

# The Nodak Neighbor

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[www.nodakelectric.com](http://www.nodakelectric.com)

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## JOINING FORCES TO POWER NATIONAL SECURITY

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**Mac McLennan**  
President & CEO  
*Minnkota Power Cooperative*

# Planning today for the power needs of tomorrow

**M**innkota Power Cooperative is preparing for one of the most important power supply planning periods in its history – and our members are at the heart of our decision-making process.

As the wholesale power provider for Nodak Electric Cooperative and 10 other member cooperatives across eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota, Minnkota is responsible for making sure reliable, affordable and sustainable electricity is available not only today, but decades into the future.

That responsibility is becoming more complex. Electricity demand is growing. Power markets are changing. Environmental requirements continue to evolve. New technologies are creating opportunities, but also new challenges. At the same time, members continue to expect dependable electric service they can afford.

Minnkota takes the job of managing these issues seriously. The path ahead is being shaped by extensive planning, detailed analysis and a long-term commitment to the members and communities we serve.

Our approach is an all-of-the-above energy strategy. That means we're working to strengthen the coal, wind and hydro resources we already have in place, while adding new resources that make our system more diverse, flexible and reliable.

One important step already in progress is the development of the Flickertail Wind Farm near New Rockford, North Dakota. Minnkota has entered into a purchase power agreement to receive energy from the 370-megawatt wind project, which is expected to be com-

pleted in 2028. When complete, Flickertail will more than double Minnkota's current wind energy portfolio.

Because wind energy output changes with weather conditions, Minnkota also needs resources that can respond when electricity demand is high or when other resources are producing less. That's why we're closely evaluating the addition of natural gas generation in North Dakota.

This effort is connected to the development of the Bakken East natural gas pipeline, which is planned to move natural gas from the oilfields of western North Dakota to the eastern side of the state. Natural gas generation can start up, ramp down and adjust output to help match electricity supply with demand across the region. Minnkota is still determining the right technology, location and size for this potential facility, but current planning is focused on having it available in the early 2030s.

At the same time, Minnkota's existing coal-based resources at the Milton R. Young Station in western North Dakota continue to provide tremendous value. This facility produces dependable, around-the-clock electricity and supports the reliability our members expect. That's why Minnkota continues to pursue Project Tundra, an effort to add carbon capture technology at the Young Station. If implemented, Project Tundra would capture CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the power plant and help position it to meet potential future environmental regulations.

Project Tundra is being advanced by a technology developer with the significant help of state and federal funding. Importantly, the project is being struc-

tured with limited required capital investment from Minnkota, minimizing financial risk to the membership. If a decision is made to move forward, the facility could be online prior to the end of the decade.

These power supply decisions are being made for Minnkota's legacy members, including the homes, farms, schools and businesses served by Nodak Electric Cooperative. You are the foundation of our system, and your needs remain at the center of our planning.

That same member-first approach also guides how Minnkota evaluates electric growth. New large electricity consumers can bring opportunity to our region, but only if they are served in a way that protects existing members and strengthens the overall system. That's the standard Minnkota is applying to the data center being developed near Harwood, North Dakota.

The data center will cover the costs for its dedicated infrastructure up front and pay its own way for all its energy needs. The agreement is designed to ensure this new load does not shift costs to existing members. In fact, the revenues from this data center project can help cover a portion of the costs tied to future power supply investments Minnkota is already pursuing.

With each of these projects now in motion, the work is moving from planning to action. The decisions ahead are significant, but necessary to keep power reliable. As a not-for-profit cooperative, Minnkota's focus remains on the people and communities we serve. That focus will continue to guide the decisions being made today for the power needs of tomorrow.

# JOINING FORCES TO POWER NATIONAL SECURITY

**Grand Forks Air Force Base partnership with Nodak Electric strengthens reliability, mission preparedness**

Airman 1st Class Matthew King finds secure footing as he makes his way up a training pole.

A small squad of Nodak Electric Cooperative lineworkers squinted up at a Grand Forks Air Force Base (GFAFB) airman climbing his way to the top of a power pole. Above the airman's head hung a 120-pound mannequin, and on the ground below, seven more service members waited their turn to strap on climbing spikes.

This pole-top rescue training day was coordinated by Nodak Assistant Line Superintendent and Safety Coordinator Derek Sondreal. Like many of the co-op's training sessions, it wasn't just for Nodak employees. It was another learning opportunity for the electricity partners serving our country. "They're really not afraid to try anything," Sondreal said of the fatigue-clad Air Force technicians nearby.

