



Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



**WILLISTON**  
577-3765

**STANLEY**  
628-2242

**NEW TOWN**  
627-3550

## National Co-op Month: your electricity history

A cooperative is formed when people come together to meet a common need.

Electric cooperatives began because of the need for electrification of rural farms. When settlers came to North Dakota, they only had candles and kerosene lanterns to use to light up the dark nights.

Franklin D. Roosevelt, after his presidential election in 1933, knew changes were needed in our nation. One of those changes would forever change rural areas. In 1935, President Roosevelt issued a presidential executive order establishing the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). The following year, the Rural Electrification Act



was passed by Congress. This legislation would permit farmers to organize cooperatives, making them eligible for low-interest loans which provided the funds to bring electricity to rural farms.

So why then, with all this legislation and fund availability, did our area not get electricity for rural areas until the late 1940s? When the Rural Electrification Administration began, there were requirements to receive funding from REA construction loans. One of those conditions was that there must be an average of three families per mile. Northwestern North Dakota averaged less than two families per mile; therefore, the area was ineligible for the loans. Directors still continued to get members signed up for service, which was at a minimum cost of \$5 per month once service began. Churches and schools received a discounted monthly rate of \$2 per month. Cooperative directors had to then submit a map to REA officials in St. Louis, Mo., for approval. Finally, in 1945 the area received the funding to begin their rural electrification project.

Though the funding had come at



**Franklin D. Roosevelt**

last, line poles were hard to come by because of the war. Thanks to the commitment and persistence of area directors, a company was found that would produce the poles for the cooperatives.

Northwestern North Dakota cooperatives continued to face more challenges throughout the next two years. Many residents did not give up hope, and from late 1947 to early 1948, electrical lines began to be energized. The area distribution systems were completed by 1950 as it had been planned. Williams

## In this issue:

- **Map helps track outages**
- **Win a trip to Washington, D.C.**
- **Halloween safety tips**
- **Meeting minutes ... and more!**



Electric Cooperative Manager Sig Forseth said, "However, the 'building' of the rural electric cooperative will probably never be completely finished, because there will, through the natural progression of events, always be some new members who will want to have electricity brought to their rural residences and business places. Manufacturers through the years will need electricity to move their machinery and equipment and to light and heat their buildings." Those words from 1949 are still true today.

Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative (MWEC) has grown and seen many changes from the early REA days. On Jan. 1, 1991, Williams Electric Cooperative and Mountrail Electric Cooperative became the first successful merger of an electric cooperative in North Dakota. With the successful merger came a new manager, Dale Haugen, who today continues the cooperative's mission of providing MWEC's member with the commitment of meeting the highest standard of satisfaction by providing safe, reliable power.

When the cooperative merged, there were a total of 4,310 members

and 3,194 miles of line, as well as 36 employees between the three locations of Williston, Stanley and New Town. The board of directors was first comprised of the united 15 board members. Three directors were then retired each year until the goal of nine board members was reached. Board members are split into three directors per district (East, Central and West).

Today, MWEC continues to

serve its members as it did with its inception. There are now 8,000-plus members, more than 4,700 miles of line, more than 400 megawatts of power provided daily and 115 employees.

Though the cooperative began with rural farmers, MWEC has seen its membership change in recent years due to the oil industry. However, the cooperative continues to value each and every member. To continue its member relations, MWEC stands by seven cooperative principles:

1. Voluntary and open membership
2. Democratic member control
3. Members' economic participation
4. Autonomy and independence
5. Education, training and information
6. Cooperation among cooperatives
7. Concern for community

