

THIS ISSUE:

- Ensuring reliability
- Helping neighbors
- RDFC Grants available
- Bomber Club road project



Alesha and Will Kouba and their two sons incorporate family life into their farm and Alesha's business.



CUSTOM CREATIONS IN A RURAL COMMUNITY: **Mad Batter**

BY SAMANTHA VANGSNESS

In small towns, word travels fast, especially when baked goods are involved. Based out of rural Regent and connected to communities across southwestern North Dakota, Alesha Kouba has turned a love for baking and design into a growing side business that brings custom cookies, cakes, muffins and cupcakes to celebrations across the region.

Kouba is a busy mom who works full time in Dickinson, chases her boys between school and sports, and keeps up with her husband on their ranch near Regent.

"If we ever got a chance to sit still, I don't know that we would know what to do with ourselves," Kouba says.

Amid her busy schedule, Kouba has turned her passion for creativity into a business. She started Mad Batter in 2022 while on maternity leave, and it has only expanded from there.

A sweet start

What started as a way to earn extra income quickly became something larger with some help, family encouragement, community support and the reach of social media.

For Kouba, Mad Batter started in an unexpected season of life. In 2022, Alesha and her husband, Will, welcomed their second child. She knew baking was something she could do well and was hopeful

continued on next page

continued from previous page

opening a baking business could help supplement their income while she was on maternity leave.

"My cousin just graduated and asked me if I could bring dessert. I showed up with extravagant Crumbl-style cookies," Alesha says. "They says, 'You could sell these. They are really good.'"

Encouraged by her family, she created a Facebook page that evening and woke up to 1,000 followers. After posting her first round of cookies for sale and selling out before the family returned home from the trip, she thought this might be something big.

Alesha's family, friends and community have helped spread the word and encouraged her to try new baked goods in her business. At first, she was only baking and designing cookies, she expanded to cakes and other baked goods.

"I had a few friends reach out and ask if I wanted to try a cake," Alesha says. "Then, when things went well one after the other, now I'm doing weddings, birthday parties, graduations, the whole 9 yards."

For Alesha, Mad Batter is a creative outlet for her love for design and creativity.

"I've always been creative. I'm always overkill with birthday parties and stuff," she says.

Now that she provides baked goods for these celebrations, she feels part of people's special days.

From recipes to custom creations

Alesha's style of baking began with mixing a little of this with a little of that until she created a recipe that could serve as a universal base for various treats. Once she started selling baked goods, she knew she needed to start recording recipes to ensure a consistent product was delivered to customers each time.

"I had a recipe that I went off of and the majority of my cookies are built off of that recipe," she says. "I have a chocolate base, a peanut butter base and a sugar cookie base and the majority of my cookies are just built off of those."

As her business has grown in customers and Alesha has perfected the process, she has added new products, such as cobbler cookies.

"I start with a base and then add all the fun toppings that sound good together," Alesha says.

But coming up with new flavors is trial and error and includes inspiration from customers. When customers place an order with Alesha, they have many options, from flavors to designs, and the decoration process is her favorite.

"I love it when people give me creative freedom and I can just run with it," Alesha says.

She has designed all kinds of cakes and cookies,



Alesha enjoys being creative with her customers' orders.

each unique for each customer.

For Alesha, serving rural communities is part of what makes the work meaningful. Each order is a chance to help families mark birthdays, graduations, weddings and other milestones close to home.

Being based in a rural community presents challenges when delivering to customers, but Alesha has a lot of help from family members who deliver baked goods across the southwest region. Thanks to those helpers, she is able to bring special baked goods to more celebrations.

As for the future of Mad Batter, Alesha looks forward to keeping her business fun and flexible for her lifestyle. She is excited to continue to bring one-of-a-kind cakes, cookies, cupcakes and muffins to people in rural communities while spending time with her family.

"Every order I take on, I take it on like it was my own child's birthday party," Alesha says. "I get to be a part of that celebration with them too, which makes it special."

To see more of Alesha's recent work or learn about placing an order, visit Mad Batter on Facebook. Customers are welcome to message the page to ask about availability, custom orders and pickup or delivery options. ■

MANAGER'S MESSAGE: **Ensuring reliability**



Travis Kupper

Co-General Manager/CEO

You expect reliable and affordable electric service from your electric cooperative, so how does Slope Electric Cooperative deliver on that promise? A complex network of power generation and tens of thousands of miles of electrical lines work together to ensure enough electricity is available on the coldest winter morning and during the dog days of summer.

