

You're invited to Northern Plains Electric Cooperative's ANNUAL MEETING

June 21, 2021
Rugby High School, Rugby
Register/meal: 5-6 p.m.
Meeting: 6 p.m.

- Enjoy a free meal catered by Grove Catering and dessert by Duchessa Gelato
- Learn about cooperative news and activities
- Elect three members to serve on the board of directors
- Entertainment by Mylo Hatzenbuehler
- Door prizes and cash drawings
- Two luck-of-the-draw \$500 scholarships to high school seniors*

Can't make it to the meeting?

Voting ballots will be mailed to the membership the last week in May.

** More information can be found at www.nplains.com or call 800-882-2500.*

MAY 2021

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Grants available to nonprofits

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

The NPEC 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 the 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 to celebrate the vital role that 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 \$2,000 to be used to support community-owned entities, nonprofits and community-based projects.

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

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 14. ■

STOP PHANTOM POWER AND SAVE 10%

Although the term “phantom power” may be unfamiliar, most of us have tangles of cords for phones, TVs, computers and other gadgets in our homes. Many electronic devices in your home continue to draw power when they are turned off or not in use, wasting energy. Advanced power strips save energy by automatically shutting off power to unused devices. Simple to use, cost-effective and convenient, they’re the smart choice for today’s homes.

How they work

Smart strips typically have three types of outlets: one control outlet, always-on outlets and automatically switched outlets. When the device plugged into the control outlet isn’t being used, power is cutoff to all devices on the switched outlets. Always-on outlets are for plugging in devices that always need power, like a cable box.

Power strips fit different needs

There are three types of smart power strips. Though they work in different ways, they all save energy by disconnecting power to electronic devices that are in standby or sleep mode.

1. Timer-equipped smart strips are controlled by programmable timers. Devices plugged in automatically turn on or off at designated times.
2. Occupancy-sensing devices are controlled by an infrared motion detector. These smart strips can sense if someone is in the room and turn plugged-in devices on or off accordingly.
3. Current-sensing smart strips are controlled by a “master” outlet. If you plug your TV into the master outlet, your cable box and video game console will turn off automatically when the TV enters sleep mode. When you turn on the TV, the other electronics turn on as well.

Smart power strips can connect to your home network, allowing you to control it remotely using your smart speaker or a smartphone app.

By plugging in with advanced power strips, you’ll save energy and money while your devices will still be there ready to go whenever you need them. ■



Plug loads

Other plug loads around the home can add up to be 8-10 percent of monthly energy use. Here are some tips:

- Turn computers and monitors off when not in use.
- When buying a new computer, consider buying a laptop. It uses less energy than a comparable desktop.
- Turn large-screen TVs off completely when not in use.
- Check for energy-saving settings on flat-panel TVs like automatic brightness control and a power-saving sleep mode.
- Turn off stereos and radios when not in use.
- Enable auto power-down feature on gaming consoles.
- If you don’t unplug them, use energy-saving modes or automatic sleep function on electronics.
- Remember to turn off hair curling irons and hot rollers.
- Make sure electric blankets are turned off in the morning.
- Verify livestock water tank heaters are off when not needed.
- Make sure heat tape is off when not needed.
- Unplug battery chargers when not needed. ■

RIGHT UP OUR ALLEY

Northern Plains secures loan for community bowling facility

BY BRITTNEE WILSON



The New Rockford Area Betterment Corporation (NRABC) strikes again! This time, it saved a historic bowling facility in New Rockford.

The NRABC is a nonprofit organization established in 1990 to create and promote community and economic development

and betterment within the community of New Rockford and Eddy County. Over the past decade, the NRABC has assisted with a variety of community development projects, including the relocation and expansion of the city library, construction and management of a 24-hour fitness center

and the digital upgrade to the Rockford Theatre. Now, it has undertaken the Wonder Lanes Bowling Alley.

After 60 years in operation, the owner of the Wonder Lanes Bowling Alley was looking to sell, as his age and health were factors in keeping the business open. Several years went by, with no buyer in sight. Even though the business hours were limited, the alley maintained a high volume of customers, including bowling leagues for both youth and adult and hosting birthday parties and events.

