



Kids enjoy the remodeled Hettinger Public School Aquatic Center.

MAKING A SPLASH: Hettinger Public School Aquatic Center returns better than ever

BY SAMANTHA VANGSNESS

After a period of closure, a Hettinger area family favorite is back with a fresh new look. June marked the reopening of the Hettinger Public School Aquatic Center to the community for various activities, from swimming lessons, open swim and swim classes for all ages.

The road to remodel

The plan for a refresh to the Hettinger pool began in 2020, after damage to the 40-year-old pool infrastructure

was identified. In 2021, the community passed a \$3.3 million bond for improvements to the school, which included funding for the pool area. Input on the remodel was gathered by community members, and the reconstruction designer considered the feedback when designing. Some of the changes include the addition of a classroom, a splash pad and windows.

“The original locker rooms were built around 1967,” said Darin Seamands, Hettinger

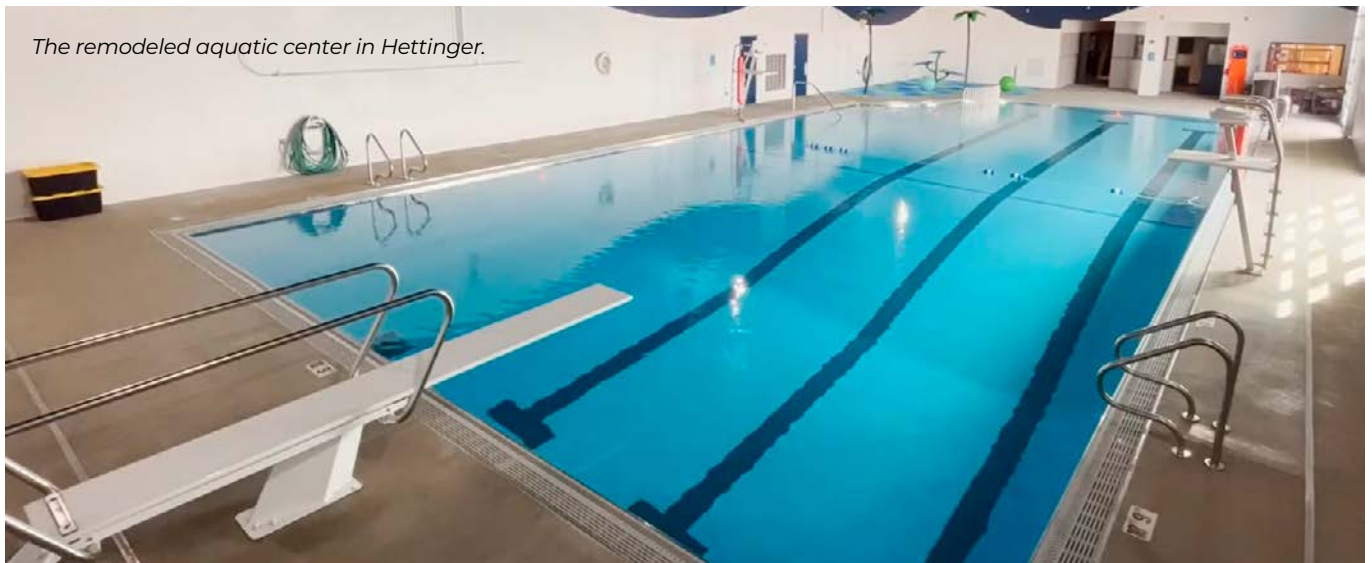
Slope Electric Cooperative Inc.

OUTLOOK

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The remodeled aquatic center in Hettinger.

Public School superintendent. The original locker rooms were quite spacious, but Seamands thought a couple of other ideas would be more beneficial, so one of the original locker rooms was remodeled into a classroom.

“We see this room being used during school hours and by the community for things such as classes or parties,” Seamands said.

The other locker room was split into two to create the present-day locker rooms. Additional areas in the remodel include space for the lifeguards, storage for swim gear and a closet for janitorial equipment.

The reconstruction of the pool added some new amenities and allows for additional amenities to be added in the future, if desired. A splash pad was added, the pool was replastered and the deck on the outside of the pool was refinished during the remodel, noted Heather Ebert, business manager of the Hettinger Public School Aquatic Center. The center still has its diving board and would be able to add a water slide in the future.

