

OCTOBER 2018

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Harvest sunset



PHOTO BY RACHEL MEUCHEL

In this issue:

- A harvest scrapbook
- What is grid resiliency?
- Apply for Youth Tour



Rachel's son, **Kasen**, out in the action.



Cari's boys take a dinner break with their grandpa **Cameron** in the field.

McKenzie Electric Cooperative

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A harvest scrapbook

BY JESSIE VEEDER SCOFIELD

The leaves are changing, the temperature is dropping and farmers in western North Dakota are hauling in the last of the crop, wrapping up harvest season and the memories that come with it. Here, readers share why harvest is such a special season.



Cari's sons stop for a happy harvest photo with their grandpa, **Cameron**.

The Dodge farm

Cari Forbes grew up helping on her grandparents' farm and ranch southeast of Watford City where her mother, Jan Dodge, was raised. Now her husband works alongside her dad, Cameron Dodge, on the place. The couple is raising three young boys who are eager to ride along or follow close behind as farm work gets done as a family.

"Harvest has always been the time of year I look forward to most since I was a kid. Hot August days and long cool nights. It makes my heart so happy that my husband and our kids get to spend the fall days and nights on the same farm, the same way I did when I was a kid. From supper in the field, to chaff down our shirts and the possible chance

to sit in the driver's seat, it's four weeks out of the year you spend 48 weeks preparing for and we wouldn't have it any other way," Cari says.

Cari lost her grandfather, Jim Kirkland, who was Jan's father, this summer, making this year's harvest special, bittersweet and full of nostalgia for the family.

"We're going into our fifth generation and I have so many sweet memories," Jan says. "Everyone in the field, ups and downs, machinery through the years and dinner in the field. Harvest is its own culture!"



Rachel takes a break with her dad in the field. Rachel's son, **Kasen**, is out in the action.

The Dwyer farm

"Nothing brings a family together quite like harvest," says Rachel Meuchel, a guidance counselor who works alongside her husband, Cory, on her family's farm near Arnegard as a fourth-generation farmer.

Rachel and Cory are raising two young sons who are learning about farming from their grandpa and uncles as well. For Rachel, harvest has always been all about family.

"You work together, laugh together, eat suppers in the field together, rejoice together when things go well, and tease each other when things go a little awry. (There's nothing worse than getting plugged up in the middle of a field, only to look over and see a sibling laughing at you while you struggle to pull out one straw at a time.) You

look out for each other, too. When there's a good song on the radio, you let the others know which station. And you might even get out of your combine to help them pull out one straw at a time. Hands down, some of my best memories growing up are from harvest," she says.



Harvesting wheat at the Eckelberg farm.

Eckelberg farm and ranch

For Rebecca Eckelberg, who farms with her husband, Tim, and two children, Aspen, 7, and Case, 5, harvest is a cornucopia of emotions.

"Harvest is a time of hard work, and peace. Sometimes joy, sometimes defeat. We are exhausted, and stressed, but also extraordinarily relieved and grateful," she says.

She recalls a devastating hailstorm in 2017 that left only a quarter of their acres standing. When another storm brought hail to their crops this June, Rebecca felt defeated. Luckily, the storm didn't do the same damage.

"We had a crop to harvest in 2018, so this season, I am blessed and content to pull long hours in the combine, or the cart, and do my part to get that grain moved out of the field. I am grateful to be sick of sandwiches and so eager to clean out that hard-working combine," she says.

Monsen farms

Minnesota native Celena Hulst is engaged to Ryan Monsen, who farms south of Arnegard. Celena is enjoying sharing in her fiancé's passion for work and being involved in the camaraderie harvest season brings.

"Ryan's grandpa, Norris Hildre, spent some time here during the harvest this year. He loves to see Ryan so happy doing what he loves. We all enjoy the short time together when we all stop for a quick bite to eat, then back to work!" she says.



Ryan catches a break with his grandpa, Norris, during his visit to the farm.

