



A few cents forging change

PHOTOS BY LAVYN MUDDER

The Missouri River Quilts of Valor was one organization receiving funding from Slope Electric Cooperative's Operation Round Up recently. Here, Arlene Meissel shows one of the quilts to be awarded to a veteran. Inside, read more about three Operation Round Up recipients.

Slope Electric Cooperative Inc.

OUTLOOK

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Sharon Eckert, right, and Louise Potocki, both of Bismarck, discuss quilt patterns during a working session by the volunteers.

Quilts of Valor wrap local veterans in comfort

BY LUANN DART

With poignant tears, dignified pride and graceful gratitude, the comfort of a quilt is wrapped around the shoulders of veterans as they are awarded a Quilt of Valor during a heartfelt ceremony.

The Missouri River Quilts of Valor received a \$1,000 grant from Slope Electric Cooperative's Operation Round Up. The funds will be enough to construct about three quilts.

"It was a time when our funds were really low," said Arlene Meissel, the group leader for the Missouri River Quilts of Valor based in Bismarck. "I've told my members, 'How many times have we had divine intervention?' That was one of them. It came at the right time."

The Quilts of Valor Foundation is a national organization founded in 2003 to award quilts to qualifying veterans. Founder Catherine Roberts' son was deployed in Iraq when she was inspired to launch the volunteer organization.

"The mission of the Quilts of Valor Foundation is to cover service members and veterans touched by war with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor," Meissel said.

During the ceremony, veterans are draped with a quilt by family or others and a short bio on their wartime service is read.

The Missouri River Quilts of Valor, with about 30 members, began in 2020 and has now awarded 150 quilts to veterans in central and western North Dakota. A ceremony in October in Rhame was especially meaningful, as it reunited five fellow soldiers 52 years after their service in Vietnam and elsewhere.

"That's another divine intervention story," Meissel said.

The national organization has 11,000 members in all 50 states and has awarded 283,763 quilts.

"It is our hope that the quilt will bring warmth, comfort,

peace and healing to the veteran or service member who receives it," Meissel said. "I think North Dakota has such respect and honor for our veterans, this is a small way of saying thank you for that. Each stitch that holds the layers together represents love, gratitude and sometimes tears of the maker."

The Missouri River Quilts of Valor members gather monthly at Sewing Machines Plus in Mandan to cut quilt kits, which are then sewn by volunteers at home.

"It's a very rewarding job. There have been tears and lots of smiles," Meissel said. Not all of the members are quilters. Some help with the website, paperwork, ironing or other duties. And nonmembers are also welcome to volunteer. All the time and quilting materials are donated.

Each quilt is adorned with the names of those who pieced, bound and quilted it, along with the veteran's name and the date of the award. Each veteran is also given a thank you card containing a star from a retired flag.

The quilts must meet requirements of the Quilts of Valor organization, as well as the veteran. To be eligible for a Quilt of Valor, the veteran or service member must have been touched by war, and have had an honorable or general discharge status. Quilts of Valor does not award posthumously. In addition, no nominations for awards can be a surprise. The veteran or service member must be notified and be made aware of their nomination.

"It's not a gift; it's an award," Meissel stressed.

"We do not do this for the glory or recognition. Our thank you is seeing the smiles and sometimes tears of those being awarded a quilt. The quilts are only a small token of appreciation compared to service and sacrifice the veteran or service member has given to our country," she said. ■

TO LEARN MORE:

Visit: <https://missouririverqov.weebly.com> or www.QOVF.org

Email: missouririverqov@yahoo.com



Lou Josephson of Bismarck prepares quilt squares for the Missouri River Quilts of Valor.

Empowering girls with Coding Camp

Women Empowering Women received a \$1,000 Operation Round Up grant from Slope Electric Cooperative to help fund a Coding Camp June 6-10, 2022, for young women in southwestern North Dakota.

“It’s huge in two ways,” Board President Ray Ann Kilen said of the grant. The grant will help purchase lunch and supplies, and will also help leverage additional grant funding.

“It seeded our process,” she said. “It also gave us the confidence that we’re on the right track with things that are needed in the region, because we were able to get support.”

Women Empowering Women is collaborating with the Roughrider Area Career and Technology Center to host a free Coding Camp in June 2022 in Dickinson for girls in grades 8-10. Each girl will be given a Chromebook to take home following the camp, along with a software program to continue to pursue what they’ve learned. Class size will be limited to 12 girls. This will be the first Coding Camp sponsored by Women Empowering Women.

“We want young girls to have an opportunity to explore career



pathways,” Kilen said.

