Slope Electric Cooperative Inc.

JUNE 2024

OUTLOOK

Slope Electric Cooperative Inc.

116 E. 12th St. • New England, ND 58647 | 701-579-4191 • www.slopeelectric.coop

Lauren Klewin *and* ***Dale Hande*** *visit in front of the Slope Electric Cooperative office in New England. Together, they have more than 35 years of experience on the Slope Electric board.*

LONGSTANDING COMMITMENT:

Hande and Klewin bid farewell to Slope Electric

BY SAMANTHA VANGSNESS

Serving as a director of an electric cooperative requires commitment, passion and understanding. Dale Hande and Lauren Klewin embody just that to ensure the cooperative is operating smoothly and the members' voices are being heard.

Hande has served Slope Electric for the past six years, while Klewin has served 27 years. Throughout their years on the board, they have worked to ensure safe, reliable electric service to Slope Electric members, while preparing for future challenges and opportunities for the cooperative.

There are a variety of reasons individuals choose to run for a director position. For some, it is a commitment to serving the local community. For others, it is something they always envisioned themselves doing.

"Being on the Slope Electric board of directors is something I always wanted to do," Hande says.

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As husband, father, retired basketball coach, roper and rodeo announcer, Hande often found his plate full. Being a director requires commitment, and Hande wanted to ensure he had the time and ability to devote to the position before running.

The Slope Electric board convenes once a month for board meetings to discuss items pertinent to the electric industry and the cooperative. In addition, directors take part in other meetings and training courses throughout the year to increase their knowledge of the electric cooperative industry.

Klewin was inspired to put his name in the hat shortly after getting off another board, when he was urged to run by former Slope Electric Director Doug Nordby. Klewin wasn't sure if he would run, but his mother reminded him how important electricity has been to his family and their ranch operation.

"She reminded me of the days they had to chop wood and haul it up to the house to warm it up before our ranch received electricity in 1952," Klewin recalls.

Industry insights and learning opportunities

Further education and information have proven instrumental in shaping Hande's and Klewin's perspective on the industry's intricacies. Attending state and national conferences has provided them with valuable networking opportunities and has served as a platform for continuous learning.

"I enjoy meeting and visiting with people," Hande says. "It is eye-opening to go and visit with other states and rural electric cooperatives and find out what their achievements and struggles may be."

Hande notes he found himself returning from those events and realizing Slope Electric is well cared for and has efficient, dependable people behind it. Hande and Klewin both commend the Slope Electric team for its success, from the CEOs to the directors and staff.

As Klewin recalls his time on the board, he notes it has been the most educational experience of which he has been a part, from the people he met to the additional doors it opened, such as serving

"The (board director) position is about what is best for the members, while also keeping the cooperative in mind."

–Dale Hande, Slope Electric Cooperative director

on the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) board.

"I recall early on in my time on the NDAREC board, we started to look at economic development and it was kind of the beginning of that. It has been eye-opening to see how far it has come since then," Klewin says.

The challenges and success

Throughout Hande's time on the board, he saw the demand for electric service increase due to all the appliances and electronics now in a household as well as on the farm and ranch.

"Costs have also increased during my time on the board as well as delayed delivery of materials," Hande says. Directors have to look at the whole picture of the cooperative and do what is best now and for the future. Hande notes Slope Electric has always been well prepared with materials and equipment for future projects and progression. Klewin notes the board does not take decisions lightly.

"We do our research and make our opinions heard as well as the members' voices during these decisions," he says.

The same goes with a success Klewin saw during his time on the Slope Electric board, forming the Innovative Energy Alliance Cooperative (IEA). Being a part of the IEA means Slope Electric is able to split costs on services, such as engineering, information technology and other departments, as well as work and collaborate with other cooperatives. Klewin recalls the time and deliberation that went into that decision and how the board considered what was best for the cooperative and the members.

As they reflect on their memories and years on the Slope Electric board, they both emphasize the importance of being a devoted and active board member.

"The position is about what is best for the members, while also keeping the cooperative in mind," Hande says.

Klewin recalls being a new director on the board and says the other directors were so willing to help.

"I remember what it was like to be a new director and want to help other directors any way I can," he says.

Hande and Klewin will retire in June following Slope Electric's annual meeting. Their dedication, insight and passion for the board, staff and Slope Electric members will be missed in and outside the boardroom. ■

JOIN US AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

Join us for an evening filled with Bingo, delicious food, exciting prize giveaways, Luck-of-the-Draw Scholarships and much more!