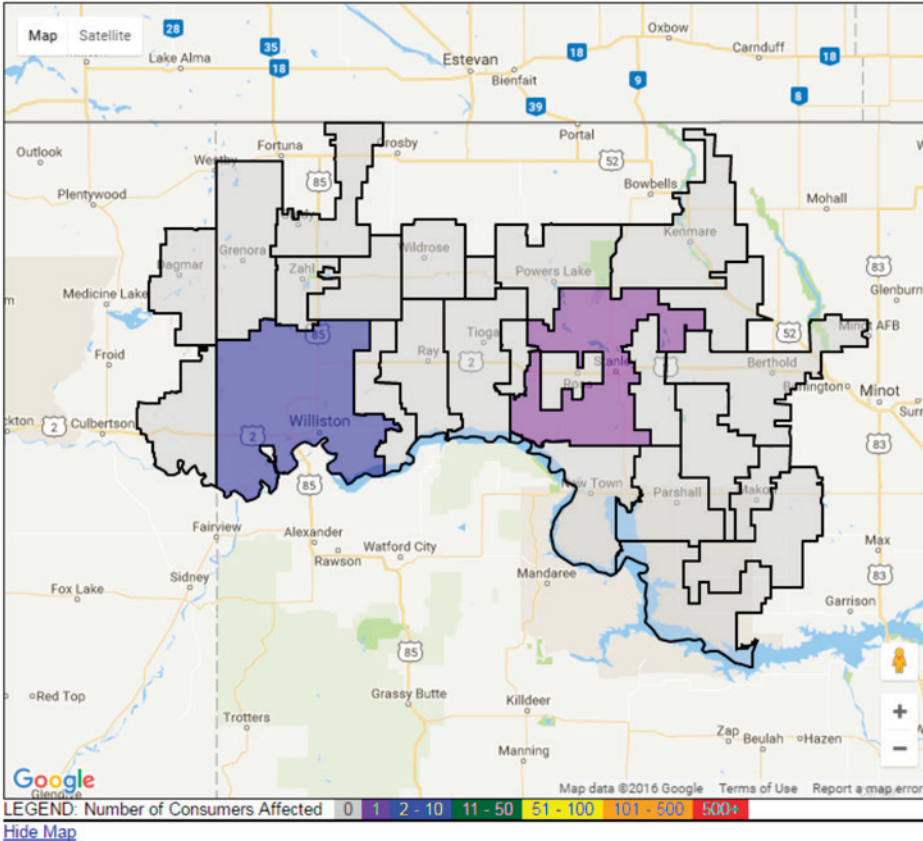
In the United States, there are 833 electric distribution cooperatives who serve an estimated 42 million people across 88 percent of U.S. counties. MWEC is happy to be one of those cooperatives and continues to appreciate its members. ■







## Current Outages at Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative



Zip Code

County

Zip Code	# Out	# Served	% Out
58801	2	6583	0.03%
58784	1	1856	0.05%
Total	3	18141	0.02%

Number of Members  
without power

Total number of members  
served in outage area

## What happens during an MWEC outage?

What can you do when you have a power outage? There are ways you can help Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative when you are experiencing a power outage. We ask that you contact us to let us know of your current outage. This allows us to get you into our system and helps us find the cause of the outage. Sometimes your neighbor may have power and you do not because your location is powered by a different line. Never rely on someone else reporting an outage for you.

Our outage map link on our website is a great tool to find out which areas are currently experiencing outages. It may look a little confusing as your area may be highlighted as a current outage but you still have power. Our maps are separated into sections, but the entire section may not be without power. We do not pinpoint an outages exact

location as that would allow for other members and non-members to know whose home, business or property is without power. We value our members and want to keep their properties secure. So when looking at the outage map, there is a legend to the right of the map that states how many members in an area are without power.

To report an outage, contact our office at 1-800-279-2667 and we ask that you have either your meter number or account number available. To check outage statuses, you can visit our website [www.mwec.com](http://www.mwec.com) and click on the "Outage Map" link. ■

# Cybersecurity is everyone's responsibility

**T**echnology breaches – think customer credit card data being stolen from Target, or consumer data being stolen from Experian – have become more commonplace, ushering in a new reality of increased security measures and constant monitoring of organizational and personal data to ensure our identities, credit card numbers or bank accounts have not been compromised.

This new reality has made many realize that keeping systems secure is not solely the responsibility of information technology employees. Rather, it is incumbent on every individual to do their part to keep critical personal and our organization's data safe from potential breaches.

It can seem a little overwhelming at times, and the idea that the next threat is always lurking around the corner can be stressful. But there are things you can do to protect your personal data, along with Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative's (MWEC) data.

## Keep your defenses up!

- Make sure all your computer software – including your web browser – is updated with the latest software. Keeping software up-to-date ensures security patches being deployed by our security team can succeed in blocking security threats.
- Create a strong password and keep it private. It could take up to two centuries to crack a password consisting of 12 characters or more!
- Treat all Wi-Fi networks as a potential security risk. Encrypt sensitive data when using a public Wi-Fi network. And never check financial or other

sensitive accounts when using public Wi-Fi.

## Don't fall for a phish!

- Be on the lookout for emails, phone calls and other messages that try to get to secure data. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. If something seems off, trust your instinct and convey your concerns to a manager or member of the security team.
- Don't click on links or attached files in emails or text messages from senders you don't know. Even if you do know the sender, hover over the link before you click as they may have been hacked or someone could be spoofing them! There are many

ways to spot a phish, and you can visit [www.staysafeonline.org](http://www.staysafeonline.org) to see them all.

