

# The Nodak Neighbor

September-October 2012

Official Publication of Nodak Electric Cooperative  
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*October is  
Co-op Month*

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**On the cover:** The Hillsboro crew installs a new pole south of Hillsboro, N.D.

# What is a cooperative?

Cooperatives are owned by their members – the people who receive services from them – and are found in many industries. For example, more than 900 electric co-ops serve 42 million Americans. According to the National Cooperative Grocers Association, 30 percent of farmers’ products are marketed through more than 3,000 farmer-owned cooperatives in America. Familiar brands like SunKist, Land O’Lakes, Cabot Creamery, Ocean Spray and Sun-Maid are all co-ops formed to help farmers distribute products.

In banking, 10,000 credit unions provide financial services to 84 million members across the nation. Co-ops have also been formed to provide child care, insurance and housing. Nearly 30,000 cooperatives operate at 73,000 locations nationally.



## Guiding principles

The cooperative movement traces its roots to a store started by weavers in the town of Rochdale, England, in 1844. The Rochdale model revolved around a set of guidelines drawn up by one of its members, Charles Howarth. When introduced into the U.S. by the National Grange in 1874, these “Rochdale Principles” fueled a cooperative explosion.

Although stated in many ways, the Rochdale Principles hold that a cooperative must provide:

- 1. Voluntary And Open Membership:** Membership in a cooperative is available to all who can reasonably use its services, regardless of race, religion, sex or economic circumstances.
- 2. Democratic Member Control:** Co-ops are democratically controlled, with each member having one vote. As a result, control remains in the hands of all customers. Directors are elected from the membership.
- 3. Members’ Economic Participation:** Cooperatives provide services “at cost” and remain not-for-profit regardless of the value of benefits delivered. Any money left over after all expenses are paid – margins – belongs to the members. Each member’s share in the margin is determined by the amount of his or her use of the co-op’s services.
- 4. Autonomy And Independence:** Cooperatives are self-sustaining, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If cooperatives enter into agreements with others or raise money from outside sources, they do so on terms that maintain democratic control as well as their unique identity.
- 5. Education, Training and Information:** Cooperatives keep members, directors, managers and employees up to date on issues so they can effectively govern the co-op. Communication, particularly with young members and opinion leaders, helps generate necessary public support for cooperatives.
- 6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives:** Mutual support helps cooperatives improve services, bolster local economies and deal more effectively with social and community needs.
- 7. Concern For Community:** Cooperatives develop communities with programs supported by the membership.





*Mylo Einarson  
President & CEO*

# Voting is your ‘civic duty’

**F**all is in the air and with the change of seasons comes many changes in our lives. Some have kids going back to school or young adults off to college. Local schools are brimming with activity as concerts, plays and sporting events are scheduled. Others have gardens to attend to, fields to harvest or seasonal interests that need to be winterized and stored until spring. The one thing that happens this time of year that affects all of us, though, is the upcoming elections.

Young or old, rich or poor, the election will have an impact on all of us because it will determine who sets the policies that shape our daily lives. Some of their decisions affect us directly like tax or energy policy, and some are more indirect like environmental regulations. Collectively, these decisions made by our elected officials determine the environment in which we live and do business. You would think that every eligible voter would want

to share their opinion about who they want making those decisions on their behalf, yet almost half of us won't cast a ballot this November.

Voting is often referred to as our “civic duty” and speaks to the idea that it’s our future, so we need to play a part in shaping it. Voting is our chance to do something to benefit our society through the democratic process, but it doesn’t stop there. What’s equally important is what we do to engage in the political process after the election.

**“Voting is our chance to do something to benefit our society through the democratic process, but it doesn’t stop there. What’s equally important is what we do to engage in the political process after the election.”**

Once our elected officials have been chosen, they need to hear our concerns. Elected officials run for office not for fame and fortune, but because of a strong desire to help mold the future. They can only do that effectively if they know what the people they represent want.

I would like to encourage everyone to embrace their duty to participate in the political process as an opportunity to be part of building the environment in which we live and work. Thomas Jefferson

said, “We do not have a government by a majority of the people, we have a government by a majority of the people who participate.”

