

The Nodak Neighbor

May-June 2024
Official Publication of
Nodak Electric Cooperative
www.nodakelectric.com

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

May is Military Appreciation Month and it serves as a reminder to Americans of the important role the U.S. Armed Forces have played in the history and development of our country.

★ Learn more on page 6. ★



The Nodak Neighbor

Official Publication of the
Nodak Electric Cooperative, Inc.

746-4461 or 800-732-4373

www.nodakelectric.com

*This institution is an equal opportunity
provider and employer.*

The Nodak Neighbor (USPS 391-200) is published six times a year, February, April, June, August, October and December for \$1.00 per year by the Nodak Electric Cooperative, Inc., 4000 32nd Ave. S., Grand Forks, N.D. 58201-5944. Periodicals postage paid at Grand Forks, N.D., and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to NODAK ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., P.O. Box 13000, Grand Forks, N.D. 58208-3000.

Volume 74, No. 3
May-June 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

Table of contents

Safeguarding energy reliability page 3
Employee updates page 4
**Rollout of EPA rules threatens
electric reliability, affordability page 5**
2024 N.D. Youth Tour recipient page 6
**Grid regulators issue warnings
about power reliability page 7**
Annual meeting held on April 10 page 8



Unclaimed Capital Credits

My Co-op • Capital Credits • Unclaimed Capital Credits



Check out our website to see if you have any unclaimed capital credits. If you would like to claim a capital credit, please call us at **746-4461** or **800-732-4373**.

nodakelectric.com/unclaimed-capital-credits

On the cover: American veterans participating in the 2023 Honor Flight of ND/MN.

Photo courtesy of Russell Hons Photography



As you prepare for planting season, don't forget to plan for safety. There are many aspects to safety on the farm, but electrical safety is often overlooked. Keep these safety tips in mind as you prepare for planting:



TRAIN OTHERS

Train anyone working on your farm, including family members and seasonal workers, about electrical hazards.

SAFETY FIRST

Have daily meetings to review the day's work and discuss safety implications. Know and review where the power lines are, the clearance required, and the proper position of extensions as they are transported.



WAIT TO UNFOLD

Remind workers to fold or unfold extensions well into the field, not close to the field's edge where power lines are typically located.

USE A SPOTTER

When working in the vicinity of power lines, always have a spotter on the ground, who can direct you away from power lines or poles if you are getting too close.

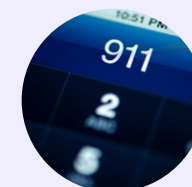


DO NOT EXIT YOUR CAB

If your machine or truck makes contact with a power line, pole, or guy wire, you could become electricity's path to ground and become electrocuted if you step out of the cab.

CALL 9-1-1

Call 9-1-1 to have your electric utility dispatched to deenergize the power source. Only exit the cab if your equipment is on fire. If that happens, make a solid jump out and hop away with feet together as far as you can.



For more information:





*Mylo Einarson
President & CEO*

Safeguarding energy reliability

Since the last Nodak Neighbor arrived in your mailbox, we brought the gavel down on another successful annual meeting. It was wonderful to see so many of you take the time to come participate in your cooperative's business. Typically, when we have an uncontested election, the attendance tends to dip, but this year we were blessed with what was essentially a capacity crowd. It was inspiring to see so many dedicated members come together to help chart the course for the future of your cooperative. On behalf of the entire team at Nodak, I want to extend a heartfelt thank-you for investing your time in attending your cooperative's annual meeting.

For those of you who were at the annual meeting, you may recall hearing me say that government regulation is one of the things that keeps me awake at night. Our nation's grid operators have been warning us that reliability could be in question in the coming months and years as we see early retirements of baseload power plants across the nation, replaced with less reliable technologies. Despite these warnings, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently issued new rules for coal-fired power

plants that give generators like our wholesale power provider, Minnkota Power Cooperative, the choice of either installing carbon dioxide (CO₂) capture technology or shuttering their coal plants. The problem is that carbon capture technology is still in its development stage, and the timeline required is completely unachievable.

The cornerstone of reliability in power generation lies in the balance between demand and supply. However, the new EPA rules, with their strict CO₂ emission standards and accelerated transition toward renewable energy sources, threaten that stability. By accelerating the retirement of coal-fired power plants, which have historically provided stable baseload power, and promoting the adoption of intermittent renewable sources such as wind and solar, the regulations introduce a great deal of uncertainty into the reliability side of things. The intermittent nature of renewable energy, coupled with the lack of available energy storage solutions, poses challenges in ensuring a consistent and reliable power supply, especially during periods of peak demand or harsh weather conditions.

