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## Three director seats up for election

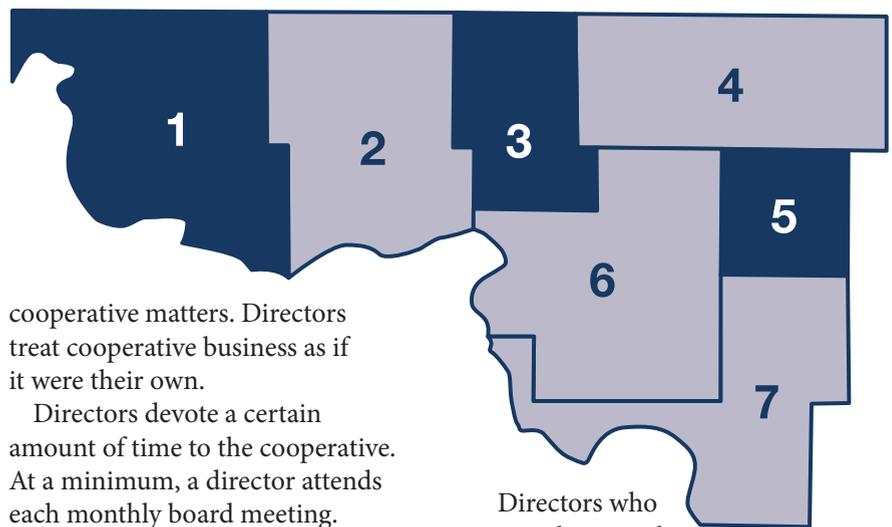
# Do you want to become a director?

**H**ave you ever thought of running for a seat on the board of directors? It is quite simple. Pick up a petition at the McLean Electric Cooperative headquarters in Garrison and secure 15 signatures of members from within your district. You can start circulating the petition right away, but it must be filed not less than 60 days before the annual meeting. Petitions for the 2019 director election must be filed with the co-op by April 19.

According to the bylaws, any member of McLean Electric Cooperative who is a member of this cooperative as a bonafide resident of the district he/she represents, and is in no way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise, can become a candidate for the board of directors. Directors shall be elected by the members at large.

### Director duties

Directors have a fiduciary responsibility to the cooperative. They exercise care, time and responsibility in reviewing



cooperative matters. Directors treat cooperative business as if it were their own.

Directors devote a certain amount of time to the cooperative. At a minimum, a director attends each monthly board meeting.

Directors learn about the industry as a whole by reading other materials and by attending state and national meetings. An understanding of the issues facing the industry is vital.

To help directors with their responsibilities, training is offered through the electric cooperative's statewide organization. Courses cover director duties and liabilities, understanding the electric business, board roles and relationships, strategic planning and financial decision-making.

Directors who currently serve the cooperative find the duty extremely rewarding.

### This year, the districts up for election are:

- **District 1** - Parshall is currently served by James Odermann.
- **District 3** - Garrison is served by Rod Stockdill.
- **District 5** - Turtle Lake is served by Troy Presser.

**2019 annual meeting  
to be held June 18, 2019, in Garrison**

Three directors will be elected at the McLean Electric Cooperative annual meeting, Tuesday, June 18, in Garrison

*Save the Date*

**McLean Electric Cooperative**

**2019 ANNUAL  
MEETING**

**June 18 • Garrison City Auditorium**



# LIFE HACKS

## TO SAVE ENERGY

Air leaks can waste energy dollars. Whether leaks are letting hot air inside during the warmer months or letting in drafts during the cooler season, one of the quickest energy- and money-saving tasks you can do is caulk, seal and weather strip all cracks and large openings to the outside.

### CAULKING

Most caulking compounds come in disposable cartridges that fit in half-barrel caulking guns (if possible, purchase one with an automatic release). Some pressurized cartridges do not require caulking guns.

### STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTIONS

- 1) For good adhesion, clean all areas to be caulked.**  
Remove any old caulk and paint, using a putty knife or a large screwdriver. Make sure the area is dry so you won't seal in moisture.
- 2) Prep the caulking gun (if you're using one).**  
Cut the tip of the cartridge of caulk at a 45-degree angle and insert the tube in the gun. If you've never used a caulking gun, take this time to do a "test caulking" on



a newspaper or paper towel so you have a good sense of what to expect before taking your project to a more conspicuous door or window.

