



# ROUGH RIDER NEWS

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

AUGUST 2023

## Roughrider Electric members participate in annual meeting

There were 111 registered voting members gathered in Dickinson for Roughrider Electric Cooperative's 2023 annual meeting on June 7. Prior to the meeting members enjoyed a complimentary meal served by Mulligan's Catering and were able to explore a bucket truck and electric vehicle.

Roughrider Electric Cooperative President Greg Steckler welcomed and thanked members for attending the annual meeting, which celebrated "Power for Generations." This year's theme reflected on generations before who joined together to provide electric service to local areas no one else would serve, and how Roughrider Electric has been preparing to serve generations to come.

The membership fulfilled the cooperative principle, democratic member control, by voting to fill the board positions held by Arnold Kainz, representing the Western District, Greg Steckler, representing the Central District, and Dan Price, representing the Eastern District. All three incumbents were unanimously reelected to retain their seats on the board.

Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile presented the financial report to the membership. He noted Brady, Martz & Associates audited the 2022 financial statements of Roughrider Electric and gave the organization an unmodified opinion, the highest rating possible.

Members listened to cooperative updates from the co-general managers/CEOs, Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, along with Line Superintendent Shawn Olson and Manager of Member Services Brad Quenette.

Bentz emphasized the importance of the co-op's members, "without you, we would not exist. As we look to the future, we view our role as a catalyst for good. Working together, we can accomplish great things for our members now

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Roughrider Electric Cooperative lineworker **Cody Hintz** shows his son the bucket truck.

## What's inside:

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*Directors serve ice cream to members during the 2023 annual meeting.*



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and be your family's power for generations."

Leonard Hibl, director of member services and key accounts, highlighted the Operation Round Up program. Operation Round Up is a cooperative program in which Roughrider Electric members can voluntarily choose to round up their monthly utility bills to the next dollar and donate their pennies. The foundation board members, who are also Roughrider Electric members, meet and disburse funds in the form of grants. Grants are distributed to worthy nonprofit corporations, organizations and agencies in the Roughrider Electric service area.

### **Youth recognized and awarded**

Roughrider Electric annually awards one \$500

scholarship to a graduating senior from each of the high schools within its service area, and one \$500 scholarship to a graduating senior from a high school outside of its service area, whose parents are members of Roughrider Electric. Hibl recognized the following scholarship winners, who were chosen by faculty members from each respective school:

- Belfield High School: Tacy Palahniuk
- Beulah High School: Taylyn Collingwood
- Dickinson High School: Lucas Shilman
- Dickinson Trinity High School: Ian Dorval
- Hazen High School: Cole Schneider
- Richardton-Taylor High School: Ava Messer
- Dickinson Hope Christian Academy: Rachel Dazell

- South Heart High School: Mackenzie Schneider
  - Center-Stanton High School: KateyInn Albers
  - St. Mary's High School: Lear Rohde
- Hibl also recognized the recipient of the \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship, Abigail Lee from Hazen High School. 3C Construction offered \$500 to Roughrider Electric to be awarded as a scholarship to a candidate pursuing a career as a lineworker, which was awarded to Layton Sailer from Hazen High School.

Also recognized was the Youth Tour recipient, Tessa Zarak, from South Heart High School. Zarak joined delegates from across the state and nation to learn from and about each other, while participating in events that showcase our nation's rich history, U.S. government, the cooperative business model and rural electrification.

