

# The Nodak Neighbor

September-October 2020  
Official Publication of Nodak Electric Cooperative  
[www.nodakelectric.com](http://www.nodakelectric.com)

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

October is National  
Co-op Month  
**#PowerOn**



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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. 5  
September-October 2020  
Officers and Directors

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

## Rescheduled 80<sup>th</sup> annual meeting held

The 80<sup>th</sup> annual meeting was held at Nodak Electric Cooperative's headquarters building in Grand Forks, N.D., on Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2020.

During the meeting, directors Cheryl Osowski, Peter Naastad and Steve Smaaladen were reelected for a three-year term and the minutes of the 79<sup>th</sup> annual meeting were approved. In further action, Steve Smaaladen was selected as chairman, David Kent as vice-chairman and David Brag as secretary/treasurer.

### District 1



**Cheryl Osowski**  
District 1

### District 2



**Peter Naastad**  
District 2

### District 3



**Steven Smaaladen**  
District 3

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## 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, 2021. Current off-peak rates are \$0.062/kWh for long-term and \$0.077/kWh for 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.



## Daily cycling of electric storage heat to begin 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.



Mylo Einarson  
President & CEO

# October is National Co-op Month

As an electric cooperative, our top priority is always to provide reliable, affordable energy to you, the member-owners we serve. Because we are a co-op, our mission is to enrich the lives of our members and serve the long-term interests of our local community – and this mission has never been more critical than in recent months. One of the seven principles that guides all co-ops is “concern for community.” To me, this principle is the essential DNA of Nodak Electric, and it sets us apart from other electric utilities.

October is National Co-op Month, and electric cooperatives across the country are highlighting the many ways we “Power On.” Keeping this theme in mind, I recognize the essential role we play in serving special communities like ours.

Who would have fathomed back in March, that the COVID-19 virus would amount to a test of our community and our nation? The changing circumstances due to the pandemic have created both challenges and opportunities. During the past several months, we’ve all been challenged to operate differently, and Nodak has stepped up to help our members and strengthen the safety net for our more vulnerable neighbors.

As an essential service, and to ensure reliability of your power supply, we modified our operations to safeguard business continuity. Our line crews and other employees began working to maintain separation from each other to ensure we have healthy employees ready to serve you. Some staff worked remotely. In the office,

we limited and modified meetings and gatherings to allow for safe separation. We also adjusted our walk-in office availability and in-person service calls to ensure the health and safety of our employees and our valued members. In addition, we initially postponed our annual meeting and finally held that meeting as a “ballot only” meeting to protect our membership. For the health and safety of everyone, we think these measures were the prudent course of action for the times.

For our members impacted by COVID-19 who needed help with their electric bills, we waived late fees and service disconnections for several months and worked with those hit hardest to make special payment arrangements.

And while we certainly missed visiting with you in person, we found new ways to stay connected. As a member-owner, you can now

virtually transact all your business with the cooperative online if you choose, including signing up for new services. We also ramped up our social media efforts to help you stay better informed and added additional content to our website.

I tell you about all these efforts not to boast about Nodak Electric, but to explain how much we care about the communities we serve – because we live here, too.

We’ve seen other local businesses rising to meet similar challenges during this time, because that’s what communities do. While the challenges caused by COVID-19 have been daunting, I’m heartened to see how everyone is pulling together.

In 1939, Nodak Electric Cooperative was built by the community to serve the community, and that’s what we’ll continue to do – Power On.

## Rural communities depend on Co-op Voters.

- ✓ Learn about the issues.
- ✓ Talk to your family and friends.
- ✓ Cast your vote.

Election Day is  
November 3, 2020



Be an active participant in our democracy. Be a Co-op Voter.

[www.vote.coop](http://www.vote.coop)

# Four ways to be Cyber safe



We all know the internet can be dangerous and scary. Experts warn of a triple threat these days. First, scammers are taking advantage of COVID-19 uncertainty, from offering phony cures and tests to promises of financial assistance. Second, with more people working from home due to social distancing, there may be fewer office-based security measures in place. Third, the FBI warns that increased use of mobile banking offers more chances for cybercrime. So, here are four cybersecurity tips to keep you safe:

## Use strong passwords

And change them regularly – many sites and apps make that easy to do by clicking on the “forgot your password” link. The best passwords are at least eight characters and include different types of characters – try using a memorable verse from your favorite song and adding a few numbers and special characters (\$!\_&), or even a space. If you are like most people, remembering all your passwords is a challenge.