Women Empowering Women is a nonprofit volunteer organization, which started three years ago, based in Dickinson to support women.

“We want women to be the best version of themselves, but also meeting them at their need,” Kilen said. “We can respond to things as they come up. Some things are very purposeful and strategic but we’re also able to react to needs as they’re identified.”

“We felt the need to have a vehicle to help either recognize what women were doing in the community or bring resources to women in the community, connections to women in the community,” Kilen said.

“Women Empowering Women wants to identify and find solutions to the challenges of women in all stages of life. Our initiatives reach out to young women, elderly women and all ages in between. We are learning and embracing our role as a catalyst to help women respond to needs in our community. Our board and members are multi-skilled and ready to work with individuals or groups who see a challenge or find a solution that needs a partner or supports,” the website states. ■

TO LEARN MORE:
<https://wewnetwork.org/contact/>

Operation Round Up empowers members

As a member-owned electric cooperative, Slope Electric Cooperative is committed to powering its communities and empowering members to improve their quality of life.

One of the cooperative’s successful community service efforts is the Operation Round Up program.

Through the program, members voluntarily “round up” their electric bills to the next whole dollar each month and the change is placed into the Operation Round Up fund. With hundreds of electric cooperative members participating, the

pennies quickly add up to dollars.

For example, a member’s monthly bill of \$52.73 would round up to \$53, with the extra 27 cents going to the Operation Round Up fund. A member donates approximately \$6 annually. That pool of money is then granted to a variety of worthy causes by a trust board of directors throughout Slope Electric Cooperative’s service area.

Applications can be found at www.slopeelectric.coop/operation-round. The next application deadline will be Jan. 27. ■



Local law enforcement showed students what a field sobriety test involves.



An accident scene was recreated during the Teen Dilemma event.



Slope Electric Cooperative's Operation Round Up grant helped purchase equipment for students to wear impaired vision goggles and ride tricycles through an obstacle course to experience the effects of driving while intoxicated.

Sharing life lessons with teens

During a daylong event in September, freshmen and sophomores at Bowman County High School and Scranton High School saw a reenactment of a scene to teach them about real-life consequences and decision-making.

The event, called Teen Dilemma, was partially funded with a \$1,000 grant from Slope Electric Cooperative's Operation Round Up fund.

Participants included the Bowman Fire Department, Bowman Ambulance, Bowman County Sheriff's Department, Bowman County Extension and South West Health Services.

During the morning, the students rotated through different learning stations, which included empathy and bullying; the effects of long-term consequences; a rollover simulator with the N.D. Highway Patrol; a station where the students wore impaired vision goggles and rode tricycles through an obstacle course; local law enforcement showing a field sobriety test; and farm safety.

After lunch, a reenactment was presented to the students. Upperclassmen first presented a skit comparing good decisions versus poor choices, with the skit ending with a prerecorded 911 call reporting a collision, explained Megan Oase, a family nurse practitioner with West River Health Services.

Outside, a simulated crash scene was presented, with local emergency responders recreating how they respond to a scene. An actor representing an intoxicated driver was

"arrested" and an "injured" student was transported to the airport by Sanford Air.

"It feels very, very real," Oase said.

The students then return inside to watch a retired judge and actors recreating a court scene and sentencing.

"It's meant to feel real and heavy so they realize that even though it may seem like a quick decision, it can have really big effects," Oase said. "Realizing there are consequences to even the littlest decisions we make throughout the day."

The event has been held annually in the past, and may switch to every other year for local students, Oase said. ■



Actors recreated a court scene and the consequences or poor decisions.

JUNE 19 TO 24, 2022



WASHINGTON, D.C.

AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

- To enter the essay-writing contest, you must be a sophomore or junior in high school.
- You and your parents or guardian must be served by Slope Electric Cooperative.
- If you have any questions, please contact Brooke Waltner, Slope Electric, at 701-579-4191 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is Dec. 10, 2021. You can email entries to Brooke Waltner at bwaltner@slopeelectric.coop or mail a hard copy to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, 116 E. 12th St., PO Box 338, New England, ND 58647-0338.

TOP 3 REASONS

TO ENTER THE ESSAY-WRITING CONTEST

1. All-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., compliments of Slope Electric Cooperative
2. A whole week to visit unforgettable historic monuments, museums and the U.S. Capitol
3. A learning experience you'll never forget

ESSAY QUESTION:

If you were asked to help promote your cooperative's annual membership meeting, what ideas do you have for increasing attendance among young member-owners and students? Please provide specific examples for unique communications strategies, scheduling and special activities for member-owners and their families.



