



ROUGH RIDER NEWS

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

JULY 2021



PHOTO BY WHITNEY BUCKMAN

Peaceful prairie

These Simmental cattle enjoy another beautiful day; they don't worry about drought or when the next good soaker will settle in. Lack of rain has been a challenge for some of our members, including fourth-generation ranchers Dustin and Whitney Buckman from Dickinson. They raise Simmental cattle, chickens and three kids on the land, and enjoy woodworking as a hobby. Many parts of the Roughrider Electric Cooperative service area received heavy rain the end of May, and we are thankful. Thank you, members, for sharing your photo and scenic view. ■

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ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

‘Together we make a powerful difference’

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

Making history by holding an abbreviated version of its annual meeting in a parking lot and broadcasting live, Roughrider Electric Cooperative welcomed members to its 14th annual meeting. It was held June 2 at a Dickinson State University parking lot. More than 20 members registered, and another 1,000-plus members voted by mail-in ballot. Portions of the meeting are available on the website

www.roughriderelectric.com and Vimeo page <https://vimeo.com/roughriderelectric>, as well as the previously recorded chief executive officer and chief financial officer reports.

In a year marked with challenges and changes, Roughrider Electric remained committed to providing members with safe, reliable and affordable electric service. This year’s annual meeting theme, “Together we make a powerful difference,” reflects our year of resiliency, thanks in large part to support from you, our member-owners.

Roughrider Electric continues to follow safety guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and N.D. Department of Health. Needing to plan the annual meeting months in advance, and not able to predict the status of the pandemic at the time of the meeting, the board of directors determined an outdoor meeting would be the safest option to come together in-person. Roughrider provided multiple options for members to participate, including mail-in ballot, the livestream and making videos available online, for those who wanted to participate, but not attend in-person. Members who attended the parking lot gathering received custom oven mitts, a snack and bottle of water.

An election for the board of directors was held. Board President Roger Kudrna explained this process prior to voting: To make or second a motion, and approve or oppose the motion, members were asked to honk their horns or wave their hands at the appropriate times. To bring something forth for discussion, the same process would be followed and they would be provided with a microphone.

The Nominating/Resolutions Committee met Jan. 22 and Feb. 26 via conference calls to make nominations and approve resolutions. Alan Kadrmaz, chair of the Nominating Committee, gave a report. He announced the following Roughrider members had been nominated by the Nominating Committee to serve on the board of directors:

West District: Roger Kudrna, Dickinson

Central District: Troy Sailer, Golden Valley

East District: Jesse Flath, Hazen, and Darell Herman, Beulah

Nominations were not received through the petition process, and Roughrider’s bylaws do not allow members to



Co-General Manager **Travis Kupper** visits with members while ballots were collected, and thanks members for attending either in-person or via livestream.

be nominated from the floor the annual meeting. Members voted by mail-in ballot and in-person at the annual meeting to elect one director in each of the cooperative's three districts. The incumbents will serve another three-year term, including Roger Kudrna, Troy Sailer and Darell Herman. The board will meet at a later date to restructure.

Roughrider Electric thanks Jesse Flath for placing his name on the ballot and choosing to be an active and involved cooperative member.

Members also voted to approve the 2020 annual meeting minutes and 2020 financial report, which were presented in the annual report mailed to members in May.

Members who voted were eligible to receive a select number of "door" prizes. Winners were announced June 7, 8 and 9 on Roughrider Electric's Facebook page and notified directly.

A condensed financial report was presented by Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile. Brady, Martz & Associates P.C. audited the 2020 financial statements of Roughrider Electric, and presented its report to the board of directors with an "unmodified opinion," the highest opinion it can give. The full report can be watched online.

The managers' report was also pre-recorded and is available online. In the video, Co-General Managers Don Franklund and Travis Kupper noted some of the major events that took place last year and provided an outlook on what the future holds. Franklund kicked it off by explaining why a recorded format was chosen, and how pandemic challenges shaped the annual meeting theme.

"Here at Roughrider Electric, safety is paramount. We work every day to keep our employees safe, to keep members safe, and to keep the general public safe. This past year was quite the challenge," he said.

Kupper continued, "In March 2020, when the pandemic was declared, we didn't know what we would face as far as safety concerns. We took a conservative approach, and wanted to limit the impact of an outbreak if one occurred within the co-op. We limited exposure to groups, implemented a mask mandate and closed the lobby. At the end of the day, we'd rather be conservative and safe, than to have a situation that could become uncontrollable; especially being we didn't know the ramifications regarding COVID."

