



SEPTEMBER 2020

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- EV charger placed
- Sharing sweet success
- Work safely

\$500,000 of capital credits refunded to Northern Plains members

Northern Plains Electric members will be receiving their capital credit checks in the mail a little earlier this year. Normally, members see a return in December. However this year, checks will be mailed out the second week in October.

At its June meeting, Northern Plains Electric Cooperative's board of directors approved the retirement of more than \$500,000 in capital credits. The capital credits are paid to members who earned patronage by doing business with the cooperative in 2005 and 2006. Unless the member participated in one of the cooperative's early payment capital credit buyout programs, a check is in the mail!

The amount of the check depends

on a member's "patronage," or how much electricity the member purchased in those years.

In addition, to date, the co-op has also made early retirements of \$132,351 to member estates and former members who requested an early buyout at the time they left the system.

How do capital credits work?

As a nonprofit organization, Northern Plains Electric's mission is to provide service to member-owners at cost, while also maintaining the co-op's financial strength. If the co-op earns revenues in excess of its expenditures, it returns those profits to members. Those profits are called capital credits.

Capital credits are the most significant source of equity for most electric cooperatives. This equity is used to help meet the expenses of the co-op, such as paying for new equipment and repaying debt. Capital credits help keep rates at a competitive level by reducing the amount of funds that must be borrowed.

For more information on capital credits, call 800-882-2500. ■

If you cease to purchase energy from Northern Plains Electric, please keep us informed of your forwarding address. This will enable us to forward payments when the capital credits are refunded in years to come.

WHAT'S ON THAT POLE?

This illustration shows the basic equipment found on electric utility poles. The equipment varies according to the location and the service they provide.

PRIMARY WIRES

Primary wires carry 7,200 volts of electricity from a substation. That voltage is 60 times higher than the voltage that runs through your home's electrical outlets!

SURGE ARRESTORS

These protect the transformer from lightning strikes.

NEUTRAL WIRE

The neutral wire acts as a line back to the substation and is tied to the ground, balancing the electricity on the system.

SECONDARY SERVICE DROP

Carries 120/240-volts of electricity to consumers' homes. It has two "hot" wires from the transformer and a bare "neutral" wire that's connected to the ground wire on the pole.

GROUND WIRE

The ground wire connects to the neutral wire to complete the circuit inside the transformer. It also directs electricity from lightning safely into the earth.

INSULATORS

Insulators prevent energized wires from contacting each other or the pole.

TELEPHONE, CABLE TV, AND FIBER WIRES

These are typically the lowest wires on the pole.



NEVER NAIL POSTERS OR OTHER ITEMS TO UTILITY POLES. THESE CREATE A SAFETY HAZARD FOR LINEWORKERS.

Original illustration by Erin Binkley



Bev Fiferlick, JRMC chief financial officer, Seth Syverson, NPEC general manager, Dave Walz, JRMC plant manager, and Trisha Jungles, JRMC chief nursing officer, with the new charging station.

SUBMITTED IMAGES BY JRMC

First EV charger for NPEC

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative has partnered with Jamestown Regional Medical Center (JRMC) to bring an electric car charging station to the JRMC campus.

Northern Plains installed a Clipper Creek Level 2 EV charger, which went online in July. It is located on the southwest corner of the JRMC parking lot, near the Cancer Center entrance and just off Interstate 94. The charger has an output of 7.7 kilowatts, which on a one-hour charge can take most electric vehicles 22 miles or more.

As electric car sales continually increase, so does the need for charging stations.

"I would like to thank JRMC for partnering with us in this venture. The cooperative will receive firsthand experience with the charging station technology and will allow us to share this information with our members. As interest in electric vehicles grows, we want to be a resource for our members and to better understand the costs, benefits, and impacts to the electrical system," said Seth Syverson, Northern Plains general manager.

The charger will initially be available at no charge and the charging station is open 24/7 with free parking. Details of how much it will cost customers to use the charger will be determined at a later date.

"We are grateful to Northern Plains Electric Cooperative for this charger. This is another way JRMC

can exceed expectations and be THE difference in the lives of those we serve," said Mike Delfs, JRMC chief financial officer.

JRMC serves 55,000 people in a nine-county region. In 2020, it was named both a Top 20 Critical Access Hospital in the nation as well as a Top 100 Best Place to Work.

"Northern Plains has partnered with us for more than a decade to serve rural communities. We're even located on Touchstone Energy® Boulevard. Thank you for powering the future of rural health care," Delfs said.

Northern Plains has shared its charger location and information on www.plugshare.com. Electric car users can access this site to find all listed public charging stations in the state. ■



The Farmer's Wife Cakes shares sweet success

BY BRITTNEE WILSON

Jennifer Dockter
of The Farmer's Wife
Cakes poses with
two trophies and her
cake that won Best
Tiered Cake Design
and People's Choice
Award for best
presentation and
best cake flavor/
taste/texture with
her famous white
chocolate raspberry
flavor in a state-
wide professional
baker competition
in 2018.



