



## Capital credit checks are in the mail

### Cooperative mails over \$500,000 to members

**N**orthern Plains Electric Cooperative’s board of directors approved the retirement of more than \$500,000 in capital credits at its October meeting. The capital credits are paid to members who earned patronage by doing business with the cooperative in 2004 and 2005. Unless the member participated in one of the cooperative’s early payment capital credit buyout programs, a check is in the mail!

The refund checks will be mailed to more than 5,900 members and former members in mid-December. 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 \$205,494 to member estates and former members who requested early buyout at the time they left the system.

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 1-800-882-2500. ■

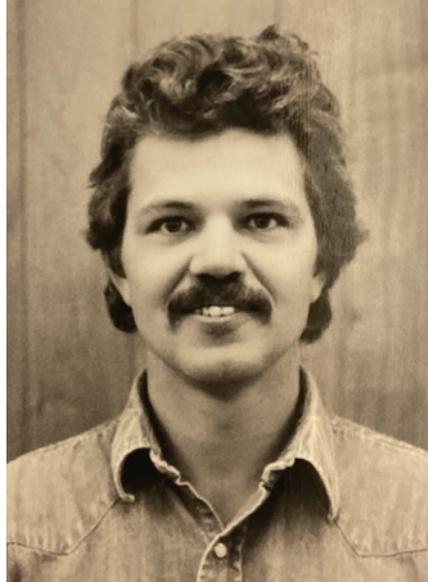
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*Cal Schlieve has retired after working for more than 40 years at the cooperative.*



*Line crew foreman Cal Schlieve in his younger years at Baker Electric.*

## Foreman Cal Schlieve retires

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative congratulates Cal Schlieve on his retirement after working for the cooperative for over 40 years, starting in 2003 as temporary help, then hired as full time in 2004.

After his service in the U.S. Air Force, Schlieve was hired as temporary help on the line crew for Baker Electric Cooperative in the busy summer season until the winter of 1978. Schlieve was called back in the spring and hired as a full-time apprentice lineworker in May 1979 for Baker Electric. He started his career working on the Maddock crew. During that time, he earned his journeyman's certificate.

Living in Leeds while working in Maddock, Schlieve transferred to the Leeds crew when a position became available in March 1985. About five years later, the Leeds outpost dissolved and Schlieve transferred to the Cando outpost.

In Cando, over the span of 15 years, Schlieve worked on

the construction crew and the maintenance crew before becoming line crew foreman in 2004. Schlieve finished his career in Cando, where he was foreman for more than 15 years.

"Cal's knowledge of the system will be missed greatly," said Northern Plains Electric's Operations Supervisor Danny Schuchard.

Thank you, Cal, for your years of service and good luck in your retirement! ■

## Thomson named foreman



Northern Plains Electric Cooperative has named Randy Thomson as the line crew foreman for the Cando

crew. Thomson took his new position as foreman on Oct. 1, after Cal Schlieve's retirement. Thomson, a journeyman lineworker, has worked for Northern Plains Electric for more than 16 years, starting in 2003 as temporary help, then starting full time in 2004.

In his new position, Thomson will be responsible for providing field supervision and assuring safety practices for himself and the Cando crew.

"Randy has filled Cal's shoes well. He has shown he will be a good leader for the Cando crew," said Northern Plains Electric's Operations and Engineering Manager Ashten Dewald.

Congratulations, Randy, and good luck in your new position! ■

**Northern Plains Electric Cooperative wishes you and your family a wonderful holiday filled with joy and a prosperous new year!**

**Office holiday closures**  
**Closing at 2:30 p.m. Dec. 24 and Dec. 31**  
**Closed Dec. 25 and Jan. 1**





# LED lighting making your spirits bright

BY BRITTNEE WILSON

**D**ecorating season is here and there is no better time to think about replacing your old string of holiday lights and upgrading to a more energy-efficient choice.

What if I told you by switching to LED holiday lights, you will make your home safer while saving money in the long run?

## Basics of LED lighting

LED stands for light-emitting diode. LED lighting products produce light approximately 90 percent more efficiently than incandescent light bulbs. How do they work? An electrical current passes through a microchip, which illuminates the tiny light sources we call LEDs, and the result is visible light. To prevent performance issues, the heat LEDs

produce is absorbed into a heat sink, according to [www.EnergyStar.gov](http://www.EnergyStar.gov).

## Savings

It's true, LEDs can save you money. However, it is not a complete no-brainer. The cost of purchasing LED lights is higher than regular incandescent bulbs.

