

THIS ISSUE:

- Benefits of SmartHub
- Youth opportunities
- Strengthening the system

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**Safety is a priority at
Slope Electric Cooperative
- at work and beyond.**

See story inside

*Piper checks on one of the bulls at the Braaten Ranch which she named **Noodle**.*

Cultivating safety for generations to come

From the golden fields of wheat to the lush, green grasses that nourish the cattle within our communities, agriculture is the backbone of our area.

As fall begins, we are reminded of the hustle and bustle that comes with this time of year. Whether it is prepping equipment for harvest or hauling hay down the road, everyone has a job to do to ensure their operation continues to run smoothly.



Piper Braaten keeps an eartag ready during spring calving at the Braaten ranch.

This is also a time to remember to slow down and be aware of your surroundings to make sure everyone gets home safely. For Slope Electric Cooperative line technician Cody Braaten, safety isn't just top of mind while working at the cooperative – it translates to his work on the family ranch.

Putting safety first

Cody ranches with his parents, Robin and Laurie Braaten. Together, they run a Black Angus cow-calf operation. Cody is the third generation to ranch, as his great-grandfather homesteaded south of Rhame in 1909. Over the years, the Braatens have focused on improving their operation, but one thing has remained a priority: safety.

The family has steadily improved their cattle handling operation over the years, prioritizing safety



Cody Braaten is the third generation on the family ranch south of Rhame.

for their livestock and themselves. Upgrading the corral system to a round shape keeps the cattle from crowding in corners. The Braatens have also taken additional steps to ensure the cattle are tamed.

“We spend as much time as we can with the cows,” Robin says. “We walk around them and hand feed replacement heifers.”

This allows the cattle to become more comfortable with everyone and reduces stress. In addition, cattle genetics plays a part in the docility. Robin says they have worked to select bulls that will breed docile animals and keep the replacement heifers that will assist in the goal as well.

When the Braatens are working cattle, they remind themselves to slow down and take their time.

“It seems that when you get in a hurry, the cattle do, too, and that is when you’re just looking for an accident,” Robin says.

From linework to the ranch

Many of the safety reminders Cody prioritizes on the ranch are also applicable to his work as a lineworker. Being aware of your surroundings, slowing down and communication are important reminders for everyone to keep in mind.

“We make sure everyone is aware of what is going on,” Cody says.

The Braatens understand clear communication ensures everyone understands the plan, reducing the chance of accidents, noting when jobs are rushed or unclear, errors become more likely.

“You hear about all these farm accidents,” Cody says. “It helps to make sure you know where everyone is and is accounted for.”

Safety for the next generation

Cody’s daughter, Piper, is no stranger to the ranch life. She tags along with Robin and Laurie during the day, riding in the tractor while haying or in the side-by-side checking cows or fencing.

“She loves being on the farm,” Cody says. “She asks questions and remembers cows’ tag numbers.”

Cody has instilled the importance of safety in Piper. Some include reminding her to be vigilant around equipment and cattle. He reiterates it is always important for her to wear her seatbelt while riding in the side-by-side.

By keeping safety top of mind, the Braaten family is not only ensuring safety for their family and livestock today, but laying the foundation for a prosperous ranch that will thrive for generations to come. ■



Piper helps Laurie hay during the summer.



Calving season takes place in March on the ranch and Piper helps bottle feed calves when needed.

MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

Benefits of SmartHub



Travis Kupper

Co-General Manager/CEO

Slope Electric Cooperative is dedicated to continuously enhancing the experience for our members. As part of this commitment, we partnered with the National Information Solutions Cooperative years ago to introduce SmartHub, an invaluable tool that has become essential for our membership.

While many of our members already benefit from SmartHub, we wanted to take a moment to remind you of its features and how you can maximize its advantages.

SmartHub makes managing your bills easier than ever. You can view current and past statements, set up automatic payments and receive reminders for due dates, all from the convenience of your phone or computer. This is particularly useful for those who may not have regular access to their mail or for members traveling on extended vacations.

Additionally, SmartHub offers valuable insights into your energy usage. With detailed reports, you can

understand when and how you consume electricity, empowering you to make informed decisions that optimize your energy efficiency.

Updating your information or requesting assistance is simple with SmartHub. Manage your account anytime, anywhere, putting you in control of your energy needs.