## Co-ops are working together

Electric co-ops – with the U.S. Department of Energy and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) – are working together, through the RC3 Program, to better protect us from security threats. From the smallest co-op with limited access to technology staff to the largest co-op with greater resources, NRECA and America's electric cooperatives are creating a co-op network that fosters a culture of cybersecurity.

Whether keeping your data safe at home, at the co-op or on the go, remember: You are the first line of defense against cybersecurity threats! ■

### OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

YOU are our organization's first line of defense!

#### Red Flags to Identify Potential Phish Attacks

- Email is unexpected
- Sense of urgency conveyed
- Offer that seems too good to be true
- Typos and misspellings



### OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

YOU are our organization's first line of defense!

#### Lockdown Your Log-in

- Create long, unique passwords and change them regularly.
- When possible, use 2-factor authentication as a second layer of defense.





**JUNE 15-21, 2019**

**WRITE A WINNING ESSAY AND**

# **WIN A TRIP OF A LIFETIME!**

**AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.**

- 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 Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative.
- If you have a question, contact Jessica George, Mountrail-Williams Electric, at the address listed below, or call 701-577-3765 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is Jan. 31, 2019. Emailed entries should be directed to [jessicam@mwecc.com](mailto:jessicam@mwecc.com), and hard-copy entries mailed to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative, 218 58th St. W., P.O. Box 1346, Williston, ND 58802-1346.

## **TOP 3 REASONS**

**TO ENTER THE ESSAY-WRITING CONTEST**

1. All-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., compliments of Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative.
2. A whole week to visit unforgettable historic monuments, museums and the U.S. Capitol.
3. A learning experience you'll never forget.

## **ESSAY QUESTION:**

*Electric cooperatives are member-owned and controlled. As a future member-owner of your cooperative, describe ways that smart technologies and social media might be used to communicate with young adults. How might they be used to increase awareness and interest in the many career opportunities with electric cooperatives?*

**CHECK OUT THE ESSAY-CONTEST GUIDELINES AT  
[www.ndyouthtour.com](http://www.ndyouthtour.com)**

**HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES & JUNIORS**

North Dakota Electric Cooperative

# **YOUTH TOUR**

# HALLOWEEN SAFETY TIPS



It's time to decorate your yard and home as ghosts and goblins plan their invasion of the neighborhood looking for treats.



As you light Halloween night with elaborate decorations, Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative recommends some important safety tips:



## COSTUMES THAT GIVE A SCARE...

Halloween is thrilling for kids and they are often distracted and excited while participating in the festivities.

However, some decorations, such as candles, can be potentially dangerous. Be sure to choose decorations, costumes, and accessories that are made with flame-resistant, flame-retardant or non-combustible materials.

## A HAUNTED HOUSE

Before you decorate, inspect each electrical item and discard any with damaged wires. If you're using electrical products outside, make sure they are marked "for outdoor use." Keep electric cords out of high-traffic areas, where they can be a tripping hazard to trick-or-treaters. And be sure to plug all outdoor decorations into circuits protected by Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) to prevent electric shock.







**SAFE,  
RELIABLE,  
AFFORDABLE  
ENERGY.**

**THEN. NOW.  
ALWAYS.**

**We are proud to  
power your life.**

**OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH**

# Celebrate Co-op Month!

By providing the electricity that powers your home, farm or business, cooperatives play a role in your daily life. As we observe Co-op Month in October, electric cooperative members should be proud of the success of the cooperative business model and the spirit of cooperation these organizations promote. Cooperatives are a true example of grassroots involvement, because cooperatives are owned and controlled by those they serve.

Look across North Dakota's landscape and you'll notice cooperatives improve our quality of life everywhere. Electric cooperatives bring light to our lives, cool our food and heat our homes.

So, when you turn on a light, or power up your computer, remember your electric cooperative is standing behind you each and every day.

## **Co-ops are community-led**

October is National Co-op Month, which is the perfect time to highlight the many ways electric cooperatives are unique.

Cooperatives are locally governed, looking out for the long-term needs of their consumer-members.

## **Co-ops are a catalyst for good**

Electric co-ops are a catalyst for good in their communities. Co-ops engage their consumer-members to do things that might otherwise be impossible or difficult, like more than 75 years ago when electric co-ops brought power to areas where other utilities did not find it economically feasible.

Cooperatives exist to meet a need that was previously unmet in the community, and they are ever striving to anticipate and plan for the future needs of their consumer-members.

Electric cooperatives often partner with local groups to bring economic opportunity to their local community. It is this facilitation role that is often the most valuable strength of the co-op.

