

The Nodak Neighbor



July-August 2017

Official Publication of Nodak Electric Cooperative
www.nodakelectric.com

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 



Naastad Acres

page 4

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Check us out
on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/nodakelectriccooperative

Is your name on the
Unclaimed
Capital Credits list?
Check out our website

On the cover: John and JoAnn Naastad stand in front of the newly built grain elevator event venue. See story on page 4.

Around the co-op

Gierszewski retires

Connie Gierszewski retired in June after 35 years of serving the members with contagious energy and enthusiasm. If you have stopped by our office during the last three-and-a-half decades, you've likely had the pleasure of speaking with Connie.

Connie started with Nodak in 1982 as a computer operator. Her job duties changed over the years, but her eagerness to help members and co-workers never changed.

She was promoted to billing supervisor in 1994, and held the position until recently.

"Connie has always treated our members with compassion and was our 'go-to person' with any questions or problems," said Blaine Rekken, Member/Energy Services Manager. "We greatly appreciate all she has done to help the cooperative and members throughout the years. She will be greatly missed."

Connie, her husband, Joe, and son, Blake, plan to spend some summer days with friends and family at their favorite place on Fox Lake. She also will be working "part-time" with Joe at his company, Joe Fix-It. When she is not at the lake or working, she attends pottery class, Yoga and plans to try golfing.

Congratulations and best wishes to Connie.



Connie Gierszewski
Billing Supervisor

New hire

Blaine Thompson has been hired as a commercial accounts supervisor.

Blaine was previously employed by May-Port CG High School as a math teacher.

A Bismarck, N.D., native, Blaine graduated from Century High School and went on to earn a math degree from the University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. Blaine and his wife, Paige, currently live in Grand Forks.

In his spare time, Blaine enjoys being outdoors playing golf, spending time with family and attending UND hockey games.



Blaine Thompson
Commercial Accounts
Supervisor



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Skip the dryer and solar power your laundry. Go outside and use an old-fashioned clothesline. Nothing better than free energy from the sun. But make sure there is no rain in the forecast!





Mylo Einarson
President & CEO

Have a safe harvest season

It's hard to believe, but by the time this *Nodak Neighbor* hits your mailbox some of our members will already be preparing for a busy harvest season. It can be an exciting and exhausting time winding up a season of hard work; however, the rush to harvest can also yield tragic outcomes if we are not vigilant. Each year, dozens of farm workers are killed and hundreds are injured in accidents involving power lines and electrical equipment across the United States.

Things people see every day can fade from view and in the busyness of harvest time, it's easy for our farmers to forget about overhead power lines. Failure to notice them can be a deadly oversight. A simple reminder to keep all equipment at least 10 feet from all power lines could be all it takes to avoid a potentially disastrous accident. We encourage our farmers to keep safe and review all activities that take place around power lines with their employees this harvest season.

Some safety tips to help ensure a safer harvest season that are recommended by the Energy Education Council include:

- Use extreme caution when raising the bed of a truck.
- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines and do not let the spotter touch the machinery while it is being moved anywhere near power lines.
- As with any outdoor work, be careful not to raise any equipment such as ladders, poles, or rods into power lines. Remember, nonmetallic materials such as lumber, tree limbs, ropes, etc., can conduct electricity depending on dampness, dust and dirt contamination.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path!
- Use qualified electricians for all your electrical work.

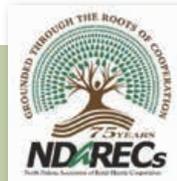
Even when exercising caution, sometimes equipment comes into

contact with power lines, so it is critical that equipment operators learn what to do. Stay on the equipment, warn others and call 911. Do not get off the equipment until utility crews say it is safe to do so. If the power line remains energized and you step outside, touching the vehicle and the ground at the same time, your body becomes the path and electrocution will result. Even if the power line has landed on the ground, the potential for the area nearby to be energized still exists. It is safest to stay in the vehicle unless there is fire or imminent risk of fire.

