

# The Nodak Neighbor

January-February 2024

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

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## Ice storm restoration

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SAVE THE DATE

**84<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING**

Wednesday, April 10, 2024 | Alerus Center

# The Nodak Neighbor

Official Publication of the  
Nodak Electric Cooperative, Inc.

746-4461 or 800-732-4373

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

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Volume 74, No. 1  
January-February 2024  
Officers and Directors

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

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## SAVE THE DATE

84<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

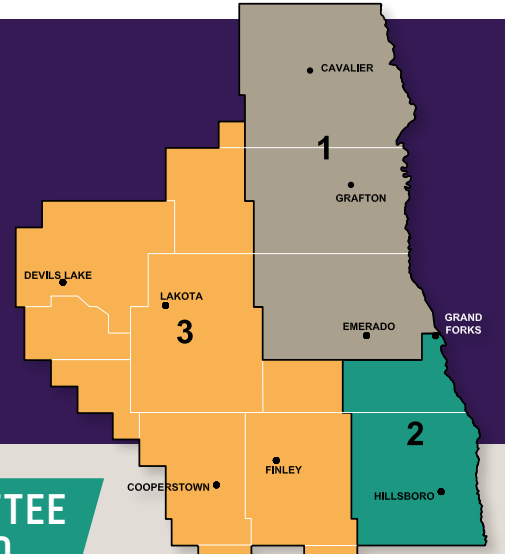
Wednesday, April 10, 2024  
Alerus Center

Meal: 5 p.m. | Meeting: 6 p.m.

**On the cover:** A significant ice/sleet storm hit the region Dec. 25-27, 2023. It brought with it large accumulations of ice on roads, power lines and nearby trees – causing large-scale power outages to the Nodak system.

# THREE DIRECTOR POSITIONS OPEN

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS APPOINTED



The board of directors has appointed the committee on nominations. At its meeting scheduled for 10 a.m. Monday, Feb. 19, 2024, at the Nodak headquarters building, 4000 32<sup>nd</sup> Ave. S., Grand Forks, the committee shall prepare and post a list of nominations for the director positions slated for election.

Committee members are: John Aamodt, Arvilla, 218-779-5250; Daryl Evenson, Devils Lake, 701-739-9093; Richard Hanson, Grand Forks, 701-739-0950; Shannon Johnson, Park River, 701-331-2933; Neal Klamm, Thompson, 218-779-7378; Jared Peterka, Forest River, 701-520-2937; Glenn Rethemeier, Larimore, 218-779-3222; Paul Retzlaff, Aneta, 701-270-0181; and Linda Stromstad, Hatton, 701-335-3034.

## THREE DIRECTOR POSITIONS OPEN

Three director positions will be open at the annual meeting on April 10, 2024. The directors whose terms expire in 2024 are:

- District 1** – Ryan Benson – Arvilla (*incumbent seeking reelection*)
- District 2** – David Hagert – Grand Forks (*incumbent seeking reelection*)
- District 3** – David Brag – Finley (*incumbent seeking reelection*)

## NOMINATION BY COMMITTEE

If you are interested in being nominated or would like to nominate an individual, you may contact a nominating committee member.

## NOMINATION BY PETITION

Nominations may also be made by petition signed by at least 15 cooperative members. The signed petition must be received at Nodak’s headquarters by Sunday, Feb. 25, 2024, to verify nominee qualifications and allow sufficient time for voting by mail.



*Mylo Einarson  
President & CEO*

# Resilience of cooperatives

To begin with, I'd like to express our thanks and appreciation to our member-owners who felt the brunt of the recent ice storm and the ensuing power outages that followed. We know power outages can be frustrating and inconvenient, but we appreciate your resilience and kindness during this difficult time. Your support made all the difference in our efforts to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. We are proud to serve such a strong and caring membership.

Our team at Nodak worked tirelessly to restore power to the affected areas, working long days in very harsh conditions. I couldn't be more proud of the work our team performed. We are grateful for their hard work and dedication.

