



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

APRIL 2024

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LIGHTING THE WAY: Recognizing our lineworkers

National studies consistently rank lineworkers among the most hazardous occupations in the nation, and with good reason. Laboring above the ground, wearing heavy equipment and working directly with high voltage creates the perfect storm of a dangerous and unforgiving profession. Nonetheless, electric lineworkers rise to the challenge.

These courageous individuals are unwavering in their commitment to safety and the demands of their trade. Roughrider Electric Cooperative's lineworkers bear the responsibility of ensuring a continuous flow of power, regardless of holidays, vacations or family milestones. Beyond the extensive training and

apprenticeships, success as a lineworker demands inner strength and a steadfast dedication to the mission. Certainly, lineworkers epitomize stewardship, placing the welfare and maintenance of their service area as an important priority.

"Our lineworkers diligently labor in all weather conditions, day and night, to ensure safe and reliable power to our members," says Chief of Staff and Line Superintendent Shawn Olson. "From maintaining infrastructure to swiftly responding to outages, their dedication ensures our services remains reliable for all members." ■

Get to know our dedicated lineworkers:

"As a lineworker, my job is different every day. I enjoy that."



JORDAN BRAUN, journeyman lineworker, 10 years

The job of a lineworker is... tough

What do you appreciate about Roughrider Electric's members? They are understanding and helpful

Hobbies: Racing and snowmobiling

What is your go-to gas station snack or drink? Dr. Pepper

"I appreciate our members' willingness to help us when needed."



KADEN FICEK, journeyman lineworker, 10 years

The job of a lineworker is... to keep the power on and make sure the system is safe and reliable

What do you enjoy most about being a lineworker? Being able to work outdoors and doing something different every day

Hobbies: Working out, hunting, spending time with my lovely wife and dog

What is your go-to gas station snack or drink? Whatever Mitch Krebs gets

"As a lineworker, I enjoy working outside and overcoming the challenges we are faced with on the job."



ALEX FREDERICK, apprentice lineworker, 1 year

The job of a lineworker is... to maintain and construct the infrastructure to supply power to our members

What do you appreciate about Roughrider Electric's members? I appreciate the support of the members

Hobbies: When I'm not working, I'm farming and ranching or snowmobiling in the mountains

What is your go-to gas station snack and drink? Kickstart and a breakfast sandwich

"Working for a cooperative offers excellent benefits and opportunities for career advancement and longevity."



DION GEFRE, journeyman lineworker, 19 years

The job of a lineworker is... to ensure members have power

What do you enjoy most about being a lineworker? The camaraderie amongst the lineworkers

Hobbies: Enjoying family and relaxing

What is your go-to gas station snack or drink? Coffee

“Our members are understanding, especially during storm situations, and they are willing to help us when needed.”



TANNER GOETZ, working foreman, 12 years

The job of a lineworker is... to safely build and maintain the cooperative’s electrical system

What do you enjoy most about being a lineworker? Power restoration, learning new skills and helping the members with their electrical needs

Hobbies: Hunting, fishing and spending time with my family

What is your go-to gas station snack and drink? Peanut butter M&Ms and Sprite

“Working as a lineworker no day is the same, your always tasked with something new and different.”



CODY HINTZ, journeyman lineworker, 11 years

The job of a lineworker is... to ensure our members have reliable power

What do you appreciate about Roughrider Electric’s members?

The willingness of members to help in the time of need

Hobbies: Hunting, fishing, golfing and spending time with my family

What is your go-to gas station snack and drink? Lemon tea

“As a lineworker, I enjoy working outside and working for our members.”



KYLE IRWIN, journeyman lineworker, 14 years

The job of a lineworker is... rewarding

What do you appreciate about Roughrider Electric’s members? They are understanding in weather-related events

Hobbies: Coaching and hunting

What is your go-to gas station snack or drink? Dot’s Pretzels

“Working for a cooperative is like being part of a big family. Everyone is always willing to help, from co-workers to members.”



MITCH KREBS, journeyman lineworker, 9 years

The job of a lineworker is... challenging and rewarding

What do you enjoy most about being a lineworker? Ensuring members have reliable power

Hobbies: Hunting, fishing, golfing and spending time with family and friends

What is your go-to gas station snack and drink? Personal-sized pizza, egg rolls, chicken strips, caramel rolls, Bosco Sticks, jerky, corn nuts, orange Kickstart

“Our members are always willing to help us when we need.”