Sondreal leads this high-voltage training as part of a partnership formed in 2018 between Nodak and GFAFB. At that time, the entities signed a utilities privatization (UP) agreement, through which Nodak became the system owner of the electric infrastructure of the installation. Under the agreement, the cooperative is responsible for maintenance and repair, reliability projects and outage response. The collaboration also extends to safety and high-voltage training with Air Force electricians, so they can both serve their base and any sites they may visit during deployment.

According to Melissa Cassanelli, the installation's energy manager and UP Contracting Officer's Representative, around two decades ago the U.S. Army and Air Force began to experience challenges with receiving the necessary funding to reinvest in base utilities, such as electrical, water and wastewater. Since much of the infrastructure had been built in the 1940s and 1950s, systems were beginning to fail and were no longer meeting code.

"Across the board, we had a lot of issues with electricity being reliable," Cassanelli said. "A lot of places, in the south especially, with their storms and heat, were really struggling."

Since GFAFB possessed one of the older systems in the nation, it was chosen by the federal government as one of the top priorities to privatize with a local utility. The UP process took around 10 years and was finalized in 2018. Nodak immediately invested in bringing the system back to the level of dependability that was needed on the base.

"We have very reliable power infrastructure now," said GFAFB Electrical Foreman Mark Lawrence. "With all

★ **Grand Forks Air Force Base**

★ **Cavalier Space Force Station**

**NODAK SERVICE TERRITORY**

our deployments and military training and everything these airmen do, we don't quite have the manpower to focus on maintaining the exterior power of the base. That's one part of the mission that won't fail, because we have Nodak out here to maintain this infrastructure."

Electric reliability is critical for the missions of the installation, including a drone mission and High Frequency Global Communications System mission – both of which rely heavily on uninterrupted power. "We do have backup generators, but those facilities need power, and Nodak knows that," Cassanelli said. "They've done a lot of upgrades to those systems to make sure those facilities are always online."

The establishment of the UP contract took what was already a strong working relationship between Nodak and GFAFB and formalized it into something with a value greater than the sum of its parts.

"It allows us to better understand the mission-critical needs of Grand Forks Air Force Base and ensure our system is aligned to support those needs," said Nodak CEO Mylo Einarson. "At the same time, it's opened the door for more collaboration on training and preparedness, which ultimately strengthens reliability and resilience for the base."

As part of their training, Air Force electrical technicians go through six months of coursework to prepare for all levels of electrical maintenance. Only a few weeks of that training is focused on high-voltage infrastructure. That's where the Nodak team steps in, building hands-on training experiences for the airmen to maintain their knowledge.

"They can learn the intricacies of the system so they're prepared for when, heaven forbid, the day came when they're the person that people have to rely on," said

## CAVALIER SPACE FORCE STATION

Nodak Electric Cooperative also holds a UP agreement with Cavalier Space Force Station, located just west of Cavalier, North Dakota. Although it is a smaller installation, reliable electricity is just as crucial.

**"Our relationship with Cavalier Space Force Station is very similar in that it's built on trust, reliability and a shared understanding of how critical their mission is. They rely on us for highly dependable electric service, and we take that responsibility seriously. Over the years, we've worked closely with their team to ensure we understand their operational requirements and can respond quickly when needed."**

*Mylo Einarson, Nodak Electric Cooperative*

Tech. Sgt. Brian Polk, who serves as electrical section chief. He explained that the training relationship with Nodak also helps the airmen meet the qualifications for their Career Field Education and Training Plan (CFETP).

Just weeks before pole-top rescue training, Sondreal joined the small crew of Air Force electricians at the Nodak service center on the base. He guided them through cutting and terminating underground primary cable, answering questions as they moved through each step of the process.

"It's rewarding to know that you're helping make a difference," he said. "I mean, they're making a difference for us, so it's one way to pay it back to them."



Nodak lineworker Paul Gapp is part of the Grand Forks West crew that works and trains with the GFAFB airmen.



Nodak's Derek Sondreal (center) leads a GFAFB training session on working with underground primary cable.



Nodak Electric lineworkers train alongside airmen from Grand Forks Air Force Base.

# STAY SAFE ON THE FARM

Farming is among the more dangerous occupations for several reasons, including the potential for encounters with electrical hazards. Planting, spraying and harvest season can bring long hours, weather constraints, tight schedules, seasonal workers and increased stress. Because of that, Nodak reminds farmers that it only takes a split second for someone to come into contact with electricity.

