



Director **Angela Carlson** looks at the cooperative's archives from the past 75 years.

Slope Electric Cooperative members participate in annual meeting

Slope Electric Cooperative member-owners gathered in Hettinger for Slope Electric's 2023 annual meeting on June 8. The 2023 meeting marked 75 years of providing electric service for Slope Electric. Prior to the meeting, members enjoyed a complimentary meal from B&E BBQ, munched on Popper's Kettle Corn and listened to music by Eclectic Wreck, as kids played on the inflatable slide. To further celebrate, members could check out the archives of Slope Electric, ranging from photos to vintage insulators. A bucket truck, safety booth and electric vehicle were also present for members to learn more about.

Slope Electric President Steven Wagner welcomed and thanked members for attending the annual meeting, which celebrated "Power for Generations." This year's theme reflected on generations before who joined together to provide electric service to local areas no one else would serve and how Slope Electric has

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Slope Electric Cooperative Inc.

OUTLOOK

116 E. 12th St. • New England, ND 58647 | 701-579-4191 • www.slopeelectric.coop

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been preparing to provide electric service for future generations.

The membership fulfilled the cooperative principle, democratic member control, by voting to fill the board positions held by Steven Wagner, representing Adams County, and Angela Carlson and Charlotte Meier, representing Hettinger County. All three incumbents were unanimously reelected to retain their seats on the board.

Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile presented the financial report to the membership. He noted Brady, Martz & Associates audited the 2022 financial statements of Slope Electric and gave the organization an unmodified opinion, the highest rating possible.

Members listened to cooperative updates from the co-general managers/CEOs, Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, along with Operations Manager Dean Volk and Manager of Member Services Brooke Waltner. Volk noted Slope Electric received the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives Safety Performance Award in 2023, which is presented to cooperatives with zero recordable injuries for five years.

Bill Gion, a Slope Electric member and president of the Operation Round Up board of directors, highlighted the charitable foundation's 2022 giving. Operation Round Up is a cooperative program in which Slope Electric members can voluntarily choose to round up their monthly utility bills to the next dollar and donate their pennies. The foundation board members, who are also Slope Electric members, meet and disburse funds in the form of grants. Grants are distributed to worthy nonprofit corporations, organizations and individuals in the Slope Electric service area.

Two employees and one director were recognized at the meeting for their years of dedication to Slope Electric: Jon Lawhead, journeyman lineworker, 10 years; Brooke Waltner, manager of member services, 10 years; and Dale Hande, director, five years.

Youth recognized and awarded

Slope Electric annually awards one \$500 scholarship to a graduating senior from each of the high schools within its service area. The



Employees help register members at the annual meeting.

following scholarship winners were chosen by faculty members from each respective school:

- Bowman County High School chose Nicholas Rodakowski, son of Luke and Andrea Rodakowski. He will be attending North Dakota State College of Science (NDSOS) in pursuit of an industrial electrical degree.
- Mott-Regent High School chose Andrew Eikamp, son of Justin and Becky Eikamp. He will be attending North Dakota State University (NDSU) in pursuit of a degree in agricultural systems management and marketing.
- Hettinger High School chose Bennett Jorgenson, son of Cody and Tara Jorgenson. He will be attending NDSU in pursuit of a degree in business.
- New England High School chose Hannah Frank, daughter of Kyle and Kyra Frank. Hannah will be attending NDSOS in pursuit of a degree in dental hygiene.
- Scranton High School chose Lilian Steeke, daughter of Trevor and Misty Steeke. Lilli will be attending South Dakota State University in pursuit of a degree in agricultural communication.
- Lemmon High School had no applicants.

Also recognized was the recipient of the \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship, Caleb Sarsland from Rhame.

Youth Tour recipients Julie Sarsland, Rhame, and Julia Dalley, Hettinger, were also acknowledged. Sarsland and Dalley



The Slope and Adams County 4-H Livestock Judging Team lead the membership in the Pledge of Allegiance.

joined delegates from across the state and nation to learn from and about each other, while participating in events that showcase our nation's rich history, U.S. government, the cooperative business model and rural electrification.

At the end of the meeting, Slope Electric awarded two "Luck-of-the-Draw" student scholarships to students who registered for the meeting and attended with a parent or guardian. The goal of these scholarships is to encourage the younger generation to learn about the cooperative business model, and to show how their voices can be heard, and how their votes count. Recipients included Jesse Reich from Mott-Regent High School and Bennett Jorgenson from Hettinger High School.

Members recognized for participating

Bentz wrapped up the evening by stating the importance of the cooperative's members. "Without you, we would not exist. As we look to the future, we view our role as a catalyst for good. Working together, we can accomplish great things for our members now and be your family's power for generations," Bentz noted.

The evening concluded with door prizes being drawn for the members, and a drawing for the kids who attended the meeting.

