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PHOTOS COURTESY OF COLBEY STEEKE

Members of the Dickinson FFA chapter attend the National FFA Convention.

## The blue and gold continues to impact youth

BY SAMANTHA VANGSNES

High school is filled with opportunities for students to experience new skills and hone areas of interest for future pursuits. These educational growth opportunities are often discovered through core curriculum classes or extracurricular activities.

At Dickinson High School (DHS), nearly 400 students are enrolled in agricultural programs. From the in-class agricultural programs, students are invited to take their curiosity and learning to new heights by joining FFA. Through FFA, students can travel and participate in various activities that may suit their interests, such as agricultural sales, livestock judging and agriscience, to name a few.

“There is something for everybody in FFA,” says Colbey Steeke, agricultural education instructor at DHS and the Dickinson FFA chapter advisor.

The Dickinson FFA chapter currently has 40 active members, from freshmen to seniors. An active member is a student who participates in contests

and programs. Steeke says they expect participation in FFA to increase as they expand agricultural education programs at DHS and begin to work more with the middle school students.

“We see students who didn’t grow up on a ranch find something for them,” Steeke says. “They don’t grow up on a ranch, but they see that there is something for everyone in FFA and in agriculture as a whole.”

Dickinson’s FFA chapter is a bit more urban, but the non-traditional pathways have helped students find a passion for FFA and agriculture in the area. FFA contests sparking an interest for those not directly involved in production agriculture are small animal care, floriculture, environmental and natural resources as well as others.

FFA also gives students the opportunity to network and meet new people with like interests.

DHS junior Logan Tyler says one of his favorite

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Dickinson FFA members take part in the state range judging contest.

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parts about FFA is meeting new people from across the state and around the country. Tyler is originally from Beach and recently transferred to DHS, but found himself among a group of familiar students through FFA.

“I knew people from the Dickinson chapter when I moved here from previous contests,” Tyler says.

Tyler joined FFA in the eighth grade and has been competing since. He is active in the livestock judging contest, parliamentary procedure and environmental and natural resources contests. Through his years in FFA, he has gotten more comfortable with problem solving and being out of his comfort zone, he says.

“There are so many opportunities in FFA,” Tyler says. He has been able to travel through FFA to the National FFA Convention in Indiana and even a potential trip overseas to Ireland.

The Dickinson FFA chapter is also active around the school through middle school agricultural education programs as well as the community, where students take part in Dickinson State University’s Kids Day on the Farm. Steeke reiterates FFA is for everyone and welcomes students to try new skills and find what fits them.

“(FFA) gives students the opportunity to enhance skills, whether that is leadership, working with teams,

speaking, decision-making,” Steeke says. “It is also an opportunity to explore different career pathways through agriculture, industries and trades.”

National FFA Week is celebrated Feb. 15-22. During this time, FFA chapters like Dickinson host various events and activities around the school to advocate for the club and showcase what the organization is about. ■



The Dickinson FFA dairy judging team earned the honor to compete at the national level, including FFA Advisor **Colbey Steeke**, left, **Logan Tyler**, **Ian Dohrman**, **Ryder Keck**, **Shaylynn Ziman** and FFA Advisor **Kay Poland**.



## MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

# Protecting yourself from utility scams



**Jason Bentz**

Co-General Manager/CEO

Consumers with a water, gas or electricity connection have long been targets for utility scams. As consumers became more reliant on technology for work, school and commerce, scammers noted these shifts and adapted their tactics to this changed environment.

Imposter scams are the No. 1 type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission. While scam artists may come to your door posing as a

utility worker, attempts in today's connected world are more likely to come through an electronic device, via email, a phone call or text.

### Common types of scams

A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in person or by phone, text or email, the scammers want to scare you into immediate payment, so you don't have time to think clearly.

If this happens over the phone, simply hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, call us at 800-748-5533. Our phone number can also be found on your monthly bill and on our website, [www.roughriderelectric.com](http://www.roughriderelectric.com).

If the scam is by email or text, delete it before taking any action. If you're unsure, contact us at 800-748-5533, [info@roughriderelectric.com](mailto:info@roughriderelectric.com) or use SmartHub to check the status of your account.

Remember, Roughrider Electric Cooperative will never attempt to demand immediate payment after just one notice.

Some scammers may falsely claim you have been overcharged on your bill and say they want to give a refund. The scammers make it sound easy by stating all you have to do is click or press a button to initiate the process. If you proceed, you will be prompted to provide banking or other personal information. Instead of money going into your bank account, scammers can drain your account and use personal information, such as a Social Security number, for identity theft.

If this "refund" scam happens over the phone, just hang up and block the phone number to prevent future robocalls. If this scam attempt occurs via email or by text, do not click any links. Instead, delete it and block the sender if possible. If you do overpay on your energy bill, Roughrider Electric will automatically apply the credit to your next billing cycle. When in doubt, contact us.

### Defend yourself

Be wary of calls or texts from unknown numbers. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a utility worker who requests banking or other personal information.

