



**See you  
next year!**

PHOTO BY BRAD QUENETTE

In June, there was certainly a void in Washington, D.C., without the 2020 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. It was cancelled mid-April due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Next year, Slope Electric representative and contest winner Josie Brennan will still get to take the trip she earned and get a hands-on lesson in history. In this month's local pages, learn why Josie is intrigued with the Pony Express — and how she's used her own horsemanship skills to help others at a local therapeutic riding center.

Slope Electric Cooperative, Inc.

# OUTLOOK

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- **Co-op Day at the Fair cancelled**
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## Josie Brennan's essay reveals passion for horses and earns Youth Tour trip — for next year

BY CARMEN DEVNEY



*Josie Brennan*

The year was 1840. A newspaper advertisement soliciting mail carriers for the Pony Express allegedly read, “Wanted: young, skinny, wiry fellows not over 18 years old. Must be expert riders, willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred.”

Josie Brennan, a home-schooled sophomore from Bowman, would have applied. Undeterred by the idea of galloping at breakneck speed — sometimes in the dark — for up to 100 miles each shift, Josie would have loved riding and making history, as she delivered mail and helped develop communications efforts in the West.

“Although a dangerous job, I do believe it would have been extremely thrilling. Having to deal with hazards such as bad weather, rough terrain and hostile outlaws, I can only imagine the stories I would have to tell,” she wrote. “Being chosen as a very select few riders, I can only believe that I would have been admired by many. What an accomplishment it would be to serve

as a rider for the Pony Express!”

The daughter of Slope Electric Cooperative members Gary and Lana Brennan, Josie wrote an essay about the development and success of the Pony Express. She submitted it to Slope Electric; it was her official application for the co-op's annual Electric Cooperative Youth Tour trip. Bismarck State College professors judged the essays and selected Josie Brennan as Slope Electric's Youth Tour winner.

This year's tour was scheduled from June 20 to 26, and cancelled due to the coronavirus. Josie has agreed to represent Slope Electric and attend next year.

Coordinated and paid for by electric cooperatives across the state and nation, the Youth Tour is an opportunity for students to watch history come alive as they explore museums, memorials and monuments for one amazing week. The contest is open to sophomores and juniors who are dependents of Slope Electric members.

This year's essay question was, “If chosen as a Youth Tour delegate, you will travel to Washington, D.C. to experience and learn about America's rich history. What moment in American history do you wish you had been a part of and what would you have contributed?”

Inspired by a documentary she watched on the Pony Express, Josie chose the topic because she has loved horses since she was a child.

“When I was about 4 years old, my Grandpa Dan had a horse named

Sonny. He was well-behaved,” she says. “My family was always leading me around on horses. I started riding on my own when I was 7.”

It was then that her grandpa gifted Sonny to her.

“He's been a really special horse to me, and we still have him and ride him,” she says.

Josie learned about the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour through her dad, who is a member of the Rotary Club in Bowman. LaWanna Wilhelm, chief of staff/key accounts executive for Slope Electric, gave a presentation to the club on what Slope Electric provides and brings to area communities. Josie's dad brought home a Youth Tour flier and encouraged her to apply.

Josie's thorough research, organization and essay earned her the now-2021 Youth Tour trip.

While in Washington, D.C., she is most interested in seeing the White House, in knowing the president lives there and thinking about how many important people have walked the same grounds. She is also interested in seeing the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial and other military monuments.

Slope Electric sponsors the Youth Tour annually to provide opportunities to families of member-owners, and help students develop leadership skills. An employee at Eats N Treats, Josie has already developed some impressive leadership skills. She is a volunteer at vacation Bible school for the Bowman Assembly of God church, and a volunteer at Hope

and Healing Therapeutic Riding. Josie walks on one side of a horse and supports the rider, who has a disability.

“We work with a client who likes to be led at the trot. She gets the biggest smile on her face, and you can see how happy she is,” Josie shares.

Josie certainly knows the happiness Sonny brings to her. Thank you, Josie,

for sharing your passion for horses and teaching us about the Pony Express. We congratulate you on earning a seat on the Youth Tour, and thank you for understanding the one-year delay in visiting Washington, D.C. Next summer, we’ll visit with you again and share your highlights with our membership.

Josie’s essay is printed below. ■



A young **Josie Brennan** and **Sonny**.

