

The Nodak Neighbor

September-October 2015
Official Publication of Nodak Electric Cooperative
www.nodakelectric.com

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Official Publication of the
Nodak Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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www.nodakelectric.com

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Tip of the Month



Looking for an easy efficiency upgrade?
Additional insulation can make a difference!
Reduce heating and cooling costs up to 30
percent by properly insulating your home.

On the cover: – A new apartment complex behind Target in Grand Forks is among several construction projects in Nodak’s service area. *Story, page 4.*

Around the co-op

New hire

Brooke Johnson, an Edmore, N.D., native, started employment with Nodak in September as a receptionist. Her responsibilities include the handling of inbound telephone traffic, processing cash receipts and service orders.

Brooke graduated from Northland Community and Technical College with a degree in Administrative Assistant and Software Support Specialist. Her previous work experience includes three years at Rydell Auto Center. Brooke enjoys spending time with her husband, Derek, friends and family, and watching Netflix.



Brooke Johnson
Receptionist

October is Co-op Month

Discover the meaning of membership.

Commitment to community, member-owned, locally served.

Safety is always in season.

During harvest, watch for power lines.



Mac McLennan
President & CEO
Minnkota Power Cooperative

GUEST EDITORIAL

Final EPA carbon rule to impact North Dakota

When the Environmental Protection Agency issued its Clean Power Plan Aug. 3, Minnkota Power Cooperative, Nodak’s wholesale power provider, and North Dakota’s elected leaders were understandably stunned. That’s because the rule looked nothing like what had been proposed just a year earlier.

It was much, much worse for North Dakota utilities and electric consumers.

The outrage has been bipartisan, with Sen. John Hoeven stating that the rule “is the wrong way to go,” and Sen. Heidi Heitkamp referring to it as “dangerous.”

In light of the significant cost increases electric consumers likely will bear under this plan and the very serious questions surrounding grid reliability, this reaction is anything but excessive.

Part of the outcry from public officials and utilities is based on the way the Clean Power Plan was developed. In 2014, the EPA told North Dakota that the agency would require an 11 percent cut in carbon dioxide emissions by 2030 to meet the overall national goal. The EPA went to great lengths to explain how it studied each state’s unique circumstances and resources.

But only a year later, the EPA issued a final rule that requires a 45 percent reduction – more than quadrupling the original proposal.

No notice. No discussion. No logical explanation.

State officials in North Dakota now are in the unenviable position of developing a plan to meet the second-most stringent carbon standard in the nation. And they don’t have long to determine the best path forward: The initial state plan needs to be submitted to the EPA by September 2016, and base-level compliance begins in 2022.

So, there is one year to determine how to radically reshape North Dakota’s

energy industry and then five years to have it partially implemented. Tough, irrevocable and expensive decisions will need to be made to comply.

An initial analysis of the 1,560-page rule indicates that there is no way North Dakota can get to 45 percent without either shutting down some of the state’s coal plants or operating them at drastically reduced levels.

“If North Dakota’s economy is to continue to thrive as it has in recent years, it will need reliable, low-cost electricity. The Clean Power Plan, as it stands today, puts that resource in jeopardy.”

That’s a big problem.

Power plants fueled by lignite coal are the backbone of the region’s electric grid. They run reliably around the clock, and they do so cost-effectively.

North Dakota’s utilities have a proven record of developing and implementing technologies that significantly reduce emissions. More than \$2 billion in state-of-the-art technology has been installed in recent years to keep our air clean. The result has made North Dakota one of only seven states to meet all of the EPA’s strict federal ambient air quality standards.

Prematurely shutting down plants would strand these substantial investments, meaning consumers will have to pay for the expenses associated with that plant while paying the additional costs for new power plant assets.

As an industry, we can find new, innovative technology to make strides toward reducing carbon emissions. It just takes time. Unfortunately, the

EPA’s plan gives us no time and ties up all investment dollars in building new power plants fueled by a different source.

That’s a shame, because North Dakota still has 800 years of recoverable coal reserves available.

Our concern with the rule doesn’t stop at coal. Minnkota’s current investment in wind energy in North Dakota does not count toward the EPA’s standard simply because it was installed before 2013.

Nearly 30 percent of our electric generation capacity comes from wind – one of the top percentages among electric cooperatives in the nation. Another 10 percent comes from emissions-free hydropower.

No credit is given by the EPA for our membership’s prudent yet significant investments in these resources.

What does this mean for electric rates in the region? It means costs likely will go up significantly for homes, schools, businesses and farms. Just how much remains to be seen.

