

Franklund retiring from Slope Electric

BY ANNE HANSEN



Don Franklund attends one of many annual meetings throughout the years.

After more than 46 years in the industry, and 15 years as co-general manager and CEO of Slope Electric Cooperative, Don Franklund has announced his retirement.

Franklund announced his intentions of retirement to the board of directors and will serve as co-general manager/CEO until a new co-general manager/CEO begins in 2023.

Early beginnings

Sleeves rolled up and ready to work, Franklund, 16 years old at the time, received his first taste of serving cooperative members by trenching cables for Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative. Little did he know that several years later, Franklund would be returning to the cooperative, but in a

much different capacity.

For Franklund, the energy industry was always a passion, stemming from his father, who was an electrician. After graduating from Mandan High School, he obtained a degree as a lineworker. A year into the field, during a stormy night changing crossarms in the hail, he vividly remembers asking himself if he wanted to do this for the rest of his life.

After that experience, Franklund found another field in the energy industry and went back to school to pursue a degree in electrical engineering from North Dakota State University. His new degree led him out of state to Denver, Colo. Although he traveled to a few more states for employment opportunities, his heart returned him home to North Dakota to raise his family.

In 1991, Franklund was hired as general manager/CEO for Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative. Franklund reflected that his first day of work would serve as an omen for his career.

“On my first day as general manager, I was driving from Bismarck to Flasher, and Highway 6 was under construction, which resulted in no pavement and a little bit of a bumpy ride. On the way home that night, I received a

Slope Electric Cooperative Inc.

OUTLOOK

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- Apply for Youth Tour
- Energy help is here!

flat tire,” he said. “The road isn’t always smooth, and it is likely to have rough patches and stops along the way, but it’s all about the people that are along on the journey with you, and that is how you determine the quality of your journey.”

Innovating along the way

In 2007, many electric cooperatives were struggling with a declining membership and an increased cost of doing business. To survive, they needed to find innovative ways to prepare for the future. When Slope Electric Cooperative’s general manager resigned, the Slope Electric board approached the boards of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric and Roughrider Electric and suggested they form a temporary management alliance.

“It was a bold step toward managing all of our cooperatives’ futures,” Franklund said.

The alliance would allow the cooperatives to remain as separate businesses with their own identities, assets and obligations, and retain their authority. Franklund embraced the spirit of an alliance, which supports the sharing of employee skills, equipment and more.

During his time serving as co-general manager/CEO of KEM Electric, Mor-Gran-Sou Electric, Slope Electric and Roughrider Electric Cooperative, Franklund has seen many changes and challenges along the way.

“I remember as a new manager in 1994, a manager in his mid-60s approached me and told me he was jealous of all the things I was going to be able to see and do during my career,” he said. “I never understood that until recently, and now I am the one jealous of all the things the cooperatives will get to see in the coming years as we face a changing industry. Yet, some of my fondest memories are happening now, as I see the fruits of my labor mature and see employees who we have hired as young individuals grow into what they are today.”

Lasting impact

Over the years, Franklund has attended over 1,000 board meetings, 73 annual meetings and has met countless individual members and mentors.

“Along the way, I have found it best to always focus on the mission on why we exist – to provide affordable, reliable and safe energy for our

members,” Franklund said.

“Don’s focus has always been on what best serves the member,” said Co-General Manager/CEO Travis Kupper. “He has a knack for evaluating every situation and making sure that every option has been explored to find the best solutions for the cooperative member.”

That focus throughout the years earned Franklund the respect of many of his peers, and many look to him for advice and counsel.

“While having a co-manager is a unique situation, it has served as a peer sounding board. I will be forever grateful for the years I have been able to work with him in this capacity,” Kupper said.

The North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives noted Franklund as an effective spokesperson and leader, and a strong representative of North Dakota’s electric cooperatives, when he was awarded the Cooperative Leadership Award.

Franklund credits those who have mentored him throughout the years.

“I had so many colleagues along the way who didn’t think they were mentors, but were,” Franklund said. “That included people like Bob McPhail, Ron Harper, Vern Dosch, Paul Sukut, Jeff Nelson and so many more.”

Slope Electric wishes Franklund the best of luck in his retirement and future endeavors, and thanks him for the years he has spent serving our members. ■



Don Franklund receives a leadership award.