## The Pony Express By Josie Brennan

*If there was a moment in American history I wish I could have been a part of, it would be when the Pony Express was in operation.*

*Before 1860, it was virtually impossible to get messages, newspapers and other mail from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Sacramento, California, in under 20 days. Twenty days was far too long for the merchants and bankers on the West Coast to wait for documents from the East. So, three men, Alexander Majors, William Russell and William B. Waddell, founded the Pony Express. The Pony Express ensured speedy and safe delivery of the mail.*

*To get the Pony Express started, Alexander Majors purchased more than 400 horses. Stations for the mail system were placed every 10 miles. This was considered to be the maximum distance a horse could gallop at one time.*

*There were about 184 stations across the West. Majors had to find riders, as well as 200 station masters. Eventually, the Pony Express had more than 80 riders.*

*A famous advertisement allegedly read: Wanted: young, skinny, wiry fellows not over 18 years old. Must be expert riders, willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred.*

*The riders could not weigh more than 125 pounds and were paid \$100*

*monthly. These riders rode day and night, and their shift ended every 75 to 100 miles. The riders and horses galloped at breakneck speed until they reached a station, and then the riders switched to a fresh horse.*

*Specially designed lightweight saddles and few extras were crucial to the success of the Express. The mochila (the riders’ mail bag) had a hole in it that went over the saddle horn. The mail inside had to weigh under 20 pounds, and the riders originally carried 20 pounds of gear including water, a Bible and a revolver they would fire to warn the upcoming station of their arrival. Eventually the riders stopped carrying a Bible to cut down on weight.*

*The first ride took place on April 3, 1860. Newspapers across the country reported on this historic event. The first mochila of mail held a letter from President James Buchanan to Governor John Downey of California, congratulating him on the Pony Express.*

*Forty riders participated in the Express’s first sprint across the country, which ended in downtown Sacramento just 10 days after the first rider left St. Joseph. With the historic first ride, the Pony Express fulfilled its promise to deliver mail from St. Joseph to San Francisco in only 10 days. This was the*

*first time in history that mail had been delivered over such a long distance so quickly.*

*Sadly, the Pony Express was only in operation for 18 months. During its 18 months of operation, the Pony Express made 308 complete runs, covering a distance of about 616,000 miles. It delivered more than 34,700 letters, and only one mochila was lost. The completion of the telegraph line in October 1861 was the immediate cause of the demise of the Pony Express. Other things contributed to its downfall as well, including its parent company’s deteriorating financial condition.*

*If I had the opportunity to be a part of the Pony Express, I would have wanted to be a rider. Although a dangerous job, I do believe it would have been extremely thrilling. Having to deal with the hazards such as bad weather, rough terrain and hostile outlaws, I can only imagine the stories I would have to tell. Being chosen as a very select few riders, I can only believe that I would have been admired by many. What an accomplishment it would be to serve as a rider for the Pony Express! It was such an instrumental part in developing communication in the West. Who wouldn’t have liked to be a part of that? ■*

There must be 10 feet of clearance between hay bales and power lines. Keep in mind that summer's warm temperatures can cause power lines to sag. Your best bet is to find another spot away from those hot, high-voltage lines – that under certain conditions, can cause fire, injury or death.



## Protect your livelihood — and your life

Stacking hay under electrical infrastructure can be dangerous, if not deadly.

Imagine up to 115,000 volts of electricity running through the power lines directly above the hay you just stacked. Highly loaded, those aluminum wires get hot — and the warmer the temperature — the more the lines sag. There needs to be at least 10 feet of clearance between the neutral line and the top of your hay bales. Did you plan for sag and leave adequate space?

As amps travel the circuit, the wires get warm. If you back your equipment into a guy wire and a pole bends or breaks, or if you hit an overhead line with the loader, the line could fall on the hay and ignite. The hay you need to feed your cattle — and the provisions you made to feed your family — just went up in smoke.

\* And that could be the best-case scenario. If you or

your equipment comes into contact with a power line, you could receive an electric shock that could cause injury and even death.

Protect your livelihood and your life, and stay away from power lines and poles. If you do make contact with a power line, call 911. Remain seated, warn others to stay away, and wait for Slope Electric linemen to de-energize the lines. Do not move from the equipment.

To report system damage that is not in need of immediate repair, call Slope Electric Cooperative at 1-701-579-4191 or email [safety@slopeelectric.coop](mailto:safety@slopeelectric.coop). If you send an email, please include the location, your name and contact information, and a photo if possible.

Members, your safety matters. Working together helps ensure the safety of all! ■

~~ANNUAL MEETING BASH / JUNE 4, 2020, FOUR SEASONS PAVILION, BOWMAN~~



# POSTPONED

The 75th Annual Meeting of Slope Electric Cooperative will be rescheduled due to the coronavirus.

More information will be shared as it becomes available.

