

ROUGH RIDER NEWS

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Bentz announced as co-general manager/CEO

BY ANNE HANSEN

Lineworkers in the energy industry learn early in their careers they will face various challenges on a regular basis. These challenging conditions prepared Jason Bentz for his new role as co-general manager/CEO of Roughrider Electric Cooperative.



Jason Bentz

In late 2022, the Roughrider board of directors announced Bentz would be joining Travis Kupper in leading the cooperative, beginning in 2023.

“Jason’s experience and leadership will be instrumental to our success, as we continue to serve the needs of our membership,” says Director Bruce Darcy.

Serving the cooperatives

From a young age, Bentz recalls his interest in the electric service industry. His basic understanding of the profession came from a cousin who served as a cooperative lineworker for many years.

“I was always interested in being able to work with my hands while being outside. And since I wasn’t afraid of heights, I thought I would pursue a career as a lineman,” Bentz says.

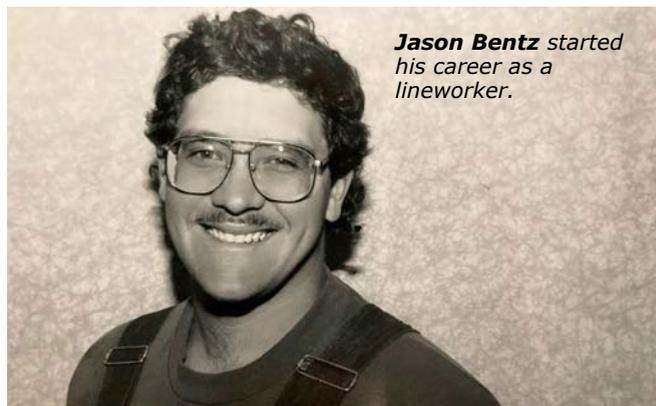
He pursued his goals, and after receiving the required training from Bismarck State College, Bentz headed out of state to work for Thiel Construction in Nebraska and Oklahoma. During his first transmission job, Bentz remembers feeling validated in his career choice.

“When I was on my first transmission project in Nebraska, I was working on a 230-kilovolt and

asked to go unclip wires in preparation for new wires to be pulled in. While on a 90-foot pole, which was situated on top of a 300-foot plateau, I thought, ‘Yes, I made the right choice,’ as the view was spectacular,” he says.

Although Bentz enjoyed working for Thiel Construction, his goal was always to return to his home state of North Dakota. That goal was made a reality when he received a job offer from Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative in Flasher as an apprentice lineworker.

“I remember my first job at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric was changing out a transformer at a pasture well tap west of Elgin with Foreman Mark Hoffman,” he says.



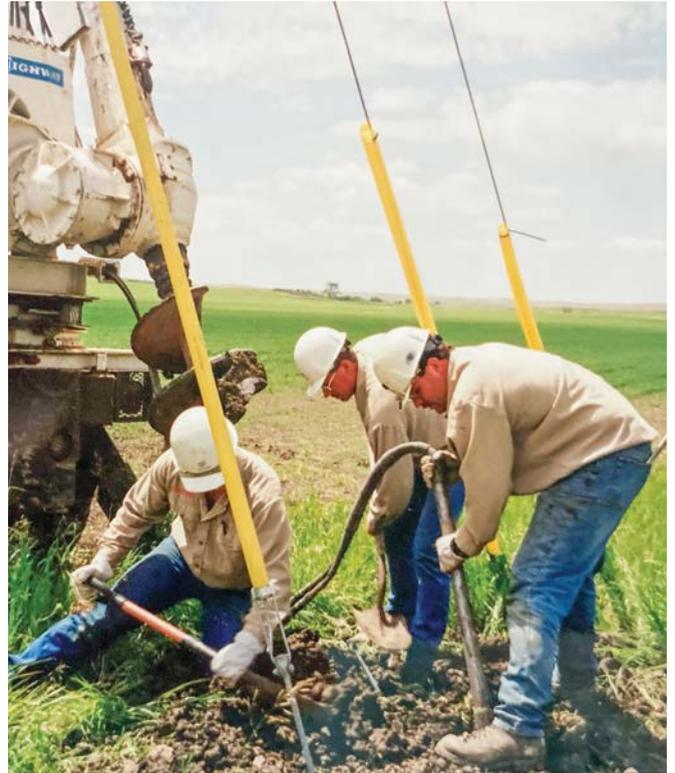
Jason Bentz started his career as a lineworker.