In this case, jump off the equipment with your feet together, without touching the ground and the vehicle at the same time. Then, still

keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area. Once you get away from the equipment, never attempt to go back or even touch the equipment. Some electrocutions have occurred after the equipment operator dismounts the vehicle and realizing nothing has happened tries to get back on the equipment.

It is very important that all farm workers and seasonal employees are informed of electrical hazards and trained in proper procedures to avoid injury. That way we can all have a safer harvest season and continue to enjoy the benefits of safe, convenient, and affordable electricity. Have a safe harvest.



NDAREC celebrates 75 years

Seventy-five years ago this year, seeds of hopeful cooperation were planted, along with high hopes for a growing – and bright – future for electric cooperatives across North Dakota.

Now, 75 years from this humble, hopeful start, the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) and its cooperative family are planting a new tree to celebrate the anniversary milestone.

Nodak Electric Cooperative planted three trees on the new Minnkota Power Cooperative Corporate Campus on Tuesday, July 18, to commemorate the occasion.

Nodak and other cooperatives from across the state are purchasing and planting trees on cooperative properties as a symbol of cooperative commitment and accomplishment. The plantings coincide with the theme chosen for this 75th anniversary observance: “Grounded Through the Roots of Cooperation.”

NDAREC hopes 75 trees will be planted for the 75th anniversary.



Blaine Rekken (left), member/energy services manager, and Blaine Thompson, commercial accounts supervisor, plant a tree to celebrate NDAREC's 75th anniversary.



A wedding reception in the barn on a warm summer night. *Photo credit Megan Sugden Photography, www.meganphoto.com.*

Naastad Acres

What began as a little girl's dream wedding in a barn blossomed into a rustic destination venue drawing people from around the region.

John and JoAnn Naastad, members of Nodak Electric Cooperative, started Naastad Acres near their home outside of Hatton, N.D., with the idea that it could serve as a stylish country wedding venue. Today, the facility not only holds weddings, but family gatherings, company events, birthday celebrations, reunions and bridal/baby showers.

Nestled in the woods, the rural location includes 10 beautiful acres surrounded by farmland with a tree-lined drive that creates a picturesque setting. Naastad Acres

is a convenient commute without sacrificing the country charm.

Outside of the scenic backdrop, the Naastads have the facilities and staff to make any event successful. A classic red barn is the centerpiece of the venue and includes room for

large receptions, an upstairs bar area and a balcony for extra seating.

Behind the barn, the Naastads designed and built a brand new building that looks like a grain elevator. The building includes a kitchen, bar and outdoor grills. The upstairs has six bedrooms and five bathrooms for the bridal party to stay on-site to enjoy the special day without giving up the comforts of home.

The original machine building has now become the bridal suite, complete with everything a new bride will need: space for her bridesmaids to relax, a small kitchenette and a separate bedroom to help feel at home.

The Naastad's attention to detail gives each building a unique charm. And when it comes to weddings or other events, the layout options are endless. To learn more about Naastad Acres, visit www.facebook.com/naastadacres or call 701-317-8221 or 701-543-3814.



An arbor is one of many different setting options for a wedding.

Top: The Naastad Acres venue getting ready for a wedding.

Right: The bridal suite ready for the bride.

Far right: An outdoor seating area for the groomsmen to relax.





Youth Tour winner visits Washington, D.C.

Mandan, N.D. — Sixteen North Dakota high school students returned June 16 from the 53rd-annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. They



Isaac Joerger

joined more than 1,600 students from around the nation for a fast-paced, intensive week of learning about history and American government, visiting with their state's congressional delegation, becoming more knowledgeable about the cooperative business model, and touring museums, national monuments and memorials. While on the tour, they develop leadership skills and a national network of peers. The students are sponsored by their family's electric distribution cooperative.