CONNER KUNTZ, apprentice lineworker, 1 year

The job of a lineworker is... a great career

What do you enjoy most about being a lineworker? Being outdoors

What do you like most about working for an electric cooperative? Doing something different every day

Hobbies: Hunting, fishing and ranching

What is your go-to gas station snack and drink? Twix and Mountain Dew

“As a lineworker, I know I am making a positive difference in our members’ lives by ensuring safe and reliable power.”



SCOTT LEINTZ, journeyman lineworker, 29 years

The job of a lineworker is... rewarding

What do you appreciate about Roughrider Electric’s members? They are always supportive of the lineworkers and the work we do

Hobbies: Coaching baseball, fishing and spending time with family

What is your go-to gas station snack and drink? Coca-Cola and ranch corn nuts

"I enjoy getting to visit with our members and taking part in events in our communities."



TYLER PHELPS, general foreman, 14 years

The job of a lineworker... is very dangerous, but rewarding

What do you appreciate about Roughrider Electric's members? The amount of support we get from our members when we are working to restore power during storms

Hobbies: Hunting, fishing and enjoying time with my family

What is your go-to gas station snack and drink? Snickers and coffee

"I like that Roughrider Electric is locally owned by members."



MICHAEL STEIER, journeyman lineworker, 15 years

The job of a lineworker is... enjoyable

What do you enjoy most about being a lineworker? Being outside

Hobbies: Blowing snow, mowing lawn, dishes, laundry, coaching kids' sports, watching my kids play sports, recreational softball, co-ed kickball and volleyball
What is your go-to gas station snack and drink? Hoagie and a diet Mountain Dew

"When we are out in the field and if we need something, members are always willing to help out."



BROCK SWENSRUD, working foreman, 19 years

The job of a lineworker is... challenging at times, but rewarding

What do you enjoy most about being a lineworker? Working outside and doing something different almost every day

Hobbies: Spending time with family, fishing and hunting

What is your go-to gas station snack or drink? Coffee

"I enjoy meeting new people on the job."



COLTON WALTERS, apprentice lineworker, 1 year

The job of a lineworker is... to build and maintain the electrical grid to help ensure reliable power for our members

What do you enjoy most about being a lineworker? Meeting new people

Hobbies: Family time

What is your go-to gas station snack and drink? Coca-Cola and a Nutter Butter

"I enjoy working with and getting to know our members."



RUSSELL WALTERS, journeyman lineworker, 29 years

The job of a lineworker is... rewarding when we get the power back on to our members, especially after a storm, and they are appreciative

What do you appreciate about Roughrider Electric's members? I enjoy visiting with the members and their willingness to offer support when needed during storms and outages

Hobbies: When not working, I enjoy spending time with family and friends, camping, riding horse and snowmobiling.

What is your go-to gas station snack and drink? Coffee and sweets

"Being part of an electric cooperative is keeping a reliable electrical system for our members."



AARON YANZTER, journeyman lineworker, 2.5 years

The job of a lineworker is... super awesome.

What do you enjoy most about being a lineworker? Troubleshooting

What do you like most about working at an electric cooperative?

Upkeeping a reliable system

Hobbies: Woodworking and fishing

MANAGER'S MESSAGE: **Celebrating our lineworkers**



Jason Bentz

When picturing our electric cooperative, the image of a dedicated lineworker typically springs to mind. These individuals embody our commitment to serving our members, working tirelessly day and night to ensure our community receives uninterrupted power. However, their role goes beyond maintenance. They are the unsung heroes who exemplify dedication, bravery and a profound sense of service.

On April 8, let's take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to our lineworkers for their exceptional service, as we celebrate National Lineworker Appreciation Day. When you see lineworkers in action, I encourage you to join me in thanking them for their dedication and bravery.

A lineworker's job: Ranked among the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the United States, a lineworker's responsibilities are far from easy. Working in close proximity to high-voltage power lines, they must perform intricate tasks in all weather conditions, often scaling heights of 40 feet while carrying heavy equipment. Despite the inherent risks and discomfort, they stay unwavering in their commitment to their duty and the members.