Thursday, June 6

4:30 p.m. (MT) Registration
5 p.m. Business Meeting with Bingo and dinner to follow.

New England Public School, 1200 Main St., New England

MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

EPA ruling can impact reliability

Jason Bentz

As an electric cooperative, our primary concern is the reliability of the service we provide to our valued members. It is with this commitment in mind we share with our members the deep concern regarding recent developments that threaten our local power supply and, consequently, our way of life. Our cooperative, along with the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, stands firmly against the new power plant rules released by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on April 25.

These rules, while purportedly aiming to cut emissions from power plants, pose a dire risk to the reliability of our electric grid. They would force the premature retirement of reliable, dispatchable, baseload electric generation assets, putting the security of our power supply in jeopardy.

The timelines set forth by the EPA are unrealistic, and the technologies required are not yet deployable. For instance, existing coal-fired power plants would be required to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by a staggering 90% by 2032, necessitating the use of carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) technologies. While CCS shows promise and is actively being pursued by organizations like Minnkota Power Cooperative, it is not yet proven or commercially available.

Furthermore, while existing natural gas plants are exempt from immediate compliance, new natural gas units must adhere to strict greenhouse gas standards outlined in the new rule. This regulatory environment threatens the very foundation of our energy infrastructure.

Looking ahead to 2032, the prospect of a future without coal is deeply troubling. As demand for electricity continues to rise, these EPA rules threaten to exacerbate reliability challenges, as highlighted by the North American Reliability Corporation. The North American Reliability Corporation, a not-for-profit international regulatory authority whose mission is to assure the effective and efficient reduction of risks to the reliability and security of the electric grid, estimates the demand for electricity will grow 10% through 2032, while the electric generation to meet that demand is projected to grow only 4% in that time.

As a community, we pride ourselves on innovation and progress. Our electric cooperatives have diversified and made strides forward, but we cannot compromise on reliability. The implications of these regulations are dire: more blackouts, higher costs and increased uncertainty for families and businesses.

We urge our policymakers to consider the practical implications of these rules and prioritize the reliability of our power supply. It is essential we work together to ensure a sustainable energy future without sacrificing the reliability and security of our local grid. ■

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With SmartHub you can:

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- Report outages
- View your usage
- and more!

Visit Slopeelectric.coop to learn more.

New England Ambulance received RDFC funds in 2023. The funds were used to purchase new equipment for the ambulance.

GRANT OPPORTUNITY:

RDFC announces 2024 allotment

The Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC) announces it has approved a 2024 grant allotment of $3,000 to Slope Electric Cooperative to support community-owned entities, nonprofits and community-based projects.

Eligible projects:

- Community-owned businesses, such as a café, grocery store, motel or other
- Community facilities, such as ambulance services, fire districts, recreation, hospital/clinic or community center
- Workforce development, defined as training to meet the needs of current and future business and industry to maintain a sustainable competitive economic environment
- Training, development opportunities or continuing education programs
- Community-based projects, such as school/youth projects or others that benefit rural areas and lead to community betterment.

Rural Development Finance Corporation
GROWING COMMUNITIES

Please note RDFC does not provide funds for medical fundraisers or general operating costs.

Matching funds include $4 of other funds to every $1 of RDFC funds. RDFC will not require documentation.

The minimum grant amount is $500; the maximum is $3,000. Applications may be found at www.slopeelectric.coop/rdfc or by calling the office at 701-579-4191 or 800-559-4191. Please return applications to Brooke Waltner at Slope Electric by Sept. 12. ■

SAFETY STARTS WITH ME:
Watch for crews

When the power goes out, so do Slope Electric Cooperative's line crews. Lineworkers are the first to respond after an outage occurs, and they work tirelessly to restore power to the communities served.

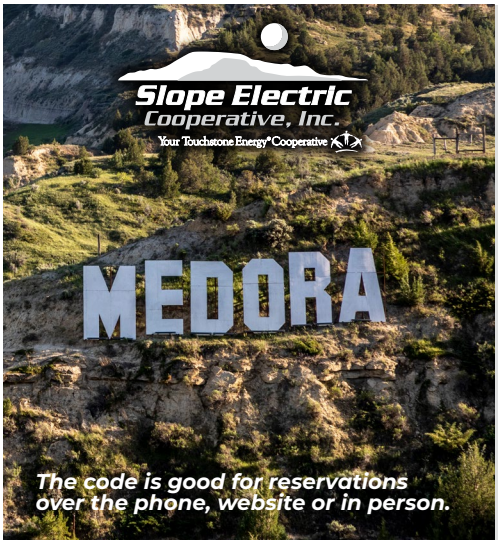
When widespread outages occur, multiple crews will be out in the field simultaneously working to repair damage at multiple locations. Even routine work has the potential to be dangerous, and it takes the full attention of the lineworkers and their colleagues, who are also responsible for the team's safety. Distractions can have deadly consequences.

