

The Nodak Neighbor

May-June 2019
Official Publication of Nodak Electric Cooperative
www.nodakelectric.com

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

The Nodak Neighbor

Official Publication of the
Nodak Electric Cooperative, Inc.

746-4461 or 800-732-4373

www.nodakelectric.com

The Nodak Neighbor (USPS 391-200) is published six times a year, February, April, June, August, October and December for \$1.00 per year by the Nodak Electric Cooperative, Inc., 4000 32nd 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 69, No. 3
May-June 2019
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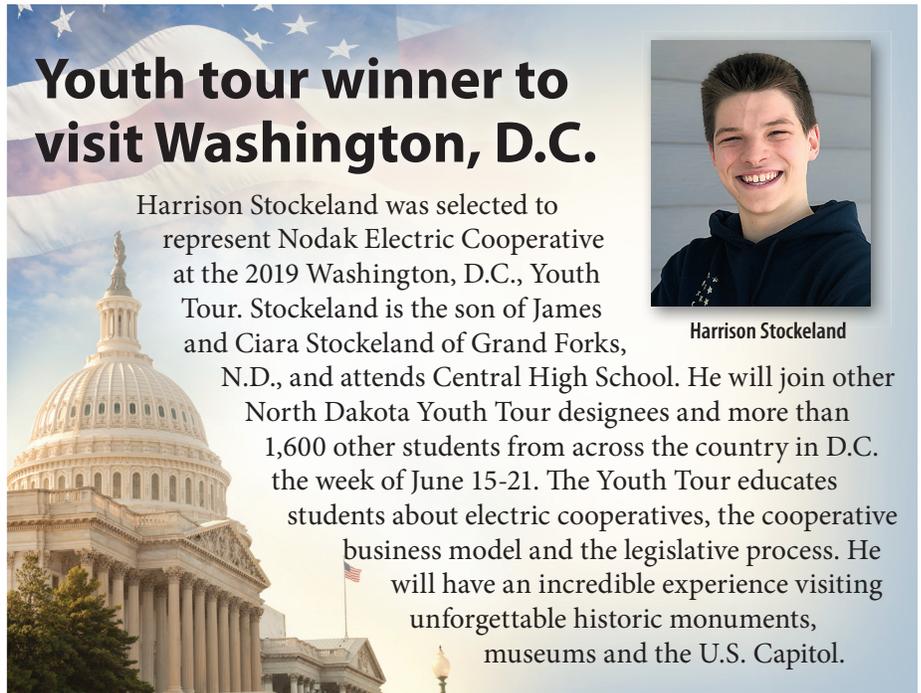
Our offices will be closed
Thursday, July 4, in observance
of Independence Day
In case of an outage, call 1-800-732-4373



**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.

Visit www.call811.com
for more information.



Youth tour winner to visit Washington, D.C.

Harrison Stockeland was selected to represent Nodak Electric Cooperative at the 2019 Washington, D.C., Youth Tour. Stockeland is the son of James and Ciara Stockeland of Grand Forks, N.D., and attends Central High School. He will join other North Dakota Youth Tour designees and more than 1,600 other students from across the country in D.C. the week of June 15-21. The Youth Tour educates students about electric cooperatives, the cooperative business model and the legislative process. He will have an incredible experience visiting unforgettable historic monuments, museums and the U.S. Capitol.

Harrison Stockeland

North Dakota's first all-electric school bus coming to Grand Forks



lifetime. The district anticipates an annual savings of \$2,500 in diesel costs and \$1,800 in maintenance costs with the purchase of the electric bus.

For more details on the event, contact Nodak Electric's energy services department.

North Dakota's first all-electric school bus will be making a stop in Grand Forks this summer.

The bus will be at Minnkota Power Cooperative headquarters on Aug. 8 as part of a community event promoting the advancement of electric vehicles in the region.

The bus was purchased by West Fargo Public Schools, with support from other partners, and will begin transporting students to and from school this fall. With 120 miles of range per charge, the bus is well equipped to meet the day-to-day needs of the school district.

