

# ROUGH RIDER NEWS

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

*Ervin Jose, a 102-year-old WWII veteran, received a Quilt of Valor in June. He passed away in August, a happy man.*



**‘Thank you for your sacrifice and service’**

*During the awards ceremony, a Quilt of Valor is wrapped around the veteran or service member’s shoulders by a member of the local Missouri River Quilts of Valor chapter, and, if the veteran chooses, a close family member or friend. While the veteran or service member had boots on the ground, his or her family members also dealt with associated challenges and sacrifices.*

## Area veterans receive Quilts of Valor, thanks in part to Operation Round Up grant

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

Sharing memories of their military service can be difficult for veterans and service members, who had to see and do some unimaginable things as they defended our freedoms at war.

Even time can’t heal the wounds some of these folks suffer, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, and other physical and physiological limitations they deal with as a result of their time on active duty.

A quilt may not ease their pain or fill a void, but it does say, “Thank you for your sacrifice, service and valor.” You are remembered and appreciated.

This summer, several veterans in the Roughrider Electric Cooperative service area received a Quilt of Valor to commemorate their service and sacrifice. The homemade quilt is constructed with three layers, crafted with patriotic colors, and gently stitched with love bestowed by volunteers.

*In this month’s local pages, read C2-C4 to learn more about the program, and meet Roughrider Electric Cooperative member Ken Lefor, who served in Vietnam and was awarded a Quilt of Valor. ■*

### What’s inside:

- See you at **YOUR annual meeting**
- Celebrate **National Cooperative Month**
- Students, apply for the **2021 Youth Tour**
- Meeting minutes ... **and more**

*'Thank you for your sacrifice and service' — continued from C1*



Veteran **Randy Fitterer** and Group Leader **Arlene Meissel**

*Meissel and three members of the Missouri River Quilts of Valor chapter stopped at quilt shops to promote the group and make purchases. Each shop gave a discount on fabric, and at their visits, ladies in Hettinger offered to "long-arm" and construct quilts for the group. A church group from Richardton donated quilting fabric. When possible, the group buys supplies locally and from the communities it serves. The more people and organizations who learn about Quilts of Valor chapters, the more donations received, the more quilters and long-armers found ... the more eligible veterans and service members nominated, the more Quilt of Valor awarded! Community partnerships make this possible!*

**F**ounded in 2003 by "Blue Star" mom Catherine Roberts, the national non-profit group Quilts of Valor Foundation came about as a dream for Roberts, who

was thinking about her son, Nat, who served in Iraq. Roberts once said, "I saw a young man sitting on the side of his bed in the middle of the night, hunched over. The permeating feeling was one of utter despair. I could see his war demons clustered around, dragging him down into an emotional gutter. Then, as if viewing a movie, I saw him in the next scene wrapped in a quilt. His whole demeanor changed from one of despair to one of hope and well-being. The quilt had made this dramatic change. The message of my dream was quilts equal healing."

An area Quilts of Valor chapter was started in February 2020. The Missouri River Quilts of Valor serves western and central North Dakota. Its mission is to cover service members and veterans "touched by war" with comforting and healing Quilts of Valor.

This spring, Group Leader Arlene Meissel wrote a letter to the Roughrider Electric Operation Round Up board of directors, asking for a donation of at least \$900: The amount needed to construct three quilts.

Operation Round Up is a program in which electric cooperative members voluntarily round up their monthly utility bills to the nearest dollar and donate their change to



**Arlene Meissel**, left, and **Lou Josephson**

*All quilts, from start to finish, are made by volunteers; some of whom are members of the Missouri River Quilts of Valor chapter. Depending on the skill of the quilter, time available, and complexity of the pattern, a quilt can take anywhere from two weeks to four months to finish. The volunteer uses supplies provided by the group, which seeks donations to help cover the costs. Roughrider Electric Cooperative gave an Operation Round Up donation to Missouri River Quilts of Valor this summer to reduce the group's expenses, and support area veterans and service members.*

local individuals, groups or charities with a specific need. The money pools and accumulates, and an elected board of co-op members reviews the grant applications that have been submitted and determines

## Quilts of Valor donations and nominations needed!

**Q**uilt construction, awards travel and office duties are all done by volunteers who do not get paid for their generous services. All supplies are obtained from donations that stay local. Funds obtained for the Missouri River Quilts of Valor chapter stay in the group account.

