

## In this issue

- Annual meeting held
- Overhead vs. underground
- Protecting members against scams
- Message from Basin Electric Power Cooperative



## Chalkfest coming to Hazen

PHOTO BY LAUREN DONOVAN



PHOTO BY LAUREN DONOVAN

## ARTISTRY, COMMUNITY AND FUN: **Chalkfest brings neighbors together**

BY SAMANTHA VANGSNESS

As the summer sun casts its warm glow over Hazen, community members gather for a lively chalk art event, transforming Main Street into a vibrant canvas filled with colorful creations and joy. This family-friendly, one-of-a-kind event known as Chalkfest will take place Aug. 14 and 15 in Heritage Park.

Chalkfest is a chance for event attendees to walk through immersive art created by talented 3D artists. Artists have created various 3D artwork from portraits to snacks to farm equipment. Each year, something new is created on the streets of Hazen and it is an experience like no other.

“This year’s theme is ‘Wonderful World,’ which was chosen to help remind us that while our world is scary at times, it remains an enchanting and beautiful place,” says Lauren Donovan, Chalkfest organizer.

Event attendees will have the opportunity to show their artwork by filling in the street-sized words, “Wonderful World,” while the renowned 3D artists from across the country create enchanting work of their own. Donovan says they’ve had 3D artists come

from across the country and even had two artists from foreign countries last year.

During its fourth year, Chalkfest will have activities for the whole family to enjoy, from live music starting at 5:30 p.m. each night to kids activities. There will also be activities and games during the day. Specialty vendors will also be present to serve delicious food under the bigtop tent at Heritage Park. The Chalkfest store will also be returning and will be filled with Chalkfest gear and toys for purchase.

Chalkfest is a great chance to soak up some of the last days of summer with family and friends by stepping into a 3D world of chalk art, enjoying good music as well as food.

“The very best part of the festival, besides the amazing chalk art, music and food, is all the families that attend. This is truly an event for all ages,” Donovan says.

For further details and up-to-date information, visit [www.hazenchalkfest.com](http://www.hazenchalkfest.com) or follow on Facebook at Hazen, ND Chalkfest. ■



DICKINSON PARKS AND RECREATION PRESENTS

# Chalk Walk



AUGUST 6 | 4-7 P.M. MT



MEMORIAL PARK, 801 5TH AVE W, DICKINSON



COME OUT TO SEE CHALK ART, LISTEN TO MUSIC, VISIT WITH LOCAL VENDORS AND BUSINESSES. FREE FOR ALL AGES!

## KX/Co-op Day at the North Dakota State Fair

Wednesday, July 24

10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Drawings for cash & prizes throughout the day

Sponsored by:

- North Dakota Coordinating Council of Cooperatives (NDCCC)
- KX News
- North Dakota State Fair

Discounts available by calling Roughrider Electric Cooperative:

- \$1 off daily admission
- \$5 off unlimited ride wristband
- \$1 off Ranch Rodeo

**Free breakfast 7:30 - 9:30 a.m.**  
**Ice cream social 1:30 - 2:30 p.m.**





## Roughrider Electric Cooperative members participate in annual meeting

There were 128 registered voting members gathered in Hazen for Roughrider Electric Cooperative's 2024 annual meeting on June 5. Prior to the meeting starting, members enjoyed a complimentary meal served by Kimi's Catering and were able to visit with Roughrider Electric staff and other members. Upon arrival, members also received an appreciation gift for attending the meeting.

Roughrider Electric President Greg Steckler welcomed and thanked members for attending the annual meeting. The membership voted to fill the board positions held by Roger Kudrna representing the Western District, Troy Sailer representing the Central District and Darell Herman representing the Eastern District. All three incumbents were unanimously reelected to retain their seats on the board.

Members listened to cooperative updates from CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, along with

CFO Alex Craigmile. Operations manager, Shawn Olson and manager of member services, Brad Quenette also addressed the membership.

Leonard Hibl, director of member services and key accounts, highlighted the Operation Round Up program and recognized scholarship and Youth Tour recipients. Luck-of-the-draw scholarships were awarded to: Myah Johnson, Hazen High School; Myah Mosset, Hazen High School; Sheyenne Busche, Hazen High School; and Tyson Wick, Hazen High School.

The board of directors, CEOs and staff at Roughrider Electric thank our members for participating in the annual meeting of the membership and look forward to meeting your needs in the future. ■

## MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

# Overhead and underground lines



**Travis Kupper**

When it comes to the transmission and distribution of electricity, we often get questions about the two primary methods: overhead power lines and underground power lines. Each method has its own set of advantages and disadvantages, which influence cost, reliability, aesthetics and environmental impact. Let's delve into the differences between overhead and underground power lines

to better understand their respective strengths and limitations.

