

# The Nodak Neighbor

May-June 2023

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

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

All-of-the-above  
strategy ensures the  
best energy value

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Official Publication of the  
Nodak Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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When the weather is nice, put your grill to use! During summer months, cooking outdoors is a great way to save energy and eliminate unwanted heat from cooking indoors.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

On the cover: A wind turbine south of Center, N.D., near the Milton R. Young Station.

## Employee updates



### Kim Soper

Congratulations to Kim Soper on her recent retirement from Nodak Electric, following 36 years of dedicated service to the cooperative as executive assistant. Kim began her cooperative career in 1987 as a secretary and has worn many hats and seen many changes since then. In 2006 she transitioned to executive assistant and quickly became a go-to source for helping employees. She was tasked with keeping CEO Mylo

Einarson and the cooperative's board of directors organized, on track, and on time.

"Kim's teamwork and dedication to the cooperative has been immensely appreciated. We will miss her years' worth of knowledge and commitment to getting projects completed on time. Her attention to detail has been invaluable, and her willingness to put in the extra effort to help everyone is something we all have come to depend upon. I truly appreciate everything she has done over the years," Einarson said.

Kim and her husband of more than 42 years, Gary, have two sons and two daughter-in-laws and are grandparents to five. When asked about retirement activities, Kim says she plans to do some traveling to see family and spend more time with her grandchildren. Thank you, Kim, for your years of great service. We will miss you at the office but wish you a wonderful, well-deserved retirement filled with happiness and good health in the years ahead.



### Kacie Tretter

Kacie Tretter was promoted to executive assistant on May 1 with the retirement of Kim Soper. She began her career with Nodak in 2020 as a receptionist. Kacie is excited for her new role in helping the cooperative members. Congratulations, Kacie!



### Brad Bergman

Brad Bergman, originally from Grand Forks, N.D., has accepted a full-time position with the Grand Forks construction crew.

He was born and raised in Grand Forks, N.D., and is a graduate of Red River High School. Brad is also a graduate of Northwest Lineman College in Idaho.

His hobbies include riding motorcycles, snowmobiling, and restoring vehicles.



### Chris Becker

Chris Becker accepted a full-time position as an apprentice lineman with the Grand Forks construction crew.

Originally from Langdon, N.D., and a graduate from Langdon Area High School, Chris went on to Bismarck State College and graduated from the lineman program.

His hobbies include rollerblading, recreational shooting, and helping on the family farm.



*Mylo Einarson  
President & CEO*

# All-of-the-above strategy ensures the best energy value

**W**e've all heard the phrase, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." This popular adage is often used in conversation or a story when someone is about to do something foolish or risky. If they heed this advice, it means they did not commit to "one basket," but instead hedged their bets with multiple options.

This strategy is how I describe Nodak Electric's commonsense approach to the current energy transition. We know that, while not yet with the majority of our members, consumer interest in renewable energy continues to grow. We've seen this trend in the region and across the nation.

Recent innovations and advances in renewable energy technologies have led to sharp decreases in costs, making renewables more feasible, accessible and scalable. Our wholesale power provider, Minnkota Power Cooperative, was an early adopter of renewable energy. Over the last two decades or so, the amount of renewable capacity on our system has grown to 42% of our power supply mix.

Nationally, there is increasing reliance on renewable energy sources at the same time that we're seeing fossil fuel plants taken offline, often ahead of schedule. Additionally, we're seeing more pressure on the electric grid due to

the frequency and intensity of severe weather events and rising electricity demand.

## Competing pressures

So how do we reconcile these challenges of grid pressure and a changing fuel mix? Solar and wind energy are certainly beneficial for the environment, but they are limited resources because the sun does not always shine, and the wind does not always blow. Our primary responsibility is to provide electricity 24/7 to you, our members/owners. To do this, we need reliable sources of power that will meet all the peaks and valleys of on-demand energy in our connected world.

So where are we netting out? That's where our familiar adage comes into play. While utilization of renewables is increasing, we still need to incorporate other forms of energy in the mix to ensure reliable service. Remember, solar and wind are intermittent power sources. This fact coupled with the growing demand for renewables creates its own challenges.

That's why we spread our eggs into multiple baskets. There is great value in maintaining a diverse mix of fuel sources – fossil fuels and renewables – to ensure reliability and resiliency and meet the growing demand for electricity.

