



PHOTO BY RICHARD VOLESKY

Shown on July 12 near Trapper's Kettle in Belfield after placing a marker and plaque for the Great Western Trail are, from left, **John Heinen, Kim Shade, Jim Ozbun, Jim Lowman, Darrell Dorgan, John Hanson, Larry Schnell** and **Bill Lowman**.

# 'The value of saying yes'

This summer, some electric cooperative members came together to install concrete markers that will mark the Great Western Cattle Trail, which parallels Highway 85 in the Slope Electric service area. In this month's local pages, learn about the history of the trail — and why some Slope members volunteered to help preserve it.

Slope Electric Cooperative, Inc.

# OUTLOOK

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## In this issue:

- Annual meeting postponed
- Farm equipment is on the move; look up and around for electrical hazards
- Meeting minutes ... and more



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According to [www.legendsofamerica.com](http://www.legendsofamerica.com), a typical cattle drive, moving 10 to 12 miles a day, would take about two months to travel from Texas to Kansas. Though the cattle could be driven as far as 25 miles in a day, they would lose too much weight and be hard to sell when they reached the end of the trail. If the cattle were skillfully managed, they could gain weight along the trail.



Obelisks mark the Great Western Cattle Trail about every six miles from Texas to North Dakota to commemorate the millions of cattle and horses that made the journey over a 20-year time period. About 55 obelisks will mark North Dakota's portion of the trail. The 6-foot posts were produced by Dickinson Ready Mix. The owner, Scott Olin, donated the posts to preserve the history and heritage of the North Dakota cattle industry. **Olin** (right) is shown here with **Jim Ozbun**, who helped coordinate the project in North Dakota with Darrell Dorgan.

## ‘The value of saying yes’

### Slope Electric members mark historic cattle trail

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

Preserving history, being part of the future, working with neighbors and highlighting the cattle industry - it is the local story of the Great Western Cattle Trail, and how some Slope Electric Cooperative members are contributing to a national effort to mark it.

“It’s the value of saying yes!” says Slope Electric member John Hanson, the fourth-generation owner of Logging Camp Ranch outside of Bowman. “That’s how this trail is happening ... by people saying yes.”

After the American Civil War, Texans came back to their ranches and found they had deteriorated. With most of the able-bodied men gone to war, the cattle had reproduced and run wild. They were practically worthless, with a lot of cattle, few people and no market.

Ranchers started putting together herds and trailing them to rail heads including Wichita and Dodge City.



PHOTO BY TED HANSON

*A former Slope Electric Cooperative member who grew up on a ranch near Regent, **Darrell Dorgan** has strong cooperative roots. His father was a member of North Dakota Farmer's Union, and now he is a member. A resident of Bismarck, Darrell is also a member of Capital Electric Cooperative.*

That way they could ship the cattle to the cities that were wanting good beef. That became known as the Chisholm Trail.

During the 1870s and early 1880s, a fight ensued for the frontier, and Native Americans were forced from the Plains. The dispute opened grasslands to the north, and the trail continued to develop.

Millions of open-range longhorns were gathered in Mexico and Texas. Cowboys drove them north to the vast prairie grasses of the Plains, and on to railroads where they were shipped to stockyards and a market. The cattle walked through Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas,

Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, North Dakota and Montana, and some went on to Canada. The drives established the Great Western Cattle Trail, which parallels Highway 85 in the Slope Electric service area.

Also known as the Western Trail, Fort Griffin Trail, Dodge City Trail, Northern Trail and Texas Trail, the Great Western Cattle Trail was used to move an estimated seven- to nine-million cattle over 20 years.

The cattle industry surged into what was then Dakota Territory when cowboys pushed a large herd from Rio Grande to the Little Missouri River in 1884. According to [www.ndgreatwesterncattletrail.com](http://www.ndgreatwesterncattletrail.com), the trail assisted in the development of the ranching and livestock industry, and had a significant impact on the economy.

