

## Giving back



**Jessica Smith,**  
with the Stanley  
Scholarship Funds.

**Michelle Hoff,**  
organizer of the  
Parshall T-Ball Group.





**Roger Evans**, with the Golden Age Club in Stanley, which was one of the recipients of the Rural Development Finance Corporation grant.



## Giving back



Once again, Operation Round Up is helping local nonprofits in Mountrail County. At the end of 2017, the Mountrail County Operation Round Up Trust designated another \$5,000 to local groups. These groups use allocated funds to help better serve the local communities.

The Operation Round Up recipients were:

- Stanley Commercial Club
- New Town City Library
- Bethel Lutheran
- Flickertail Village
- Parshall T-Ball Group
- Stanley Scholarship Funds Inc.
- Prairie Quilters

• American Legion Powers Lake  
Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative offers other programs for groups/nonprofits as well. One program is the Rural Development Finance Corporation grant. This program is offered through the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC), which represents the electric cooperatives of North Dakota and their members.

If you would like more information on these types of programs, please visit our website, [www.mwec.com](http://www.mwec.com), call us at 1-800-279-2667 or email [jessicam@mwec.com](mailto:jessicam@mwec.com). ■

**Julie Herbel**, librarian at the New Town City Library, which recently moved to a new location.

## The power of Operation Round Up

BY ADAM SCHWARTZ

It started as a simple idea 27 years ago at one co-op in South Carolina. Just round up the co-op member's electric bill to the next dollar, and then use it to do good work in your community. Today, hundreds of electric co-ops throughout the country, including Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative (MWEC), use this idea to help members and organizations close to home.

All co-ops adhere to the seven cooperative principles, including "Concern for Community." The Operation Round Up program is the perfect embodiment of this core principle. The average co-op member donates \$6, with a maximum possible contribution of \$11.88 per year. This may not seem like a large amount, but when combined with all participating members, it adds up to make a significant impact.

Each co-op decides how it wants

to operate the program, and the vast majority of the programs are governed by a board of volunteers that is different from the board of directors for the electric co-op. This ensures that the decisions are made in the best interest of the community.

The program is always voluntary, and at any time, members can change their minds about participating. Once folks see the good work the program does in their community, they almost always keep contributing.

Over the years, millions of dollars have been collected and distributed for a wide range of activities. This can include helping a family in need after a house fire, assisting the local food pantry, or providing funds so the local fire department can get a needed piece of equipment. Or dozens of other humanitarian efforts that bring electric co-ops even closer to the communities we serve.

While each co-op must respond to the needs of its members, one of the great attributes of co-ops across the country – and the world – is their willingness to share information about the programs that have been successful. Operation Round Up is a perfect example of that cooperative spirit.

MWEC is pleased to offer Operation Round Up. We will continue to "borrow" ideas from other co-ops and welcome your participation. Please share with us additional activities we should explore to serve you and your neighbors. ■

*Adam Schwartz is the founder of The Cooperative Way, a consulting firm that helps co-ops succeed. He is an author, speaker and member-owner of the CDS Consulting Co-op. You can follow him on Twitter @adamcooperative or email him at [aschwartz@thecooperativeway.coop](mailto:aschwartz@thecooperativeway.coop).*



## MWEC accepting applications for scholarship program

Each year, Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative (MWEC) gives one, \$1,000 scholarship to a dependent of a member. Basin Electric Power Cooperative, our power generation cooperative, provides the funds to all of its member co-ops.

Applicants must be high school seniors enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university or

vocational/technical school.

Scholarship recipients will be chosen based on a combination of SAT/ACT scores and overall grade point average, work experience, participation in school and community activities, a personal statement of career goals, a written recommendation by a third party and an essay on the topic, "Describe how a cooperative can build a culture to best serve its members."

