

# The Nodak Neighbor

May-June 2018  
Official Publication of Nodak Electric Cooperative  
[www.nodakelectric.com](http://www.nodakelectric.com)

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Springtime  
in the Valley

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Official Publication of the  
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Officers and Directors

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Vice Chairman. . . . . Les Windjue  
Secretary/Treasurer. . . . . David Kent  
Directors. . . . . Dave Brag, David Hagert,  
Pete Naastad, Cheryl Osowski,  
Paul Sigurdson and Steve Smaaladen  
President & CEO. . . . . Mylo Einarson  
Editor . . . . . Blaine Rekken

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**On the cover:** (Top) Stay safe this spring – look up for power lines when moving equipment and call 811 before starting a digging project.  
(Bottom left) Kody Schmaltz looks for the best spot to plant a new tree.  
(Bottom right) Kayle and Jocelyn, daughters of Grand Forks crew foreman Derek and Bobbi Sondreal, enjoy some spring flowers.

## Youth tour winner to visit Washington, D.C.



Lilly Bina was selected to represent Nodak Electric Cooperative at the 2018 Washington, D.C., Youth Tour. Bina is the daughter of Cameron and Estelle Bina of Park River, N.D., and attends Park River Area High School. She will join other North Dakota Youth Tour contestants and more than 1,600 other students from across the country in D.C. the week of June 9-15. The Youth Tour educates students about electric cooperatives, the cooperative business model and the legislative process. She will have an incredible experience visiting unforgettable historic monuments, museums and the U.S. Capitol.

Lilly Bina

## Save a tree and a stamp by making the commitment to go paperless with your Nodak Electric monthly bill

### Paperless benefits

- Using our mobile-friendly app called Smarthub allows you to access your account online to make a payment, look at past billing statements, monitor energy usage and sign up for text or email notifications.
- View your electric bill with 24/7/365 access to your secure online information.
- Receive a text or email notification when your monthly bill is available.
- Choose from several options to pay your bill online.
- Never lose your bill in the mail or receive one late.



### How to sign up

If you do not currently have a Smarthub account, register at [www.nodakelectric.com](http://www.nodakelectric.com), or find the Smarthub app at the app store. If you have questions, call us at 800-732-4373.





*Mylo Einarson  
President & CEO*

## It's always time for safety

Safety is an everyday thing, especially for line crews; however, spring and fall are times when we tend to talk about it more with our members. Farmers are back in the fields and homeowners are eager to get out of the house, and kids are outside riding bikes and playing in the parks. All of these things require additional vigilance on everyone's part to ensure we all stay safe.

Our farmers will spend long hours using heavy equipment that can be inherently dangerous. Homeowners will bring out saws, mowers and ladders as spring cleanup begins, and our kids will be crossing busy streets riding bikes to school and play. With all this activity going on, we need to be reminded to follow safety instructions and to watch out for each other at the same time.

May is National Electric Safety month. As a member-owned electric cooperative, we are committed to keeping members and employees safe. Electrical safety is a common topic with the employees of Nodak Electric Cooperative, but May is a time when we make an extra effort to educate and inform our members about the dangers of electricity. While electricity is a necessity in modern-day life, the same electricity used to power our daily lives can be dangerous, even life-threatening if used improperly. We regularly print articles in this publication with tips on how to avoid being hurt by electricity. I would encourage you to take a few moments and read those short articles and ask yourself if you are following those potentially life-saving tips.

One recommendation we don't stress often enough is to have a qualified electrician tackle all of your wiring projects. Not only will they ensure your project is done properly, they will notice if something is not up to current electrical code. The standards for safe electrical wiring can change from time to time. Even though your system may have been installed correctly according to the code in effect at the time it was put in, it may not adhere to today's National Electric Code. For example, your wiring may have been done before GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter) outlets were required, but depending on their location they may be required for new construction today. A qualified professional would notice such a departure from current code requirements and suggest you change them out. Seemingly simple improvements like this can make a dramatic difference in securing your family's safety. For their sake and yours, consider hiring a qualified electrician for your next project no

matter how big or small.