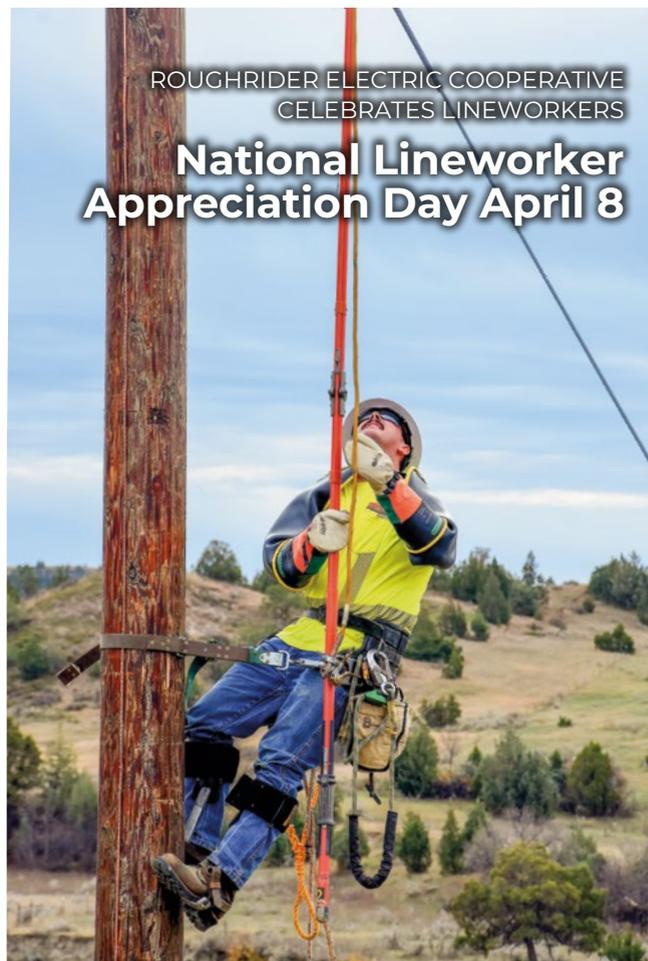
And behind every dedicated lineworker is a supportive family who plays an integral role in enabling their loved ones to serve the community. While lineworkers are in the field, sometimes working all night to restore power, their families take care of the home front, providing support and understanding during challenging times.

The heart of service and dedication: Becoming a lineworker is not merely a profession. It's a calling that requires years of specialized training, ongoing education and a deep sense of service. It's about leaving the comfort of home to tackle challenging tasks when most are sheltering indoors. This dedication and sense of service to the community define the essence of our lineworkers and their indispensable role in our cooperative.

Recognizing the team behind the scenes: While lineworkers are the most visible faces of our cooperative, it's essential to acknowledge the team of highly skilled professionals working tirelessly behind the scenes. From engineers providing invaluable expertise, to member service representatives fielding inquiries and information technology experts safeguarding sensitive data, each member of our cooperative family plays a vital role in ensuring the reliability of our services.

Expressing gratitude: To our lineworkers and the entire cooperative family, we extend our deepest appreciation for your tireless dedication and invaluable contributions. Your unwavering commitment to keeping our local service area powered and your willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty do not go unnoticed. We are grateful for your service and sacrifice.

As we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day, let's honor our lineworkers for their unwavering commitment to service and sacrifice. Let's express our gratitude not only to them, but also to the entire cooperative family for their efforts in ensuring service reliability. ■





INVESTING IN THE FUTURE: **Luck-of-the-Draw scholarships**



Roughrider Electric Cooperative believes in investing in the future of the students in our service area. At the annual meeting on June 5, Roughrider Electric will award three \$500 luck-of-the-draw scholarships. All high school seniors whose parents or guardian are Roughrider Electric members are eligible for this scholarship.

Students must attend our annual meeting with at least one parent/guardian. We ask students to RSVP for the meeting by May 27. Scan the QR code with your smart phone camera or visit our website at www.roughriderelectric.com/scholarships to complete the RSVP form. ■

Need help with heating costs? **LIHEAP can help**

As the winter weather progresses, Roughrider Electric Cooperative reminds members about the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which can help low-income and eligible individuals when it comes to heating and insulation costs. Through the N.D. Department of Human Services, human service zone offices and Community Options, individuals can be helped with a variety of services when it comes to

heating assistance.

Apply for LIHEAP

LIHEAP applications are being accepted through May 31. Applications can be found online at www.applyforhelp.nd.gov or by request at the local human service zone office or Community Options office at 800-823-2417. ■

SAFETY STARTS WITH ME: Call before you dig

As the weather warms and spring begins to appear, you may be planning your to-do list for the upcoming months. If those projects require digging, don't forget to call 811 before you start. Projects ranging from planting trees, building a house or installing a fence require a call.

