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**MAY**  
**2025**



## AN EXPERIENCE OF A LIFETIME: Gussey chosen for Youth Tour



**Kailee Gussey**

Each year, Slope Electric Cooperative sponsors one student to participate in a once-in-a-lifetime experience in Washington, D.C., during the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

A longstanding cooperative program, the Youth Tour immerses students in American history for a week. While in Washington, D.C., students learn more about electric cooperatives,

visit national monuments and meet North Dakota's congressional delegation. Through this experience, students gain life skills, meet new people and make unforgettable memories.

This year's Youth Tour winner is New England High School junior Kailee Gussey, the daughter of Steven and Jessica Gussey from New England.

To apply for the Youth Tour, sophomores and juniors who are dependents of Slope Electric members may submit an application, which includes an essay question set forth by the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives. This year's essay question was: "Why is it important to be involved in your community, and how does that prepare you to be a future leader?"

"Being involved in your community is important, because it helps you develop crucial leadership skills," Kailee wrote in her essay. She strives to be a community leader in various ways, including working at the grocery store, lifeguarding at the community pool, acting as vice president of the New England FFA chapter and volunteering through the food pantry, just to name a few.

After hearing about the opportunity from her dad, Kailee immediately started working on her essay. For years, she has always wanted an opportunity to go to Washington, D.C. She looks forward to seeing the various museums while in Washington, D.C., but also is interested in learning more about the government.

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"I am interested in learning more about the whys behind government and politics and to have a deeper understanding of the government," she says.

During the Youth Tour in June, Kailee will join hundreds of students representing electric cooperatives. To hear about her experience in Washington, D.C., check back in August for a recap of her trip.

### **Read Kailee's winning essay:**

Being involved in your community is important, because it helps you develop crucial leadership skills, such as teamwork, communication and problem-solving. For example, by helping my town's Booster Club do concessions at football games, I've gained a sense of responsibility, and by working together with the other volunteers, I gained valuable collaboration skills. Additionally, there have been situations requiring problem solving, such as how to hang a sign with limited available magnets. While the main focus of volunteering is improving the community, when volunteering, you expand your capabilities, quick-thinking skills and sense of responsibility as a leader.

Most people prioritize career advancement, so volunteer leadership is usually a second thought. However, taking on a leadership role outside of a paid job is one of the best experiences you can have to prepare yourself to be a future leader. There have been times when volunteering at a student council function I've taken the reins on a project and guided my fellow council members in completing it. This was an extremely rewarding experience, because it gave me the confidence to lead in the future and additional leadership experience.

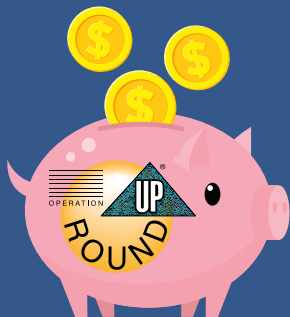
Volunteer leadership not only influences your personal growth, but also improves your leadership abilities. It's about giving back while also developing important traits.

When you make that first commitment to leading

a volunteer project, you are offering time, energy and passion without the expectation of anything in return. I remember when our student council group started going to administration to talk to them about policies students did not agree with and why. The student council taking these steps for the student body and explaining their side to administration displays immediate action taken for the sake of others. After these changes to unfair school policies were put in motion, students were overwhelmingly more willing to work harder in their studies and work alongside their teachers. Empathy and passion are important traits to have as a leader, as they help you connect with team members and understand them better on a personal level, which in turn, will further help with encouragement, management, guidance and increase overall support for a cause.

Volunteer leadership positively affects your community by bringing people together, addressing local needs and fostering a thriving community instead of a stagnant one. When people came together in my community to help a family whose house burned down, people were brought together to enact a common goal, one out of compassion and determination, which ultimately ended in our local area becoming further intertwined with more care for one another, encouraging people to stand up for the community and lead when they are needed. Interacting with various community members and working toward common goals unites and contributes to a brighter future for your area.