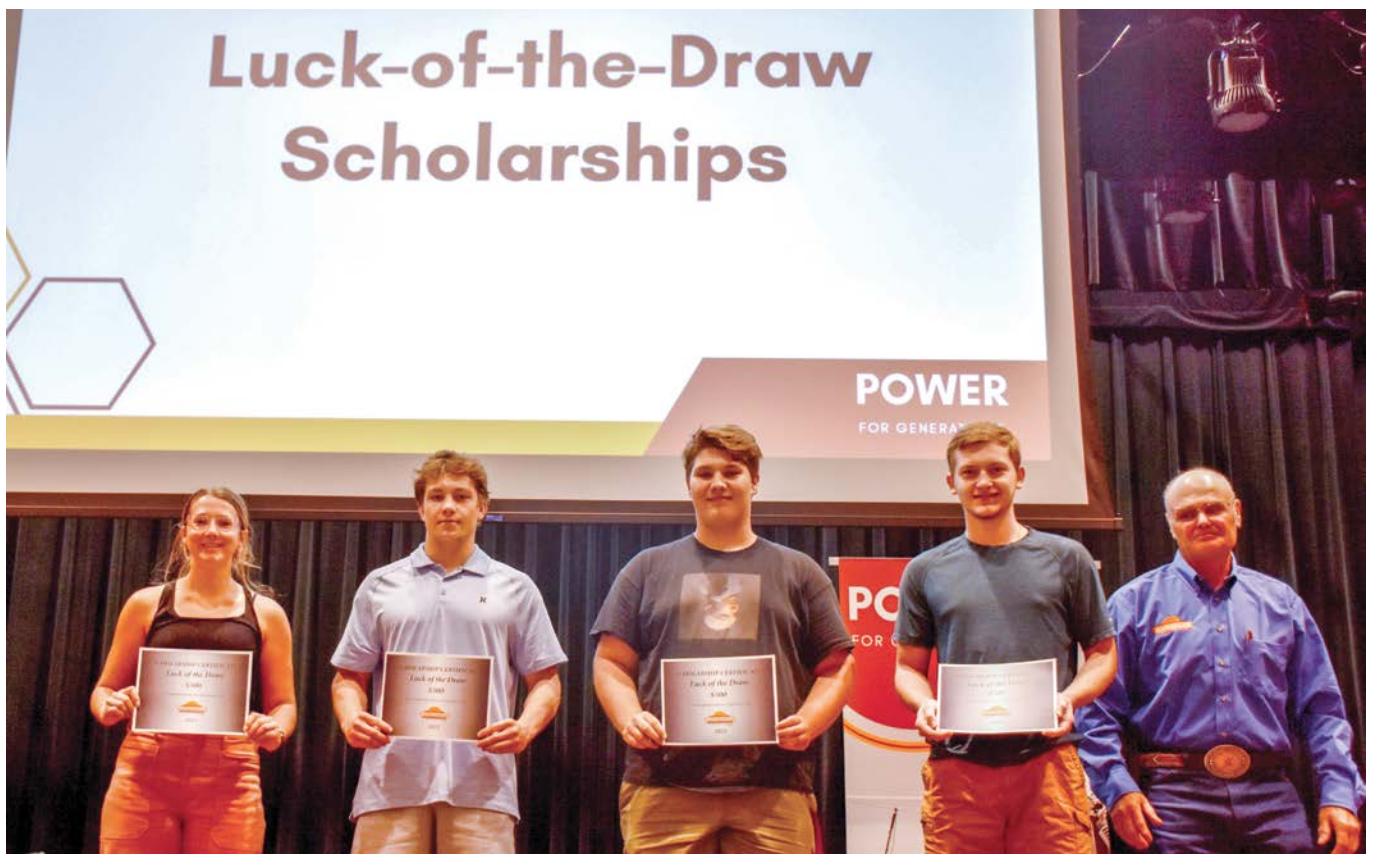
At the end of the meeting, Roughrider Electric awarded "Luck-of-the-Draw" scholarships to students who had registered for the meeting

and attended with a parent or guardian. The goal of these scholarships is to encourage the younger generation to learn about the cooperative business model, and to show how their voices can be heard and have their votes count. Recipients included Cade Harm, Hazen High School; Matthew Richter, N.D. Center for Distance Education; Ian Dorval, Dickinson Trinity High School; and Julianne Kadrmas, Dickinson Hope Christian Academy.

### Members recognized for participating

The evening concluded with all members who attended the meeting receiving a \$20 credit on their Roughrider Electric bill. Door prizes were also drawn. They included energy credits and various other prizes.

The board of directors, CEOs and staff at Roughrider Electric wish to thank our members for participating in the annual meeting of the membership and look forward to meeting your needs in the future. ■



*Luck-of-the-Draw scholarships were awarded during the annual meeting.*

## Manager's message:

# Affordable electricity powers quality of life



**Jason Bentz**

Most of us use electricity, either directly or indirectly, almost all the time.

Because electricity is so abundant and available with the simple flip of a switch, it's easy to take it for granted.

According to the Energy Information Administration, the typical U.S. household now uses more air conditioning,

appliances and consumer electronics than ever before. The average home also contains 10 or more internet-connected devices. Considering everything powered by electricity, it's no wonder we occasionally might wince at our monthly bill. But keep in mind, it's no longer just the "light bill."