Be a part of your own future by calling your senator, writing your city council member or visiting your co-

op’s board members. They’ll listen to your concerns and value your feedback, and in the long run, we will have elected officials doing the will of the people rather than what they think may be the will of the people.

ENERGY



EFFICIENCY

## Tip of the Month



Exhaust fans are great for circulating air in your kitchen and bathroom. Just remember to shut them off 20 minutes after you are done using them to avoid unnecessary costs.

## Juntunen retires; Schlieve joins Devils Lake crew

Steve Juntunen retired from Nodak as lead lineman of the Devils Lake crew with 34 years of service. Steve worked at the former Emerado outpost before transferring to Devils Lake.

Flint Schlieve has accepted the position of journeyman lineman with the Devils Lake crew following Steve’s retirement. Flint was with the Cavalier crew.

Congratulations to Steve and Flint on their new adventures.



Steve Juntunen



Flint Schlieve

# Summers Manufacturing continues as family

Story & photos by Kent Brick

*A welder at Summers Manufacturing in Devils Lake works on a piece of equipment.*

About 50 years ago, when Harley Summers started a business to manufacture and market farm equipment, the core workforce was his family. Now, with three interstate locations, more than 200 employees and customers worldwide, Summers Manufacturing still relies on the family model for its success.

Current Summers Manufacturing President Deb Anderson – Harley and Viola’s daughter – recalls that her father was once just a Maddock area blacksmith. He developed a knack for creating tractor-drawn implements and other farm equipment. In 1965, he purchased patent rights for Goebel truck and pickup hoists from Goebel Brothers of Lehr.



*Company President Deb Anderson, Harley Summers’ daughter, and Brian Perkuhn, vice president of sales, provide executive leadership for Summers Manufacturing.*

These hoists, produced in the blacksmith shop the first year, were distributed nationwide.

With growing sales, and success at fashioning what is now known as the acclaimed Herman Harrow, Summers moved the business out of the blacksmith shop. He went looking for larger quarters and a management team. Anderson says her dad convinced his two sons – one was in the military and one was selling insurance – to join the growing business.

“I was the baby of the family and I came in because it was growing, and then my sister came back in and then the entire family was involved in the business,” Anderson says.

Brian Perkuhn, today’s vice president of sales for Summers Manufacturing, affirms that family dynamics are still central to their operations. “We have a good culture here,” Perkuhn says. “We’re employee-owned, we try to promote teamwork and team building, and we’re a family-oriented business. So when you come to work here, it’s not just a job, it’s more like a family.”

Summers Manufacturing started with a manufacturing center in Maddock, created an additional, larger plant in Devils Lake and has a service, parts and set-up facility in Aberdeen, S.D. In all, there are just more than 200 employees; two-thirds work in the Devils Lake facility, which is served by Nodak Electric Cooperative. Summers builds several types of field treatment implements.

“All of our products are towed implements pulled by a tractor,” Perkuhn says. Summers is a builder in the truest sense. “We do it all – from raw steel to painted finished parts,” he says. The current 13 product lines include: spring tillage; fall tillage; spring residue management; fall residue management; field spraying equipment; soil conditioning; land rollers; rock removal equipment; no-till; minimum-till; conventional-till; vertical tillage; and seedbed preparation.

These product lines feature a combined 57 different equipment types. Summers has a strong commitment to research, product development and working directly with farmers and monitoring results closely.

“We’re always evolving – that’s the way I see us,” Anderson says. “We’re always coming up with ways to serve a

customer better, including products for conditions they face.”

Perkuhn says Summers has an engineering and sales staff rooted in agriculture. Engineers look closely at equipment performance a farmer needs, and help move Summers in that direction. The sales staff has a similar approach. “A lot of our sales staff has been born and raised on farms, so they’re in tune with farmers’ needs, can relate to them, can see the need for product changes and help us adapt with new products,” Perkuhn says.

This full and dynamic catalog of products began growing rapidly with the Summers Manufacturing official incorporation in 1969. Harley Summers’ collaboration with area farmer Ardon Herman led to the Herman Harrow, an effective piece of light tillage equipment.

