



Photos by Lauren: An eye for agriculture

BY ANNE HANSEN

With her mother's camera in tow, Lauren Weishaar vividly remembers her younger years in the countryside, capturing photos of livestock.

"I would always take my mom's camera and mess around with it, whether it was during bull sales or of my grandparents," Weishaar said.

Her two passions in life – photography and agriculture – have guided her toward her future career.

Slope Electric Cooperative Inc.

OUTLOOK

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Weishaar, who grew up on a fourth-generation registered Red Angus ranch 14 miles north of Lemmon, S.D., was a recipient of the \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship through Slope Electric Cooperative in 2021. She has been putting the scholarship to good use as she attends South Dakota State University (SDSU) and studies agricultural communications, with a minor in animal science and marketing.



Lauren Weishaar

Although studying to earn her degree, Weishaar has been busy outside of the classroom with her own photography business, which she started in high school.

“Back then, it started as a hobby, and now it has grown to a deeper passion of mine and will likely always be a part of my life,” Weishaar said. “I love being able to take photos and, years later, look back at them and reflect on those memories.”

Although her business focuses on a variety of photography, from newborns to weddings, her true love is taking photos of anything that showcases rural America and the agricultural industry.

“The good Lord has given me a love for the ag industry and for helping and seeing others prosper, and I feel like with photography I am able to combine those two things to help serve him, and that is a joy,” she said.

Her passion for both photography and agriculture gave Weishaar the opportunity to be chosen for the photography committee for Little International, or “Little I,” which is a two-day agricultural exposition planned, organized and implemented by students at SDSU for the benefit of high school and college students.

In addition to this experience, Weishaar has been growing her skillsets through internships and working with great photographers, she noted.

“Within the last year, I was able to work with some of the greatest photographers in the

industry through Focus Marketing Group, and I am so grateful for those experiences,” she said.

While soaking in every opportunity she can in college, and operating her photography business, she does have goals to return to her roots after graduation.

“Upon completion of my studies at SDSU, I plan to return to my roots and work in the communications and marketing sector of an agricultural company,” she said. “For example, I would love to work in a livestock marketing agency and advocate for the industry that built me, through photography and graphic print and design content.”

You can see more by following Weishaar on Facebook at Photos by Lauren Elyse. ■



Manager's message:

We love our communities



Travis Kupper

"To move forward, you have to give back." This quote from Oprah Winfrey reflects the special bond and obligation that ties Slope Electric Cooperative to the members we serve. With Valentine's Day approaching, we can't think of a better time to express how much we appreciate serving you, the members of the co-op.

We know when we helped to bring electricity to rural North Dakota many years ago, the quality of life improved for all. Through the years, other issues needed to be tackled, and we have been at the forefront of helping to address some of those issues. We want to help meet the long-term needs of our service area to ensure it continues to thrive.

While our top priority is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to you, equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of the members (that's you!) we serve. This focus to benefit the larger community is central to the way we operate as a cooperative. Slope Electric knows electricity is a critical need for modern-day life, but it takes more than poles and power lines to make a cooperative.

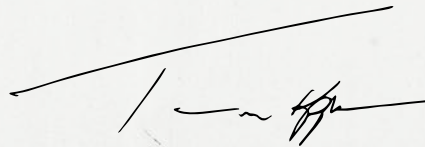
Over time, our co-op has evolved to meet the changing needs of our area, improving the quality of life for everyone. And that can mean many different things. It can mean programs for North Dakota's youth, such as education scholarships or the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, in which we take our community's brightest young people to Washington, D.C., for a week-long immersion to experience democracy in action. It is contributing more than \$8,000 to Operation Round Up, a program that helps local families in need and supports community projects and programs in our service area. It

means partnering with organizations like the Rural Development Finance Corporation for grants to support community development and other worthy programs.

Over the last three decades, our community-focused programs and other giving projects have supported local growth, enabled those in need to keep the lights on and so much more. And we couldn't do any of this without you, our members.

We all benefit from these programs because of you and your neighbors. You empower Slope Electric through your membership and through your participation in and support of these programs.

As a local business, we are proud to power your life and bring good things to our service area. We hope you will continue to guide our efforts by sharing your perspective as we plan for the future. The energy landscape is undergoing dramatic change, fueled by evolving technology and consumer desires for more options. While the larger environment in which we operate is constantly changing, one thing remains the same. By working together, I'm certain we can continue to do good things for our membership. ■



Opening the archives

Each Thursday, Slope Electric Cooperative will be opening the archives and learning more about the history of our territory, view photos from the past and discover how far we have come!