Choose a security option based on the value of what you’re protecting. The options you use to secure your bank and retirement account passwords might be different than how you store your social media passwords.

Password apps keep them in one place and may be a great option for some passwords, but you can be in big trouble if you forget the password that lets you into that app. Keeping passwords on paper or in a notebook might be more secure than using the same password for everything, depending on how secure and hidden that paper is from other people at the office or kids at home.

## Install software updates

Your apps and operating systems will periodically send updates. Install them – they often include protections against the latest security threats. But remember, those updates come from the apps and not from emails or social media notices. An email containing an update may be a scam – instead of clicking on the link, go to the app’s website to see if there really are updates available.

## Use two-factor authentication

That phrase is just a fancy word for a technique that adds an extra layer of security in addition to a password. Banks increasingly use this system – when you try to con-

nect with them, the bank may text a code number to your phone that you type in to complete the sign-in process for your account.

Keep in mind that answering a security question is similar to having a password – both are something you know. Answering a security question won’t provide the same level of additional security as that of a second factor. A second factor will be something you have, like your phone to receive a passcode, or something you are, like a biometric fingerprint, in addition to something you know, like a password or security question.

## Think before you click

Be wary of any offer or link that comes through the internet, whether by email or social media, or even a phone call instructing you to get online. Don’t click on a link unless you know for certain what it is. Ideally, you should be expecting to receive the link. Even emails from friends should be suspect – hackers can impersonate someone you know to send a link or an attachment, and either can result in you downloading malware that can take control of your computer in ways you may not even be able to detect.

If you have any doubt, whether it’s a link to a software update or an attachment to a funny cat video, give the sender a phone call to find out if they really sent it or if it’s a scam.



### Cybersecurity Tip

Create long passwords that only you will remember and change them every six months. A strong password is at least eight characters long.

# Who owns what?

## Electric co-op owned equipment vs member-owned equipment

Nodak Electric Cooperative is committed to the reliable delivery of power to our members.

When power interruption occurs, we work very hard to restore service as quickly and as safely as we can.

With so many different pieces of equipment that make up the electrical system, it can be hard to know what equipment belongs to (and is repaired by) Nodak and what portion is the member's responsibility (see illustration on this page).

Nodak lineworkers maintain all 8,082 miles of line that make up the system, including your individual service all the way to the meter (and meter disconnect – if we installed it – below your meter).

Due to insurance, liability and safety reasons, lineworkers cannot work on anything past the meter or on any equipment mounted on a building. Please contact a licensed electrician to help you with your electrical projects.

Members are responsible for equipment between the meter and home or business, including the overhead or underground service line that leads into the structure and the service panel (fuse box). Please call a licensed electrician to make repairs.