Applications are available

at [www.mwec.com](http://www.mwec.com), at any of our three locations, or by emailing [jessicam@mwec.com](mailto:jessicam@mwec.com)

All applications must be submitted no later than **Feb. 21, 2018**, to:

**Mountrail-Williams  
Electric Cooperative  
Attn: Jessica George  
P.O. Box 1346  
Williston, ND 58802**

-or-

**[jessicam@mwec.com](mailto:jessicam@mwec.com) ■**



## Your annual meeting

### What you're missing at the annual meeting

BY ADAM SCHWARTZ

**D**id you know every cooperative is required to conduct an annual meeting of the membership? The purpose is to hold the election for the board of directors, share important financial information, occasionally vote on other matters such as bylaw changes and, of course, register for great door prizes!

Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative's (MWEC) annual meeting is a community gathering where neighbors can meet new neighbors – or catch up with old acquaintances. As our lives get busier with the “errands of life” and more of our interactions with others are online (via social media), we must renew the value of face-to-face human connections. Very few organizations are uniquely positioned like MWEC to bring together all members of our local communities.

While rural Americans probably do a better job of staying connected to our neighbors, it is not something we should take for granted. The simple act of smiling, saying hello and



shaking someone's hand truly lifts both parties.

Our country and community face many challenges. Overcoming these challenges will only happen if we come together.

MWEC's annual meeting is designed to take care of the important business of your co-op and the equally important business of building a real sense of community. All cooperatives serve both an economic and social purpose. While safe and affordable electric power is crucial to our mission, improving the quality of life for all members is at the core of what we do every day.

If you have not attended the annual meeting in the past or if it has been a few years, we urge you to take the time to be with your fellow co-op members.

We get out of life what we put into it. MWEC is connected to you by more than just power lines.



We are your neighbors, and we look forward to seeing you at your annual meeting. ■

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**Adam Schwartz** is the founder of *The Cooperative Way*, a consulting

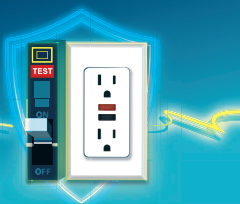
firm that helps co-ops succeed. He is an author, speaker and member-owner of the CDS Consulting Co-op. You can follow him on Twitter @adamcooperative or email him at [aschwartz@thecooperativeway.coop](mailto:aschwartz@thecooperativeway.coop).



**Save the date: June 7**  
**Agri-Sports Complex – UMVF Fairgrounds, Williston**

# GROUND-FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTERS

PREVENTING ELECTROCUTIONS SINCE 1973



Ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) are special outlets that have saved thousands of people from electrocution over the last three decades. If GFCIs were installed in older homes, experts suggest that 70 percent of the electrocutions that occur each year in the home could be prevented.

GFCIs are electrical safety devices that trip electrical circuits when they detect ground faults or leakage currents. A person who becomes part of a path for leakage current will be severely shocked or electrocuted. These outlets prevent deadly shock by quickly shutting off power to the circuit if the electricity flowing into the circuit differs by even a slight amount from that returning.

A GFCI should be used in any indoor or outdoor area where water may come into contact with electrical products.

Since the first introduction of GFCIs in homes, there has been an:

**83%**  
DROP in  
electrocutions



**95%**  
DROP in electrocutions  
from consumer products



The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that:

**47%**  
of current  
electrocutions  
could be prevented with  
proper GFCI protection



**50%**  
of American homes were  
built before the  
introduction of GFCIs



There are potentially **43 MILLION**  
American homes without GFCI protection



**WAS YOUR  
HOME BUILT  
BEFORE  
1976?**

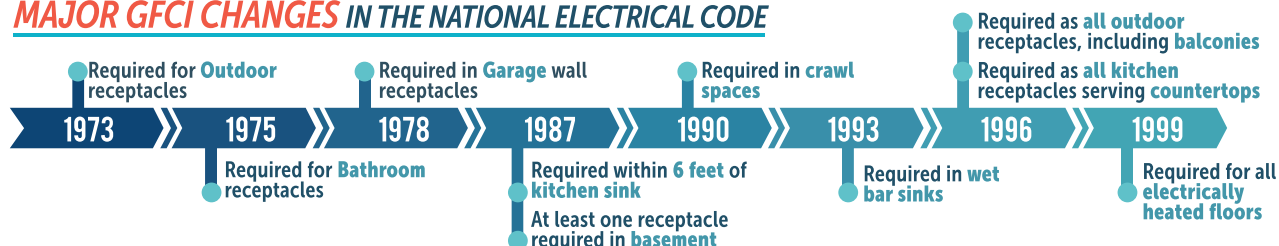
Have a qualified electrician inspect your electrical system to ensure it's up to code.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF A QUALIFIED ELECTRICIAN

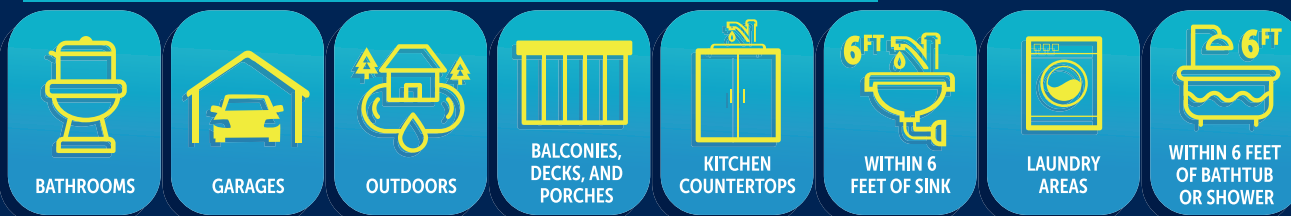
Call a qualified electrician if you have:

- Frequent problems with blowing fuses or tripping circuit breakers
- A tingling feeling when you touch an electrical appliance
- Discolored or warm wall outlets
- A burning or rubbery smell coming from an appliance
- Flickering or dimming lights
- Sparks from an outlet

### MAJOR GFCI CHANGES IN THE NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE

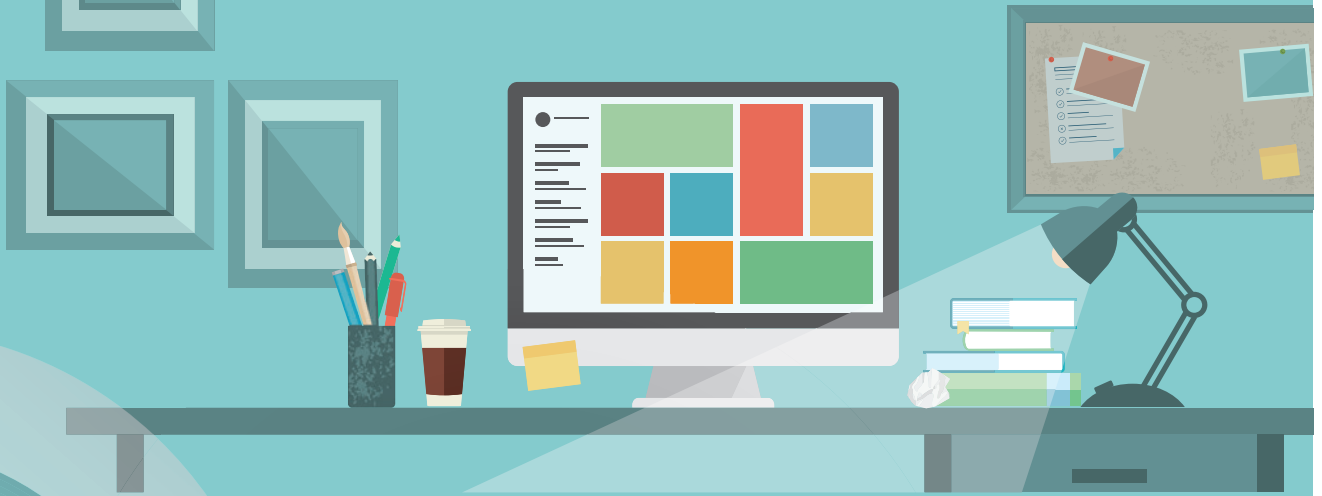


### CURRENT REQUIREMENTS IN THE 2017 NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CODE



# Power down your energy bill

You may have finished working, but your laptops and PCs in the home office are contributing to your electric bill.