In conclusion, getting involved in the community is a process that is both individually and group driven. It builds key leadership skills, encourages teamwork and gives people the confidence needed to make a change. By actively participating, we not only develop ourselves, but also create stronger, healthier communities for future generations. ■



## **Our next Operation Round Up application deadline is quickly approaching!**

Visit our website at [www.slopeelectric.coop](http://www.slopeelectric.coop), call our office or visit with an Operation round Up board member for more information. The next deadline is May 21.

## Klewin honored for cooperative leadership



Recently, the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) presented Lauren Klewin, former longtime director of Slope Electric Cooperative, with the Cooperative Leadership Award. This award recognizes Klewin's 27 years of exceptional leadership and devotion to duty.

NDAREC notes Klewin was nominated by his peers for being selfless and devoting his time and talents in service to not only his local cooperative, but to electric cooperatives throughout the state. For 18 years, he served on NDAREC's board of directors, and his exceptional memory and depth of knowledge made him an invaluable resource. He could provide historical context on nearly any topic related to rural electrification, and he spent a considerable amount of time mentoring and supporting his fellow board members.

Klewin's compassion was evident, and his care for others made him a pillar of the community. He served three terms on Slope Electric's Operation Round Up board, ensuring crucial funding was directed to communities, charitable organizations and members in need. Funded by members who opt to "round up" their electric bill to the next dollar, Operation Round Up demonstrates the value of working cooperatively to make a difference. ■

## JOIN US AT YOUR ANNUAL MEETING

JUNE 5, FOUR SEASONS PAVILION,  
BOWMAN

*Registration opens at 4:30 p.m., the  
business meeting begins at 5 p.m.  
followed by dinner and bingo*





## MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

# Make your voice heard at your Annual Meeting



**Travis Kupper**

Co-General Manager/CEO

Each year, we look forward to Slope Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting. You, the members we serve, always bring value to the meeting, and I know our co-op team is energized by these interactions.

If you've never attended the Annual Meeting, I encourage you to participate. Why? Because input from members like you matters and helps drive the direction of the co-op.

At the Annual Meeting, we report on current initiatives and discuss the co-op's financial health and priorities for the coming years. This year's items under consideration will include director elections and department reports. And equally important, this is an opportunity for us to hear from you.

## You have the power

This is also a time to vote for new directors who will represent you and our communities' interests in the co-op. Also this year you will have the chance to weigh in on various bylaw amendments. As a member of Slope Electric, you have the power to help shape our communities' energy future.

Electric co-ops are democratically controlled by the members we serve, which means you have a say in who governs our co-op. By voting in the annual director election, you can weigh in on the leaders who will make important decisions about the future of the cooperative and our local energy needs.

Slope Electric's directors are community-minded individuals with different skillsets. We rely on them to help us make more informed decisions on long-term

priorities and investments. We have eight directors who live in the co-op's service area. We consider them the eyes and ears of the community, because they provide their unique perspective on various local issues.

## 2025 Director Candidates

The following Slope Electric members are candidates for the 2025 director election. The names are listed in the order they will appear on the ballot.

**District 2** (one open seat):

Anthony Larson – Hettinger

**District 4** (two open seats):

Chip H.J. Fischer – Rhame

Jerry Jeffers – Rhame

Daniel Maychrzak – Scranton

Kevin Thompson – Bowman

We want to make voting as convenient as possible for our members, so we offer a variety of ways for you to participate. We hope you'll join us at the Annual Meeting June 5 in Bowman, where you can cast your vote in person. If you are unable to attend and vote in person you can vote prior to the meeting electronically or by mail. Watch for your Annual Report and mail-in ballot in May.

If you've never been to an annual meeting or it's been a while since you attended, we hope you'll stop by. We'll have fun activities for all ages, so we hope to see you and your family there. Join us for food, fun, door prizes and more. All members who attend the event will receive a "thank you" gift and will have the opportunity to play bingo and win additional prizes.

Your Slope Electric team will be ready to answer any energy-related questions you may have. We look forward to seeing you at your Annual Meeting on June 5 in Bowman at the Four Seasons Pavilion. ■



Join us at the Annual Meeting for a delicious meal catered by Home Cooked Meals and games of bingo after the business meeting.