**3) Hold the caulking gun at a 45-degree angle to the now-dried, clean edge that's to be filled.**

Using a "pulling" motion, hold the gun at a consistent angle and slide the tube nozzle along the joint, while pulling the trigger of the caulk gun to apply the material. You know you've got the right angle when the caulk is immediately forced into the crack as it comes out of the tube. Try to avoid stops and starts by caulking in one straight continuous stream.

**4) "Tool" the caulk by pushing it into the crack.**

Once you've covered 2-3 feet of

the surface with a bead of caulk, dampen your finger (or spoon, piece of wood or foam paintbrush if you don't want the material to touch your hand) and glide over the bead, pushing the caulk into the crack and force the caulk deeper into the crack you're filling.

**5) Clean up any mistakes or excess caulk with a damp rag.**

Make sure to take care of any problem areas right away, since dried caulk is much harder to clean up later.

**6) Allow the caulk to dry according to the directions on the package.**

It usually takes about 24 hours for the caulk to fully cure, but can depend on air temperature and humidity. ■



**Travis Voth**



**Brian O'Shea**



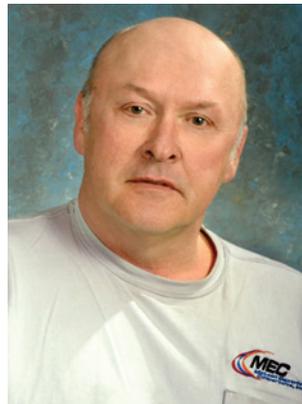
**Trevor Thomas**



**Nathan Ruud**



**Lucas Dusek**



**Rick Gienger**



**Jesse Carter**

# Celebrate National Lineworker Day April 8: Meet the MEC line crew

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

**N**ational Lineworker Appreciation Day is April 8. It's a day Congress designated in 2013 to recognize lineworkers across the United States who keep lights on and electric energy flowing to farms, homes, businesses and everyone in-between.

McLean Electric Cooperative (MEC) has seven lineworkers in its Garrison headquarters and Turtle Lake outpost. It will soon add an eighth lineworker, bringing it to full staff in April, described McLean Electric General Manager/CEO Marty Dahl.

Lineworkers are the face of McLean Electric, Dahl added. They're the ones in the field working on line, in the yards servicing line up to the meter, and restoring electricity in the most adverse weather conditions North Dakota offers. "We appreciate them the most because they're out in the worst," Dahl suggested.

McLean Electric's line crew is a wealth of industry experience: Rick Gienger, Garrison's lead lineworker, is the group's veteran, having served MEC consumers for 42 years. Garrison's line foreman, Nathan Ruud, has more than 19 years of experience and 17 with McLean Electric. Jesse Carter has four years of experience at MEC, but more than 18 years in the industry altogether. Lineworker Lucas Dusek has 14 years of experience, 11 with MEC.

The Turtle Lake crew is headed by 16-year veteran line foreman Travis "Shorty" Voth. When lineworker Brian O'Shea joined MEC 10 years ago, he brought more than a decade of experience with him. Trevor Thomas has been with MEC three years, but also worked in the industry prior to coming to Turtle Lake.

Typical of the industry, all of MEC's lineworkers enjoy the outdoors – working and recreating outside.

# Safety comes first

Safety is critical in the lineworker industry.

Often the only thing between a lineworker and a massive charge of electricity is a well-insulated rubber glove or rubber sleeve.

However, for everyone in the industry, safety extends beyond the line crew and the job.

It's everyone all of the time.

McLean Electric Cooperative (MEC), like everyone in the electrical industry, emphasizes safety at all levels from management, office staff and the line crew.

The cooperative's board of directors adopted a "Commitment to Zero" initiative at its February meeting as part of a nationwide effort to encourage people from all walks of life to focus on zero accidents.

"It doesn't have to be linemen. ... It's everybody," MEC Operations Manager Keith Thelen described.