What happens when the demand for power overwhelms the ability to provide the electricity? That's a particularly complicated question, given the transition taking place in how electricity is produced and shared across this network.

The key to meeting energy needs so essential to your quality of life is balancing electricity supply with demand. While that may sound simple, a complex web of facilities and organizations work together to make it happen each day.

Regional transmission organizations coordinate, control and monitor the electric grid across several states in a region. Think of them as energy traffic managers on an interstate highway system, regulating

the number of cars – in this case, electricity – and their destination.

Our cooperative is part of the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) as the regional transmission organization.

In recent years, organizations such as SPP have issued new requirements for additional generation capacity. These requirements are being put in place to ensure the grid has enough available power, even during extreme conditions.

As a distribution electric cooperative, we don't generate our own electricity, but we purchase it through our generation and transmission (G&T) providers, including Basin Electric Power Cooperative and the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA). This means our G&T providers will need to have additional sources of power and are building for the future to ensure we have enough capacity. Ultimately, this has also increased our power costs to ensure reliability.

While these investments come at a cost, they are essential to maintaining the reliable electric service you depend on today while preparing the grid to meet the challenges and energy needs of tomorrow. ■



**Scan these QR codes
to read a message from our
power suppliers, Basin Electric and WAPA.**



**Basin Electric Power
Cooperative article**



**Western Area Power
Administration article**

MESSAGE FROM MEMBER SERVICES:

Operation Round Up helps neighbors



Brooke Waltner

Manager of Member Relations/Chief of Staff

Communities are built on neighbors helping neighbors. Slope Electric Cooperative was founded by community members who sought change. Cooperatives are different. Cooperative values reflect dedication to strengthening the communities we serve.

One of the most meaningful ways we live out that commitment is through our Operation Round Up program, which supports community members, organizations and initiatives locally. By investing

in projects that enrich lives, foster opportunity and build stronger communities, we are proud to give back and support the people and organizations working every day to create lasting change.

Apply for Operation Round Up grant

Operation Round Up is a voluntary, charitable program that allows cooperative members the opportunity to round up their electric bill to the nearest dollar. The pennies, dimes, nickels and quarters accumulate in a fund. The funds are then distributed by our Operation Round Up board in the form of grants solely for medical, educational, charitable, safety and scientific purposes. The board's top priority is given to individual applicants with medical needs, who often have no other resources.

Over the years, our community-focused programs, food donations and other giving projects have supported local schools and young people, fed hungry families and so much more.

Since 1997, with donations from members, we've helped 388 recipients through this program. This shows small donations over time can collectively make a big impact.

The success of Operation Round Up is a testament to the kindness and generosity of our members. Through their selfless contributions, we can make a real and lasting difference in the lives of those facing challenges in our community.

Our next Operation Round Up grant application deadline is Oct. 15. Visit our Operation Round Up page on our website for details and to apply. ■

Since 1997, Slope Electric, together with the support of our members has donated

\$218,820
to individuals

\$81,250
to community projects

\$14,184
to youth programs

\$13,050
to school programs

Scan the QR code to hear a 2025 recap of Operation Round Up from Lane Miller.





Rural Development
Finance Corporation
GROWING COMMUNITIES

Community grants available through Slope Electric

Grant funds are available through the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC). Grant funds are allotted to be used to support community-owned entities, nonprofits and community-based projects.

Eligible projects include:

- Community-owned businesses (café, grocery store, motel, other)
- Community facilities (ambulance services, fire districts, recreation, hospital/clinic, community center, other)
- Workforce development or community-based projects (school/youth projects) that benefit rural areas and lead to community betterment.
- Community-based projects (school/youth projects) that benefit rural areas and lead to community betterment.

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.

Applications are due to Slope Electric by Sept. 8 and can be found at slopeelectric.coop or by calling Brooke at 701-579-4191.

Additionally, if you are a rural business seeking funding and programs, NDAREC has a program coordinator who can assist in navigating grant funds and programs.



Come enjoy a delicious meal on behalf of Slope Electric and visit with our board of directors, CEOs and staff as well as other members.