The board of directors, co-general managers/ CEO's and staff at Slope Electric wish to thank our members for participating in the annual meeting of the membership and look forward to meeting your electrical needs in the future. ■

Manager's message:

Affordable electricity powers quality of life

Most of us use electricity, either directly or indirectly, almost all the time. Because electricity is so abundant and available with the simple flip of a switch, it's easy to take it for granted.

According to the Energy Information Administration, the typical U.S. household now uses more air conditioning, appliances and consumer electronics than ever before. The average home also contains 10 or more internet-connected devices. Considering everything powered by electricity, it's no wonder we occasionally might wince at our monthly bill. But keep in mind, it's no longer just the "light bill."



Jason Bentz

and bread increased 5.5%. But the cost of electricity only increased 4.6%. Considering all the ways we depend on electricity, it still remains a great value.

So, the next time you're enjoying your favorite podcast, TV series or movie, consider the value of electricity and how it enhances your quality of life.

We care about you, the members we serve, and understand electricity is more than a commodity. It's a necessity. That's why Slope Electric Cooperative will continue working hard to power your life, reliably and affordably. ■



Electricity powers quality of life

Electricity powers our quality of life. From the infrastructure of your home (appliances, water heater and HVAC system) to charging your smartphones and powering your computers, TV and Wi-Fi router, your energy bill covers so much more than lighting.

Today, there is more demand for electricity than ever before. At home, in schools and businesses, and in commercial sectors, such as transportation, the need for electricity is increasing.

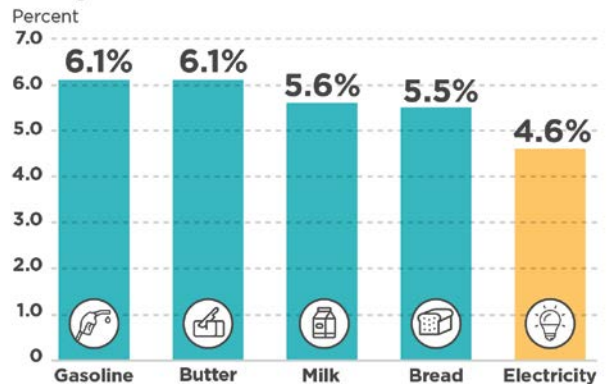
Typically, when demand goes up, so does the price, as is the case with most goods or services, like cable or even your favorite specialty coffee. However, that's not true with electricity. Let's take a look at how the value of electricity compares to other common expenses.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the five-year national average of the cost of gasoline increased 6.1%, butter increased 6.1%

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

Although inflation has led to increasing costs in many areas of our lives, the cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common goods. Looking at price increases over the last five years, electricity remains a good value.

Average Annual Price Increase 2017-2022



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
Consumer Price Index

Dalley and Sarsland make memories on Youth Tour

Each year in June, over 1,000 high school students travel to Washington, D.C., for an opportunity to learn more about electric cooperatives, meet state congressional delegates and make lifelong friends and memories. This year, Slope Electric Cooperative sponsored Julie Sarsland, Rhame, and Julia Dalley, Hettinger, for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

Getting to Washington, D.C.

Slope Electric Cooperative holds a contest annually for high school sophomore and junior students to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Students enter the contest by writing an essay in response to a question posed by the cooperative. This year's question had to do with American history.

Sarsland and Dalley were this year's winners and joined North Dakota youth sponsored by electric cooperatives and students from around the nation in Washington, D.C. for a week of learning and networking.

A once-in-a-lifetime experience

Fifteen North Dakota youth gathered before the trip at the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives headquarters in Mandan for some team building before leaving for Washington, D.C. The group reviewed the itinerary and gathered T-shirts for the week. The youth left from North Dakota Sunday and returned late Friday. Each day included a new learning experience and sights to see.

Once the plane landed, the group was off to their first stop, the Holocaust Museum. Later that day, the NRECA Youth Tour students learned about co-ops and youth advocacy. The following days were busy. The group toured museums, national monuments and visited Arlington National Cemetery. They also attended other activities, such as a riverboat cruise, "The Lion King" musical and a Nationals baseball game. The group even got on the big screen during the Nationals game!



Julia Dalley and Julie Sarsland join other Youth Tour participants in Washington, D.C.

The group was able to partake in sessions to learn more about co-ops and youth advocacy. Sarsland noted her experience on the Youth Tour has pushed her to become more involved in leadership programs in her area and help other young people step out of their comfort zone and try something new. Dalley said the Youth Tour helped her grow in her leadership skills and understand the importance of working as a group.

While in Washington, D.C., the Youth Tour group met with North Dakota's Sens. John Hoeven and Kevin Cramer and toured the U.S. Capitol. Congressman Kelly Armstrong joined the group for dinner at Founding Farmers and visited with the North Dakota students about issues ranging from energy to agriculture.

"You won't regret writing it, but you will regret not writing it and missing out on a once-in-a-lifetime experience," Sarsland offered to future participants. Dalley says if you have a passion for history, art, politics, learning life skills or making lifelong friends, then the Youth Tour is the opportunity for you!

