

The Nodak Neighbor

November - December 2022

Official Publication of Nodak Electric Cooperative
www.nodakelectric.com

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Family, farming,
and feeding
carb cravings

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Official Publication of the
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Officers and Directors

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

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SAVE THE DATE

83rd Annual Meeting

TUESDAY, APRIL 11, 2023
ALERUS CENTER
Meal: 5 p.m. / Meeting: 6 p.m.

On the cover: Sisters Grace Lunski (left), Annie Gorder (center) and Mollie Ficocello (right) are the faces behind Three Farm Daughters, a better-for-you pasta brand that's hitting shelves across the nation.

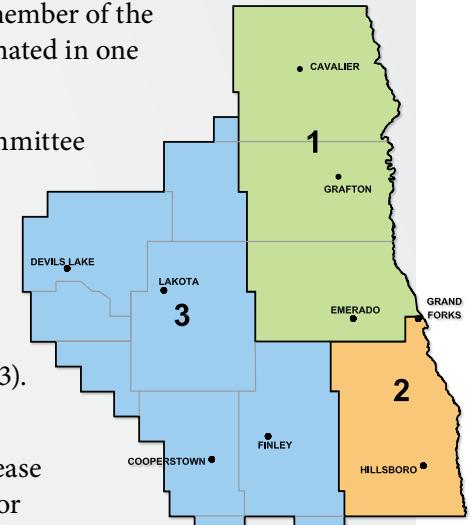
2023 director elections

Nodak Electric Cooperative, Inc. will hold its 83rd annual meeting Tuesday, April 11, 2023, at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks, N.D. Elections for three positions will be held at the annual meeting.

Members who desire to serve as a member of the Nodak board of directors may be nominated in one of two ways:

1. By Nominating Committee. The committee will meet Monday, Feb. 20, 2023.
2. By a petition signed by 15 members of Nodak in good standing. The petition must be submitted to Nodak's office 45 days prior to the annual meeting (Friday, Feb. 24, 2023).

If you are interested, or would like to know which district you reside in, please contact Nodak's office at 701-746-4461 or 1-800-732-4373 for more information.



EMPLOYEE UPDATES



Matt Konze

Matt Konze was promoted to construction crew foreman in Grand Forks. He has been with Nodak for 4 years.



Trent Edens

Trent Edens transferred to the construction crew in Grand Forks as Journeyman lineman. He was previously with the Cavalier crew and has been with Nodak for 4 years.

ENERGY SAVING TIP

Keep the temperature of the water heater to the warm setting (120°F). This will not only save energy, it will also help avoid scalding.





Mylo Einarson
President & CEO

A season for giving

The holiday season is finally here. Some call it the most wonderful season of all. That's because we associate it with family traditions and gathering with friends and loved ones. It's a time of giving and spreading joy.

But giving back reminds me of the many good things we have right here in our communities and why it's so important to spread the good as far as we can, especially to the most vulnerable in our local area. I'm also reminded of how wonderful our communities are and what a big impact we can have when we work together.

When you are a member of Nodak Electric Cooperative, you can help us spread the good throughout the year. Through our Operation Round Up® program, your donations help local families and individuals in need by providing financial assistance when they need it most. All you need to do is tell us you'd like to help and our volunteer Operation Round Up® board of directors will take care of the rest.

When you "round up" your monthly bill from Nodak Electric and donate those pennies to this fund, you're making a big difference in someone's life. You are helping to meet an immediate, critical need, but just as importantly, you are telling this person their community cares.

Over the years, our community-focused programs have helped build projects, support local schools and young people, fed hungry families,

and assist individuals in their time of need.

Nodak Electric also participates in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, where we take our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C., for a weeklong immersion to experience democracy in action. Ultimately, the larger community benefits from these programs because of you and your neighbors.

