



*Caleb Sarsland visits with Rep. Kelly Armstrong during the Youth Tour.*

## Caleb Sarsland experiences Washington, D.C., on Youth Tour

BY RACHEL NEFF

When Caleb Sarsland, who will be a senior at Bowman High School, was approached by his mother about applying for the 2022 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, he never knew his “might as well give it a try” response would lead to a trip of a lifetime packed with memories he will never forget.

Slope Electric Cooperative Inc.

# OUTLOOK

116 E. 12th St. • New England, ND 58647 | 701-579-4191 • [www.slopeelectric.coop](http://www.slopeelectric.coop)

### In this issue:

- Manager’s message: Know the signs of a scam
- New England Public School awarded grant
- Safety Starts with ME



## Getting to Washington, D.C.

His knowledge, research and time spent writing an essay won Sarsland an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., to see our nation's capital during the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth Tour June 19 to 24. In his essay, Sarsland touched on the topic of increasing youth attendance at the cooperative's annual meeting.

Each year, Slope Electric Cooperative holds a contest to select one local sophomore or junior to attend the NRECA Youth Tour. The winner travels with other North Dakota teens and joins 1,400 students from across the nation during the Youth Tour. Participants learn about cooperatives, visit with legislators at the Capitol, see the national monuments and make memories to last a lifetime.

## The trip of a lifetime

A group of 14 North Dakota teenagers from different North Dakota electric cooperatives set out on Sunday, June 19, to Washington, D.C., to learn about their co-ops and their country on the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. The next five days were packed full of sightseeing, educational sessions and experiencing history in a way they have never experienced before.

Once arriving in the nation's capital, the North Dakota Youth Tour winners loaded a bus and headed straight to the first stop of the day – the Holocaust Museum.

The following day, the group learned more about electric cooperatives before heading to the National Archives Museum, U.S. Naval Academy and visits to all the memorial sites the area had to offer.

"The trip made me want to be more American and patriotic," Sarsland recalled. "Every American should experience Washington, D.C., because it shows how America was formed and how important our freedom is."

The Arlington National Cemetery was one site, in particular, that meant a lot to him.

"The Changing of the Guard was so peaceful," Sarsland said. "Seeing all of the graves as well

made me realize how many people died for our freedom and how important those soldiers are."

The Youth Tour participants were also able to meet Rep. Kelly Armstrong, who touched on a variety of different topics, including the importance of smaller governments, North Dakota's role in energy production and community involvement.

"I learned so much from him. It was truly an inspiration to hear from him and probably one of my favorite parts of the trip," Sarsland said. "He helped me become more educated on various topics for when I am able to vote."

Other sites Sarsland and his fellow Youth Tour candidates saw included the Lincoln Memorial, Fort McHenry and the White House.

This year's annual Youth Tour was the first one since 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and surely was not one to forget.

"If you got a chance, just take it," Sarsland said, referring to his leap-of-faith mentality in applying for the 2022 Youth Tour. "Sometimes, you only get one chance, and you might as well take it."

Stay tuned for the 2023 Youth Tour application in an upcoming issue of *North Dakota Living*. ■





Manager's message:

# Know the signs of a scam



Travis Kupper

It's no secret that consumers with a water, gas or electricity connection have long been targets for utility scams, but fraudsters have changed their tactics, as consumers have become more reliant on technology for work, school and commerce. Scammers have noted these shifts and adapted their tactics

to this changed environment.

Imposter scams are the No. 1 type of fraud reported to the Federal Trade Commission. While scam artists may come to your door posing as a utility worker for the "power company," in today's more connected world, attempts are more likely to come through an electronic device, via email, phone call or text.

## Common types of scams

A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in-person, by phone, text or email, the scammers want to scare you into immediate payment, so you don't have time to think clearly.

If this happens over the phone, simply hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, call us at 701-579-4191. Our phone number can also be found on your monthly bill and on our website, [www.slopeelectric.coop](http://www.slopeelectric.coop). If the scam is by email or text, delete it before taking any action. If you're unsure, you can always contact us or use the SmartHub app to check the status of your account.

Remember, Slope Electric Cooperative will never attempt to demand immediate payment after just one notice and an employee will never take a credit card number over the phone.