**5-6:30 p.m. on
Sept. 30**



**Memorial Hall, 925
Main St, New England**



**Can't make it? Join us from
11 a.m.- 1 p.m. on Oct. 12 at
Slope Electric's Bowman
Outpost (8511 143rd Ave
SW, Bowman)**



MESSAGE FROM OPERATIONS: **Bomber Club Road project**



Andrew Sonsalla

Operations Manager

Each year, our operations and engineering team diligently compiles a work plan to improve our system's reliability. Projects are included in a plan for various reasons, from aging infrastructure to an increase in reported outages or alignment with the cooperative's long-term goals. One project in this year's work plan was updating the New England substation's east circuit along the Bomber Club Road.

This summer, crews installed 14 miles of underground three-phase power line and converted all overhead power lines along and across the road. Upgrades were made based on the age, condition and historical outage data of the three-phase overhead power line.

Over the years, line crews have frequently worked in adverse weather and conditions to repair this specific

line. Converting the line to underground will reduce weather-related outages and the need for restoration during extreme weather. It also improves reliability and reduces outages for our members, and ultimately decreases operational expenses. Replacing the overhead with underground also removes the hazard of overhead power lines and utility poles along field edges and over roads, where farm equipment can sometimes have clearance issues.

Converting overhead line to underground also works toward objectives in our wildfire mitigation plan, which aims at reducing the potential for Slope Electric Cooperative's infrastructure to become the source of ignition for a fire. Making updates to this area also advanced Slope Electric's long-term goal of burying main three-phase tie lines and feeders, which will reduce system outages.

Slope Electric is proud to make investments that improve reliability for our members. We look forward to bringing more of these projects to communities across our service territory in the coming years, helping to reduce outages, improve service reliability and ensure our members have access to safe and dependable electric services. ■

SAFETY STARTS WITH ME:

Outdoor electrical safety



Brad Schmitt

Journeyman Lineworker

Fall brings busy days outdoors, whether you're tackling fall projects, preparing for cooler weather or simply enjoying time outside. It is also a good time to look around your home, yard and shop to check for potential electrical safety hazards.

Taking a few simple precautions can help prevent accidents and keep everyone safe. Remember these outdoor electrical safety tips this fall:

- Check extension cords, power tools and outdoor electrical equipment for signs of wear or damage. It is a good time to replace frayed or cracked cords to help prevent shocks and fires.
- Use extra caution when operating electrical equipment near puddles, ponds, livestock waterers or wet grass. Never handle electrical devices with wet hands.

- Be aware of power lines when using ladders, trimming trees, moving equipment or completing outdoor projects.
- Make sure extension cords, outlets, power strips and tools are designed for outdoor use when used outside. Outdoor-rated products are built to withstand weather conditions.
- Never operate a portable generator inside a home, garage, shed or other enclosed area. Keep generators outdoors and away from doors, windows and vents. Always make sure to follow the manufacturer's instructions when operating a portable generator.
- If you notice a damaged utility pole, pad-mounted transformer (the big green box) or downed power line, stay away and contact Slope Electric Cooperative right away. Never attempt to inspect or repair electrical equipment yourself.

Electricity is all around us, and Slope Electric is committed to providing safe, reliable and quality electric service to all of our members. We hope you'll keep these electrical safety tips in mind so you can be aware of hazards before damage occurs. ■



If you encounter a downed power line, stay away and never approach it. Contact the co-op office immediately by calling 800-559-4191.

SLOPE ELECTRIC'S TOUCHSTONE ENERGY STUDENT OF THE MONTH

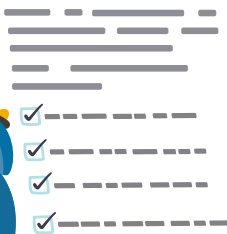


**NOMINATE A NEW ENGLAND
PUBLIC SCHOOL
STUDENT TODAY!**

**SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT
OUR WEBSITE FOR DETAILS.**



MEETING MINUTES



You can find the complete monthly board meeting minutes by scanning the QR code or visiting the "Governance" page on our website, www.slopeelectric.coop/governance.



116 E. 12th St.
New England, ND 58647

Phone: 701-579-4191
or 800-559-4191

Email us:
comments@slopeelectric.coop
UNDERGROUND LINE LOCATES
800-795-0555 or 811

SLOPE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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

MANAGEMENT

Jason Bentz
CO-GM/CEO

Travis Kupper
CO-GM/CEO

slopeelectric.coop



Become a fan of Slope Electric Cooperative to learn timely co-op news!

*Slope Electric Cooperative Inc.
is an equal opportunity provider.*