



ROUGH RIDER NEWS

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

SEPTEMBER 2023

DRIVING SUCCESS:

Community comes together for Touch-a-Truck

BY SAMANTHA VANGSNESS

Main Street Hazen came alive as 500 community members showed up for the first Touch-a-Truck and food drive event in the community on July 18. Attendees of all ages buzzed with excitement as they had the opportunity to see various trucks and visit with those who operate them.

Roughrider Electric Cooperative showcased a bucket truck and an accompanying booth where community members could see various lineworker equipment.

The event was hosted by The Dash, a local thrift store. The Dash is co-owned by sisters, Breanne Slavick and Mariah Usselman. The sisters wanted to do something special for their five-year anniversary of opening The Dash. Both have children who enjoy trucks and husbands who work with heavy equipment, so they knew they wanted to bring those two things together.

"My kids' favorite event is the Touch-a-Truck event in Mandan. It is something they look forward to every year," Slavick says. "We wanted a kid-centric event, but to also showcase the heavy-equipment careers in the community."

Slavick says she started by calling the police and fire station about the event, then she started getting inquiries from a dozen local businesses who wanted to be a part of the event. The 2023 Touch-a-Truck had 20 trucks for community members to explore and learn more about, as well as free hotdogs, cotton candy, frisbees, face painting and more.

"As free as possible" was another important stipulation Slavick had for the event. The Dash wanted families of all sizes to be able to come and enjoy the day and give back as they thought appropriate.

continued on next page



Tanner Goetz, a working foreman, helps at Hazen's Touch-a-Truck and food drive event.

What's inside:

- Manager's message
- Energy tips for back to school
- Hunting safety

continued from previous page



Russel Walters, Journeyman Lineman, visits with kids at the Touch-a-Truck and food drive event.

The food drive

Along with the Touch-a-Truck event, The Dash hosted a food drive as well. They asked community members to donate nonperishable food items that will be donated to Youth Works, a youth shelter in Bismarck. This year, the community's goal was to collect 2,000 pounds of nonperishable food to donate. According to The Dash, the youth shelter goes through roughly 500 pounds of food per week and hasn't had a full week's worth of food since January. The community was able to raise 700 pounds of food for the shelter. They also donated 100 pounds of personal care items and around \$1,500, which was raised during the event.

The Dash works regularly with Youth Works to help attain specific items for those in need by reaching out to community members for help. To view a list of needed items or donate, visit the Youth Works website at www.youthworksnd.org.

Success results in 2024 Touch-a-Truck

The Dash wasn't planning on hosting a 2024 Touch-a-Truck event, but after the community reaction and business inquiries for next year's

event, they will plan another event. The 2024 Hazen Touch-a-Truck event will be hosted in July in downtown Hazen. ■



Kids had the opportunity to try on the gear a lineworker wears every day.

Roughrider lineworkers attend Hotline School



Roughrider Electric Cooperative lineworkers joined lineworkers from across the state for the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) Hotline School. This year, two Roughrider Electric apprentice lineworkers, Conner Kuntz and Alex Frederick, attended the school. Dion Gefre, Mike Steier and Kyle Irwin, journeyman lineworkers, helped instruct the training course. Roughrider Electric was also able to supply two bucket trucks for the Hotline School.

The session was held at the Bismarck State College lineworker program facility in Mandan. The annual field training teaches lineworkers how to safely work on energized lines through hands-on instruction and demonstrations from experienced lineworkers.

“Hotline School allows employees to simulate live line work that they potentially could do in

a normal day’s work,” said Shawn Olson, line superintendent at Roughrider Electric. “It is used as a training tool, so the new employees who may not get to utilize hot work in their normal everyday work get a chance to keep their skills up to date and help them learn safe ways to keep the power on while working on energized equipment.”

This training prepares lineworkers for situations when deenergizing the lines is not possible and helps keep power flowing during storms or scheduled maintenance, when possible.

