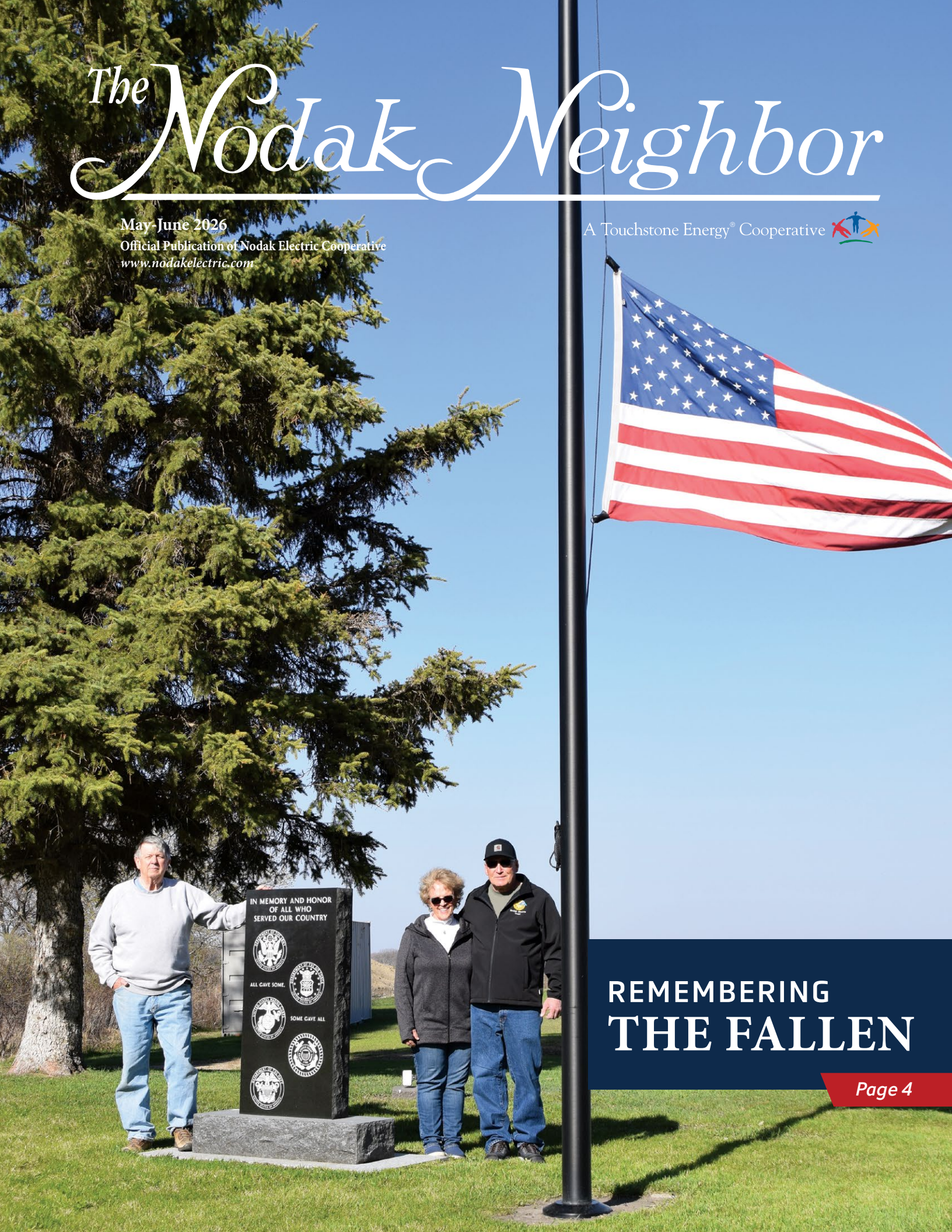


# The Nodak Neighbor

May-June 2026

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

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



## REMEMBERING THE FALLEN

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Nodak Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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*This institution is an equal opportunity  
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**May-June 2026**  
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Nodak Electric will be  
closed on **July 3, 2026**,  
for Independence Day.  
Have a safe and happy  
Fourth of July!



*On the cover: (left to right) Marvin Larson (Honeyford, North Dakota), and Jodi and Danny Carlson (Grand Forks, North Dakota) stand next to a new monument honoring veterans.*

We would like to congratulate our 2026 Youth Tour winner, **Meg Reinhold** of Larimore, North Dakota, daughter of Joe and Lori Reinhold.