Some cowboys eventually stayed and helped establish the ranches that would grow North Dakota's Western heritage, which is strong and prosperous today.

John Hanson is one of those modern-day cowboys who runs a ranch with his wife, Jennifer. His father, Robert Hanson, and wife Ann, are retired but remain active in raising American Quarter Horses. Located in the Little Missouri River Valley among cedars and pines, abundant wildlife, and rugged buttes and canyons, Logging Camp Ranch is a working ranch that has been in the Hanson family since the early 1900s. It welcomes

guests to ride and participate in activities like branding.

John and friend Steve Brooks, Slope Electric member at Brooks Chalky Butte Ranch, worked with volunteers and landowners to mark the Great Western Cattle Trail in the Slope Electric service area. They helped coordinate the placement of markers, wrote legal descriptions, lined up excavators and operators to dig — and joined a national effort that began 12 years ago to ensure the trail is never lost.

"People were forgetting about it," says Darrell Dorgan, journalist/documentary producer and former Cowboy Hall of Fame executive director. "Growing up, lots of people watched Western movies that showed cattle herds being driven up the trail. That same trail came through North Dakota, and this is it!"

A year ago, Darrell agreed to head up the effort of having trail markers placed in North Dakota, with assistance from retired North Dakota State University President Jim Ozbun, who lives in Dickinson. Ozbun's maternal grandfather came up the cattle trail as a child, bringing cattle to North Dakota. After the N.D. Cowboy Hall of Fame was built, Ozbun secured the first marker at the site in Medora.

Darrell, a native of rural Regent, contacted longtime friend John Hanson to ask if he would set a post on his land. John agreed, and the effort grew exponentially by his knowledge of the area and the people he knew to ask for help.

This summer, about 10 ranchers gathered and split into two groups. John took one group to Belfield, and Steve took the other to the North Dakota/South Dakota border. They started installing concrete markers about every six miles to mark the trail, with permission from the landowners. The markers, called obelisks, are engraved with the words, "Great Western Tr." The second group also installed a black marble marker at the border that describes the trail's history. These description markers will be placed every 30 to 40 miles.

About 55 obelisks weighing 260 pounds each will mark North Dakota's portion of the trail, from the state border to Fort Buford near Williston. The posts were produced by Dickinson Ready Mix. The owner, Scott Olin, donated the posts in a generous effort to preserve the heritage of North Dakota's first industry.

The two groups met in Amidon at the courthouse and set a final marker together. Then they traveled to Logging Camp Ranch northwest of Amidon, where John hosted a social event for the volunteers and their

families. The evening was filled with good food among good friends.

Other than a sincere thank-you, the volunteers received nothing for their time and labor. Their payment was attending a good steak fry — and becoming a part of history.

“One hundred years from now, someone will drive down the road and say their great-grandpa was one of the guys who put this marker up, and helped preserve the Great Western Cattle Trail,” says Darrell.

In addition to preserving history, Darrell says the trail may enhance the state’s tourism industry.

“When this project is done, there will be a new attraction that goes through the middle of the United States from Mexico to Canada that dates back to the true Western era,” he says. “It’s a piece of history that people may really enjoy and like, [and give them a reason to get on the road.]”

Phase one of the North Dakota project will be completed this fall. Next year the remaining stretch

from Belfield to Watford City and on to Fort Buford will be marked.

Commitment to community is making this project possible. Area rotary clubs became involved in the project, including the Bowman Rotary Club. The Dickinson Rotary Club served as banker and contributed a donation. Dickinson Ready Mix supplied the markers, with assistance from Fisher Sand and Gravel in Dickinson. The Medora Tourism Committee is considering a donation. Project coordinators also worked with the North Dakota Highway Department, State Historical Society of North Dakota and North Dakota Cowboy Hall of Fame.