## MESSAGE FROM MEMBER RELATIONS: Additional scholarship opportunities available



**Brooke Waltner**

Manager of Member  
Relations

As our Annual Meeting approaches on June 5 in Bowman, we are excited to share additional scholarship opportunities. This year, we will have five Luck-of-the-Draw Scholarships for members and dependents of members. Three \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded to full-time students and two \$500 scholarships to full- or part-time students. Whether you are a non-traditional student taking online courses or a high school student

taking college credits, you qualify to register for the Luck-of-the-Draw Scholarships. ■

### FAQ

**Who is eligible?** Slope Electric members and dependents of members enrolled in full- or part-time college courses!

**How do I sign up?** Join us at our Annual Meeting on June 5 in Bowman and sign up there!

**Do I have to be present to sign up and receive a scholarship?** Yes, you must be present at the Annual Meeting on June 5 to register and qualify for the Luck-of-the-Draw Scholarship. If you are a dependent of a member, you and the member must be present.

If you have any further questions, call our office at 701-579-4191 or 800-559-4191 and visit with Brooke.

## EMPOWERING OUR FUTURE: Co-op awards scholarship



**Blake Larson**

Each year, Slope Electric Cooperative fuels the future by awarding a \$1,000 scholarship provided by Basin Electric Power Cooperative to a high school senior within its service area. This initiative embodies our cooperative's unwavering commitment to community growth and celebrates the achievements of dependents of our members.

This year's winner of the Basin Electric scholarship is Blake Larson, the son of Anthony and Jodi Larson, Hettinger. Blake is a senior at Hettinger Public School and plans to attend North Dakota State University in pursuit of an agribusiness degree.

Blake is active in various activities, including FFA, 4-H, choir and sports. His involvement on his family's ranch as well as FFA and 4-H helped lead him to an agricultural focused degree, he says.

"I like the business side of things and look forward to exploring finance or marketing," Blake says.

One of the requirements of the Basin Electric scholarship is to write an essay. This year's essay topic was: "How does the electricity provided by your electric cooperative improve the quality of life in your community?" In his essay, Blake wrote about the connections within rural communities and the role electric cooperatives play to provide homes and business with reliable power, but also the empowerment for communities to grow.

"I have the mentality community is important to be a part of," Blake says. "And electricity powers the necessities of our small towns."

Congratulations, Blake, and best of luck in your future endeavors. ■

## MESSAGE FROM OPERATIONS: **Ensuring system reliability**



**Dean Volk**

*Chief of Staff/  
Operations Manager*

Slope Electric Cooperative is committed to providing reliable electric service to our members. To ensure our electrical infrastructure is performing properly, line crews conduct line patrol and pole testing in various parts of our service area. This year, crews focused on testing poles in the Mott and Cedar Butte substation and conducted line patrol across the service area.

### **Pole testing**

Utility poles, like any infrastructure exposed to extreme weather conditions, can begin to deteriorate over time both externally and internally. To ensure the safety and reliability of the utility poles, Slope Electric tests poles on a nine- to 10-year rotation. Testing also helps us to find poles that are an issue, so we can replace them before they begin to fail.

### **Line patrol**

As an annual system assessment, our line crew conducts line patrol. You may have seen some of our crews driving cooperative-marked vehicles or ATVs and patrolling line these past few months. Our crews patrol lines and assess various aspects of the utility line, brackets and poles, but also the surrounding of the power lines. A few of the items line crew are looking for are damaged or missing hardware, broken strands, foliage in the power line, clearance issues and leaning or damaged poles. While they are out driving around the service area, they also check service voltage, meter readings and service equipment, if necessary.

Pole testing and line patrol are just a few of the ways Slope Electric is committed to maintaining reliable electric services for you, our members. If you notice anything that doesn't look quite right on electrical infrastructure near you, such as trees growing too close to the power line, give us a call at the office so we can have a crew assess the potential issue. ■





## SAFETY STARTS WITH ME: Electrical Safety Month

May is recognized as Electrical Safety Month, but we know the importance of practicing safety year-round. From our cooperative crews to you, the members we serve, we recognize everyone has a part to play in prioritizing safety.