As the winner of our essay contest, Meg has won an all-expenses-paid weeklong trip to Washington, D.C., this summer with other students from across North Dakota, joining thousands of students from around the United States!

Essay entries were received from students from across Nodak's 13-county service territory. This is truly an incredible accomplishment! Congratulations, Meg!

## 5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

**Working on an outdoor project?**  
Careless digging poses a threat to people, pipelines and underground facilities.

**Always call 8-1-1 first!**  
Here are 5 steps for safe digging:

- 1 NOTIFY**  
Call 8-1-1 or submit a request online two to three days before you begin. The utilities affected by your digging will be notified of your project.
- 2 WAIT**  
It may take two to three days for utilities to send a locator to mark any underground lines.
- 3 CONFIRM**  
Compare the marks on your yard to the list of utilities contacted by 8-1-1. Confirm that all entities have responded to the request.
- 4 RESPECT**  
Protect and follow the utility markers – the flags and/or paint will remain important guides throughout your project.
- 5 DIG CAREFULLY**  
Be sure to avoid digging within two feet of the markers on all sides. If you can't, you'll need to consider moving your project.

*Source: call811.com*



Mylo Einarson  
President & CEO

## Protecting power above and below ground

When most people think about electric reliability, they picture the power plant or the lines strung along the highway. What they don't always consider are the two quieter threats that keep our crews busy year-round — and that every member can help us address.

Reliable electricity doesn't just happen. It's the result of constant vigilance above ground and below it. At Nodak Electric, we work hard every day to protect the infrastructure that delivers power to your home, your farm and your business. But some of the biggest risks to that infrastructure come from things that seem perfectly ordinary, like a shovel breaking ground for a new fence post or a tree branch rubbing against a line in the wind.

These aren't rare, dramatic events. They're everyday situations. And that's exactly why they deserve your attention.

North Dakota may not feel like a crowded place, but beneath the ground runs a complex network of utilities — electric lines, natural gas, fiber, water and more. Across our service territory, underground lines are far more common than many members realize.

Digging without knowing what's below is one of the most preventable causes of outages we see. A single strike on an underground line can knock out power to dozens of members, create serious safety hazards and result in costly repairs.

The solution is simple: Call 811 before any digging project, no matter how small. It doesn't matter if you're putting in a mailbox, planting a tree or installing a new grain bin — if you're breaking ground, make the call first. North Dakota 811 will coordinate with utilities to mark the lines on your property, free of charge, within a few business days. It takes a few minutes and can prevent an outcome that affects you, your neighbors and your cooperative. Make it a habit. Call 811. Every time.

### The hidden cost of trees in a "treeless" state

Something that surprises many people is that tree trimming is one of our largest ongoing maintenance expenses — and that's in North Dakota, a state not exactly known for its forests.

But look around. Farmsteads across our service territory are lined with shelterbelts that have been growing for decades. Towns and cities have mature trees shading neighborhoods and lining streets. And many of those trees have grown up alongside — or directly into — our power lines.

Trees and power lines are a challenging combination. Branches that grow into or near lines can cause outages during wind events, ice storms, and even on calm days when a limb finally gives way under its own weight. To keep the lights on, we have to stay ahead of that growth through regular trimming and, in some cases, full removal.

This work isn't optional — it's essential. And it's ongoing. The trees we

trim this year will grow back. New growth near lines requires constant monitoring. Our crews and contracted trimmers work throughout the service territory on a rotating basis, and even so, it's a challenge to stay ahead of the curve.

We understand that tree trimming can be a sensitive issue. These are your trees, often planted by your parents or grandparents to shelter a home from the wind. We don't take removal lightly. But when a tree poses a risk to the reliability and safety of the system, action is necessary — and it ultimately protects you.

Reliability is a partnership. Here's how you can help:

- **Call 811 before any digging project.** No exceptions.
- **Think about what you plant and where.** When adding trees or shrubs near your home, keep future growth in mind and avoid planting directly beneath or beside power lines. Low-growing species are a great option near utility corridors.
- **Let us work.** If our crews or contractors reach out about trimming near your property, please know it's being done to protect both you and your neighbors.

At Nodak Electric, keeping the power on is our mission — 24 hours a day, every day of the year. The steps we take to protect underground lines and manage vegetation may not always be visible to members, but the work is constant. With your help, we can keep doing it well.

# REMEMBERING THE FALLEN

Near Mekinock, North Dakota, sits a quiet little cemetery where 39 veterans have been laid to rest. Among those veterans is Bruce Carlson, who served in the U.S. Army as a First Air Cavalry mechanic in Vietnam.