Safety and reliability go hand in hand. Kupper discussed reliability and how Roughrider has an aggressive commitment to plant improvement.

"Some projects this year included converting overhead lines to underground, and rebuilding some overhead lines to improve system reliability for our members," he said.

The cooperative made a large investment over the past year in building a new substation in the Hebron area and transmission line along the north side of Interstate 94 running west to Richardton. This was done to accommodate growth at the Red Trail Energy ethanol plant, and to improve reliability for other members being served in the area.

Kupper then described the annual audit process and said it's an opportunity for Roughrider to show the auditors and members where the dollars are going, and how the cooperative complies with the rules and regulations of the Internal Revenue Service and Rural Utilities Service.

"We are taking account of each of your dollars and being good stewards of the money that you are providing to us," Kupper said.

He described the Payroll Protection Program, a national pandemic-relief package that helps businesses keep employees working, and reduces layoffs and employee reductions. Roughrider applied for and received a Payroll Protection Program loan that is in the process of being converted into a grant.

Kupper then described the difference between an allocation and retirement of capital credits. This information was also shared with members in the May and June local pages of *North Dakota Living* and online at www.roughriderelectric.com (click "Your Power in Membership and Capital Credits").

"You receive capital credits because you are a member and an owner of Roughrider Electric. Any margin we earn in the prior year is allocated to each of you after the board has reviewed and accepted the audit. Allocation is where you receive a portion of the prior year's margin, or profit, based on last year's usage. Allocation is simply what is your share of the 2020 margin that was earned. Retirement is considered actual cash; what is being retired," Kupper said.

Roughrider's allocations are done after the audit is performed every year, around the May or June timeframe. Traditionally, retirements are done at a fall board meeting. When a retirement is approved, checks are mailed to members between mid-November and mid-December.

Reflecting on the annual meeting theme, Franklund noted how pandemic-related challenges pushed the entire organization to a new level in the use of technology. The board held video-based conference calls, and members were encouraged to sign up for SmartHub and use the Roughrider Electric app to pay their monthly bills, contact the cooperative with questions, report service issues and receive important updates.

"Technology is critical to our day-to-day operation. It



Members who watched the livestream of the annual meeting “attended” the same meeting as the members in attendance. This clip was captured during the director election.

allows us to make improvements on the system to increase reliability,” he said. “We have distance-to-fault relays on transmission lines that if we were to have a problem on the line, it can tell us in less than a half of a mile where that problem exists. The linemen are using technology to work out of their trucks and function as though they were working in the office. We invest in different forms of technology to provide you, the members, with the reliable electric service you have become accustomed to and depend on.”

Roughrider’s members are using technology more, too. In addition to using SmartHub, they are turning to Roughrider’s Vimeo site for videos, the website at www.roughriderelectric.com and Facebook page to learn timely news.

“Many of you wish to continue receiving a print format to read, and a growing number of you wish to receive more digital news from the cooperative. We will be moving more into web-based content in the future,” Kupper said.

With support from the membership, Roughrider’s board of directors continues its commitment to community and support for area youth in the form of student scholarships within its service area.

“It’s something you, the members, have said you look forward to seeing every year,” Kupper said.

Roughrider gave numerous financial donations to show community support, and continues its Operation Round Up program. This cooperative-based program allows members to round their monthly utility bills up to the next whole dollar, and donate their change to be awarded locally in the form of grants.

“The members who choose to support this program can see where their pennies are being used to help their neighbors across our service area,” he said.

“While COVID definitely had an impact on our ability to be in the communities we serve, know that we want to be there and support the activities you are involved in, and that are near and dear to your heart. We are looking forward to being more active and involved with activities as we move into the future,” he said.

Much of the cooperative’s members experienced challenges, too. The oil industry suffered a fairly substantial drop in price, which caused Roughrider’s sales of electricity to drop. While the decrease in revenue was not good for cooperative, Roughrider had a decrease in expenses because the cooperative wasn’t purchasing the electricity to sell to them. In July 2020, the industry started to rebound, but it has not fully recovered.

