



IN THIS ISSUE:

- Launching a training center
- Taking flight
- Events and activities

New life for an old substation

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

Repurposing old into new may be trendy in today's world, but McLean Electric Cooperative (MEC) and its wholesale power supplier and electric transmission provider, Central Power Electric Cooperative (CPEC), will take repurposing to entirely new heights.

Literally.

Like the height of a substation.

CPEC will donate the entire Garrison substation to the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC)/Bismarck State College Lineworker Training Center in Mandan, once a new and larger Garrison substation goes online and the old substation is decommissioned.

"The whole thing," MEC General Manager/CEO Mark Doyle added. "It's repurposed rather than junked."

The Garrison substation is currently located adjacent to MEC's Garrison headquarters along Highway 37.

Crews will dismantle the old substation once the new one, located about 2 miles northeast of its current location, is complete, CPEC General Manager Tom Meland described.

The current Garrison substation has 7 million volt-amperes (or 7 MVA) capacity. It will be replaced by a 14-MVA capacity substation fed by a new and larger CPEC 115-kilovolt (KV) transmission line, providing more reliable electrical transmission, Doyle explained.

Recently, CPEC upgraded a 41.6-KV transmission line serving three MEC substations to a new, more reliable 115-KV transmission line, essentially upgrading from Max to Makoti, Meland described.

That left the need to upgrade the current Garrison substation, so it wouldn't be more susceptible to unnecessary outages, including during routine load transfers. In addition, it allows CPEC to take full advantage of its new transmission line.

"It's significantly more reliable," Meland added.

In its new life as a training tool, the old Garrison substation can open new doors of learning for lineworker students.

"Now, these lineworkers can get substation training. They can build transmission out of it or underground

risers up out of it," Doyle described.

NDAREC advanced the idea of repurposing the substation and the idea grew from there.

"We were more than happy to donate the retired substation," Meland said. "We feel it's an important part of training for students and will provide them with more familiarity and comfort when working on a substation. It will greatly assist in their training."

CPEC provides electricity to six electric cooperatives. Its lineworkers, as well as lineworkers from its member cooperatives, operate and maintain CPEC's 175 distribution substations, Meland described. It's important for lineworkers entering the industry to have that prior knowledge and experience of working on substations as they join the lineworker workforce, he continued.

Plans call for the new Garrison substation to be online about mid-summer. From there, the current substation will be shut down, dismantled and trucked to the new Lineworker Training Center to begin its new life.

The substation is another example of the enhanced and expanded training that will be available to students and current lineworkers, because of the new and expanded Lineworker Training Center, Doyle said.

The environment benefits from less industrial waste in a landfill.

People entering an important industry powering America benefit by gaining previously unavailable training opportunities.

CPEC and MEC member-owners benefit by receiving more reliable energy transmission.

In other words, it's win-win for everyone. ■



PHOTO BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

MANAGER'S MOMENT

Cooperation among cooperatives

BY MARK DOYLE, GENERAL MANAGER

I would appreciate a moment of your time...

The cooperative business model, in my opinion, is the greatest business structure, for one simple reason: It has all our interests in mind. 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,” states the International Cooperative Alliance.

In other words, cooperatives are created by people who have a specific need and who are willing to work together to operate and organize a company that will meet that need.

This model is driven by seven cooperative principles: voluntary membership; democratic member control; members' economic participation; autonomy and independence; education, training and information; cooperation among cooperatives; and concern for community. All are equally important, but today I emphasize “cooperation among cooperatives.”

As you read this month's articles on the new North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives/ Bismarck State College training facility and Central Power Electric Cooperative's generous donation of a substation to the training center, you quickly realize the cooperative family looks out for each other.

In my experience, I see cooperation in the electric distribution family, but also with other cooperatives in the membership we serve. Overall, the cooperative model fosters cooperation through participation. You will not find this as prevalent in any other business model.

Take pride in the fact that you are a member of your local cooperatives, like McLean Electric Cooperative, and ag cooperatives or telecommunication cooperatives. You own it!

As always, feel free to reach out to me with any questions or comments. My door is always open.

Regards,
Mark Doyle, general manager

Launching a state-of-the-art lineworker training center

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

An April 12, 1970, *Mandan Morning Press* newspaper article highlighted a new Bismarck Junior College (now Bismarck State College, BSC) training program.