Reliability also means repairing and replacing our distribution system to prevent wear-and-tear, ensuring our equipment can withstand severe weather. We are laser-focused on providing our Nodak Electric Cooperative members with reliable, affordable energy. That's why fuel diversity – or placing our eggs in multiple baskets – is essential to reliability.

## The bottom line

Lowering the overall carbon footprint in this country means we're going to electrify more and more of our economy. For example, an electric pickup can use more electricity than most single-family homes. As the carbon footprint goes down, electric usage will go up. Renewable power is an important part of a broader energy portfolio, but it is not available 24/7. In today's ever-connected world, people need power around the clock.

As our nation increasingly depends on electricity to power the economy, Nodak Electric Cooperative is working to anticipate, plan, and respond to market trends and policy shifts. That's how we can power your home and our economy, while continuing to serve as your local energy provider.

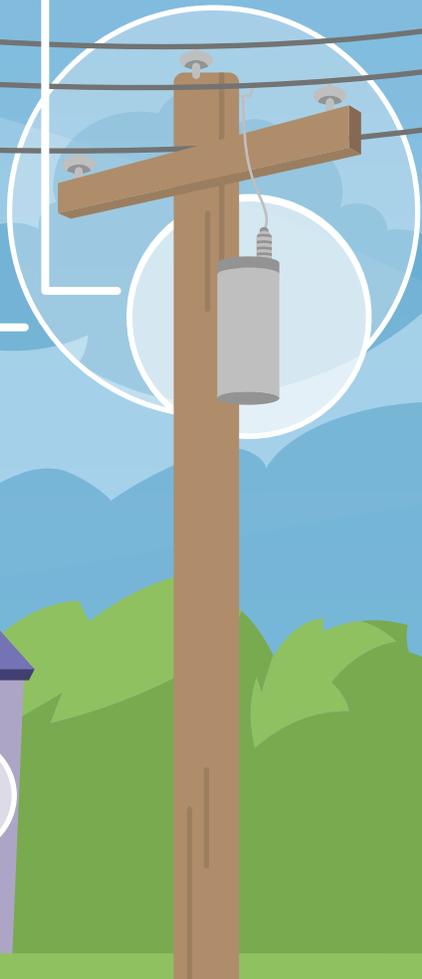
# What's that in my yard?

If you're a homeowner, you likely have at least one form of utility electrical equipment somewhere in your yard. You should know how to care for the areas around equipment to ensure it remains reliable, safe and easily accessible.

## Pole transformer

**What it does:** These high-mounted transformers convert the overhead line's higher-voltage power to a usable lower voltage. Pole transformers are usually found near rural homes.

**What you can do:** Simply stay away from it! Avoid using extended tools or aerial equipment like drones around ANY power pole.



## Electric meter

**What it does:** An electric meter calculates your home's electricity consumption in kilowatt-hours. They are typically found on the side or back of a home. Although many modern electric meters take automated readings, it's still important to keep the equipment accessible to crews and first responders.

**What you can do:** Make sure shrubs and plants are trimmed (or removed) to allow a 3-foot access radius around the meter. Ensure that locked fences or animals don't obstruct emergency access.

## Power pole

**What it does:** These tall poles are the infrastructure that keep overhead power lines safely out of reach. You will more likely have a power pole on your property if you are a rural member, but poles can be found within the city limits as well.

**What you can do:** Never attach anything to a power pole with nails, staples or even tape. Unauthorized attachments to poles could injure co-op employees or damage the pole's ground wire.

If you are planning an outdoor project, don't forget to call before you dig.



## Utility pedestal

**What it does:** The utility pedestal may look like a pad-mounted transformer, but much smaller. This piece of equipment is seen more regularly in neighborhood yards, serving as a junction point to send the transformer's stepped down electricity to each home.

**What you can do:** Keep 3 feet of clearance on every side of the pedestal.



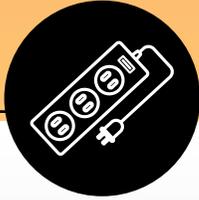
## Pad-mounted transformer

**What it does:** This is a distribution transformer housed in a safe metal cabinet, usually 4 feet by 4 feet and sitting on a small concrete slab. They are connected to underground lines and step down high-voltage power to supply residences. One transformer can serve many homes.

