



The Amidon Fire Department hosts an annual burgers, brats and roast beef fundraiser.

Southwest North Dakota communities receive federal funds for economic development

Rural communities are the heartbeat of our state, filled with lively community members invested in growth and community betterment. Some rural communities are faced with limited space to support their growing population, from fire halls to community centers. To assist these growing communities along the North Plains Connector,

two towns in southwestern North Dakota are receiving funds from the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Transmission Siting and Economic Development Program. Mott received \$14.2 million for a new community center and Amidon received \$700,000 for improvements to its fire department.

The North Plains Connector is a

continued on next page

Slope Electric Cooperative Inc.

OUTLOOK

116 E. 12th St. • New England, ND 58647 | 701-579-4191 • www.slopeelectric.coop

In this issue:

- Serving up savings
- Join committee
- Winter generator safety
- Apply for Youth Tour

continued from previous page



Mott-Regent girls high school basketball team hosts games at the armory.

proposed 415-mile, high-voltage direct-current power line planned between Colstrip, Mont., and Center. The line would connect the eastern and western grids and send power in either direction.

The program funding was allocated based on a grant application and is to be used to support community infrastructure projects along this major new transmission line project.

Community center in Mott

Mott is home to about 600 residents, and its armory is a hub of community activity. From elementary to high school sports practices to extracurricular classes, many events are held at the Mott armory.

"The armory is a busy space for the community, and we have outgrown it," says Charlotte Aldinger, Commercial Bank of Mott president.

Aldinger heard buzz about the North Plains Connector coming through town and discovered a federal grant funding opportunity through the DOE. This was Aldinger's first experience grant writing and she dove headfirst into the project.

She is a member of the Independent Community Bankers Association of North Dakota. Her connections there helped mold the small group that worked on and submitted the grant application for a community center in Mott.

As a Mott native who moved away and decided to return to the community years later, Aldinger hopes the new community center project will excite others looking to move into or back to the area.

"This project isn't just for Mott. It is for our region, our state," Aldinger says with passion. "The starting point for the project is to house a few basketball and volleyball courts as well as a community space."

Although there is still time to decide what the final project looks like, Aldinger hopes this is a place the whole community can come together to use. They are looking at what it would take for the community center to act as an emergency shelter as well.

"I am excited for this project to come to life and see the kids and community flourish in this space," Aldinger says.

Amidon Fire Protection District

As you drive Highway 85 between Belfield and Bowman, you'll find yourself passing through the Slope County seat of Amidon. Amidon is home to many community-minded individuals looking for ways to better the community and its residents, including those of the Amidon Fire Protection District. Fighting fires takes a toll on equipment, so the department has had to maintain and replace fire trucks and vehicles, but this has led the department to outgrow the current fire hall.

"As fire trucks and equipment get larger, we have found that our fire hall doesn't have the space to keep all of our equipment," Richard "Dick" Frederick says. "Keeping equipment outside becomes an issue in the winter."

The fire department will utilize the federal funding to build a new fire hall. Frederick began to hear about the North Plains Connector project coming through the area and received the federal grant information from the county. The fire department enlisted assistance from the Roosevelt Custer Regional Council, which handled and submitted the grant application.

Once funds are received, a 5% match is required.

"We have an annual fundraiser that is 10 days long called Burgers, Brats and Beers during Sturgis that has helped us raise the funds," Frederick says.

The new fire hall will be attached to the current fire hall and be used as an extra shop to store fire vehicles as well as a work area so they can keep all equipment in working order and ready to be used at a moment's notice. The fire district serves about 450 square miles and its 28 volunteer firefighters are always willing to lend a hand to neighboring fire departments, so equipment must be ready to go when needed. ■

MANAGER'S MESSAGE: **Serving up savings**



Travis Kupper

*Co-General Manager/
CEO*

Cooperative members to help lower your monthly energy use.

Winter months typically bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. Making minor low-cost improvements, such as weatherstripping exterior doors and caulking around drafty windows, can make a positive impact on energy bills

Be festive without breaking the bank

My wife, Crissie, insists I bring the Christmas decorations down from the attic faster than we can finish the Thanksgiving turkey. With holiday lights adorning our home for well over a month, we decided to make the switch to LEDs to save energy.

LED holiday lights use 88% less energy than incandescent holiday lights. To put that into perspective, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates standard holiday decorations using LED lights typically increase energy bills by about \$5 to \$7. But with incandescent lights, energy bills will typically increase by \$33 or more. For homes that go above and beyond with incandescent holiday lighting (think Clark Griswold), energy bills could increase by as much as \$350.