## Overhead power lines

### Pros

- **Cost-effectiveness:** One of the most significant advantages of overhead power lines is their lower initial installation cost compared to underground lines. The materials used for overhead lines, such as poles, conductors and insulators, are typically less expensive than those required for underground installation.
- **Accessibility and maintenance:** Overhead power lines are more accessible for maintenance and repairs, as they are visible and easily reachable. This accessibility translates to faster response times and lower maintenance costs, contributing to overall reliability.
- **Scalability:** Overhead power lines offer greater flexibility for expansion and upgrades. Additional wires can be added to existing poles or new poles can be erected without the need for extensive excavation work, making it easier to accommodate growing energy demands.

### Cons

- **Susceptibility to weather:** Overhead power lines are exposed to the elements and are susceptible to damage from severe weather events, such as storms, high winds and lightning strikes. This vulnerability can lead to power outages and safety hazards for both utility workers and the public.
- **Height clearance concerns:** Despite their visibility, overhead power lines pose a risk of accidental contact, particularly when moving tall equipment or large machinery. Farmers must remain vigilant and adhere to recommended height clearance guidelines to avoid striking power lines, which can

result in serious injury, equipment damage and power outages.

## Underground power lines

### Pros


- **Enhanced reliability:** Underground power lines are less susceptible to weather-related outages and external interference, as they are protected from elements, such as wind, ice and falling debris.

### Cons

- **Higher initial cost:** The primary drawback of underground power lines is their significantly higher upfront installation cost compared to overhead lines. Excavation, trenching and cable-laying processes are labor-intensive and require specialized equipment, increasing project expenses.
- **Limited accessibility for maintenance:** Underground power lines are more challenging to access for maintenance and repairs, as they are buried beneath the ground. Locating and accessing faults or damaged cables can be time-consuming and costly, leading to longer outage durations and increased operational challenges.
- **Technical challenges:** Underground power lines are subject to technical limitations, such as heat dissipation, cable capacity and voltage regulation. These factors can impact system performance and may require additional engineering considerations during design and installation.

The choice between overhead and underground power lines involves weighing various factors, such as cost and reliability. While overhead lines offer cost-effectiveness and scalability, underground lines provide enhanced reliability, aesthetic improvement and reduced environmental impact.

Ultimately, the selection of the most suitable transmission and distribution method depends on the specific requirements and priorities of each project, community or cooperative. By carefully evaluating these factors and considering long-term implications, stakeholders can make informed decisions to ensure the efficient and sustainable delivery of electricity for generations to come. ■



## SAFETY STARTS WITH ME:

# Protecting members against utility scams

In today's interconnected world, millions of Americans face the persistent threat of utility scams, which manifest through various channels, such as phone calls, emails and text messages. Remaining vigilant against these evolving tactics is crucial for safeguarding oneself and one's community from financial harm and identity theft.

"Staying informed and cautious is the best defense against utility scams," says Brent Hysjulien, billing coordinator. Here is how you can be better prepared:

- **Awareness is key:** Stay updated on the latest scam reports from local and national news outlets and utility companies to recognize potential threats.
- **Watch for red flags:** Be wary of common scam tactics, such as overpayment tricks and smishing (SMS phishing) attempts and question any suspicious communications.
- **Take control:** Take time to assess the situation, being suspicious of unusual requests, and verify the legitimacy of any communication with the utility company directly.

"If the request seems strange or urgent, you're likely being targeted by a scammer," Hysjulien says.

"If someone calls you on behalf of Roughrider Electric and it sounds like a scam, hang up and call the office immediately."

As we navigate the digital landscape, it's imperative to remain vigilant and proactive in protecting ourselves and our communities from utility scams.



By staying informed, exercising caution and reporting suspicious activities, we can collectively work toward a safer environment, shielding our friends and neighbors from falling victim to fraudulent schemes. ■



## EXPLORE IT, ADORE IT AND SAVE: Medora discounts

Roughrider Electric Cooperative is excited to offer Medora discounts for some unforgettable family summer fun! Roughrider Electric is able to offer its members a discount by being a Touchstone Energy® member. Simply call 1-800-MEDORA-1 and give the discount code "**TOUCH2024**" for a 15% discount on all of the following during any night of the season.

The code is good for reservations over the phone, website or in person.