In an effort to push back against what the National Rural Electric Cooperatives Association (NRECA) has called an "unlawful, unreasonable and unachievable barrage of new rules, that ignores our nation's ongoing electric reliability challenges," NRECA and 10 generation and transmission cooperatives recently filed a lawsuit to have the new EPA ruling put on hold and ultimately overturned. We need to strike a balance between the goals of carbon-free power and the reliability our nation needs. The way to achieve that goal is through a measured response that entails adopting technological advancements when they become proven and implementing them with a sensible timeline. The transition toward cleaner energy sources is well underway, but it has to be done in a manner that safeguards the reliability of our systems.

As we navigate these hurdles, we remain committed to keeping you informed and engaged. Please take the time to read the articles in this edition focusing on reliability. We will continue to provide updates as these issues unfold, standing together to safeguard the reliability of our cooperative's energy supply.

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.

2-3



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

EMPLOYEE UPDATES



PROMOTION

George Gardiner was promoted to Finley crew foreman.



TRANSFER

Wade Haman transferred to the Grand Forks East crew from Hillsboro.



TRANSFER

Jordan Holm transferred to the Grand Forks West crew from Cavalier.



NEW EMPLOYEE

Mitchell Nistler was recently hired with Nodak as a GIS/staking engineer. A native of Killiher, Minn., Mitchell previously worked at Nodak as an engineering assistant from 2018-2021. After graduating from UND in 2021 as a civil engineer, he moved out west to Bozeman, Mont., and worked at North Western Energy.

In his spare time, Mitchell plans to check out one of the many camping and fishing spots throughout North Dakota.



RETIREMENT

Jeff Hanson, journeyman lineman with the Grafton crew, retired after 31 years of service at Nodak.

Jeff began his career at Nodak in May 1993 as a journeyman lineman at the Fordville, N.D., outpost. With the merger of Sheyenne Valley Electric in 2001, the Fordville outpost was closed and Jeff then moved to the Michigan, N.D., outpost for a few years until his final move to the Grafton crew.

We wish Jeff the best in his retirement, as he plans to spend time with his grand kids and catch up on some fishing.

NODAK HAS HIRED THE FOLLOWING CONTRACTORS

North Plains Contracting

URD Cable Installation

Joe Ritter Painting

Painter

Ace Utilities

Contract Cable Locator

WLK Inspections

Pole Testing

Dakota Tree

Tree Contractor

Arrow E.

Tree Contractor



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.

ROLLOUT OF EPA RULES THREATENS ELECTRIC RELIABILITY, AFFORDABILITY



Final power plant rules create concerns for Nodak Electric Cooperative

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a series of final power plant rules on April 25 that threaten to impact the reliability and affordability of electricity for Nodak Electric Cooperative members and many others across the United States.

Minnkota Power Cooperative, Nodak's wholesale power provider, has major concerns with the unworkable timelines and requirements included in rules targeting greenhouse gas emissions, mercury emissions and coal combustion residuals. These rules have the potential to push the nation's fleet of reliable power plants toward retirement at a time when the electric grid is already facing reliability challenges.

"While we are in the process of evaluating these final EPA power plant rules, it is clear they will have significant impacts on electric grid reliability and affordability," said Mac McLennan, Minnkota president and CEO. "These rules set our nation on a dangerous path forward that will likely result in more blackouts, rising costs and greater uncertainty at a time when

dependable electricity is needed more than ever."

Minnkota has a longstanding commitment to environmental stewardship. From 2007 to 2011, approximately \$425 million was invested in emissions control technology at the coal-based Milton R. Young Station, which serves as the backbone of the cooperative's power supply portfolio. Additionally, more than 40% of Minnkota's power generation capacity is already derived from carbon-free resources, including wind and hydropower.

In its greenhouse gas rule, EPA has mandated power plant operators choose between installing carbon dioxide (CO₂) capture technology or selecting a path toward facility closure. For the past nine years, Minnkota has been proactively developing Project Tundra – an initiative to build one of the world's largest CO₂ capture facilities at the Young Station. Up to 4 million metric tons of CO₂ would be captured annually before being safely and permanently stored approximately one mile underground – the equivalent of taking 800,000 gasoline-fueled vehicles off the road.

