

Members receive NDSU Harvest Bowl recognition

BY RACHEL NEFF

March is National Agriculture Month, and Slope Electric Cooperative salutes our farmers and ranchers who make agriculture one of North Dakota's top industries.

North Dakota State University (NDSU) also acknowledges the agricultural impact on the state by recognizing leading agriculturalists through the NDSU Harvest Bowl.

"The Harvest Bowl is a weekend event, where we are able to recognize agriculture and athletics, and the connection between," said Duane Hauck, NDSU Harvest Bowl chair.

The Harvest Bowl annually recognizes dedicated agriculturalists in all of North Dakota's 53 counties and 10 counties in western Minnesota with the naming of county agriculturalist honorees. The honorees are selected through the local NDSU Extension offices.

"Each county agent nominates an individual or couple based on active community leaders, people who are innovative and active in promoting the ag industry, and are highly respected individuals," Hauck said.

Four Slope Electric Cooperative members were recognized during the event.



Brad and Sheila Steiner

Brad and Sheila Steiner, Hettinger County

Brad and Sheila Steiner are fourth-generation farmers and ranchers honored this year for their work raising wheat, canola, corn and sunflowers, and Black Baldy heifers.

"Brad has been very active in our crop improvement association and 4-H youth program. He has been a very strong leader in the 4-H archery program as an

amazing instructor and mentor to the kids. The Steiners are well-respected producers in the county that do a little bit of anything and everything," said Heidi Marxen, NDSU Extension agent for Hettinger County.

"It is an honor to be recognized," Brad said. "With all the trials over the years, we are still in business."

Brad is a member of the North Dakota Stockmen's Association

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and the Hettinger County weed board. Sheila, a retired special education teacher and 4-H leader, now spends her time as a part-time interventionist/substitute teacher in the local school district. The Steiners have three daughters.



Eric and Andrea Bowman

Eric and Andrea Bowman, Bowman County

The Bowman family raises registered and commercial Angus cattle in Bowman County. They also operate a small feedlot permitted by the state, where they develop

their own cattle as well as some for other ranchers in the area.

“Both my wife and I are graduates of NDSU, and it is an honor to be recognized by them for our work in agriculture in the community,” Eric said.

“The Bowman family exemplifies agriculture in our county by not only keeping to the family’s ranching roots, but also taking their operation to the next level through herd management and reproductive advancements. They have taken their knowledge of the beef industry to help others through reproductive consulting and custom feeding. They are also involved in community and youth development through multiple events and 4-H,” said Penny Nester, NDSU Extension agent for Bowman County.

Andrea is a leadership and civic engagement program coordinator with NDSU Extension, a member of the Bowman County school board and a Sunday school teacher. Eric is a board member of Rhame Township and coaches youth basketball in Bowman

Their three children, Dillon, Liv and Grayson, are also active helping hands on the ranch.

Scott and Kelley Ouradnik, Slope County

Scott and Kelley Ouradnik own and operate the Walking X Bar ranch located in Slope County, where they are known for raising their own



Scott and Kelley Ouradnik

heifer calves.

Working closely with the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS), the Ouradniks have completed an extensive installation of pipeline to help aid in a rotational grazing practice known as cell grazing, which

ultimately improves land function and health.

Along with their pipeline system, the most important part of their operation are their helping hands – Scott and Kelly’s three children, Jett, Cutter and Sage – who help in various ways around the ranch, Scott said.

“Scott and Kelley Ouradnik are not only successful producers on their operation, but also huge supporters of NDSU Extension programs and community projects. Their passion for 4-H is evident through the involvement of their three children,” said Shelby Hewson, the NDSU Extension agent for Slope County.

Scott is a volunteer firefighter and first responder with the Amidon Rural Fire Department and serves on the Slope County Commission. Kelley is the Bowman County Elementary school principal.



Todd and Judy Larson

Todd and Judy Larson, Adams County

Todd and Judy Larson, along with Todd’s parents, Bill and Colleen, own and operate Larson XL Simmental, a fourth-generation farm and ranch in Adams County. They raise Angus cattle and grow spring wheat,

sunflowers, oats, corn and feed.

