

# Nodak Neighbor

May-June 2009

Official Publication of Nodak Electric Cooperative  
[www.nodakelectric.com](http://www.nodakelectric.com)

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



## Annual Meeting Highlights

Pages 4-5



# Nodak Neighbor

Official Publication of the  
Nodak Electric Cooperative, Inc.

746-4461 or 800-732-4373

[www.nodakelectric.com](http://www.nodakelectric.com)

The Nodak Neighbor (USPS 391-200) is published seven times a year, Feb., March, April, June, August, Oct. and Dec. for \$1.00 per year by the Nodak Electric Cooperative, Inc., 4000 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave. S., Grand Forks, N.D. 58201-5944. Periodicals postage paid at Grand Forks, N.D., and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NODAK ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., P.O. Box 13000, Grand Forks, N.D. 58208-3000.

Volume 59, No. 4  
May-June 2009

## Officers and Directors

Chairman of the Board.....	Roger Diehl
Vice Chairman.....	David Kent
Secretary/Treasurer.....	Steven Smaladen
Directors.....	Donna Grotte, David Hagert, Doug Lund, Lee McLaughlin, Paul Sigurdson and Harvey Tallackson
President & CEO.....	George Berg
Editor .....	Duane Hafner

## Table of contents

- A real lifesaver ..... page 2
- Perspective ..... page 3
- Annual meeting highlights . pages 4-5
- Veterans trip ..... page 6
- Air conditioner buying tips. .... page 6
- Flood damage keeps crews busy. page 7

ENERGY  EFFICIENCY

## Tip of the Month

Don't keep your refrigerator or freezer too cold. Recommended temperatures are 37° to 40° F for the main refrigerator compartment and 5° F for the freezer. If you have a stand-alone freezer, it should be kept at 0° F. Appliance settings may vary, so an easy way to check the temperature is to use a meat thermometer.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

# A real lifesaver

## Nodak lineman puts CPR training to the test

In each of his 31 years as a Nodak Electric Cooperative lineman, Mark Slominski took CPR training.

He's never needed to use that skill on the job, but its worth was immeasurable on March 22. That's



**Mark Slominski**  
Nodak Lineman

when Slominski used CPR to resuscitate hockey buddy Tim Anderson during a pick-up game.

"I had a heart attack and a 100

percent clogged artery," Anderson said. "I'm still here due to Mark's training. I'd say it came in very handy."

Anderson had stopped breathing on the players' bench. Slominski handled the mouth-to-mouth while fellow hockey player Mark Record did the chest compressions.

"You know you have to do something," Slominski said. "A guy could have skated away from fright. But my mind said to get in there."

A paramedic rushing to the scene later told Slominski that he saved Anderson's life. The CPR kept him alive until a defibrillator shocked his heart into beating.

"If I had been somewhere else when it happened, who knows what the outcome would have been," the 49-year-old Anderson said. "His training came in unbelievably handy. I'd do anything for Mark."

CPR is just one portion of the safety training offered by Nodak. All long-term employees are trained on general safety rules, safe operat-

ing procedures, ergonomic hazards and claims management soon after they start with Nodak, then receive refresher courses annually.

The training is especially intensive for linemen, who work with the high-voltage lines. It starts with a one-year line worker school. Once hired, linemen partake in a three-year apprenticeship program with Nodak.

The North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives annually conducts approximately eight on-site training sessions – some of them lasting all day – at member headquarters. Any accidents in the tri-state area are reviewed. Training is held in such areas as CPR, pole

**"I had a heart attack and a 100 percent clogged artery. I'm still here due to Mark's training. I'd say it came in very handy."**

– Tim Anderson  
heart attack survivor

top rescue, first aid, ergonomics, bucket truck safety and recognizing hazards.

But the training isn't just seasonal. Nodak has a safety meeting every Monday morning for crews. And a "tailgate session" is held at work sites to discuss any potential hazards.