The goal: train people in the electric lineworker industry, combining the science of electricity with hands-on training in the electric energy industry – what it takes to build, maintain and provide electricity to consumers.

The North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC), the statewide association representing North Dakota's electric cooperatives, joined BSC in developing the program. It didn't matter if lineworkers would be employed by an electric cooperative, municipality or investor-owned utility – the goal was and always has been safety and proper training for all.

Fifty-two years later, the BSC program remains the regional go-to place for most people entering electric linework, helping gain a lead on employment and an opportunity for many to live and work in their home state. It's also a career with opportunities across the

United States.

The program has been in the same humble – but large – metal quonset-style facility since its inception as an experimental program.

But that will change in 2022, weather and material availability permitting.

NDAREC began discussing the concept of upgrading its Lineworker Training Center in Mandan more than 10 years ago, described NDAREC General Manager and Executive Vice President Josh Kramer. By 2018, the organization was studying design and engineering options.

Groundbreaking took place in the spring of 2021, after receiving a U.S. Economic Development Administration grant assisting with 80% of its cost. NDAREC also conducted a capital campaign to raise additional funds. Several North Dakota cooperatives and industry suppliers, recognizing the importance of the program, supported the campaign, Kramer added.

NDAREC, BSC and cooperatives across the state recognize the significant undertaking the 25,000-square-

foot facility entails, Kramer acknowledged. The training center covers 17,500 feet, with the rest in classrooms.

Construction of the new facility would not have been possible without North Dakota's support of individual rural electric cooperatives.

"That was essential. ... It's an investment in the future," Kramer emphasized.

McLean Electric Cooperative (MEC) was one of those cooperatives welcoming and supporting the new facility.

Through their support of the new state-of-the-art facility, North Dakota's cooperatives are telling their member-owners that they remain committed to serving them as safely and reliably as possible, Kramer added.

MEC General Manager/CEO Mark Doyle echoed that sentiment: "It's training our future employees, and McLean was part of the statewide cooperative effort. McLean Electric participated in all aspects in support of the training center," Doyle continued.

As an example of the role the lineworker training program plays in the industry, MEC recently posted an opening to fill a lineworker position with the retirement of Garrison's lead lineworker, Rick Gienger. Of the 63 applicants, 50 were graduates of the BSC lineworker training program.

The program helps provide North Dakotans with a stable, trained workforce to ensure reliable electric service, Kramer and Doyle reiterated. Plus, it helps industry employers by providing well-trained staff, many wanting to stay in the state. That, in turn, helps with employee retention.

In addition, the new, much larger facility will allow for more hands-on, on-the-job advanced training for current lineworkers across North Dakota in the winter. That's typically when line crews have more time to step away from constructing or maintaining existing line. That opportunity can help crews stay abreast of new technology, proper training and safety.

Doyle also is anxious for the potential array of future training and continuing educational opportunities in the winter for the cooperative's current lineworkers.

"It opens up for a lot more opportunities for training (of current staff)," he added.

Regardless of how the electric industry changes in coming years, linework is critical to the American

economy and lifestyle.

The lineworker program helps ensure apprentice lineworkers entering the industry know and understand what their career choice entails: Students learn how to climb poles and work hands-free while belted in, hooks dug into a wooden utility pole.

It's not for everyone, so learning to climb – or not climb – gives students early opportunities to look into other career paths should they decide it's not for them.

Students learn apprentice lineworker skills, with the curriculum blending classroom studies and in-the-field training.

Training and studies include power line construction, ropes and rigging, maintenance and equipment operation, industry-related technology, safety, applied and fundamental electrical distribution, electrical equipment and transformers.

They learn trenching. They learn how to set a pole.

They will also be able to train on a simulator to obtain a commercial driver's license.

Even though lineworkers in states like North Dakota work in some brutal weather conditions – regardless of what time of year it is – the new training center's thick dirt floor allows students to learn skills, such as trenching or setting poles, in an indoor environment.

However, learning to work in the outdoor elements won't be neglected. Students will still train outside, Kramer emphasized, so working in the elements won't be a new experience when they enter the workforce.

The opportunity to learn skills indoors allows students to focus strictly on their work and training and not become deterred or detracted by weather conditions.

Training center walls in the new facility exceed 40 feet.

"Because they're going to be setting poles in that space," Kramer added.

Plans call for the new training center and classrooms to be completed by the fall of 2022.