Big-city flair with small-town charm. That's what one can expect when working with baker and creative genius, Jennifer Dockter of The Farmer's Wife Cakes. This small-town cake shop located in Rugby produces the most fantastic cakes in appearance and taste that have gained recognition all over the United States.

Dockter's dream of owning a bakery came to life in 2015 after she left the corporate world, and moved back to her hometown, looking for a way to combine her love for baking with a flexible schedule to be home with her three children when needed.

Dockter operates her business from a licensed commercial kitchen located on her home property. She bakes all orders custom, fresh and made-to-order and is available by appointment only. She gets some help from "the farmer," her husband, Brandon, when he can spare time from the farm.

Although "cake" is in her business name, Dockter also makes baked goods for all occasions, including cupcakes, cookies, macarons and pastries.

"It's fun to mix things up," Dockter says. "Each type of event brings something new to work with as each piece is custom to the individual ordering."

The design and detail that goes into one of Dockter's cakes is what catches people's attention, but it's the taste that brings the clients back. Right now, she has 20 options on the gourmet flavor list. Dockter has even won an award for her famous white chocolate raspberry flavor.

When asked about her favorite part of her job, she responded "I love seeing the look on my clients' faces when they see their finished edible art piece for the first time.

Their smiles and watching their faces light up will never get old."

The bakery, which started as a much-needed creative outlet for Dockter, has turned into a successful business. Dockter has been featured nationally in *American Cake Decorating* magazine and by TLCme.com as the best wedding cake bakery in North Dakota.

Dockter, who is completely self-taught, has been contacted multiple times by a talent agency for the Food Network as well as HGTV. Because family comes first for Dockter, the timing for filming didn't work out and she had to pass on the opportunities.

"Someday, if I'm meant to compete on TV, it'll happen if it is supposed to," Dockter says.

Recently, Dockter received another opportunity to showcase her talents, this time in a storefront retail space in Harvey. Misti Arnold, a longtime client of Dockter's called her with the news that she was opening a coffee shop/boutique and she wanted The Farmers Wife's Cakes to be the provider of baked goods for her shop, called Marsai's Bean and Boutique.

Dockter jumped at the idea and she is glad she did. "We've been welcomed by the community of Harvey with open arms," Dockter says. "People have been coming from all over the state to check things out and the feedback has been nothing but positive."

At the grand opening in June, the number of cupcakes Dockter thought that would last one week sold out in one day. "I am so thankful to Misti for the opportunity to grow our small family business," she says.

As for as what Dockter sees for her future, she would continue to bake in some way, shape, form or

capacity. "It's a part of my soul and is something that I will never not do," she says.

The Farmer's Wife Cakes takes orders by appointment only at 701-776-7686 or thefarmerswifecakes@gmail.com. Follow her on Facebook: The Farmer's Wife Cakes and on Instagram: [thefarmerswifecakes](https://www.instagram.com/thefarmerswifecakes). ■



This winter wildlife cake is one of Dockter's favorite cake designs she's ever made. Many techniques went into creating it, and Dockter said she really had to step out of her comfort zone. This photograph went viral on The Farmer's Wife Cakes social media and was shared across the world.





Do you have electric heat? Check that breaker!

Often, members turn off their breaker to their heat meter through the summer months and forget to turn it back on heading into fall. If the breaker is off to the meter, the meter will not register, therefore the member will not be credited for the lower rate of electric heat.

If you already have an off-peak meter and your breaker is switched to the "ON" position, you do not need to do anything.

Don't have an electric heat meter?

One thing that can help members save during cold winter month is having a heat meter installed. An

electric heat meter records your heat usage only. When electric demand and market prices are high, an off-peak device in the home automatically switches from an electric source to a backup source, such as propane or fuel oil. In exchange, participating members receive discounted off-peak rates, which are competitive with fuel oil and propane. Our off-peak program is designed to reduce electric demand during peak times and save money.

If you are heating with electric heat and do not have a heat meter, please contact the NPEC office at 800-882-2500 to learn more. ■



Who POWERS you?

Inspired by someone making a difference in your community?
Tell their story and they could win a cash prize.

Visit whopowersyou.com between 9/8/20 and 10/9/20 and submit a photo of your nominee. Then tell us why that person inspires you and how they make a difference in your co-op community.



\$5,000 GRAND PRIZE

\$2,000 SECOND PLACE

\$1,500 THIRD PLACE

\$500 HONORABLE MENTION

Visit whopowersyou.com for full contest rules

Sponsored by Touchstone Energy Cooperative, Inc., 4301 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22203. © 2020.



Work safely around grain bins

Make sure everyone, including family and employees, working around stored grain understands the hazards and proper safety procedures.