Some scammers may falsely claim you have been overcharged on your bill and say they want

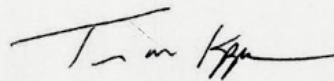
to give a refund. It sounds easy. All you have to do is click or press a button to initiate the process. If you proceed, you will be prompted to provide banking or other personal information. Instead of money going into your bank account, the scammers can drain your account and use personal information, such as a Social Security number, for identity theft.

If this "refund" scam happens over the phone, just hang up and block the phone number to prevent future robocalls. If this scam attempt occurs via email (known as a "phishing" attempt) or by text ("smishing"), do not click any links. Instead, delete it and, if possible, block the sender. If you do overpay on your energy bill, Slope Electric will automatically apply the overpayment to your next billing cycle. When in doubt, contact us.

## Defend yourself against scams

Be wary of calls or texts from unknown numbers. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a utility worker who requests banking or other personal information. Slope Electric Cooperative will never request your credit card or banking information over the phone.

We want to help protect our members against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense. Please report any potential scams to us, so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim. ■







## How to apply for funding

If you are interested in RDFC, call Slope Electric Cooperative at 701-579-4191 or 800-559-4191 or email [comments@slopeelectric.coop](mailto:comments@slopeelectric.coop) to visit about a specific project and determine eligibility. If the project meets the qualifications, the member should complete and submit an application to Slope Electric Cooperative for consideration. From there, the application will be presented to the board of directors for approval. If approved, the grant application will be submitted to RDFC for final consideration.

## New England Public School awarded RDFC funds

It has been noted by many academic studies that children moving, playing and navigating playground equipment aids in building gross and fine motor skills.

With a growing school district, and the need to add to the current school building, the New England Public School began searching for ways to fund moving and adding to the current playground equipment.

“We started brainstorming funding options for more playground equipment to help reduce the chances of accidents between students as we continue to grow,” said Lori Fitterer, principal, New England Public Schools.

Fitterer noted the public school was awarded

\$500 through the Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC) in addition to a grant from Knights of Columbus.

Each year, \$2,000 is allotted to Slope Electric Cooperative from RDFC to be used to support community-owned entities, nonprofits and community-based projects. In 2021, four Slope community organizations received funds, including the New England Public School.

Due to supply chain shortages, the playground was unable to be completed until mid-May, as students were leaving for the summer.

“As we look into the new school year, we are excited to see the students’ reaction to the new equipment,” Fitterer said. ■



## Safety Starts with ME: Jon Lawhead

As rewarding as it may be, farming is an extremely difficult job. It ranks among the top 10 most dangerous professions in the United States. At Slope Electric Cooperative, safety is top priority for all – our employees and our members.

“Our farmers work hard to get the job done, and sometimes it’s easy to forget all the necessary steps to take when practicing safe operations,” said Jon Lawhead, Bowman lineman.

Grain bins play an integral role in the efficiency and profitability of farm and ranch operations, and safety regulations should always be considered when working around these structures.

“Whether you are purchasing new grain bins or remodeling areas that contain existing ones, proximity to overhead power lines must be a considered factor,” Lawhead said. It is very important that grain bins are a safe distance from power lines to help ensure the safety of all farm workers. We want to make sure they go home after a hard day’s work to be with their family!

Here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- **Safe clearance.** The National Electrical Safety Code requires an 18-foot minimum vertical clearance from the highest point of the filling port of the grain bin to nearby high-voltage wires, and an 18-foot minimum distance from the power line to the grain bin wall. Changes to landscaping and drainage work can affect clearance heights of power lines, so remember to check these measurements regularly and consult your electric cooperative.
- **Filling grain bins.** High-voltage power lines are not insulated, so it’s important to remember to maintain an adequate high-wire clearance when using a portable auger, conveyor or elevator to fill your grain bin.
- **Moving equipment near grain bins.** When



moving equipment, such as a hopper or a scaffold, be aware of nearby power lines. Remember to maintain a 10-foot clearance to ensure safety.

Accidents can happen in a split-second, which is why Slope Electric reminds you to always use caution when working near power lines. If you happen to contact an overhead line when moving a grain auger, please stay in your equipment if possible. Call Slope Electric for assistance. Don’t assume the power is off, until someone from our line crew shows up to ground it out.

“If you are considering a plan for a new grain bin or reconstruction of an existing bin’s site, please contact Slope Electric and let us assist you in maintaining a safe environment for you and your family,” Lawhead said.

