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## FROM SERVICE TO SERVICE: A veteran's journey to restaurant owner

BY SAMANTHA VANGSNESS

From serving our great country to serving local community members, Drew Henderson has always answered the call to serve.

As a senior at Bowman County High School, Drew enlisted in the N.D. Army National Guard. He was stationed in Hettinger and later Fargo. While in the National Guard, Drew served in the engineer battalion and was deployed for about a year.

"I live and breathe the history of our country and what makes us the greatest country in the world," Drew says.

In 2004, his National Guard contract expired and he later returned to Bowman. During this time, he met Nicole while in the very restaurant they didn't know would mean so much to them one day. Drew and Nicole eventually got married, built a family, then a business, together.

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## **Becoming business owners**

Both Drew and Nicole know the work and passion it takes to operate a local business, as both of their parents own local businesses in Bowman.

Their parents' commitment to the community drew them to step up in 2018 when Windy's, a locally owned and operated restaurant, announced the longtime community staple was closing its doors. Drew's dad was the contractor who built Windy's in 1988.

"This place is nostalgic," Drew says.

He began visiting with Nicole about the idea of purchasing the business and becoming restaurant owners. Six months later, they cut a deal.

"Before she would agree to it, I had to agree that family would always come first," Drew says.

In 2019, the Hendersons became the new owners of Windy's. The first year was booming, Drew says, as he recalls all the traffic coming through Bowman at the time, but then 2020 hit and they had to pivot.

"You have to be able to roll with the punches and the changes," Drew says.

That year, they shut down and remodeled, opening the entire restaurant to bar service, which has worked well for them.

Drew credits their success to their passion and dedication to their community.

"We take care of our locals, and they keep coming back," Drew says.

But they also put just as much value on the visitors who stop for a bite to eat.

"We have great food," Drew says. "People come to

Bowman to just check North Dakota out and they come here to eat. We are convenient."

## **Hearts for community**

Being a part of a community is being a part of something bigger than yourself, and that holds true for the Hendersons and their business. They work each day to do what they can to support their community members.

"Our hands are open to everyone," Drew says when talking about supporting the community.

Additionally, Drew is active in the American Legion, and the Hendersons take the opportunity to give back to their local ambulance and fire department when they can.

"We love to pour back into our community and keep things local," Drew says.

In their unwavering dedication to the community's longevity, they contribute through their family restaurant and participation in local events, ensuring a vibrant future. ■



## MANAGER'S MESSAGE: Understanding capital credits



**Travis Kupper**

Co-General Manager/CEO

Capital credits, patronage dividends, patronage refunds. These are all familiar terms with similar meanings. They all refer to the allocation of operating margins as equity and, when appropriate, retiring them to the members of the co-op in the form of money or a credit on the bill.

Unlike for-profit organizations, Slope Electric Cooperative operates differently from traditional utilities, and one of the key

benefits of your membership is the opportunity to earn capital credits.

### What are capital credits?

Capital credits represent your share of the cooperative's margins. Unlike other utilities, after we calculate our revenues and expenses, any remaining margins are allocated back to you, the members, based on your usage of electric services from our cooperative.

### How are credits allocated?

Each year, the cooperative allocates a portion of the year's margins to the membership. These margins are reflected on your account statement. Each member's allocation is determined by the amount paid for services, allowing us to equitably distribute the cooperative's earnings. Once these credits are allocated, they are recorded in your account, but are not paid.



### Retirement of credits

Electric cooperatives use a long-term financial model that balances returning profits to members with keeping the cooperative stable and rates affordable. That is why capital credit retirements sometimes happen 20 to 30 years after allocation. The money stays with the cooperative for a time to help maintain power lines and equipment, avoid borrowing money and make investments in reliability and infrastructure.

Slope Electric's board of directors keeps this in mind when determining when to retire capital credits. Typically, the board retires a portion of the capital credits on an annual basis. When credits are retired, members will receive a check in the mail. This is why it is important to keep your mailing address up to date, even if you move away and no longer are an active member.

### Why it matters

Capital credits are a significant way for our cooperative to provide tangible benefits to you, our valued members. They reflect the success of our cooperative and reinforce the idea you are not just a customer, but an owner. Your membership not only provides you with essential services, but also offers you a stake in our financial success.

If you have any questions about capital credits, how they are calculated or how they benefit you, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are committed to ensuring you fully understand the advantages of your membership and the cooperative model.

Thank you for your continued support of our cooperative. ■



## Thank you, Jerry!

**Jerry Caron**, seated second from right, retired from the Slope Electric Cooperative board of directors in June after 36 years of service. He recently was presented with gifts of appreciation from the cooperative board for his years of commitment and dedication to the cooperative!



## MESSAGE FROM MEMBER RELATIONS: Join the Slope Electric Nominating/Resolution Committee



**Brooke Waltner**

Manager of Member  
Relations

At the upcoming Dec. 17 Slope Electric Cooperative meeting of the board of directors, directors will appoint the Slope Electric Nominating/Resolutions Committee. The committee's role is to identify and nominate candidates interested in serving on the board of directors. This is your chance to play an active role in our cooperative's decision-making process!

Here's what you need to know:

**Representation:** Each director will appoint one member from their district, ensuring a range of perspectives. Additionally, we'll select up to two more committee members from

districts with director elections.

**Visibility:** Your commitment will be recognized as we publish the committee member names in Slope Electric's local pages of North Dakota Living.

**Compensation:** We value your time and effort. That's why we offer a per diem and mileage reimbursement for both committee meetings.

