



## Spring into safety

Hey, kids! Fly kites, drones and other toys in large, open areas like a field or park. Stay far away from power lines. If a kite gets stuck in a tree that's near a power line, do not climb up to get it. Contact Slope Electric Cooperative for assistance.

Parents, please take a walk around your property with your kids, and look for those big green boxes (pad-mount transformers), poles and power lines. Tell them to stay away so they can stay safe, and enjoy a fun-filled spring!

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:

- **IMPORTANT: Annual Meeting update**
- **Slope Electric remembers former employee Arlin Reindel**
- **Cooperative and community welcome Brad Schmitt**
- **Tell me more about those capital credits!**
- **Board meeting minutes ... and more**

## 2021 Annual Meeting

The annual membership meeting of Slope Electric Cooperative, Inc. will be held:  
**Thursday, June 3, 2021 at 2 p.m.**  
**Parking Lot, Community Center, Reeder, N.D.**



The meeting will be broadcast live on FM radio; the station will be provided on-site. Portions of the meeting will also be available online at [www.slopeelectric.coop](http://www.slopeelectric.coop) at a later date.

***DUE TO THE ONGOING COVID-19 PANDEMIC, AN ABBREVIATED VERSION OF THE ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE HELD OUTDOORS.***

The annual meeting will be a business meeting only. Unless there is a nomination from the floor, there are no contested board elections. Amended Bylaws have been proposed, and will be voted on. They are included in their entirety in the Annual Meeting packet.

There will be a sealed snack given to members who attend. To ensure your safety, Slope Electric will follow safety requirements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and North Dakota Department of Health in effect at the time of the meeting.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 annual meeting was not held. As such, the candidates put forth by the 2020 Nominating Committee were not voted on by the membership. These candidates were incumbent Board members, and they have been serving on an interim basis until an election of the membership can occur. These candidates are Angela Carlson and Charlotte Meier of Hettinger County, and Steve Wegner of Adams County. The directors whose tenure of office expires in 2021 are Lauren Klewin and Dale Hande of Slope County.

The Nominating/Resolutions Committee connected on March 22 via conference call to make nominations and approve resolutions. The following members have been nominated by the Nominating Committee:

Steve Wegner .....	Reeder. ....	Adams County (2020 vacancy)
Angela Carlson.....	Regent .....	Hettinger County (2020 vacancy)
Charlotte Meier.....	Regent .....	Hettinger County (2020 vacancy)
Lauren Klewin.....	Amidon .....	Slope County (2021 vacancy)
Dale Hande .....	Rhame .....	Slope County (2021 vacancy)

More information is included in the Annual Report, scheduled to be mailed in May. ■

## Report from THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MARCH 22, 2021

Meeting held at New England headquarters

- Approved the agenda with additions.
- Approved minutes of the Feb. 22, 2021, Board meeting.
- Approved five capital credit estate retirements.
- Approved special equipment for transformers.
- Reviewed RUS Form 219 Inventory.
- Co-General Managers/CEOs provided updates.
- Heard power supplier updates.
- Heard Nominating Committee report.
- Heard legislative update provided by the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives.
- Heard personnel report.
- Heard West Dakota Utility Services and 3C Construction updates.
- Discussed the Southwest Power Pool winter event.
- Heard reports from Directors who participated in various meetings and classes.
- Discussed Board Policy 02-12 and accepted the changes.
- Discussed and approved a Dependent Care Resolution.
- Discussed an agenda addition.
- Discussed Bylaw amendments.
- Entered Executive Session to discuss rate review.
- Approved donation for the North Dakota Leopold Conservation Award.
- Discussed 2021 Annual Meeting planning.
- Discussed upcoming meetings, director attendance and voting delegates.
- Reviewed and accepted the executive summary of the financial report.
- Heard senior staff report.
- Heard legal counsel report.
- Held voucher review.
- Scheduled the next Board meeting for April 29, 2021.
- Held Executive Session to discuss legal and strategic matters.
- Adjourned.