Be sure to like and follow us on Facebook and Instagram to learn more! ■

Safety Starts with ME: Jeff Boynton

You might be aware of the green metal box in your yard, but do you know what it is for? These boxes are known as pad-mount transformers and are crucial in converting electricity to a voltage that is safe for use in homes and businesses.

“Although crucial, pad-mount transformers can be potentially dangerous and should not be messed with,” said Jeff Boynton, Slope Electric’s outpost foreman.

“Pad-mount transformers are connected to primary high-voltage lines, and secondary lines can extend in several directions to distribute power to homes and businesses,” Boynton said. “Be mindful of underground cabinets and transformers before removing snow, planting shrubs or trees, setting fence posts, installing sprinkler systems and digging, as this may damage underground lines.”

During the winter months, snow removal can be very important around these important pieces to our grid.

“The North Dakota winter can sometimes camouflage these pieces of equipment, making snow removal that much more dangerous,” Boynton said. “Be sure to know the location, if near one, to make snow removal safe and easy.”

Use these tips to keep you and your family safe around pad-mount transformers:

- Remove snow around pad-mount transformers. Snow piled on electrical equipment can impact your safety and electric service to your home. In the event of an outage, having the pad-mount transformers cleared of any snow will make it easier for lineworkers to restore power.
- Never touch, climb or play near or on a pad-mount transformer. Inform your children of the dangers of this piece of equipment.
- Keep the area around a pad-mount transformer clear of any obstructions. A 10-foot radius is recommended. This includes trees, shrubs or other obstructions.



- Do not dig around pad-mount transformers. Below are underground lines that can cause damage to you and the electrical system if hit. Always call 811 before you dig.
 - Report any damaged or an unlocked transformer to your local electric cooperative. If you notice anything odd about the equipment, call us at 800-559-4191.
- “At Slope Electric, we want to provide you with electricity as well as protect your livelihood,” Boynton said. “Please take this information into consideration to keep you and others around you safe.” ■

Help us with safety at Slope Electric

Did you know members also play a key role in keeping our system safe? At times, you are our eyes in the sky and on the ground. Should you see a power line issue that may need Slope Electric Cooperative’s attention, please call the office or send us an email at safety@slopeelectric.coop with your concern. This correspondence should include the description of the location, your name and complete contact information, and a photo if possible. Working together helps ensure the safety of all!



Planning to build or upgrade?

Whether you are looking to build a new structure or make changes to an existing structure, it is important to contact Slope Electric Cooperative in the early planning stages.

“Each year, we help our members with their construction upgrades and new builds,” said Dean Volk, operations manager at Slope Electric Cooperative.

“Projects can range from pasture wells to grain storage, new outbuildings, houses and businesses,” Volk said. “For projects of all sizes, it is important to contact your local cooperative.”

By doing so, you will be able to confirm the viability of your project.

“Our engineering department can verify whether we can serve additional load in your area and the availability and cost of equipment and materials,” Volk said.

Information you will need to share with the

cooperative includes the type of upgrade or new build, location, timeline and power requirements.

“If you are unsure of this information, work with an electrician that can contact us,” Volk said.

“This year, it is especially important due to the global supply chain disruptions,” Volk said.

“We want to ensure your building project or upgrade goes as smoothly as possible, and that is why it is important to call us in the early stages,” he said. ■

Save energy with new builds

Are you planning to build a new structure on your property? Follow these tips to achieve energy efficiency:

- **Location matters.** If possible, carefully consider where you build your shop or barn. Consider drainage, sun exposure and how the building may affect your neighbors.
- **Start with a sustainable design plan.** A sustainable design plan, according to the U.S. General Services Administration, includes the ability to use environmentally preferable products; protect and conserve water; enhance indoor environmental quality; and optimize operational and maintenance practices.
- **Choose efficient building methods.** Pole barns offer reliable shelter without costly excavation, concrete foundations or general site disruption. ■

Save when upgrading an existing structure

Follow these tips to make energy-efficient upgrades to an existing structure:

- Replace indoor lighting with energy-efficient LED bulbs.
- Ensure your existing structure has adequate insulation levels.
- Choose outdoor lighting designed to be energy efficient, and install motion detectors to reduce energy consumption when not in use.
- Plant trees around your metal shed or barn. In colder climates, trees act as a windbreak, and in warmer climates, trees have a natural cooling effect that can reduce temperatures in your metal building 3 to 6 degrees.
- Consider adding a ceiling fan to circulate air. Typically, there is a 2-degree temperature increase for every 1-foot increase in ceiling height. A ceiling fan can help keep warm air close to the ground in the winter, and circulate fresher, cooler air in the summer. Not only will this help with energy costs, it will also help keep the air in the building from becoming hot and stagnant, which will keep harmful bacteria from building and insects at bay. ■

78th annual meeting to be June 8

Slope Electric Cooperative's 78th annual meeting will be held Thursday, June 8, at the Hettinger armory. There will be three board seats up for election at the 2023 annual meeting: one director from Adams County and two directors from Hettinger County.