Stay tuned for the 2024 Youth Tour application in an upcoming issue of *North Dakota Living*. ■

Safety Starts with ME: **Safe harvest**

Agriculture is the backbone of our country, and our livelihood greatly depends on the crops provided by America's farmers. In addition to being one of the most labor-intensive professions, farming is also considered one of the most dangerous jobs in the United States.

The hard work and exhaustive labor are tough, but rushing the job to save time can be extremely dangerous – even deadly – when farming near electrical equipment.

“Every year, we see collisions where tractors and other farming equipment accidentally collide with utility poles and power lines, causing injuries and power outages,” said Andrew Sonsalla, a line technician at Slope Electric Cooperative.

These dangerous accidents can be avoided by looking up and around your surroundings when operating large farm machinery. If you're preparing for harvest season, please keep the following safety tips in mind:

- **Maintain safe distances.** Always be aware of the power poles and maintain a safe distance. Keep all machinery, including combines, tractors and other tall equipment, at least 10 feet away from power lines. Remember, some power lines may be lower than others, so it's crucial to remain vigilant and make sure you are aware of their height.
- **Know the location of power lines.** Familiarize yourself with the locations of power lines and poles in the fields where you are working. Take note of any changes or new installations since the last harvest season. Stay updated and ensure all workers are aware of the potential hazards posed by power lines.
- **Be extra cautious with tall equipment.** When operating tall machinery, such as grain augers or portable elevators, always be mindful of the height and the proximity to power lines. Ensure these tools are carefully maneuvered, and their movements are coordinated to avoid any contact with power lines.
- **Report damaged or downed lines.** If you encounter any damaged or downed power



lines, never attempt to move them yourself. Immediately report the situation to the utility company or local authorities and keep a safe distance until help arrives. If your equipment makes contact with an energized line, contact 911 immediately and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is deenergized.

Safety Starts with ME (and YOU)

Each one of us has a responsibility to prioritize safety during the harvest season.

“By following these safety tips and encouraging others to do the same, we can create a safer work environment for everyone involved,” Sonsalla said. “It's important to remain vigilant, keep an eye out for potential hazards and report any unsafe conditions promptly.”

Remember, safety should never be compromised. The harvest season is a time to celebrate the fruits of our labor, but let's ensure we celebrate it safely. By staying aware, informed and cautious around electricity and power poles, we can make this harvest season a successful and accident-free one. ■

Look up and around

The fall is a busy time for agricultural producers across the state, with harvest getting started. Slope Electric Cooperative wants to remind all those operating farm equipment to look up and around to familiarize yourself with the location of power lines. For your safety, make sure you have at least 10 feet of clearance between power lines and your combines, grain augers, pickers, balers and front-end loaders. Also, never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.

If you see a power line issue that may need Slope Electric's attention, please call the



Farm equipment is getting larger and the increased height can cause more contacts with powerlines.

Always look up before operating machinery or raising implements. And be extra cautious when moving tall equipment around the yard and exiting or entering fields from roadways.

office. Or, send an email to comments@slopeelectric.coop with location information and

a photo, if possible. Working together helps ensure the safety of all. ■

Rural Development Finance Corporation
GROWING COMMUNITIES

**Applications are due September 11.
For more information contact the Slope Electric office.**

In observance of



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

our office will be closed on Sept. 4.

Line crews will be available to respond to emergencies and power outages by calling 800-559-4191.

Board meeting highlights

Slope Electric board of directors met June 29 at the Bowman outpost.

- Slope Electric board of directors met June 29 at Bowman's outpost.
- Reorganization of the board was held. The officers are as follows; president- Steven Wegner, vice president- Anthony Larson, secretary- Angela Carlson and treasurer- Chip Fischer.
- The board reviewed and approved the minutes of the May 25 meeting.
- Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz presented the co-general managers' report.
- A May report was presented to the board from WDUS and 3C Construction.
- Basin provided a report to the board.
- Alex Craigmile, CFO, presented a summary of the financial report.
- Dean Volk, operations director, and Brooke Waltner, member relations, provided the board with an update.
- Jennifer Grosz, attorney, updated the board on the status of projects.
- Reviewed board member reports.



116 E. 12th St. - PO Box 338
New England, ND 58647-0338

Phone: 701-579-4191
or 800-559-4191
Fax: 701-579-4193

Email us:
comments@slopeelectric.coop
UNDERGROUND LINE LOCATES
800-795-0555 or 811

SLOPE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Steven Wegner, President
Anthony Larson, Vice President
Angela Carlson, Secretary
Henry "Chip" Fischer, Treasurer
Jerome Caron, Director
Dale Hande, Director
Lauren Klewin, Director
Charlotte Meier, Director

MANAGEMENT

Jason Bentz
CO-GM/CEO

Travis Kupper
CO-GM/CEO

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