## Remembering former Slope Electric employee Arlin Reindel

On behalf of Slope Electric's managers, board of directors and employees, we say thank you and goodbye to Arlin Reindel, who passed away March 30 in New England. After his Honorable Discharge in 1969 from the U.S. Army, Arlin found a job and career with Slope Electric.

For 45 years, he worked as a line technician and later in the office, supporting the line crews.

Operations Manager Dean Volk says when Arlin started at the cooperative, there wasn't a line school program available to learn the trade. Arlin learned on the job, gaining knowledge and experience alongside his co-workers.

Going through part of their apprenticeship at the same time, Dean and Arlin were often on-call together. Dean says Arlin was a great co-worker and friend who will be missed.

This following attributes, published in his obituary, summarize how many people will remember Arlin: "He meticulously cared for his lawn, yard, garden and flowers.



Arlin Reindel

He enjoyed tinkering in his shop and hosting NDSU Bison game day activities. Arlin enjoyed fishing and pheasant hunting with family and friends. He loved watching his grandchildren's activities and playing cards with his great-nieces and nephews. Arlin never met a stranger and could visit with anyone, finding local connections with people across the country."

He certainly made connections across the Slope Electric Cooperative service area.

We share our sincere condolences with his wife LaVon, children, grandchildren, extended relatives and friends. ■

## WIN-WIN FOR COOPERATIVE AND COMMUNITY

### Slope Electric welcomes Brad Schmitt to Bowman outpost

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

Cooperative and community are benefiting with the addition of a new lineworker and his family. Slope Electric Cooperative welcomes Brad Schmitt to the Bowman outpost.

A former apprentice lineman for Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative in Timber Lake, S.D., Brad moved to Bowman with his wife, Ashley, and their children: daughter Quinn, and twins Mason and Addison. His first day with Slope Electric was April 5.

Brad grew up in Mandan and graduated from South Central High School in Bismarck. He worked for Interstate Battery as a shop hand for almost 10 years before starting an electrical apprenticeship in Belfield. When the oil industry slowed after a few years, he went back to Interstate



After driving his own semi for many years, **Brad Schmitt** (right) enrolled in the Bismarck State College lineworker program to start a new career. A seasoned driver used to pulling double trailers, he probably could have taught the class on how to pull a trailer loaded with poles.



**Brad and Ashley Schmitt** and their three children recently moved to Bowman so Brad could work at the Slope Electric outpost. In his spare time, Brad likes motorsports and riding four-wheeler with his kids.

Battery and earned his CDL license. Brad delivered batteries for a few years before buying his own semi and hauling double trailers for Menards, Magnum and other customers.

After starting a family, Brad wanted to spend less time on the road. A nature enthusiast, he decided to go back to school and enroll in the Bismarck State College lineworker program so he could work a variety of jobs outdoors.

After he graduated, he was hired by Moreau-Grand and the family moved to Trail City, S.D. He commuted to Timber Lake and the surrounding service area for work. Wanting a job opportunity for Ashley, the couple looked for options for Brad to move within the electric cooperative network. When the Slope Electric job in Bowman was posted, Brad applied and was hired.

Familiar with the area from his time working in Belfield, he is looking forward to doing more hunting and fishing. With more opportunities for housing, schools and a job for Ashley, the Schmitt family is glad to make Bowman their home — and Bowman is fortunate to gain another family.

As an apprentice line technician, Brad will continue to fulfill the bookwork, tests and hours needed to complete the apprenticeship program.

He says his favorite part of the job is responding to outage calls.

“You never know what you’re going to find,” he says.

Due to his experience driving a semi, he is also quite proficient at backing a flatbed trailer loaded with poles.

“I can manage pretty well,” he says with a smile.

Slope Electric Cooperative welcomes Brad Schmitt to the outpost, and Bowman welcomes the family to the community. ■

*A former apprentice lineman for an electric cooperative in South Dakota, **Brad Schmitt** has made a fast transition to the Slope Electric Bowman crew.*





# Work safely around grain bins

**M**ake sure everyone, including family and employees, working around stored grain understands the hazards and proper safety procedures.