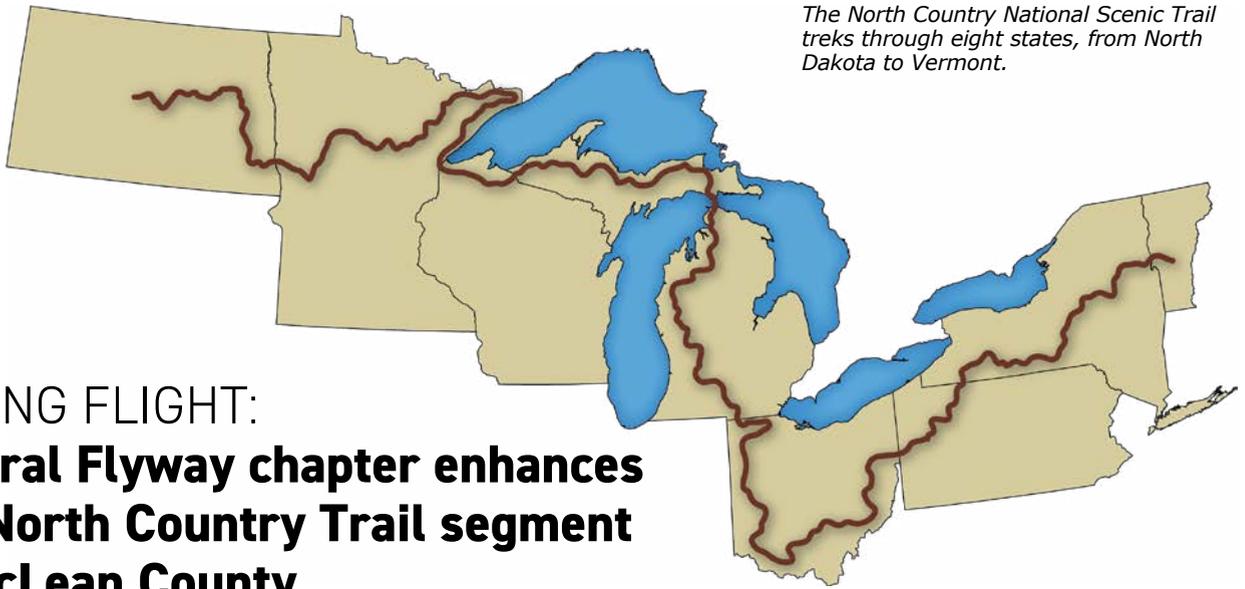
"Before winter sets in, the next class should be able to use this building," Kramer said.

While enhanced safety training and reinforcement is one of the foremost benefits of the new training center, electric cooperative member-owners also benefit.

"A well-trained employee contributes to the reliability of our system," Doyle summarized. ■

McLean Electric Cooperative annual meeting Tuesday, June 21

McLean Electric Cooperative headquarters in Garrison



The North Country National Scenic Trail treks through eight states, from North Dakota to Vermont.

TAKING FLIGHT: Central Flyway chapter enhances the North Country Trail segment in McLean County

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

McLean County has been part of the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCT) for years. It's just kind of "been there" for those dedicated hikers daring to find its hidden gems along the 4,800-mile trail stretching from west-central North Dakota to western Vermont.

But that's changing in McLean County, as several trail segments have vibrant, new life.

Glee Mayer, Minot, her brother, Mark Zimmerman,

Bismarck, and volunteers of the NCT Central Flyway Chapter are instrumental in bringing that vibrancy to McLean County's trail segments after establishing the chapter in December 2020.

Together, the chapter (nicknamed the "Fly" chapter) and three Eagle Scouts from Bismarck/Mandan Troops 123 and 54 redesigned and built the trail, providing new opportunities to venture across areas within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Audubon National Wildlife Refuge

Hiking the trail

Audubon National Wildlife Refuge's primary mission is wildlife habitat mitigation after construction of Garrison Dam on the Missouri River. The refuge is critical for migratory bird nesting and migration, including species on the federal threatened and endangered species list, and for providing resident wildlife habitat.

Hiking and other public uses within the refuge are allowed under the 1997 Refuge Improvement Act if they're compatible with the refuge's mission. Most public use on the refuge is during ice fishing season, when access points to the south end of Lake Audubon are available on the refuge.