To be selected for the all-expense-paid Youth Tour, North Dakota students entered an essay-

writing contest and addressed the following essay topic: "Democracy is the foundation of our American way of life and of cooperative enterprise. The fundamentals of democracy include voter participation, political party affiliation, and public debate of issues. Describe what you think makes our current democracy strong, and provide suggestions for ways our democracy can be made stronger and more effective."

The judging of the essays was handled by the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC). NDAREC serves as the liaison between the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and the state's distribution cooperatives for this annual youth program. NRECA is the national service organization representing the nation's more than



900 consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

This year, students from North Dakota and Montana were chaperoned by Pete Erickson, member services manager for North Central Electric Cooperative in Bottineau, and his wife, Lori. Joining five chaperones from Montana, the Ericksons helped guide 44 young leaders safely around the nation's capitol.

Education is a fundamental principle of electric cooperatives. Boards of directors and managers say they believe it's imperative to help students understand the democratic process and gain the skills necessary to become tomorrow's leaders. By sponsoring the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, North Dakota's electric cooperatives are helping high school students experience government firsthand by visiting Washington, D.C., meeting their representatives and senators, and building a better understanding of our country and their role as engaged citizens.



Outages *What members should know*

Electricity travels many miles from where it is generated to the member's home. The path includes high and low voltage transmission lines, step up and down transformers, voltage regulators, switches, and overcurrent protection before being delivered to the member's meter. At the member's premises, electricity moves through a disconnect switch, secondary wires, junction boxes and breakers or fuses before being used by appliances in the home. Even with so many possible points of failure, electricity is delivered to Nodak members 99.96 percent of the time.

Frequently asked questions:

How do I know if the outage is from Nodak or me?

The easiest way to know is by looking at your main meter outside the home. If there is no LED display of readings, power is not being delivered by Nodak. If a display is present, check your fuses/breakers and call an electrician if needed. If you are unsure, please call Nodak.

How do I report a power outage?

Once a member has determined an outage is not caused by own equipment, report the outage by calling 1-800-732-4373, at any time, and be sure to press 1 when prompted by automated attendant. DO NOT post outage reports on Nodak's Facebook page as the timeline is not monitored 24 hours/day.

No one answered my after-hours call, what should I do?

Periodically, Nodak receives more outage calls than has personnel to answer. This typically happens when substation service is lost or a feeder has been opened affecting hundreds of members at once. If this happens to you, please try again later.

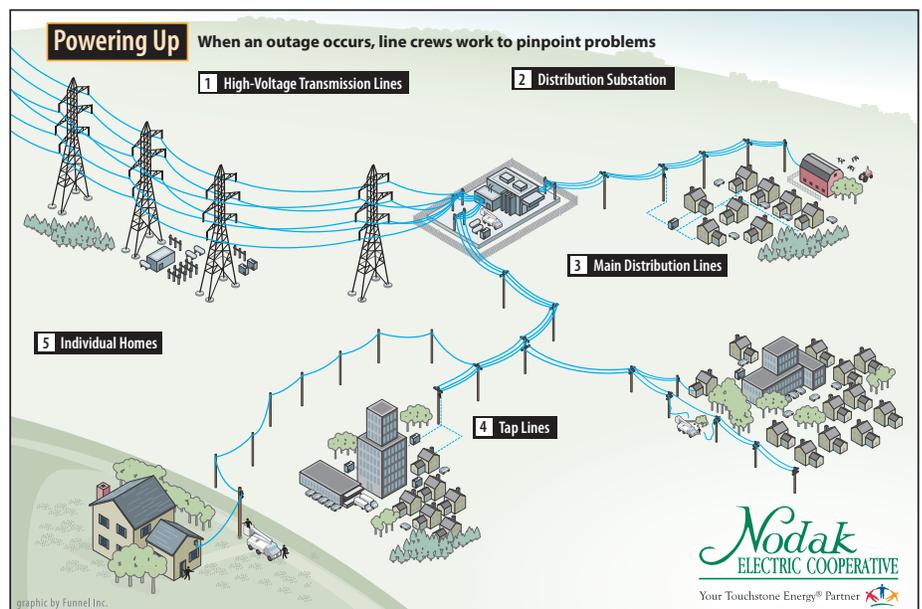
How do I know what is going on?