Johnson farm

For fourth-generation farmer Shane Johnson, farming is a passion he can't explain and harvest is at the center of what he's built his life around.

"My whole life has revolved around it, not only growing up on a farm, but I started on the harvest crew working from Texas to North Dakota when I was 14. For seven years, I lived and breathed harvest," says Shane, who met his fiancé, Lindsay, and her two boys, Waylon, now 11, and Kreed, now 8, in South Dakota during a break. This is Shane's 24th straight year of harvest, working alongside his father, Wayne, on their farm near Arnegard.

"My family essentially started because of harvest. I went to school, I did a few other jobs, but I never missed that start of wheat harvest," he says. ■



Shane and his father, Wayne, at work.



What is grid resiliency?

the impact of an outage to the membership.

Ensuring resiliency is a 24/7, 365-days-a-year effort. Whether it's the transmission lines, distribution lines or substations facilities on our grid, it takes proactive maintenance and investment to keep them running smoothly. With thousands of consumers without power for months, the lack of resiliency in Puerto Rico's power grid wasn't solely caused by hurricane damage; it was the result of years of neglect in taking care of their system and not preparing for a worst-case scenario.

In a similar way to how we maintain our vehicles with regular oil changes, inspections and tire rotations, a grid must also be properly maintained. Throughout the year, companies regularly conduct pole and line inspections. The goal is to find a problem before it becomes one. For example, if we find a weak pole that has damage, we replace that pole. Doing so eliminates a weak link and helps to ensure that pole is as strong – or as resilient – as it can be. We also monitor distribution lines to recognize if there are any weak links in that system. When areas of concern are discovered corrective actions are taken to increase our reliability and help prevent future outages.

Living in North Dakota, we know that significant power outages can occur, especially as we enter the fall and winter season. Whether we're at the mercy of tornadoes or blizzards, we utilize cost-effective measures to design and maintain our systems to be as resilient as we can so that our system can recover from a situation with as little disruption as possible.

In the dictionary, resilience is defined as "the ability to bounce back, recover quickly and go back into shape or position after being stretched." When it comes to providing our member-owners with reliable electricity, resilience is a way of life! ■

Resiliency of the grid is one of the most popular concepts being talked about in the electric industry today. This concept made headlines earlier this year in the wake of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, which caused extraordinary damage to Puerto Rico's electric grid, resulting in the longest sustained outage in U.S. history. Lack of resilience became the go-to phrase to describe Puerto Rico's grid. The lack of modernization efforts or maintenance of the aging system left the system vulnerable to long-term outages in the event of a major disaster. What is grid resiliency here in western North Dakota, and what does it mean for you?

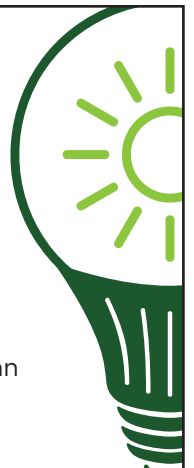
Grid resiliency is many things – it's reliability in your electric service, it's our ability to efficiently restore your power, it's being able to meet the demands of new technology and it's how we serve you with multiple delivery points across our system without skipping a beat. Ultimately, resilience is how we deliver on our promise to improve the quality of life for our member-owners.

Having a resilient electric grid begins with a system that is designed and built to withstand high winds, powerful storms, cybersecurity threats and other disruptions that could result in outages. Scheduled maintenance and testing activities allow McKenzie Electric Cooperative (MEC) to monitor system health and schedule upgrades and system maintenance prior to equipment failure. To increase the resiliency of our system, MEC designs looped feeds where possible to minimize outage times and increase system reliability. A looped system allows power to be rerouted around damaged equipment minimizing

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Cooler temps are just around the corner! Is your home's heating system ready? Remember to replace furnace filters once a month or as recommended. If you heat your home with warm-air registers, baseboard heaters or radiators, remember to clean them regularly to increase efficiency.