### Discounts offered for Medora vacation

- Medora Musical
- Pitchfork steak fondue
- Bully Pulpit Golf Course
- Gospel Brunch tickets
- Old Town Hall Theater shows

### Lodging at any of the following:

- Elkhorn Quarters
- Badlands Motel
- Rough Riders Hotel



# Message from Basin Electric Power Cooperative

BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND GENERAL MANAGER TODD BRICKHOUSE  
AND BOARD PRESIDENT WAYNE PELTIER

***Editor's note: Basin Electric Power Cooperative supplies much of the power distributed to Roughrider Electric Cooperative members throughout the tri-county area. We asked Todd Brickhouse and Wayne Peltier to update our members on what is happening at Basin Electric.***

In 2023, Basin Electric Power Cooperative continued to provide reliable and affordable power to our members. We understand the quality of life of our members depends on our efforts, and we value the trust our members place in us to provide electric service.

Today's reliability and affordability is the result of careful planning and prudent investments that occurred years and even decades ago. We are striving to continue this tradition of stewardship. Over the next five years, we expect to invest as much as \$4 billion in our utility system. This is in addition to the \$470 million we invested in 2023, which was our highest single year of capital expenditures since 2015.

These investments are required due to the robust growth of Basin Electric's members. In 2023, Basin Electric's megawatt-hour sales to members increased 7.5%, which is on top of 7.8% growth in 2022. We expect strong growth to continue over the next decade, driven by healthy agricultural, petroleum and technology sectors of the economy.

Growth presents both opportunities and risks. The biggest opportunity is for our members to experience higher standards of living from economic growth. With respect to risks, many of these loads can materialize faster than Basin Electric can build generation, which impacts both reliability and affordability. To mitigate some of the risks, we work with our members throughout the year to develop innovative rates for cryptocurrency and large loads.

Our 2023 consolidated margins were consistent with our targeted margin of \$150 million, although we achieved these margins by utilizing a portion of our rate stability fund. Our utility margins were well above what was budgeted. However, results at Dakota Gasification Company, our for-profit subsidiary, were below budget due to weak commodity prices and lower-than-budgeted plant capacity factors.

Dakota Gasification's results will always be impacted by commodity prices, but we made great progress toward de-risking a portion of this volatility in 2023. By the end of the year, construction related to Dakota Gasification's carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) sequestration project was largely complete, and CO<sub>2</sub>



**Wayne Peltier and Todd Brickhouse**

sequestration commenced in mid-February 2024.

During 2023, our senior leadership team and board updated Basin Electric's strategic plan. This included a new mission statement: We are a safe, environmentally responsible cooperative that provides reliable, affordable power, products and services to sustain the quality of life for our member-owners across rural America. This mission statement provides us with a unifying sense of purpose and is supported by eight strategic objectives designed to increase the value we provide to our members. While achieving all of our strategic objectives is important, we put particular emphasis on safety, reliability and affordability by making them cooperative-wide goals.

In closing, we offer our thanks to our members and stakeholders for your trust and support. ■

## Roughrider Electric board meeting highlights: April 26

The meeting of the board of directors of Roughrider Electric Cooperative was held on April 26 at Roughrider Electric's Hazen office. The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m. A quorum was present. Also attending were co-General Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile, Director of Key Accounts Leonard Hibel, Line Superintendent Shawn Olson, Board Liaison Connie Hill and Legal Counsel Jennifer Grosz. Roughrider Electric's Manager of Engineering Trisha Samuelson and System Engineer Jordan Kleppen attended a portion of the board meeting.

**Consent agenda:** There were no proposed additions to the agenda. The agenda was approved as presented.

**Strategic/action:** Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates on Upper Missouri Power Cooperative, Western Area Power Administration, Basin Electric Power Cooperative and National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Legislative Conference. Reports for West

Dakota Utility Services and 3C Construction were reviewed. The co-general managers also provided Basin Electric's CEO report.

**Action items:** Action items were resolved.

**Department reports:** Craigmile provided the CFO report. Olson provided the operations report, which included project updates and other operations information. Hibel's written member service report was provided. Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar provided a written report for the board. Grosz provided the board with an update on the status of projects addressed in her written legal report.

**Discussion/general information:** The board discussed Upper Missouri candidates as well as other meetings and programs.

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

**Next meeting date:** The next meeting is at 1 p.m. MT July 22 in Medora. ■



[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



## Operation Round Up application deadline approaching, July 1.

Contact the Roughrider Electric office or visit [roughriderelectric.com](http://roughriderelectric.com) for more information.




Become a fan of Roughrider Electric Cooperative to learn timely co-op news!

[facebook.com/RoughriderElectric](https://facebook.com/RoughriderElectric)