

ROUGH RIDER NEWS

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

NOVEMBER 2017



Dr. Mike Schmit and Carl Miller, Sakakawea Medical Center surgeon and certified registered nurse anesthetist, respectively, say the new medical center has a good flow for staff and patients. In this month's local pages, learn about the facility and its services — and how it is improving the quality of life for patients in the Roughrider Electric Cooperative service area, thanks in part to cooperative support.

PHOTO BY BASIN ELECTRIC

Transforming local health care

What's inside:

- Manager's message on giving thanks
- Now's the time to consider a portable generator
- Electric Cooperative Youth Tour
- Meetings minutes, and more

Sakakawea Medical Center: A modern facility made possible with co-op support

BY TRACIE BETTENHAUSEN, BASIN ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE



PHOTOS BY BASIN ELECTRIC

Marcie Schulz, registered nurse and Sakakawea Medical Center director of patient care, demonstrates the telemedicine system found in the hospital's emergency rooms. Staff is able to push a button to virtually invite staff from Sioux Falls, S.D., into the room through a two-way camera and microphone. The system is a paid service through Avera, which has presence in 150 sites across the Midwest and beyond. Professionals in Sioux Falls are able to help with everything from recording vital signs for a busy nurse, to assisting with trauma care, to providing sign language translation.

“Wherever we live, we want to have accessibility to health care services for that time of need,” says Darrold Bertsch, chief executive officer of Sakakawea Medical Center and Coal Country Community Health Center. “Rural people shouldn’t have to compromise the accessibility and availability of health care services. By constructing this facility, we can provide better health care today, and also for future generations to come.”

Bertsch was referencing the relatively new Sakakawea Medical Center, which serves people who live in Mercer, Oliver, and Dunn counties, covering about 2,000 square miles and a population of about 15,000 residents.

After discussing the future of health care, and assessing what could be done as far as renovation and/or addition to the former facility, the most cost-effective approach was to construct a new facility.

Cooperative support helped make it possible.

Transforming local health care

A study was done in 2012 to determine the need for an updated, expanded medical center in the community. The needs assessment

took input from nearly 650 community members and health care professionals from the region, as well as 22 community leaders. “The top priorities we found were the need for more providers, more mental health services, more accessible clinics with more locations and longer hours, better access to specialists, and additional equipment and technology,” Bertsch says.

More than 300 individual donors contributed to the \$3 million capital



campaign to get the project going. The total cost of the facility was about \$30 million, and the facility opened its doors in April.

Christie Obenauer, president of the Hazen Memorial Hospital Association board of directors, says the new facility has transformed the way health care is provided in the area. “The medical center is consolidating the majority of its outpatient services to improve access and meet future health care needs,” she says. “More than 15,000 square feet was added, with a centralized registration area.”

In addition, the services provided are now under the same roof. “When patients need lab and X-ray, they’re able to do it in the same facility now,” Bertsch says.

Aside from patient care, the ability to recruit physicians, visiting specialists and staff is greatly enhanced with the construction of the new facility. “Having a modern, state-of-the-art facility is important both in our recruitment and retention activities,” Obenauer says. “The quality of the local school systems, shopping, and the availability of health care services are questions that get asked by individuals being recruited to come here, regardless of the industry looking to expand or enhance its workforce.”

Community-driven, member-driven

Located on the edge of oil activity, the area experienced the quick growth that went along with the Bakken boom. “We serve both the temporary and transient, as well as the permanent workers brought here by oil jobs and all of the local energy industry,” Bertsch says.

The energy industry is a major employer in the region. Basin Electric



Power Cooperative, a generation and transmission provider for Roughrider Electric Cooperative, owns and operates several businesses in the area. The Antelope Valley Station and Leland Olds Station, Dakota Gasification Company’s Great Plains Synfuels Plant, and The Coteau Properties Company’s Freedom Mine account for about 1,200 of the cooperative’s 2,300 employees.

That concentration of Basin Electric’s workforce meant the cooperative had an interest in helping. Jen Holen, Basin Electric charitable giving administrator, says the Charitable Giving Committee pledged \$250,000 over five years with support from Roughrider Electric Cooperative, which has office locations in Hazen and Dickinson.