Please, LOOK UP. Thank you for being SAFE! ■



# Look up and around!



While farmers focus on the ground when sowing and harvesting, looking up is just as important – especially when operating farm equipment near power lines. For your safety, make sure you have at least 10 feet of clearance between power lines and your combines, grain augers, pickers, balers and front-end loaders. Keep in mind that uneven ground and shifting soil conditions can put you in harm's way. Look up and look around when operating equipment. Power lines and poles may be closer than you think.

If you see a power line issue that may need Slope Electric's attention, please call the co-op. Or, send an email to [safety@slopeelectric.com](mailto:safety@slopeelectric.com) with location information and a photo, if possible. Working together helps ensure the safety of all. ■



# TAKE THE BRR OUT OF WINTER

**DON'T SHIVER THROUGH ANOTHER WINTER. PREPARE YOUR HOME NOW BEFORE THE WINTER WINDS START BLOWING.**

## **BUNDLE UP YOUR HOME**

Weatherstripping and caulking are probably the least expensive, most effective ways to save energy in the winter. Take these steps:

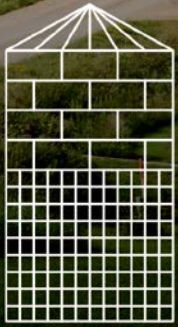
- **Check around doors and windows for leaks and drafts.** Add weatherstripping and caulk any holes you see that allow heat to escape. Make sure doors seal properly.
- **If your windows leak badly, consider replacing them with newer, more efficient ones.** Keep in mind, however, that replacing windows can be expensive – it could take you quite awhile to recover your costs from the energy savings alone.
- **Every duct, wire or pipe that penetrates the wall, ceiling or floor has the potential to waste energy.** Seal them all with caulking or weatherstripping.
- **Electric wall plugs and switches can allow cold air to enter.** Purchase simple-to-install foam gaskets that fit behind the switch plate and effectively prevent leaks.
- **Don't forget to close the damper on your fireplace when the fireplace is not in use.** If the damper is open when you're not using the fireplace, your chimney functions as a large open window that draws warm air out of the room and creates a draft.
- **Reverse your fan.** In the summertime, a fan is a wonderful way to keep cool, but your fan can also help circulate warm air in the winter. When you reverse the direction of your fan (there's a little switch on the motor housing), the fan will push warm air downward and recirculate it through the room. To ensure your fan is spinning in the correct direction, set it so the blades are spinning clockwise when you look up.

## **TUNE UP YOUR FURNACE THIS FALL**

Save energy this fall and winter by having your furnace tuned up. Furnaces can go approximately three to five years between service calls and longer, if you change the filters regularly.

Changing filters regularly is one of the key maintenance tasks to keep any type of furnace running efficiently. Make sure you know where your furnace's filter is located and what size it is. Inspect it periodically, and replace it when it is dirty. How frequently you need to change the filter depends on the amount of dirt in the house and around the furnace and also how much time the furnace operates. ■





## Play it safe near grain bins.

When moving equipment, be aware of power lines and maintain at least a 10-foot clearance to ensure safety. Follow all guidelines set by the National Electrical Safety Code.

### Report from THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Regular meeting held at the Slope Electric office in New England

- Approved agenda
- Approved minutes from previous meeting
- Heard co-general managers/ CEOs update
- Heard CFO report
- Financial report
- Heard the attorney report
- Reviewed Basin Electric Power Cooperative report
- Reviewed board member reports
- Heard operation report,
- Heard member relations summary
- Voted to cast a ballot of Kim Rasmusen for RESCO Director
- Discussed strategic planning

### In observance of the Labor Day holiday, Slope Electric Cooperative will be closed on Monday, Sept. 5.

Line crews will be available to respond to emergencies and power outages by calling 800-559-4191. Please do not contact Slope Electric Cooperative on Facebook with outage information; it is not monitored 24/7. Call the toll-free number to log your specific information with dispatch, and you will receive assistance as quickly and safely as possible.



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Email us:

[comments@slopeelectric.coop](mailto:comments@slopeelectric.coop)

UNDERGROUND LINE LOCATES  
800-795-0555 or 811

### SLOPE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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

### MANAGEMENT

Donald A. Franklund  
CO-GM/CEO

Travis Kupper  
CO-GM/CEO

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