Beyond energy savings, LEDs provide additional benefits, such as being shock-resistant, shatterproof and cool to the touch, making them safer for the home.

You can also lower energy use by conveniently managing holiday lighting. Smart light timers can help you save energy by connecting to a smartphone app or voice assistant to program lights to turn on and off at set times. If you don't use smart home technology,

The holiday season is just around the corner and festive music will soon flood the airwaves, sparkling lights and decorations will adorn homes and businesses, and good tidings will abound.

The holidays also bring a frenzy of decorating, cooking and family gatherings. Amid the hectic hustle and bustle, you may receive higher-than-usual energy bills.

So, I thought this would be a good time to share some tips with Slope Electric

you can still save energy by using traditional timers.

Additional easy ways to save during the holiday season include turning off overhead lights and using your Christmas tree to illuminate your home. If you have a fireplace, remember to close the flue when you're not burning a fire to ensure heat doesn't escape through the chimney.

Cook up energy savings in the kitchen

If you plan to have family and friends over this holiday season, you can cook up energy savings by using small countertop appliances, such as microwaves, air fryers and slow cookers, when possible, as they use much less energy than the stovetop or oven.

When using the oven, bake multiple dishes at once for maximum efficiency. After all, it takes as much energy to cook one dish as it does to cook several. Turn the oven off a few minutes before the recipe's end time and allow the residual heat to finish baking the dish. Once the food is done, leave the stove door ajar to allow the residual heat to warm the room. When using the stovetop, match the pan size to the burner to maximize efficiency.

I hope a few of these tips will be helpful as we approach the holiday season. Remember, we're here to answer any questions you have about managing energy use or your monthly bills. With a little planning upfront, you can find efficient ways to save on everything from holiday decor to your favorite soup recipes.

From your friends at Slope Electric Cooperative, we hope you have a wonderful holiday season. ■



MESSAGE FROM OPERATIONS:

Celebrating National Apprenticeship Week



Dean Volk

Chief of Staff/
Operations Manager

Slope Electric Cooperative is celebrating National Apprenticeship Week Nov. 17-23 in partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor. Apprenticeships provide demand-driven education, allowing apprentices to earn while they learn and helping to close the gap between the skills job creators seek and job seekers need.

National Apprenticeship Week provides an opportunity to spotlight how apprenticeships can help

employees grow in knowledge and skill to succeed in today's workplace. In exchange, these employees have the opportunity to learn from veteran employees

and mentors. In turn, those apprentices work, purchase goods from area businesses, volunteer in our communities and ultimately sustain our smaller towns and improve our quality of life.

The apprenticeship program requires lineworkers to complete 8,000 hours of on-the-job training and 40 tests. Once the program is completed, the lineworkers advance from apprentice to journeyman.

Slope Electric is proud to highlight Shay Olson, an apprentice lineworker who works out of the New England office. Additionally, Slope Electric hires apprentice lineworkers each summer to join crews to get additional experience in the field. This summer, Teigen Marmon and Logan Schriock joined the Slope Electric crews for a few months.

We thank all the apprentices who are helping electric cooperatives provide safe, reliable and affordable electric service to communities! ■



Shay Olson, an apprentice lineworker, works to gain his 8,000 hours of on-the-job training and complete program books.

MESSAGE FROM MEMBER RELATIONS: Join Nominating/Resolutions Committee



Brooke Waltner
Manager of Member
Relations

At the upcoming Dec. 19 Slope Electric Cooperative board meeting, directors will appoint the Slope Electric Nominating/Resolutions Committee. 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 his or her 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 10:30 a.m., Jan. 21, 2025, will provide insights into the committee's functions, including the policies that guide us in nominating qualified members. The second meeting at 9 a.m., Feb. 27, 2025, is when the committee members will roll up their sleeves to make official 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. ■



Reminder:

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program applications are now being accepted until May 31, 2025. For more information, scan the QR code or contact your local human service office.





HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS!

Be on the lookout for scholarship information to be released soon on our social media, slopeelectric.coop and December issue of *North Dakota Living*.





Our offices will be closed
Thursday, Nov. 28
and
Friday, Nov. 29
for Thanksgiving



SAFETY STARTS WITH ME: Winter generator safety

As the winter weather arrives, Slope Electric Cooperative is preparing to deal with whatever weather hits us this season. Although we don't anticipate any outages, it is important for members to be prepared and have a plan in place in case Mother Nature throws us an unexpected curveball.

