

ROUGH RIDER NEWS

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

OCTOBER 2021

The dog whisperer

Brett Gjermundson, the owner of Badlands K-9 Training Center, trains and boards dogs at his facility near Taylor. Read more inside.



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The dog whisperer

Brett Gjermundson solves canine companion concerns

BY LUANN DART

The German shepherd pup peers attentively at her trainer, Brett Gjermundson, as the local dog whisperer gathers her attention without a word. Her fur shudders with nervousness, but she rallies herself to follow his command.

The graceful shepherd is just one of hundreds of dogs Gjermundson has trained at his facility, Badlands K-9 Training Center, since 1997. The center is a professional boarding kennel and medium-to-large-breed dog training facility located near Taylor.

Gjermundson, a professional, certified dog trainer and canine behavior consultant, started training dogs when he was 15 years old, mostly by accident.

“I always liked bigger, working breed dogs. That’s what I was naturally drawn to,” he says. So, he acquired a Rottweiler when he was 15 years old.

“In high school, I thought a Rottweiler would be the dog for me and when I got a Rottweiler, we realized there was all this stigma attached,” he shares.



“We’ll let you keep your dog, but you better make sure he doesn’t cause any trouble,” his parents told him.

So, he started studying how to train the dog.

“I figured out how to do my training with that first dog I had to make sure he was really good. I started getting other people asking me what I’ve done when they saw me out and about with the dog,” he says.

After graduating from high school, he decided to train dogs for other people. He placed his first ad in 1997, and has now been training for 24 years.

By 2012, he had also built a boarding facility just outside of Taylor, where he now trains and boards dogs.

His training focuses on obedience and behavior modification, teaching dogs how to obey commands and helping with behavioral issues.

“When you come to me, your house pet learns the same obedience as a dog that’s going to have a real job like an assistance dog, and then I also work on any behavior issues,” he says. Common issues include jumping up, pulling on the leash and play biting, he says, but he also works with dogs with aggression.

While he doesn’t train hunting dogs specifically, he does lay the foundation for those dogs.

“I get a lot of people who like my obedience for their bird dogs, then they’ll send it off to their field trainer,” he says. “We work really hard making sure the dogs that go through our program know that it’s their job to pay attention to us and check with us and that translates over to the hunting really well.”

The dogs Gjermundson trains board at the kennel for the two-week sessions. He uses the first day getting the dog comfortable with him and the environment.

“Even before any commands are done, I’m teaching them to check with me, keep an eye on me, doing the attention training,” he says. “I’m just trying to become a team with the dog.”

Following the teaching phase, Gjermundson uses the second week as the “proofing phase.”

“The second week is proofing that training and that’s where it becomes more working dog style,” he says. Owners often tell Gjermundson their dog will sit and stay in the kitchen with a piece of cheese as enticement, then becomes deaf to commands when distractions abound.

So, he introduces distractions the second week, with the help of his family. His wife, Melissa, handles the dog and his children, ages 12 and 9, play in the training room.

He has trained every age, from puppies to a 10-year-old dog, he says.

“People are adopting a lot more now, so I see more 3- to



Brett Gjermundson trains family pets for obedience and helps solve behavior concerns.

5-year-old dogs than I used to,” he says. “Socialization is really the thing that people skip. It’s so important between 2 to 4 months old to get them out and let them see new things and meet a lot of new people, even walking on different surfaces.”

He recently trained a dog who was not comfortable on the cement floor of his training room.

“It wasn’t that he couldn’t learn the commands. He walked around like we were on an ice skating rink,” Gjermundson says with a laugh.

Now, Gjermundson is seeing puppies from 2020 who missed those socialization skills because their owners didn’t travel during the pandemic, so they didn’t meet new people or ride in cars.

“So, we’re working through a lot of that stuff,” Gjermundson says.