“As a cooperative team, safety is a top priority from the office to the field and even at home,” says Jeff Boynton, outpost working foreman. “Keeping our members safe is just as important to us as keeping each other safe.”

Here are a few practical safety tips to use around the home, office, shop or school.

- **Frayed wires pose a serious safety hazard.** Power cords can become damaged or frayed from age, heavy use or excessive current flow through the wiring. If cords become frayed or cut, replace them, as they could cause a shock when handled.
- **Avoid overloading circuits.** Circuits can only cope with a limited amount of electricity. Overload happens when you draw more electricity than a circuit can safely handle by having too many devices on one circuit.
- **Label circuit breakers to understand the circuits in your home.** Contact a qualified electrician if your home is more than 40 years old and you need to install multiple large appliances that consume large amounts of electricity.
- **Use extension cords properly.** Never plug an extension cord into another extension cord. If you “daisy chain” them together, it could lead to overheating, creating a potential fire hazard. Don’t exceed the wattage of the cord. Doing so also creates a risk of overloading the cord and creating a



fire hazard. Extension cords should not be used as permanent solutions. If you need additional outlets, contact a licensed electrician to help.

Our top priority is providing reliable electrical service to power homes, schools and businesses in our community year-round. But equally important is keeping our community safe around electricity.

If you see something that looks unsafe on a power line or around a substation, give us a call so we can evaluate the situation. ■

## KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR YOUR ANNUAL REPORT PACKET!

The Annual Report packet will arrive to your mailbox soon. Inside the packet, you will find the following Slope Electric information:

- **2025 Official Notice of the Annual Meeting**
- **2025 Ballot**
- **2024 Annual Report and more.**



## SLOPE ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: FEB. 27

The regular meeting of the board of directors of Slope Electric Cooperative was held on Feb. 27 at the cooperative's headquarters in New England. President Steven Wegner called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. A quorum was present. Slope Electric's General Counsel Jennifer Grosz was appointed recorder for the meeting. Also present were Slope Electric co-General Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile, Chief of Staff/Operations Manager Dean Volk, Member Relations Manager Brooke Waltner and Board Liaison Connie Hill.

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

**Strategic/action:** Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates on Slope Electric's member appreciation events, Basic Electric Power Cooperative's winter managers meeting and North Dakota manager group meeting.

Several reports were available for review, including Basin Electric's CEO, West Dakota Utility Services and 3C Construction.

**Department reports:** Craigmile provided a financial and statistical report. Volk provided a report, including an update on line patrol and general maintenance. Waltner provided a report, including a member meeting update, youth programs and annual meeting preparation. Grosz provided a legal report.

**Action items:** The board reviewed and resolved various items, including policy review.

**Discussion/general information:** The board discussed the fire mitigation plan and other items.

The meeting concluded with the adjournment. Secretary Angela Carlson certified the accuracy of the minutes.

**Next meeting date:** The next meeting is at 9 a.m. May 29 in New England. ■



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### SLOPE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Steven Wegner, President  
Anthony Larson, Vice President  
Angela Carlson, Secretary  
Chip HJ Fischer, Treasurer  
Jerome Caron, Director  
Ryan Jacobson, Director  
Charlotte Meier, Director  
Cheryl Van Daele, Director

### MANAGEMENT

Jason Bentz  
CO-GM/CEO

Travis Kupper  
CO-GM/CEO

[www.slopeelectric.coop](http://www.slopeelectric.coop)



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## Discounts offered for Medora vacation

Slope Electric Cooperative 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 of "TOUCH2025" for a 15% discount on all of the following during any night of the season.

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

### LODGING AT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Elkhorn Quarters
- Badlands Motel
- Rough Riders Hotel

The code is good for reservations over the phone, online or in person. A green fees discount will be applied at check-in for a tee time at the golf course.