You've likely heard me say that the cooperative principle "Concern for Community" is part of Nodak Electric's DNA. It defines who we are as an organization. When we first brought electricity to this area in 1940, the quality of life improved. But other things also need to be addressed and through the years, this co-op has been at the forefront of bringing improvements to the quality of life in our community. It's why we created Operation Round Up®.

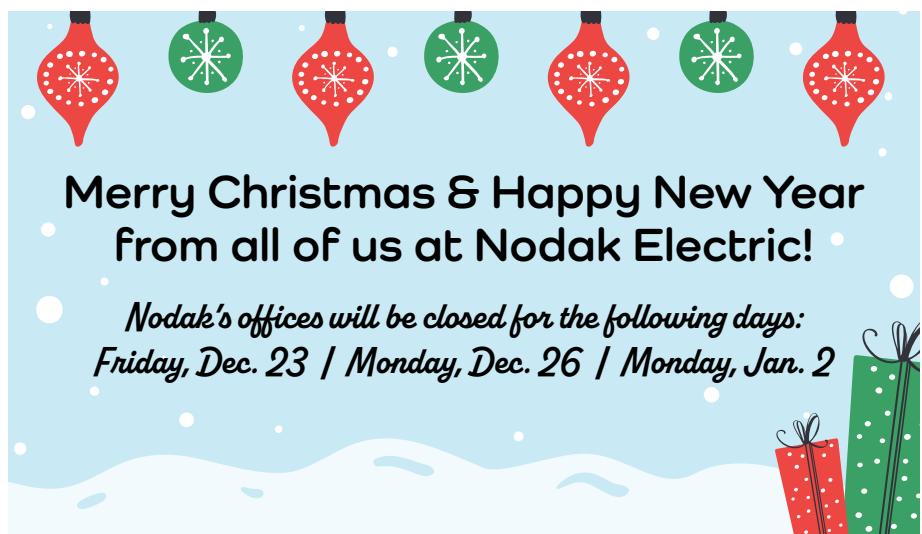
To date, with approximately 52% of our members donating an

average of \$6 per year, we've given over \$1.5 million back to local families and organizations through this program. And across the country, more than 350 electric co-ops have an Operation Round Up® program, and together, we've raised many millions for local communities. This shows that small donations from electric co-ops like ours, over time, can collectively make a big impact.

As a local cooperative, we have a stake in our communities. It's why we support our veterans and local organizations like volunteer ambulance and fire departments. We hope you will think of Nodak Electric Cooperative as more than your energy provider, but also as a catalyst for good in our community.

I hope all our members have a joyous holiday season. May it be merry and bright!

To learn more about Operation Round Up®, visit nodakelectric.com.



Family, farming, and feeding carb cravings

Annie Gorder's earliest memories of growing up on Sproule Farms north of Grand Forks, N.D., don't involve as many tractor rides or chicken chases as you might imagine. She and her two younger sisters were raised to see agriculture through a different window.

"What I remember is every Sunday, after church, Mom and Dad would throw us all in the vehicle and we'd do crop tours for hours at a time. Back then, there were no iPads or DVD players in the Suburban, so we would just be sitting in the vehicle with coloring books," Gorder said, her sisters nodding in agreement beside her. "We got immersed in it because they immersed us in their business."

Gorder and her siblings, Mollie Ficocello and Grace Lunski, didn't know it at the time, but that early immersion would create a bond with the business (and each other) that

would lead to the creation of Three Farm Daughters – a small pasta company that has now expanded to hundreds of stores across the country. In just two short years, the women turned the idea of better-for-you, additive-free pasta into a successful brand found on the shelves of Whole Foods, Hugo's, Hornbacher's, Kowalski's and many other retailers.

Family entrepreneurship wasn't always on the roadmap for the sisters, who all went off to college and earned advanced degrees in business and law. But when they all started to build families, they knew their paths would ultimately lead back to Sproule Farms.