Whether it's Nodak's line or member-owned line,

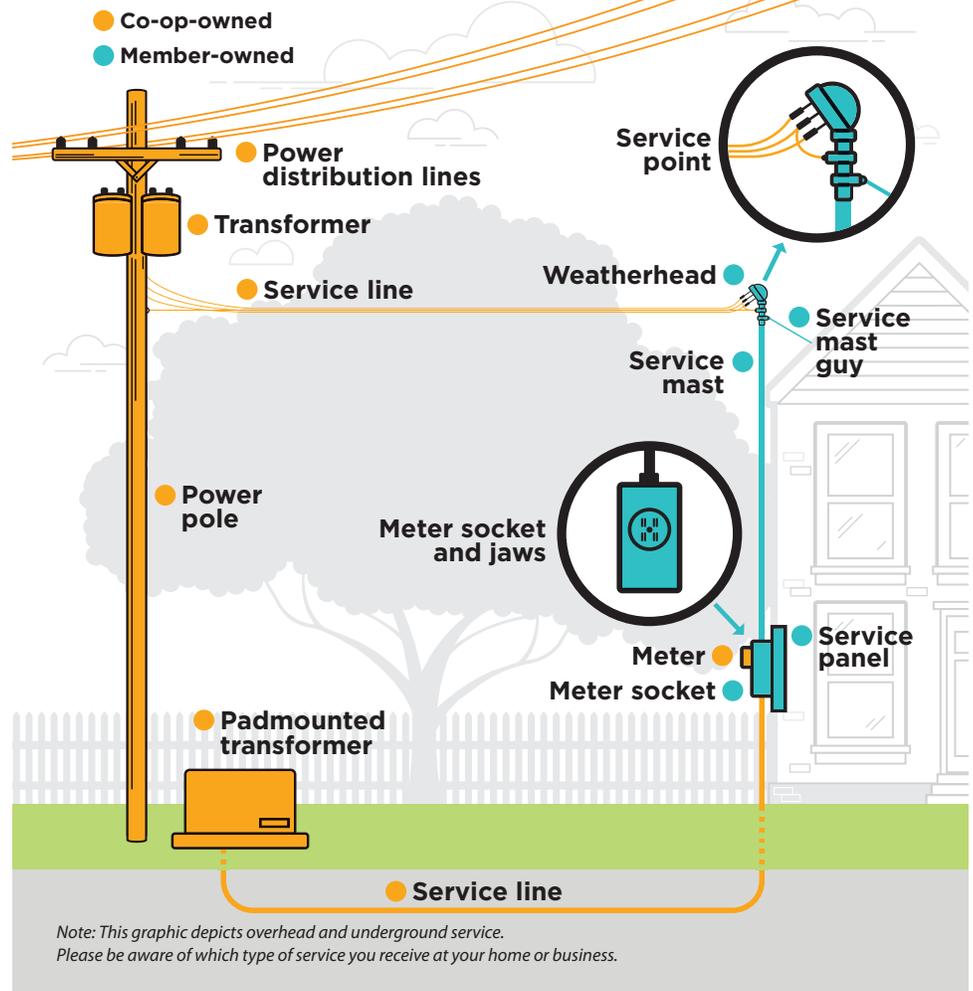
please be aware when planting trees, shrubs, etc., of not only the overhead lines but also underground wires.

If you have questions on who owns what, please contact us at 800-732-4373.



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

This graphic depicts equipment owned by the co-op (in gold) and the member (in blue). If a storm damages any equipment owned by the co-op, we are responsible for repairs. If a storm damages any member-owned equipment, the member is responsible for repairs. Members should hire a licensed electrician when making any repairs to member-owned equipment.



Is your off-peak heating system

# Ready for Winter?

It's hard to believe winter is right around the corner. Since weather conditions and future wholesale power market prices make the amount of load control hours hard to predict, all of our off-peak members are encouraged to have a reliable, automatic dual heating system in place and ready to use.

To ensure your total comfort this winter, consider the following questions about your backup heating system:

1. Is the system sized to heat your entire home or business?
2. Does it maintain an adequate comfort level?
3. Is it reliable?
4. Is it fully automatic?

Check current fuel prices and be sure to fill your propane or fuel oil tank at the beginning of the season. Also, make sure your tank is large enough to hold an adequate supply. Remember, prices typically rise as demand increases during the heating season.

Our member services department is glad to answer any off-peak questions you may have. A loan program is also available to assist you in replacing your old, inadequate off-peak heating system.

**If you have any questions regarding off-peak or your electric heating system, please call our Energy Service Department.**

## ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS FOR HUNTERS



This hunting season, we encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment and take necessary precautions while hunting. Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors.



**Take notice** of posted warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.



**Do not** shoot at or near power lines or insulators.



**Know** where power lines and equipment are located on the land where you hunt.



**Be especially careful** in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.



**Do not** place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them, causing shock or electrocution.



**Do not** place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Any non-electrical equipment attached to a pole can pose an obstruction and serious hazards to our line crews.

## WATT'S THE DIFFERENCE?



### Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter

Prevents electrical shock by detecting variations in current.

Install in areas where water and electricity are in close proximity.

Test outlets with GFCIs monthly; if they don't work properly, consult your electrician.



### Arc Fault Circuit Interrupter

Prevents electrical fires caused by arc flash. Usually installed by an electrician.

An arc is an electrical discharge that can cause intense heat or light.

It interrupts the circuit when it detects an arc or other abnormalities in the flow of electricity.



### Tamper Resistant Outlet

Prevents shocks caused by tampering with an outlet.