This year, amid the COVID-19 crisis and rising health issues, the owner decided to close the doors for good. That's

when the NRABC stepped in. The organization's nine-member volunteer board of directors unanimously voted to purchase the business and work to revitalize the historic facility.

NRABC secured a \$200,000 economic

SPARE CHANGE?

Individuals who would like to donate to the Wonder Lanes Bowling Alley fundraising campaign can do so online at cityofnewrockford.com or make a contribution at Bank Forward, New Rockford.



development loan with a low interest rate through Northern Plains Electric Cooperative to purchase the bowling alley. It has also launched a fundraising campaign and grant writing to raise the remaining amount needed to complete the project.

"We are very fortunate to have Northern Plains invest in economic

development projects in the communities they serve," said Amanda Hegland, NRABC executive director. "Programs like this help keep our small communities thriving."

NRABC has plans to remodel and revamp the aging eight-lane facility, including updating the existing equipment and refurbishing the mechanical system, scoring system, bumpers and

gutters. It plans to create an additional seating area for events, and add a small bar and an updated kitchen facility to serve food.

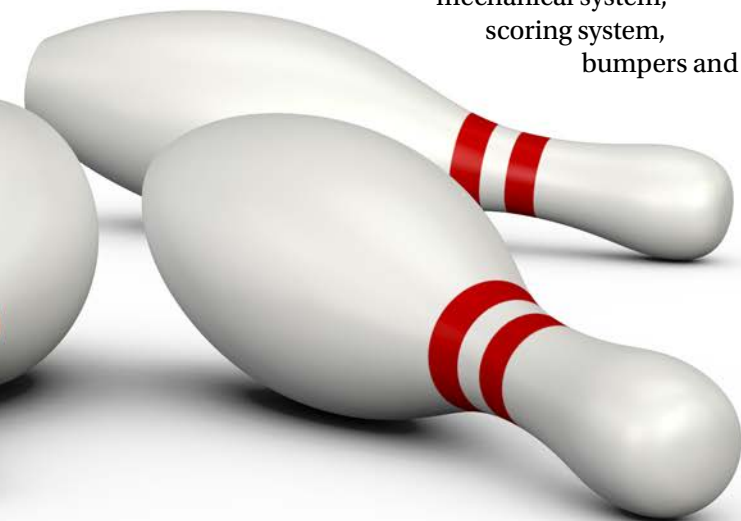
Once the facility is renovated, the NRABC's ultimate goal is to lease the space to an entrepreneur who could thrive at operating it. "We are setting it up, so a new business can be successful," Hegland said.

The goal is to have the remodel complete by the fall to reopen the facility for league play. The

bowling alley will have open bowling, party rental options and corporate and offices parties, meetings and rentals.

Hegland noted, "Our hope is to have Wonder Lanes Bowling Alley a vibrant destination for all residents, neighbors and tourists!"

To find out more information on Northern Plains Electric Cooperative's economic development loans, please contact us at 800-882-2500. ■





Maintaining the line

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) has approximately 74,000 poles making up 3,900 miles of overhead line in its system, 2,781 miles of buried cable and serves over 11,500 meters. It takes a lot of moving parts to maintain the reliability of NPEC's system. A majority of that maintenance needs to be squeezed into the spring and summer months, when 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 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/ replacements

For the past couple years, NPEC has hired RAM Utilities, a utility

service company from Moorhead, Minn., to inspect our utility poles to ensure they are safe.

Last year, 8,130 poles were tested in the Rolla, Rock Lake and Belcourt areas. RAM Utilities conducts 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.

In 2020, 342 poles were rejected and are currently being replaced by the co-op with the help from Legacy Power Line Inc. out of Wadena, Minn.

Pole replacements are expected to go through June. A majority of these change outs are being conducted "hot," meaning members will not lose power. It is important to note that just because a pole is rejected doesn't mean it was in imminent danger of failure. The purpose of the inspection process is to prevent future issues.

In 2021, RAM Utilities began pole testing in the early spring in the Tuttle, Robinson and Woodworth

areas, looking to test approximately 8,000 poles. It is expected to be in these areas through May.

Cable locating

To improve NPEC's efficiency, Summit Locating out of Missoula, Mont., handles all underground cable locates in our system. By law, utilities only have 48 hours to get the lines marked, often pulling a crew member from our busy construction season to locate.