"We always say that growing up around the farm and around the family business, it kind of pulls at your heartstrings and brings you back to the business," Ficocello said. "It's kind of personal. It seemed to pull us all back."



Scan here
to check out
Three Farm
Daughters



THREE FARM DAUGHTERS CREATES PASTA EMPIRE WITHIN NODAK ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S RURAL FOOTPRINT

Im-pasta-bly good for you

The concept for Three Farm Daughters pasta was grown and harvested in the same Sproule Farms offices in which the girls spent much of their childhood, now with fewer Pack 'N Plays and colored pencils. Annie, Mollie and Grace knew the wheat that was being produced in their backyards had unique attributes and health benefits over standard grains and flours found at the grocery store.

"We were thinking this was nutrition we would want to eat ourselves and feed our families," Ficocello explained, gesturing to the table before her. "We then, in this conference room, came up with the idea of making a product."

The grains used to make Three Farm Daughters pasta contain resistant starches that help produce good bacteria in the large intestine, called butyrate, which is known to support a strong immune system. The sisters also learned their pasta has a low glycemic index (GI) response, meaning it doesn't trigger the blood sugar spike, bloating and crash of a typical helping of noodles. Buyers with diabetes have messaged the women, thanking them for making pasta accessible again. The wheat variety's high fiber also leads to a nutritional calculation that is lower in calories and net carbs – a miracle macaroni of sorts.

"When we say that we started this company because this was what we wanted to feed our kids, it was for those reasons," Lunski said. "To get to feed a child their favorite food in the world, and they're getting high fiber, and it's good for their immune system – this is a win-win, check all of the boxes!" she added with a laugh.



The ag entrepreneurs showcase their latest short-cut varieties: penne, rotini, elbow and cavatappi.

As the trio learned more about “better pasta,” they also learned more about “better business.” They started selling their small-batch product in shops and boutiques around the region, making a full-on boots on the ground effort to contact anyone who may have room for a local pasta on the shelf.

“Being from Grand Forks, we have such a great community. Even the state of North Dakota itself, it’s a very supportive state,” Ficocello said. “When we launched in Hugo’s, our local grocer, we had reached out to their team to see if we could sell with them. They were very willing and receptive to our product and what we were trying to do.”

“For me, the moment I felt we had made it was when Hugo’s was like, ‘Yeah, we’ll take you!’” Gorder said. “We got a grocery store!”

By December of 2020, just months after the business was conceived, Three Farm Daughters had expanded into 38 retail stores. The following year, the sisters decided to begin a professional rebranding process to make sure their product was ready for the big leagues they knew would be calling.

In July 2022, the new logo, packaging and products were ready,

just in time to hit 68 Whole Foods locations in the Midwest. Three Farm Daughters not only redesigned its brand and boxes, but also worked to bring all production to North Dakota, returning the local support that had been given to them at the start.

Rural resilience

Annie, Mollie and Grace consider their father, Paul Sproule, one of the chief navigators of their new venture. He’s been by their side with business advice and words of wisdom.

“Our dad has really instilled in us that failure isn’t fatal in business. He reiterates that constantly,” Gorder said.

Sproule and his wife, Susie, know something about starting a journey from a spark of an idea. They started farming in Nodak Electric Cooperative’s service territory in 1993 when Annie was just three years old. They respect how rural ambition can lead to innovation and growth, even when it comes to the electricity that powers their home, their daughters’ homes, and their Sproule Farms shop.

Branding, branding, branding! One of the family combines (now referred to as Peachy) is professionally wrapped with Three Farm Daughters artwork. (Photo courtesy of Grace Lunske)



“The beauty of Nodak is how it was built. It was built by farmers. If they wouldn’t have got together and started a co-op, North Dakota wouldn’t have developed like it developed. To get those power lines going from place to place and to share those costs was very important,” Sproule said.

That farm work ethic – that need to grind until the world is made better for your family and your community – still flows through the Sproules and is visible in each of their daughters.