Here is what YOU can do:

- If lineworkers are on or near your property during a power outage, for vegetation management or for routine maintenance, please allow them ample room to work. These small accommodations help protect our crews – and you.
- If you're traveling and see one of our crews on the side of the road, we kindly ask you to move over if possible and give them a little extra space to work. We deeply care about the safety of all, and this extra precaution ensures just that.
- If you approach a crew while traveling on a two-lane road, moving over to the next lane might not be an option. In this case, we simply ask you to slow down when approaching roadside crews. If you approach a crew while traveling on a four-lane road, and safety and traffic conditions allow, we ask you to move over into the far lane.

"Summer is busy for us," says Line Technician Andrew Sonsalla. "We are working on construction projects across our service territory and that may be near the roadway at times. I urge everyone to please be mindful and move over when they see a crew working roadside. This ensure safety for all."

As a member of Slope Electric, you can feel confident knowing we're standing by, ready to restore power as quickly and safely as possible. ■



EXPLORE IT, ADORE IT AND SAVE:
Medora discounts

Slope Electric Cooperative is excited to offer Medora discounts for some unforgettable family summer fun! Slope Electric 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 "TOUCH2024" for a 15% discount on all of the following during any night of the season.

DISCOUNTS OFFERED FOR MEDORA VACATION INCLUDE:

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

LODGING AT ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

- Elkhorn Quarters
- Badlands Motel
- Rough Riders Hotel

ALWAYS ASSUME ALL DOWNED LINES ARE LIVE

Downed power lines can be ***deadly***. Always assume a downed power line is ***live*** and avoid approaching them or anything near them.

Use Precaution

35 ft

Downed power lines can energize the ground up to **35 feet away**. Even more in wet conditions.

Never drive over downed power lines or anything in contact with them.

911 Calling...

If you see a downed power line, **call 911**.

Never try to move a downed power line.

If a vehicle contacts a **power line** or **utility pole**...

STAY AWAY AND CALL 911

Consider **all lines** to be live and dangerous.

Stay in place or inside your vehicle unless you see **fire or smoke**.

35 ft

Warn others to stay at least **35 feet away**.

Tell others not to approach vehicle, downed lines or anything that may be in contact with downed lines.

911

Call **911**.

In the Event of Fire or Smoke

Do not touch the ground and vehicle at the **same time**.

Jump from the vehicle with your **feet together**.

Shuffle away, avoid lifting your feet.

ESFi.org

Slope Electric board meeting highlights: **March 21**

The regular meeting of the board of directors of Slope Electric Cooperative was held on March 21 at the cooperative's headquarters in New England. President Steven Wegner called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. A quorum was present. Slope Electric's General Counsel Jennifer Grosz was appointed recorder for the meeting. Also present were Slope Electric's co-General Managers/CEOs Travis Kupper and Jason Bentz, Chief Financial Officer Alex Craigmile, Operations Manager Dean Volk, Member Relations Manager Brooke Waltner and Board Liaison Connie Hill.

Consent agenda: There were a few proposed amendments to the consent agenda. The consent agenda was approved as amended.

Strategic/action: Bentz and Kupper provided the co-general managers' report, which included updates on the Region 8 meeting, North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives grant opportunities, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's PowerXchange Conference and Upper Missouri Power Cooperative. Bentz and Kupper also presented the February reports for West Dakota Utility Services and 3C Construction and Basin Electric Power Cooperative's updates.

Department reports: Craigmile provided the board with February's financial reports. Volk provided a report, which included new construction in the service territory. Waltner reviewed her member relations report, which included community involvement opportunities. Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar provided a report about projects he is working on for the cooperative. Grosz provided her legal report.

Action items: The auditor's report was approved as presented.

Discussion/general information: The co-general managers led a discussion of the progress being made on the strategic planning session action items.

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

Next meeting date: The next meeting is at 9 a.m. MT June 27 in New England. ■

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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SLOPE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Steven Wegner, President
Anthony Larson, Vice President
Angela Carlson, Secretary
Henry "Chip" Fischer, Treasurer
Jerome Caron, Director
Dale Hande, Director
Lauren Klewin, Director
Charlotte Meier, Director

MANAGEMENT

Jason Bentz
CO-GM/CEO

Travis Kupper
CO-GM/CEO

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