For those who attended our annual meeting last month, thank you for taking the time to participate in your cooperative's business. We had 2,400 members who participated in our Board of Directors' election through mail-in ballots and at the meeting. Congratulations to Paul Sigurdson and David Hagert who were reelected to new three-year terms and welcome to our newest board member, Dave Brag, who is beginning his first three-year term. This meeting also marked the end of the long career for Director Doug Lund. Doug served our cooperative with distinction for more than 27 years. I would like to thank Doug for his strong commitment over the years and wish him well in his new endeavors.



*Dave Brag  
District 3 Director*

**811**  
Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.  
KNOW WHAT DANGERS LIE BELOW.  
**DIG SAFELY.**  
Accidents can happen to anyone.



*Steve Breidenbach  
Engineering Manager*

# What is that thing?

While driving down a country road and checking out the scenery, people often look at power lines and wonder how they work.

Nodak utilizes many different pieces of equipment to get you the reliable power you need. The green box next to the pole is an underground junction box. The source of power is the overhead line. Nodak taps power off the overhead line, through a lightning arrester and connects to an underground riser. Power is run to the underground junction box we sometimes refer to as a sectionalizing pedestal. They have up to four connection points that can distribute underground lines. Also at the top of this pole is an Oil Circuit Recloser (OCR). These devices sense an Amperage value above their rating and trip open that section of power line. They operate much the same as a

circuit breaker in your home except they can open and close automatically.

A high amperage value could be the results of a tree branch in the power line, contact with farming equipment, an animal contact or lightning. The recloser is set to three or four operations depending on the installation. If an object gets into the power line, the recloser will open and after a couple of seconds it will close back in. If the object is still present in the line, it will open again. After the three or four operations, if the object is still in the power line, the line will remain off and that section of line will have a power outage. If the object is no longer present in the line, the line will continue to deliver power. This is the reason members experience blink outages. Without the recloser, more members would be out of power for a longer period of time.

This only covers a few major pieces of equipment we use to keep your power on. Some other vital equipment we use includes highside and lowside breakers and voltage regulators. This process also does not cover the maintenance we must perform and personnel it takes to ensure the infrastructure we have put in place stays in top condition. This includes our vegetation management program, line and substation inspections and other critical programs.





# Annual meeting HIGHLIGHTS

About 400 members and guests attended Nodak Electric Cooperative's 78th annual meeting Thursday, April 12, 2018, at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks. Members enjoyed a roast beef dinner served by the Alerus staff.

During the meeting, the cooperative's board of directors was seated for the upcoming year, including the selection of officers and three director elections. Paul Sigurdson was re-elected to represent District 1, David Hagert was re-elected to represent District 2 and new board member David Brag was elected to represent District 3. Following the meeting, Nodak's board of directors elected Luther Meberg as its chairman. In addition, Les Windjue was named vice chairman and David Kent was named secretary-treasurer.



# Around the co-op

## New hires



**Matt Konze**  
Apprentice Lineman

**Matt Konze** has been hired as an apprentice lineman with the construction crew.

A lineman for seven years, Matt previously worked at Strata, AW Power as a foreman and at East Grand Forks Water and Light.

An East Grand Forks native, Matt and wife, Danica, have a daughter, Amelia, and are expecting a baby boy in September.

In his spare time, he enjoys being outdoors, going to the lake, hunting and fishing.



**Jolene Landis**  
Warehouse Worker

**Jolene Landis** has been hired as warehouse person. Jolene's duties include receiving and distributing construction materials, assisting with work orders, maintenance

of reclosers and maintenance of buildings and grounds.

A Larimore, N.D., native, Jolene previously worked at Landis Enterprises, Inc., running heavy equipment and doing bookkeeping. She also co-owned the Larimore Flower and Gift Shop for nine years with her husband, Jay.

Jolene and Jay have three kids and three grandkids.

Her hobbies include going to the lake, fishing and hanging out with family and friends.

## Promotions



**Derek Sondreal**  
Grand Forks Crew

Derek was promoted to foreman of the Grand Forks crew. He has been with Nodak for nine years.



**Jared Stadstad**  
Grand Forks Crew

Jared was promoted to lead lineman with the Grand Forks crew. He has been with Nodak for seven years.



**Ben Haarstad**  
Construction Crew

Ben was promoted to journeyman lineman and interim crew foreman with the construction crew. He has been with Nodak for five years.