“Grace always comments that we’re living off coffee, adrenaline and a dream,” Annie said, smiling at her youngest sister. “You have to want it. If you don’t want it, then it’s hard. But when you want it, it’s exciting and it’s easy.”

By Kaylee Cusack / Photography Michael Hoeft

AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

ESSAY QUESTION:

If chosen as a Youth Tour delegate, you will be traveling to Washington, D.C., to experience and learn about America's rich history. What moment in American history do you wish you had been a part of and what would you have contributed?

TOP 3 REASONS:

1. All-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., compliments of Nodak Electric Cooperative.
2. A whole week to visit unforgettable historic monuments, museums and the U.S. Capitol.
3. A learning experience you'll never forget.

WASHINGTON, D.C. JUNE 18 TO 23, 2023



- To enter the essay-writing contest, you must be a sophomore or junior in high school.
- You and your parent(s) or guardian must be served by Nodak Electric Cooperative.
- If you have any questions, please contact Gretchen Schmaltz, Nodak Electric, at 701-746-4461 during regular business hours.
- **The deadline is Jan. 20, 2023.** You can email entries to Gretchen Schmaltz at gschmaltz@nodakelectric.com or mail a hard copy to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, 4000 32nd Ave. S., PO Box 13000, Grand Forks, ND 58208-3000.



CHECK OUT THE ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES AT
<https://ndyouthtour.com>

STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and USDA civil rights regulations/policies, USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs or reprisal/retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA; not all bases apply to all programs; remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (AD-3027) found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: 202-690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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Light the holiday with safety

As you light your holiday with shining stars and shimmering snowmen, be sure to decorate safely. For a happy – and safe – holiday, follow these tips from Nodak Electric Cooperative:

Use lights approved for safe use by a nationally recognized testing laboratory.

Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many decorations or electrical devices. They can overheat and cause a fire.

Never connect more than three strands of incandescent lights together.

Outdoor electric lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs).

Always unplug electrical decorations before replacing bulbs or fuses.

DON'T FALL VICTIM TO UTILITY SCAMS

Every day, millions of Americans are targeted by scammers through phone calls, emails, text messages, online or in person. Scammers' tactics can change daily, which is why it's important to stay alert and cautious.

TAKE CONTROL OF THE SITUATION, IF TARGETED:

TAKE YOUR TIME

Utility scammers try to create a sense of urgency so that you'll act fast and hand over personal information, especially over the phone. Take a moment to think about the situation before acting.

BE SUSPICIOUS

Scammers typically request immediate payments through prepaid debit cards or third-party apps. Unusual requests like this should raise red flags. Remember, if the request seems strange and out of the ordinary, you're likely being targeted by a scammer.



CONFIRM BEFORE YOU ACT

If you're contacted by someone claiming to represent Nodak Electric Cooperative or any other utility but you're unsure, just hang up the phone and call Nodak Electric at 800-732-4373 to verify the situation.

REPORT IT

Contact Nodak Electric Cooperative with information about the scam so we can alert other members on Facebook, etc.





A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

WINTER WEATHER CAN BRING POWER LINES DOWN



DID YOU KNOW:

- Downed power lines are extremely dangerous and even deadly?
- The current could spread through the ground and anything touching the ground?
- Stray voltage spreads like ripples on a pond?
- If you step from one “ripple” (voltage) to another you could be electrocuted?
- Downed lines could be hiding under standing water, ice or debris?

[Learn more at safeelectricity.org](http://safeelectricity.org)



STAY WHERE YOU ARE

You've just been in an accident involving a downed power line. Your first instinct might be to get out and run, but that could cost you your life. In most cases, the safest place to be is inside your vehicle. Wait there until electric utility workers deenergize the power. If your car is on fire or you see smoke, escape as safely as possible by making a clean, solid jump out and hop away with both feet together as far away as you can. Warn others not to approach the scene.

Source: safeelectricity.org