The co-op business model is unique. It is pragmatic, mission-oriented and puts people first. Co-ops strive to be a trusted voice in their communities. Co-ops have earned that trust because, while not perfect, they always have their members' best interest at heart and are determined to enrich the lives of those living and working in the communities they serve – now and in the future. ■



**Touchstone Energy®**  
Cooperatives of North Dakota

## Aug. 29, 2018

**Directors present:** Lahtinen, Lynne, Johnson, Hartsoch, Grant, Sorenson, Jorgenson, Ludwig and Lalim.

**Directors absent:** None.

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

The meeting was held at the new Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative (MWEC) office building and called to order at 8:30 a.m. An executive session was added to the agenda and approved as amended. Minutes of the reorganizational meeting of June 28 were approved as presented. Minutes of the July 24 board meeting were approved as corrected.

### ATTORNEY'S REPORT:

Attorney Foust reported on a case concerning cooperative setoff of pre-petition patronage dividends in bankruptcy matters.

In-house counsel Johnson Ellis updated the board on a final settlement and easement with a landowner. She also commented on the Basin Electric Power Cooperative condemnation trial.

**COOKS ON MAIN OPEN HOUSE MENU:** Angela Skogen, owner of Cooks on Main, spoke with the board about the menu options, quantity and price. The board approved a motion to accept the Cooks on Main bid as presented.

**PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** The cooperative was recognized as one of the cooperatives to implement the "Commitment to Zero Contacts."

**OPERATING AND FINANCIAL REPORT:** Jay Lux presented the operating report for the year to date and for the month of July. The total margins and capital credits for the year to date was \$17,130,458. OTIER is 2.71; MDSC is 2.44; cooperative equity is 24.9 percent; and SPP equity is 35.4 percent.

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

Closeout 709.....	\$18,057.29
Closeout 710.....	<\$14,420.55>
Closeout 711.....	\$184,646.78
TOTAL.....	\$188,282.52

**BAD DEBTS:** The board approved the transfer of \$1,871.42 from accounts receivable to bad debts. Efforts will continue to collect these sums including the retention of capital credits.

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

the month of August:

Shirley A. Syverson estate .....	
Jean Lund estate .....	
Bernice Johnson estate .....	
Gerald Widmayer estate.....	

### COOPERATIVE FINANCE CORPORATION (CFC) LOAN SIGNING:

A resolution was approved regarding CFC loans as well as authorized individuals to sign on behalf of the cooperative.

The board approved a motion to authorize all board representatives listed on the loan documentation to sign the loan documents.

### MANAGER'S REPORT:

**SAFETY** – A certificate of commitment to zero contacts was shown.

Manager Haugen reported one incident that resulted in a third-party injury. All appropriate authorities were contacted, and interviews have been conducted.

The July in-house safety meeting minutes were provided, and it was reported the cooperative has hired a new safety coordinator.

**EMPLOYEE UPDATE** – Two dispatchers, two safety employees and a custodial supervisor have been hired.

**SOUTHWEST POWER POOL (SPP)** – Manager Haugen commented on the amount of wind generation coming on in the SPP footprint.

**GRIDLIANCE** – Manager Haugen attended a meeting with GridLiance and the PowerPoint presentation from the meeting was made available. The board discussed the presentation and offer to buy the cooperative's SPP assets.

**MWEC OPEN HOUSE** – The role of the board members at the open house was discussed.

**CONTINENTAL RESOURCES** – The cooperative has reached a preliminary proposed agreement for the Long Creek project.

**EXXON MOBILE** – The cooperative participated in a meeting with Exxon Mobile to discuss the potential to generate natural gas by wire or over wire to mitigate concerns about flare limitations, natural gas waste and natural gas pipeline space.

**LETTER TO THE EDITOR** – A member's letter to the editor published in the *Mountrail County Promoter* about the "No Firearms" sign on the cooperative's buildings was made available.

A "thank you" from the Friends of Lewis and Clark State Park Organization for the cooperative's bike donation for their Christmas in July event was provided.

Jerry Rehak gave an update on the technology in the new office building.

### MEETING REPORTS:

**NORTH DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES (NDAREC)** – Director Grant gave an update on the Governance Task Force.

**UPPER MISSOURI POWER COOPERATIVE** – Director Jorgenson gave an update on the last board meeting he attended.

**CFC** – No vote was cast for the open at-large director position.

**MID-WEST ELECTRIC CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION** – Director Lynne and Director Sorenson will attend the 61st annual meeting. Director Lynne was named delegate and Director Sorenson alternate for the meeting.

**STUDENT THANK YOU:** Chase Glueckert, a student at Williston High School, came to personally thank the board for sponsoring him for the 2018 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Washington, D.C., Youth Tour.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** The board broke for executive session to discuss employee matters.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. ■

## 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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New Town .....	(701) 627-3550
WATS.....	(800) 279-2667

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