Seamands said Ebert has been instrumental to the remodel process. “There were times she was here every day, getting done what needed to be done to ensure the process could keep moving,” he said.

The contractor of the aquatic center pool remodel, Burnn Boiler Inc., was able to save the school around \$20,000 on the project. The saved

funds will go to projects originally planned, but which had been put aside due to budgetary limits. Seamands said the funds may be used for a patio area near the pool, but those decisions are not solidified yet.

Fun for all

The aquatic center has been open since June, and has been packed with kids. This doesn't just include Hettinger locals, but people from other surrounding towns as well. Other communities have utilized the space for swimming lessons. The Hettinger Public School Aquatic Center is one of the only indoor pools in the area. Some who visited the area over the summer said the addition makes the community so much more welcoming.

The summer was filled with open swimming, swimming lessons, water aerobics and more. Now, going into the school year, the pool will be utilized for K-12 physical education classes. Ebert said they hope to have lap swimming in the morning and water aerobics in the evening, but they are still working on the daily fall schedule.

“We want to thank the community for volunteering when needed and everyone's patience on this project,” Seaman said. They look forward to the future of the aquatic center and plan to host an open house this fall, so everyone can come and see the newly remodeled space. ■

Manager's message:

Factors that impact electricity prices



Travis Kupper

The daily cost of living seems to have increased across the board throughout our state and country.

Just as inflation has impacted everything, from the price of gasoline to the price of eggs, costs for the fuels required to produce electricity have also risen.

This is a timely topic, so I wanted to help explain

some of the factors impacting electricity prices (and energy bills) in this month's message.

While there is no short answer, a few key elements impact electricity prices and rates. Some of these factors Slope Electric Cooperative can manage, some of them you can impact and other factors are beyond our control. So, let me break it down.

There are two primary parts to your monthly electric bill: a base charge and an energy consumption or kilowatt-hour (kWh) charge. To understand your total energy costs and what impacts your bill, let's unpack one piece at a time.

The first is a fixed monthly base charge, which covers the costs associated with providing electricity to your home. This includes equipment, materials, labor and operating costs necessary to serve each meter in Slope Electric's service territory, regardless of the amount of energy used.

To ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local system, including power lines, substations and other necessary equipment. Like many other businesses, we've experienced supply chain issues and steep cost increases for some of our basic equipment. For example, the cost for a distribution transformer (which looks like a long


metal can at the top of a power pole) increased from \$1,000 in 2021 to \$1,500 this year, and wait times to receive this essential equipment are up to 20 weeks or longer.

Because we are a not-for-profit cooperative, some of these expenses must be passed on to our members. I should note the base charge is the same for everyone in the rate class and the costs are shared equally across the membership in that rate class.

Another component of your monthly bill is the kWh charge, which covers how much energy you consume. You've likely noticed the amount of energy you use can vary from month to month and is typically impacted by extreme temperatures. When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling or heating equipment operates longer, which increases your home energy use. Regardless, energy consumption is an area you have some control over, and you can lower your monthly bill by actively reducing energy use. Your thermostat is a great place to start, experts suggest to keep it close to 78 degrees during summer months and 68 degrees in the cooler months.

I hope this information sheds light on some of the factors impacting electricity prices. While we can't control the weather or the rising costs of fuels, please know Slope Electric is doing everything possible to keep internal costs down.

We're here to help you, too. Contact us if you have questions about your energy bill or for advice on how to save energy at home. ■



Back-to-school energy tips

BY SAMANTHA VANGSNESS



Electronic and mobile devices, TVs, computers and gaming stations have become common devices in today's homes. Additionally, the rise of smart home appliances, advanced technology and electric vehicles have slowly, but steadily, reshaped our homes and lifestyles.

Children are growing up in this highly connected world, where technology plays a significant role in our daily lives and energy consumption. It is crucial to teach them the importance of saving energy as a valuable lesson.

Learning by doing

We know children learn by observing what their parents do. Even if they don't say anything, children are processing their parents' actions. When you turn off the lights when leaving a room or unplug the phone charger once the device is fully charged, they will notice. Learning about energy efficiency can be fun and have a lasting impact.