Other public activities allowed include birding and wildlife observations along the auto tour route, walking the ADA-compliant Prairie Nature Trail, or deer and late-season upland game hunting (with specific refuge regulations during North Dakota's open seasons).

Special regulations apply when hiking on the North

Country Trail segment within the refuge:

- No camping is allowed anywhere within Audubon National Wildlife Refuge.
- Dogs are allowed when hiking the trail, but must be leashed.
- The trail is for foot traffic only. No bicycles, horses or motorized use are allowed.
- While people can walk off the mowed trail, it's especially important not to disturb, harass or chase any wildlife, especially nesting birds or young wildlife.
- No collecting of natural artifacts – including antler sheds – picking wildflowers or berries, or removal of other natural objects is allowed.
- Because the refuge is open for hunting, hikers need to be aware others can be afield during that time with firearms and hunting dogs.
- The trail is mowed for summer hiking, but there is no winter maintenance. ■

that few people likely have experienced.

For years, the trail within the refuge simply took hikers on its auto tour route, a winding gravel road mostly meandering along Lake Audubon. While it was a nice hard-packed surface, it was still a road with traffic.

Audubon National Wildlife Refuge is more than some land along a manmade lake.

It's a treasure for nesting migratory and resident bird species, including rare least terns and piping plovers. It's a blend of native prairie and restored grassland habitat. It offers trees and renovated wetlands. It's a resting area for thousands of migrating waterfowl.

The chapter had a goal, Mayer described: "To be able to get it right into the heart of the refuge." Working with Audubon National Wildlife Refuge's Wetland District Manager Kathy Baer, the chapter developed a new 12.5-mile route.

Work on the route was divided into three segments, with the Eagle Scouts doing the signage and flagging. Chapter volunteers followed with mowing.

The trail has three distinct looks, Mayer described. The portion by the visitor center includes trees and uplands. Another segment melds a wetland and grassland experience. The east segment is near Lake Audubon itself, as hikers trek toward the McClusky Canal head gates.

The chapter was instrumental in developing the new route, Baer added.

"Without them, the trail would still be on the auto tour route." Together, the refuge, chapter members and other agencies were able to emphasize the beauty of the refuge, especially its remnant native prairie, she added.

The project is a perfect example of a collaborative effort among the public and state and federal agencies to benefit a region, added McLean Electric Cooperative General Manager/CEO Mark Doyle. The cooperative serves the refuge and nearby farms.

That, in turn, helps improve the quality of life for residents, Doyle added, bringing new people to McLean



A North Country Trail marker lets hikers know they're along the Audubon National Wildlife boundary.

County as they learn more about what North Dakota offers, whether it's recreational hiking opportunities or environmental benefits the refuge provides for wildlife and habitat.

Hiking the trail is also a healthy activity getting people outdoors, Baer added.

The new portion of NCT introduces more people to the refuge – especially hikers from throughout the country unfamiliar with North Dakota. It allows more people to explore the refuge's unique aspects, Baer continued. It's also safer than being on the gravel auto tour route.

About the North Country National Scenic Trail:

- 4,800 miles long, the longest nonmotorized hiking trail within the National Trails System.
- Covers eight states: North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and Vermont.
- Designed for hiking only.
- Treks through four U.S. Forest Service National Forests, 10 U.S. National Park Service areas, several other state and federal public lands in the various eight states, including state forests, parks and wildlife areas, and in North Dakota, portions of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Audubon National Wildlife Refuge.
- More information is available at www.northcountrytrail.org. ■



A team of volunteers prepares to sign the new North Country Trail portion on Audubon National Wildlife Refuge. The trail will go "that-away!"

"It's just a nice, easier walk," she described.

Chapter members worked with the N.D. Department of Transportation to add an NCT trailhead sign along Highway 83, directing hikers and others to the refuge headquarters and trail, located about a mile east of the highway along Lake Audubon's south shore.

In addition, the chapter constructed a large arch for Lake Sakakawea State Park recognizing its western terminus, working closely and with support from the N.D. Parks and Recreation Department and Lake Sakakawea State Park.

But the chapter is not done. They have a list of things they want to accomplish to enhance the NCT in other areas of McLean County, Mayer explained.

They've already worked with the Fish and Wildlife Service's Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery downstream of Garrison Dam to get its existing trail system officially incorporated into the NCT.