To compare savings on an initial purchase, a strand of traditional 100-count incandescent mini-light bulbs is \$4.99, while a comparable LED set is \$19.99. Sure, you will pay more upfront, but the savings will reflect in your energy bill.

To compare savings on your electric bill, that same 100-count incandescent mini-light set runs at approximately 40 watts, while the comparable LED set runs at approximately 7.2 watts. Because

incandescent wattage is 80-90 percent more than LED wattage, the cost to power an incandescent set can be up to 90 times greater than powering an LED. Multiply that by your amount of connected light strings and the energy usage can add up fast.

By switching to LED lighting, your savings will also extend beyond electricity. LEDs tend to last up to 25 times longer than incandescent. Certified LED light strings do not have moving parts, filaments or glass, and they are much more durable and shock-resistant than other light strings. Causing less of a headache, if one bulb burns out, the rest will stay lit.

## Safety

LED lights are cool to the touch, reducing the risk of fire. With the old-school light strands, whenever one bulb burnt out, it caused the rest of the lights on the strand to burn even hotter, making a fire hazard. LEDs typically do not "burn out" or fail. Instead, they experience "lumen depreciation," where the brightness of the LED dims slowly over time.

However, there is one part of the light strand to keep in mind: the transformer. It's crucial to make sure the transformer does not overheat. It's a good idea to turn off your LED lights at night so the transformer has time to cool and avoid the risk of overheating.

Whether you deck the halls with incandescent or LEDs this season, keep these safety tips in mind.

- Make sure there are no broken bulbs or damaged frayed cords. Discard any defective stands.
- Do not overload electrical outlets or extension cords.
- Turn off all indoor and outdoor holiday lighting before leaving the house or going to bed. ■

# Northern Plains Celebrates Co-op Month

In October, Northern Plains Electric Cooperative took part in celebrating National Cooperative Month by hosting giveaways, contests and gathering items for donation. Thanks to all who participated in our activities. Northern Plains Electric is proud to be a cooperative and serve our members.



Congratulations to Brittany Huffman, of rural Devils Lake and Gina Jones, of rural Jamestown, the two winners of the \$75 bill credit. These members were the first to answer correctly one of the multiple trivia question asked on our Facebook page, then randomly drawn as winners.

Congratulations to Lona Lutz, of rural Glenfield and **Connie Elspenger**, of Cando (pictured) for each winning a gift basket full of Northern Plains swag and North Dakotan made products and treats. These members were randomly drawn after signing up at one of our main offices.



As part of celebrating National Co-op Month, Northern Plains Electric held a Hat and Mitten Drive for local school aged children. Over 75 items were collected and donated to school children in the Northern Plains service area.

Thanks to all who donated items!



## POPCORN! GET YOUR POPCORN!

Eleven schools in the Northern Plains service area accepted the gift of free popcorn bags courtesy of Northern Plains Electric. 4,500 popcorn bags were hand delivered and/or mailed in October to be used at school sporting events.

Good luck to all area teams!



## TAKE THE BRRRR OUT OF STARTING A COLD VEHICLE

**W**ill your vehicle start Monday morning when it's 30 degrees below zero? When your vehicle doesn't start due to frigid temperatures, it can be frustrating. That's why most North Dakotans use an engine block heater on their vehicles. Engine block heaters keep your vehicle's motor warm, allowing an easy start on those cold mornings. But there are some considerations when using an engine block heater. Northern Plains Electric Cooperative offers these tips:

- Don't overload a circuit by plugging your engine block heater into just any outlet. A simple formula will help you decide how many watts one circuit can handle. Divide the wattage of the engine block heater by 120 volts to find out how many amps will be used. If you plug a 640-watt engine block heater into a 120-volt outlet, you are using 5.33 amps. Circuit breakers are rated in amps, so make sure the circuit has enough amps to carry the additional load. It might be best to use an exterior outlet that is protected by one circuit breaker and has ample capacity.
- If the engine block heater has a three-prong plug, don't alter it. Always leave the plug intact and attach extension cords correctly.
- If you use an extension cord outdoors, make sure it is a heavy-duty extension cord rated for outdoor use.
- Warming your engine all night and sometimes all day can use a significant amount of electricity. For better energy efficiency, purchase a timer for your block heater. A timer allows you to automatically turn the engine heater to on-and-off intervals according to your specifications. ■

## Q&A

*Q. Am I wasting money by keeping my tractor engine block heater plugged in and on all night?*

A. Leaving engine block heaters on all night does waste money and energy. Agricultural producers can cut energy consumption by using an inexpensive timer to turn the heater on and off. Diesel tractor engines generally require one to three hours of heater operation before cold-weather starts, depending on the temperature (-30 degrees for three hours). Many farmers and ranchers leave heaters plugged in overnight. A 1,000-watt engine heater can cost \$150 a season to use (based on 10 hours per night at 10 cents/kilowatt-hour and a 150-day heating season). Operating that same 1,000-watt heater for only two hours each morning will save \$120 a year, which is more than enough to pay for the cost of the timer.