While the new electric bus has a higher upfront cost, it is expected to be more cost effective than a traditional bus over the course of its

SAVE THE DATE
**Thursday,
Aug. 8, 2019**
- at -
**Minnkota Power Cooperative
Headquarters**
*Come join Nodak Electric
and Minnkota Power for food,
fun and electric vehicles!*
MORE DETAILS COMING SOON!



*Mylo Einarson
President & CEO*

N.D. legislature concludes session

You may have recently read or heard reports that the 66th session of the North Dakota legislature concluded its business and has adjourned. For some of us, it's welcome news that comes with a sigh of relief. One of our responsibilities as the stewards of your cooperative is legislative advocacy. Laws and regulations can have a profound effect on the operation and success of our cooperative, so it's vital that we closely monitor state and federal attempts to change the rules under which we operate.

By working with our industry partners and trade associations, we engage with political leaders in Bismarck and Washington on your behalf. When speaking on behalf of the cooperative we represent, we bring credibility. Policymakers know that we represent constituents who have skin in the game and will be affected by the issues we bring to them. Because of that, we as a cooperative family speak collectively with a loud voice when addressing our politicians. I would say that voice was heard clearly this year in Bismarck.

Our industry was successful in helping to defeat bills that would be detrimental to our operation and supported the passage of those we believed would be helpful. In North Dakota, there were bills on net metering, easements and energy project siting that were successfully killed, each of which would have had a detrimental effect on your cooperative. There were also changes to railroad crossing permits and

carbon dioxide sequestration enacted that will ultimately have positive impacts for us. On the national front, there are always issues with regulation, taxes and infrastructure that we are working on.

Just as we depend on our members to support our issues and speak up when called upon, we depend on our industry partners and trade associations to be our eyes and ears and take the lead on our political advocacy efforts. Quite frequently, NRECA, the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives and Minnkota Power Cooperative, our wholesale power supplier, do much of the heavy lifting for us and we depend on them mightily. Rest assured, we are right there supporting the efforts of the group to guard against any detrimental political or regulatory action and to support positive change.

When it comes to political parties, we are completely blind. Whether Democrat, Republican, right, left or middle, the issues that affect your cooperative are all that matter to us. We support the political leaders who support the legislation that is in our cooperative's best interest.

One of the ways we show this support is through the political action committees to which cooperative members donate – ACRE and REPAC. ACRE, or the Action Committee for Rural Electrification, is the federal political action committee, or PAC, and REPAC, or Rural Electric Political Action

Committee, is the North Dakota PAC. These two groups make contributions to candidates for state and federal offices who will speak for and protect the interests of electric cooperatives and their member-owners. These dollars go to our political champions regardless of which political affiliation they belong to and are funded by individual contributions from co-op directors, employees and our member-owners. If you would like to help support the candidates that support our cooperative, consider contributing to one or both of these political action committees.

In just a few weeks, Harrison Stockeland, a high school sophomore from Grand Forks Central High School, will represent Nodak at the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. He will join other cooperative member students from across North Dakota and the rest of the country for a week in Washington, D.C., learning more about cooperatives and how our government works. For decades, this program has been churning out future political and cooperative leaders who better understand how the cooperative business model works. We would like to congratulate Harrison and wish him the best as he travels to and from Washington, D.C.

Summer construction season



Dan Schaefer
Line Superintendent

The snow has finally melted away, and that means your cooperative can get to work on some important maintenance projects. To do all we need to do, Nodak reaches out to local contractors who have proven their skill and dedication to detail.

Underground power lines

North Plains Utility Contracting is based out of Devils Lake, N.D. Its contractors install all of Nodak's underground primary and secondary distribution lines by means of trenching, plowing or directional boring. Nodak has North Plains start when the frost comes out of the ground in the spring and continue until the ground freezes in the late fall. They provide one large plow that is pulled with two steel-tracked machines. One smaller machine has a trencher, plow and a backhoe all in one. They also have two directional bore machines when needed.

- **Trenching** is cutting a trench 4 inches wide with a trenching machine. The machine has a long steel bar with a chain that cuts the trench to the needed depth. The cable is put in the bottom of the trench, which is then backfilled. A lot of labor is involved in the backfill process, as the soil that is put back in the trench

needs to be compacted to prevent settling. This is typically the procedure used when there are large, or many, cables in the same trench. It is mainly used in new housing areas.