The cooperative already has an extensive safety program with training, education, and an emphasis on making safety part of the entire McLean Electric staff's day-to-day life.

Just as the state of North Dakota launched its "Vision Zero" as its traffic safety initiative, striving for zero highway fatalities, "Commitment to Zero" is an effort to encourage safety at all levels for those in the electric cooperative family – consumers and employees alike.



For some, the opportunity to work at McLean Electric is an opportunity to either return or stay in the area where they grew up. Gienger is from Garrison; Voth, O'Shea and Thomas from Turtle Lake; Ruud grew up on a farm in Mountrail County near Parshall; Dusek is from Anamoose; and Carter is from Beulah.

The crew also likes the diversity linework provides, which also brings challenges such as weather conditions. One day they might be working on underground cable and later that day – or night and next day – they might have an outage caused by a tornado, thunderstorm or a North Dakota breeze blowing trees into overhead power lines.

The work can be highly technical and technology-based one day and then they could find themselves pounding ice off a power line with specialized equipment the next when an ice storm moves through an area. "We're very technical, it can be highly technical at times. It's one end of the spectrum to the other," Ruud described.

Most of MEC's lineworkers attended Bismarck

State College's (BSC) lineworker program, although Carter began his career in line construction. He then worked with Basin Electric Power Cooperative, McLean Electric's generation and transmission supplier, prior to joining MEC.

Working with line contractors provides an opportunity to gain experience and work a variety of types of line, whether it's distribution or transmission, as well as the experience of traveling and seeing other regions of the country.

However, while being a cooperative lineworker can mean late nights and sometimes continuous long days of working storm outages, it's still an opportunity to be home. "It's the cooperative world. You're not living out of a suitcase," Voth offered.

The BSC program provides hands-on training and education to advance to apprentice and journeyman levels of certification, Dusek explained.

Most industry employers require work experience, training or a degree, or both, and the BSC program helps



lineworkers move toward the end goal, which is often employment with an electric cooperative, Carter added.

Several of McLean Electric's crew were familiar with the industry as children. For example, Ruud's uncle was in linework. Ruud was encouraged to pursue a career in linework from a longtime family friend.

While MEC's lineworkers are the face of the cooperative for its consumers, they are also becoming a familiar face at some local schools.

For three years, Ruud and Gienger have taken MEC's bucket truck and share their knowledge of electricity, electric safety and the work they do with third-grade students at Garrison's Bob Callies Elementary School. They demonstrate their rubber gloves and sleeves, and talk safety, simple electric circuits and insulators, for example.

McLean Electric is looking at the opportunity to bring the program to other area schools and potentially becoming an annual activity. Working hands-on with the students is another example of the cooperative principle, commitment to community.

Electricity is more than flipping a switch on and off.

Lineworkers are the ones who ensure people can do it reliably whenever they want and need electricity.

So, yes, April 8 is National Lineworker Appreciation Day – and a “thank you” to McLean Electric's line crew. ■

**McLean Electric Cooperative has an opening for a full-time accountant at the cooperative's headquarters in Garrison, N.D.**

A qualified candidate will be responsible for a variety of accounting functions, including but not limited to payroll, fleet management, asset management and depreciation as well as handle federal and state reporting functions. Must be able to multi-task and meet deadlines. Requires a high school diploma, 2-year degree in a related field and/or applicable job-related experience. Experience in RUS accounting preferred but not required. This position offers a competitive salary and a comprehensive benefit package. Qualified applicants should fill out an application which can be obtained at the McLean Electric Cooperative office in Garrison or on our website at [www.mcleanelectric.com](http://www.mcleanelectric.com). Application with resume should be mailed or emailed to:

*McLean Electric Cooperative,  
PO Box 399 Garrison, ND 58540 Attn: Wendy Kinn*

*Or email to [wendylk@mcleanelectric.com](mailto:wendylk@mcleanelectric.com)  
or call 701-463-6700 for more information*

The position will remain open until filled.



MEC is an equal opportunity employer.



## Training close to home

**A**n April 12, 1970, *Mandan Morning Press* newspaper article highlighted a Bismarck State College (Bismarck Junior College at that time) pilot program.