Donations are needed to keep providing this valuable service.

Nominations are also needed ... to keep honoring those who have been touched by war, and awarding veterans and service men and women with a Quilt of Valor.

To nominate, go to [www.qovf.org](http://www.qovf.org). Click "Nominations and Awards"

and "Nominate a Service Member or Living Veteran." Read the information, complete the online form or the printable form, and proceed as instructed.

To donate or ask questions, contact Arlene Meissel at 701-471-6147 or email at [missouririverqov@yahoo.com](mailto:missouririverqov@yahoo.com). ■

grant worthiness.

In her application, Meissel noted the group awards quilts based on nominations received and the local chapter's inventory. They give priority to the elderly and those with health issues. "Our priority when receiving funds is purchasing fabric to construct quilts. However, we are in continuous need of many other supplies," she wrote.

In July, the Charitable Trust met to review applications and award grants. Missouri River Quilts of Valor received an Operation Round Up grant for \$900 from Roughrider Electric. The money was used to purchase fabric, batting, cutting mats, rotary cutters, and quilting rulers.

Donations are also used to send thank you cards, print award certificates, and cover the costs of paper, ink, stamps, envelopes, copying and printing.

The Missouri River Quilts of Valor chapter meets the second Thursday of every month at 322 W. Main St. in Mandan, in the basement of



*Mary Dunn, quilter and member of Missouri River Quilts of Valor.*

Sewing Machines Plus. The group meets from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. with a short business meeting at 5:30 p.m. During this time, members of the working group cut and assemble quilt kits for those who are interested in constructing a quilt.

For information on the local and national Quilts of Valor

organizations, visit <https://missouririverqov.weebly.com/> or [www.qovf.org](http://www.qovf.org), or find "Missouri River Quilts of Valor" on Facebook. You may also contact Group Leader Arlene Meissel for information at 701-471-6147 or email [missouririverqov@yahoo.com](mailto:missouririverqov@yahoo.com). ■

## **'North Dakota has people who care'** **Roughrider member shares Vietnam memories; receives Quilt of Valor**

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

**K**en Lefor, a Roughrider Electric Cooperative member who lives south of South Heart, was awarded a Quilt of Valor in August.

Lefor, a native of rural Lefor, was drafted into the U.S. Army following his second year of college. After completing basic and advanced training at Fort Lewis in Washington, he was sent to Vietnam as a "replacement" ... to replace someone who had died in war.

Lefor was flown over on a Boeing

747 in a khaki uniform; the entire plane was filled with military members. The plane landed under fire. The pilot came on the radio and told the people that all the exits would be open, and to get out now; he was leaving. Lefor jumped on an airbag and ran for cover.

Hiding behind a 55-gallon drum because the airport was under attack, Lefor was approached by a captain in a starched uniform, who told him to come with him. "I'll show you a better

place to hide," the captain said. He took him to a bunker, where he was told to hide until he was called. Lefor remembers thinking, "Who WAS that man who saved my bacon?" He would never see that captain again to thank him.

Everything was in shambles when Lefor left the airport. He was given his first assignment and weapon, an M16, and told to go to the roof of a hotel, where he would watch for enemy troops. His shift lasted eight hours,

*'North Dakota has people who care' — continued to C4*

*'North Dakota has people who care' — continued from C3*



*Vietnam Veteran and Roughrider Electric member **Ken Lefor**, supported by quilt-maker **Mary Dunn**, received a Quilt of Valor in August, at a ceremony at the Eagles in Dickinson. He shares that around 10 years ago, he and his wife, Carol's son told them he was joining the U.S Army. While his initial reaction was, "No!" He speaks with pride in saying his son is now a Major in the Army, and will make a career out of his military service. "I'm very, very proud of that young man."*

and when he was done, he slept in a nice bed. That lasted two weeks.

Lefor was sent to the field as an infantryman, who secretly patrolled between Vietnam and Cambodia. There was a major trail coming from the north into south Cambodia. His job was to waylay the enemy and their supplies.

Helicopters flew in C-rations to eat, and ammunition. Lefor was in the field for 90 days without a shower or change of clothes.

"Can you imagine being in the swamp or jungle for 90 days? New guys would come to the field and say, 'My God, you guys stink!' We didn't think so, because we all smelled the same."