- Most cable is installed by means of **plowing**. The plow chute is lowered into the ground to the desired depth (normally 4 feet). The cable goes through a chute and makes its way through to the bottom of this chute, then rests at the bottom of the trench that the plow has made. The plow and chute vibrate up and down very fast to help cut through the soil. Very little cleanup is needed in this process, and it is mainly used in rural areas.
- **Directional boring** is used when Nodak must cross a paved road, slough area, drainage ditch or congested area where trenching or plowing is impractical. This is accomplished with a specialized machine that spins pipe-type rods into the ground with a special boring bit on the end of the pipe sections. This bit has an electronic device inside of it that sends a signal to a hand-held transmitter above ground, allowing the transmitter and bore machine operator to steer the bit up, down, left or right. Water is pumped inside the bore pipe and exits through the end of the spinning boring bit. This allows the bore hole to stay open so the cable can be pulled back through this opening. This procedure is very expensive and is only used where it is absolutely needed.

Know what's below
Call **811** before you dig.



Vegetation management

To address vegetation management issues affecting Nodak's overhead distribution system, Dakota Tree Service (Devils Lake, N.D.) and AW Power (Hannover, N.D.) are hired to assist in these efforts.

Trees that are touching the energized conductor can cause power quality issues such as blinking or dimming lights and power outages. If the right of way is properly cleared, it will also take less time for our crews to complete repairs. Trees that are touching an energized conductor create unwanted use of electricity known as line loss. Line loss is electricity we purchase from our power supplier that is not sold to our members. Vegetation is managed with a combination of bucket trucks, chainsaws, brush chippers that turn the branches into small chips and large mowers that can grind up small trees.

Pole testing and replacement

RAM Utilities of Moorhead, Minn., tests every pole on Nodak's overhead system once every 10 years.

It is crucial to identify the defective poles in our system, as one broken pole can cause a domino effect in a storm situation and take out miles of poles if it is not replaced.

RAM Utilities inspects every pole for decay spots by means of "sounding" with a hammer above the ground line. The pole is lightly excavated at the ground line and a small hole is drilled for inspection of the wood. If everything appears fine, a treated plug is placed in the hole and all hardware is inspected. All information is gathered and GPS coordinates are recorded.

All poles that fail the test fall into one of two categories:

- A **priority reject** is a pole that needs to be replaced as soon as possible. The pole has considerable machinery or fire damage or decay.
- A **reject** is a pole that will be replaced within one year, as the decay is such that a wind event or sleet storm would break this pole prematurely.



North Plains Utility Contracting



RAM Utilities



Joe Ritter, Metal Refinishing Services

Our crews typically need to change 200 to 250 poles per year, which equates to 1 to 2% of our poles. Most of these poles are changed out with the line energized so members do not experience an outage.

Painting and fiberglass repair

Mother Nature is tough on the paint covering our meter sockets, pad mount transformers, sectionalizing cabinets and switch gear. Joe Ritter of Metal Refinishing Services from Little Falls, Minn., is equipped to sandblast and paint these items on site, which saves the time and expense of changing out the piece of equipment that needs a paint job.

Ritter also repairs fiberglass on cabinets that have machinery damage. It is more cost effective to repair fiberglass than purchase new. The repair can also be completed with the device energized so the customer's power is not interrupted.

**Watch for these
contractors in
your area:**

North Plains
Utility Contracting
*Install underground
lines*

RAM Utilities
Pole testers

Dakota Tree Service
Tree trimming

AW Power
Tree trimming

Joe Ritter, Metal
Refinishing Services
*Painting and
fiberglass repair*

Ways to pay



Pay online – View and pay your bill online with SmartHub web, 24/7, with a checking account or credit/debit card. Visit nodakelectric.com and click on the “SmartHub” icon.



SmartHub app – View and pay your bill using this app with your smartphone or smart tablet. The app is available at your favorite app store.



Pay-by-phone – Pay your bill securely by phone 24/7. Call toll free 1-844-846-2690 and follow the automated prompts to pay by check, credit or debit card.



AutoPay – Choose an automatic payment deduction from a checking or savings account. This is set up as a recurring payment on the due date shown on your bill. Contact our office to get set up or access the form on our website.