"Underground utilities, such as electric, telephone, gas and water lines, can be a shovel thrust away from turning a project into a disaster," says Joyce Braun, lead locator.

Even simple tasks, such as installing a new mailbox post, can damage utility lines and disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm diggers and potentially result in fines and repair costs.

Play it safe by dialing 811 or visiting www.ndonecall.com to find out where utility lines are located on your property.

Be prepared to share the following information about the project property to North Dakota One Call:

- Name and contact information
- Proposed digging date and time
- Legal description
- County, city and street address
- Nearest intersecting street
- The owner of the property
- Type of work planned and extent of work and depth

Within a few days, a locator will arrive to designate the approximate location of any underground lines, pipes and cables. These areas will be marked with flags or paint, so you'll know what's below. That is



when the safe digging can begin.

"Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines," Braun says. "There's no need to assume, as the 811 service is free, prevents the inconvenience of having utilities interrupted and can help you avoid serious injury."

For more information about local services, visit www.ndonecall.com. ■

PLANNING TO BUILD OR UPGRADE? Give us a call

Whether you are looking to build a new structure or make changes to an existing structure, it is important to contact Roughrider Electric Cooperative in the early planning stages.

By doing so, you will be able to confirm the viability of your project. Roughrider Electric's engineering department can verify whether we can serve additional load in your area and the availability and cost of equipment and materials.

Information you will need to share with the cooperative includes the type of upgrade or new build, location, timeline and power requirements.

Roughrider Electric wants to ensure your



building project or upgrade goes as smoothly as possible, so it is important to call in the early stages of planning. ■

PRIVATE FACILITIES: WHAT DOES NOT GET MARKED?

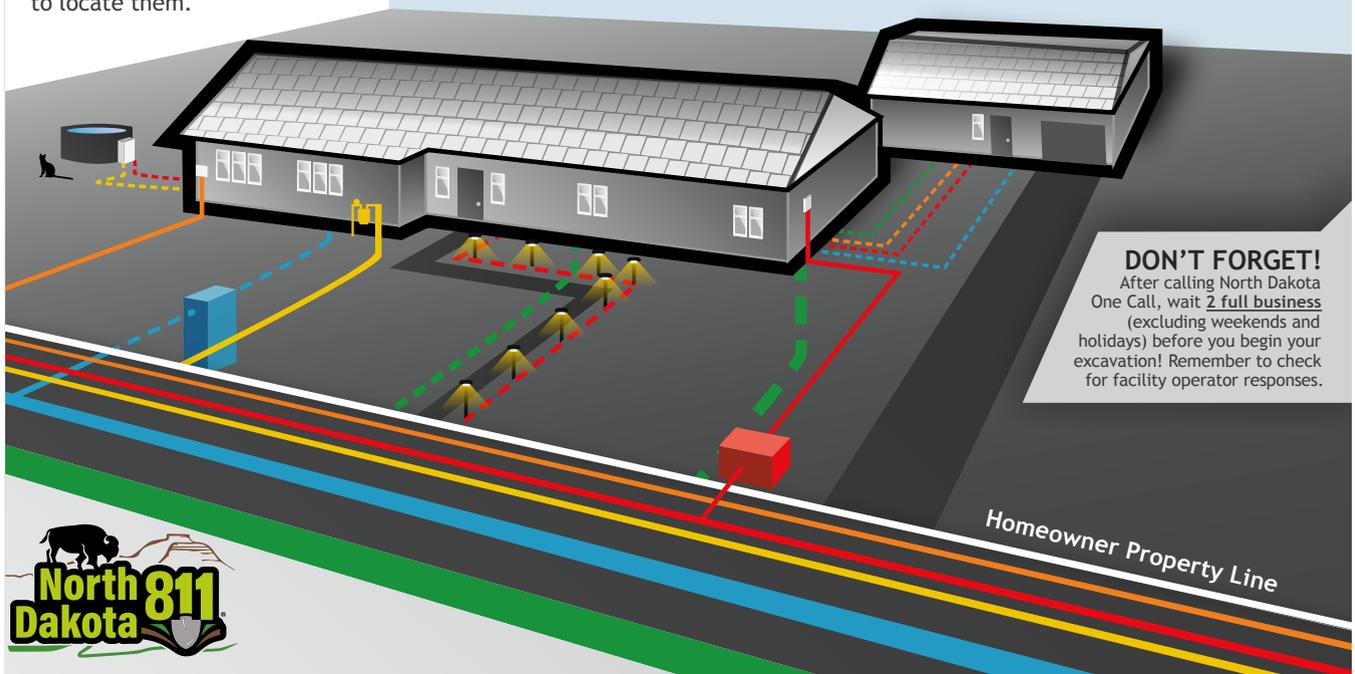
Private underground facilities, such as private utility lines and private distribution networks, do not get marked by facility operators. When a property owner or tenant has any type of private underground facility, they are responsible to locate those facilities or hire someone to locate them.