But back at Audubon National Wildlife Refuge, they're working to develop a parking area at the trailhead along the McClusky Canal head gates. The refuge trail is also now designated as a Geocache Adventure Lab. They're working with Baer and the refuge to develop refuge-specific hiking guidelines.

And they've been asked by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to provide input and assist in enhancing the NCT as it passes along the McClusky Canal, including portions of the canal in McLean County.

The chapter also wants to work with neighboring communities so hikers know what camping opportunities are available once they're off the refuge, Mayer added.

The chapter has developed wonderful relationships with agencies, such as the refuge, N.D. Game and Fish Department, U.S. Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation, as it continues its efforts to enhance hiking opportunities along the trail, Mayer explained.

There were only a few miles of the NCT in North Dakota's western segment less than two years ago before the chapter organized, Mayer described.

And they were along roads.

Now, people from across the United States can – and do – hike official portions of the NCT on some of the state's treasured wildlife areas, including Audubon National Wildlife Refuge and woody Missouri River bottomland near Garrison Dam National Fish Hatchery.

"To say the (North Country Trail) headquarters in Michigan is excited to have a chapter out here is an understatement," Mayer smiled. "The refuge is kind of like a diamond in the rough." ■

North Country Trail in North Dakota:

- Covers 440 miles, almost two-thirds of the state.
- The western terminus is located in Lake Sakakawea State Park near Pick City.
- North Dakota's portion of the trail is divided into three segments: West-central portion from Lake Sakakawea State Park to the east end of the N.D. Game and Fish Department's Lonetree Wildlife Management area near Harvey. The Central Flyway Chapter works to maintain, enhance and promote that segment. The central portion travels from the New Rockford Canal to the north end of Lake Ashtabula, while the southeast segment continues from there to the North Dakota-Minnesota border.
- More information is available at www.northcountrytrail.com/trail/north-dakota/ fly or the Facebook page, NCTA Central Flyway Chapter and NCTinND for statewide information. ■



Mackenzie Fuller



Andrew Haakenson



Ben Scheresky



Grace Goven

2022 scholarship winners announced

As part of our commitment to community and area youth, McLean Electric Cooperative (MEC) is pleased to announce the 2022-23 student scholarship winners, whose families are member-owners of MEC. This year, 12 applications were received. All applicants were rated favorably, which is an indication of the quality of students we have in MEC's service territory. These scholarships will be presented at the 77th annual meeting June 21 in Garrison.

Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarships

Basin Electric Power Cooperative provides two \$500 to McLean Electric Cooperative to be awarded as a scholarship to two qualified candidates. These scholarships were awarded based on academic excellence, which includes the following criteria: ACT scores, work experience, and participation in school and community activities.

Mackenzie Fuller

Mackenzie will graduate from Garrison High School and is the daughter of Michelle and Aaron Fuller of Garrison. She will be attending the University of North Dakota to obtain a degree in human resources. She is a member of the N.D. Air National Guard and will attend basic training and tech school to pursue a degree in intelligence.

She is active in basketball and football cheer, dance, honor society, FFA, Future Business Leaders of America, yearbook and choir, and serves as senior class secretary. She also was Miss Teen North Dakota International 2021, Miss Teen McLean County International 2019-20; Miss Geographic Center's Outstanding Teen 2019; and Miss Hazen-Beulah's Outstanding Teen 2018.

Andrew Haakenson

Andrew will graduate from Parshall High School and is the son of Anita and Steve Haakenson of Parshall. He

will be attending North Dakota State University (NDSU) in the fall, pursuing a degree in agriculture. He is active in 4-H, FFA as the FFA president, National Honor Society, honor roll, basketball, baseball and church. Andrew plans to return to his family farm after college to be a fourth-generation farmer.

McLean Electric scholarship

Each entry had to include a short statement for an essay question to be eligible for the \$500 scholarship. This year's essay question was: What challenges face rural electric cooperatives in the coming years and how do you think challenges should be addressed?

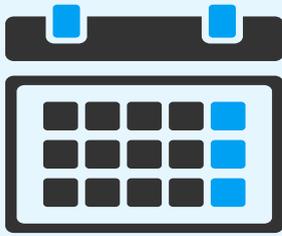
Ben Scheresky

Ben will graduate from Max High School and is the son of Bonnie and Galen Scheresky of Max. He will be attending NDSU in the fall to pursue a career in agricultural economics. He is active in FFA, 4-H, student council, honor society, basketball, community service and his church. He plans on utilizing his degree in his future farming and ranching career. ■

Youth Tour winner announced

Grace Goven, a junior at Turtle Lake-Mercer High School, has been selected to represent McLean Electric Cooperative on the all-expense-paid 2022 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., this June.