“Too many people ignore safety practices and suffer severe injury or death while working around grain,” says Ken Hellevang, North Dakota State University Extension agricultural engineer. Never enter a bin while unloading grain or to break up a grain bridge or chunks that may plug grain flow. Flowing grain will pull you into the grain mass, burying you within seconds. Use the “lock-out/tag-out” procedures to assure equipment will not start before entering the bin.

Bridging occurs when grain is high in moisture content, moldy or in poor condition. The kernels stick together and form a crust. A cavity will form under the crust when grain is removed from the bin. The crust isn’t strong enough to support a person’s weight, so anyone who walks on it will fall into the cavity and be buried under several feet of grain.

Determine if the grain has a crust before any grain has been removed. If work needs to be done with a crust, it must be done before any grain is removed.

To determine if the grain is bridged after unloading has started, look for a funnel shape on the surface of the grain mass. If the grain surface appears undisturbed, the grain has bridged and a cavity has formed under the surface. Stay outside the bin and use a pole or other object to break the bridge loose.

If the grain flow stops when you’re removing it from the bin, a chunk of spoiled grain probably is blocking the flow. Entering the bin to break up the blockage will expose you to being buried in grain and tangled in the auger.

If grain has formed a vertical wall, try to break it up from the top of the bin with a long pole on a rope or through a door with a long pole. A wall of grain can collapse, or avalanche, without warning, knocking you over and burying you.

Never enter a grain bin alone. Have at least two people at the bin to assist in case of problems. Use a safety harness and rope that prevents you from descending rapidly more than a couple of feet when entering a bin.

“Take time to think of all options before entering a bin,” Hellevang advises. ■

## Grain bags are a suffocation hazard

Never enter a grain bag, because it is a suffocation hazard. If unloading the bag with a pneumatic grain conveyor, the suction can “shrink wrap” a person so he or she cannot move and will limit space for breathing.

## Bins require clearance from power lines

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. Whether you are purchasing new grain bins or remodeling areas that contain existing ones, proximity to overhead power lines must be a considered factor.

- **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 a 55-foot minimum distance from the power line to the grain bin wall.

- **Filling grain bins.** 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 Cooperative reminds you to always use caution when working near power lines. 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. ■

## COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE #3:

# MEMBERS ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

**All co-op members invest in their cooperative. This means people, not shareholders, benefit from a co-op's profits.**

### Tell me more about those capital credits!

In last month's magazine local pages, Slope Electric Cooperative published a list of member names whose current addresses are needed to mail capital credit allocation statements and/or checks. If they received a check, it was not cashed, or the check or statement did not reach the intended recipient and was returned by the post office.

When members sign up to receive electric service from Slope Electric, they become a member of an electric utility.

Slope is a non-profit business that exists only to provide goods and services to you, our member-owners; not to make a profit for a shareholder or investor. Cooperatives are operated to provide electric service to their members as reasonably priced as possible.

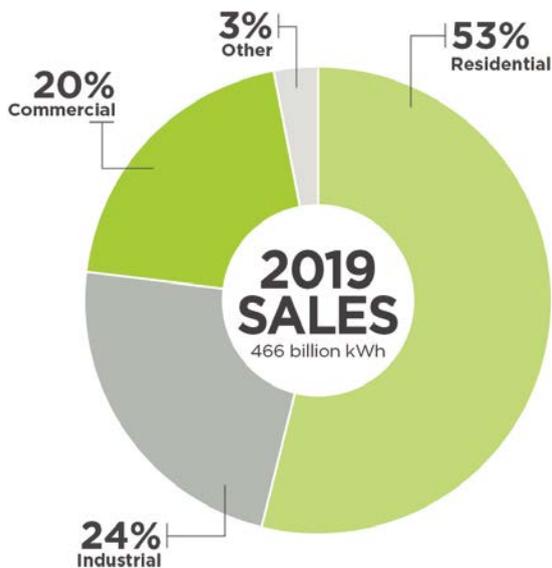
While investor-owned utilities return a portion of any profits back to their shareholders, electric co-ops operate on

an at-cost basis. Instead of returning leftover funds, known as margins, to folks who might not live in the same region or even the same state, Slope periodically allocates any margin (profit) to members as capital credits (also called patronage dividends, patronage refunds, patronage capital or equity capital) based upon their purchase of electricity during the year.

