

ATTEND YOUR DISTRICT MEETING IN FEBRUARY

DISTRICT 2

TUESDAY, FEB. 18 - FESSENDEN
FESTIVAL HALL

DISTRICT 1

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 19 - CANDO
NORTH STAR PUBLIC SCHOOL

DISTRICT 3

THURSDAY, FEB. 20 - JAMESTOWN
NORTH DAKOTA FARMERS UNION HEADQUARTERS

*Registration and complimentary meal
from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.*

*Meeting and director election
from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.*

*To learn in which district you reside, visit our
website www.nplains.com or call our office
1-800-882-2500.*

LUCK-OF-THE-DRAW SCHOLARSHIPS

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative will award two, \$500 luck-of-the-draw scholarships to be drawn at our annual meeting on April 16 in Pingree. All high school seniors who are a dependent of a member of Northern Plains Electric Cooperative are eligible for the scholarships. Students must attend one of our three district meetings this February or our annual meeting in April to register.

FEBRUARY 2020

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Solar research project year-end update

In May 2015, Northern Plains and Dakota Valley electric cooperatives jointly installed a 16-panel solar system at our Carrington office. The 6.56-kilowatt system is used primarily as a research project. The co-op's goal is to learn how much the system will cost to maintain, how reliable it is and what sort of return members would see on their investment. With this information, Northern Plains can help provide unbiased information to members considering installing a system of their own.

System recap

The research solar system is comprised of 16 panels, in an array of four panels wide and four panels deep. Overall, it covers an area about 25 feet wide by 25 feet long. Its output is rated at 6.56 kilowatts and produces about 8,500 kilowatt-hours per year.

Cost

Together, the two cooperatives invested approximately \$29,000 in the research solar system. However, \$10,000 in grants was received from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development and N.D. Department of Commerce, bringing the net cost down to \$19,000.

Total Energy Generated [kWh]

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total	\$ saved
2019	303	190	879	814	958	942	1138	978	710	474	250	190	7825	\$861
2018	398	593	765	1113	1015	1051	1142	1004	757	584	266	257	8945	\$984
2017	276	538	723	759	905	1016	1208	1011	760	721	426	332	8675	\$954
2016	325	484	831	821	975	1104	991	1042	730	536	440	248	8527	\$938
2015	-	-	-	-	530	961	1065	1019	861	607	413	232	5689	\$626

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 \$935 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.

In 2019, the highest output was 1138 KWH in July and the least was an output of 190 KWH in both February and December. This trend is unfortunate, as winter is usually the time when electrical use is the highest and is needed the most. The total output for 2019 was 7,825 kilowatts, a savings of \$861. This year-end number is lower than years previous. This can be attributed to more cloudy days and the tripping of inverters that needed resetting.

Maintenance

Basic maintenance took place in 2019, including basic cleaning of dust, leaves and snow and the resetting of inverters when they trip. Since the beginning, the only major maintenance took place in 2018 when high winds bent the aluminum supports, causing four reflector panels to fall out and break. Cost of materials to repair these damages was \$373, plus labor to reinstall the parts.

Return on investment

All electricity produced is used at the facility and the value of the electricity is calculated using the cooperative's retail residential electric rate. The return on investment of \$19,000 (with grants) is anticipated to be about 20 years. Without the \$10,000 in grants, this would extend the payoff period to 30 years. Any repairs to the system would extend the payoff period.

Visit our website to view solar generation in real-time: www.nplains.com. ■

ATTENTION KIDS! ENTER OUR POSTER CONTEST!

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative is sponsoring a safety poster contest for children in kindergarten to sixth-grade. The purpose of the safety poster contest is to make children aware of the dangers of electricity. At Northern Plains, safety always comes first, and we are dedicated to doing our part to teach children how to be safe around electricity.

Winners will be announced on our Facebook page and featured in the Northern Plains local pages of the *North Dakota Living* magazine. So, grab your art supplies and be creative!

Entry categories

K-first grade
Second-third grade
Fourth-sixth grade

Prizes in each category

First prize: \$20
Second prize: \$15
Third prize: \$10

RULES

- Posters must be on white, 8.5x11-inch paper.
- Posters must depict the theme: "How to stay safe around electricity." Print the child's name, school grade, address and parents' names on the back of the poster.
- Child must be a dependent of a current Northern Plains member.

Submit entries to a Northern Plains office (Cando or Carrington) or mail to:

Northern Plains
Electric Coop.
Attn: Brittnee Wilson
P.O. Box 608
Cando, ND 58324

Deadline is March 5.

Staking engineer/engineering technician needed



Position opening for a staking engineer/engineering technician at Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC). Position will be based in Carrington.