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- Giving back to community
- Apply for Youth Tour
- Scholarships available

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Jason Bentz served as a lineworker for Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative early in his career.

Growing into a cooperative leader

For the next several years, Bentz continued to work his way up in cooperatives, rising from apprentice to journeyman lineworker and foreman.

“I have always wanted to take opportunities and grow with them and try my best to serve others, and give others the opportunities to grow as well,” he says.

For 20 years, Bentz did just that at Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, before transitioning to operations manager and chief of staff at Roughrider Electric Cooperative in Dickinson, beginning in 2013.

Although Bentz recognizes being a lineworker is not a glamorous or easy profession, the skills learned, including commitment to safety, understanding shortcuts are not an option and a dedication and sense of service, have prepared him for his new role.

This also includes his understanding of working as a team.

“In life, and in a career in the energy industry,

you cannot be very successful without a good team,” Bentz says, noting his good fortune of working alongside influential teams and leaders throughout his career, which helped shaped him into the person he is today.

“I have always had good role models and mentors, starting with my parents, who taught me to work hard, to do a job well and to never pretend to know the answers if you don’t,” Bentz says. “In addition to my parents, the leaders out in the field have taught me to not be afraid to ask questions, and most importantly, always listen to understand.”

Bentz looks forward to his new role, and to using the skills he has gained along the way to continue moving the cooperative in the right direction, while working alongside Kupper.

“I will try and make the plans a reality to help our member-cooperatives succeed in an ever-changing industry. We need to be mindful of the members and keep providing reliable, affordable power, and keep looking at new technologies,” Bentz says. ■

Manager's message: Giving back to our community



Travis Kupper

Over the past year, you've probably heard or read about Roughrider Electric Cooperative's concern for our community. This is one of the core principles that sets cooperatives apart from other types of utilities and businesses. We've always taken this mission and responsibility to heart.

It's who we are as a co-op.

Now, with the holidays behind us, it has made me pause and reflect on the role we play in our rural area. While our purpose is to provide safe and reliable energy to you, the members we serve, we have a greater mission – to be a catalyst for good.

You're probably aware of our Operation Round Up program, in which we take donations from generous members like you who have "rounded up" the amount due on their electric bill to the next highest dollar to donate to local charities. Or our Youth Tour program, in which we take our community's brightest young people to

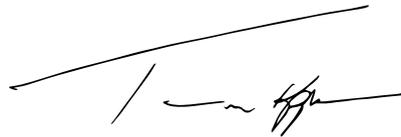
Washington, D.C., for a weeklong immersion to experience democracy in action.

You'll also see our employees serving on local boards, coaching youth sports and volunteering at charitable events. Because when you work at a co-op, you understand how important a strong community is. After all, without you, the co-op wouldn't exist.

We know our core job is to keep the lights on, but our passion is our rural areas, and we want to make them a better place for all.

If there's anything we can do to help you, whether providing energy-saving advice to help lower your monthly bill or discussing payment plan options during these difficult times, please reach out to us at Roughrider Electric at 800-748-5533.

Concern for community is the heart and soul of who we are. And no matter what the future brings, you can count on your electric co-op to care about you. ■



Board meeting highlights

When, where and who: The board of directors of Roughrider Electric Cooperative met at Roughrider's Dickinson office on Nov. 18.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The board reviewed and approved the minutes of the Oct. 28 meeting.

Co-general managers' report: Travis Kupper presented the co-general managers' report.

West Dakota Utility Services (WDUS)/3C updates: An October report was presented to the board from WDUS and subsidiaries.

Board member reports: Attendees at the meetings over the past month reported to the board.

CFO report: Alex Craigmile presented the board with a summary of financial reports, which were accepted by the board.

Operations report: Jason Bentz provided the board with additional information on his written report.

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

Legal report: Jennifer Grosz provided the board with an update on the status of projects addressed in her written report.

Roughrider Electric supports students with scholarships

Roughrider Electric takes pride in assisting with the development of rural leadership through our scholarship program.

We are happy to continue our scholarship program and offer scholarships to qualifying seniors, who must be dependents of Roughrider Electric members.



Visit our website for applications and more detailed information.
www.roughriderelectric.com

Complete applications and send to: bquenette@roughriderelectric.com or by mailing to:

Roughrider Electric Cooperative
Attn: Scholarship Committee
800 Highway Dr.
Hazen, ND 58545

Return completed application before Feb. 1.