In 1973, the company moved into a newly built 20,000-square-foot plant and offices in Maddock. It more than doubled this square footage by 1975. During the next 10 years, Summers added a major rock picker line; built and opened the Devils Lake facility; added a field sprayer line in 1983; and, in 1984, started making the Herman Diamond Disk, a disk harrow made in a diamond shape to reduce blade breakage from rocks.

In 2007, the Summers family and the employees made the determination that employee ownership was the appropriate operating mode for the business. Anderson says the employee ownership model works because of the emphasis on sharing key information, and on wide, inclusive discussion of operational matters. “We try not to stress the organizational structure as much as that we’re all owners. I think it’s a good culture because we understand what we do affects the bottom line,” Anderson says.

Anderson leads a Summers team of employees in analyzing and planning strategically. The company planning team is made up of 14 individuals, each one undertaking a close look at part of the company’s work. The result is a strategic plan, which, Anderson says, is “not just put on the shelf.”

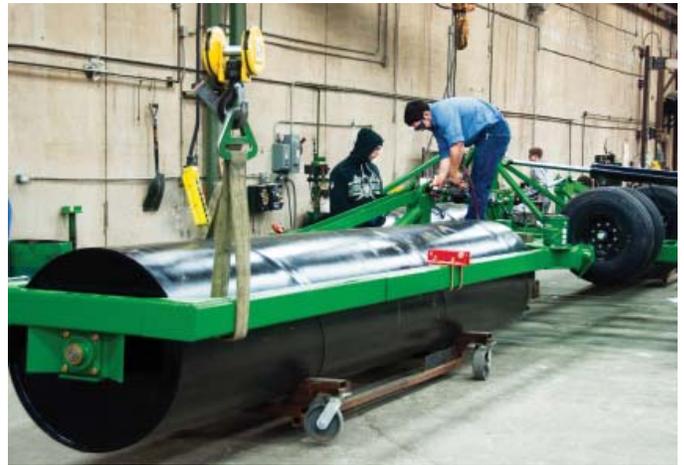
“Our strategic plan takes us out to 2020,” Perkuhn says. He says widespread popularity of corn and soybean varieties, and equipment needed to perform with these varieties, are the drivers of the plan. He says the marketing principles they employ are closely allied with the products they put out into fields.

“It comes down to product and customer service,” Perkuhn says. “We pride ourselves on the quality product we build, on its strength and durability. We get good feedback and repeat customers for that.”

Anderson sums up the overall Summers Manufacturing effort by pointing to their people, the Summers owners and family atmosphere. “I like to look at our mission statement, because it’s very passionate. It says ‘We’re going to build field-tested tough agricultural equipment to help farmers feed and fuel the world.’ That gives us the deeper meaning of what we’re doing here,” Anderson concludes.

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**Kent Brick** is editor of *North Dakota Living*. He may be reached at [kbrick@ndarec.com](mailto:kbrick@ndarec.com).



*Employees at Summers' Devils Lake plant work on a hydraulic fold land roller.*



*The Summers name on field equipment reflects the pride of the employee-owned company.*

## Summers Manufacturing milestones

**1965** – Summers Manufacturing is founded by Harley Summers, who purchases patent rights for Goebel truck and pickup hoists from the Goebel Brothers of Lehr.

**1977** – Summers introduces the Agri-sprayer, used in conjunction with the Herman culti-harrow to incorporate herbicides and liquid fertilizer.

**1984** – Herman Diamond Disk, a disk harrow made in a diamond shape to reduce blade breakage from rocks, comes off the assembly line.

**1994** – A 50- by 125-foot addition to the Maddock factory is completed. Construction begins on a 24,576- square-foot addition to the Devils Lake factory, which enables the company to increase production of truck-mounted and pull-type supersprayers and rockpickers.

**2000** – Company introduces the Supercoulter, the innovative solution for excessive field residue management on no-till, minimum-till and conventional-till farming operations.

# Fall into a new habit

## Change your clock, check your smoke alarm batteries

This is a good time to remember to change something other than your clock.



As Daylight Saving Time ends for the year Nov. 6, The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends that you change the batteries in your smoke detector.

According to NFPA, smoke detectors have reduced the number of home fire deaths by half since they were installed in homes during the 1970s. Ninety-five percent of homes have at least one smoke detector. Unfortunately, a third of those smoke alarms won't sound due to dead, missing or disconnected batteries according to NFPA.