Bachelor's in electrical engineering preferred OR vocational/technical school degree in electrical, geospatial (GIS) or other related technical field with industry experience in the power distribution field. Valid driver's license required. A full description of the responsibilities and NPEC application form are provided at the following website: <http://www.nplains.com/content/job-opportunities>.

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative offers a competitive wage and benefits package, including health insurance, 401K plan, pension and paid vacation.

To apply, send an NPEC application and cover letter to: Northern Plains Electric Cooperative, Attn: Engineering Dept., P.O. Box 180, Carrington, ND 58421. Applicants must submit an application by Feb. 14, 2020.

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity employer. ■



Chace Engstrom, marketing and sales (left), and **Kim Engstrom**, owner, stand in front of their popcorn display at their new facility, CoJack Snack & Pack in Devils Lake.

Colorado Jack gives back

BY BRITTNEE WILSON

A small popcorn business is making big waves across the Midwest. You may have heard of Colorado Jack, a North Dakota company with a Colorado name. But what you may not know is how this small business, which is based on the values and principles of giving back, is helping our communities.

But let's start from the beginning. Northern Plains Electric members, Brian and Kim Engstrom, are the fourth generation to work the family farm near Leeds. They also own and operate a processing plant that handles dry edible beans, Engstrom Bean & Seed, also located near Leeds. In 2013, they entered a partnership that purchased a bean processing facility in Colorado that also produces raw popcorn.

The popcorn aspect of the business was new to them. Searching for a way to diversify their business in 2015, they began to make pre-popped flavored popcorn using a unique mushroom-type popcorn kernel and named the company Colorado Jack. The name paid tribute to the business in Colorado, Jack's Bean Company, which has been in operation since 1932.

The popcorn is grown in Colorado, then the raw kernels are brought to North Dakota for popping and flavoring. With the help of a hired chef, they came up with five delicious flavors: white cheddar, caramel, sea salt and butter, white cheddar and jalapeño, along with a Colorado mix which is a blend of caramel and white cheddar jalapeño.

Making Colorado Jack even more of



a family business, husband and wife team Brian and Kim, who have three children, now have their eldest two in the business. Their daughter, Chace, runs Colorado Jack's marketing and sales and their son, Cullen, has a hand in making the popcorn through Open Door Center, while their youngest is still in school.

In 2015, Open Door Center (ODC) in Valley City and Colorado Jack entered a partnership, creating work for their residents by having the ODC facility pop, flavor and package Colorado Jack popcorn. ODC is a private, nonprofit organization that provides day, residential and vocational services to individuals with disabilities.

"Once we learned about ODC and their amazing work program, we thought we could have them make our popcorn! We know how important it is for individuals with disabilities to have meaningful work," Kim Engstrom said.

And that's just what they did. Moving their production from Leeds, they purchased all the popping, seasoning, blending and packaging equipment needed to set up a small distribution center at ODC.

In 2019, their son, Cullen, who has intellectual and behavioral disabilities,

moved into Open Door Center after graduating from the Anne Carlson Center of Jamestown. Cullen now has a hand in the family business and loves making money.

Kim explained how important ODC is to Cullen, "He really enjoys his job and the busier Cullen is, the less problems he has. He also really enjoys working toward a goal. He just purchased a new TV and his next goal is to save up for a trip."

Cullen is one of about 12 people at ODC who are involved with making the popcorn. "Their production can

produce about a pallet of popcorn a day," Chace Engstrom said.

Because capacity at ODC is limited, the Engstroms purchased a facility near Devils Lake this past year to ramp up production. The new facility, CoJack Snack and Pack, is set up to package large quantities of dry edible beans that come from their plant in Leeds as well as make large batches of Colorado Jack popcorn. Their new production line can put out 1,500 pounds of popcorn an hour.

With the new facility, they are hoping to get their popcorn into



*The Engstrom family at Cullen's graduation. Left to right are **Chace, Isabella, Brian, Cullen** and **Kim**.*

national chain stores. Currently in talks with a big outlet, they still need to dot some I's and cross some T's. If they close the deal, they would like to provide job opportunities to the individuals of Lake Region Cooperation (LRC). A corporation similar to ODC, LRC is a private, nonprofit community-based organization in Devils Lake that provides quality vocation, residential and support services for people with disabilities.

Kim declared, "Even though we are making popcorn at CoJack Snack and Pack, Open Doors Center will continue to produce our fundraising and online orders. That won't change."