If North Dakota’s economy is to continue to thrive as it has in recent years, it will need reliable, low-cost electricity. The Clean Power Plan, as it stands today, puts that resource in jeopardy. To use Sen. Heitkamp’s words, it’s a “slap in the face” to North Dakota.

FREE TREE NOTICE

We had a note in the last newsletter about free trees being available. Minnkota Power has been able to find homes for all the trees.



Woodland Resort, Devils Lake, N.D., opened its new 10-room lodge on June 10, 2015.



By Steve Breidenbach
Engineering Manager

Summer construction keeps crews busy

After the 2014 construction activities were completed, Nodak was asked by Cavalier Rural Electric Cooperative if it could help with the installation and substation setup of its Automated Meter Reading (AMR) system.

Throughout the winter months, our metering technicians assembled and tested the substation equipment that was to be installed in the spring. Nodak also gave technical assistance for the programming and setup of the Aclara software applications and billing software needed to operate the AMR system. Nodak's portion of this project was completed early summer and Cavalier Rural Electric continues to change meters to the new AMR system.

Generally, late May is the start of Nodak's underground construction, but this year we started at the end of April! The Devils Lake and Grand Forks areas are experiencing much of the new service installations.

In the Devils Lake area, the continuing expansion of Ackerman

Valley along with Woodland Resort and the Cove areas have been keeping our crews very busy. One of the first underground projects this spring was a three-phase tie line adjacent to the Woodland Resort to handle power demands around the lake.

The Grand Forks area continues to grow with both housing and commercial services. Minnkota Power and AgCountry are just a few of the commercial expansions. Both are in the process of constructing new facilities. Apartment units are also popping up behind Target for an additional 264 apartments that will be active in the upcoming months.

Each year, Nodak has many requests for all types of projects. As the construction season progresses and our workload continues to grow, it is very important to plan ahead as much as possible. Please contact the engineering department if you have any questions.



AgCountry (lot 8) will be located in the Heartland West Addition, west of I-29 along 32nd Avenue South. Infrastructure is in progress for the remaining lots.

Pole inspections are key to maintaining reliable system

Nodak Electric has approximately 85,000 poles in its system. We make sure that every pole in the system is inspected once every 10 years. Ram



By Dan Schaefer
Line Superintendent

Utilities of Moorhead, Minn., is the contracting inspection company that makes this happen.

Any pole 10 years old or newer receives an inspection, in which 360 degrees from the top of the pole to the ground line is visually inspected.

Any pole older than 10 years is checked at a probable decay point by shoveling one shovel width and removing 6 to 8 inches of earth to check for external decay.

If there is decay present where the earth has been removed, the pole is excavated through the entire circumference at a depth of 18 inches. Then a paste wood preservative is installed 3 inches above ground line to 18 inches below ground. The treatment is then

covered by an impermeable barrier that protects it from the soil.

The pole is then sounded with a hammer to hear if there are any hollow areas inside the pole from ground line to 8 feet.

To complete the inspection, a small hole is bored at a 45-degree angle until a depth below the ground line is reached. A special tool is then inserted in the hole to check for decay. If there is decay, the choice is either to treat the pole internally with a preservative or reject the pole if the decay is too far gone.

Each pole tested has its GPS coordinates marked and then recorded into Nodak's database.

In 2015, Ram inspected 9,956 poles. A total of 680 poles were visually inspected, with 422 poles given internal treatment and 376 treated due to external decay. A total of 307 poles were rejected, with a rejection rate of 3.1 percent.

It is important that we get the rejected poles off of the Nodak system. If one of the weaker rejected poles breaks in a sleet storm, it could start the domino effect and cause many strong poles to break.

Throughout the year, Nodak maintenance crews change each of the poles that are rejected by the pole tester. The vast majority of these poles are changed out with the line energized so electrical service is not disrupted. Due to the busy schedule during construction season, most of the crews change the poles during the winter months.



An inspector locks in pole coordinates using GPS.



Inspectors drill a hole in a pole to inspect the inside for decay.



NORTH DAKOTA
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

JUNE 11-17, 2016

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SOPHOMORES & JUNIORS!**

**Write a winning essay and win a trip of a lifetime!
An all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C.**

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1. All-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., compliments of Nodak Electric Cooperative.
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CHECK OUT THE ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES AT
www.ndyouthtour.com and www.youthtour.coop

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Blaine Rekken Customer/Energy Service Manager Date: 7-1-2015

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Introducing Pay-by-Phone



Residential and small commercial members who wish to inquire on their account balance or make a payment by credit card or E-check via phone can now use Nodak's Pay-by-Phone payment solution. Pay-by-Phone is a practical solution for those members who do not have Internet access and can be used for one-time or recurring payments. You can pay either by credit card (Visa® or MasterCard®) or checking account. This service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

