire and Rescue, a member of the Central Dakota Sportsman's Club and is active in the youth wrestling and football programs.

Welcome to the team, Brad. We are happy to have you! ■



Brad Weninger

NPEC hires summer help

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) has hired two temporary apprentice lineworkers for summer help. James Rosencrance and Cody Homes began working for the cooperative in June to help NPEC through its construction season.

Rosencrance, originally from Towner, is working with the Rugby line crew under Foreman Stan Pierson. Rosencrance, who graduated lineworker school at Bismarck State College (BSC) in 2019, worked for Cold Creek Construction as a lineworker before joining NPEC. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting and golfing. He said he is thankful for the learning opportunities he will receive while working for the cooperative.

Hailing from rural Jamestown, Homes joined the Carrington West crew under foreman Shannon Petersen. A 2022 spring graduate of the lineworker program at BSC, Homes is looking forward to working



James Rosencrance



Cody Homes

close to home. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting, fishing and lifting weights. Homes is appreciative of the experience he will gain working alongside Petersen's crew.

NPEC is glad to have these two join our crews! ■

Employees recognized for years of service



Rebecca Nyhagen
Billing assistant,
5 years



Blaine Hulbert
IT/network technician,
10 years



Justin Kollman
Dispatcher/safety coordinator,
10 years



Dustin Peterson
Lineworker,
10 years



Beau Bredahl
Line foreman,
20 years



Trevor Wick
Line foreman,
25 years



Doyle Schwanke
Lineworker,
25 years

Members' cents go a long way

At its June meeting, the Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) Operation Round Up board of directors approved grants totaling \$9,550 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.

Since the program's beginning in October 1998, grants totaling \$880,837 have been awarded to 1228 local charitable causes.

Grants approved in June include:

- **David Flath**, Robinson, medical expenses
- **Kathryn Lang Benson**, Cando, medical expenses
- **Leann Hoppe**, Carrington, medical expenses
- **Women's Auxiliary Cemetery Association**, New Rockford, grounds maintenance program
- **North Star Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)**, Cando, National Leadership Conference
- **Harvey FCCLA**, National Leadership Conference
- **Carrington Area Healthy Communities Coalition**, new park equipment
- **Presbyterian Church of Rolla/St. John**, roof maintenance project

If you would like additional information about

this worthy program, please contact Northern Plains Electric Cooperative by calling 800-882-2500. Or, you may obtain guidelines or download applications at www.nplains.com. The board will meet again in September to review applications. The application deadline is Aug. 20. ■



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