Bruce's son, Danny Carlson, is a member of Nodak's Operation Round Up board of directors. After Bruce passed, Danny and his mother, Judy Carlson, had an idea to add a cemetery memorial to honor the veterans there – an idea that became Ness Cemetery Veterans Memorial.

The Carlsons wanted to establish a memorial that would serve as a place to preserve the memory of our nation's heroes and be a tribute to the brave men and women who defended our freedom. They rolled up their sleeves and called around, asking area residents with connections to those in the cemetery for donations. Before long, many were contacting Danny, offering to donate and expressing gratitude for their idea.

In June of 2025, the monument was officially dedicated at a ceremony attended by over 200 people. Friends, families and several members of veterans' support groups attended the dedication.

Marvin Larson, Air Force & Air National Guard veteran and lifelong friend of Bruce Carlson, gave the introduction and decoration of the monument.

The Veterans Memorial and markers serve as a permanent reminder of the bravery, commitment and heroism exhibited by our veterans. This monument honors veterans who served in the Civil War, WWI and WWII, with the hope of bringing families and friends together to remember loved ones and show appreciation and support for veterans in our communities. The Carlson family hopes other rural churches will be inspired to recognize and honor veterans buried in their cemeteries.



## NODAK COMPLETES ANNUAL POLE-TOP RESCUE TRAINING

Nodak recently completed a comprehensive pole-top rescue training course, furthering its commitment to safety and preparedness. The training equipped lineworkers with the essential skills and knowledge to perform effective pole-top rescues during emergencies.

The training covered a range of scenarios and techniques, ensuring participants were proficient in safely executing rescue procedures. From harnessing and ascending poles to administering first-aid and employing rescue equipment, lineworkers underwent rigorous hands-on training to enhance their capabilities in real-world rescue scenarios.

With this rescue training, Nodak reaffirms its unwavering dedication to safety excellence and readiness, ensuring its lineworkers are equipped to handle any challenges they may encounter in the field.

# AROUND THE CO-OP

## Two longtime employees hang up their hats at Nodak



### Kevin Dahlen

After **40 years of service**, Kevin Dahlen is retiring from Nodak Electric.

Kevin started as a seasonal underground construction worker during the summer while attending North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton, North Dakota.

In 1985, he became a full-time employee in the member services department, working on night light repairs and making house calls to serve Nodak's off-peak customers by performing heating system analysis.

After a couple of years, he transferred to the meter department as a meter technician apprentice and later became a meter technician. Over the years, he witnessed firsthand how the metering trade has developed, working on all types of meters and the ever-evolving technology.

Kevin and his wife Jill have two grown children and a very special granddaughter, Elliana, whom he is looking forward to chasing around. He also plans to spend more time on the golf course and enjoy his well-deserved free time.



### Cory McKelvey

Please join us in celebrating a new chapter for our longtime Devils Lake crew foreman Cory McKelvey. He dedicated an amazing **45 years of co-op service**.

Cory began his career as a lineworker with the underground construction crew in Grand Forks in 1980. A year later, when an outpost position opened in Brocket, North Dakota, Cory moved there to serve as lineman. When the Brocket outpost closed, Cory moved to the Devils Lake crew and became crew foreman in 2012, a position he has held since.

Cory has been a staple at the Devils Lake office, having navigated the challenges of North Dakota's toughest winters and unfavorable summer storms by fixing the impossible and ensuring all power was restored to members. His dedication to co-op members and fellow co-workers, his leadership, and his hard work have helped shape Nodak for decades.

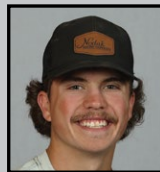
Cory's positive attitude, friendly demeanor and passion for the work have made his departure bittersweet. We are celebrating a well-deserved exit and an incredible career journey. Thank you, Cory, for over 45 years of service and for setting the standard.

Wishing you a joyful, relaxing and well-earned next chapter. Congrats!

## PROMOTIONS



**Jake Lamb** was promoted to Crew Foreman, Devils Lake crew.



**Tucker Woods**, seasonal Apprentice Lineman with the Grafton crew, has been promoted to full-time.



**Jack Lund**, Apprentice Lineman, transferred to the Devils Lake crew.

## NODAK ELECTRIC EMPLOYEES VOLUNTEER AT FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN EVENT

On April 24-25, Minnkota Power Cooperative opened its conference center and fleet garage to the community to host the annual Grand Forks Feed My Starving Children mobile packing event. Nodak Electric volunteers joined with others from across the region to pack hundreds of thousands of nutritionally complete meals for malnourished children around the world.