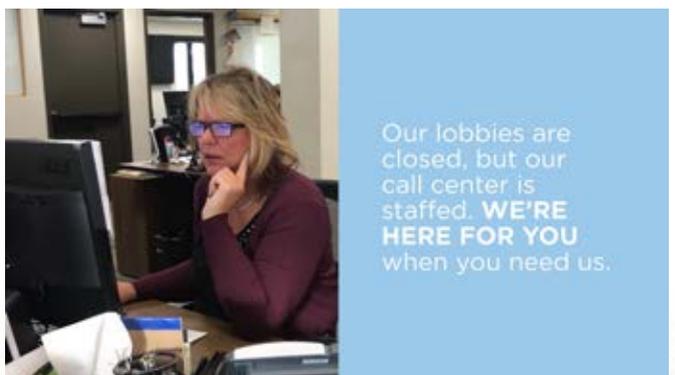
“We keep a close eye on how the price of oil impacts the cooperative, due to the ramifications it could have had on our finances,” Kupper said. “While revenue was down, it wasn’t as significant as it could have been. Last year was not our best year, but from a financial standpoint, it was a stable year and we are moving forward.”

Roughrider’s farming and ranching members also experienced challenges with commodities and drought.

“Those are things we have to consider when taking into account the financial status of the cooperative,” Kupper said.

“2020 was a very challenging year for many of our members, and it was for your electric cooperative, too,” Kupper said. “COVID affected everything we did, from how we operated internally from a safety standpoint, to how we operated in the field.”

While 2020 presented challenges, Roughrider looked to them as opportunities to make use of improved technologies that allowed us to do business in the most



Our lobbies are closed, but our call center is staffed. **WE'RE HERE FOR YOU** when you need us.

In a pre-recorded video update from the co-general managers, the pandemic and associated challenges – and opportunities – were discussed with the membership. Don Franklund stated safety is paramount, and Roughrider staff worked every day to keep employees, members and the general public safe.



A member survey conducted in 2020 indicated Roughrider’s members are using technology more. Members who prefer to receive digital content from the cooperative can log into their SmartHub account at www.roughriderelectric.com. They can also learn timely news by visiting the website, Vimeo page at <https://vimeo.com/roughriderelectric> and Facebook page at www.facebook.com/RoughriderElectric.

safe and efficient manner.

The managers’ report was concluded with a sincere thank you to all who endured the trials and tribulations of 2020.

“We’d like to thank the members, for working with

us and continuing to be a member of the cooperative. We thank the employees, for working through the last 12 months. We thank the board of directors, who had to adapt and learn to use online video conferencing,” Kupper said. “Together we make a powerful difference.” ■

Report from **THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS** **MAY 28, 2021**

When, where and who: A regular meeting of the board of directors of Roughrider Electric Cooperative Inc. (Roughrider) was held at the Hazen headquarters of the cooperative.

Agenda: The board reviewed and added to the meeting agenda. An executive session was requested. The board approved the agenda as amended.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The board reviewed and approved the minutes of the April 30, 2021, meeting.

Consent agenda: The board reviewed, discussed and approved the consent agenda, including proposed membership applications, service connects and assignments, proposed cancellations of membership and requests for retirement of capital credit accounts.

Co-general managers’ report: Travis Kupper referred the board to the co-managers’ written report and provided the board with an update of occurrences affecting the cooperative since the past board meeting.

2020 capital credit allocation: Alex Craigmile reviewed with the board his proposal for the allocation of Roughrider’s 2020 margins, as per the audit report.

2021 annual meeting: Leonard Hibl provided an update on the annual meeting plans.

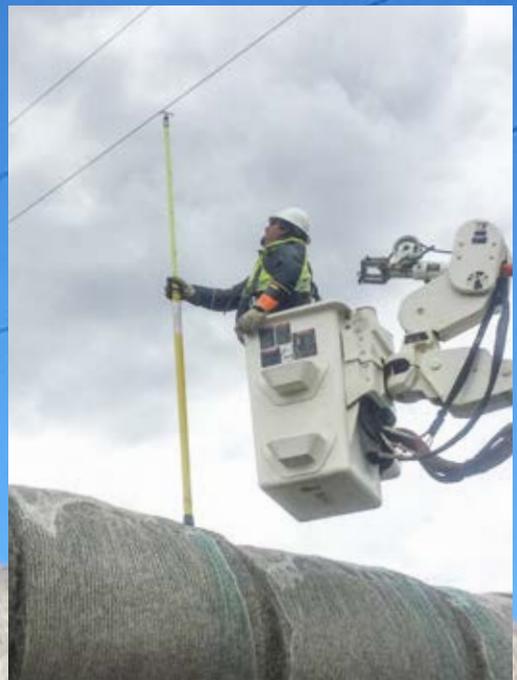
Upcoming meetings: The next board meeting was set for 10 a.m. CT June 25 at Roughrider’s office in Hazen. ■