Area high school scholarship

Roughrider Electric Cooperative will award nine \$500 scholarships. Each school in our service area chooses one recipient. School representatives from Belfield, Beulah, Center-Stanton, Dickinson High, Dickinson Trinity, Hazen, Richardton-Taylor, South Heart and Dickinson Hope Christian Academy choose a graduating senior to receive the funds. Contact your school counselor for more information. The deadline to apply is Feb. 1, 2023

\$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship

Roughrider Electric will award a \$1,000 scholarship to a student who is already enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate program. The student must attend an accredited two- or four-year program, university or vocational/tech school. All applicants must have parents or guardians who are members of the co-op.

Lineworker scholarship from 3C Construction

Owned in part by Roughrider Electric, 3C Construction employs lineworkers who travel, plowing cable and assisting with projects as needed. Eligible applicants are high school seniors who are enrolled or planning to enroll in a certified vocational or technical school pursuing a career as a lineworker, and whose parents are members of Roughrider Electric.

Luck-of-the-draw scholarship

Roughrider Electric will award three \$500 luck-of-the-draw scholarships to be drawn at our annual meeting. All applicants will need to RSVP for the meeting.

High school scholarship outside service area

Roughrider will award one \$500 scholarship. See roughriderelectric.com/scholarships for details.

Mechanic scholarships from West Dakota Utility Services

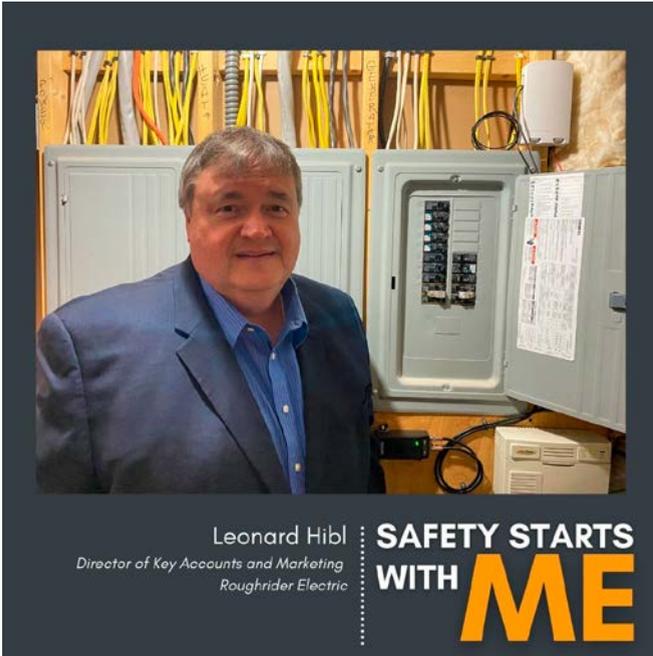
Eligible applicants are high school seniors who are enrolled or planning to enroll in a certified vocational or technical school pursuing a career as a mechanic, and who are dependents of a Roughrider Electric member. A completed application is required.

Students can get the applications from our website, www.roughriderelectric.com, or call the office in Hazen. Applications can be filled out online and emailed to bquenette@roughriderelectric.com, or printed and mailed to: Roughrider Electric Cooperative, Attn: Scholarship Committee, 800 Highway Dr., Hazen, ND 58545-4737.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Safety Starts with ME: **Leonard Hibl**



“At Roughrider Electric, we do our best to maintain our system to ensure readiness for all types of severe weather and to reduce the number of outages, but Mother Nature can be unpredictable,” said Leonard Hibl, Roughrider’s director of key accounts and marketing.

That being said, outages are inevitable. Here at Roughrider, our line crew takes necessary safety precautions when restoring power for you, our members.

However, our line crew’s safety remains in your hands. When using portable generators in the event of a downed power line, this can prove to be dangerous and, in some cases, fatal to our lineworkers when used incorrectly.

A generator plugged into a home’s wiring or regular household outlet can cause backfeeding along power lines and electrocute anyone that comes into contact with them, even if the line seems deenergized.

Not only does this cause danger for our lineworkers, but also for our members. If a generator is used improperly, generator owners may also be at risk of electrocution, fire injury, property damage or carbon

monoxide poisoning.