"Despite the progress made on Project Tundra and our optimism about its future, these rules create a significant amount of uncertainty

that will need to be navigated and better understood prior to a final decision," McLennan said. "Minnkota will need to closely examine whether the final rule is achievable, even with Project Tundra."

The EPA rules are being developed at a critical time. America's leading grid operators and regulators have been sounding the alarm recently on their growing concerns around the reliability of electricity supply. In its Minnesota and North Dakota service area, Minnkota faces challenges in how it provides resilient electricity in extreme cold conditions. Both wind and solar have historically faced major operational challenges in harsh winter conditions. During these times, the cooperative's coal-based resources have been essential in maintaining grid stability at a time when member-consumers would face life-threatening conditions without electricity.

"We should not have to choose between grid reliability and decarbonization," McLennan said. "We can address these priorities at the same time, but we need to approach them with caution and common sense. We will need both technology and time well beyond what EPA is mandating. Unfortunately, these rules will likely serve to stifle innovation and take environmental solutions off the table."

Briley Zhang, a junior at Red River High School in Grand Forks, N.D., has been selected to represent Nodak Electric Cooperative on the North Dakota Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., in June 2024.

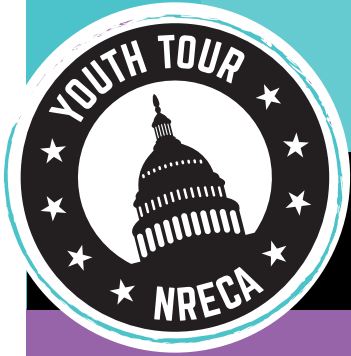
Briley enjoys playing violin, piano and flute. She is also involved in a robotics team.

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.

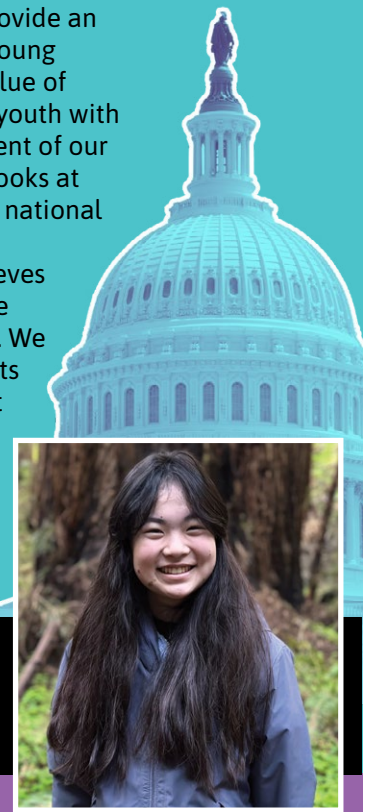
Congratulations, Briley!



Briley Zhang

2024 N.D. Youth Tour Recipient

LEARN MORE AT NODAKELECTRIC.COM



NODAK INTERN WINS SECOND PLACE IN COMPETITION

Charles Rieger, Nodak's electrical engineer intern, recently participated in the Andrew Freeman Senior Design Innovation competition. University of North Dakota (UND) engineering students present their senior design project to a panel of engineers. Awards are based on the innovativeness, problem-solving and team building skills of a design team project. The competition is held in honor of Andrew Freeman, a 1932 UND graduate and former general manager of Minnkota Power Cooperative who invented the head bolt heater, a plug-in heating device to help a car or tractor start on cold days. Rieger's team consisted of students from UND's Electrical Engineering and Computer Science programs. The collaborative team of seniors included Rieger, Chis Post, Lucy Deane, and Levi Lawson who created a rover prototype that digs up a super fine topsoil. Their design of the rover prototype (which was specifically designed for NASA Lunabotics), won them second place.

Pictured (left to right): Lucy Deane, Charles Rieger, Chis Post, Brendan Kennelly, Minnkota VP of Power Delivery and Kasey Borboa, Minnkota Senior Manager of Power Delivery.

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.

GRID REGULATORS ISSUE WARNINGS ABOUT POWER RELIABILITY



Nodak Electric Cooperative is connected to a regional grid that is facing a high to extreme risk of reliability issues in the next five years, according to assessments from leading grid regulators.

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) – the entity responsible for developing and enforcing mandatory reliability standards for utilities in the United States and Canada – released its Long-Term Reliability Assessment in December 2023. The report found that rising peak demand for electricity and the planned retirement of 83,000 megawatts (MW) of fossil fuel and nuclear generation over the next 10 years creates blackout risks for most of the United States.