The first meeting, scheduled for Jan. 20 at 11 a.m. and will provide insights into the committee's functions, including the policies that guide us in nominating qualified members. The second meeting, on Feb. 26 at 7:30 a.m. is when the committee will roll up their sleeves to make official candidate nominations for the cooperative's annual meeting.

If you're enthusiastic about shaping the cooperative's future or know someone who is, please reach out to us before Dec. 1. You can contact our office at 701-579-4191 or email us at [comments@slopeelectric.coop](mailto:comments@slopeelectric.coop). ■



The nominating committee meets to review candidates and resolutions for the annual meeting.

## MESSAGE FROM OPERATIONS:

# Remote monitoring technology being installed



**Dean Volk**

Chief of Staff

In a step toward enhancing reliability for our members, Slope Electric Cooperative has begun the process of installing supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) technology within our substations. Slope Electric's operations department, along with Innovative Energy Alliance Cooperative's SCADA administrator, are strategically planning implementation of the technology over the next several years. With this

technology, SCADA acts as a remote monitoring and control system within our substations, allowing for enhanced service throughout Slope Electric's service area.

### Isolating issues

The cooperative's priority is to ensure safe and reliable electric services for members, and SCADA will further assist Slope Electric with system reliability. SCADA will provide the cooperative with in-depth data on power load, blinks and overall management of substations. The data collected by the SCADA system

can then help identify trends or performance patterns, prompting crews to address issues. Being proactive in system maintenance helps eliminate issues that could lead to unexpected outages or equipment failure, which then saves the cooperative money.

### Outage detection

With the implementation of the SCADA technology, Slope Electric will have access to real-time data and control at the operation department's fingertips, allowing more efficient system load switching. Accessing data remotely ensures efficient restoration times, allowing line crews to respond more quickly and accurately to outages.

### Enhanced safety

SCADA allows for faster response time in the event of an emergency, such as public contact or fires. During these emergencies, operations personnel have the ability to open or switch lines without being onsite, minimizing the impact of an emergency event.

Slope Electric remains committed to ensuring safe and reliable electric services to members. Implementing technology like SCADA will help us continue to strengthen our system and improve reliability to members. ■



## Sonsalla promoted

We are excited to share the promotion of Andrew Sonsalla to the position of operations manager.

Sonsalla has been with Slope Electric Cooperative for 19 years, most recently serving as line technician. As operations manager, Sonsalla will help guide the cooperative in building, maintaining and improving our electrical system, while simultaneously leading efforts to ensure our members continue to receive safe, reliable electric services they can count on. If you see him, help us congratulate him on his new role! ■



## SAFETY STARTS WITH ME: Hunting safety

As you head outdoors for hunting season, Slope Electric Cooperative encourages you to be aware of overhead power lines, utility poles and other electrical equipment while hunting.

“Hunting is an activity enjoyed by many in our area,” says Mark Frank, line technician. “Every hunter needs to be aware of the electrical equipment in the area they are hunting and take the necessary safety precautions.”

Here are some safety tips to keep in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors.

- Take notice of posted warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Know where power lines and equipment are located on the land where you hunt.
- Be especially careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.
- Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them, causing shock or electrocution.
- Do not place decoys on power lines, pad-mounted transformers or other utility equipment. Any non-electrical equipment attached to a pole can pose an obstruction and serious hazards to our line crews.



Each of us plays a role in ensuring safety this hunting season. Please give our office a call if you see any cooperative equipment that may need immediate attention. We hope everyone has a safe and memorable season. ■



# CO-OP YOUTH PROGRAMS NOW AVAILABLE



## YOUTH TOUR

Youth Tour 2026 is calling, are you in? Slope Electric Cooperative is now accepting applications for the 2026 Youth Tour. Apply today and level up your summer!

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: JAN. 16**

SCAN ME



## HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS

Each year, Slope Electric offers a variety of scholarships for high school seniors. Whether you're attending a four-year university, technical college, or trade school, there are various scholarship opportunities available.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: JAN. 31**

SCAN ME



Scan the QR codes above or visit [slopeelectric.coop](https://www.slopeelectric.coop) for more information and details on each of these initiatives.



## SLOPE ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS AUG. 28



**Angela Carlson**

President

The regular meeting of the board of directors of Slope Electric Cooperative was held on Aug. 28 at the cooperative's outpost in Bowman. President Angela Carlson called the meeting to order at 8 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, Chief of Staff/Operations Manager Dean Volk, Member Relations Manager Brooke Waltner and Board Liaison Connie Hill.

**Consent agenda:** An amendment was proposed to the consent agenda. The consent agenda was approved as amended.

**Strategic items:** Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates on material supplies, training course opportunities, the June storm and more. Several additional Basin Electric Power Cooperative board documents were available for review.

**Department reports:** Craigmile provided a financial report. Volk provided a report, including an update on projects, including line maintenance, service changes and other projects. Waltner provided a report, including bill credit program, youth opportunities and donation requests. Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar provided a written report. Grosz provided an update on the status on legal topics and projects.

**Action items:** The board reviewed and resolved various items.

**Discussion/general information:** The board discussed committee discussion dates, director terms and other items.

The meeting concluded with adjournment. Secretary Charlotte Meier certified the accuracy of the minutes.

**Next meeting date:** The next meeting is at 8 a.m. on Nov. 20 in New England. ■



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### SLOPE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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

#### MANAGEMENT

Jason Bentz  
CO-GM/CEO


Travis Kupper  
CO-GM/CEO

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



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**SLOPE ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE OFFICES WILL  
BE CLOSED ON THE  
FOLLOWING DATES:  
NOV. 11, NOV. 27-28.**

**PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE DURING  
NORMAL BUSINESS HOURS WITH ANY  
QUESTIONS.**