

# ROUGH RIDER NEWS

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

FEBRUARY 2017

## 'Soul' survivor



### What's inside:

- **Monk on the prairie puts soul into art**
- **Co-op earns RESAP certification**
- **Annual Meeting notification**
- **Report from the board of directors and more**

*It's a long, cold winter for all of God's creatures seeking food and shelter among the piles of snow. While Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative member and photographer J.C. Balcom has many pheasants taking shelter in the brush on his property, he captured this shot of a sole rooster trying to warm itself in the morning sun. Balcom notes it takes soul to persevere through a North Dakota winter.*

PHOTO BY J.C. BALCOM



PHOTOS BY LUANN DART

Brother **Llewellyn Kouba**, a Benedictine monk at the Assumption Abbey, sits at the pottery wheel in the abbey's studio.



PHOTO COURTESY OF LLEWELLYN KOUBA

"August Morning Light" is one of Brother Llewellyn Kouba's recent oil paintings.

# Monk on the prairie puts soul into art

BY LUANN DART

**P**ast the industrial metal of the laundry room, at the top of the drab stairway, the door opens to a brightly lit clamor of color. It's art pandemonium. Jars of paintbrush bouquets punctuate the room. Pottery glazed in the prairie hues of North Dakota accents every nook.

Yet the space is calming, too. An orange-and-yellow butterfly orchid floats near an expansive window. By another window, two oil paintings express the quiet, spiritual soul of their creator.

This is the pottery and art studio at the Assumption Abbey in Richardton, where Brother Llewellyn Kouba spends each day in artistic solitude, creating pottery and paintings.

Kouba is a Benedictine monk serving God with approximately 30 others who lead a monastic lifestyle at the abbey. They gather for prayer four times a day, and work at assigned tasks or jobs. Kouba is the Assumption Abbey's potter and painter.

Kouba was raised on a farm near Regent, as one of seven children, and developed an early interest in art.

"I first dabbled with paint cans, pouring colors on a board in the basement, and then my parents got me a paint-by-number set for Christmas," he says.

When he finished the painting, his grandmother hung the art in her dining room, where it remained until her death.

"That was my start," he says. After high school graduation, he



*The 4- by 8-foot "Passing the Gift of Creativity" is an icon which Brother Llewellyn Kouba created using ancient art forms.*

was accepted into the Institute of Art in Minneapolis, Minn. But Kouba said he "panicked" when faced with urban life.

"I came back and I never looked back," he says. "I don't know if I ever regretted not having the schooling."

But he found an outlet for his art at the Assumption Abbey when he visited the studio where the pottery wheel spun.

"It kind of came full circle in a way. I'm still with the arts, but I'm not famous," he says with a laugh.

He found a permanent home at the monastery in 1975.

"I just felt at home, with the camaraderie with the brothers. At that time, I thought I wanted to enter priesthood, but that clarified itself later that it was never the priesthood, but just the fellowship of living with like-minded people in work and prayer," he says.

After arriving at the monastery, Kouba created watercolor paintings, often working into the early morning hours. Initially assigned to maintenance and groundskeeping at

the abbey, he pursued his passion for art during his free time.

Brother Basil Atwell had opened the pottery studio above the laundry facilities as the abbey's first potter, and Kouba served as an apprentice. But after only a few years in the studio, Atwell felt called to active ministry, according to the abbey's website.

"I was learning how to throw pots on the wheel, struggling with

centering the clay," Kouba says. "I've got three pots in my room that are so crooked I couldn't make them again if I tried."

After Atwell's departure, the studio was vacant until the Assumption Abbey sent Kouba to apprentice under a potter in Minnesota. He returned in 1996 and re-opened the studio.

Today, Kouba melds clay into plates adorned with decorative three-dimensional leaves, or massive four-foot urns, or tiny oil lamps. Or he puts brush to canvas to create paintings in muted colors.

He uses red terra cotta clay, stoneware or porcelain as his pottery mediums, also dabbling with native clay, which he describes as more labor-intensive because of the tiny rocks that must be hand-screened from the clay.

Porcelain clay is pure white clay imported from England, devoid of grog or sand.

"It's a more difficult medium," Kouba says. "It's a learning curve. It's very buttery."

Stoneware, on the other hand, nearly supports itself on the pottery wheel because it contains more grog.



*Brother Llewellyn Kouba has not yet named this work in progress, an oil painting in the studio.*



PHOTOS BY LUANN DART

*Hanging ferns and a colorful fish tank are just part of the busy atmosphere surrounding Llewellyn Kouba.*

Kouba's studio contains two potter wheels and one of the largest gas-fired kilns in the region. The ceramic ware is placed inside the 45-cubic-foot kiln to mature the glaze at about 2,300 degrees, which takes about 20 hours.