## On or off?

Ensure power management features are enabled so your computer monitor will automatically go into sleep mode after a period of inactivity. Of course, a desktop or laptop computer can still suck 15-21 watts when idle. Turn it off instead and save even more electricity. Here are some general guidelines when deciding to turn off your personal computer:

- Turn off the monitor if you aren't going to use your computer for more than 20 minutes. Many computers available today come with a sleep mode or power management feature. Using these features will save you up to \$30 each year on your electricity bills. Enable the power management features when a computer is purchased. *Note that screen savers are not energy savers.*
- Turn off the computer if you're not going to use your PC for more than two hours. Most PCs reach the end of their "useful" life due to advances in technology long before the effects of being switched on and off multiple times have a negative impact on their service life. The less time a PC is on, the longer it will "last."

## Use a power strip

Make sure your monitors, printers and other accessories are on a power strip/surge protector. When this equipment is not in use for extended periods, turn off the switch on the power strip to prevent them from drawing power even when shut off.

Many appliances continue to draw a small amount of power when they are switched off. These vampire loads occur in most appliances that use electricity, such as DVD players, TVs, stereos, computers and kitchen appliances. Unplug battery chargers when the batteries are fully charged or the chargers are not in use.

Unofficial minutes  
of regular board meeting  
**Dec. 27, 2017**

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:** Johnson, Hartsoch, Lynne, Lalim, Ludwig, Sorenson and Grant.

**DIRECTORS ABSENT:** Jorgenson and Lahtinen.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Manager Haugen, in-house counsel Johnson-Ellis, attorney Foust and staff members.

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 a.m. at the south Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative (MWEC) headquarters, Williston. Minutes of the Nov. 29, 2017, regular board meeting were approved as presented. Manager Haugen added an executive session to the agenda and the board approved it as amended.

**ATTORNEY'S REPORT:** In-house counsel Johnson-Ellis updated the board on the alleged trespass concerning an underground electrical line.

In-house counsel Johnson-Ellis and attorney Foust discussed N.D. Century Code Chapter 62.1-02 regarding weapons and the posted "no-firearms" sign on MWEC buildings.

Attorney Foust discussed a case concerning stray voltage.

**JLG BUILDING BUDGET UPDATE:** Nick Lippert reviewed the building budget with the board. He also discussed the checks and balances being used throughout the project to help prevent and avoid possible issues in the future. The board was also shown snapshots of the furniture being used throughout the building and chose the chairs for the boardroom.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** The board went into executive session to discuss employee matters.

**OPERATING AND FINANCIAL REPORT:** Jay Lux presented the November financial report. The total margins for the year to date is \$19,576,000. OTIER is 2.24; TIER is 2.40; MDSC is 2.17; equity is 30.83 percent; and SPP equity is 33.75 percent.

**SPECIAL EQUIPMENT/WORK ORDER CLOSEOUTS:** The board approved the closeout of the following special equipment/work order:

Closeout 692 ..... \$1,804,168.55  
TOTAL ..... \$1,804,168.55

**CAPITAL CREDIT RETIREMENTS:** The board approved the retirement of the following capital credit accounts for December 2017:

Esther Erickson estate  
Helen Monson estate

**BAD DEBTS:** The board approved the transfer of \$65,300.95 from accounts receivable to bad debts. Retaining capital credit retirements, using small claims courts, and other methods will be used to

try to collect these sums.