The bylaws of Slope Electric Cooperative state in Article IV, Section 4, directors can be nominated one of two ways:

1. Through the Nominating Committee. The committee's first meeting was held Jan. 18 to review procedures, responsibilities and qualifications for directorship. The second meeting will be held in February to nominate candidates and to approve resolutions.
2. Members can also be nominated by filing a petition with 15 signatures. Filing must be done 60 days prior to the annual meeting on June 8 and posted at the office of Slope Electric.

The following members have been appointed by the board of directors to serve on the Nominating/Resolutions Committee:

Kevin Stafne, Hettinger, 701-853-2207

Jim Bugner, Reeder, 701-541-9497

Cammie Janikowski, Bowman, 701-574-4313

Michael Schneider, Rhame, 701-279-6927

Lane Dingfelder, Bowman, 701-523-5332

Gary Witte, Regent, 701-563-4461

Bill Hourigan, Lemmon, S.D., 701-376-5296

Joshua Greff, Regent, 701-290-8154

Gary Symanowski, Scranton, 701-275-8807 ■



JOIN SLOPE ELECTRIC JUNE 8, 2023 IN HETTINGER!

ENJOY FOOD TRUCKS FROM THE LOCAL AREA WHILE ATTENDING SLOPE ELECTRIC'S ANNUAL MEETING ON THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 2023 AT THE HETTINGER ARMORY.

MORE INFORMATION WILL FOLLOW.



The cooperative way of giving back: 2022 recap

As a cooperative, our passion is not only serving you, but the communities you live in as well. At Slope Electric Cooperative, we are reminded how wonderful our communities and local areas are, and what a big impact we can have when we work together.

In 2022, Slope Electric worked with local organizations to help donate more than \$11,500 through our Operation Round Up program, \$2,000 through the Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC) and \$5,000 in local scholarships and various sponsorships and contributions.

Operation Round Up

When you are a member of Slope Electric, you help us spread the good throughout the year. Through our Operation Round Up program, your donations help various groups. In 2022, we were able to give to several families within our communities struggling with medical expenses, the Adams County 4-H Shooting Sports Program, the Bowman County Historical & Genealogical Society, the Lemmon EMT Association, the Marketplace for Ideas/Marketplace for Kids Inc. and the New England Ambulance Service.

Organizations and families benefit so much

from a small commitment of rounding up your monthly bill. Members will donate no more than \$11.88 a year to Operation Round Up, yet you are helping to meet the immediate, critical needs of people within our communities, and just as importantly, you are telling this person the community cares.

To date, with your help, we've given over \$271,000 to local organizations and individuals through this program. And across the country, more than 350 electric co-ops have an Operation Round Up program, raising millions for local communities. This shows that small donations from electric co-ops like ours, over time, can collectively make a big impact.

RDFC funds

Each year, \$2,000 is allotted to Slope Electric from RDFC to be used to support community-owned entities, nonprofit and community-based projects. This year, \$1,000 was awarded to the Lemmon EMT Association to help purchase a new ambulance, and \$1,000 was awarded to the Amidon Fire Protection District to help replace a fire truck.

Local scholarships

Slope Electric understands the importance of investing in our youth and offers a variety of scholarships to area students whose parent(s) or guardian(s) are members of the co-op. This year, Slope Electric awarded \$4,000 in scholarships and a \$1,000 scholarship sponsored by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

Youth Tour

Slope Electric also participates in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, in which we take our community's brightest, young people to Washington, D.C., for a week-long immersion to experience democracy in action. Ultimately, the larger community benefits from these programs because of you and your neighbors. ■



Prepare for tax season with SmartHub

Print copies of your monthly utility bills for your tax records by logging into SmartHub! Visit www.slopeelectric.coop and click "SmartHub" to proceed to your billing history. If you have not signed up for SmartHub, you can set up a new, secure account.



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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

Jason Bentz
CO-GM/CEO

Travis Kupper
CO-GM/CEO

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



In observance of
Presidents Day,
Slope Electric Cooperative
will be closed on

Feb. 20

Line crews will
be available
in case of an
emergency outage.

Report from THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Regular meeting held at Slope office in New England

- Approved agenda
- Approved minutes from previous meeting on Nov. 17
- 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
- Approved bill credit
- Reviewed board member reports