- ELECTRIC
- GAS, OIL, AND PROPANE
- PHONE AND CABLE
- WATER
- SEWER

Customer-owned lines usually include any that serve outbuildings, hot tubs, security lighting, pools, and natural gas grills.

The free locating service available through North Dakota One Call (NDOC) applies **ONLY** to public facility operators. The diagram below shows a variety of utilities, some owned by the utility and some by the homeowner.

Those utilities marked by dotted lines are typically owned by the property owner. Those lines will **NOT** be marked by contacting NDOC. Private locating services will mark these for a fee.



For marking of all other underground utilities,
go online at **www.ndonecall.com**
or call **811** or **800-795-0555**.

It's free, it's simple and it's the law.

Roughrider Electric board meeting highlights: Jan. 26

The January meeting of the board of directors of Roughrider Electric Cooperative was held on Jan. 26 at Roughrider Electric's Dickinson office. Chair Greg Steckler called the meeting to order at 9 a.m. Roughrider Electric's General Counsel Jennifer Grosz was designated as the meeting recorder. A board quorum was met. Also present were Roughrider Electric's co-General Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile, Chief of Staff/Line Superintendent Shawn Olson, Director of Key Accounts Leonard Hibl and Board Liaison Connie Hill. The meeting commenced with the board reviewing Roughrider Electric's mission statement.

Consent agenda: There were proposed amendments to the consent agenda. The consent agenda was approved as amended.

Strategic/action: Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates from various meetings attended. Bentz and Kupper also reviewed updates from Basin Electric Power Cooperative, 3C Construction and West Dakota Utility Services with the board.

Action items: The board discussed several items, including a 2024 mutual aid agreement and agenda additions.

Discussion/general information: The board reviewed the exposure control plan and discussed the Dickinson State University donation request.

Administration/upcoming meetings: Upcoming meetings and events were shared.

Department reports: Craigmile reported Roughrider Electric's audit is underway. Olson provided updates on various construction projects and outage reports for December. Hibl reviewed the deadline for petitioning to be on the board and the Operation Round Up report. Grosz provided the board with an update on the status of Basin Electric's Federal Energy Regulatory Commission hearing and other matters. Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar provided a report that was presented to the board.

The meeting concluded with the adjournment. Secretary Troy Sailer certified the accuracy of the minutes.

Next meeting date: The next meeting date was set for 10 a.m. CT Feb. 20 in Hazen. ■



www.roughriderelectric.com

HAZEN OFFICE
701-748-2293 or 800-748-5533
800 Highway Dr., Hazen, ND 58545
7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. CT Monday-Friday

Payments may be deposited in the deposit box by Roughrider Electric's main office entrance or in the drop boxes located at Krause's Super Valu in Hazen or Bronson's Super Valu in Beulah.

DICKINSON OFFICE
701-483-5111 or 800-748-5533
P.O. Box 1038, 2156 4th Ave. E.
Dickinson, ND 58602
7 a.m. - 4 p.m. MT Monday-Friday

Payments may be deposited in the deposit box west of Roughrider Electric's main office entrance or the west and south locations of Family Fare supermarkets.

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Greg Steckler, President; Dunn Center 548-8122
Roger Kudrna, Vice President; Dickinson 483-8377
Troy Sailer, Secretary; Golden Valley 948-2427
Bruce Darcy, Treasurer; Golden Valley 983-4222
Jesse Flath, Hazen 880-0386
Darell Herman; Beulah 873-4371
Arnold Kainz; Dickinson 483-8207
Dan Price; Hensler 794-3779
Callen Schoch; New England 290-3836

MANAGEMENT

Travis Kupper Co-GM/CEO
Jason Bentz Co-GM/CEO



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