### Electricity powers quality of life

Electricity powers our quality of life. From the infrastructure of your home (appliances, water heater and HVAC system) to charging your smartphones and powering your computers, TV and Wi-Fi router, your energy bill covers so much more than lighting.

Today, there is more demand for electricity than ever before. At home, in schools and businesses, and in commercial sectors, such as transportation, the need for electricity is increasing.

Typically, when demand goes up, so does the price, as is the case with most goods or services, like cable or even your favorite specialty coffee. However, that's not true with electricity. Let's take a look at how the value of electricity compares to other common expenses.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the five-year national average of the cost of gasoline increased 6.1%, butter increased 6.1%

and bread increased 5.5%. But the cost of electricity only increased 4.6%. Considering all the ways we depend on electricity, it still remains a great value.

So, the next time you're enjoying your favorite podcast, TV series or movie, consider the value of electricity and how it enhances your quality of life.

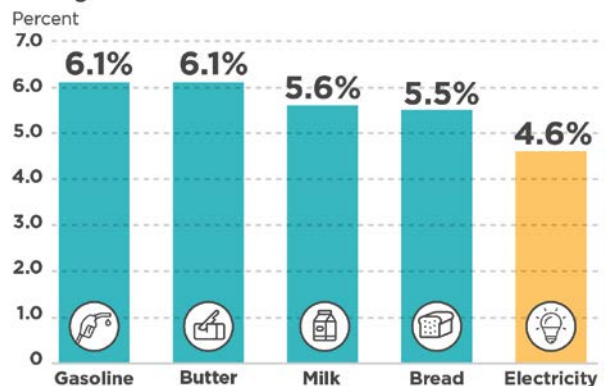
We care about you, the members we serve, and understand electricity is more than a commodity. It's a necessity. That's why Roughrider Electric Cooperative will continue working hard to power your life, reliably and affordably. ■



## ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

Although inflation has led to increasing costs in many areas of our lives, the cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common goods. Looking at price increases over the last five years, electricity remains a good value.

### Average Annual Price Increase 2017-2022



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics  
Consumer Price Index

# Zarak learns new skills at 2023 Youth Tour



Each year in June, over 1,000 high school students travel to Washington, D.C., for an opportunity to learn more about electric cooperatives, meet state congressional delegates and make lifelong friends and memories. This year, Roughrider Electric Cooperative provided a sponsorship for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour to Tessa Zarak from South Heart.

## Getting to Washington, D.C.

Roughrider Electric Cooperative holds a contest annually for high school sophomore and junior students to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Students enter the contest by writing an essay in response to a question posed by the cooperative. This year's question had to do with American history.

Zarak was this year's winner and joined other North Dakota youth sponsored by electric cooperatives and students from around the nation in Washington, D.C., for a week of learning and networking.

## An experience for all

Fifteen North Dakota youth gathered before the trip at the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives headquarters in Mandan for some team building before leaving for Washington, D.C. The group reviewed the itinerary and gathered T-shirts for the week. The youth left from North Dakota Sunday and returned late Friday. Each day included a new

learning experience and sights to see.

Once the plane landed, the group was off to their first stop, the Holocaust Museum. Later that day, the NRECA Youth Tour students learned about co-ops and youth advocacy. The following days were busy. The group toured museums, national monuments and visited Arlington National Cemetery. They also attended other activities, such as a riverboat cruise, "The Lion King" musical and a Nationals baseball game. The group even got on the big screen during the Nationals game!

While in Washington, D.C., the Youth Tour group met with North Dakota's Sens. John Hoeven and Kevin Cramer and toured the U.S. Capitol. Congressman Kelly Armstrong joined the group for dinner at Founding Farmers and visited with the North Dakota students about issues ranging from energy to agriculture.

Zarak said this experience helped her meet new friends and realize she would like to take more of a leadership role in her activities, ranging from student council to basketball.

"It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. You will meet great people and it doesn't cost the student anything," Zarak says. She looks forward to sharing her experience with others in her area and encouraging them to apply in 2024.

Stay tuned for the 2024 Youth Tour application in an upcoming issue of *North Dakota Living*. ■



## Safety Starts with ME: Safe harvest



Agriculture is the backbone of our country, and our livelihood greatly depends on the crops provided by America's farmers. In addition to being one of the most labor-intensive professions, farming is also considered one of the most dangerous jobs in the United States.

The hard work and exhaustive labor are tough, but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous – even deadly – when farming near electrical equipment.