The SmartHub app is available on both iOS and Android, allowing you to access your account and energy data whenever you need it. If you prefer not to use the app, you can easily login through our website.

We encourage you to explore SmartHub and discover how it can help you take charge of your energy usage. Your engagement strengthens our cooperative, and together we can work toward a more efficient and sustainable future.

As always, if you have any questions about the technology or need assistance, our member service department is here to help. ■



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MESSAGE FROM MEMBER RELATIONS: Youth opportunities



Brooke Waltner

Manager of Member Relations

As a proud member of our community, Slope Electric Cooperative is committed to supporting our local schools and empowering the next generation. We believe in investing in our youth and providing them with opportunities to foster personal and academic growth.

As the school year begins, we wanted to remind you about the programs and opportunities Slope Electric offers to our community to benefit students.

High school scholarship

We offer a scholarship to high school seniors who demonstrate academic excellence, leadership and community involvement. These funds are designed to support students as they further their education and pursue their career goals. Scholarship applications are due Jan. 30.

Educational resources

Our employees have a vast amount of knowledge and are available to provide students with information on how energy services are provided and how to stay safe around electricity. If you would like a member of our team to visit a classroom, give our office a call.

If you have any questions about these youth opportunities, please give us a call at 701-579-4191 and visit with Brooke. We look forward to a successful 2025-26 school year! ■



Line technician, **Jon Lawhead**, visits with students about safety.



Luck-of-the-Draw scholarship winners gather after being chosen at the 2025 Annual Meeting.



Youth participate in the annual meeting by leading the membership in the Pledge of Allegiance.

MESSAGE FROM OPERATIONS: **Continuing to strengthen our system**



Dean Volk

*Chief of Staff/
Operations Manager*

Slope Electric Cooperative had a busy summer, marked by a strong dedication to the work plan projects that focused on system improvements. In addition to scheduled improvements, our crews have responded to new requests from members for service upgrades addressed unplanned system repairs due to storm and weather-related events. Other projects ranged from new commercial services to underground upgrades.

Portions of the Langberg substation, located south of Rhame, were recently converted to underground cable. This will allow Slope Electric to retire over 14 miles of overhead power line and replace it with underground cable. Converting to underground cable allows for additional safety and reliability to our system. Now that the substation work is complete, Slope Electric crews have been working

to switch members' electric service feed back to the substation.

During line patrol, crews identified places across our service area where trees need to be trimmed and utility poles needed replacement. Crews continue to work on these projects across the service area to ensure reliable electrical services. Slope Electric also worked on restoration efforts from the frequent high winds and storms that impacted the area.

Our service area has also been busy with economic development projects to which Slope Electric provided services, including a wind farm project near Rhame and others.

Slope Electric crews have also been helping prepare for new services, such as grain handling services.

As harvest begins, we encourage members to take extra safety precautions, such as keeping an eye on wires and poles to ensure an accidental contact or collision does not take place.

If you need lines moved or see damage that needs to be addressed by the cooperative, please call our office at 701-579-4191. ■



SAFETY STARTS WITH ME: Everyday electrical safety

Electricity plays many roles in our lives, from powering generators, cellphones and lighting to running HVAC systems and appliances. No wonder we get so comfortable with its instant availability. When we flip a switch, we expect most systems or devices to do the job. But that sense of reliability can lead to complacency, especially during the shift in seasons and the rush that comes with a new season.

“Fall is a busy time in the area,” says Brad Schmitt, line technician. “And as the season begins to change, kids gear up for school and harvest begins, we want to remind members to take a look around your home and shop to check for potential safety hazards.”

Below are a few connections to check to ensure your home and operation can continue to run smoothly.

Ground-fault circuit interrupters

What is it? A ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) is designed to sense abnormal current flows, breaking the circuit to prevent potential electric shocks from devices plugged into the outlets. GFCI features are normally included in outdoor outlets or those in potentially damp locations, such as in the kitchen, bathroom or laundry room.

What can you do? Check them frequently by pressing the red test button, which will simulate a fault to ensure the GFCI is working properly. To restore power to the circuit, press the black reset button. If you notice any issues, contact a licensed electrician.