"Being a lineman is very safe if you follow all the safety rules," said Dan Schaefer, assistant line superintendent and safety director for Nodak. "But if you do not, it's a very dangerous job. That's why we have the safety program we have."

# Energy conservation and efficiency



**George Berg**  
President & CEO

Perhaps you have noticed in recent years our emphasis on marketing and load building has decreased, and for all practical purposes has been eliminated. At least recently, we have begun putting more emphasis on promoting energy conservation and efficiency, which, of course, if effective, will reduce our energy sales.

Being a business administration graduate, this has been somewhat of a tough swing for me. Electric utilities are businesses with large amounts of fixed costs. Fundamental 101 Economics dictates that the best way to reduce per unit cost in our type of business is to increase sales and spread those fixed costs over more kilowatt-hours.

So, why are we and most other electric utilities getting away from the traditional best practice for this type of business?

As it turns out, there are two basic driving forces for this change. First, virtually all electric utilities are in need of added generation capacity to meet our growing demand. New generation is always more expensive than existing generation, and with the newer environmental regulations, it is expected to be a great deal more expensive. This has spawned the theory that it may be less expensive to "find" generation capacity in our own system by encouraging existing customers to use less energy. The theory could hold true even if the electric utility needs to spend money providing these incentives.

What it really means is that from the utility standpoint, encouraging energy conservation and efficiency may have an adverse effect on our system, requiring higher electric rates. Ironically, it still may be a good idea because the alternative of building additional expensive generation will increase our rates even more.

The second basic driving force toward energy conservation is the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, otherwise known as the Federal Stimulus Package. Included with this Act is an allocation of millions of dollars for each state to be directed toward the energy sector.

The funds allocated to North Dakota will, in turn, be distributed through a state program. The North Dakota State Energy Program is currently being drafted, but it is almost certain to contain incentive money

to promote efficient use of electricity. Likely uses of the funds will include rebates for the purchase of energy efficient devices, such as compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs and programmable thermostats. There may be incentives to install geothermal or high-efficiency air-source heat pumps.

When the state program is developed, we intend to be a source of information of how you can take advantage of the program and cut your energy usage. We hope to do this by including information in the *Nodak Neighbor*, providing information on our Web page, and having knowledgeable people who can answer your questions about energy-saving opportunities.

Watch for this information, as it will be useful if you wish to mitigate higher energy prices in the future with more efficient use of this energy.

## E-billing We now accept MasterCard, as well as Visa!

E-billing is an online tool, which allows you to view and pay your bill through the Internet. To learn more about the E-bill option, visit our Web site at [nodakelectric.com](http://nodakelectric.com). Click on "Programs and Services," and then select "E-bill." If you are interested in using the E-bill option, just follow these few steps:

- Have your Nodak account number ready
- Select highlighted option "Click here to enter E-billing"
- Select "If you are a new user"
- Fill out the appropriate information, name, account number, etc. and select "Submit"

It's that easy and you're on your way to accessing your account. If you have any questions, please feel free to call our offices at 701-746-4461 (toll-free 1-800-732-4373) or e-mail us at [nodak@nodakelectric.com](mailto:nodak@nodakelectric.com).

# Annual Meeting Highlights



*Luther Kvernen, Minnkota vice president of Generation, answers questions while the crowd listens intently.*



**N**odak Electric Cooperative, Inc. held its 69<sup>th</sup> annual meeting on April 4, 2009, at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks. Chairman Roger Diehl and President & CEO George Berg presented the 2008 business report. Some of the highlights of the year 2008 were a summary of significant financial results, a review of the recently completed Automated Meter Reading (AMR) system, the cost and effects of the November 2008 ice storm, a review of the recently adopted North Dakota property tax plan, and a recap of the retail rate increase that was put in place at the end of the year.

Luther Kvernen, vice president of Generation, Minnkota Power Cooperative, reported on significant changes that are being made to the Milton R. Young generating plants at Center, N.D. In particular, Kvernen emphasized the environmental improvements that have been made and how that has, and will continue, to affect the members' rates, in addition to providing a long-term, reliable baseload generation resource.

