

# The Nodak Neighbor

July-August 2020

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

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**2020 annual meeting  
rescheduled for Sept. 8.** *See page 2*

# The Nodak Neighbor

Official Publication of the  
Nodak Electric Cooperative, Inc.

746-4461 or 800-732-4373

[www.nodakelectric.com](http://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 32<sup>nd</sup> 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 70, No. 4  
July-August 2020  
Officers and Directors

Chairman of the Board . . . . . Luther Meberg  
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

## Table of contents

Perspective . . . . . page 3  
New interactive dispatch display . . . . . page 4  
Around the co-op . . . . . page 6  
Rebates . . . . . page 7  
EV fast charger coming soon . . . . . page 8



On sunny summer days, keep your drapes and blinds closed to save energy – this will keep the heat out, so your air conditioner doesn't have to work as hard.

– Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

## Notice of Rescheduled Annual Meeting

To the members of Nodak Electric Cooperative, Inc.:

You are hereby notified that the Cooperative's September board meeting will serve as the rescheduled 80th Annual Meeting in lieu of holding an in-person meeting of members this year due to COVID-19. To accommodate this change, business will be conducted as follows:

### 1. Reports:

Annual reports from Cooperative board chairman, Luther Meberg, and President & CEO, Mylo Einarson, will be made available via video at [nodakelectric.com](http://nodakelectric.com) and on the Cooperative's Facebook page in September.

### 2. Election of three directors:

Listed below are the candidates either nominated by petition or selected by the Committee on Nominations. The members of the Committee on Nominations are appointed by the board of directors.

#### District 1

(one 3-year term)  
**Cheryl Osowski**  
Grafton

#### District 2

(one 3-year term)  
**Peter Naastad**  
Hatton

#### District 3

(one 3-year term)  
**Steven Smaaladen**  
Aneta

### 3. Approval of 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting minutes:

**Voting by Mail.** For the election of directors and approval of the 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting minutes, the board of directors has authorized the mailing of an absentee ballot to each member upon request. Since the election this year is uncontested, Nodak is asking members who are interested in voting to call the office at 701-746-4461 or 1-800-732-4373 to receive an absentee ballot. Canvassing of the election will be conducted by the election committee prior to Sept. 8, 2020.

The 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting minutes, nominating committee meeting minutes and affidavit of mailing are available online at [nodakelectric.com](http://nodakelectric.com), under the "My Co-op" drop down, labeled "79th Annual Meeting Info."

David Kent, Secretary/Treasurer  
July 7, 2020

## Attention corporate members

If you are a member corporation, cooperative, school, church or township (or other nonnatural person) of Nodak Electric Cooperative, Inc., and want to be represented at the members' meeting(s), please request a Designation of Voting Representative form and one will be mailed to you. The form must be completed and signed by an authorized officer of the organization. This form must be completed annually.

In order for the member corporation, etc., to participate in business matters, this form must be received by the secretary of Nodak on or before the date of the members' meeting(s). This form may be mailed with your ballot to Nodak.



*Mylo Einarson  
President & CEO*

# Electricity brings everyday value

Even though I work in the energy industry, like most people, I still don't think much about the electricity I use. I expect the lights to turn on when I flip the switch and the coffemaker to work each morning. Because electricity is so abundant, we don't think much about it. Since many of us have been spending more time at home during the past few months, we have likely been using more energy there. And yet, we still expect an endless supply of power with uninterrupted service 24/7. The only time we really think about electricity is when the power goes out, or maybe when the monthly bill arrives.

Given how electricity powers our modern lifestyle every day, it's a great value, especially when compared to other common services and expenses. For example, think back to the cost of just about any consumer item 20 years ago. Consider the cost of groceries or a cup of your favorite specialty coffee from a few years back. In comparison, the cost of electricity has remained largely flat, unlike most other consumer goods.

Like many of you, I have a cellphone to stay connected, and I subscribe to cable TV and Netflix so I can enjoy more viewing options. Many of us consider these necessities for modern-day life. We can see what we are getting for our money, and we pay the price for those services. In contrast, when we use electricity, we don't necessarily "see" all that we are getting for our money.