## Report from

# THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MAY 21, 2020

- Approved minutes of the April 30, 2020, Board meeting minutes.
- Approved capital credit estate retirements and special equipment.
- Co-General Managers/CEOs gave an update on the past week's happenings regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. All National Rural Electric Cooperative Association-related meetings have been cancelled through the fall, as far as in-person meetings, and may transition to virtual meetings.
- The 2019 Audit Presentation was given by Mr. Lance Rambousek of Brady Martz & Associates, via conference call. The Board then entered into Executive Session to discuss the audit report with Mr. Rambousek. The audit for 2019 was approved.
- Reviewed and approved several Board policies.
- The Board reviewed the proposed Bylaw amendments and discussed them in detail. Consensus of the Board was that they support the proposed amendments and the proposed amendments be submitted to the membership for a vote at its next annual meeting.
- Reports were provided by senior staff, including the financial report for April.
- The Board entered into Executive Session to discuss matters of strategic importance to the Cooperative.
- The next Board meeting is set for June 22, 2020.



## LIHEAP offers emergency crisis program

Assistance may be available to those having trouble paying their heating bills due to the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in household income.



The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) offers heating assistance until May 31, and a year-round crisis program to assist qualifying households.

- Assists with unpaid heating costs associated with read dates that are no more than 90 days prior to the application date
- Qualifying households can receive Emergency Assistance more than once
- Costs must have been incurred from the current residence

- Can assist with reconnection fees
- CANNOT assist with deposits

In addition, the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services will provide additional LIHEAP funding through the CARES Act.

Households can contact the human service zone office, formally known as county social services, to request an application. Anyone who needs help completing and submitting an application can contact Community Options at 800-823-2417 ext. 140. ■

## Sign up to receive text messages

Innovation is a core value at Slope Electric Cooperative, Inc. As advancing technologies become available, we utilize them to benefit our membership.

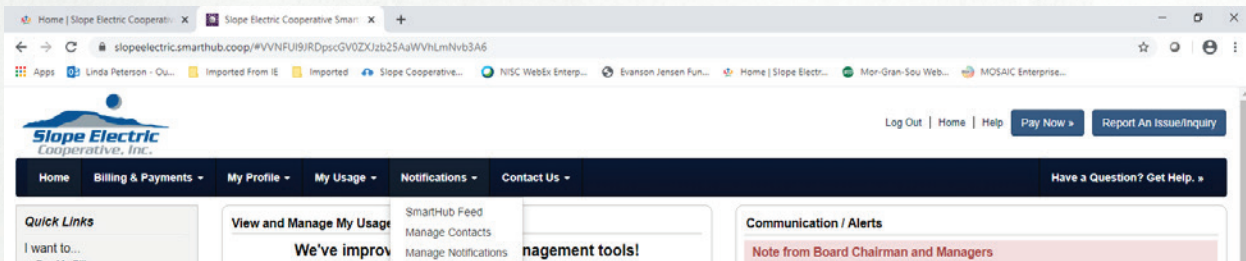
One of the communication tools offered by SmartHub is text messaging. These timely messages would alert our members to billing information, upcoming events

and other important notices. Please sign up for this additional communications tool!

To sign up through SmartHub, follow these steps:

### Website instructions at [www.slopeelectric.coop](http://www.slopeelectric.coop):

1. Log onto SmartHub. Find notifications on the black header.



2. Hover over notifications; choose manage contacts. A box will appear. Find your mobile phone number; click edit. If your mobile phone number does not appear, please add it.

### Manage Contacts

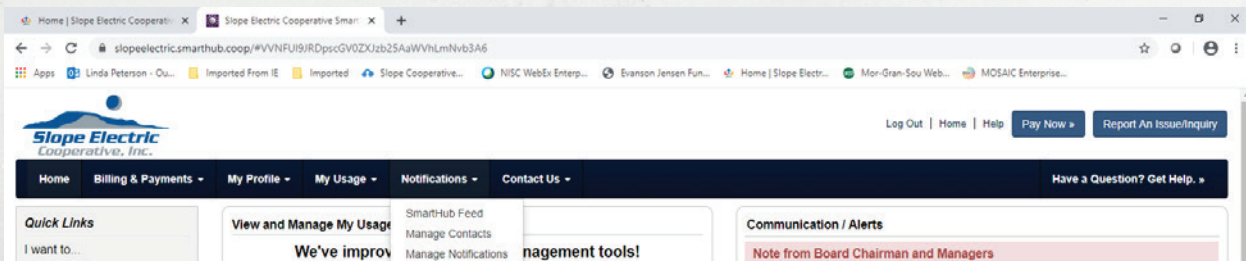
Use this page to manage your contacts. Once you have contacts setup, you may use those contacts to sign up for notifications about your billing account.

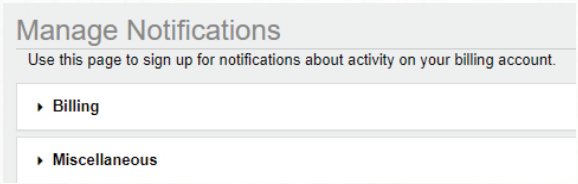


3. A “contact settings” window appears. Click the box that says receive text messages. Text Terms and Conditions will appear. Click to agree. You will receive a Verification Code on your phone. Enter Phone Verification Code; click Save Contact. Indicates you will receive Text Messages.