Incumbent directors Paul Sigurdson, David Hagert and Doug Lund were re-elected as directors in a non-contested election.

The meeting was adjourned, and the Alerus staff served an excellent turkey dinner to approximately 400 members and guests.



*Downtown Horns entertained the crowd with lively jazz numbers prior to the meeting.*

# hlights



Numerous door prizes were awarded. Gary Bahr, Thompson, was the lucky winner of the \$100 cash early bird drawing.



George Berg, Nodak president & CEO (above) and Dennis Hill, executive vice president of the North Dakota Statewide Association.



Steve Smaaladen, secretary-treasurer, visits with attendees.



Left to right: David Kent, vice chairman; Doug Lund; Donna Grotte; Harvey Tallackson; Roger Diehl, chairman; George Berg, president & CEO; Dennis Hill, executive vice president of the North Dakota Statewide Association; David Sogard, legal counsel; Steve Smaaladen, secretary-treasurer; Lee McLaughlin; Paul Sigurdson and David Hagert.



## NORTHERN VALLEY HONOR FLIGHT

The Northern Valley Honor Flight was started in April 2008 for veterans of the Red River Valley. This volunteer organization's main purpose is to provide a complimentary trip for veterans of World War II in recognition of their sacrifices. It is paid for through contributions from local businesses, service groups, churches, clubs and individuals.

Not often does Nodak Electric make large contributions, but when the opportunity to contribute to the Northern Valley Honor Flight arose, Nodak's Board of Directors was eager to help. Nodak's contribution of \$5,000 was one of the larger gifts of the more than \$80,000 given to support this event honoring WWII veterans by sending them to Washington, D.C., to visit the WWII memorials.



## Looking to buy a new AC unit this summer?

*Do some homework and check out the SEER before buying*

### What is SEER?

SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Rating) was invented by the heating and cooling industry to measure the efficiency of air conditioners. SEER is a number that describes how well air conditioning equipment works. The higher the SEER, the better efficiency of the unit; therefore, lower energy bills.

SEER has a universal formula, which is calculated by dividing the amount of cooling supplied by the air conditioner or heat pump (Btus per hour) by the power (watts) for varying weather conditions.

Basically, the lower the SEER rating, the more energy (electricity) is required to produce the desired effect, thus higher electric usage.

For example, a SEER of six produces about 6 Btu/hr of cooling per watt of electricity. Six is a very common

rating for older units produced prior to the 1990s – this is when energy was somewhat inexpensive.

For newer models, a SEER of 13 produces about 13 Btu/hr of cooling per watt of electricity. Thirteen is very common for newer high-efficiency units. This output would be double the cooling effect of a six SEER unit. This increased efficiency has become more and more important as electricity rates continue to rise.

Since 2006, all new cooling systems must have a SEER rating of 13 or better. The best units are pushing a 20 SEER rating.



# Flood damage keeps crews busy



Dale Reed, lead lineman, and Tom Ferguson, crew foreman for the Grand Forks crew, set a temporary pole to restore power northeast of Manvel.



Guy Ford, crew foreman, and Jeff Hanson, lineman for the Grafton crew, utilize an airboat from the Oslo Fire Department, piloted by Orrin Knutson and Troy Solem, to conduct line patrol northwest of Oslo.



Friendly farmers help pull a Grand Forks crew lift truck down a county road to get to a work site.



Wade Haman, lineman, and Mel Nagel, crew foreman of the Hillsboro crew, prepare to switch underground cable while surrounded by icy water.



Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



# ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG



One free, easy call gets your utility lines marked AND helps protect you from injury and expense.

**Safe Digging Is No Accident:  
Always Call 811 Before You Dig**

Know what's below. Always call 811 before you dig.  
Visit [call811.com](http://call811.com) for more information.



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**