Manager's message:

May your holiday season be merry and bright



Travis Kupper

The holidays are a time of year many of us eagerly anticipate. The season is marked by special foods, seasonal decorations and lots of festivities. In our service area, many members look forward to annual traditions.

We cherish carrying on old family traditions and enjoy creating new ones. For me personally, I look forward to more time spent

with family and friends.

However, given the hustle and bustle of the season, the holidays can also offer an opportunity to slow down and reflect. All of us at Slope Electric Cooperative are grateful for you, the members of the co-op.

You see, one of our founding principles as a co-op is "concern for community." While our main focus is providing safe, reliable and affordable energy, we want to give back. We want to help our membership thrive.

Reflection

In looking back at this past year, I'm grateful we were able to make a positive impact in our local area. Through programs such as Operation

Round Up, we were able to contribute over \$ 8,500 to families in need and projects that benefit our communities, thanks to your generosity.

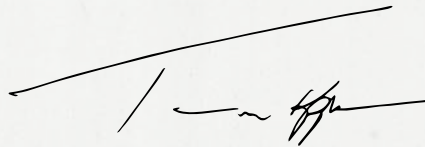
We continue to work closely with our local high schools to award college scholarships. In 2022, we awarded \$4,000 to local scholars.

There are other ways we can help, including finding ways to save energy at home. We want you to know we're here to help.

Looking ahead

Looking ahead to 2023, we hope you will share your opinions with us. We recognize our members have a valuable perspective, and that's why we continually seek your input. Whether through community events, our social media channels or the annual meeting, we want to hear from you. We are led by you – the members of the co-op – and we depend on your feedback.

As we prepare for next year, we look forward to the opportunity to serve you and the greater community. On behalf of the Slope Electric family, we hope your holidays are indeed merry and bright! ■



Holiday closings

Slope Electric Cooperative wishes our members a very merry Christmas and a safe and happy New Year! In observance of the holidays, we will be closed on Dec. 26 and Jan. 2. Line crews will be available in the case of an emergency or power outage.

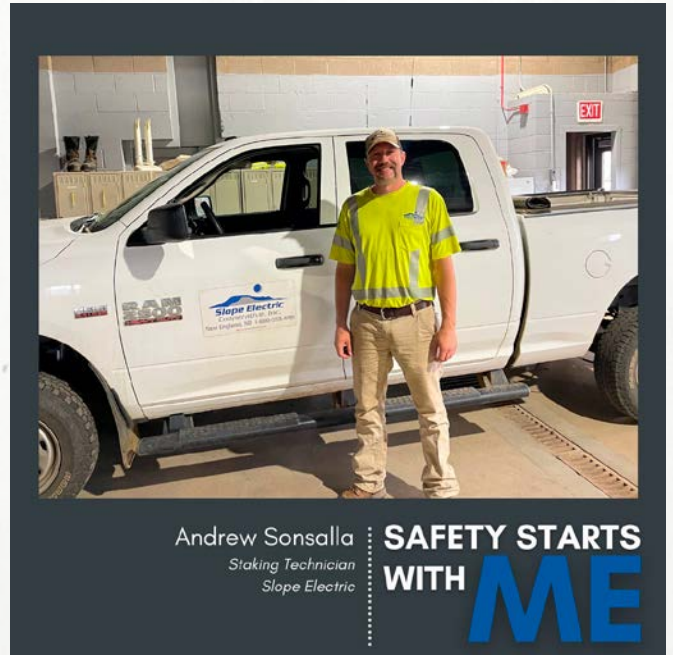
Safety Starts with ME: Andrew Sonsalla

It's no surprise that winter months bring increased potential for fire risks and electrical safety hazards.

"During the coldest months, consumers are using additional electrical devices and appliances, like space heaters, electric blankets and portable generators," said Andrew Sonsalla, a line technician at Slope Electric Cooperative.

The National Fire Protection Association estimates 47,700 home fires occur each year in the United States due to electrical failure or malfunction. These fires result in 418 deaths, 1,570 injuries and \$1.4 billion in property damage annually. This winter, safeguard your loved ones and your home with these electrical safety tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International.