Donations to subsidize the cost of the trail markers are being accepted. For information on the project and how to donate, contact Darrell Dorgan at 701-226-4431 or [ddorgan695@aol.com](mailto:ddorgan695@aol.com), or Jim Ozbun at 701-290-4153 or [circlez@ndsupernet.com](mailto:circlez@ndsupernet.com). ■

## Slope Electric extends electric service to Logging Camp Ranch

John Hanson recalls visiting with Slope Electric Cooperative staff decades ago, and requesting that they extend electric service to some cabins. At the time, the family declined because of the expense.

One day, two Slope Electric employees came for a visit: Manager Richard Selinger, and Operations Supervisor Russell Kunze.

They had been thinking about the Hanson family’s request, and said if the Hansons moved their primary power supply closer to the cabins, then it would be more affordable to extend it to the cabins.

“Their goal was to bring power to the people,” Hanson recalls.

At the recent celebration at Logging Camp Ranch to thank the volunteers for setting posts along the trail, Hanson says he felt it was fitting to hold the celebration that Lyle Kovar attended. Kovar is a line technician for Slope Electric.

The power supply had come full circle. And with neighbors and friends working together in the cooperative spirit to mark the Great Western Cattle Trail, the power of the people was evident. ■



PHOTO BY TED HANSON

*Born and raised in western North Dakota, Slope Electric member John Hanson says his family hit the “great cosmic lottery,” and he’s the luckiest guy in the world to have family owning and operating the Logging Camp Ranch. The family invites guests to the working ranch, where they can ride and help with activities including branding.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF WWW.ND.GREATWESTERNCATTLETRAIL.COM

Between 1874 and 1893, millions of Longhorn were driven from Mexico through nine states including North Dakota, and some into Canada, to graze until they could be loaded on rail cars and sent to market. Their path of travel became known as the Great Western Cattle Trail.



PHOTOS BY JOHN HANSON

**Lyle Kovar**, line technician for Slope Electric Cooperative, shows the Great Western Cattle Drive marker set on the Kovar ranch east of Amidon.



Slope Electric member **Kim Howie** learned about the trail-marking project from area neighbor John Hanson. Kim lives about 15 miles north of Amidon, where her grandfather homesteaded the property in 1908. After learning about the trail's history and how she can be part of its future history, she agreed to have a post set in the pasture she now rents out. Right along the highway, she drives by it almost every day.

Slope Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
2019 ANNUAL REPORT

**Lights.  
Comfort.  
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## Annual Meeting Postponed

For the safety of our members and employees, the Slope Electric Board of Directors postponed the rescheduled Aug. 17 annual meeting.

The Board thanks you for your understanding.



## Nominate a local hero for the fifth — and final — #WhoPowersYou contest

Members, this year marks the fifth, and final, #WhoPowersYou contest. Hosted by Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives nationwide including Slope Electric Cooperative locally, the annual contest celebrates people who inspire or make a difference in our local communities.

This year's contest will be held Sept. 8 to Oct. 9. Winners will be announced in November, and the person you nominate could receive up to \$5,000.

Entrant/nominator or entrant's/nominator's immediate family (spouse or parent) or other persons residing in the same household as entrant/nominator must be a member of Slope Electric.

To read additional eligibility requirements or enter the contest, visit [www.whopowersyou.com](http://www.whopowersyou.com), fill out a submission and submit a photo. Entries from our co-op will be featured in the local pages of *North Dakota Living*.