“Todd and Judy were selected because they are extremely community-minded and huge supporters of our Extension office and 4-H. The Larson family is well deserving of this

nomination,” said Hannah Nordby, Adams County Extension agent.

The Larsons are actively involved in 4-H, as all five of their children are or have been active

participants. Todd is a deacon at the Reformed Presbyterian Church and Judy is a co-founder of Placemakers located in Lemmon, S.D. ■

Manager’s message: Stay in the know



Travis Kupper

At Slope Electric Cooperative, we are constantly striving to improve our operational efficiency, so we can provide the most reliable electric service possible for our consumer-members (that’s you!).

We rely on data for nearly every aspect of our operations, which is why we need your help. By

making sure we have your most accurate and complete contact information, we can continue to provide the high level of service you expect and deserve. Accurate information enables us to improve customer service and enhance communications for reporting and repairing outages. It also allows co-op members to receive information about other important programs, events and activities.

Up-to-date contact information can potentially speed up the power restoration process during an outage. For example, the phone number you provide is linked to your service address to our outage management system. This means when you call to report an outage, our system recognizes your phone number and matches it with your account location. Accurate information helps our outage management system predict the location and possible cause of an outage, making it easier for our crews to correct the problem.

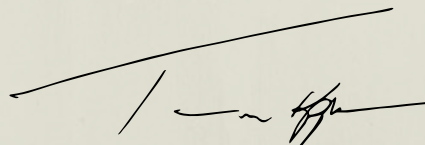
While we always do our best to maintain

service, we occasionally plan outages to update, repair or replace equipment. In these instances, we can provide advance notification to affected members through automated phone messages if we have your updated contact information and communication preferences.

Keeping the co-op updated with your information also helps us when there’s a question about energy use or billing. Emails and text messages are also used to notify registered members of any changes in co-op event details. In addition, discrepancies on your account can be taken care of promptly if Slope Electric has accurate account information.

Many of you have been members of the co-op for years, and it’s likely your account information hasn’t been updated for some time. We recognize many members now use a cellphone as their primary phone service, and we might not have that number in our system.

I want to emphasize we will never share your contact information with any third parties. It is only used by Slope Electric to send important information to you. Please take a moment to confirm or update your contact information by contacting our office. By doing so, you will be helping us improve service and efficiency, so we can better serve you and all members of the co-op. ■





Slope Electric Cooperative apprentice line technician **Shay Olson**, second from right, accepts a Safety Performance Award on behalf of the cooperative.

Lineworkers attend AT&S Conference

The North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) hosted its 59th annual Apprenticeship Training and Safety Conference Jan. 11-13 in Bismarck. The conference is sponsored by NDAREC with cooperation from the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship.

The conference drew representatives of NDAREC member-cooperatives, students at the Bismarck State College lineworker program and the electric industry for classroom sessions, equipment evaluations and award ceremonies. Training topics included N.D. Department of Transportation updates, protective grounding,

lineworker safety and tool training, transformer connections, conducting a thorough accident investigation, and more.

"Participants increase their knowledge and skills of the trade by attending the Apprenticeship Training & Safety Conference and, in turn, improve the safety, resilience and reliability of the electrical system, which directly impacts the quality of life for our members," said Christina Roemmich, NDAREC safety services director.

During the banquet, Slope Electric Cooperative was presented with the Safety Performance Award. ■

Safety Starts with ME: Mark Frank

Power surges can be frustrating, but typically happen unexpectedly. To reduce the members' risk of damage, it is important to be knowledgeable and prepare ahead of time if and when a power surge does strike.

"A power surge is typically caused by lightning, changes in electrical loads, faulty wiring or damaged power lines," said Mark Frank, a Slope Electric Cooperative line technician. "Regardless of the cause, a power surge can cause significant damage to electronic devices and equipment in your home."

Common causes

Electrical overload happens when devices or appliances are plugged into an outlet that cannot handle that amount of voltage, or if multiple devices are plugged in at the same time through an extension cord. If power surges are a reoccurring event in your house due to electrical overload, it is time to call a certified electrician to evaluate your home's circuits and electrical needs.

Faulty wiring in a home is another cause of power surges. Signs of a faulty wire include visible burns on outlets, buzzing sounds from outlets or frequently tripped circuit breakers.