**What you can do:** Be sure you have 10 feet of clearance in front of the transformer (where the lock is), as well as 3 feet on all other sides. This means no plants, fences or other obstructions within that area.

# May is Electrical Safety Month

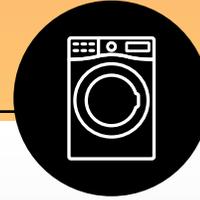
Every May, electric cooperatives across the country celebrate Electrical Safety Month. Raising awareness about the importance of electrical safety is more essential than ever. This article discusses some potential electrical hazards and how you can safeguard your home.



**Surge protectors** are used to protect your computer and other electronic equipment from damage caused by voltage changes. If you are relying heavily on power strips, it might be an indication that you have too few outlets to address your needs.



**Extension cords** should not be used to provide power on a long-term or permanent basis. If you are using several extension cords, you should look into getting additional outlets installed by a qualified, licensed electrician.



**Appliances** can pose hazards if not properly cleaned and maintained. When was the last time you thought about your dryer as a fire hazard? Clean the lint filter before and after each use to reduce the chances of a fire starting and to increase its energy efficiency.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Electricity is the cause of more than 140,000 fires each year, resulting in more than 500 deaths, 4,000 injuries and \$1.6 billion in property damage, according to Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI).

## ELECTRIFY YOUR DIY

You don't have to be an experienced DIYer to reap the benefits of handy electric tools. Check out what can help elevate your DIY to the next level and keep your projects from feeling like a flop.

*Cordless Circular Saw*



*Electric Grass Trimmer*



*Electric Paint Sprayer*



*Cordless Nail Gun*



*Cordless Electric Sander*



# 5 things to know about

## OUR ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENT

Our co-op offers:



Carbon-free leadership



Infinity Renewable Energy program

Incentives for electrifying efficiently



Wildlife protection strategies

Community volunteerism



### ADDYSON HEFTA SELECTED FOR NORTH DAKOTA YOUTH TOUR

Addyson Hefta, a junior at Midway Public High School, and the daughter of Justin Hefta, has been selected to represent Nodak Electric Cooperative on the North Dakota Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., in June 2023.

Addyson is involved in FCCLA, Sources of Strength, NHS, and the Student Council. She is actively involved in golf, volleyball, basketball and softball.

The Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., is more than a trip to the nation's capital to sightsee. It is a prominent event in which thousands of high school students from across the United States gain an understanding of our nation's history and the freedoms we enjoy, along with the many costs of those freedoms.

The Youth Tour is designed to provide an opportunity for outstanding rural young people

to better understand the value of rural electrification. It familiarizes youth with the historic and political environment of our nation's capital through firsthand looks at monuments, historically significant national sites and government buildings.

Nodak Electric Cooperative believes in investing in today's youth. We are investing in our – and your – future. We know we have the brightest students right here in this area, and we want to give them the opportunity to experience the past, present, and future of our country.

Congratulations, Addyson!



# Annual Meeting held at Alerus Center in April

The 83<sup>rd</sup> annual meeting was held at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks, N.D., on Tuesday, April 11, 2023.

During the meeting, directors Cheryl Osowski, Peter Naastad and Steven Smaaladen were reelected for three-year terms and the minutes of the 82<sup>nd</sup> annual meeting were approved. There were 250 members in attendance at the annual meeting.



**DISTRICT 1**  
Cheryl Osowski



**DISTRICT 2**  
Peter Naastad



**DISTRICT 3**  
Steven Smaaladen



## Nodak has hired the following contractors

**North Plains Utility Contracting**  
Trenching/plowing

**Dakota Tree Service**  
Tree trimming

**Joe Ritter Painting**  
Metal refinishing service

**MVM Contracting**  
Pole inspection

**AW Power**  
Tree trimming

These contractors are currently working in our service area. They will have a Nodak Electric decal on their vehicle. If you have any questions, please contact us at 800-732-4373.



# MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

**Military Appreciation Month is a special monthlong observance honoring those in and out of the United States Armed Forces. The Senate selected May as National Military Appreciation Month in 1999 to ensure the nation was given the chance to publicly show its gratitude and recognize the men and women – past and present – who serve our country.**

**Each year, Military Appreciation Month reminds Americans of the important role the U.S. Armed Forces have played in the history and development of our country. May was chosen because it has many individual days marked to note our military's achievements. We thank you, service members, for your dedication and strength in keeping our nation safe.**