Gjermundson graduated from National K-9 School for Dog Trainers in 2003, in Columbus, Ohio, where he was certified in all 12 endorsements offered by the school, which pioneered training assistance dogs in

the 1970s. His certifications include basic obedience, advanced obedience, kennel managements, behavior modification, personal protection, police K-9, tracking, scent detection, agility, retrieval, assistance dog work and puppy development.

During the school, he was required to train a service dog to do everything from pick up a dime off the floor to get mail from a mailbox.

“Ate, slept, lived and breathed it,” he says of the course.

The Badlands K-9 Training Center also includes 14 kennel runs for boarding dogs.

“The boarding was always in the back of my mind, but it took a lot longer to materialize,” he says.

“We’re really proud of the fact that we don’t rely on a doggie door system to let the dogs in and out. We’re really hands-on, checking on the dogs all the time and letting them out like they’re at home,” Gjermundson says. “They’re not outside, confused how to come in when its 100 degrees or negative 40.”

The rest of the facility includes an open 30x20 training room and the front office. Overhead radiant heat keeps the entire building warm, even the cement floor.

“Boarding’s been really great. Last year, training carried me through, because nobody was going anywhere. I didn’t realize that I was in the travel business until last year,” he says with a laugh. “I’m a dog babysitter. I’m like your dog’s day care person. But then, you realize when people weren’t going anywhere that you’re in the travel business. If they’re not traveling, you’re not boarding a dog. It was a funny realization.” His clients come from Dickinson and the surrounding area and he has trained dogs from as far away as Montana.

As Gjermundson works with the German shepherd, his love for dogs is evident.

“You have to be just really into dogs or you’re not going to have the patience to fix a bunch of dog behavior issues,” he says. “Just a natural love of dogs. A lot of people really like dogs, but dogs are just drawn to me when they see me and I think it’s because they know I’m really excited to see them. It’s a genuine excitement and I think they know that.”

Consistency is another important tool in training, he says.

“I learned early on, even if it doesn’t seem like it’s working, just stick it out. You have to be consistent and fair, and sooner or later it’ll click,” he shares.

The toughest cases are those who have human aggression issues, he says.

“You’re wondering through the first few days if this dog

is even going to accept you and when you first put the leash on, there’s a little bit of a risk,” he says.

“It’s a work ethic thing. There are some dogs that want to please you and give it all they have and there are other dogs that are like, ‘Make me,’” he says with a laugh. “I like personalities.” ■



The Badlands K-9 Training Center includes 14 kennel runs to board dogs.

To learn more:
701-290-8301
www.badlandsk9.com

JUNE 19 TO 24, 2022



WASHINGTON, D.C.

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 any questions, please contact Brad Quenette, Roughrider Electric, at 800-748-5533 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is Dec. 10, 2021. 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.

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:

If you were asked to help promote your cooperative's annual membership meeting, what ideas do you have for increasing attendance among young member-owners and students? Please provide specific examples for unique communications strategies, scheduling and special activities for member-owners and their families.



CHECK OUT THE ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES AT
www.roughriderelectric.com/youth-tour



Leave the climbing to **US!**

Power lines transport tremendous amounts of electricity. Contact with a power line can result in serious injuries, burns or death. Stay away from all power lines, and NEVER climb or use a ladder to work on cooperative utility poles!

Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from lines.

Never trim trees near power lines.

Never climb trees near power lines.

If you have questions about anything attached to a utility pole in your yard, call us at 800-748-5533.

Report from

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AUG. 27, 2021

When, where and who: The board of directors of Roughrider Electric Cooperative met via WebEx videoconference Aug. 27.

Minutes of the previous meeting: The board reviewed and approved the minutes of the July 30 meeting.

Capital credit estate retirements: A list of capital credit estate retirements was provided to the board.

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

Kupper highlighted that work on a wildfire mitigation plan has been completed, and it will be presented to the board for approval later in the meeting.