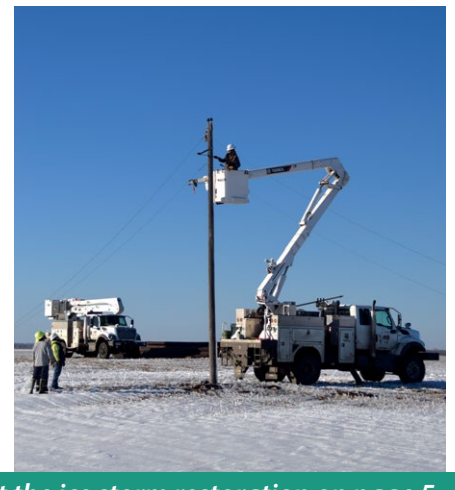
In addition, I wish to express my deep appreciation for the overwhelming support and assistance we received through mutual aid efforts. The collaboration between cooperatives and the selfless contributions from our neighbors played an integral role in expediting the process. Cooperation Among Cooperatives is one of the guiding principles we

build our cooperative culture around; it's one of the fundamental concepts that makes our business model the greatest way to serve our members. I'd like to express our sincere appreciation to North Star Electric Cooperative, PKM Electric Cooperative and Roseau Electric Cooperative for sending their talented line crews to assist in our restoration efforts.

Secondly, I want to bring to your attention that Nodak has decided to close the physical location of our Hillboro outpost. As part of our ongoing efforts to streamline our operations and allocate resources more effectively to better serve our members, we made the decision to rearrange the primary service areas for our outpost line crews, as well as incorporate some contract services. This strategic decision negated the need for that warehouse. However, we want to assure you that our commitment to providing exemplary services to all our members remains unchanged. We will continue to work hard to ensure that all our members receive the reliable and affordable electric service that you have come to expect from us. We will continue

to invest in advanced technologies, infrastructure improvements, and ongoing training for our personnel to ensure that our service remains not only reliable, but also responsive to your evolving needs. While the physical location in Hillsboro may be closing, our commitment to serving our members with integrity, transparency and excellence remains steadfast.

Finally, it is with great pleasure that we extend a warm invitation to join us at our upcoming annual meeting. This event is a unique opportunity for us to come together as a cooperative community, share insights on the past year's achievements, and discuss the exciting initiatives ahead. Your presence is crucial in shaping the future of our cooperative, and we encourage you to attend, participate in discussions, and exercise your right to have a voice in the decisions that impact our community. Join us for an informative and engaging gathering on April 10 at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks, where your ideas, input and presence will contribute to the continued success of Nodak Electric Cooperative. We look forward to seeing you there!



[Read more about the ice storm restoration on page 5.](#)

# WELCOMING WALLE SUBSTATION



Minnkota's line crew works together to reroute a 230-kV line around Walle substation.



A 20-foot hole is bored to hold a new laminated power pole near Walle substation.



Crews use a large crane to lift the structure into the bored hole.

A new transmission substation south of Grand Forks is set to fortify power reliability for Nodak Electric members this year. Walle substation is one of the largest transmission substations Minnkota Power Cooperative (Nodak's wholesale power supplier) has built to date. When fully energized in the spring of 2024, it will receive 230-kilovolt (kV) power from Minnkota's transmission lines, step it down through a transformer and send it on its way as 69-kV electricity for Nodak's distribution substations.

The new infrastructure is a product of a multiyear Minnkota system study. The study determined that a transmission substation near southern Grand Forks would be critical to keep electric reliability high for a quickly developing region.

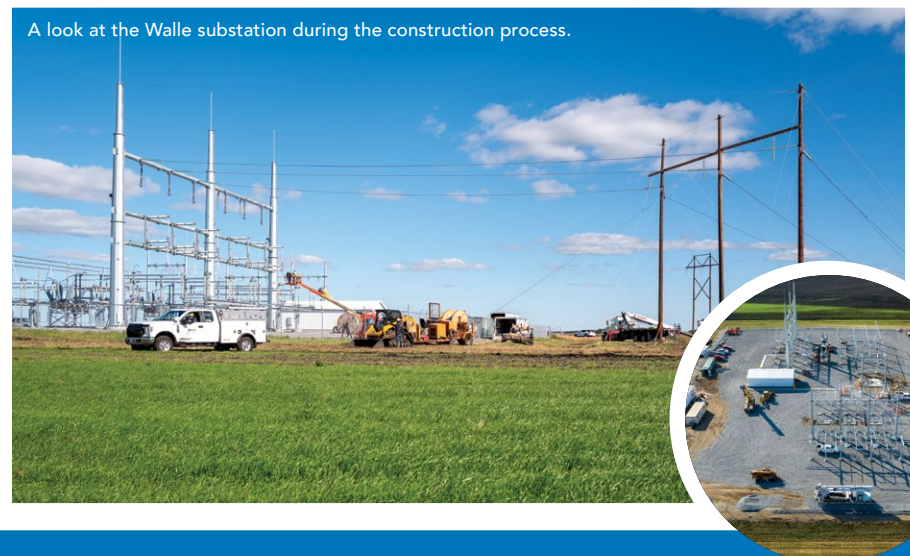
"This substation will allow for additional load growth. And reliability is a big factor. The investment is worth it because this will help out in the future," said Ryan Brorby, Minnkota substation engineering manager. "This will prevent transmission congestion, and we won't find ourselves in a power bind."