During extended outages, Nodak will post updates on its Facebook page, or members can access the outage viewer map at www.nodakelectric.com by clicking on "outages" at the top menu of the home page.

Can Nodak tell me when my power will be restored during an outage?

Power restoration time is easier to predict during planned or single member outages, but can be difficult during extended outages where more than one outage type could be occurring at the same time. During a single severe weather event, outages may be

Most line outages people experience are caused by severe weather (typically wind, ice, rain & lightning), loss of substation service, wildlife and tree contact, device failure, public damage from power line contact by vehicles, farm and construction equipment or by planned scheduled maintenance. Loss of power can happen at the member's home by a secondary wire failure and blown fuse or tripped breaker due to an overloaded circuit. An outage can result in a momentary blink or brownout (period of low voltage), up to several minutes without power.



caused by loss of substation service, wire breaks, broken poles, damage to member equipment or a combination. Another reason why outage restoration times are difficult to predict is that plans can change at any time on where crews are dispatched to respond.

What should I do during an outage?

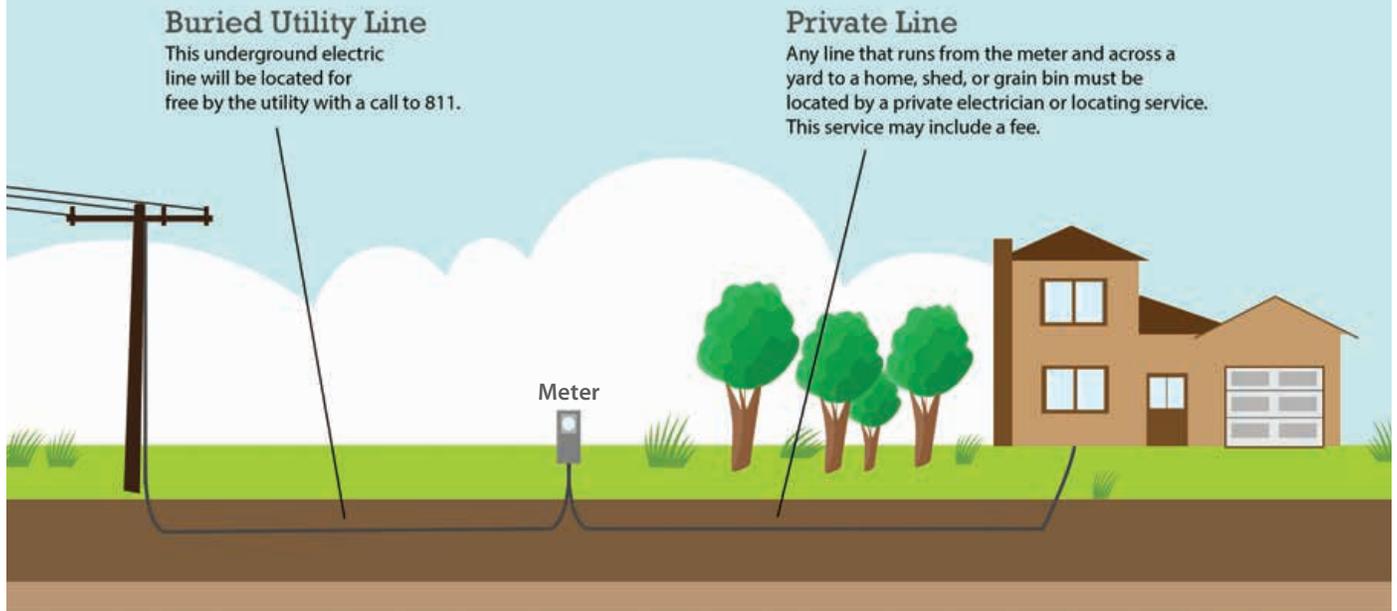
- Remain calm and report your outage to Nodak.
- Turn off electrical appliances in use when outage occurred, such as ovens/stoves or hot plates and portable electric heaters. Do leave a light switch on so you will know when power is restored.
- Keep doors closed on refrigerators and freezers as much as possible during power