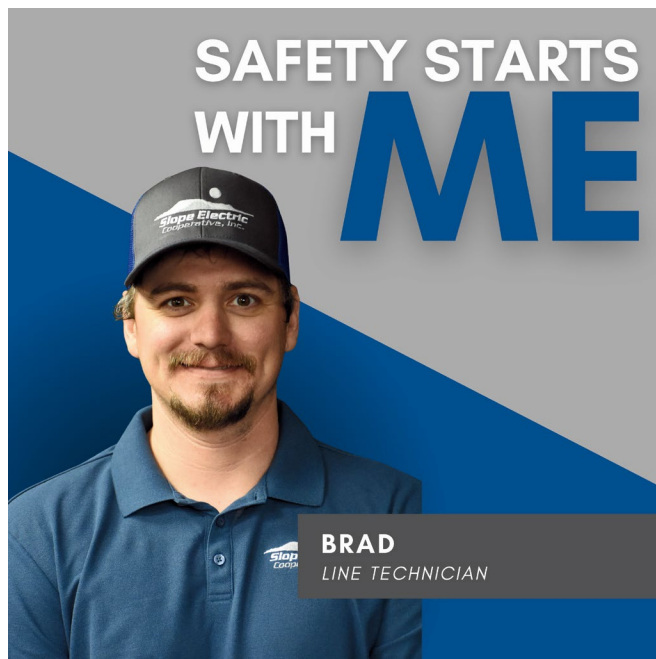
Loose or damaged outlets and switches

What should you look for? It is good to be aware of items you use every day, such as electrical outlets and wall switches. Signs of heat damage or discoloration in these items may be early warnings of potential shock or electrical fire hazards.

What can you do? Check your electrical outlets and wall switches to ensure they are properly connected. If you notice any issues, contact a licensed electrician.

Extension cords

What should you look for? If you use extension cords regularly to connect devices and equipment to your wall outlets, your home or shop may be underwired. Extension cords are designed for temporary, occasional or periodic use.



What can you do? If an extension cord gets noticeably warm when in use, it could be undersized for the intended use. If it shows any signs of frayed, cracked or heat-damaged insulation, it should be replaced. If the grounding prong is missing, crimped or loose, a grounded cord will not provide the protection designed into its performance. Always make sure extension cords used in outdoor or potentially damp locations are rated for exterior use.

Electricity is an essential necessity for our everyday lives, and Slope Electric Cooperative is committed to providing safe, reliable and affordable electric services to all our members. We hope you'll keep these electrical safety tips in mind so you can note any potential hazards before damage occurs. ■

SLOPE ELECTRIC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: JUNE 26

The regular meeting of the board of directors of Slope Electric Cooperative was held on June 26 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 of Staff/Operations Manager Dean Volk and Board Liaison Connie Hill. Chris Fitterer, Clarence Binstock and Stan Koppinger with the New England golf course attended a portion of the meeting as guests.

Reorganization of the board: Board reorganization took place. The executive committee elected is as follows: Angela Carlson, president, Anthony Larson, vice president, Charlotte Meier, secretary, and Chip H.J. Fischer, treasurer.

Consent agenda: Amendments were proposed to the consent agenda. The consent agenda was approved as amended.

Strategic items: Bentz and Kupper presented the co-general managers' report, which included updates on the Cooperative Finance Cooperation, Upper

Missouri Power Cooperative and more. Several additional Basin Electric Power Cooperative board documents were available for review.

Department reports: Kupper provided a financial report. Volk provided a report, including an update on storm restoration and projects on which crews are working. Waltner provided a written report, including a Youth Tour recap, an annual meeting update and communications from the co-op. Chief Information Officer Charlie Dunbar provided a written report. Grosz provided a legal report.

Action items: The board reviewed and resolved various items, including strategic planning and policy review.

Discussion/general information: The board discussed strategic planning, sponsorship opportunities and other items. Fitterer, Binstock and Koppinger presented the board with a proposal for the New England golf course.

The meeting concluded with adjournment. Secretary Charlotte Meier certified the accuracy of the minutes.

Next meeting date: The next meeting is at 8 a.m. on Sept. 29 in New England. ■

EMPOWERING GROWTH TOGETHER

At your Touchstone Energy Cooperative, your involvement is key. Join us in shaping the future for a stronger, more vibrant community for everyone.



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

MANAGEMENT

Jason Bentz
CO-GM/CEO

Travis Kupper
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