Before taking to the fields, farm workers should be aware of overhead power lines and to keep equipment and extensions far away from them. Review overhead power line locations and height clearance with anyone and everyone working on the farm or doing business there. Although farm work is filled with tight deadlines and heightened work stress, making time for safety, including electrical safety, can save lives.

Never assume that because someone grew up on the farm they understand the potential of stray voltage or other electrical hazards. Share these electrical safety tips with farm families and workers to keep them safe from accidents year-round:

**Start each morning by planning your day's work and have a safety meeting.**

**Educate everyone that potential electrical hazards include both direct and indirect contact with an overhead power line or pole.**

**Keep yourself and equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines at all times. Use a spotter when moving tall equipment and loads.**

**Encourage drivers and operators to position grain augers in their lowest position or to lower truck bed boxes before moving.**

**Always lower equipment extensions or elevators to their lowest possible level, under 14 feet, before moving or transporting.**

**Do not raise equipment, such as augers, the beds of grain trucks, ladders, poles, or rods, into power lines.**

**Encourage folding and unfolding to be done well into the field, not at the field's edge, which could have power lines running next to it.**

**Be aware of power line locations in the proximity of grain bins.**

**If you are on equipment that contacts a power line, do not exit the equipment. When you step off the equipment, you become the electricity's path to ground and receive a potentially fatal shock. Wait until Nodak crews have de-energized the line and confirmed it is safe for you to exit. If the vehicle is on fire and you must exit, jump clear of the vehicle with both feet together. Hop as far from the vehicle as you can with your feet together. Keep your feet together to prevent current flow through your body, which could be deadly.**

Contact Nodak about damaged or downed power lines or poles. Our crews would much rather check out an issue than risk a potentially dangerous situation.

Electrical work around the farm can also pose hazards. Often, the need for an electrical repair comes when a farmer has been working long hours and is fatigued.

**Source: [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.safeelectricity.org)**



# NODAK EMPLOYEE YEARS OF SERVICE

Throughout the year, Nodak will be recognizing our outstanding employees for their years of service to both the co-op and their communities. We succeed as a cooperative because of their unwavering dedication and commitment to hard work. The following employees began service in the months of July through August.



**Bret Poehls**  
Michigan Lineman  
**31 years**



**Andrew Peterson**  
Accounting & Finance Manager  
**13 years**



**Greg Anderson**  
Dispatcher  
**11 years**



**Blaine Thompson**  
Member Services Supervisor  
**9 years**



**Jeff Bolstad**  
Information Technology Coordinator  
**8 years**



**Rachael Boman**  
Member Services Representative  
**3 years**



**Cari Scarborough**  
Receptionist  
**1 years**

## NORTH DAKOTA FOOD IMPACT FUND

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Quality Meats & Seafood, West Fargo



St. Anthony Meats, St. Anthony



T&L Meats, Grand Forks

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- Loan participation with a lead lender preferred.

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- Kramlich-Deede Meats, Medina
- Yellowstone River Beef, Williston
- T&L Meats, Pettibone
- 6 In 1 Meats, New Salem
- Frontier Meats, Minot
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- R3 Meats, Carrington
- Planted, Kindred (egg processing)
- St. Anthony Meats, St. Anthony
- Quality Meats & Seafood, West Fargo
- Carnis Meats, Bismarck
- Wishek Sausage, Wishek



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NORTH DAKOTA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# 2026 YOUTH TOUR

Meg Reinhold, Nodak Electric's Youth Tour delegate, recently returned from the 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., held this June. "The NRECA hosted an outstanding gathering for hundreds of students, and I am so thankful I got to be part of it!" she said. "I've made lifelong friends, gained knowledge that I wouldn't have learned in class, and had an experience that has opened up countless opportunities for me. Thank you Nodak for this once in a lifetime trip. To all juniors and seniors, take this opportunity, write that essay, go for it! You won't regret it. It was an unforgettable week."

Meg joined other North Dakota high school students on the Youth Tour trip. They spent seven days touring museums and memorials, visiting with their state's congressional delegation, learning history, character building and understanding the cooperative business model. During the tour, they developed leadership skills and established a network of peers.

Education is a fundamental principle of electric cooperatives. Boards of directors and managers say they believe it is imperative to help students understand the democratic process and gain the skills necessary to become tomorrow's leaders. By sponsoring the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, North Dakota's electric cooperatives are helping high school students experience government firsthand by visiting Washington, D.C., meeting their representatives and senators, and building a better understanding of our country and their role as engaged citizens.