Kouba has developed native glazes, including a corn ash that's made from burned cornstalks, which produces an ash that is high in silica.

A glaze mixture might initially be a thick creamy brown or gray, but fires as a brilliant blue or green. Stored in slots in a cupboard, Kouba has tile samples with various glazes on each type of clay.

"You have to know what it's going to do in the fire," he says.

"I like the creativity of taking something from the earth that's so ancient and the three elements, water, fire and earth, and making something from nothing and either having it functional or artistic," he says.

On some plates, he includes 3-D

clay calla lily or an iris, or the imprint of a leaf in 3-D. A 3-foot-tall urn may take a week to create on the potter's wheel, as layers of coils must become leather-hard before the next layer is added.

Kouba also hand-builds ceramic birdhouses, which are hung in the abbey gardens for wrens to nest inside.

While Kouba is a master potter, he also takes brush in hand to create watercolor, oil or acrylic paintings.

"My work would often be very detailed and picky, so what I liked about this piece is I felt it was finally loose and painterly," he says about a recent oil painting, titled "August Morning Light."

His masterpiece hangs in the Assumption Abbey's dining hall, an iconography that Kouba started in 2008 and completed two years later, when the icon was blessed. The icon depicts the monastic setting at the abbey. While the icon is created by layering gesso, gold gilding and paint, the artistic endeavor is referred to as "writing" an icon.

Creation of the 4- by 8-foot "Passing the Gift of Creativity" followed an ancient art form. Using an oak base, 20-30 coats of gesso were first built onto the wood. The gesso is a mixture of rabbit skin glue and whiting, which is a clay product. Next, the gold gilding was placed on the gesso. Paints were created by grinding raw pigments for the egg tempera medium, which Kouba applied often using a jeweler's loop to see the details. A description of the symbolism of the painting can be found on the Assumption Abbey's website at [www.assumptionabbey.com/pottery](http://www.assumptionabbey.com/pottery).

Pottery and paintings have not been Kouba's only creations in the studio. He has also created hand-

dyed wool rugs, hooked by hand. But each rug could take two years to complete, so he has stepped away from that art.

As music soars to the ceiling in his studio, Kouba explains his service to God through his art.

"For me, I feel that's where I'm making my contribution," he says. ■



*A three-dimensional clay leaf created from the imprint of a real leaf adorns a plate.*



PHOTO COURTESY OF LLEWELLYN KOUBA

*A close-up of the New York twin towers depicted in a stoneware medallion piece that Llewellyn Kouba made to commemorate 9-11. The piece is now in the collection of the International Peace Garden.*



PHOTO BY NDAREC/JOHN KARY

**Jason Bentz**, Roughrider Electric's manager of operations, accepted the RESAP certificate from NDAREC Safety Instructor **James Neether**.

## Roughrider Electric earns RESAP certification

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

The North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) hosted the 53rd annual REC Apprenticeship Training and Safety (AT&S) Conference Jan. 11-13 at the Ramkota Hotel in Bismarck. The conference is sponsored by the NDAREC AT&S program, with cooperation from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship.

During the banquet on Jan. 12, Roughrider Electric Cooperative was awarded a RESAP certificate of safety achievement.

To achieve and maintain high safety standards for the protection of employees and the community, Roughrider Electric applied for and achieved safety accreditation through the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program. Founded by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), RESAP strives to promote the highest standards of safety among electric cooperatives. The premise for the program is based on two fundamental guiding principles that are essential to achieving safety excellence:

1. Safety must be embraced as a core value where the actions and decisions of the cooperative reflect a fundamental and unwavering commitment to safety at all levels. This is achieved through a strong safety leadership culture. Cooperative leaders accept responsibility for a culture that ultimately drives safety performance.
2. Cooperative leaders and employees take ownership of the systems and processes that create a safe working environment. Safety systems are a shared responsibility and should focus on enhancing safe behaviors and reducing unsafe acts and risks to injury.

Additional components to achieving recognition including:

- A cooperative safety improvement plan;
- The completion of 14 annual self-assessments; and
- Establishing safety goals and benchmarking performance.

Roughrider Electric's RESAP audit was conducted June 2 by industry peers including Christina Roemmich, Jeff Tweten and Jerry Nielsen from the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC), and Chris Backhaus, a line technician with Slope Electric Cooperative.