- 1. Don't overload outlets.** Overloaded outlets are a major cause of residential fires. Avoid using extension cords or multi-outlet converters for appliance connections. They should be plugged directly into a wall outlet. If you're relying heavily on extension cords in general, you may need additional outlets to address your needs. Contact a qualified electrician to inspect your home and add new outlets.
- 2. Never leave space heaters unattended.** If you're using a space heater, turn it off before leaving the room. Make sure heaters are placed at least 3 feet away from flammable items. It should also be noted that space heaters take a toll on your energy bills. If you're using them throughout your home, it may be time to upgrade your home heating system.
- 3. Inspect heating pads and electric blankets.** These items cause nearly 500 fires every year. Electric blankets more than 10 years old create additional risks for a fire hazard. Inspect your electric blankets and heating pads – look for dark, charred or frayed spots, and make sure the electrical cord is not damaged. Do not place any items on top of a heating pad or



electric blanket, and never fold them when in use.

- 4. Use portable generators safely.** Unfortunately, winter storms can cause prolonged power outages, which means many consumers will use portable generators to power their homes. Never connect a standby generator into your home's electrical system, without having an approved transfer switch installed by a licensed electrician. For portable generators, plug appliances directly into the outlet provided on the generator. Start the generator first, before you plug in appliances. Operate it in a well-ventilated area outside your home. The carbon monoxide it generates is deadly, so keep it away from your garage, doors, windows and vents.

"In addition to the tips from the National Fire Protection Association, we also remind everyone to check their fire alarms to ensure their families safety in case of an emergency," Sonsalla said. ■

Slope Electric supports students with scholarships

Slope Electric takes pride in assisting with the development of rural leadership through our scholarship program.

We are happy to continue our scholarship program and offer scholarships to qualifying seniors, who must be dependents of Slope Electric members.



Download applications at www.slopeelectric.com

Complete applications and send to: comments@slopeelectric.coop or by mailing to:

Slope Electric Cooperative
Attn: Scholarship Committee
116 E. 12th St. | P.O. Box 338
New England, ND 58647

Return completed application before **Jan. 31, 2023.**

\$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship

Slope Electric will award a \$1,000 scholarship sponsored by Basin Electric. The scholarship will be awarded to a high school senior or college freshman already enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time graduate or undergraduate program, and who are dependents of a Slope Electric member. The student must attend an accredited two- or four-year program, university or vocational/tech school. A completed application is required.

Area high school scholarship

Slope Electric will award six \$500 scholarships to seniors who are dependents of a Slope Electric member. One graduating senior will be selected from each school in Slope's service area: Bowman, Hettinger, Lemmon, Mott-Regent, New England and Scranton. Students should

contact the school counselor for requirements.

Luck-of-the-draw scholarship

Slope Electric will award two \$500 luck-of-the-draw scholarships at the annual meeting. All area high school students who are dependents of a Slope Electric member are eligible. Students must attend Slope's annual meeting, accompanied by at least one parent or guardian. No application is required.

Lineworker scholarship from 3C Construction

Slope Electric will award a \$500 scholarship sponsored by 3C Construction. Eligible students are high school seniors who are enrolled in a certified vocational or technical school pursuing a career as a lineworker and who are dependents of a Slope Electric member. A completed application is required.

Mechanic scholarship from West Dakota Utility Services

Slope Electric will award a \$500 scholarship sponsored by WDUS. Eligible students are high school seniors who are enrolled or planning to enroll in a certified vocational or technical school pursuing a career as a mechanic, and who are dependents of a Slope Electric member. A completed application is required.

Applications can be filled out online and emailed to comments@slopeelectric.coop, or printed and mailed to: Slope Electric Cooperative, Inc. Attn: Scholarship Committee, 116 East 12th St P.O. Box 338 New England, ND 58647.



Serve your cooperative

The Slope Electric Cooperative board of directors will appoint the Nominating/Resolutions Committee at the Dec. 15 board meeting. Each director shall appoint one member from his or her district, and the board will select up to two additional committee members from the district(s) with director elections.

The committee member names are then published in Slope Electric's local pages of *North Dakota Living*. The Nominating/Resolutions Committee meets twice. The first meeting will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Jan. 18, 2023, to explain the functions of the committee, including policies to aid you in selecting qualified members to be nominated. The cooperative will pay you a per diem, along with reimbursing you for mileage for both meetings. The second meeting will be held at 8:30 a.m. on Feb. 27, 2023.

The purpose of this meeting will be to make the actual nominations for the election to be held at the cooperative's annual meeting, and to approve resolutions to be printed in the annual meeting report.

If you or someone you know is interested in serving on the Nominating/Resolutions Committee, please notify the office at 701-579-4191 or email comments@slopeelectric.coop.