Don Franklund, Innovative Energy Alliance Cooperative co-general manager and chief executive officer, says access to modern, convenient health care is important to Roughrider’s members for many reasons.

“Without these facilities, some people might be traveling an hour or more to get to a doctor or piece

of technology needed to treat them properly. The primary mission of electric cooperatives is to serve their members, and so we were happy to put our support behind this project,” he says.

Innovative Energy Alliance Cooperative is a professional management and services company that provides support for four electric cooperatives in North Dakota including Roughrider, Slope, Mor-Gran-Sou, and KEM Electric Cooperatives, and the West Dakota Utility Services management company.

Bertsch says the commitment from the cooperatives was important to the medical center, because it was an indication of community support. “Cooperatives are so community-driven, member-driven,” Bertsch says. “Having the support of these organizations is extremely important because it shows commitment to the members of the cooperative, that they care about those members in the rural areas. From a health care perspective, they’ll be well taken care of in our facilities.” ■

The season of gratitude — and snowstorms — is on the horizon

DON FRANKLUND, CO-GENERAL MANAGER AND CEO

For electric cooperatives, those two seem to go hand in hand.

Many of us look forward to getting together with family for Thanksgiving to eat, watch football and enjoy being together. If you're a lineman who works for an electric cooperative, you may or may not get to eat that pumpkin pie.

This is the time of year when temperatures hover around freezing. If we get moisture that clings and builds on the power lines, conditions are prime for a power outage. The wind gusts, tree branches snap, and the compromised lines underneath give way to the weight. Regardless of the holiday or family celebration, our staff goes to work: informing members and the media, ordering supplies when necessary, and restoring the damaged system.

Roughrider Electric Cooperative employs more than 20 linemen who take pride in their jobs. The minute they get called, they are out the door, heading to the office to grab a truck and head to the field.

Missing a meal is unfortunately part of their job. Every lineman I know has missed a holiday celebration, birthday party, sporting event and more, because he was called to fix an outage afterhours. Linemen knew sacrifice would be involved when they choose their job and career, and I rarely hear any one complain; even after working in brutal conditions.

Most of our members can understand the time it takes to drive to a location, assess the situation, make a plan and fix the system. When they see crews working near their homes, they offer a thermos of coffee. They help clear roads to provide access to broken lines and poles. They post on Roughrider's Facebook page to say thanks. Now it's our turn to say thank YOU, for waiting, and helping, and trying to understand.

Sometimes the wait is longer than others. When snow is blinding. When roads are blocked. When no travel is advised. That means no travel is advised for our linemen, too. They can't restore power if they can't see to drive, or if their truck gets lodged in snow. Then, someone else

who shouldn't be on the road needs to come to their rescue, and it puts another life in danger.

At Roughrider, we have a culture of safety. We are our brother's keeper, always looking out for one another at the office and in the field. That goes for our members, as well. We share safety messages regularly with you in the local pages of the *North Dakota Living* magazine, on Facebook and with weekly newspapers in our service area. Your safety matters. Nothing matters more to your family than having you home and safe.

We understand, because the families of our employees feel the same way. Nothing matters more to them than having their loved ones home safe. From an operations standpoint, when there is a power outage and the linemen have been dispatched, we don't ask them, "How long until the power is restored?" The question implies a sense of urgency. We already know they are working on restoration, and will get it done as soon as possible. When the linemen finish the job and return home to their families unharmed, it's been a good day — regardless of the length of the outage.

Thankfully, most power outages, even during difficult conditions, last only a few hours. If you are concerned about being out of power this winter, now's the time to look into getting a portable generator and having a licensed electrician install a transfer switch. If you could use advice on what to buy, consider calling our friends at West Dakota Utility Services in Mandan. They can help you assess your family's needs and order equipment delivered to your door.

As we approach this season of thanksgiving, I want to thank our linemen and staff for always going above and



Don Franklund

beyond to serve our member-owners.

William Arthur Ward once said, “Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings.” We can’t change the bad weather on the horizon, but we can choose not to complain about it. Your electric cooperative employees are ready. When bad

weather hits and takes down parts of our system, we will do our best to restore the power that allows you to enjoy the holiday and every day.