Here are some tips to ensure you are using a generator correctly:

1. Never connect a generator directly to your home’s wiring, unless your home has been wired for generator use.
2. Always plug appliances directly into generators.
3. Use heavy-duty, outdoor-rated extension cords.
4. Ensure your generator is properly grounded.
5. Never overload a generator.
6. Turn off all equipment powered by the generator before shutting it down.
7. Keep the generator dry. Operate it on a dry surface under an open structure.
8. Always have a fully charged fire extinguisher nearby.
9. Never refuel a generator while it is operating.
10. Read and adhere to the manufacturer’s instructions for safe operation.

We encourage you to protect the well-being and safety of your family as well as those that assist in bringing power to you, our members. Contact Roughrider Electric for more information regarding generator hookups. ■



AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

ESSAY QUESTION:

If chosen as a Youth Tour delegate, you will be traveling to Washington, D.C., to experience and learn about America's rich history. What moment in American history do you wish you had been a part of and what would you have contributed?

TOP 3 REASONS

1. All-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., compliments of Roughrider Electric Cooperative
2. A whole week to visit unforgettable historic monuments, museums and the U.S. Capitol
3. A learning experience you'll never forget



- To enter the essay-writing contest, you must be a sophomore or junior in high school.
- You and your parents or guardian must be served by Roughrider Electric Cooperative.
- If you have any questions, please contact Brad Quenette, Roughrider Electric, at 800-748-5533 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is Jan. 20, 2023. You can email entries to Brad Quenette at bquenette@roughriderelectric.com or mail a hard copy to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, 800 Highway Dr., Hazen, ND 58545-4737.



CHECK OUT THE ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES AT
<https://www.roughriderelectric.com/youth-tour>



ELECTRIC BLANKET FIRE PREVENTION TIPS



Heating pads and electric blankets cause around **500 fires each year**. Almost all of these fires involve electric blankets that are **more than ten years old**. Learn how to stay safe.

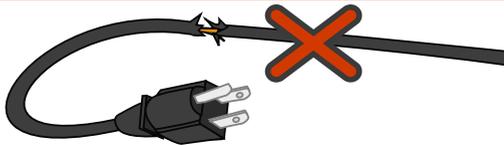
Heating appliances should **never be left unattended** or used while **sleeping**.



Do not plug electric blankets into an **extension cord** or **power strip**, as they could overheat and **cause a fire**.



Look for dark, charred or frayed spots or electrical cords that are cracked or frayed. **Replace** any worn or old heating pads or electric blankets.



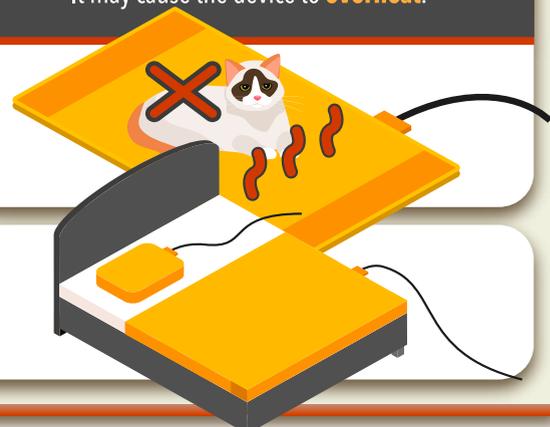
Never fold electric blankets when in use. Folded or tucked-in blankets could overheat and **cause a fire**.



When purchasing electronics, including electric blankets, be sure to only **purchase from reputable retailers**. Purchase devices that have been approved by a **nationally recognized testing laboratory**.



Do not allow anything to **rest on top** of a heating pad or electric blanket when it is in use. It may cause the device to **overheat**.



There are **two types** of personal heating appliances, **heating pads** that are placed directly on the mattress and **electric blankets**. They are not meant to be used interchangeably or at the same time.

Prepare for tax season with SmartHub

Print copies of your monthly utility bills for your tax records by logging into SmartHub! Visit www.roughriderelectric.com and click "SmartHub" to proceed to your billing history. If you have not signed up for SmartHub, you can set up a new, secure account. ■



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
Darell Herman; Beulah	873-4371
William Retterath; Center	794-8729
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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facebook.com/RoughriderElectric

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible agency or USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD3027, found online at www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form.

To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: 1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410; 2) fax: 202-690-7442; or 3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. Roughrider Electric Cooperative Inc. is an equal opportunity provider. ■