“The training is important to train employees on new equipment and keep familiar with industry changes and provide a chance to work with others in the state to learn different ways to get the job done safely and efficiently,” Olson noted. ■



MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

Factors that impact electricity prices



Travis Kupper

The daily cost of living seems to have increased across the board throughout our state and country.

Just as inflation has impacted everything, from the price of gasoline to the price of eggs, costs for the fuels required to produce electricity have also risen. This is a timely topic, so I wanted to help explain

some of the factors impacting electricity prices (and energy bills) in this message.

While there is no short answer, a few key elements impact electricity prices and rates. Some of these factors Roughrider Electric Cooperative can manage, some of them you can impact and other factors are beyond our control. So, let me break it down.

There are two primary parts to your monthly electric bill: a base charge and an energy consumption or kilowatt-hour (kWh) charge. To understand your total energy costs and what impacts your bill, let's unpack one piece at a time.

The first is a fixed monthly base charge, which covers the costs associated with providing electricity to your home. This includes equipment, materials, labor and operating costs necessary to serve each meter in Roughrider Electric's service territory, regardless of the amount of energy used. To ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local system, including power lines, substations and other necessary equipment. Like many other businesses, we've experienced supply chain issues and steep cost increases for some of our basic equipment. For example, the cost for a distribution transformer (which looks like a long metal can at the top of a power

pole) increased from \$1,000 in 2021 to \$1,500 this year, and wait times to receive this essential equipment are up to 20 weeks or longer. Because we are a not-for-profit cooperative, some of these expenses must be passed on to our members. I should note the base charge is the same for everyone in the rate class and the costs are shared equally across the membership in that rate class.

Another component of your monthly bill is the kWh charge, which covers how much energy you consume. You've likely noticed the amount of energy you use can vary from month to month and is typically impacted by extreme temperatures. When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling or heating equipment operates longer, which increases your home energy use. Regardless, energy consumption is an area you have some control over, and you can lower your monthly bill by actively reducing energy use. Your thermostat is a great place to start, many experts recommend to keep it close to 78 degrees during summer months and 68 during the cooler months.

I hope this information sheds light on some of the factors impacting electricity prices. While we can't control the weather or the rising costs of fuels, please know Roughrider Electric is doing everything possible to keep internal costs down.

We're here to help you, too. Contact us if you have questions about your energy bill or for advice on how to save energy at home. ■



Safety Starts with ME: Safe hunting

Hunting season is on the horizon as the weather cools and the days begin to get shorter. Roughrider Electric Cooperative encourages members to take some extra precautions to stay safe during hunting season.

“We encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment and be safe when hunting,” said Cody Hintz, a journeyman lineworker with Roughrider Electric. “Hunting season is an exciting time for many, but safety needs to be front of mind at all times.”

To mitigate accidents, Roughrider encourages you to use the following electrical safety tips for safe hunting.

- Take notice of posted warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Know the location of power lines and equipment on the land where you hunt.
- Be especially careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be visible.
- Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment can conduct electricity to anyone who encounters them, causing shock or electrocution.
- Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Any non-electrical equipment attached to a pole can pose an obstruction and serious hazard to our line crews.



Safety Starts with ME (and YOU)

Safety doesn't take just two or three members; it takes a collective effort by all.

“By following these safety tips and encouraging others to do the same, we can create a safer hunting environment for everyone involved,” Hintz said. If you see something that doesn't look right while hunting in the Roughrider Electric service area, call 800-748-5533 as soon as possible.

Hunting season is a time to make memories for years to come. Don't forget to take these safety tips into consideration while making memories, and encourage others to do the same to ensure a safe hunting environment for all. ■



Olson accepts chief of staff position

Congratulations to Shawn Olson, line supervisor, on accepting the role of chief of staff of Roughrider Electric Cooperative. Olson has been at Roughrider Electric since 2011. Olson's insight, leadership and commitment to excellence will significantly contribute to Roughrider Electric.