Pay by mail – Mail your check along with the stub conveniently located at the bottom of your bill to Nodak Electric Cooperative in the envelope provided with your statement. Please allow 3 to 5 business days for delivery.



Pay in person – Stop by the office in Grand Forks during business hours to pay your bill in person. An after-hours drop box is also available for non-cash payments.

Annual meeting HIGHLIGHTS

Members and guests attended Nodak Electric Cooperative’s 79th annual meeting Thursday, April 11, 2019, at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks. A winter storm lowered the number of attendees, but those who could attend enjoyed a turkey 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. Luther Meberg was re-elected to represent District 1, David Kent was re-elected to represent District 2 and Les Windjue was re-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.



SURGE AND PROTECT

POWER SURGES AND HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

THE ISSUE

WHAT IS A "POWER SURGE"?

A power surge, or transient voltage, is a **sudden and unwanted increase in voltage that can damage, degrade or destroy** the sensitive electronic equipment in your home or business.



CAUSES

The National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) estimates that **60-80% of surges are created within a facility**, such as when large appliances, like air conditioners, turn on and off. Lastly, the most powerful surges can be caused by **lightning**.



IMPACT

A spike in voltage can be **harmful to electrical devices** in your home if the increase is above the device's intended operating voltage. Repeated small-scale surges may slowly **damage your electronic equipment** and **shorten the life** of appliances and electronics involved.



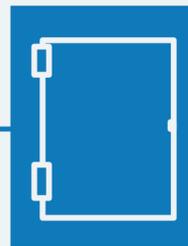
THE SOLUTIONS

POINT-OF-USE SURGE PROTECTION DEVICES



Protect only the items that are **directly plugged into the device** from most electrical surges. It does not suppress or arrest a surge but **diverts the surge to ground**. Use point-of-use surge protectors that have an indicating light and/or audible alarm that alert when it needs replacement.

SERVICE ENTRANCE SURGE PROTECTION DEVICES



Mounted in or on your main electrical panel or at the base of the electric meter, this device provides **protection for your entire electrical system**. This device covers components that cannot be connected to a point-of-use device, such as outlets and light switches.

REMINDERS

- ! No surge protection device can handle a **direct lightning strike**. The best surge protection is to **unplug devices from the wall** if you suspect a surge might be coming.
- ! Power strips **do NOT provide surge protection**. Be sure you are relying on the appropriate device for protection.
- ! Power strips and surge suppressors **don't provide more power to a location**, only more access to the same limited capacity of the circuit into which it is connected.

Check out our great rebate offers!

Add comfort and energy efficiency to your home this summer with help from Nodak Electric Cooperative

Electric heating rebates

- \$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

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

- 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.

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

New electric water heater rebates

Enjoy reliable hot water and save money at the same time with Nodak Electric Cooperative's electric water heating rebate program.

Water heating is one of the largest energy expenses in most households, making it a smart area to try to improve efficiency. New electric water heaters are among the most efficient and durable products in the market today. With great new incentives from your cooperative, it has never been more affordable to upgrade.

All rebate-qualifying water heaters must be on the off-peak program, which allows your water heater to draw electricity during times of low demand, such as late at night, when it's less expensive. The water heater is temporarily turned off during high demand periods, both saving energy and money on your monthly bill. Participants in the off-peak program also receive a lower monthly rate for the electricity their water heater uses.



Electric Water Heaters (must be on off-peak)	Incentive Per Unit
55 gallon or less	\$100
56-99 gallon	\$150
100 gallon or greater	\$200
Additional rebate for new building construction	\$100
Additional rebate for conversion from existing natural gas or propane	\$250

Rebate requirements:

- Must be new purchased electric water heater installed on Nodak Electric's system
- Must be on off-peak/load control
- Must be 240 volts and hard-wired
- Tankless water heaters do not qualify for rebate
- Hybrid heat pump water heaters do not qualify for rebate
- Rebate limit of \$500 per member-account
- Maximum \$300 rebate for coupling of two water heaters in parallel or series
- Multifamily dwellings do not qualify for rebate; exceptions considered on case-by-case basis

Contact Nodak Electric Cooperative today to find out more about the water heater rebate program!