“Too many people ignore safety practices and suffer severe injury or death while working around grain,” says Ken Hellevang, North Dakota State University Extension agricultural engineer. Never enter a bin while unloading grain or to break up a grain bridge or chunks that may plug grain flow. Flowing grain will pull you into the grain mass, burying you within seconds. Use the “lock-out/tag-out” procedures to assure equipment will not start before entering the bin.

Bridging occurs when grain is high in moisture content, moldy or in poor condition. The kernels stick together and form a crust. A cavity will form under the crust when grain is removed from the bin. The crust isn’t strong enough to support a person’s weight, so anyone who walks on it will fall into the cavity and be buried under several feet of grain.

Determine if the grain has a crust before any grain has been removed. If work needs to be done with a crust, it must be done before any grain is removed.

To determine if the grain is bridged after unloading has started, look for a funnel shape on the surface of the grain mass. If the grain surface appears

undisturbed, the grain has bridged and a cavity has formed under the surface. Stay outside the bin and use a pole or other object to break the bridge loose.

If the grain flow stops when you’re removing it from the bin, a chunk of spoiled grain probably is blocking the flow. Entering the bin to break up the blockage will expose you to being buried in grain and tangled in the auger.

If grain has formed a vertical wall, try to break it up from the top of the bin with a long pole on a rope or through a door with a long pole. A wall of grain can

collapse, or avalanche, without warning, knocking you over and burying you.

Never enter a grain bin alone. Have at least two people at the bin to assist in case of problems. Use a safety harness and rope that prevents you from descending rapidly more than a couple of feet when entering a bin.

“Take time to think of all options before entering a bin,” Hellevang advises. ■

Grain bags are suffocation hazard

Never enter a grain bag, because it is a suffocation hazard. If unloading the bag with a pneumatic grain conveyor, the suction can “shrink wrap” a person so he or she cannot move and will limit space for breathing.

Bins require clearance from power lines

Our farmers work hard to get the job done, and sometimes it’s easy to forget all the necessary steps to take when practicing safe operations. Whether you are purchasing new grain bins or remodeling areas that contain existing ones, proximity to overhead power lines must be a considered factor.

- **Safe clearance.** The National Electrical Safety Code requires an 18-foot minimum vertical clearance from the highest point of the filling port of the grain bin to nearby high-voltage wires and a 55-foot minimum distance from the power line to the grain bin wall.

- **Filling grain bins.** Maintain an adequate high-wire clearance when using a portable auger, conveyor or elevator to fill your grain bin.
- **Moving equipment near grain bins.** When moving equipment, such as a hopper or a scaffold, be aware of nearby power lines. Remember to maintain a 10-foot clearance to ensure safety.

Accidents can happen in a split second, which is why Northern Plains Electric Cooperative reminds you to always use caution when working near power lines. If you are considering a plan for a new grain bin or reconstruction of an existing bin’s site, please contact Northern Plains Electric and let us assist you in maintaining a safe environment for you and your family. ■

Co-op urges farm safety

Harvest is sometimes the busiest – and most dangerous – time of year for farm workers. The whirlwind of harvest can lead to a rash of accidental power outages.

So far this year, spring planting and spraying seasons have resulted in 30 accidents reported at Northern Plains. In the last five years, the average number of yearly public accidents reported to Northern Plains is 63. These accidents send crews scrambling to rebuild lines and replace poles.

After an accident, the co-op typically bills for time, mileage and material. Average bills amount to \$1,500, said Operations Supervisor Danny Schuchard.

“The cost off damage is insignificant compared to the cost of lost time, damaged equipment and worse – an injury or death to you or a loved one,” he said.

If you hit a pole, unless there’s a fire or immediate danger, stay

in the tractor. Then, call us for help. Remind other’s nearby that they should stay away until electric co-op personnel arrive to cut power.

“Even if a power line has landed on the ground, the area nearby may be energized. Tangling with 7,200 volts of electricity can have serious and fatal consequence,” Schuchard said.

For more information, call 1-800-882-2500. ■

Follow these other tips:

- Always know the width and height of your equipment including antennas.
- Make sure you have at least 10 feet of clearance between power lines, cabinets, transformers and guy wires.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, call 1-800-882-2500.

YEAR	ACCIDENTS
2015	64
2016	69
2017	73
2018	56
2019	54
2020	30 (as of 7-31-20)

**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

BOARD & MANAGEMENT:

President..... **Tracy Boe, Mylo**
Vice president **Curtis Wiesz, Heaton**
Secretary/treasurer **Randall Simon, Oberon**
Assistant Secretary/treasurer..... **Dave Teigen, Rugby**
District 1 **Mark Brehm, Cando**
District 1 **Bruce Olsen, Cando**
District 3 **Lori Carlson, Jamestown**
District 3 **Judy Geier, Heaton**
District 3 **Curtis Hanson, Pettibone**
General Manager..... **Seth Syverson**
Manager of Engineering & Operations..... **Ashten Dewald**
IT Manager..... **Scott Buchholtz**
Business Manager..... **Cheryl Belle**
Northern Notes Editor **Brittnee Wilson**