Grace is the daughter of Jill and Gerard Goven of Turtle Lake. During the weeklong tour, Grace and other students from across North Dakota will travel with the Montana youth delegates. They will tour sites, monuments, attractions and congressional offices. They will learn about electric cooperatives and discuss issues facing their community and nation. ■



McLean County community calendar:

Events and activities to see and do

McLean County community food pantry May distributions:

- **Community Cupboard of Underwood:** 4-6 p.m. May 5, 208 Lincoln Ave. Like us on Facebook, Community Cupboard of Underwood, for food pantry distributions, thrift store and other information.
- **Garrison Area Resource Center and Food Pantry, Garrison:** May 26, noon-2 p.m. and 5-7 p.m., former Lazy J's building back door.
- **Our Savior Lord's Food Pantry, Max:** May 16, noon-3 p.m. and 5-7 p.m., Max City Hall, 215 Main St.
- **The Lord's Pantry, Turtle Lake:** 2-4 p.m. May 12, Trinity Lutheran Church, 515 Kundert St.
- **Wilton Food Pantry, Wilton:** "Mini" distributions every Friday, 11:30 a.m. until gone; full food distribution, 4-6 p.m. May 19, Wilton Senior Citizens Center, 42 Dakota Ave.

Area food pantries often experience high needs for these items: baked beans, pork and beans, canned fruit, tuna, chicken, cereal, oatmeal, granola and breakfast bars, juice, mac and cheese, hamburger and tuna helper, pancake mix, syrup, pasta, pasta sauce, peanut butter, jelly, rice side dishes, soups and household items such as body wash and soap, dish soap, laundry detergent, shampoo and conditioner, toilet paper, toothpaste and toothbrushes. Contact local food pantries for drop-off information or a list of additional needs in your community.

May activities:

Please consider attending local Memorial Day remembrance ceremonies.

- **May 4:** Annual pancake supper sponsored by the Underwood Civic Club, 5-7 p.m., Underwood City Hall gymnasium.
- **May 7:** Bike Fest, Turtle Lake.
- **May 7:** Annual Spring Fling Vendor Show, Wilton Memorial Hall, in conjunction with the annual Highway 36 Rummage Sale.
- **May 14:** Full Flower Moon Fairy Hike, Fort Stevenson State Park, Garrison. Contact the park, 701-337-5576, for details.
- **May 21:** Fourth annual EMS Kid Strong, 4 p.m., bounce house activities and tours of specialized emergency services vehicles, Fort Stevenson State Park, Garrison. Contact the park, 701-337-5576, for details.
- **May 28-30:** SkyFest over Fort Stevenson, annual kite festival on the Fort Stevenson State Park's Guardhouse Interpretive Center lawn beginning 10 a.m. daily. Kite flying, demonstrations, children's kite-making, prize drawings and special activities daily. Go to the festival website, www.skyfestnd.com, for details.
- **May 30:** McLean Electric Cooperative closed in remembrance of Memorial Day.

Nonprofit organizations and communities throughout McLean County are encouraged to contact Patricia Stockdill, stockdill.patricia@gmail.com, or telephone 701-337-5462, to submit their community events. ■

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Larry Gessele, president
701-447-2461
District 7, Mercer

Darcy Klain, vice president
701-448-2408
District 4, Ruso

Rod Stockdill, secretary-treasurer
701-337-5462
District 3, Garrison

Clarence Behles, asst. secretary-treasurer
701-337-5362
District 2, Garrison

Troy Presser, director
701-447-2855
District 5, Turtle Lake

Karen Hanson, director
701-448-2636
District 6, Washburn

James Odermann, director
701-743-4415
District 1, Parshall

STAFF:

Mark Doyle, General Manager/CEO
Keith Thelen, Operations Manager
Lucas Schaaf, Engineering Manager
Wendy Kinn, Finance Manager

Office: 701-463-6700
Toll-Free: 800-263-4922
Fax: 701-337-5303
Email: mclean1@mcleanelectric.com
Website address:
www.mcleanelectric.com