One tool that can help ease extended outages for your family and any animals in your care is a portable generator. With proper use and maintenance, portable generators can provide great convenience during an outage. However, when generators are used incorrectly, they can be extremely hazardous to both you and us!

"While generators provide convenience during power outages, they can quickly become hazardous – even deadly – if improperly operated," says Shay Olson, an apprentice line technician. "Before you operate a portable generator, please become familiar with it and keep the following safety tips in mind."

If you have questions about the proper use of portable generators, we're here to help. Give us a call at 701-579-4191 or 800-559-4191. ■



Here is what YOU can do

The do's and don'ts when using portable generators

Do's:

- ✓ Keep children and pets away from portable generators.
- ✓ Start the generator first, before you plug in appliances.
- ✓ Position generators at least 25 feet outside the home, away from doors, windows and vents that can allow carbon monoxide to enter the home.
- ✓ Ensure your generator is properly grounded. Use a portable ground-fault circuit interrupter to prevent electric shock injuries.
- ✓ Use three-pronged extension cords rated to handle the generator's load. Inspect extension cords for cuts, frays or other damage before use.

Don'ts:

- ✗ Do not operate a generator inside your home or an enclosed (or partially enclosed) space. Generators produce high levels of carbon monoxide, which can be deadly.
- ✗ Do not open windows or doors while the generator is running.
- ✗ Do not rely on generators as a full-time source of power. They should only be used temporarily or in emergency situations to power essential equipment or appliances.
- ✗ Do not overload generators. They should only be used to power essential equipment. Make sure your generator can handle the load of the items you plan to power.
- ✗ Do not connect generators directly into household wiring, unless you have an appropriate transfer switch installed. If a generator is connected to a home's wiring without a transfer switch, power can backfeed along power lines and electrocute lineworkers making repairs.

ENTER YOUR YOUTH TOUR ERA



FIRED UP @ GETTYSBURG!



HONORING HEROES @ WWI MEMORIAL



JUNE 15-21, 2025

**1,800 students.
7 days.
1 unforgettable trip.**

Join us on the adventure of a lifetime. On the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, you'll do it all. You'll explore monuments and museums, meet with members of Congress and get an up-close look at where our country's laws are crafted. You'll stand on the Gettysburg Battlefield, walk the halls of George Washington's iconic 18th-century mansion and witness ceremonies honoring the men and women who fought in uniform for this great nation. For one jam-packed week, you'll be immersed in the cooperative spirit that built and sustains our great nation. And **all expenses are paid** by your local electric cooperative!

Yeah, Youth Tour hits different.

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.

Essay question:

Why is it important to be involved in your community, and how does that prepare you to be a future leader?

The application deadline is Jan. 17, 2025.

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.

Questions? Please contact Brooke Waltner, Slope Electric, at 701-579-2252 during regular business hours.



**Learn more at
slopeelectric.coop/youth-tour**

SLOPE ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: AUG. 29

The regular meeting of the board of directors of Slope Electric Cooperative was held on Aug. 29 at the cooperative's headquarters in New England. President Steven Wegner called the meeting to order at 9 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, Member Relations Manager Brooke Waltner and Board Liaison Connie Hill.

Consent agenda: There were several proposed amendments to the consent agenda. The consent agenda was approved as amended.

Strategic/action: Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates on the Basin Electric Power Cooperative annual meeting, North Dakota managers meeting, Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) and more.

Several Basin Electric reports, and West Dakota Utility Services and 3C Construction updates were available for review.

Department reports: Craigmile provided a financial and statistical report. Volk's written report for the board was provided, including new projects the crews have been working on and maintenance. Waltner provided a report with details of the new member welcome packet and student program opportunities. Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar provided a written report for the board. Grosz provided a legal report.

Action items: Action items were reviewed and resolved.

Discussion/general information: The board discussed CFC and other matters.

The meeting concluded with the adjournment. Secretary Angela Carlson certified the accuracy of the minutes.

Next meeting date: The next meeting is at 12:30 p.m. Nov. 21 in New England. ■



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SLOPE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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Angela Carlson, Secretary
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Jerome Caron, Director
Ryan Jacobson, Director
Charlotte Meier, Director
Cheryl Van Daele, Director

MANAGEMENT

Jason Bentz
CO-GM/CEO

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CO-GM/CEO

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to learn timely co-op news!

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

Our offices will be closed
Monday, Nov. 11
for Veterans Day