For younger kids, turn energy efficiency into a "treasure hunt" game to locate all the things in your home that use electricity. Depending on the age of the children, challenge them to count and group the items into categories, such as electronics, appliances or lights. If age appropriate, have them create a list. Ask which gadgets and appliances could be turned off or unplugged to save power every day. Show older children how to program smart thermostats and appliances. Shop with them for LED lights and discuss ENERGY STAR-rated appliances. Kids of all ages can learn a few simple energy-saving habits that can last a lifetime.

Energy-saving tips

The whole family can chip in and save on electricity costs by following a couple of additional energy saving tips.

- **Adjust your thermostat**

Now that there aren't as many people occupying the house all day, try turning your thermostat up a few degrees when you're not home in the warmer months and down a few degrees in the cooler months.

- **Run appliances when full**

To reduce unnecessary loads of laundry and dishes, only run appliances when full.

- **Use the fridge and freezer wisely**

When cooking meals in the warmer months, limit the number of times you open your fridge and freezer. Try getting all the ingredients you need for a meal or recipe out at one time.

- **Cook outside**

A great way to hold onto summer is cooking outside. Cooking outside also prevents you from having to heat the house by turning on the stove top or oven.

- **Unplug devices**

A simple tip everyone can do is to unplug devices when not in use. Another tip is unplugging devices when fully charged and unplug the charger from the outlet. ■

Fischer earns continuing education award

The directors at Slope Electric Cooperative are committed to advancing their knowledge so they can perform their duties to the best of their abilities. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) offers programs for directors to do just that.

Henry “Chip” Fischer, a Slope Electric director representing Bowman County, earned NRECA’s Director Gold Credential. The Director Gold Credential is the highest credential honor a director can receive. This certificate recognizes directors who have completed two tiers of NRECA training, plus three additional course credits. NRECA’s director certificate programs are specifically designed to help electric cooperative directors, at every stage of their service, understand their roles and responsibilities, stay up to date on the key issues and trends in the industry and prepare them to meet the challenges facing electric cooperatives now and in the future. ■



Henry “Chip” Fischer, right, a Slope Electric Cooperative director representing Bowman County, receives his Director Gold Credential.

September 17-23 Farm Safety and Health Week

The week will include webinars on various topics from equipment safety reminders to heart and mental health check points. Agrisafe.org has a list of in-depth topics and more information.



Agrisafe.org

Safety Starts with ME: **Safe hunting**



- Take notice of posted warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Know the location of power lines and equipment on the land where you hunt.
- Be especially careful in wooded areas, where power lines may not be visible.
- Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment can conduct electricity to anyone who encounters them, causing shock or electrocution.
- Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Any non-electrical equipment attached to a pole can pose an obstruction and serious hazard to our line crews.

Safety Starts with ME (and YOU)

Safety doesn't take just two or three members; it takes a collective effort by all.

"By following these safety tips and encouraging others to do the same, we can create a safer hunting environment for everyone involved," Olson said. If you see something that doesn't look right while hunting in Slope Electric's service area, call 800-559-4191 as soon as possible.

Hunting season is a time to make memories that will be remembered and talked about for years to come. Don't forget to take these safety tips into consideration while making memories, and encourage others to do the same to ensure a safe hunting environment for all. ■

Hunting season is on the horizon, as the weather cools and the days begin to get shorter. Slope Electric Cooperative encourages members to take some extra precautions to stay safe during hunting season.

"We encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment and be safe when hunting," said Shay Olson, an apprentice line technician. "Hunting season is an exciting time for many, but safety needs to be front of mind at all times."

To mitigate accidents, Slope Electric encourages you to use the following electrical safety tips for safe hunting.



Simplify and save with automatic payments

Enjoy convenient billing and earn credit toward your electric bill

In today's fast-paced world, convenience is key. Slope Electric Cooperative understands the value of simplifying your life and maximizing your savings. That's why Slope Electric introduced a hassle-free payment option that not only streamlines your billing process, but also rewards you for your participation.

By signing up for automatic payments, members can unlock a host of benefits and enjoy a seamless experience with Slope Electric.