The North Dakota managers' meeting was held in Medora a couple weeks ago. Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) presented information on its operations and what it anticipates for rates in 2023, as the 2022 rates have been set. If conditions do not improve, a drought adder could be added to WAPA's rates in 2023.

Basin Electric Power Cooperative's new CEO, Todd Telesz, starts Sept. 1.

Review capital budget: Jason Bentz presented the capital budget to the board.

Wildfire mitigation plan: The board reviewed and approved Board Policy 07-01 Wildfire Mitigation Plan. Roughrider's insurer, Federated, has encouraged its insureds to establish such a plan.

Operations and construction report: Bentz elaborated on the contents of his written report, noting that Roughrider completed 13 new services in July. He updated the board on the storm which came through earlier that week, stating there were numerous lightning strikes experienced on Roughrider's system.

IT report: The board reviewed Charlie Dunbar's report to the board about various IT matters. Kupper provided additional detail regarding cybersecurity breaches experienced by businesses, and what Innovative Energy Alliance's IT Department is doing to protect the cooperative.

Next meeting: The next board meeting was set Sept. 24.

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



CELEBRATE CO-OP MONTH!

By providing the electricity that powers your home, farm or business, cooperatives play a role in your daily life. As we observe Co-op Month in October, electric cooperative members should be proud of the success of the cooperative business model and the spirit of cooperation these organizations promote. Cooperatives are a true example of grassroots involvement, because cooperatives are owned and controlled by those they serve.

Look across North Dakota's landscape and you'll notice cooperatives improve our quality of life everywhere. Electric cooperatives bring light to our lives, cool our food and heat our homes.

So, when you turn on a light, or power up your computer, remember your electric cooperative is standing behind you each and every day.

Co-ops are community-led

October is National Co-op Month, which is the perfect time to highlight the many ways electric cooperatives are unique.

Cooperatives are locally governed, looking out for the long-term needs of their consumer-members.

Co-ops are a catalyst for good

Electric co-ops are a catalyst for good in their communities. Co-ops engage their consumer-members to do things that might otherwise be impossible or difficult, like more than 75 years ago when electric co-ops brought power to areas where other utilities did not find it economically feasible.

Cooperatives exist to meet a need that was previously unmet in the community, and they are ever striving to anticipate and plan for the future needs of their consumer-members.

Electric cooperatives often partner with local groups to bring economic opportunity to their local community. It is this facilitation role that is often the most valuable strength of the co-op.

The co-op business model is unique. It is pragmatic, mission-oriented and puts people first. Co-ops strive to be a trusted voice in their communities. Co-ops have earned that trust because, while not perfect, they always have their members' best interest at heart and are determined to enrich the lives of those living and working in the communities they serve – now and in the future. ■

DON'T LET HALLOWEEN BE SCARY!

It's time to decorate your yard and home as ghosts and goblins plan their invasion of the neighborhood looking for treats.

As you light Halloween night with elaborate decorations, Roughrider Electric Cooperative recommends some important safety tips:

- Make sure extension cords are in good condition. Use only cords rated to carry the electrical load you will connect to them.

- Use only lights that have been safety tested and approved by Underwriters Laboratory (UL). Look for the UL label on the box and on each string.

- Make sure extension cords are in good condition. Use only cords rated to carry the electrical load you will connect to them.

- Before plugging in the lights, check each string for broken sockets, frayed cords or faulty plugs. Replace damaged strings.

- Outdoors, use only lights and cords rated for outdoor use.

- Use flashlights or battery-operated candles when decorating the home, including to light walkways, jack-o'-lanterns and outdoor displays.

- Keep electric cords out of high-traffic areas.

A safe celebration is the best celebration, and following basic electrical safety guidelines will help you avoid real scares and keep your memories "boo-tiful" and fun.

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. 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 800-627-8470
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

Roger Kudrna, President; Dickinson..... 483-8377
Darell Herman, Vice President; Beulah..... 873-4371
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Don Franklund..... Co-GM/CEO
Travis Kupper..... Co-GM/CEO



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