Power Seekers team members **Tom Moravec** (middle left) and **Josh Cabler** (middle right) presented a \$100 check to the teachers and kids of Carrington Preschool. (Top, left to right) **Diane Odstrcil**, **Robin Somonson** and **Amy Seaburg**.



Team members **Scott Buchholtz** (left) and **Jill Wright-Van Dyke** (right) presented the \$100 check to **Kristin Larson**, Carrington Youth Center and Theater manager.

## Health, wellness challenge brings money to local charities

This fall, some of Northern Plains Electric Cooperative employees took part in a health and wellness challenge through the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC). Titled the “Life Line Challenge,” this contest between participating electric co-ops across the state competed for better wellness habits, bragging rights, and a chance to raise money for charity while having fun.

Fifteen teams participated in the six-week challenge, including three teams from Northern Plains. The object was to build imaginary power lines by doing daily activities to gain points. Such activities included drinking half your weight in water, exercising, wearing your seatbelt, cutting out sweets and

junk food from your diet, telling jokes and sharing photos.

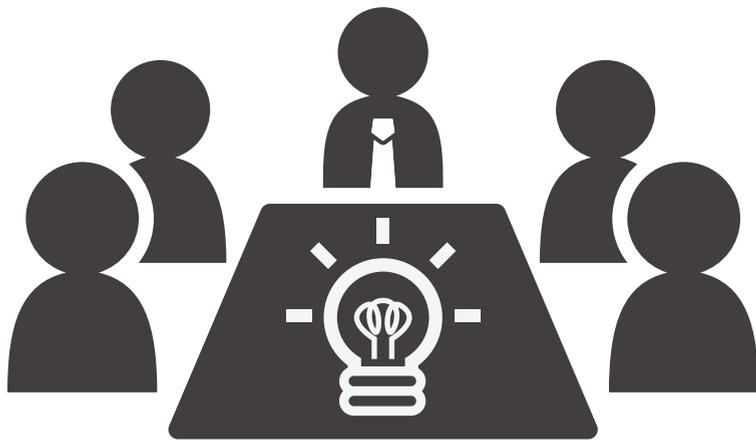
One of Northern Plains Electric’s teams, the Power Seekers, took home third place overall, receiving \$100 from the trust to donate to a charity of their choice. A total of \$800 was given as cash prizes, with all money raised to be given to charities. Teams from Verendrye Electric and Dakota Valley Electric took home first and second place.

The Power Seekers team members, Scott Buchholtz, manger of information technology, Jill Wright-Van Dyke, office assistant, Tom Moravec, lineworker, and Josh Cabler, foreman, chose Carrington Preschool in Carrington to receive their \$100 prize.

The Power Seekers also won an in-house challenge in conjunction

with the Life Line Challenge and won another \$100, this time from Northern Plains Electric Cooperative to give to a charity of their choice; the team chose the Carrington Youth Center.

The Life Line Challenge was the second challenge of the year sponsored by NDAREC in which Northern Plains Electric participated. Northern Plains Electric also has an in-house wellness committee that sponsors multiple challenges throughout the year to better their employees’ mental and physical health and wellness. ■



## District meetings scheduled

Each year, Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) holds director elections in three districts. Those elections are the members' opportunity to select someone to represent them on the NPEC's nine-member board.

The board meets on the fourth Monday of each month to make decisions regarding budget, policy, rates and other co-op business. Meetings alternate between the Carrington and Cando office and typically last a good share of the day. In addition to a monthly meeting, NPEC directors often attend meetings and conferences of the statewide association. Directors are compensated for their time.

To run for director, members must:

1. Receive Northern Plains Electric service at your primary residential abode and you may only run in the district in which you reside.
2. Obtain a petition from our offices in either Carrington or Cando.
3. Obtain at least 15 signatures from NPEC members.
4. Submit a petition at least five days prior to the district meeting.
5. Attend the district meeting.

For more information, call 1-800-882-2500 or email [justask@nplains.com](mailto:justask@nplains.com). ■

### 2020 district meetings

#### 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 meal from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.  
Meeting from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

#### **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](http://www.nplains.com)  
[justask@nplains.com](mailto: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

**Russell 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**