We want to help protect our community against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense. Please report any potential utility-related scams to us, so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim. ■



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## MESSAGE FROM MEMBER SERVICES: **North Dakota Career Tour**



**Brad Quenette**

*Member Services Manager*

As a member services manager, I'm excited to personally invite you to a unique opportunity that could ignite your future. Our two-day North Dakota Career Tour is set to offer a deep dive into the fascinating world of energy careers right here in our state.

### **Why should you join us?**

If you've ever been curious about what powers your world, this is your chance to explore.

From coal mines and power plants to wind turbines and electric cooperatives, you'll get hands-on experiences and hear directly from the experts who drive North Dakota's energy sector.

This tour is more than just an exploration. It's a gateway to understanding how diverse career paths and cutting-edge technologies shape our industry.

You'll meet professionals who are passionate about their work and discover how you could be a part of this exciting field.

### **Event details**

**When:** Aug. 5-6

**Who can attend:**

- 2025-26 high school seniors, juniors and sophomores who are interested in exploring careers in energy.
- Students who are curious about the wide range of opportunities in North Dakota's energy sector.

### **How to register:**

We have a limited number of spots available. Our cooperative is joining forces with our sister cooperatives within the Innovative Energy Alliance Cooperative, with each selecting 10 students, totaling 40 participants from across the state.

This is your chance to gain a new perspective and start envisioning your future in energy. To secure your spot and find out more, visit [www.roughriderelectric.com](http://www.roughriderelectric.com) or get in touch with us at 800-748-5533.

I look forward to seeing you on this exciting journey and helping you light the way to your future career! ■



# JOIN ROUGHRIDER ELECTRIC FOR THE CAREER TOUR

AUGUST 5-6, 2025

## **FROM COAL MINES TO POWER PLANTS AND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES DIVE INTO THE HEART OF NORTH DAKOTA'S ENERGY SECTOR.**

Limited spots available. Learn more by visiting: [www.roughriderelectric.com](http://www.roughriderelectric.com).

**Application deadline is April 25.**

# Roughrider Electric Nominating Committee

The Roughrider Electric Cooperative board of directors appointed a Nominating Committee at its Dec. 22, 2024, board meeting. The Nominating Committee appointed by the board consists of **Eugene Kinzel**, Dickinson; **Ivo Schoch**, New England; **Gerald Buresh**, Dickinson; **Don Buck**, Zap; **David Twist**, Manning; **Robert Fitterer**, Golden Valley; **Randy Becker**, Beulah; **Dean Knell**, Hazen; and

**Cole Price**, Stanton. The committee met for the first time Jan. 19 and the final meeting will be Feb. 23 at the Hazen office.

If you or someone you know is interested in running for a position, contact the Nominating Committee or the Roughrider Electric office. Nominations are due to the Nominating Committee by Feb. 23. ■

## Nomination process

To comply with Rural Utilities Service requirements, we must provide each member with a summary of the bylaws on the nomination process prior to the nomination of candidates for board positions. Following is the bylaw section on nominations:

### SECTION 4. Nominations.

(a) A Nominating Committee shall be selected by the Board of Directors in time for its first meeting to be held before the annual meeting of members in 2009 and for each annual meeting of members thereafter. The Nominating Committee shall consist of an equal number of members from each of the Cooperative's districts and a minimum of two members from each district shall be selected. No member of the Board of Directors may serve on the Nominating Committee. The Board of Directors shall establish rules for the conduct of and arrange for the meeting of the Nominating Committee. The Secretary shall notify the members of the Nominating Committee in the manner provided by Article II, Section 4.3 delivered at least fifteen days before the date set for the Committee meeting. From and after 2009, the Nominating Committee shall meet at least sixty days before the annual meeting of members to nominate at least one qualified candidate for each directorship for which there is a vacancy to be filled by a vote of the members. Upon conclusion of the meeting, the Nominating Committee shall cause a list of nominees for Directors to be posted at the principal office of the Cooperative.

(b) By petition, any fifteen or more members of the same district acting together may make other nominations for each directorship in that district for which there is a vacancy to be filled by a vote of the members, provided that the petition is filed with the Secretary not less than ninety (90) days prior to the annual meeting of members. The Secretary shall cause to be posted such

nominations at the same place where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted.

(c) The Secretary shall cause to be mailed, with the notice of the annual meeting of members or separately, but at least fifteen days before the date of the meeting, a statement of the number of Directors to be elected and the names and addresses of the candidates, specifying separately the nominations made by the Nominating Committee and also the nominations made by petition, if any.

(d) Unless voting by mail or remote electronic means for directorships has been approved, the President, acting as Chairman of the meeting, shall invite additional nominations from the floor and nominations shall not be closed until a reasonable time has passed during which no additional nominations have been made. No member may nominate more than one candidate at any single annual meeting of members. If extenuating circumstances exist, nominations from the floor may be accepted even though voting by mail or electronic means has occurred. ■





## MESSAGE FROM OPERATIONS:

# Things you may not know about power restoration



**Shawn Olson**

Chief of Staff/  
Operations Manager

We often get questions from members about power outages and why it can take time to get the lights back on. Given our reliance on electricity, there's simply never a good time to be without it. As we continue through the cold, brisk winter we thought it would be a good time to shed light on our restoration process to help our members understand what may be happening behind the scenes.