But considering what electricity does for us, it's a tremendous value for our quality of life as well as our

budgets. For comparison, consider the average rent increase has been nearly 4% from 2014 to 2019 according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index, or CPI. The cost of medical care increased 3% during that time, and education was not too far behind at 2.6%. So, where did electricity rank? The CPI shows electricity increased by less than half a percentage point at 0.4% nationwide over that time period.

The bottom line: Electricity brings everyday value. In fact, Nodak Electric Cooperative members on average had electricity available to them 99.97% of the time last year. Considering that electricity is something we all use around-the-clock, I'm very proud of our track record. At the same time, we are striving to increase our service reliability, reduce those brief interruptions and reduce costs. We are continuously working to improve our operations to ensure a smarter grid and ensure we have the right energy mix. Nodak Electric Cooperative provides the reliable service you expect and deserve as a valued member of our cooperative.

We recognize that the past few months have been challenging for many of our members, and we're here to help. If you have questions about your account, please give us a call. Nodak is your electric co-op, and our sole purpose is to serve you and the needs of our community. That's everyday value.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, we made the decision back in March to postpone the annual meeting to a time when we felt safe

gathering a large group of people. In light of the continued threat and social distancing guidance, your board of directors has decided to hold an annual meeting as a "business-only" meeting. We have two business items we need to take care of – approval of last year's annual meeting minutes and approval of the results of the board of directors election. Both of these items will be conducted through mail-in ballots only.

For many of us, the annual meeting is one of the highlights of our membership in the cooperative. With that in mind, it's a very difficult decision to not bring you all together for an evening of fellowship. Unfortunately, the conditions aren't conducive to doing so, and we will have to wait until next spring to give it another try. It's hard to do, but it's the safe thing to do. Your board chairman and I will record messages for the membership and place them online for you to review. Until we can get together again face-to-face, stay safe, everyone.



**Our offices will be closed  
Monday, Sept. 7, for Labor Day**

**In case of an outage,  
call 1-800-732-4373.**

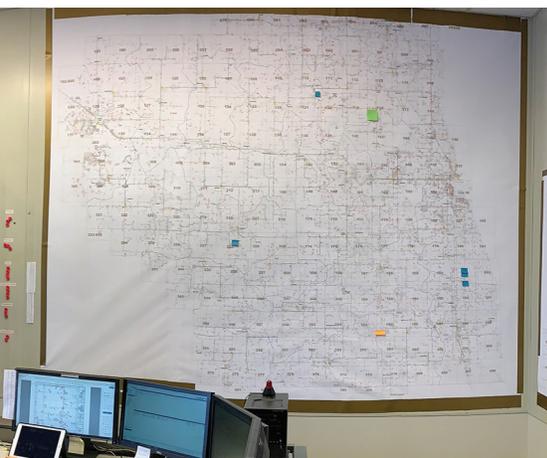


*New interactive digital display.*



**Steve Breidenbach**  
*Engineering Manager*

## New interactive display wall to enhance Nodak service



*Old paper mapping system.*

**N**odak Electric Cooperative is continuously looking for ways to better serve our members. That's why we have replaced our outdated dispatch mapping display with a new, innovative and interactive live wall system.

Nodak has always used some form of mapping display in its everyday work. These maps show future project zones, crew locations and storm outage areas. For many years, the information had been displayed on a large paper map taped together on a metal backing.

Magnets were used to indicate crew locations and Post-it notes identified the positions of downed poles or other line issues. Nodak recognizes that technology is constantly changing and improving, and the cooperative chose to be proactive and forward-thinking when choosing the next stage of this important resource.

By researching and monitoring dispatch control centers around the country, the team discovered what was available to best fit the needs of the cooperative and benefit the

The new 9-by-20-foot live wall is made up of 16 ultra-thin LED display panels. The system allows dispatch to quickly assess an outage and dispatch crews while providing up-to-date information about the outage situation.

membership. The new 9-by-20-foot live wall is made up of 16 ultra-thin LED display panels. The system allows dispatch to quickly assess an outage and dispatch crews while providing up-to-date information about the outage situation. In addition, the system will monitor the entire grid in real time.

Safety is top priority. Nodak's goal was to design a system to accommodate its Outage Management System (OMS) and Automated Vehicle Locating (AVL) system. The OMS helps predict outage areas and highlights outage areas on a map. The AVL system applies the location of each vehicle. The live wall system allows Nodak to display both of those programs on the same map with the ability to add electronic notes, which are displayed graphically.