**JULY 27, 2020**

## Report from THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Approved minutes of the June 22, 2020, Board Meeting and the July 7, 2020, Special Meeting.
- Approved three capital credit estate retirements.
- Approved special equipment inventories.
- Co-General Managers/CEOs gave an update on the past week's happenings regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. The hot spot in North Dakota seems to have shifted to the Bismarck/Mandan communities. The infection rate has increased, as well. Slope's service territory has not experienced a significant increase, although it has increased contraction rates. No Slope employees have been diagnosed, but Slope employees are being affected by others contracting COVID-19. A July lobby reopening was tentatively planned for Slope, but an increase in COVID-19 cases is delaying this.
- Mr. Kupper provided the Board with an update on how other cooperatives are holding their annual meetings.
- Mr. Kupper summarized for the Board the key items discussed and outcomes of meetings the Co-General Managers attended since the last Board meeting. He also updated the Board on PPP Loan matters.
- GDS Associates, Inc. presented its Cost of Service Study to the Board. Outlined with the Board was typical steps to a rate study, which begins with data collection, proceeds to financial review that results in a completed cost of service study. The next step would be to undergo rate design, should the Board desire to do so. He also discussed with the Board its roles for each step of the process. Also provided to the Board with detail was the financial metrics utilized in the Cost of Service Study, which includes Operating Times Interest Earned Ratio (Operating TIER), equity level, cash level, and the rate of return on rate base. The Cost of Service Study also analyzes the cost of capital, as the cost to raise capital for a cooperative is an important metric to understand. The Board discussed the impact revising the retirement schedule would have on this calculation.
- The Cost of Service Process was next addressed. This is a separate topic that is ultimately interrelated with the financial analysis. This Cost of Service Process functionalizes, classifies and allocates costs. This process was reviewed with the Board. When classification of plant and expenses occurs, the question of what is the minimum distribution plant required to serve the first kilowatt-hour is posed. That investment is customer-related. All other investment is demand-related. Transmission plant is demand-related. The functionalized and classified plant and expenses are next allocated out to the rate classes. The allocated income statement was next reviewed with the Board, including the rate of return for each rate class.
- The Board will review this and asked that it be made an agenda item for discussion at next month's Board meeting.
- Heard reports from Directors who participated or attended various meetings the past month.
- The Board reviewed the proposed amendments to the CFC Bylaws, and reviewed and discussed the Official Ballot presented to the Board for consideration. The Board approved the ballot be cast FOR the Bylaw amendments, and that Larson be selected the delegate.
- The Board reviewed the 2020 Official NCSC Mail Ballot presented to the Board. The Board approved the ballot be cast for the candidates and Bylaw amendments proposed; and Larson be selected the delegate.
- The Board reviewed the 2020 RESCO Director Election. It was approved that the ballot be cast for candidate Donald Franklund.
- Reviewed and approved revisions to Board Policy 04-01 - Equal Employment Opportunity.
- An update was given on the Annual Meeting rescheduled for Aug. 17, 2020, at Four Seasons Pavilion in Bowman. The meeting will be a business meeting only.
- Senior Staff reports were attached to the agenda and reviewed, along with the financials for June 2020. The financials were accepted.
- The Board entered into Executive Session to discuss matters of strategic importance to the Cooperative.
- A next Board meeting will be held on Aug. 17, 2020, immediately after the annual meeting at Four Seasons Pavilion in Bowman.

Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec



## FARM EQUIPMENT IS ON THE MOVE

### LOOK UP AND LOOK AROUND POWER LINES AND POLES MAY BE CLOSER THAN YOU THINK

For your safety, make sure you have at least 10 feet of clearance between power lines and your combines, grain augers, balers and front-end loaders.

Farming equipment is vulnerable to hitting power lines because of its large size, height and extensions. Newer, larger equipment is especially at risk.

Look for low-hanging lines when you enter and leave a field.

Keep in mind that uneven ground and shifting soil conditions can put you in harm's way.

If your equipment does make contact with a power line, do not leave the cab. Call 911, tell others to stay away, and wait for help.

If you are a Slope Electric Cooperative member and you see a power line issue that may need attention, call us at 800-559-4191 or email [safety@slopeelectric.coop](mailto:safety@slopeelectric.coop).

Your safety matters. Working together helps ensure the safety of all!



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800-795-0555 or 811

#### SLOPE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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Steve Wegner, Vice President  
Anthony Larson, Secretary  
Jerome Caron, Treasurer  
Angela Carlson, Director  
HJ "Chip" Fischer, Director  
Dale Hande, Director  
Charlotte Meier, Director

#### MANAGEMENT

Donald A. Franklund  
CO-GM/GEO

Travis Kupper  
CO-GM/GEO

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