Here are a few things you may not know about power restoration:

- **We need you.** When your power goes out, it might be just at your home or a smaller section of our service area. There is a chance we may not know about it, and no one has reported it. We rely on you to let us know if your power is out. Report outages by calling our office at 800-748-5533.
- **It's a team effort.** Every one of Roughrider Electric's employees are working to get power restored as soon as possible. Our member services representatives are taking your calls, operations staff are surveying damage and organizing crews, and communicators are keeping everyone informed of progress or potential dangers. When your power goes out, we all work together as quickly and safely as possible to get you back to normal.
- **We assess the situation first.** Every outage is different, and we don't know how dangerous it is or what infrastructure might need to be replaced.

When responding to outages, we first need to see what happened, then figure out what materials we need and a plan for how to fix the problem(s) without compromising electric flow for the rest of our members.

- **Restoration is normally prioritized by the largest number of members we can get back on in the shortest amount of time.** Our crews focus on responding first to public safety issues and critical services like hospitals. Then we complete work that impacts the largest number of people first.
- **Flickering lights are a good thing.** Some folks mistake flickering lights for outages, but these "blinks" are important because they indicate our equipment has worked properly and prevented a possible outage likely caused by weather, an animal or stray tree limbs on the lines. If the line continues to blink, please call the office so we can isolate the section of line to address the members impacted. Line crews may be dispatched to patrol that section of line looking for any issues that may be causing the blinks.
- **Sometimes it's a waiting game.** Our portion of the power grid is connected to other electric utilities, and we maintain positive relationships with power providers interconnected to our system. If our outage is due to an issue from their feed into our system, we must let them do their repairs and be mindful of what they're going through to fix it. We do our best to avoid power disruptions, but they are inevitable from time to time. If the lights go out, know that our team at Roughrider Electric is working as quickly and safely as possible to restore power.

If you experience an outage, please let us know by calling the office at 800-748-5533 or reporting it on SmartHub. ■

## SAVE THE DATE

Roughrider Electric

Annual Meeting

June 4, Dickinson

More details will be available in the coming months.



## SAFETY STARTS WITH ME:

# Snow removal around electrical equipment

It is that time of year when we break out our shovels and snowblowers a bit more than we would like. Roughrider Electric Cooperative may have electrical equipment, such as pad-mounted transformers or even overhead lines, near areas where you have to clear snow, so we remind members to proceed with caution.

“We want members to be aware of where pad-mounted transformers – also known as the green box – or other electrical equipment is located on their property,” says Lance Peterson, a journeyman electrician. “Ensuring members know where equipment is located helps alleviate accidents and keeps everyone safe and informed.”

Here are a few tips to keep in mind this winter as you are removing snow.

- **Know where electrical equipment is located:** Before a heavy snowfall, mark the location of electrical equipment with flags to easily see it when removing snow.
- **Be gentle when clearing snow:** Always use a shovel to clear snow around electrical equipment. Never use a snowblower or plow directly against it.
- **Maintain clearance:** Ensure a safe distance is maintained around electrical equipment, typically at least 10 feet in front and 3 feet on the sides.
- **Be aware of overhead lines:** Be mindful of overhead power lines, especially when removing snow from roofs.
- **Report damage:** If you notice any damage to electrical equipment due to snow removal, contact



our office as soon as possible. Do not try and fix the damage yourself.

Keeping the following tips in mind will help Roughrider Electric ensure safe and reliable electrical services continue to power your homes and local businesses. If you notice any damage to electrical equipment, contact our office as soon as possible at 800-748-5533. ■



# CONGRATULATIONS!

**After 34 years of service, Russ Goodwin electrician foreman, has retired from Roughrider Electric. We would like to thank him for his work and dedication to the cooperative and members over the years. We wish him the best in his future endeavors!**

## Roughrider Electric board meeting highlights: Nov. 22, 2024

The meeting of the board of directors of Roughrider Electric Cooperative was held on Nov. 22, 2024, at the cooperative's Dickinson office. The meeting was called to order at 1:10 p.m. A quorum was present. Also attending were co-General Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile, Operations Manager Shawn Olson, Director of Key Accounts and Member Services Leonard Hibl, Legal Counsel Jennifer Grosz and Board Liaison Connie Hill.

**Consent agenda:** The agenda was approved as presented.

**Strategic/action:** Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates on various meetings, including a statewide Safety Committee meeting. Several Basin Electric Power Cooperative, West Dakota Utility Services and 3C Construction reports were available for review.

**Department reports:** Craigmile provided a financial report. Olson provided an operations report, which included an update on construction projects. Hibl provided a member services\key accounts update, which included upcoming programs. Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar provided a written report for the board. Grosz provided the board with an update on the status of projects.

**Action items:** Action items were reviewed and resolved.

**Discussion/general information:** The board discussed the 2025 budget and other items.

The meeting concluded with the adjournment. Secretary Troy Sailer certified the accuracy of the minutes.

**Next meeting date:** The next meeting is 10 a.m. CT (9 a.m. MT) Feb. 28 in Hazen. ■



[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 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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