To serve on the Nominating/Resolutions Committee, you must be an active member of Slope Electric with your name listed on the membership. Directors' terms from Hettinger County and Adams County will expire. Those positions are currently held by Angela Carlson, Charlotte Meier and Steven Wegner.

Members can also be nominated to serve as a director by filing a petition with 15 members' signatures. Filing must be done 60 days prior to the annual meeting and posted at the office. Members may also be nominated to serve as a director from the floor at the annual meeting. To serve on the Slope Electric board, you must be a bona fide resident receiving service from Slope Electric at your primary residence, and you must be a named member of the cooperative. ■

Need help with your energy bills? LIHEAP is here!

While the fall weather settles in, Slope Electric Cooperative members will be faced with cooling temperatures, and even colder temperatures in the coming months. For some, anticipation of the winter months causes stress and anxiety, as they wonder how to make ends meet. Thankfully, there are programs to help members.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) can assist Slope Electric's low-income and eligible individuals with heating and insulation costs in the winter. Through the N.D. Department of Human Services, human service zone offices and Community Options, individuals can be helped with a variety of services when it comes to heating assistance.

Services offered

LIHEAP offers a variety of service assistance. Not only can the program help curb the costs of your heating and cooling bills, it can also help households with weatherization to make homes more energy efficient.

"For example, if someone lives in a 100-year-old home, with outdated windows, we might be able to help them with the costs of installing new windows, therefore making the home more energy efficient, and reducing their electricity bill," said Shannon Rolandson, outreach specialist at Community Options.

The assistance program may also help with the costs of furnace and chimney cleaning, emergency assistance and energy cost-reduction devices.

It is important to remember this program is not only for homeowners, Rolandson said.

"This program not only helps low-income homeowners with energy costs, but renters as well," she said.

Apply for LIHEAP

LIHEAP-eligible members can apply from Oct. 1 through May 31.

"Some individuals can be referred to the program, but anyone is welcomed," Rolandson said. Upon applying for LIHEAP, an outreach specialist will visit your home and assist you in gathering necessary documentation for the service. From there, an application will be sent into the state for review, and the results will be provided within a week or two.

"I wish more people knew the program was available," Rolandson said. "We often hear, 'This won't apply to me' or 'I will just get denied,' but if you need help, please contact us and we will work with you. It doesn't hurt to apply."

Last year, Community Options processed a total of 548 applications, with 433 approved for LIHEAP. If you, or someone you know, would like to apply, visit your local human service office for more information.

Applications will be accepted from Oct. 1 through May 31 and can be found online at www.applyforhelp.nd.gov or by request at the local human service zone office or Community Options office. ■

TWO ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIPS TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

ESSAY QUESTION:

If chosen as a Youth Tour delegate, you will be traveling 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?

TOP 3 REASONS

1. Two all-expense-paid trips to Washington, D.C., compliments of Slope Electric Cooperative
2. A whole week to visit unforgettable historic monuments, museums and the U.S. Capitol
3. A learning experience you'll never forget

JUNE 18-23, 2023



- To enter the essay-writing contest, you must be a sophomore or junior in high school.
- You and your parents or guardian must be served by Slope Electric Cooperative.
- If you have any questions, please contact Brooke Waltner, Slope Electric, at 701-579-2252 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is Jan. 20, 2023. You can email entries to Brooke Waltner at bwaltner@slopeelectric.coop or mail a hard copy to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, 116 E. 12th St., P.O. Box 338, New England, ND 58647-0338.



CHECK OUT THE ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES AT
<https://ndyouthtour.com>

Slope Electric makes saving money easy!



Slope Electric is now making it even easier to save on your electric bill! All members who only receive paperless statements will receive a \$1 credit for each month enrolled. In addition, members who sign up for an automatic withdrawal through their bank account will also receive a \$1 credit for each month enrolled. The savings will show up once a year on your bill.

To learn more about the benefits of SmartHub, visit slopeelectric.coop/ways-pay.



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800-795-0555 or 811

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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

www.slopeelectric.coop



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

Report from **THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Regular meeting held at the Slope Electric office in New England

- Approved agenda
- Approved minutes from previous meeting on Sept. 29
- Heard co-general managers/CEO update
- Heard WDUS/3C update
- Heard Basin Electric Cooperative updates
- Heard CFO report
- Heard operations report
- Heard member relations summary
- Heard the attorney report
- Reviewed board member reports