It would train people in the electric lineworker industry, melding the science of electricity and hands-on training for building, maintaining and providing electric energy to consumers.

Fast-forward nearly 50 years and for most people entering electric linework in North Dakota, the BSC program is the go-to place to get a heads up on employment and the opportunity to live and work – for many – in their home state.

With a limit of 60 students, enrollment in the program is full more often than not. It begins in the summer with students learning early how to climb and work hands-free while belted in, hooks dug into a 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.

Most lineworker program students are like McLean

Electric Cooperative's (MEC) lineworkers – they love the outdoors, enjoy working with their hands, and like hands-on learning and training. Students learn apprentice lineworker skills with the curriculum blending classroom studies and in-the-field training.

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

The BSC program provides opportunities for North Dakotans interested in the career to get their education close to home, described McLean Electric Cooperative General Manager/CEO Marty Dahl.

It also helps provide North Dakotans with a stable, trained workforce to help ensure they receive reliable electric service. Plus, it helps industry employers by providing well-trained staff, many who want to stay in the state, which helps with employee retention.

“When you send people out-of-state (for education and training), they get (job) offers out-of-state,” Dahl added.

When McLean Electric has an opening for a lineworker position, many applicants either are in the process of going through BSC's program or are graduates, supplying a pool of well-qualified and experienced people to make a selection.

McLean Electric Cooperative is bringing its eighth lineworker on staff in April. Interested applicants want to live and work in McLean County, Dahl described, and they want to work for a cooperative. “We've (McLean Electric and the surrounding communities and county) become a desirable place to be. It's just a good place to work.”

That reflects on the community, the county and the cooperative, he added. Whether a lineworker is stationed in Garrison or its Turtle Lake outpost, they're within close proximity to an array of outdoor recreational opportunities and both communities are a short drive to larger communities of Bismarck and Minot.

It also becomes easier to recruit new lineworkers, in part, through the BSC lineworker program because of its proximity to McLean County and the region.

More information about the lineworker program is available from Bismarck State College's online academic catalog at <http://catalog.bismarckstate.edu/catalog/degrees/career-technical-education/lineworker-electrical/>. ■



## You've planned every acre Have you planned for your safety?

**A**s spring planting nears, McLean Electric Cooperative reminds hardworking farmers and ranchers to stay safe.

Overhead power lines are necessary to deliver electricity, but those same power lines can be deadly if not treated with respect. While you need to focus on the field and your machinery, McLean Electric Cooperative urges you to also watch for electrical hazards around the farm or ranch.

### Be aware

Farmers and their equipment should always be 10 feet away from power lines on all sides. Field cultivators and sprayers can often reach as high as

12 feet in the air. Practice extreme caution and use a spotter to make sure you stay far away from power lines when you use tall equipment.

If you have purchased new equipment, be aware of antennas or other attachments that may pose new hazards. A newer, bigger piece of equipment may no longer clear a line. In addition, shifting soil may also affect whether or not machinery avoids power lines from year-to-year.

Power lines also may sag over the years. If power lines on your property are sagging, contact McLean Electric Cooperative to repair the lines. Never try to move a power line on your own.

Overhead power lines are not the only electric hazard on the farm. Pole guy wires, used to stabilize utility poles, are grounded. However, when one of the guy wires is broken, it can become charged with electricity. If you break a guy wire, call the cooperative to fix it. Don't do it yourself.

### Follow these other tips:

- Check areas carefully for overhead power lines and utility poles. Make sure you, your family and employees know the location of overhead power lines, and use routes to avoid the lines when moving equipment. Do this every year, as equipment sizes and soil conditions may change.
- Be aware of increased heights of equipment, especially new equipment with higher antennas.
- Avoid moving large equipment alone. Have someone watch as you move equipment to ensure you are clear of power lines. ■

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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**Darcy Klain**, vice president  
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District 4, Ruso

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**Troy Presser**, director  
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District 5, Turtle Lake

**Thomas Sheldon**, director  
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District 6, Washburn

**James Odermann**, director  
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**Keith Thelen**, Operations Manager  
**Lucas Schaaf**, Engineering Manager  
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