"If you notice these signs, it may be time for an electrical wiring repair or update," Frank said.

A quick surge of electricity may also occur after Slope Electric restores the power after an outage. In the case of a power outage, it is important to unplug any sensitive devices around your home, then wait to plug them back in after power is restored.

Protect electronics in your home

There are two other ways in which you can save the longevity of devices in your home.

Point-of-use surge protection devices can protect your devices during most power surges. Not all power strips, however, include surge protection. So, before buying a power strip, read



the packaging and do not overload the power strip with too many devices.

Whole-home surge protection can protect your home from more powerful power surges. These are connected to your home's service panel and include features like thermal fuses and notification capabilities to inform when a device has been impacted by a surge. The price of this device varies and should be connected by a licensed electrician. ■

Help us with safety at Slope Electric

Did you know members also play a key role in keeping our system safe? At times, you are our eyes in the sky and on the ground. Should you see a power line issue that may need Slope Electric Cooperative's attention, please call the office or send us an email at safety@slopeelectric.coop with your concern. This correspondence should include the description of the location, your name and complete contact information, and a photo if possible. Working together helps ensure the safety of all!

Serve your **COMMUNITY** by serving on Slope Electric's board of directors!

Reminder: If you or someone you know wants to serve on Slope Electric's board, petition nominees are due by April 8.

To learn more, visit <https://slopeelectric.coop/annual-meeting>



Need help with your energy bills? **LIHEAP is here to help.**

While the fall weather settles in, Slope Electric members will be faced with cooling temperatures, and even colder temperatures in the coming months. For some, anticipation of the winter month's causes stress and anxiety, wondering how to make ends meet – thankfully, there are programs that can help members out.

The Low-Income Heating Energy Assistance Program, also known as LIHEAP, can help Slope Electric's low income and eligible individuals with assistance when it comes to heating and insulation costs in the winter. Through the North Dakota Department of Human Services, human service zone offices and Community Options, individuals can be helped with a variety of services when it comes to heating assistance.

Apply for LIHEAP

LIHEAP eligible members can apply from Oct. 1 – May 31.

Upon applying for LIHEAP, an outreach specialist will assist you in gathering necessary documentation for the service. From there, an application will be sent into the state for review and the results will be provided back within a week or two.

Applications will be accepted from October 1- May 31 and can be found online at www.applyforhelp.nd.gov or by request at the local human service zone office or Community Options office. ■


JOIN SLOPE ELECTRIC JUNE 8, 2023 IN HETTINGER!

ENJOY FOOD TRUCKS FROM THE LOCAL AREA, TAKE AN UP CLOSE LOOK AT OUR LINEMEN'S EQUIPMENT, EXPLORE OUR BUCKET TRUCK AND CATCH UP WITH THE MEMBERSHIP, ALL WHILE ATTENDING SLOPE ELECTRIC'S ANNUAL MEETING CELEBRATION AT THE HETTINGER ARMORY!



POWER

FOR GENERATIONS



Do we have your current contact information?

If you no longer have a land line or your mobile mailbox is full - we may not be able to reach you in regards to information about your electric service. Update your phone number and email address by:

- ✳ **Logging into your SmartHub Account**
- ☎ **Call us at 701-579-4191 or 800-559-4191**

Slope Electric makes saving money easy!



Slope Electric is now making it even easier to save on your electric bill! All members who only receive paperless statements will receive a \$1 credit for each month enrolled. In addition, members who sign up for an automatic withdrawal through their bank account will also receive a \$1 credit for each month enrolled. The savings will show up once a year on your bill.

To learn more about the benefits of SmartHub, visit slopeelectric.coop/ways-pay.



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*Slope Electric Cooperative Inc.
is an equal opportunity provider.*

Report from THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Regular meeting held at the Slope Electric office in New England

- Approved agenda
- Approved minutes from previous meeting on Dec. 19
- Heard co-general managers/CEO update
- Heard WDUS/3C update
- Heard Basin Electric Cooperative updates
- Heard CFO report
- Heard operations report
- Heard member relations summary
- Heard the attorney report
- Reviewed board member reports
- Discussed strategic planning