Bryce Jurgenson, warehouseman, and Russ Walters, journeyman lineman for Roughrider Electric, gave the auditors a tour of cooperative headquarters in Dickinson and Hazen, the service centers and warehouses, and took them to the field to watch some line crews working.

Roemmich, the safety services director for NDAREC, says Roughrider Electric crews are team-oriented and routinely engage in workplace safety.

"They utilize their safety equipment and personal protective equipment such as high-voltage testers and face shields," she says.

Roughrider Electric Cooperative thanks its employees for taking a team approach to safety and its continuous improvement. ■

# Mark your calendars for the 2017 Annual Meeting

Roughrider Electric Cooperative will hold its annual meeting **Wednesday, June 7**, in Dickinson. Look for more information in upcoming issues of *North Dakota Living*.

## Vote by mail 2017 Annual Meeting

In 2009, Roughrider Electric Cooperative's board of directors decided to offer the members the option of voting by mail. Ballots and instructions will be mailed prior to the annual meeting. Under the bylaws, no nominations are accepted from the floor at the annual meeting. A qualified member of Roughrider Electric Cooperative may become a candidate for election by being nominated by the Nominating Committee or by a petition submitted not less than 60 days before the meeting.

**Mail-in ballots will only be sent to members upon request. To request a ballot, please contact Steve Hildebrand at 701-748-2293 or 800-748-5533 prior to May 12. You may also contact Steve at: [shildebrand@roughriderelectric.com](mailto:shildebrand@roughriderelectric.com)**

**TO: All Members**  
**FROM: Donald A. Franklund and Christopher L. Baumgartner, Alliance Co-General Managers**  
**SUBJECT: Nomination Process**

To comply with Rural Utilities Service requirements, we must provide each member with a summary of the bylaws on the nomination process prior to the nomination of candidates for board positions. The following is the bylaw section on nominations:

#### SECTION 4. Nominations.

- (a) A Nominating Committee shall be selected by the Board of Directors in time for its first meeting to be held before the annual meeting of members in 2009 and for each annual meeting of members thereafter. The Nominating Committee shall consist of an equal number of members from each of the Cooperative's Districts and a minimum of two members from each district shall be selected. No member of the Board of Directors may serve on the Nominating Committee. The Board of Directors shall establish rules for the conduct of and arrange for the meeting of the Nominating Committee. The Secretary shall notify the members of the Nominating Committee in the manner provided by Article II, Section 4 delivered at least fifteen days before the date set for the Committee meeting. From and after 2009, the Nominating Committee shall meet at least sixty days before the annual meeting of members to nominate at least one qualified candidate for each directorship for which there is a vacancy to be filled by a vote of the members. Upon conclusion of the meeting, the Nominating Committee shall cause a list of nominees for Directors to be posted at the principal office of the Cooperative.
- (b) By petition, any fifteen or more members of the same district acting together may make other nominations for each directorship in that district for which there is a vacancy to be filled by a vote of the members, provided the petition is filed with the Secretary not less than sixty days prior to the annual meeting of members. The Secretary shall cause to be posted such nominations at the same place where the list of nominations made by the committee is posted.
- (c) The Secretary shall cause to be mailed, with the notice of the annual meeting of members, or separately but at least fifteen days before the date of the meeting, a statement of the number of Directors to be elected and the names and addresses of the candidates, specifying separately the nominations made by the Nominating Committee and also the nominations made by petition, if any.
- (d) Unless voting by mail for directorships has been approved, the President, acting as Chairman of the meeting, shall invite additional nominations from the floor and nominations shall not be closed until a reasonable time has passed during which no additional nominations have been made. No member may nominate more than one candidate at any single annual meeting of members.

The nominating committee appointed by the board consists of Gordon Ficek, Dickinson; Ivo Schoch, New England; Alan Kadrmaz, Dickinson; Bruce Voegelé, Beulah; David V. Sadowsky, Dickinson; Robert Fitterer, Golden Valley; John Smith, Beulah; Cole Price, Hazen; Clay Price, Washburn.

One committee meeting was held Jan. 27 in Hazen and another is scheduled for Feb. 24 in Dickinson.

If you have questions concerning nominations, feel free to contact anyone on the Nominating Committee or please call our office for information.

Report from

# THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS DEC. 16, 2016

**When, where and who:** The Board of Directors met in Hazen on Dec. 16.

**Agenda:** The Board reviewed, added to and approved the meeting agenda.

**Minutes of the previous meeting:** The Board reviewed and approved the minutes of the Nov. 28, 2016, meeting.

**Co-General Managers' report:** Chris Baumgartner and Don Franklund presented the managers' report. Mr. Baumgartner reported on the effects the recent snowstorm and cold weather have had on the system, and the Cooperative's employees. Employee safety, particularly linemen, in this cold weather has been emphasized.