**EIDE BAILLY ENGAGEMENT LETTER:** The board approved Eide Bailly as the firm to complete the 2017 audit of MWEC financial statements, which comprise of the balance sheet as of Dec. 31, 2017, and the related statements of operations, members' equity and cash flows for 2017, and the related notes to the financial statements.

**MANAGER'S REPORT:**

**SAFETY** – No lost-time accidents were reported. The mini-RESAP inspection walk-through notes were made available.

**RELIABILITY AND OUTAGE REPORT** – The reliability and outage report was made available. There were two major outages at the end of December caused by the cold temperatures.

**SPP** – MWEC counsel has issued the settlement agreement to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for signing. The settlement letter sent to the Honorable Kimberly D. Bose, statement and agreement and 2018 annual update filing were made available.

**SPP VISIT** – The board, manager Haugen, in-house counsel Johnson-Ellis, attorney Foust and a few MWEC staff members will be visiting SPP headquarters in Little Rock, Ark., in early January.

**WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION (WAPA)** – The board approved the transmission operator procedure update between WAPA and MWEC.

**Upper Missouri Power Cooperative (UMPC)** – The board approved the annual "Exhibit A" to the wholesale power contract with UMPC. Manager Haugen also talked about the UMPC notes from Dec. 14, 2017, and from the UMPC meeting with ONEOK, specifically discussing the difference in price between gas and electric.

**BASIN ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE JOB SHADOWING** – Manager Haugen reported on his experience job shadowing at Basin Electric Power Company.

**MWEC BUILDING UPDATES** – The minutes from the Dec. 20, 2017, owners meeting with FCI Constructors Inc. was made available.

**UPCOMING BOARD MEETING** – Manager Haugen went through a list of topics to be discussed at the upcoming two-day board meeting in January/February.

**RLND SPONSORSHIP:** The board approved a full-tuition sponsorship for the Rural Leadership North Dakota Program at North Dakota State University (NDSU). This is an 18-month leadership development program offered through NDSU with a mission to "prepare and develop effective leaders to strengthen

rural North Dakota."

**MEETING REPORTS:**

**UMPC** – The general manager update from Dec. 22 was made available.

**MID-WEST ELECTRIC CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION** – Director Lalim and Director Grant reported on the annual meeting they attended in December.

**NORTH DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES (NDAREC)** – Director Grant reported on the November board meeting he attended. The minutes from the November board meeting, NDAREC notice of annual meeting, 2017 annual meeting draft agenda and unofficial minutes, and the RDFC annual meeting invite, agenda and president's report were made available.

**BASIN ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE** – Basin Electric is retiring the remaining 2000 capital credits and partially retiring the 2001 capital credits to MWEC. These funds are being distributed based on each member cooperative's purchases of power from Basin Electric during 2000 and 2001.

**COOPERATIVE FINANCE CORPORATION (CFC)** – The report from the boardroom from Dec. 14, 2017, was made available.

**NATIONAL INFORMATION SOLUTIONS COOPERATIVE (NISC)** – NISC is retiring 30 percent of the organization's 2017 patronage capital.

**MOUNTRAIL-WILLIAMS  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

P.O. Box 1346  
Williston, N.D. 58802-1346  
P.O. Box 129  
Stanley, N.D. 58784-0129

**DIRECTORS**

Roger Sorenson ..... Chairperson  
Robert Grant ..... Vice-Chairperson  
Cheryl Hartsoch ..... Treasurer  
Blaine Jorgenson ..... Secretary  
Larry Johnson ..... Director  
Aaron Lynne ..... Director  
Garrett Lalim ..... Director  
Luke Lahtinen ..... Director  
Dick Ludwig ..... Director  
Neff, Eiken  
& Neff, PC ..... Project Attorney  
Dale Haugen ..... General Manager

**OFFICE PHONE NUMBERS:**

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Stanley ..... (701) 628-2242  
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WATS ..... (800) 279-2667

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