They sent a young soldier to be

under Lefor's wing. He wasn't ready for the job. Lefor says it was like taking a kid from the city and leaving him in the country; he was totally lost.

One day the Sergeant told Lefor he needed a "point" man. Lefor agreed if he could trade weapons with someone, he would do it; all he carried was an M79 grenade launcher that held one round. It basically had the force of a sawed-off shotgun. "I carried rounds in two nap sacks across my shoulders; it was more than what I weighed," Lefor says.

He was tough, wiry and in shape, but it wouldn't save him from danger. When no one would trade him a weapon, he proceeded with the M79. The young soldier under his wing volunteered to back him. Lefor asked if he knew what he was getting into, and the young man indicated he did.

They were walking a berm between rice patties when Lefor spotted movement out of the corner of his eye. He was hit on his back about 8" below his neck, and pushed into the mud. He lost his helmet, his weapon, everything. He could feel bullets flying everywhere, hitting the berm where he was hiding. He managed to call his company and crawl back, injured, and with 104 leeches on his body.

Before he got back, he discovered the body of Roy, the young man who was backing him. He was dead. There was no helping him.

Ken got a helicopter ride to the VA hospital, where he spent four days recovering. He spent another 20 days in the rear of the base camp gaining strength, before he was sent back to the field.

A trooper told him, "You get to carry the flame thrower today." That weighed 60 to 70 pounds. With all his other gear, he carried it for only one-half mile before he passed out. He

awoke in the hospital.

A sergeant told him they couldn't send him to the field again; it was "no use." He asked Lefor if he could type, and he said yes. He was given the new job of company clerk. He worked for his company in that capacity until he could come home to the United States, where people were waiting at the airport in San Francisco ... not to welcome him home and thank him for his service ... but to throw rotten cabbage, fruit and vegetables at him.

After a break, he would finish his two years of service at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, where he worked as a mailman.

Lefor says he is here today because there is a God. He felt divine intervention twice: once when he arrived at the airport under fire and a captain guided him to the bunker; and a second time when he hid in the berm while bullets were flying.

"God helped me, and I appreciate it very much," he says.

For all the demons Lefor faced in Vietnam, and carried with him back home, he says he is still glad he served our country in Vietnam.

"I'm glad I did. I had a heck of a lot of good learning experiences," he says.

The Quilt of Valor he received a couple short months ago has helped him to say those words.

"When I came back from Vietnam, I was treated like garbage. I was called a baby killer and a woman killer and everything else," Lefor says. "That quilt makes a difference. I know that people care for what I did. I've learned a lot about the people of the United States, and especially the people of North Dakota. North Dakota has people who care."

Yes. Yes, we do.

Thank you, sir, for your service and sacrifice. ■



PHOTOS BY BRAD QUENETTE



## #PowerOn with National Cooperative Month!

September marked the 25th anniversary of the seven Cooperative Principles being adopted as part of the Statement on the Cooperative Identity. This statement reads: “A cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.” It also includes our values, as show in these icons. Members, this is YOUR cooperative, and we are here because of you ... and for you!

This month, we celebrate October is National Cooperative Month ... a time when cooperatives across the state and nation celebrate who we are and who we serve — our member-owners. This year’s theme is, “Power On.”

Roughrider Electric Cooperative is proud to power your tools and toys, work and volunteer in our local communities, and give back through scholarships, grants and more.

Together with our members, we are making a difference!



**JUNE 21 TO 26, 2021**

## 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 Roughrider Electric Cooperative.
- If you have any questions, please contact Brad Quenette, Roughrider Electric, at 800-748-5533 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is Jan. 13, 2021. You can email entries to Brad Quenette at [bquenette@roughriderelectric.com](mailto:bquenette@roughriderelectric.com) or mail a hard copy to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, Roughrider Electric Cooperative, 800 Highway Dr., Hazen, ND 58545-4737.

## ESSAY QUESTION:

*The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour includes the opportunity to tour many historic sites, monuments and museums of great significance to our country's government, rich history and culture. Name two of these within the Washington, D.C. area you would most like to see. Describe why these are important to you and why they should be important to others.*

## TOP 3 REASONS

### TO ENTER THE ESSAY-WRITING CONTEST

1. All-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., compliments of Roughrider 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



CHECK OUT THE ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES AT  
[www.roughriderelectric.com/youth-tour](http://www.roughriderelectric.com/youth-tour)

## Report from **THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS** **AUG. 28, 2020**

**When, where and who:** A Regular Meeting of the Board of Directors of Roughrider Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Roughrider) was held via conference call Aug. 28, 2020.