**Travis Vathauer**  
Grand Forks Crew

Travis was promoted to journeyman lineman with the Grand Forks crew. He has been with Nodak for three years.

## Seasonal apprentices



**Alex Larson**  
East Grand Forks, MN  
Grafton and Cavalier  
crews



**Jesse Sturman**  
Grand Forks, ND  
Construction crew



**Trent Edens**  
Bemidji, MN  
Devils Lake and  
Michigan crews

## Transfer



**Jacob Ihry**  
Grand Forks Crew

Jacob was transferred from the construction crew to the Grand Forks crew. He has been with Nodak for a year.

## Director Lund retires

Doug Lund became a member of the board of directors for Sheyenne Valley Electric Cooperative in 1990 and the board of Nodak Electric since the merger on Jan. 1, 2001. He earned a business education degree from Mayville State University and taught school in Richardton, N.D., and Prior Lake, Minn., before moving northwest of Sharon to farm.

In the past, he has served on the North Dakota Statewide board, the Finley-Sharon school board, the Trinity Lutheran Church board, the Sharon Elevator board, the Sharon Township board and the Steele County Crop Improvement Association.

Doug and his wife, Carol, farm wheat, barley, flax and soybeans. They have three grown children and three grandchildren. Retirement includes traveling, volunteering and spending time with family and spoiling the grandkids.



**Doug Lund**  
Director



# STAY SAFE ON THE FARM

Overhead power lines are necessary to deliver electricity to hardworking farmers and ranchers, but those same power lines can also be deadly if not treated with respect. While you need to focus on the field and your machinery, your local electric cooperative urges you to also watch for electrical hazards around the farm or ranch.

## BE AWARE

Farmers and their equipment should always be 10 feet away from power lines on all sides. Field cultivators and sprayers can often reach as high as 12 feet in the air. Practice extreme caution and use a spotter to make sure you stay far away from power lines when you use tall equipment.

If you have purchased new equipment, be aware of antennas or other attachments that may pose new hazards. A newer, bigger piece of equipment may no longer clear a line. In addition, shifting soil may also affect whether machinery avoids power lines from year to year.

Power lines also may sag over the years. If power lines on your property are sagging, contact your electric cooperative to repair the lines. Never try to move a power line on your own.

Overhead power lines are not the only electric hazard on the farm. Pole guy wires, used to stabilize utility poles, are grounded. However, when one of the guy wires is broken, it can become charged with electricity. If you break a guy wire, call the cooperative to fix it. Don't do it yourself.

## FOLLOW THESE OTHER TIPS:

- Look over work areas carefully for overhead power lines and utility poles. Make sure you, your family and employees know the location of overhead power lines, and use routes to avoid the lines when moving equipment. Do this every year, as equipment sizes and soil conditions may change.
- Be aware of increased heights of equipment, especially new equipment with higher antennas.
- Avoid moving large equipment alone. Have someone watch as you move equipment to ensure you are clear of power lines.
- Be extra careful when working around trees and brush; they often make it difficult to see power lines.

## WHAT IF YOU CONTACT A POWER LINE?

Imagine that you are driving a tractor to the field when things come to a screeching halt. You look back to see what's stopping you, only to discover that you're tangled in an overhead power line! What do you do?

- First, DON'T climb out. If your equipment does contact a power line, stay in the cab and call for help. Warn others to stay away and wait until the electric cooperative arrives. Most utility lines are uninsulated, bare wires. Do not let your body become a direct link between the power line and the ground.
- If you must leave the tractor due to immediate danger, such as a fire, jump as far away as you can, making sure that no part of your body touches the tractor and the ground at the same time. Land with both feet together and hop or shuffle your feet a few inches at a time, making sure to never break contact with the ground or cause separation between your feet.
- Once you're off the tractor, do not go back until your local electric co-op disconnects the power line.



## Meet your Grand Forks crew

**Grand Forks crew** – (from left) – Crew foreman Derek Sondreal; Jesse Sturman, seasonal apprentice lineman; Cody Reule, apprentice lineman; Jared Lothspeich, apprentice lineman; Travis Vathauer, journeyman lineman; Jared Stadstad, lead lineman; and Jacob Ihry, apprentice lineman.