Back-to-school energy tips

BY SAMANTHA VANGSNESS

Electronic and mobile devices, TVs, computers and gaming stations have become common devices in today's homes. Additionally, the rise of smart home appliances, advanced technology and electric vehicles have slowly, but steadily, reshaped our homes and lifestyles.

Children are growing up in this highly connected world, where technology plays a significant role in our daily lives and energy consumption. It is crucial to teach them the importance of saving energy as a valuable lesson.

Learning by doing

We know children learn by observing what their parents do. Even if they don't say anything, children are processing their parents' actions. When you turn off the lights when leaving a room or unplug the phone charger once the device is fully charged, they will notice. Learning about energy efficiency can be fun and have a lasting impact on kids.

For younger kids, turn energy efficiency into a "treasure hunt" game to locate all the things in your home that use electricity. Depending on the age of the children, challenge them to count and group the items into categories, such as electronics, appliances or lights. If age appropriate, have them create a list. Ask which gadgets and appliances could be turned off or unplugged to save power every day. Show older children how to program smart thermostats and appliances. Shop with them for LED lights and discuss ENERGY STAR-rated appliances. Kids of all ages can learn a few simple energy-saving habits that can last a lifetime.

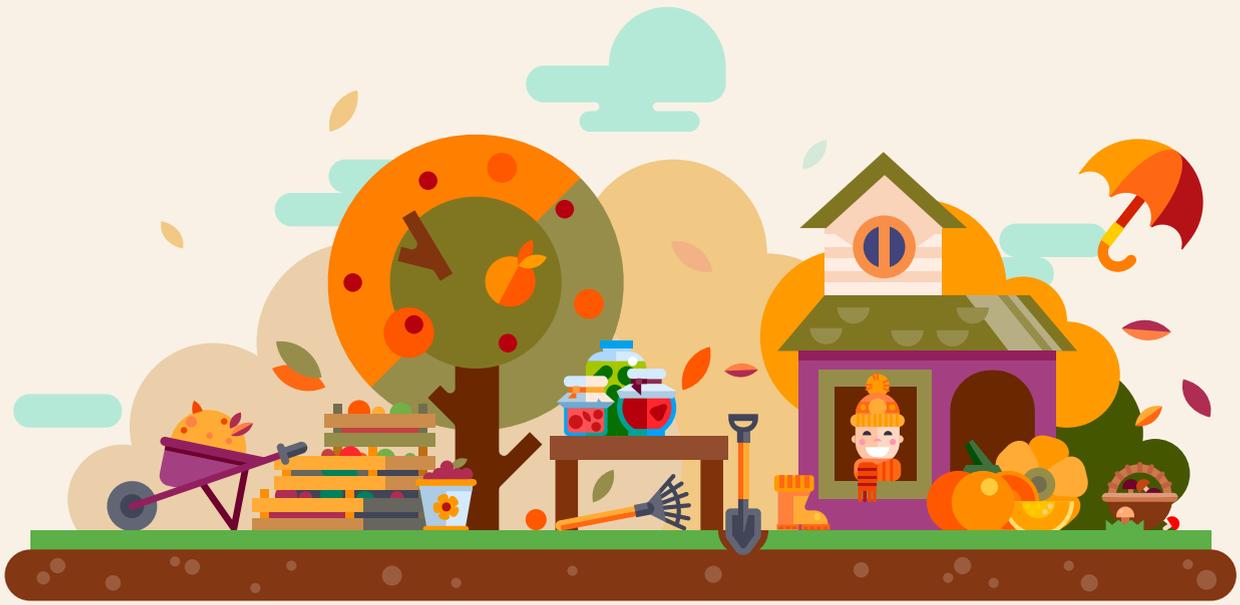
Energy-saving tips

The whole family can chip in and save on electricity costs by following a couple of additional energy saving tips.