Source: energy.gov



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 McKenzie Electric Cooperative.
- If you have a question, contact John Carns, McKenzie Electric, at the address listed below, or call 701-444-9288 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is Jan. 31, 2019. Emailed entries should be directed to jcarns@mckenzieelectric.com, and hard-copy entries mailed to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, McKenzie Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 649, Watford City, ND 58854-0649.

TOP 3 REASONS TO ENTER THE ESSAY-WRITING CONTEST

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

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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

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, McKenzie 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.



BOARD
OF
DIRECTORS



Monsen



Thompson



Hanna



Kershnik



Wasem



Wahlstrom



Sanford



Tescher



Link

Board report

August 29, 2018

The regular meeting of the McKenzie Electric Board of Directors was held at the Headquarters Building in Watford City, North Dakota. Directors present were: Clayton Monsen, Travis Thompson, Rondee Hanna, Cameron Wahlstrom, Ken Sanford, Chris Link, Tim Wasem, Ray Tescher and Stephan Kershnik. CEO John Skurupey, Attorney Dennis Johnson and staff personnel of McKenzie Electric were also present.

PRELIMINARIES: The agenda for the meeting and minutes of the previous board meeting were approved by the Board of Directors. Expenses were also approved.

NORTH DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES: Director Tim Wasem reported there was no North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) meeting on which to report.

POWER SUPPLY: Director Travis Thompson reported on the recent Upper Missouri board meeting. Thompson reported two resolutions were approved by the Upper Missouri Board of Directors. Director Ray Tescher reported there was no Mid-West Electric Consumers Association meeting on which to report.

ASSOCIATED ORGANIZATIONS: The Board made their selections for the CFC nominating committee and director vote ballot. The Board designated CEO John Skurupey as delegate to the CFC District 6 meeting.

ATTORNEY'S REPORT: The amended bylaws were again reviewed and discussed for clarification. The Board approved modification of language in Article 1 Membership. Bylaw amendments will be presented to the membership at the next annual meeting.

CEO REPORT: CEO John Skurupey reported on several items. The Board approved moving ahead with a large load construction project. The Board also reviewed the evaluation of proposals received for the Cost of Service RFP and the Five Year Construction Work Plan/

Ten-Year Long Range Plans. The Board approved the Cost of Service/Financial Forecast proposal submitted by Power System Engineering and FCS Group. The Board also approved the Five/Ten Year Construction Work Plan and Long Range Plan proposal from ECI.

HUMAN RESOURCES: The Board reviewed the written report noting recent staffing changes. Other administrative issues were shared with the Board.

OFFICE REPORT: Financial and statistical reports for July were reviewed with the Board along with a budget-to-date comparison, the capital projects report and the comparative cash report. The Board approved special capital credit retirements as presented. Business Manager Jamie Cross reviewed the year end Form 7 and discussed several items with the Board.

ENGINEERING REPORT: An update was provided on landscaping issues around the headquarters building. An easement issue was discussed with the Board. Updates were provided on system outages, potential new loads, cyber security, substations and line loss. The outage report was reviewed.

OPERATIONS/CONTRACT MANAGEMENT/SAFETY REPORT: Written reports provided updates on projects currently being worked on by MEC contractors and a work order progress report. The old 4Bears Substation and transmission line have been dennergized as load is now served from the new Elm Tree and Table Butte substations increasing system reliability on the eastern side of MEC's service area. The Right-of-Way policy was discussed with suggested changes to the policy being proposed by Board and management. MEC crews are busy with outages, maintenance projects, work orders, meter changes, conversions, retirements, mowing substation property, tree trimming and high loads. The written safety report was reviewed by the Board.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

COORDINATOR: An update was given on NERC (North American Electric Reliability Corporation) compliance activities. MEC staff continues to review facility ratings on a transmission line segment from the Lonesome Switchyard to Cherry Creek.

NEXT MEETING DATE: The next meeting date was set for September 26, 2018 at the Watford City Headquarters building.

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



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