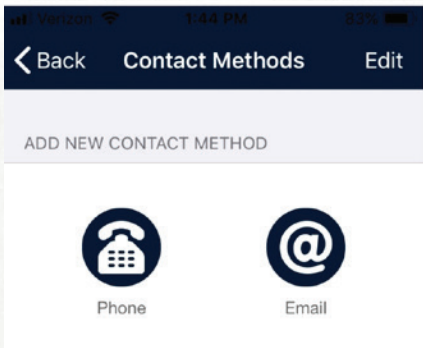
4. Manage other notifications. Return to the header; find notifications. Hover over notifications and select manage notifications. A screen will appear with categories for billing and miscellaneous. Click a category; there are many notification types under each category.



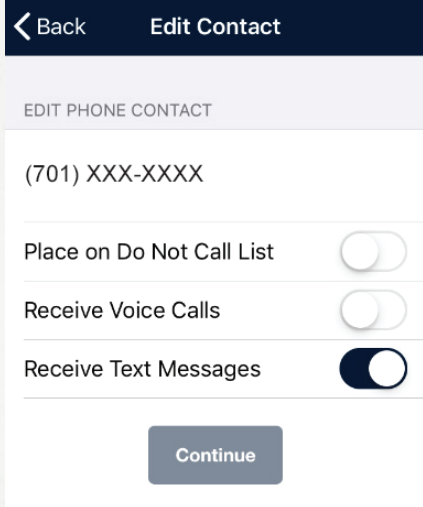


5. For each notification type, choose if you would like to be notified by email, text or both. Save your settings. Do this for both categories if you wish.

**Cell phone or tablet instructions:**



1. Log onto SmartHub. For cell phone: Click more at the bottom of the screen. Next click settings; then click contact methods. For tablet: Click settings at the bottom of the screen. Next click contact methods.



2. Find your mobile phone number and click the right arrow.  
 3. An “add or edit phone contact” window appears. Move the slide to confirm. The colored slide indicates you will receive text messages.

4. Manage other notifications. Return to settings. Select manage notifications. A screen will appear with categories for billing and miscellaneous. Click a category; there are many notification types under each category.  
 5. Follow step five listed above in website instructions.

\* If you are entering your phone number for the first time, you may need to accept Text Terms and Conditions. Once you accept, a verification code will be sent via text. Enter the code to finalize your enrollment.

Please check your phone plan to ensure your plan has unlimited texting. Some plans bill the recipient for each text message received and we do not want to cause a financial hardship.

You will not be able to reply or text the cooperative. This tool is only set up for Slope to send, and not receive, messages.

If you need assistance, we are happy to help! Call Slope Electric at 701-579-4191 or 1-800-559-4191 or email your questions to comments@slopeelectric.coop. Someone will contact you as soon as possible.

Thank you, members, for giving us another way to communicate with you and keep you up-to-date! ■

## KX/CO-OP DAY at the N.D. State Fair cancelled

In mid-May, it was announced on <https://ndstatefair.com/> that the 2020 North Dakota State Fair would be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A statement read: "This decision is in the best interest for all involved. It is impossible to predict the scale of this pandemic, and our concern is for the health and safety of our community, our attendees, exhibitors, vendors, staff and all involved with the North Dakota State Fair."

Every year, North Dakota's electric cooperatives are proud to take part in KX/Co-op Day at the Fair. This is only the second cancellation since the flood of 2011, and we regret that we won't be able to see members from across the state taking part in the pancake breakfast, stopping by the co-op tent and getting a free ice cream cone.

Thank you for your understanding, and we hope we can continue the tradition during safer times next year. ■



## Spend the day in Medora — and save

In partnership with the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation, more than 10 Touchstone Energy Cooperatives in North Dakota have joined forces to make vacationing in North Dakota more affordable for families, including Slope Electric Cooperative. This summer, head west to Medora, where electric cooperative members are eligible for a 15-percent discount off the following reservations:

- ✓ Tickets to the Medora Musical
- ✓ Bully Pulpit Golf Course

Lodging at any of the following:

- ✓ Badlands Motel
- ✓ Elkhorn Quarters
- ✓ Rough Riders Hotel

Members also receive 20 percent off at the Cowboy Hall of Fame by providing the discount code **Touch2020** at the door.

Slope members, if you are traveling to beautiful Medora this summer, call 1-800-MEDORA-1 to provide the discount code **Touch2020**, make reservations and receive your savings.



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800-795-0555 or 811

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Anthony Larson, Secretary  
Jerome Caron, Treasurer  
Angela Carlson, Director  
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Dale Hande, Director  
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Donald A. Franklund  
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