The highest risk level is in the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) region, which covers 15 states including Minnesota and the eastern Dakotas through the central U.S. to Louisiana. Challenges throughout other parts of the U.S. can and do impact operations at Nodak Electric Cooperative due to the interconnected nature of the grid. Although this region plans to add 12,000 MW of new resources in the next five years, the retirement of power plants is expected to leave the region with a shortfall of 4,700 MW by 2028.

The top recommendation from NERC in the report is for the addition of new

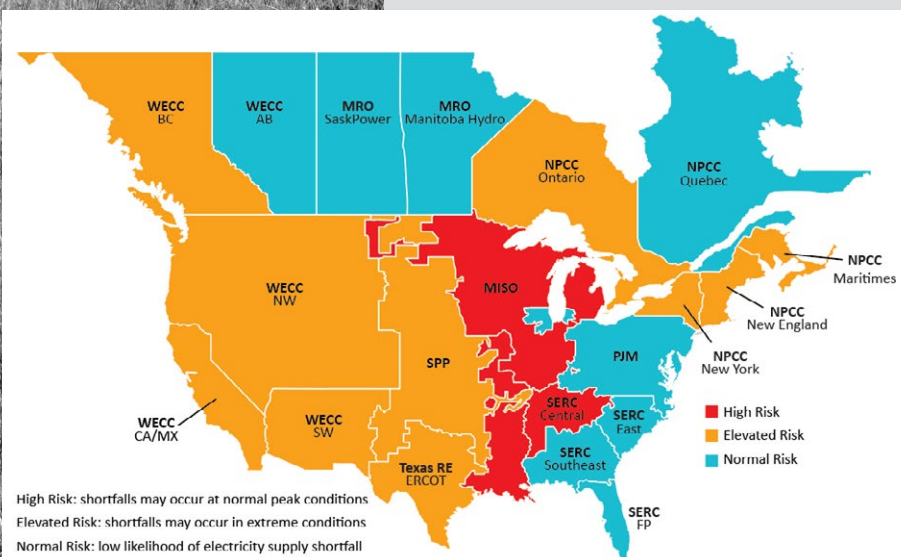
resources with needed reliability attributes and to make existing resources more dependable. Additionally, NERC said, “New wind and solar resources use inverters to convert their output power onto the grid, and the vast majority of resource inverters are susceptible to tripping or power disruption during normal grid fault conditions; this makes the future grid less reliable when more resources are inverter-based.”

Other important recommendations include the expansion of power transmission infrastructure, updates to wholesale energy market designs and strengthened relationships among reliability stakeholders and policy-makers. The Midwest Reliability Organization (MRO) came to a similar conclusion about the dire state of grid reliability when it released its 2024 Regional Risk Assessment in February. For the first time in its history, MRO identified an extreme risk – uncertain energy availability.

The report identified that “conventional, baseload generation that is available on demand is being retired and replaced with resources with limited energy availability due to uncertain fuel supplies that are increasingly weather dependent.” Additionally, the report found that “new generation resources are largely inverter-based and perform much differently than conventional resources, reducing essential reliability services to the grid and requiring new modeling assumptions.”

MRO is one of six regional entities operating underneath NERC to ensure the reliability of the bulk electric system through the enforcement of reliability standards.

“Reliability needs to stay at the forefront of people’s minds as the policy framework is being defined,” said Mac McLennan, Minnesota president and CEO. “It’s unacceptable for the people of our region to wake up in the morning and not know if they’re going to have dependable electric service. Our country is accelerating down a path where this could become our reality. We need to approach this transformation of America’s electric grid with caution and common sense. There’s simply too much at stake.”

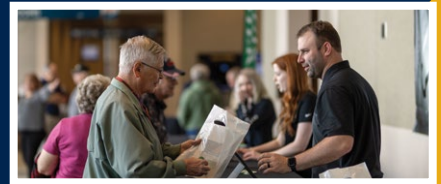


ANNUAL MEETING

held on April 10

The 84th annual meeting was held at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks, N.D., on Wednesday, April 10, 2024.

During the meeting, directors Ryan Benson, David Hagert and David Brag were reelected for three-year terms and the minutes of the 83rd annual meeting were approved. There were 305 members in attendance at the annual meeting.



Ryan Benson

DISTRICT 1



David Hagert

DISTRICT 2



David Brag

DISTRICT 3