Many external partners came together to help support Walle substation. Nodak Electric Cooperative was heavily involved in the project, which was happening in the community it serves. The Nodak team set up a new service at the substation site to support the work of Minnkota and its contractors, and it was no simple task - they needed to bury underground line under a road to reach the site. "They were really great to work with, and they did it really quickly," said Minnkota electrical engineer Kara Laframboise.

The City of Grand Forks also became a strong partner for Walle substation, knowing that a new

transmission substation would support goals for economic development. City inspectors visiting the site commented on the remarkable quality of the site work. With so many developments happening around the city in 2023, they were pleased to have an "easy" item to check off the list.

"Everyone says, 'A substation is getting built,' and they get a little jumpy about that, thinking it's going to be this ugly-looking thing," Brorby said. "What I've heard around the community is that everyone was impressed and happy with how the process went."



A look at the Walle substation during the construction process.



# ICE STORM RESTORATION

**N**odak Electric Cooperative's line crews battled the effects of a significant ice/sleet storm that froze the region Dec. 25-27, 2023. The storm started late on Christmas, producing accumulations of ice on roads, power lines, and nearby trees - causing large-scale power outages to the Nodak system in the ensuing days.

Crews were first dispatched when calls started trickling in for members in the Blanchard, Cummings and Hope areas. The next day, outage numbers continued to climb due to wires slapping together, resulting in breakers opening. Wednesday, Dec. 27, was a challenging day for Nodak's southern system with many broken power lines and poles reported. At the peak of the outages, a total of 2,244 members lost power, with 200 broken poles that needed to be replaced. It was at this time that Nodak requested mutual

aid to help tackle the crippling effects of the ice storm.

The rain finally subsided on Thursday, Dec. 28, giving the line crews slightly improved working conditions. With the help of some very talented lineworkers from North Star Electric Cooperative, PKM Electric Cooperative and Roseau Electric Cooperative, crews got to work on both broken poles and smaller outages that Friday and significant progress was made. By 3:47 p.m. on Dec. 30, power was restored to all residential members.

Thank you to all the lineworkers who worked in less-than-ideal conditions and the employees working tirelessly to restore power to our members. And thank you, North Star Electric Cooperative, PKM Electric Cooperative, and Roseau Electric Cooperative for sharing your talented lineworkers and equipment!



# NODAK DISTRIBUTES RDFC GRANT MONEY TO 4 RECIPIENTS

Nodak Electric Cooperative is a member of the Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC). As a result, communities in our service area are eligible to apply for a grant of up to \$3,000 for community-based projects. RDFC is making these funds available so that more people become aware of its larger loan program that funds community-based projects and nonprofit entities with low-interest loans.



*Pictured: Nodak Board Director Steve Smaaladen and Bradlyn Sand*

RDFC has recently granted \$1,500 to McVile Park District-City of McVile to renovate the McVile softball field. Funds will be used to purchase a new backstop and install a permanent fence. New dugouts will be built and the baseball diamond will be transitioned to a softball diamond.



*Pictured: Larry Weigel and Nodak Board Director Les Windjue*

A \$500 grant went to the Lake Region Sportsmen's Club located in Devils Lake. The club hosted a Youth Ringneck Pheasant Extravaganza during which they released 450 adult pheasants in areas open to public hunting, the evening prior to the state's youth two-day pheasant season. A banquet was held for all youth hunters and a catered meal and prizes were given to every hunter.