Streamlined payments and financial perks

With automatic payments, your monthly bill will be automatically deducted from your bank account, ensuring a timely payment each month. This convenient option eliminates the stress of remembering due dates.

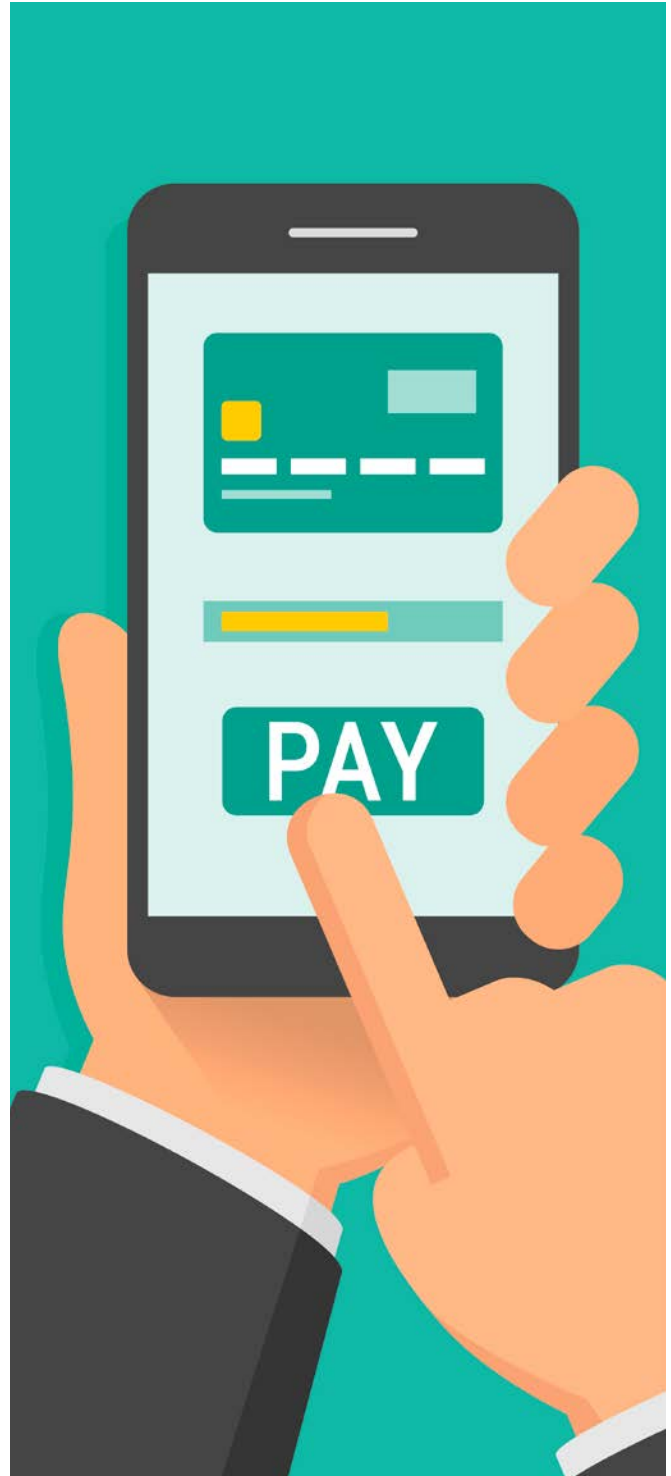
Through automatic payments, Slope Electric offers members the opportunity to save even more. For members who choose paperless statements and enroll in automatic payments, Slope Electric rewards a \$1 credit for each month enrolled. These savings accumulate throughout the year and are reflected on your August billing statement.

Discover the benefits of SmartHub

To take advantage of automatic payments and the accompanying benefits, Slope Electric utilizes SmartHub, a user-friendly online platform that gives you full control over your account. Through SmartHub, you can effortlessly manage your billing preferences, monitor your usage and access valuable resources to help you make informed decisions about your energy consumption.

How to get started

Signing up for automatic payments is quick and easy. Simply visit www.slopeelectric.coop/ways-pay to learn more about the benefits of SmartHub and the enrollment process. Take the first step toward simplifying your billing experience and start earning credits on your electric bill. ■



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Slope Electric Cooperative Inc. is an equal opportunity provider.

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 800-748-5533.