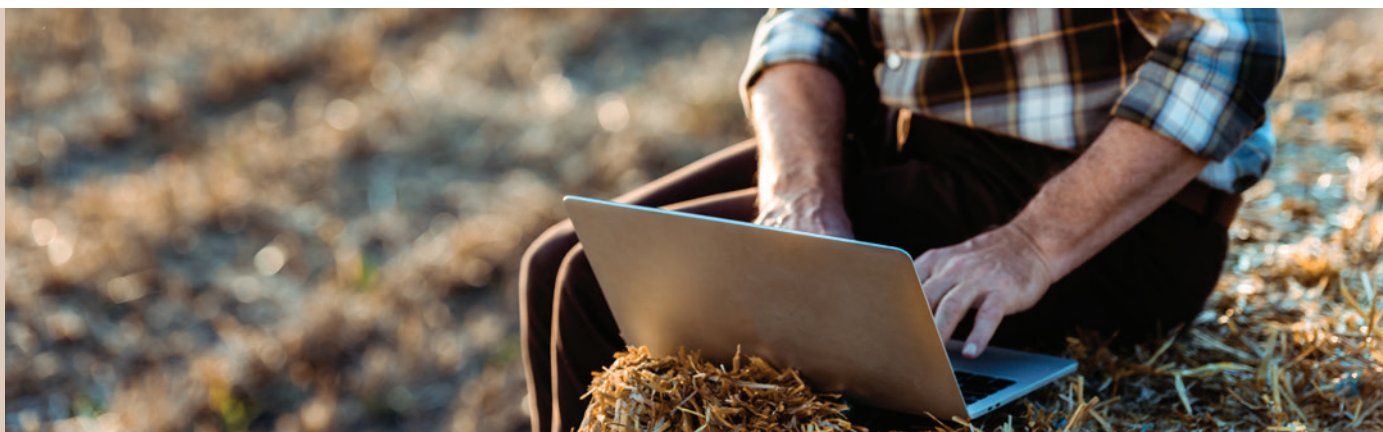
In addition to creating jobs for the residents of ODC, the Engstroms found another way to give back, implementing a program called Colorado Jack Giveback. Through this program, they offer a generous 50 percent return to any nonprofit organization wanting to fundraise money by selling their popcorn. The remaining 50 percent of the sales pays wages to the residents and their staff supervisors, and covers operating expenses.

"It's the ultimate giving back," Kim said. It makes meaning work for the individuals at ODC as well as money for the nonprofit organizations doing the fundraising.

Continuing to give, Colorado Jack is the official popcorn for annual fundraising events such as Wine & Wishes, a signature fundraising event for Make-A-Wish North Dakota and Giving Hearts Day, a 24-hour fundraising event for charities of North Dakota and northwest Minnesota.

You can find Colorado Jack popcorn in select stores such as Scheels, Ace Hardware, Happy Harry's and Hornbacher's. You can also purchase from the website at www.ColoradoJackPopcorn.com.

To learn more about their fundraising program, visit www.ColoradoJackGiveback.com. ■



No-cost counseling services available to farm, ranch families

When the stresses of agriculture seem too great, farmers don't have to go it alone. Caring and confidential counseling sessions are available to farmers, ranchers and members of their households.

Jamestown Regional Medical Center (JRMC) collaborated with The Village Business Institute to offer web-based counseling at no cost to the agricultural community. The program is called Agricultural Workforce Assistance (AWA) and

includes up to three free sessions of counseling support.

The three free counseling services through AWA are available to farm families in JRMC's nine-county region: Stutsman, Foster, LaMoure, Logan, Barnes, Eddy, Griggs, Kidder and Wells. Should a farmer or rancher from another county need this care, The Village will guide him or her through their options.

To access the services, call 800-627-8220 and ask for web-based counseling with The Village AWA.

The Village staff will walk you through how to access the web-based service. ■





WEARING OUT YOUR BOOTSTRAPS?

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

North Dakotans expect a lot from our bootstraps.

Handling stress. Fixing problems. Farmers and ranchers learn how to troubleshoot challenges. But sometimes life overwhelms us more than even the strongest bootstraps can support. Life is just plain tough sometimes.

Being sad, frustrated or overwhelmed doesn't mean you are failing. Those feelings are signals, like a "check engine" light. It's a cue to focus on your wellness, because your health is your most important asset.

When we experience a disappointment or loss, it's normal to feel sad or discouraged. Normal sadness usually fades as we figure out how to handle the event that caused it and re-involve ourselves in our day-to-day life.

But depression is different. Depression is a medical condition and does not just improve on its own.

If a number of the signs/symptoms listed below are present in you or someone you know, and they continue for over two weeks, the person may be experiencing depression and should seek medical care:

- Feeling sad most of the day, nearly every day.
- Becoming irritable about abnormal things. Irritability can apply to everyone; men are more likely to show this sign of depression.
- Unable to stop worrying or overthinking.
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions because of worry.