outages to keep food cold for a longer period of time.

- Stay away from downed power lines and report them to Nodak immediately – please. Even lines that appear harmless can be dangerous.
- Have a power outage kit on hand consisting of spare fuses, flashlight, portable radio and fresh batteries.
- Have your charged cellphone or smart device handy.
- Please consider an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) for medical necessity devices, computers and sump pumps or standby generator during extended power interruptions.

Please remember that during extended power outages, Nodak's goal is to restore service to the greatest number of members as quickly as possible. Line crews begin at the substation (power source) and work their way out to individual services.

Know What's Below



Summer is officially in full swing, which means it is time to dig into those outdoor projects. But, before homeowners and landowners start those projects, they need to call 811 to locate any underground utilities. Calling 811 is free and ensures that property owners can dig safely without cutting into a fiber optic cable or severing an underground electric line.

Whether it is a homeowner tackling a do-it-yourself project or a professional contractor, the person who is actually doing the digging should call 811 before starting the project. The call must be made 48 hours before the project begins – excluding weekends and holidays – to ensure local utilities have enough time to locate the buried lines.

Homeowners who are simply planting a garden at a depth less than 12 inches are not required to call 811 before they plant their produce. The North Dakota 811 system takes information about digging projects 24 hours a day

and seven days a week and then passes the information on to the appropriate gas company, cable company, or an electric cooperative like Nodak Electric. Those utilities have 48 hours to locate the lines and mark the ground with the appropriate colored paint. This is a completely free service.

Utility companies, however, are only required to mark the buried lines that they own and operate and not the lines that are privately owned. This means Nodak Electric crews will mark the underground lines that run from a main electric line to the meter but not the lines that run from the meter through a yard to a home, shed or shop.

Professional electricians and private locating companies will do this work but often charge a fee for locating the buried lines. The fee, however, is small in comparison to cutting into a gas line or electric line and creating a dangerous situation and being held responsible for the repairs.

Following these rules and safety practices will help homeowners avoid digging into buried lines and ensure that digging into those summer projects will be safe and enjoyable.

COLOR CODING FOR MARKING UNDERGROUND UTILITIES

electric

gas-oil

cable-communication

water

irrigation

sewer

temporary survey

proposed excavation

YOUR NODAK NEIGHBORS

The power you get from Nodak Electric Cooperative is so reliable that it can be easy to forget that there are dozens of men and women helping to make it happen. Who are these faces behind the kilowatts? We're your neighbors, and it's time we introduced you to some of the folks who keep Nodak running smoothly.

MYLO EINARSON

President & CEO

Job: Manages all the working parts of Nodak in a manner that creates value for Nodak's members

Year started at Nodak: 2011

Hometown: Grafton, N.D.

Favorite part about North Dakota: The beautiful sunsets

First job: Cleaning bowling balls at a bowling alley in 3rd grade

Hobbies/Interests: Golf, grilling and traveling

Surprising fact: I have a third-degree black belt in Tae Kwon Do and I'm a certified self-defense instructor

Biggest strength: I'm an analytical thinker

Favorite quote/advice: My dad always said "If you watch your pennies, the dollars will take care of themselves."

Guilty pleasure: Cashews

Craziest food you've eaten: Sea cucumber

Favorite place to travel: Europe

Go-to music: Anything from the 80s

Favorite sports team: University of North Dakota