Feed My Starving Children is a nonprofit based in Minnesota. Since its establishment in 2013, the organization has sent food to children in nearly 70 countries around the world.



# WATCH THE WIRES DURING SPRING PLANTING

The fields in Nodak Electric Cooperative territory are finally ready for planting season. Are you and your farm team also ready? Safety around power lines, poles, guy wires and transformer boxes should be a top priority before you head out to the field.

As farm equipment gets larger and more producers use autosteer functions on their equipment, the number of line and pole contacts continues to climb. This is especially the case when helping hands aren't familiar with the roads, line crossings and pole placements of the area.

Please take a moment at the beginning of your workday to discuss power line and electrical safety with your team. A simple conversation could protect your equipment – or ultimately save a life.

Here are a few planting safety tips to get you started:

You can find a full Watch the Wires safety briefing for download at [WatchtheWires.com](http://WatchtheWires.com). There, you can also request a free Watch the Wires safety kit, which includes safety materials for four people.

If you have questions about the power lines and poles on your farms and fields, please don't hesitate to call the Nodak office at (701) 746-4461.

Visit [WatchtheWires.com](http://WatchtheWires.com)



**Review your work route and mark any potentially dangerous areas.**

**Never assume new equipment fits under power lines.**

**Maintain a 10-foot clearance from all power infrastructure.**

**In tight spaces, have a spotter to help you maintain 10-foot clearances.**

**If you hit a pole, line or transformer box, stay in the vehicle and call 911.**

**Make sure you know how to safely exit in a fire emergency.**

- Cross your arms tightly across your chest.
- Open the door and jump out with your feet tightly together.
- DO NOT touch the ground and vehicle at the same time.
- Shuffle or bunny hop far away. Do not let your feet come apart.
- Call 9-1-1.



# 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 May through June.



**Cory McKelvey**  
Former Crew Foreman, Devils Lake  
**45 years**



**Blaine Rekken**  
Member/Energy Services  
**36 years**



**Eric Hjelmstad**  
Michigan Lineman  
**21 years**



**Derek Sondreal**  
Assistant Line Superintendent  
**17 years**



**Jake Lamb**  
Crew Foreman, Devils Lake  
**15 years**



**Casey Hansen**  
Electrical Engineer  
**15 years**



**Cole Johnson**  
Engineering Manager  
**14 years**



**Mike Foerster**  
Cavalier Crew Foreman  
**13 years**



**Chad Neppel**  
Engineering Representative  
**12 years**



**Trevor Werchau**  
GF West Apprentice Lineman  
**3 years**



**David Larsen**  
Warehouse  
**2 years**



**Paul Gapp**  
GF West Lineman  
**2 years**



**Michael Helle**  
Information Technology Specialist  
**1 year**

## NODAK HAS HIRED THE FOLLOWING CONTRACTORS

These contractors are currently working in our service area. They will have their company logo on their vehicle (except for Joe Ritter Painting, which will have a Nodak logo). If you have any questions, please contact us at 800-732-4373.

▶ **EAGLE RIVER UTILITY SOLUTIONS**  
Cable Installer

▶ **JOE RITTER PAINTING**  
Transformer Painter

▶ **NORTH PLAINS CONTRACTING**  
Underground Cable Installer

▶ **DAKOTA TREE SERVICE**  
Tree Contractor

▶ **ACE UTILITIES**  
Cable Locator

▶ **WLK INSPECTIONS**  
Pole Testing

▶ **ARROW E TREE CONTRACTORS**  
Tree Contractor

▶ **CARR'S TREE SERVICE**  
Tree Contractor

## ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON APRIL 8, 2026

The 86<sup>th</sup> annual meeting was held at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks, North Dakota, on Wednesday, April 8, 2026.

During the meeting, directors Cheryl Osowski, Peter Naastad and Steven Smaaladen were reelected for three-year terms and Luke Ressler was elected for a one-year term. The minutes of the 85<sup>th</sup> annual meeting were also approved. There were 215 registered members and 370 total attendees at the annual meeting.



**CHERYL OSOWSKI**  
*District 1*



**PETER NAASTAD**  
*District 2*



**LUKE RESSLER**  
*District 2*



**STEVEN SMAALADEN**  
*District 3*