- Disinterest in doing things you usually enjoy.
- Wanting to be alone, isolating yourself.
- Trouble waking up or falling back asleep because of worrying OR sleeping much more than usual.
- Feeling tired, lacking energy.
- Feeling like you can't control emotions.
- Being asked by others if something is wrong.
- Feeling physically ill (stomach upset, trouble eating, headaches, muscle aches).
- Repeated thoughts of death or suicide.

It's not weakness. It's called being human.

Sometimes people won't seek help for depression, because they worry what others might think.

The fact is this: Even if you feel alone, you aren't. An estimated 16.2 million adults have had at least one major depressive episode.

Depression is a complex medical condition. Like any medical condition, it requires treatment.

The good news: It's treatable!

Since we know that not everyone experiences and handles stress in the same way, we recognize there can't be a one-size-fits-all approach to treating depression, stress and anxiety. There are multiple, evidence-tested treatments that can help, ranging from medications to calibrate your brain chemistry to counseling approaches to help you cope with life's ups and downs. ■

WHERE TO GET HELP

- In an emergency, call **9-1-1**.
- For nonemergency situations, speak with your health care professional about mental health services in your area.
- NDSU Extension offers resources for dealing with farm/ranch stress: www.ag.ndsu.edu/farmranchstress.
- Abound Counseling at Lutheran Social Services North Dakota (LSSND) offers in-person and statewide telehealth counseling services. Payment options include sliding fee, health insurance and no-fee options through LSSND's Abundant Care fund: **701-223-1510**.
- North Dakota Regional Human Service Centers offer counseling services statewide: www.nd.gov/dhs/locations/regionalhsc.
- For FirstLink helpline, call **2-1-1**. This is a 24-hour helpline with services and referrals.
- National suicide-prevention hotline (available 24 hours/day): **800-273-8255**.



Do you have money waiting for you?

The following people have capital credit checks at Northern Plains Electric Cooperative for which we do not have a current address. Please notify us if you have a current address for any of these people, or if you are entitled to the capital credits in the case of an estate. Information must be received by March 31, 2020. Call us at 800-882-2500.

2019 UNCLAIMED CAPITAL CREDIT CHECKS

Alkire, Marjorie Lukeville, Ariz.
Allen, Elvina Grand Forks
American General Valley City
Anhorn, Elizabeth Devils Lake
Baker, Gary R. Belcourt
Banic, Al Round Rock, Texas
Bear, Runner J. Belcourt
Bearrunner, Shannon Belcourt
Bercier, Sandra M. Belcourt
Bishop, Robert Bisbee
Borgerson, Jenni Devils Lake
Brunelle, Charles Belcourt
Brunelle, Jamie Rolette
Charboneau, Chasity Belcourt
Charboneau, Karla Bismarck
Dauphinais, Eldora Fort Totten
Demery, Jackie M. Fargo
Duckwall-Alco Carrington
Eisenzimmer, Regina Rugby
Feather, Sharon Fort Totten
Giron-Vargas, Juanita Wimbledon
Goter, Martin Wilmington, N.C.

Gourneau, Marlow Belcourt
Grant, Maxine Rolla
Helton, Gracie Carrington
Higgins, Michael Belcourt
Houle, Beverly Rolla
Johnson, Curtis Bisbee
Klassy, Howard Medina
Klingenstein, Scott Mandan
Kleinvachter, Jean Devils Lake
Laducer, Monica Belcourt
LaFloe, Cindy Belcourt
Lafontaine, Alvin Belcourt
Lafontaine, Judy Belcourt
Lambert, Tonda Fort Totten
Lavallie, Bonita Belcourt
Lavallie, Jessica Bismarck
Leben, Debra J. Devils Lake
Littlewind, Clifford Fort Totten
Lobato, Lisa Belcourt
Lureen, Bruce Jamestown
Marion, Renee M. Belcourt
Martello, Dale Cando

Mickelson, Carollee Dunseith
Morin, Crystal Belcourt
Morin, Jolene Belcourt
Nelson, Doris Fort Totten
Nilson, Vi Grand Forks
Orrill, Sherea Cando
Peltier Turcotte, Stephanie .. Grand Forks
Premiere Asset Services Frederick, Md.
Roberts, Randall Jamestown
Robertson, Dave St. Petersburg, Fla.
Selzler, Terry Mandan
Schwartz, Lorraine Mapleton
Tucker, Lester Jamestown
Tuege, Karen Cando
Vivier, Michael Grand Forks
Wagner, Anna Jamestown
Walette, John F. Belcourt
Wanzie, Marilyn Belcourt
Wilkie, Kirk Belcourt



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

An equal opportunity provider and employer.

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Cando, ND 58324

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Carrington, ND 58421

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