For first time call and setup, complete the following steps:

1. Call 1-844-846-2690. Enter the Nodak Electric billing account number or phone number. If Pay-by-Phone automatically recognizes caller's incoming phone number is in the member record, skip to #3.
2. Enter the last four digits of the social security number or date of birth that is on file in their member record with Nodak Electric. If no member information requested is on file, the caller is prompted to enter the amount of their last payment.
3. The caller is asked if he/she is calling in regard to the electric service identified by a billing address prompted.
4. The caller is asked to enter a four-digit personal identification number (PIN) with at least one non-zero number. Account access after setup will only require the caller to enter their account number if the incoming phone number is not recognized and the four-digit PIN.
5. Call Nodak at 746-4461 or 1-800-732-4373 for assistance if needed.

Please have the following information ready:

- Pay-by-Phone access number
1-844-846-2690
- To access your account
 - Your Nodak Electric billing account number, or
 - Your phone number on file with Nodak and
 - Your Pay-by-Phone personal identification number (PIN), when created
- To make a credit card payment
 - Your credit card number on the front of your card
 - Month/year expiration date of credit card
 - Zip code where the card statement is mailed
- To make a payment by check
 - Your bank's nine digit routing number
 - Checking account number
- Pen and paper to write down confirmation number

Electric off-peak heat rates begin Oct. 1

Members with subtractive or separately metered off-peak electric heating systems will be charged the applicable off-peak rate for energy usage beginning Oct. 1. The off-peak rates will continue to be charged for energy usage through May 31, 2016. Current off-peak rates are \$0.057/kWh for long-term and \$0.072/kWh short-term controlled systems (price includes the \$0.004/kWh renewable energy market adjustment charge). It is a good idea to inspect, clean and test your heating system before cold weather arrives. Please check to make sure all of your electric heat circuit breakers are on prior to Oct. 1.

Get ready for WINTER



Check for leaks.

- Check around doors and windows for leaks and drafts. Add weatherstripping and caulk to any holes and make sure doors are sealed properly.
- Electric wall plugs and switches can allow cold air in. Installing pre-cut foam gaskets that fit behind the switch plate will effectively prevent leaks.
- Examine heating ducts for leaks. Over time, ducts can leak from being torn or crushed and flattened. Old duct tape can dry up and fall away over time, allowing heated air into your attic or under the house.

Check insulation.

- Insulate your attic. In an older home, that can be the most cost-efficient way to cut home heating costs.
- Weatherstrip and insulate your attic hatch or door to prevent warm air from escaping out of the top of your house.

Check your heating system.

- Get a routine maintenance inspection of your heating system each fall to make sure it's in good working order.
- Replace air filters monthly.
- Make sure all heating vents are open and not blocked by furniture.

Source: consumerenergycenter.org

Daily cycling of electric storage heat begins in late October

Members heating with electric thermal storage, such as thermal storage room units, thermal storage furnaces or slab-in-floor heating, should turn on their heating system prior to Oct. 15 to allow a heat reservoir to build up before daily cycling of loads begins. The actual date cycling begins varies each season. Thermal storage heating is controlled each day from 7 a.m. to noon and 5 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Nodak's electric heating rebate program!

Incentives available for installation of an off-peak electric heating system

- Receive a \$20/kW rebate for the installation of a qualifying electric heating system that is on off-peak.
- Air-source heat pump incentive is \$100/ton – heating mode must be controlled on off-peak.
- Ground-source heat pump incentive is \$200/ton – heating mode must be controlled on off-peak.
- Equipment must be new and off-peak systems must have a qualified backup.
- Homeowner will receive a rebate check after a visit from a Nodak Electric technician.
- Maximum incentive per off-peak meter is \$600.

Homeowners adding new off-peak heating systems qualify for these rebates.

Contact our Energy Services
Department for details
at 701-746-4461 or 800-732-4373

Celebrating 75 Years

I remember when the lights came on ...

In the '40s, everyone on the farms was talking about rural electricity. We were so excited to see wood stakes put up around our yard where the big poles would be put in later.

– Unice Ford
Tolna, N.D.

It was 1957. We were so excited when they wired our buildings, only when we turned on the switch nothing happened. The electrician had failed to connect a wire. My husband remedied it, and then the lights came on!

– Walter and Delores Hoyt
Pekin, N.D.

Our house had burnt down in July 1949. We built a new house that summer, and we were on our way home when we saw a light. We thought, “oh no, the house is on fire,” but instead we found that a light switch had been turned on – and that was the night that the lights came on.

– Dorine Gerstner
Langdon, N.D.

75
Years Of Positive Energy
1940-2015