For efficient maintenance, Nodak developed apps for the line crews to use in the field through their iPads. Crews receive information for outages, maintenance, pole inspections and repairs. When changing out equipment in the field, new and accurate information is sent with a push of a button and the information is automatically updated for dispatch.



If you look up at overhead power lines, it would not be surprising to see birds sitting on the wires. While it is safe for a bird to do so, it is not safe for people to be near overhead power lines. So how can birds sit on a power line unharmed? Safe Electricity reveals insights into the “bird on a wire” phenomenon and separates fact from fiction.

It is a myth that all power lines are insulated with a protective coating that prevents shocks. Most power lines are actually not insulated. The coating that is on lines is actually for weather proofing and will not offer any protection from the electrical current.

In order for an electrical charge, or electrons, to move from one spot to another, it must be in contact (or sometimes close proximity) with conductive material that has at least two different points of potential. Electrons will move toward lower potential. That is why it is said that electricity is always looking for a path to ground (lower potential).

A bird remains safe because it is sitting on a single wire and is at one point of contact – and consequently one electrical potential. If the bird sitting at this one potential was to also make contact with another object of different potential, that bird would be completing a path to ground, causing severe electric shock or electrocution. For larger birds with wider wingspans, reaching and touching another cable is a real hazard.

Getting near overhead power lines is also a serious hazard for people. The utility crews who work near overhead power lines must wear appropriate safety clothing, use tested safety equipment and take training to be able to do the installation, maintenance and repair work they do. It is vital that safety equipment is regularly tested as even nonconductive materials, such as rubber, wood or plastic, can conduct electricity if damp, dirty or damaged.

Safe Electricity encourages everyone to be aware of their surroundings and shares the following safety tips:

- Always look up and look out for overhead power lines.
- Keep yourself and any tools or equipment a minimum distance of 10 feet away from power lines in all directions at all times.
- Remember that getting too close to a power line, even without touching it, is very dangerous.
- Avoid working directly under power lines.
- When working with tall equipment such as ladders, poles or antennas, carry them in a horizontal position as to not risk making contact with overhead lines.
- Always assume that power lines, even if they have come down, are live and carry an electrical charge.

To learn more about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.safeelectricity.org).

# Grilling safety tips



The joys of summer: swimming, fishing and grilling. Enjoy mouth-watering food with safety in mind.

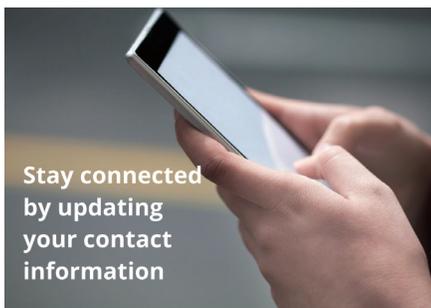
## SAFETY TIPS

- Propane and charcoal barbecue grills should only be used outdoors.
- The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area.
- Never leave your grill unattended.
- Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

Source: [nfpa.org](http://nfpa.org)

## OPT FOR ELECTRIC

- Electric grills are safe and can be used either indoors or outdoors.
- Grill within minutes: electric grills heat up quickly and efficiently.
- No gas leaks to worry about.
- Electric grills require less preparation.



Stay connected by updating your contact information

## Around the co-op

### Charbonneau retires

**Brian Charbonneau**, district crew foreman for the Cavalier service center, retired from Nodak after 30 years of service. A Rolla, N.D., native, Brian attended Bismarck State College for lineman school. He started with Nodak in 1990 and was promoted to foreman in 2012.



**Brian Charbonneau**  
District Crew Foreman

### Foerster promoted

**Mike Foerster** has accepted the position of Cavalier crew foreman after the recent retirement of Brian Charbonneau.

Mike joined Nodak's Cavalier crew as a journeyman lineman in 2013. A graduate of Bismarck State College and a Fordville, N.D., native, Mike resides in Cavalier.



**Mike Foerster**  
District Crew Foreman

## Save money while at home

As some co-op members may be spending more time at home, they may also be seeing a surge in home energy use.