In 2020, Summit Locating conducted 3,738 locates in the NPEC territory. Outsourcing our locates has allowed our crews to efficiently work on construction projects with little or no interruptions.

To make a locate request, by law, you must call 811 two or three days prior to the start of your project. The operator will notify all the utilities affected by your project, including NPEC. Wait two to three days for the affected utilities to respond to your request. Electric cables will be marked with red flags.

Meter exchanges

Starting in June, meter exchanges will begin for the Tuttle, Robinson, Pettibone, Woodworth, Pingree, Buchanan, Spiritwood Lake, Courtenay, Medina, Cleveland and Jamestown areas by Chapman Metering of Avoca, Iowa.

These area members who have an older Power Line Carrier meter will have their meter replaced with an AMI meter as part of the meter maintenance program.

"The reasons for the meter changes are twofold: the ages of these meters and the high meter maintenance costs we are experiencing as they age," said Scott Buchholtz, NPEC's IT manager.

NPEC will continue to exchange meters, moving north across our service territory over the next three years, so that we complete our meter maintenance by the end of 2024.

Chapman Metering will be driving white service vans with its company name and our Northern Plains Electric Cooperative name

on them.

Give us a call

Want to confirm whether contractors employed by NPEC are working in your area? Give us a call (800-882-2500). Vehicles will be either marked with one of the following company names or with Northern Plains Electric

Cooperative logo. They may have out-of-state license plates.

Contractors hired by Northern Plains Electric:

Ram Utilities LLC - Pole testing

Legacy Power Line Inc. - Pole replacement

Summit Locating - Cable locating

Chapman Metering - Meter exchanges ■

Northern Plains Electric announces 2021 scholarship winner

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) announces its 2021 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship winner, Abigail Mehlhoff.

Abigail is a senior at Wing High School and the daughter of NPEC members John and Rebecca Mehlhoff, Tuttle.

Abigail is involved in various school activities such as student council, FFA, 4-H, track, speech and band. She is involved with community food drives, works with children's ministry and volunteers on community service projects.

Abigail plans to pursue her higher

education at the University of Mary in Bismarck, where she plans to earn a Bachelor of Science in nursing, with a long-term goal of becoming a nurse practitioner.

The scholarship is based off many factors, including academics, extracurricular activities, community involvement and an essay on how a cooperative can be economic engines for their local communities. Abigail's winning essay was one of 15 applicants. NPEC is honored for the opportunity to play a small part in the education of young adults. Congratulations, Abigail!



Abigail Mehlhoff

Operation Round Up grants \$9,800

At its March meeting, the Northern Plains Electric Operation Round Up board of directors approved grants totaling \$9,800 to help support worthy causes.

The board meets quarterly to disburse funds to help Northern Plains members with medical expenses and area nonprofit organizations. Since the program's beginning in October 1998, grants totaling \$834,162 have been awarded to 1157 local charitable causes.

Grants approved in March include:

- Woodworth Fire Department, Purchase turnout gear
- Woodworth First Responders, Continuing education costs
- Cathay Fire Protection District, Purchase SCBA tanks

- Jack Geske, Pingree, Medical expenses
- Cheryl Hager, Balta, Medical expenses
- Edith Armey, Cando, Medical expenses
- Lori Stahl, Glenfield, Medical expenses
- Anton Korb, Cando, Medical expenses
- Sylvia Martin, Pettibone, Medical expenses
- Kerry and Roxann Haugen, Cando, Medical expenses

If you would like additional information about this worthy program, please contact Northern Plains Electric Cooperative by calling 800-882-2500, or 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. ■

STAY SAFE ON THE FARM



Overhead power lines are necessary to deliver electricity to hardworking farmers and ranchers, but those same power lines can also be deadly if not treated with respect. While you need to focus on the field and your machinery, Northern Plains Electric Cooperative urges you to also watch for electrical hazards around the farm or ranch.

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 you use tall 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. ■



**NORTHERN
PLAINS** Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

An equal opportunity provider and employer.

CANDO OFFICE:

609 4th Ave.
Cando, ND 58324

CARRINGTON OFFICE:

1515 West Main
Carrington, ND 58421

OFFICE HOURS:

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

www.nplains.com
justask@nplains.com
800-882-2500

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