Mr. Franklund reported on the Midwest meeting held last week. He noted it was very interesting from the standpoint of water projections for the coming year. He also reported on technological challenges and cybersecurity issues that will be significant issues for cooperatives to address in the coming years.

**2017 Budget:** Mr. Kupper led a discussion of the 2017 Budget proposal.

**Operations and Construction report:** Mr. Bentz referred the Board to his written report. He provided the Board with an update on the service-area agreements with Montana-Dakota Utilities. Roughrider has signed them and delivered them to MDU for signing. We have not yet received a fully executed version back.

**Upcoming meetings:** The next Board meeting was set for 9 a.m. MT on Jan. 27, 2017, at Roughrider's office in Dickinson, North Dakota.

**Other business:** There being no other business, upon motion made, seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting adjourned. ■

## Roughrider Electric Cooperative offers members CONSERVATION AND ENERGY EFFICIENCIES INCENTIVES

**R**oughrider Electric Cooperative is continuing the conservation and energy-efficiency program through 2016. The incentives help you, the member, become more energy efficient.

The program for 2017 will include ground-source heat pumps and air-source heat pumps.

Members must buy and install qualifying systems between Jan. 1, 2017 and Dec. 31, 2017. The program for the heat pumps is for new installation or for replacement of a conventional heating system.

Roughrider Electric Cooperative personnel will check the

installation, and get the appropriate documentation and receipts. Once completed and approved, Roughrider Electric Cooperative will send a check directly to the member to help cover the purchase cost.

A maximum dollar amount has been set aside for the incentive program. The program will close when we meet this amount. Roughrider Electric reserves the right to cancel the program without further notice. One rebate allowed per member.

For more information, please contact Brad Quenette, director of member services, at 800-748-5533 or email [bquenette@roughriderelectric.com](mailto:bquenette@roughriderelectric.com).

**Ground-Source Heat Pumps:**  
Required minimum efficiency

**\$150 per ton with a maximum rebate of \$600**  
CLOSED LOOP: EER >= 14.1 COP >= 3.3  
OPEN LOOP: EER >= 16.2 COP >= 3.6

**Air-Source Heat Pumps:**  
Required minimum efficiency

**\$100 per ton with a maximum rebate of \$400**  
HSPF >= 8.2 EER >= 12 SEER >= 14.5

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ROUGH RIDER ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ADDED THIS FEATURE TO BE COMPLIANT WITH THE PAYMENT CARD INDUSTRY (PCI) DATA SECURITY STANDARD. THESE WORLDWIDE REQUIREMENTS ARE DESIGNED TO HELP COMPANIES THAT PROCESS SUCH PAYMENTS PREVENT CREDIT CARD FRAUD THROUGH INCREASED DATA CONTROLS. MOVING TO THIS SYSTEM ENSURES OUR CONTINUED ABILITY TO ACCEPT DEBIT AND CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS.

## STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

Roughrider Electric Cooperative, Inc., is a recipient of federal assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: 202-690-7442; or

(3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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[www.roughriderelectric.com](http://www.roughriderelectric.com)

### HAZEN OFFICE

701-748-2293 or 800-748-5533  
800 Highway Dr., Hazen, ND 58545  
7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. CST Monday-Friday

Payments may be deposited in the deposit box by Roughrider Electric's main office entrance or in the drop boxes located at Krause's Super Valu in Hazen or Bronson's Super Valu in Beulah.

### DICKINSON OFFICE

701-483-5111 or 800-627-8470  
P.O. Box 1038, 2156 4th Ave. E.  
Dickinson, ND 58602

8 a.m. – 5 p.m. MST Monday-Friday

Payments may be deposited in the deposit box west of Roughrider Electric's main office entrance or in the drop boxes located at Dickinson City Hall, or the north and south locations of Family Fare supermarkets.

### OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Roger Kudrna, President; Dickinson .....483-8377  
Darell Herman, Vice President; Beulah .....873-4371  
Troy Sailer, Secretary; Golden Valley .....948-2427  
Bruce Darcy, Treasurer; Golden Valley .....983-4222  
William Retterath; Center .....794-8729  
Arnold Kainz; Dickinson .....483-8207  
Dan Price; Hensler .....794-3779  
Greg Steckler; Dunn Center .....548-8122  
Callen Schoch; New England .....579-4395

### MANAGEMENT

Don Franklund .....Co-General Manager/CEO  
Chris Baumgartner .....Co-General Manager/CEO



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