The board of directors analyzes the current financial strength of the cooperative, and at its discretion, decides whether to proceed with a general retirement of capital credits for that calendar year.

A cooperative's members are also the people it serves. Capital credits reflect the ownership in, and contribution of capital to, the cooperative.

For more information on capital credits, visit [www.slopeelectric.coop](http://www.slopeelectric.coop) and click Your Power in Membership and Capital Credits. Or, give us a call at the office at 701-579-4191 or 800-559-4191. We are here to serve you! ■



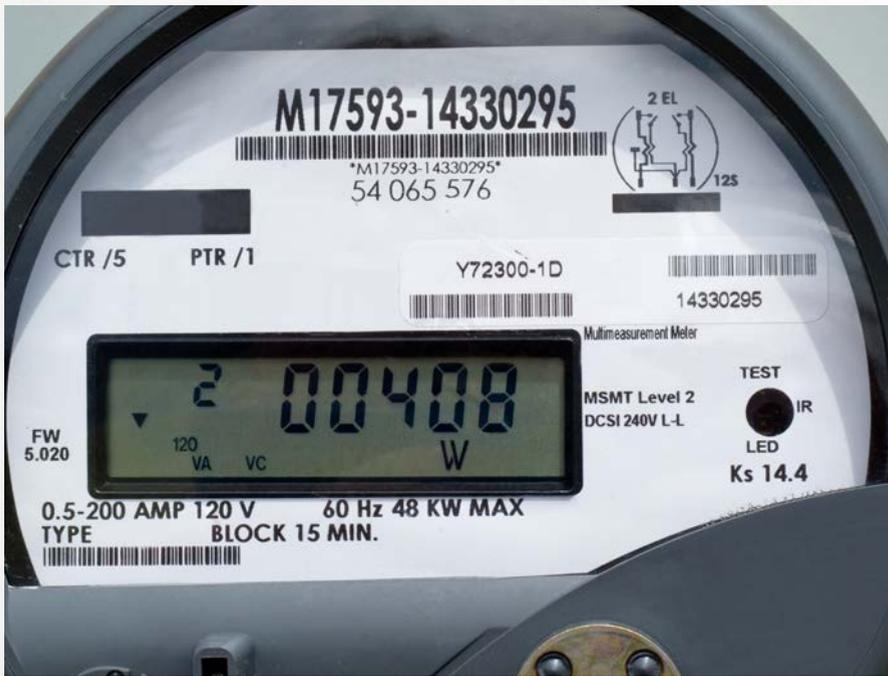
*Unlike the rest of the electric sector, electric co-ops sell the majority of their power to households rather than businesses. Keeping rates affordable is especially important for these consumer-members at the end of the line.*

## Did You Know?

Electric cooperatives have retired \$17 billion to members since 1988 – \$1.3 billion in 2019 alone. Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues (called margins) are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.

Source: National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation





## Breaker, Breaker!

Members, heat meters need to be energized at all times for billing purposes. Please notify Slope Electric if the breaker to your heat meter needs to be turned off. There is a \$50 charge to reinstate the heat meter if Slope Electric is not notified. Thank you.



Your Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup> Cooperative

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**SLOPE ELECTRIC  
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AND DIRECTORS**

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Anthony Larson, Secretary  
Jerome Caron, Treasurer  
Angela Carlson, Director  
HJ "Chip" Fischer, Director  
Dale Hande, Director  
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**MANAGEMENT**

Donald A. Franklund  
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