The protective shutters are designed to move when a plug is correctly inserted.

Became part of the National Electrical Code in 2008; if your home does not have these, install childproof devices.

# Act early – visually inspect around your transformer

Full is in the air and outdoor critters are looking for a place to nest for the upcoming winter. Unfortunately, the inside of a transformer makes a great spot – especially if it is already damaged by a lawn care mistake.

Pad-mounted transformers take the place of utility poles and feed underground electrical services to our businesses and homes. They enclose energized electrical

conductors and can be hazardous when damaged. As many transformers are located in residential areas, they may be part of the landscaping or areas we mow, making them susceptible to contact with mowers or tractors.

Any damage to the pad mount of a transformer can leave just enough room for critters like squirrels, mice, rats, gophers, snakes and even fire ants to move in and cause real damage to the inside. Their nesting materials can cause short circuits by eating away at conductor insulation or packing the transformer full of dirt or debris, both of which make equipment maintenance a challenge.

To prevent interruption in your



power, please let us know if you see damage to the equipment in your yard so our crews can make the necessary repairs.

**UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)**

**Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation**

1. Publication Title: **The Nodak Neighbor**

2. Publication Number: **3911-2000**

3. Filing Date: **Sept. 2, 2020**

4. Issue Frequency: **Six Times Year**

5. Number of Issues Published Annually: **6**

6. Annual Subscription Price: **\$1.00**

7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®):  
**PO Box 13000 Grand Forks Grand Forks County ND 58208-3000**

8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer):  
**PO Box 13000 Grand Forks ND 58208-3000**

9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank):  
 Publisher (Name and complete mailing address): **Nodak Electric Cooperative Inc PO Box 13000 Grand Forks ND 58208-3000**  
 Editor (Name and complete mailing address): **Blaine Rekken PO Box 13000 Grand Forks ND 58208-3000**  
 Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address): **Blaine Rekken PO Box 13000 Grand Forks ND 58208-3000**

10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of all individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)  
 Full Name: **Nodak Electric Cooperative Inc** Complete Mailing Address: **PO Box 13000 Grand Forks ND 58208-3000**

11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box:  None

12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)  
 Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months  
 Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)

PS Form 3526, July 2014 (Page 1 of 4) (See instructions page 4) PDI: 7330-01-000-9031 PRIVACY NOTICE: See our privacy policy on www.usps.com

13. Publication Title: **The Nodak Neighbor**

14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: **July/August 2020**

15. Extent and Nature of Circulation

		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
<b>16. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)</b>			
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		14863	14858
<b>17. Paid Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)</b>			
(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)		14826	14821
(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)			
(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®			
(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)			
e. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 16b (1), (2), (3), and (4))		14826	14821
<b>18. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 18a (1), (2), (3), and (4))</b>			
(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541			
(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541			
(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)			
(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)		35	35
f. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 18a (1), (2), (3), and (4))		35	35
<b>19. Total Distribution (Sum of 16c and 18e)</b>			
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 16c and 18e)		14861	14856
<b>g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 page #10)</b>			
g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 page #10)		2	2
<b>h. Total (Sum of 19f and g)</b>			
h. Total (Sum of 19f and g)		14863	14858
<b>20. Payment Paid (15c divided by 10 if 15c is 100)</b>			
i. Payment Paid (15c divided by 10 if 15c is 100)		99	99

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**Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation**

12. Electronic Copy Circulation

	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Paid Electronic Copies		
b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)		
c. Total Print Distribution (Line 19f + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a))		
d. Payment Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 10c x 100)		

I certify that 50% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are paid above a nominal price.

17. Publication of Statement of Ownership  
 If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the **Sept/Oct 2020** issue of this publication.  Publication not required.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Business Manager, Publisher, or Owner  
 Signature: *[Signature]* Title: **Editor** Date: **Sept. 2, 2020**

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# October is National Co-op Month



Rain or shine,  
day or night,  
we're here  
for you.

**#PowerOn**

## AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES:

- ▶ Power over 20 million businesses, homes, schools and farms in 48 states.
- ▶ Serve 42 million people across 2,500+ U.S. counties.
- ▶ Power 56% of the nation's landmass.
- ▶ Own and maintain 42% of U.S. electric distribution lines that serve our communities.