Jim Davis once said, “Vegetables are a must on a diet. I suggest carrot cake, zucchini bread and pumpkin pie.” I will sign off now to enjoy one slice of pie, and wish you and your family a warm and safe Thanksgiving. ■



PHOTO BY CARMEN DENNEY

WDUS offers portable generator sales *and* service

BY JOE MEIER, CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER FOR WDUS, MANDAN

might benefit by owning a generator include the elderly, those with health care needs that require electric service, families with young children, and farmers and ranchers who care for livestock.

“We have units that range in size from small to large,” Meier says. “For the farmer who milks cows, he could use a larger unit than someone who lives in the country and is only concerned about heat and water, and being able to cook himself a hot meal.”

A distributor that can order generators, WDUS can work with members to size the generator properly. The process includes filling out a brief questionnaire that rates the customer’s power requirements. Meier stresses it is important to have the unit sized appropriately, so it does not create issues with appliances. It also needs to be installed by a qualified technician, so it does not backfeed electricity into the power grid, and harm the linemen or the general public.

WDUS technicians can also inspect the generator annually, to make sure the electrical components are in working order.

“We offer sales *and* service for the customer,” Meier says.

If you are interested in purchasing a portable generator, Meier suggests not waiting until the weather becomes unpredictable and a power outage occurs.

“Now’s a great time to fill out the questionnaire and assess your needs, so we have an understanding of your power requirements and can make sure you have something on hand before the bad weather hits,” he says.

West Dakota Utility Services is an independent business owned by Roughrider, Slope and Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperatives. It services utility trucks, in addition to contractors and customers who have vehicles that need hydraulic repairs or N.D. Department of Transportation certification. WDUS also repairs welders, engines and utility tools including crimpers and hydraulic tamps, and is a distributor that can order hydraulic tools and generators.

If WDUS can help you with a project or repair, or fix you up with a generator, call 701-663-4365 or email wdus@btinet.net. ■

Roughrider Electric Cooperative works hard to build what Mother Nature tears down — but in the meantime, electrical service can still be interrupted. While line crews make every effort to keep these interruptions brief, natural disasters and North Dakota’s unpredictable weather may cause extended power outages when people need electric service the most.

If going without power for even a few hours is a concern, you can take a simple, proactive step to avoid lapses by installing an automatic standby power generator.

Joe Meier, chief operations officer for West Dakota Utility Services (WDUS), says some people who

Loan helps provide living quarters for overnight ambulance workers

COURTESY OF THE NORTH DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES



PHOTO BY LIZAKESSEL

RDFC Board Member **Wes Engbrecht**, Capital Electric; **Troy Schilling**, West River Telecommunications; and **Brad Quenette**, Roughrider Electric; present a loan check to **Marcy Sailer**, Mercer County Ambulance Service.

The Mercer County Ambulance Service is adding living quarters to its existing building, thanks in part to a \$46,928 community capital loan provided by the Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC). Founded in 1994 by North Dakota's telecommunications and rural electric cooperatives including Roughrider Electric Cooperative, RDFC helps rural communities grow

by offering low-interest financing.

"This community capital loan is an example of RDFC's commitment to the cooperative principle of concern for community, contributing to a vibrant workforce and a livable community," says RDFC Board Member Wes Engbrecht. "In a crisis, emergency responders need to act quickly. RDFC is proud of our emergency responders and is glad to finance a project that will help ensure they are well rested and ready to save lives."

The addition will provide living arrangements for two overnight responders. It will include two bedrooms, a kitchenette, a shower and a rest area.

Mercer County Ambulance Service provides emergency services to residents and guests of Mercer County, covering a service area of 1,015 square miles and a county population of 8,600. The ambulance service is largely comprised

of skilled volunteers, but also employs four full-time emergency medical technicians, one advanced emergency medical technician and four paramedics. ■

Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC)

RDFC is a nonprofit corporation that encourages economic diversification and community vitality through the generation of funding that supports sustainable asset building. Funding for RDFC programs comes from fee income generated by Dakotas America LLC, a certified development entity providing New Market Tax Credits in economically distressed census tracts across the United States. Support is provided by the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives.