**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 July 31, 2020, meeting.

**Consent Agenda:** The Board reviewed, discussed and approved the Consent Agenda, including proposed membership applications, service connects and assignments, proposed cancellations of membership and requests for retirement of capital credit accounts.

**Co-General Managers' report:** Don Franklund and Travis Kupper presented the managers' report. Mr. Kupper provided an update regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and its effect on the cooperative. North Dakota seems to be entering a spike in cases across the state, and particularly in the Bismarck/Mandan and Dickinson communities. Roughrider's lobbies remain closed to the public, but appointments can be made if necessary. Mr. Kupper anticipates that with the schools going back into session there will be more positive tests, and Roughrider will more directly feel the effects, particularly with childcare.

**Operations Capital Budget:** Mr. Bentz presented the Board with the proposed Operations Capital Budget for 2021. He reported that most of the numbers found in the budget are from the most recent Work Plan approved by the Board.

**Annual Meeting update:** Ms. Grosz and Mr. Hibl provided the Board with an update on the planning of the annual meeting.

**Chief Financial Officer report:** Mr. Craigmile provided the Board with a summary of his written report. Operating revenue is under budget, as are kilowatt hours sold. The total margin is above budget, as is Roughrider's operating margin.

**Operations and Construction report:** Mr. Bentz referred the Board to his written report. He reported on storm repairs and oil field issues that have recently been addressed.

**Upcoming meeting:** The next Board meeting was set for 9 a.m. MT on Sept. 25, 2020, to be held via conference call.

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



PHOTO BY BRAD QUENETTE

## **Congratulations and best wishes, Jim Block!**

At the end of July, Roughrider Electric Cooperative said thank you and enjoy to Jim Block, who retired after 41 years of service to our membership.

He started as apprentice lineman and ended as general foreman, working out of Hazen.

Always the outdoorsman, Jim plans on doing more camping and fishing. Roughrider Manager of Operations Jason Bentz says Jim has been a great asset over the years, and his knowledge of the system will be missed.

Thank you for all you've done for our members, Jim. We hope your next chapter is full of angling adventures! ■



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## Roughrider Electric Cooperative, Inc.

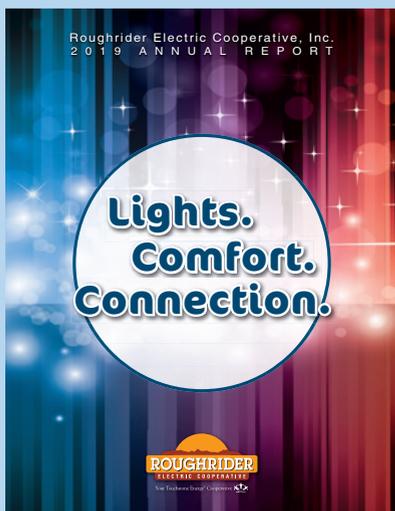
# 2020 ANNUAL MEETING

## “LIGHTS. COMFORT. CONNECTION.”

**Friday, Oct. 9, 2020, at 10 a.m. CT**

**Beulah Civic Center**

**112 7th St. N.E., Beulah, North Dakota**



This will be a business meeting only that will entail wearing masks and maintaining social distance. We ask that there only be one attendee per membership. Masks and hand sanitizer will be available at the door.

- 9:30 to 10 a.m. Registration
- 10 a.m. Business Meeting call to order; election of candidates

There will be reports from the board chair and election of a director in each district.

All members who submit mail-in



ballots will be eligible for a select number of door prizes. Door prizes will be drawn for and announced on Roughrider’s Facebook page during the week following the meeting. All winners will also be notified directly.

The 2020 annual meeting will be live-streamed by cooperative friend Consolidated Telcom. Members can access via Roughrider’s website at [roughriderelectric.com/annual-meeting](http://roughriderelectric.com/annual-meeting) or scan this QR code.

Read your annual report for details.

Thank you for being a valued member-owner. ■



[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. – 4:00 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  
7 a.m. – 4 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 west 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 .....	290-3836

### MANAGEMENT

Don Franklund .....	Co-GM/CEO
Travis Kupper .....	Co-GM/CEO



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