CHECK OUT THE ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES AT
<https://ndyouthtour.com/>

What should I report to my local co-op?



- **If you see a downed power line or utility pole, contact Slope Electric Cooperative immediately.**
- **If you see broken wires, cross arms or other equipment that may be damaged.**
- **If you hit any electrical equipment, such as poles or guy wires, while farming.**
- **If a tree is growing into a power line.** Call a professional to trim that tree before it causes a hazard for you or leaves you without power. Children climbing that tree can get shocked or killed; branches can break or fall onto the wire, causing an outage; or the wind can whip a limb into the line and cause an outage. But remember: When power lines are involved, always leave the trimming to professionals. Call your cooperative.

To report an outage

Because power outages can't be totally eliminated, Slope Electric Cooperative offers these steps to follow if an outage occurs:

- **Confirm the outage.** Check your own fuses and circuit breakers first.
- **Check with a neighbor to confirm if he or she is also experiencing an outage before you call the cooperative.** This will help your cooperative determine the extent of the outage.
- **Call the cooperative.** If the outage is widespread, the phone lines may be busy, but keep trying. Your cooperative will send a line crew to find the problem and restore power as quickly as possible.



Remember: We do not monitor our Facebook page 24/7. If you are experiencing an outage or have something to report, please contact the cooperative by phone.

Report from **THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

SEPT. 30, 2021

Regular meeting held at the Rural Collective in Hettinger.

- Approved the agenda with additions
- Approved minutes of the Aug. 26 board meeting
- Approved two capital credit estate retirements
- Approved special equipment capitalization
- Heard co-general managers/CEOs updates
- Reviewed West Dakota Utility Services/3C Construction update
- Reviewed Basin Electric Power Cooperative update
- Appointed Angela Carlson as the voting delegate for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) director election, and Lauren Klewin as the alternate voting delegate
- Reviewed the 2022 load forecast
- Reviewed and considered Board Policy 02-14 Director Election Procedure
- Reviewed and considered Board Policy 02-17 Board Meetings Conduct and Procedure
- Held executive session
- Heard an Upper Missouri Power Cooperative report
- Heard an Innovative Energy Alliance (IEA) report
- Heard a Maintenance Solutions Cooperative report
- Heard a report on the NRECA Region 5-6 meeting
- Heard a report on the Cooperative Finance Corporation district meeting
- Heard a report on the RESCO annual meeting
- Heard a report on the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives
- Appointed Charlotte Meier as voting delegate and Travis Kupper as the alternate voting delegate to the Mid-West Electric Consumers Association annual meeting
- Heard the CFO report
- Reviewed the written operations report
- Reviewed the legal counsel report
- Held voucher review
- Scheduled next meeting for Oct. 28

Holiday closings

Slope Electric Cooperative will be closed Thursday, Nov. 11, in observance of Veterans Day, and Thursday and Friday, Nov. 25 and 26, for the Thanksgiving holiday. Line crews will be available in the case of an emergency or power outage.

We thank all veterans and members of the military for their service and sacrifice!

Life hacks for the holidays

Thanksgiving is a favorite holiday, as family and friends reunite to feast and give thanks. The one drawback, however, is that the holiday contributes to an annual increase in energy use, due to a usual drop in temperatures, lights staying on longer, and appliances operating more frequently. Here are some energy-saving tips which can help lower the unwelcome tradition of higher energy bills following a Thanksgiving celebration:

AFTER THE FEAST

- Don't wash dishes by hand because an Energy Star-certified dishwasher uses less than half as much energy as washing dishes by hand and uses less water.
- Let the leftovers cool before placing them in the fridge, because your refrigerator has to work harder to cool them.

TURKEY TIPS

- How much turkey can you and your guests really eat? Be sure to get the right size bird. A smaller turkey takes less time to cook and saves energy.
- It takes longer to cook the turkey when it is stuffed with dressing, so cooking the dressing separately can actually reduce oven usage.
- Adding side dishes that can be cooked at the same temperature while the turkey is cooking can also reduce oven use. Just make sure to adjust the cooking time to accommodate different temperatures.
- Resist the urge to check on your food as it cooks. Each time you open the oven door, you'll reduce the temperature inside by 25 degrees.

HOSTING

- Turn down the thermostat, whether it's manual or programmable. With all the heat from your kitchen and a house full of people, your home will stay plenty warm.
- If you are hosting a large gathering, use a cooler stocked with ice to hold drinks. You'll free space in your refrigerator and prevent cold air from escaping from frequent door openings.



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