*Pictured: Lakota Elementary School Principal Sam Preble and Nodak Board Director Ryan Benson*

Another \$500 grant went to Lakota Elementary School District #66 to support a three-phase accessible playground project located at the elementary school. The mission of this project is to ensure that a safe and accessible playground for everyone is available in the community. Once complete, it will be the only accessible playground within the county.



*Pictured: Tracy Laaveg and Agatha Frisby of the Save the Fountain committee and Nodak Board Director Cheryl Osowski*

The final \$500 grant went to Park River WCTU Fountain Restoration, Park River. Grant funds will be used to preserve, repair and restore the Park River Women's Christian Temperance Union Fountain, located at the city park. After the restoration and preservation is complete, the goal is to be able to have the WCTU Fountain listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## ELECTRIC 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.

### 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**



CHECK OUT  
ADDITIONAL  
REBATES HERE!



# AROUND THE CO-OP



## COLE JOHNSON COMPLETES MIP PROGRAM

Cole Johnson, Nodak's Engineering Manager, received recognition for completing the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Management Internship Program (MIP). The MIP is a comprehensive, six-week program that provides an in-depth analysis of the functions and processes of cooperative management. Congratulations, Cole!



## STEVE DANIELSON RETIRES

Energy Management Coordinator Steve Danielson retired from Nodak in December of 2023 with 33 years of service.

After graduating from North Dakota State College of Science (Wahpeton) in 1990, Steve worked for a HVAC company before joining Nodak as a member services representative. With a background in HVAC, Steve was able to answer members' questions about off-peak, load management, demand response and heating issues. There have been numerous meters installed, parts of equipment tested and outages worked during his time, but he always showed up with a smile and was ready to go the extra mile for the members he served. He was promoted to Energy Services Coordinator in 2012, a role he held until his retirement.

When asked what his favorite part of working for the cooperative was, he said, "It was interacting with so many different members. I made many friends and great memories over the years."

Steve and his wife Sherri are enjoying retirement, much of which he plans on spending countless hours golfing, watching his family grow, pontoon rides around the lake, and grilling as much and as often as possible. There will be no replacing Steve's friendly smile, positive attitude and his willingness to help. Thank you, Steve, for 33 fantastic years of service and enjoy your well-deserved retirement!



## MAX STROMSODT COMPLETES APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM

Max Stromsodt, of the Finley crew, earned his journeyman status following the completion of a robust apprenticeship program of the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC). He was recognized during a Jan. 11 awards ceremony at the NDAREC Apprenticeship, Training and Safety Conference in Bismarck, N.D. Congrats Max!

# PURPA HEARING AND BOARD DECISION

The Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act (PURPA) hearing was properly noticed, member participation was encouraged and ultimately the meeting was held on Oct. 3, 2023, at 9 a.m., wherein the board heard from both Nodak staff and from the members regarding whether Nodak would continue to promote its robust demand response programs and whether Nodak would continue to promote affordable and equitable electric vehicle charging options throughout its service territory. After receiving Nodak staff's presentation, as well as written input from the membership, the Nodak Board of Directors unanimously approved its Decision Determining Adoption of PURPA Standards on Nov. 1, 2023. The Board of Directors hereby determined that it is in the best interest of the cooperative:

## Demand Response Practices:

To promote the use of demand response and demand flexibility practices with its entire membership base, in that it will continue to consider its rate mechanisms for the timely recovery of the costs of promoting the same, subject to demonstration that benefits of any individual program or measure outweigh any costs.

## Electric Vehicle Programs:

To promote affordable and equitable electric vehicle charging options throughout its service territory with the exception that they do not impose constraints on rate development which may not align with long-term needs of Nodak's members or for which non-rate means for improvement or acceleration are more effective.



**Building a new house,  
garage, cabin or  
farm shop?**

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**Need to upgrade  
your current facilities?**

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**Plan on extending to  
an area not currently  
serviced with  
electricity?**

## ***NOW IS THE TIME TO START PLANNING!***

Summer will be here soon and with some preplanning, Nodak can help make the construction process easier.

Once you have an idea of your plans, contact one of our engineers to get started on your summer project needs.



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