- **Adjust your thermostat.** Now that there aren't as many people occupying the house all day, try turning your thermostat up a few degrees when you're not home in the warmer months and down a few degrees in the cooler months.



- **Run appliances when full.** To reduce unnecessary loads of laundry and dishes, only run appliances when full.
- **Use the fridge and freezer wisely.** When cooking meals in the warmer months, limit the number of times you open your fridge and freezer. Try getting all the ingredients you need for a meal or recipe out at one time.
- **Cook outside.** A great way to hold onto summer is cooking outside. Cooking outside also prevents you from having to heat the house by turning on the stove top or oven.
- **Unplug devices.** A simple tip everyone can do is to unplug devices when not in use. Another tip is unplugging devices when fully charged and unplug the charger from the outlet. ■



Take the brrrr out of winter

The weather will soon get cooler, heralding the arrival of autumn. With the changing season, you have some work to do. Here are some indoor and outdoor maintenance tips that will help keep your family safe and comfortable this fall and winter, and save energy, too.

INSIDE

- **Check your heating system.** Hire a qualified professional to inspect and clean your heating system. This will help ensure efficient performance and alert you to any potential maintenance or repair issues.
- **Change your furnace filter.** Dirty filters restrict airflow, making your heating system work harder to keep you comfortable. Change your furnace filter regularly according to manufacturer's instructions.
- **Clean your chimney.** Hire a qualified professional to clean your chimney. A cleaning typically includes an inspection for soot buildup, obstructions, cracks in the chimney liner and signs of water damage.
- **Air seal your basement.** Check for air leaks around pipe or wiring holes on outside walls. Seal any leaks you find with expandable spray foam. Also, check for gaps where the wall meets the ceiling. Fill smaller gaps with caulk; fill larger gaps with insulation.
- **Test detectors.** Replace batteries in smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and test them to ensure they work. Wired detectors should also have fresh battery backups. Replace any detectors that are 10 years old or older.

OUTSIDE

- **Seal windows and doors.** Check windows and exterior doors for gaps that can let warm air escape. Seal any you find with caulk or weatherstripping.
- **Look at outdoor lighting.** With nights getting longer, check outdoor security lights and switch out bulbs at or near end of life. LEDs are highly efficient, last longer than conventional bulbs and work well in cold temperatures.
- **Clear gutters and downspouts.** Blocked gutters can keep water from melting snow from draining. This can lead to the buildup of ice dams. Clear gutters and downspouts of leaves and other debris.
- **Trim trees away from your house.** Heavy ice and snow can cause tree branches to fall. If they are hanging over your roof, they can cause serious damage.
- **Maintain your generator.** Make sure your generator is ready if needed. Change the oil and the fuel filters, as well as the spark plug and air filter as recommended. Start it up and let it run for a few minutes to test it. Always follow manufacturer's guidelines regarding maintenance and safe operation.
- **Sustain your snowblower.** Before the snow falls, change the oil and the spark plug on your snowblower. Inspect belts and auger paddles for wear and tear and replace if needed. Check the shave plate and skid shoes for wear, and reverse or replace them as necessary. ■





www.roughriderelectric.com

HAZEN OFFICE

701-748-2293 or 800-748-5533
 800 Highway Dr., Hazen, ND 58545
 7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. CT 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 800-748-5533
 P.O. Box 1038, 2156 4th Ave. E.
 Dickinson, ND 58602
 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. MT 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

Greg Steckler, President; Dunn Center..... 548-8122
 Roger Kudrna, Vice President; Dickinson..... 483-8377
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 Dan Price; Henster 794-3779
 Callen Schoch; New England 290-3836

MANAGEMENT

Travis Kupper Co-GM/CEO
 Jason Bentz Co-GM/CEO



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In observance of



LABOR DAY



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



our office will be closed on Sept. 4.

Line crews will be available to respond to emergencies and power outages by calling 800-748-5533.