# Work safely this harvest season

Use care when raising augers or the bed of a truck. When moving large equipment or high loads near a power line, always use a spotter, or someone to help make certain that contact is not made with a line.



## E-billing

Check out our e-billing option on our website at [nodakelectric.com](http://nodakelectric.com). Simply click on "Programs and Services," and then select "E-bill." It's quick, easy and a convenient way to access your account. If you have any questions, call our offices at 701-746-4461 (toll-free 1-800-732-4373) or email us at [nodak@nodakelectric.com](mailto:nodak@nodakelectric.com).

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## Do-it-yourself Home Energy Audits

One of the first steps to making your home more efficient involves understanding how it uses energy. Just as a doctor has to do a thorough examination of a patient before writing a prescription, your home will need a good inspection before most inefficiencies can be identified and corrected.

You can easily conduct a basic home energy audit with a simple but diligent walk-through. When auditing your home, keep a checklist of areas you have inspected and problems you find. Full lists are available online. Touchstone Energy Cooperatives® Home Energy Saver ([www.touchstoneenergysavers.com](http://www.touchstoneenergysavers.com)) and the Alliance to Save Energy Home Energy Checkup (search for it at [www.ase.org](http://www.ase.org)) are both useful websites. Most trouble spots can be found in a few key areas.

### Locating air leaks

First, make a list of obvious air leaks (drafts). The potential energy savings from reducing drafts in a home may range from 5 percent to 30 percent per year, resulting in a much more comfortable residence. Check for indoor air leaks, such as gaps along a baseboard or edge of the flooring and at junctures of walls and ceiling. Inspect windows and doors for air leaks. If you can rattle them, movement means possible air leaks. If you can see daylight around a door or window frame, then the door or window has a leak; you can usually seal these through caulking or weatherstripping.

### Insulation

Heat loss through the ceiling and walls in your home could be very large if insulation levels are less than the recommended minimum. When your house was built, the builder likely installed the amount of insulation recommended (if any) at that time. Given today's energy prices (and future prices that will probably be higher), your insulation might be inadequate, especially if you have an older home. Online energy audits will provide more details on checking insulation levels in the attic, walls and basement.

### Heating/cooling equipment

Inspect heating and cooling equipment annually, or as recommended by the manufacturer. If you have a forced-air furnace, check filters and replace them as needed. Generally, you should change them about once every month or two, especially during periods of high use. Have a professional check and clean your equipment once a year.

### Lighting

On average, lighting accounts for about 10 percent of a home's electric bill. Examine the wattage size of the light bulbs in your house. You may have 100-watt (or larger) bulbs where 60 or 75 watts would do. You should also consider compact fluorescent light bulbs for areas where lights are left on for hours at a time.

More information on both do-it-yourself and professional energy audits can be found at [www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov) or contact Nodak Electric at 746-4461 or 800-732-4373. 

*Article courtesy of the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy*

## Ten ways to save energy this heating season



- ✓ Lower your thermostat. For every degree you lower it, you save about 2 percent on your heating bill.
- ✓ Close furnace vents and doors in unused rooms.
- ✓ Turn down your thermostat during the day while you're not at home.
- ✓ If you have single-pane windows, add storm windows to cut heat loss by up to 50 percent.
- ✓ Be careful not to block your radiators or heating vents with furniture or drapes. This will cause your furnace to work harder to disperse heat.
- ✓ If you have a fireplace, close the damper when it's not in use.
- ✓ Clean your radiators, registers and baseboards. These systems operate more efficiently when they are free of dust and dirt.
- ✓ Change your furnace filter regularly. Dirty filters hamper air flow and overwork the furnace.
- ✓ Keep shades and curtains open on the south side of your home during the day to allow solar heating. Close them at night to prevent heat loss.
- ✓ Weatherize your home by caulking and weatherstripping the doors and windows. This could reduce your annual heating bill by up to 10 percent.

*For more energy-saving tips, instructional videos and home-energy audit information, visit [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).*

# Meet your Hillsboro crew



**Hillsboro crew** — (from left) journeyman lineman Wade Haman, lead lineman Jim Bjornstad and crew foreman Mel Nagel.