“Every year, we see collisions where tractors and other farming equipment accidentally collide with utility poles and power lines, causing injuries and power outages,” said Russel Walters, a journeyman lineworker at Roughrider Electric Cooperative.

These dangerous accidents can be avoided by looking up and around your surroundings when operating large farm machinery. If you're preparing for harvest season, please keep the following safety tips in mind:

- **Maintain safe distances.** Always be aware of the power poles and maintain a safe distance. Keep all machinery, including combines, tractors and other tall equipment, at least 10 feet away from power lines. Remember, some power lines may be lower than others, so it's

crucial to remain vigilant and make sure you are aware of their height.

- **Know the location of power lines.** Familiarize yourself with the locations of power lines and poles in the fields where you are working. Take note of any changes or new installations since the last harvest season. Stay updated and ensure all workers are aware of the potential hazards posed by power lines.
- **Be extra cautious with tall equipment.** When operating tall machinery, such as grain augers or portable elevators, always be mindful of the height and the proximity to power lines. Ensure these tools are carefully maneuvered, and their movements are coordinated to avoid any contact with power lines.
- **Report damaged or downed lines.** If you encounter any damaged or downed power lines, never attempt to move them yourself. Immediately report the situation to the utility company or local authorities and keep a safe distance until help arrives. If your equipment makes contact with an energized line, contact 911 immediately and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is deenergized.

### Safety Starts with ME (and YOU)

Each one of us has a responsibility to prioritize safety during the harvest season.

“By following these safety tips and encouraging others to do the same, we can create a safer work environment for everyone involved,” Walters said. “It's important to remain vigilant, keep an eye out for potential hazards and report any unsafe conditions promptly.”

Remember, safety should never be compromised. The harvest season is a time to celebrate the fruits of our labor, but let's ensure we celebrate it safely. By staying aware, informed and cautious around electricity and power poles, we can make this harvest season a successful and accident-free one. ■

## Look up and around

The fall is a busy time for agricultural producers across the state, with harvest getting started. Roughrider Electric Cooperative wants to remind all those operating farm equipment to look up and around to familiarize yourself with the location of power lines. For your safety, make sure you have at least 10 feet of clearance between power lines and your combines, grain augers, pickers, balers and front-end loaders. Also, never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.

If you see a power line issue that may need Roughrider Electric's attention, please call the office. Or send an email to



Farm equipment is getting larger and the increased height can cause more contacts with powerlines.

Always look up before operating machinery or raising implements. And be extra cautious when moving tall equipment around the yard and exiting or entering fields from roadways.

[safety@roughriderelectric.com](mailto:safety@roughriderelectric.com) with location information and a photo, if possible. Working

together helps ensure the safety of all. ■

In observance of



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

**our office will be closed on Sept. 4.**

Line crews will be available to respond to emergencies and power outages by calling 800-748-5533.

# EXPLORE IT, ADORE IT AND SAVE!



**ROUGH RIDER**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

In partnership with the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation, Roughrider Electric Cooperative is once again making excursions to Medora more affordable for families.

This summer, our members are eligible for a 15% discount on the following reservations:

- Tickets to the Medora Musical
- Pitchfork Steak Fondue
- Gospel Brunch tickets
- Bully Pulpit Golf Course
- Old Town Theater shows
- Lodging at the Badlands Motel, Elkhorn Quarters, Rough Riders Hotel and Medora Campground

Touchstone Energy® members can use the code, TOUCH2023, for the discount. The code is good for reservations by phone, website or in person.



[www.roughriderelectric.com](http://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 in the drop boxes located at Dickinson City Hall, 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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## Board meeting highlights June 30

**When, where and who:** Roughrider Electric board of directors met June 30 at the Hazen office.

Reorganization of the board was held. The officers are as follows: president – Greg Steckler, vice president – Roger Kudrna, secretary – Troy Sailer, and treasurer – Bruce Darcy.

**Minutes of the previous meeting:** The board reviewed and approved the minutes of the May 26 meeting.

**Co-general managers' report:** Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz presented the co-general managers' report.

**WDUS/3C updates:** A report was presented to the board from WDUS and 3C Construction.

**Board member reports:** Attendees of the board meeting reported to the board.

**CFO report:** Alex Craigmile presented a summary of the financial report.

**Operations report:** Shawn Olson provided the board with an update.

**Member services/key account report:** Leonard Hibl provided the board with an update.

Jennifer Grosz, attorney, updated the board on the status of projects. ■