For information, contact Roughrider Electric Cooperative at 800-748-5533 (Hazen) or 800-627-8470 (Dickinson). Or, visit www.ndarec.com and click the Rural Development tab, or contact Lori Capouch, rural development director for NDAREC, at 701-667-6444 or lcapouch@ndarec.com.

Report from THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS SEPT. 29, 2017

When, where and who: The Board of Directors met in Dickinson on Sept. 29.

Agenda: The Board reviewed, added to and approved the meeting agenda.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The Board reviewed and approved the minutes of the August 25, 2017, Meeting.

Manager's report: Don Franklund presented the manager's report.

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Region V/VI meeting: The Board members reported on the presentations and outcomes of the meeting. Safety was touted and emphasized. It's not an expense; it's an investment.

Capital Budget: Mr. Bentz presented the Board with his proposed Capital Budget. He referred the Board to

his written memorandum that summarized the proposed Capital Budget that was also provided to the Board for its consideration.

Board committee appointments: Ms. Grosz led the Board in a discussion of its currently standing committees, and the tasks and responsibilities of each of these committees.

Operations and Construction report: Mr. Bentz referred the Board to his written report. He updated the Board on the plowing of the Scheffield line.

Upcoming meetings: The next Board meeting was set for 10 a.m. CT on Oct. 27, 2017, at Roughrider's office in Hazen, North Dakota.

Other business: There being no other business, upon motion made, seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting adjourned. ■

WRITE A WINNING ESSAY AND WIN A TRIP OF A LIFETIME!

JUNE 9-15, 2018

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

- 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 a question, contact Brad Quenette, Roughrider Electric, at the address listed below, or call 701-748-2293 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is **Jan. 31, 2018**. Emailed entries should be directed to bquenette@roughriderelectric.com, and hard-copy entries mailed to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, Roughrider Electric Cooperative, 800 Highway Dr., Hazen, ND 58545-4737.

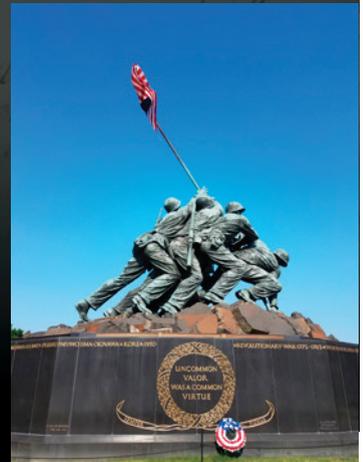
TOP 3 REASONS

TO ENTER THE ESSAY-WRITING CONTEST

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.

ESSAY QUESTION:

There are approximately 20 million military veterans in the United States today. How shall fellow U.S. citizens honor and look after these veterans, who have served and sacrificed on our behalf? Describe any special connection you may have to a veteran or active-duty member of the military.



CHECK OUT THE ESSAY-CONTEST GUIDELINES AT
www.ndyouthtour.com



PHOTO BY CARMEN DENNEY

Roughrider Electric employees **Lance Peterson** (left), electrician, and **Steve Hildebrand**, member services representative

Career Day

Roughrider Electric Cooperative employees visited an elementary school in our service area in September for Career Day. The students got to handle tools, dress in personal protective gear — and learn there are many interesting (and fun) jobs at an electric cooperative. They could also take an outlet plug or fridge magnet, and share a safety message with their families. ■

HOLIDAY CLOSINGS

Roughrider Electric Cooperative's offices will be closed Friday, Nov. 10, in observance of Veterans Day, and Thursday and Friday, Nov. 23 and 24, for the Thanksgiving holiday.

Line crews will be available in case of an emergency power outage.



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
8 a.m. – 5 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; Dickinson483-8377
 Darell Herman, Vice President; Beulah873-4371
 Troy Sailer, Secretary; Golden Valley948-2427
 Bruce Darcy, Treasurer; Golden Valley983-4222
 William Retterath; Center794-8729
 Arnold Kainz; Dickinson483-8207
 Dan Price; Hensler794-3779
 Greg Steckler; Dunn Center548-8122
 Callen Schoch; New England579-4395

MANAGEMENT

Don Franklund General Manager/CEO



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