Try these tips to help control your energy bill:

- Program your thermostat to maximize energy savings. Setting your thermostat one degree lower when heating or one degree higher when cooling can reduce energy use by up to 5%.
- Do full loads of laundry and wash with cold water. Using warm water instead of hot can cut a load's energy use in half and using cold water will save even more.
- Air dry dishes. This step can cut your dishwasher's energy use by up to 50%.
- Substitute LEDs for conventional light bulbs. Lighting can amount to up to 12% of monthly energy use. LED bulbs can cut lighting costs by 75%.
- Unplug appliances and electronics when not in use. Small appliances and electronics use energy even when not in use. When powered on, game consoles, televisions and similar electronics are responsible for up to 12% of energy use.



# Great rebates from Nodak Electric Cooperative

Add comfort and energy efficiency to your home with help from Nodak Electric Cooperative. Nodak Electric offers the following rebates to encourage load development, load retention and wise use of energy.

## Electric heating

Heating Systems	Rebate
Plenum heaters, baseboard, electric furnace and hanging unit heater	\$25/kW
Cable floor heat, electric boiler and brick storage unit	\$45/kW
Mini-split or air-source heat pump	\$150/ton
Ground-source heat pump	\$250/ton

### Electric heating rebate requirements

- Electric heating must be on off-peak with a qualified backup heating system.
- Electric heat equipment must be hardwired (no plug-in loads eligible for rebate).
- Air-source heat pumps do not have to be a part of an off-peak heating system to be eligible for this rebate.
- Must be at least 240 volts and hard-wired.
- Multifamily dwellings do not qualify for rebate. However, exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Rebate limit of \$1,200 per member/owner account.

## Water heaters

Electric Water Heaters	Rebate
55 gallon or less	\$125
56-99 gallon	\$200
100 gallon or greater	\$300
Additional rebate for new building construction	\$100
Additional rebate for conversion from existing natural gas or propane to an electric water heater	\$250

### Water heater rebate requirements

- Must be off-peak controlled.
- Must be at least 240 volts and hard-wired.
- Tankless water heaters do not qualify for rebate.
- Hybrid heat pump water heaters do not qualify for rebate.
- Multifamily dwellings do not qualify for rebate. However, exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Rebate limit of \$550 per member/owner account.
- Maximum \$300 rebate for the coupling of two water heaters in parallel or series.

## Electric vehicle chargers

Electric Vehicle Chargers	Rebate
Electric vehicle (EV)	\$50/kW
Commercial – forklifts, Zambonis, etc.	\$50/kW



### Electric vehicle charger rebate requirements

- Charger must be a Level 2 unit, wired on a dedicated 240-volt circuit, sub-metered and connected to a Nodak-issued load control device.
- Member must participate in Nodak's load control program for EVs.
- Money-saving energy rate of \$0.062/kWh for charging your vehicle during specific time periods each day, plus a \$3.95/month facility charge.
- One-time rebate per charger installation of \$50/kW with a \$500 maximum rebate.

**In addition to the above listed requirements for electric heating and water heating rebates, all systems must be new equipment and controlled on Nodak's off-peak program. A check will be issued to participating members after a visit from a Nodak technician.**

**Please call our Energy Services team at 701-746-4461 or 800-732-4373 if you have any questions about off-peak or the rebate program.**



## SMART PAYMENTS

Save time. Eliminate late fees.

With SmartHub, you'll be notified when your bill is due and you can pay securely online in the app – anytime, anywhere.

Sign up for autopayments, set up your secure preferred payment method and let account management go into autopilot.

All in the palm of your hand and online. Go to [nodakelectric.com](http://nodakelectric.com) or call for details.

**SMART MANAGEMENT. SMART LIFE. SMARTHUB.**

## CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!



**Know what's below; call 811 before you dig!**



**EV**

*fast charger coming soon!*

**Grand Forks will soon be the latest North Dakota city to offer a public fast charging opportunity for electric vehicle (EV) drivers.**

In the coming weeks, Nodak Electric Cooperative will unveil a new ChargePoint DC fast charging station in the Wendy's restaurant parking lot at 3760 32nd Ave. South. DC fast charging allows EV drivers to charge their vehicle's battery up to 80% in just 30-60 minutes – a vital resource for those traveling to our community.

***Stay tuned to Nodak Electric's Facebook page and website for more details on this exciting installation!***