KX/CO-OP DAY at the N.D. State Fair July 28 in Minot

If you plan to attend the North Dakota State Fair on July 28, you are eligible to receive reduced-price tickets for \$1 off gate admission, \$5 off daily unlimited-ride wristbands for carnival rides, and \$1 off Ranch Rodeo

admission and a free ice cream social at 2 p.m. at the KX/co-op tent. Give us a call at the office at 701-663-0297, 701-597-3301 or 800-750-8212, and we will hook you up with tickets! ■

There must be 10 feet of clearance between hay bales and power lines. Keep in mind that summer's warm temperatures can cause power lines to sag. Your best bet is to find another spot away from those hot, high-voltage lines — that under certain conditions, can cause fire, injury or death.



Protect your livelihood — and your life

Stacking hay under electrical infrastructure can be dangerous, if not deadly.

Imagine up to 115,000 volts of electricity running through the power lines directly above the hay you just stacked. Highly loaded, those aluminum wires get hot — and the warmer the temperature — the more the lines sag. There needs to be at least 10 feet of clearance between the neutral line and the top of your hay bales. Did you plan for sag and leave adequate space?

As amps travel the circuit, the wires get warm. If you back your equipment into a guy wire and a pole bends or breaks, or if you hit an overhead line with the loader, the line could fall on the hay and ignite. The hay you need to feed your cattle — and the provisions you made to feed your family — just went up in smoke.

And that could be the best-case scenario. If you or your equipment comes into contact with a power line, you could receive an electric shock that could cause injury and even death.

Protect your livelihood and your life, and stay away from power lines and poles. If you do make contact with a power line, call 911. Remain seated, warn others to stay away, and wait for Roughrider Electric lineworkers to de-energize the lines. Do not move from the equipment.

To report system damage that is not in need of immediate repair, call Roughrider Electric Cooperative at 1-800-748-5533 or email safety@roughriderelectric.com. If you send an email, please include the location, your name and contact information, and a photo if possible.

Members, your safety matters. Working together helps ensure the safety of all! ■

**Always assume
downed lines are**

energized

- Downed power lines can energize the ground up to **35 feet away**. Even more in wet conditions.
- **Never drive over** downed power lines or through water that is in contact with them.
- **Never try to move** a downed power line.
- If you see a downed line, **call 911**.

If a vehicle or farm equipment contacts a power line or utility pole, stay away and call 911.

- Consider **all lines** to be live and dangerous.
- Stay in place or inside your vehicle unless you see fire or smoke.
- Warn others to stay at least **35 feet away**.
- **Tell others** not to approach vehicle, downed lines, or anything that may be in contact with downed lines.
- **Call 911**



In the event of fire or smoke

- **Do not** touch the ground and vehicle at the **same time**.
- Jump from vehicle with your **feet together**.
- **Shuffle away**, avoid lifting your feet.

If a vehicle contacts a power line
or utility pole...

***stay away
and call 911***

ROUGH RIDER

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Explore it ... Adore it ... and Save!

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-percent discount off the following reservations:

- Tickets to the Medora Musical
- Pitchfork Steak Fondue
- Bully Pulpit Golf Course
- Lodging at the Badlands Motel, Elkhorn Quarters and Rough Riders Hotel

Members will receive a 20-percent discount at the Cowboy Hall of Fame.

To make your reservations and claim your savings, call 1-800-MEDORA-1 and provide the discount code **Touch2021**. When visiting the Cowboy Hall of Fame, provide the discount code **Touch2021** at the door. ■



ROUGH RIDER
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative 

www.roughriderelectric.com

HAZEN OFFICE
701-748-2293 or 800-748-5533
800 Highway Dr., Hazen, ND 58545
7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. CST 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 800-627-8470
P.O. Box 1038, 2156 4th Ave. E.
Dickinson, ND 58602
7 a.m. - 4 p.m. MST 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

Roger Kudrna, President; Dickinson..... 483-8377
Darell Herman, Vice President; Beulah..... 873-4371
Troy Sailer, Secretary; Golden Valley..... 948-2427
Bruce Darcy, Treasurer; Golden Valley..... 983-4222
William Retterath; Center..... 794-8729
Arnold Kainz; Dickinson..... 483-8207
Dan Price; Henler..... 794-3779
Greg Steckler; Dunn Center..... 548-8122
Callen Schoch; New England..... 290-3836

MANAGEMENT

Don Franklund..... Co-GM/CEO
Travis Kupper..... Co-GM/CEO





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