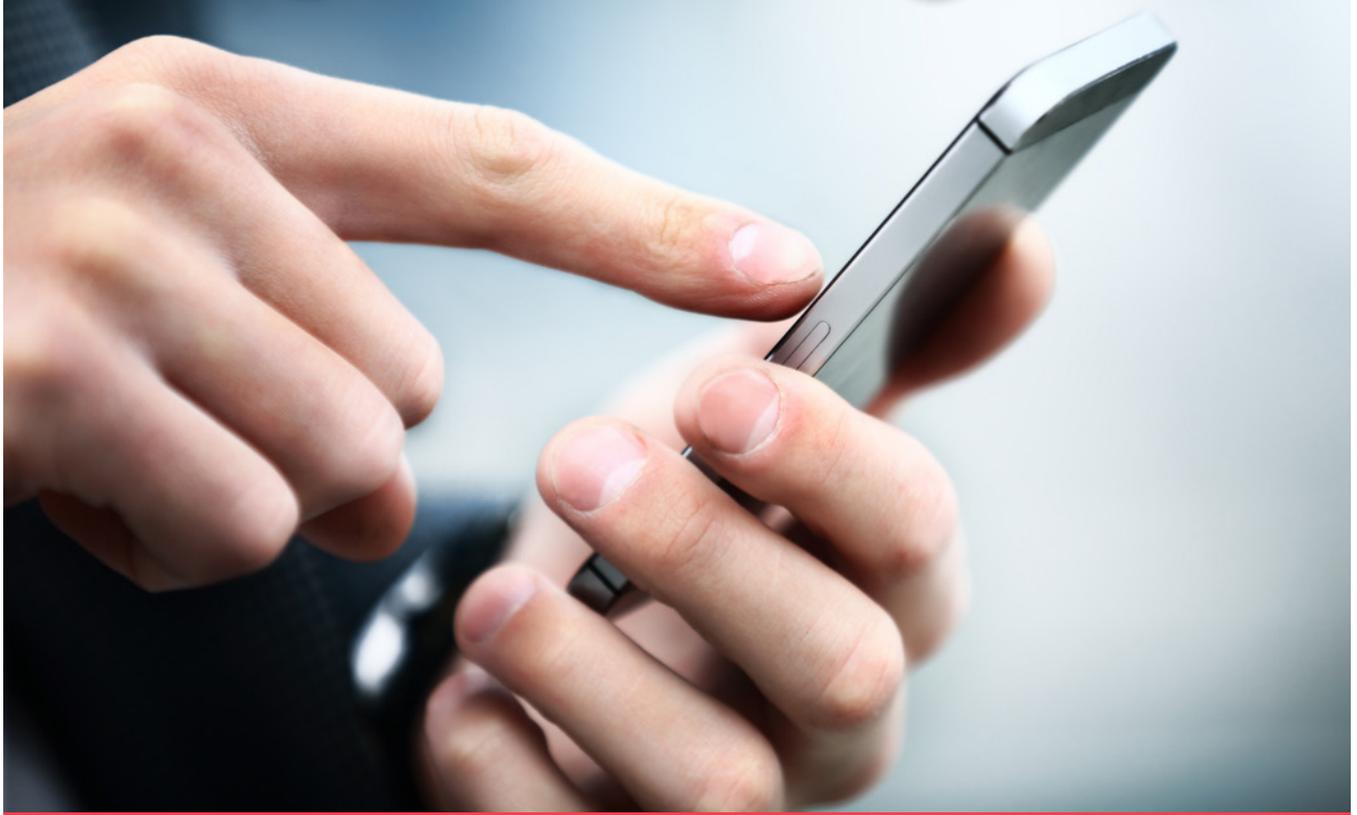


IN THIS ISSUE:

- Welcome new General Manager Mark Doyle
- Strength in numbers
- Events and activities

To report an outage



Because power outages can't be totally eliminated, McLean Electric Cooperative offers these steps to follow if an outage occurs:

- **CONFIRM THE OUTAGE.** Check your own fuses and circuit breakers first.
- **CHECK WITH A NEIGHBOR TO CONFIRM IF HE OR SHE IS ALSO EXPERIENCING**
- **AN OUTAGE BEFORE YOU CALL THE COOPERATIVE.** This will help your cooperative determine the extent of the outage.
- **CALL THE COOPERATIVE.** If the outage is widespread, the phone lines may be busy, but keep trying. Your cooperative will send a line crew to find the problem and restore power as quickly as possible.

Remember: We do not monitor our Facebook page 24/7. If you are experiencing an outage or have something to report, please contact the cooperative by phone.

McLean Electric Cooperative welcomes new General Manager/CEO Mark Doyle

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL



Mark Doyle brings years of finance, operations and development experience to his new position as McLean Electric Cooperative's (MEC) general manager/CEO, which he began Aug. 31.

Prior to joining MEC, he spent five years with the financial cooperative, CoBank, as a vice president/senior relationship manager. CoBank is a major lender for electric cooperatives across the United States. Doyle worked with cooperatives in North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota.

His career path also included six years with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Services (RUS) electric program as a general field representative, assisting electric cooperatives with financing construction projects.

Doyle, who is from Cavalier, began his career in the electric industry as a Bismarck State College graduate.

"It's not your normal career path," Doyle said, smiling. He

journeyed from line work to finance and management. Even though his career path differs from many lineworkers across the country, he fits with the mantra of many North Dakotans and lineworkers – someone who loves the outdoors, working outside and activities such as hunting, fishing and hiking.

While all cooperatives have the same mission, each one is different and unique in its own way, he offered. MEC is a cooperative in the unique position of serving a wide diversity of loads – everything from large industrial accounts, such as Blue Flint Ethanol, to agricultural and small industrial accounts to recreation and rural residential members.

"McLean Electric has a really nice mix," he added.

MEC, with more than 4,000 accounts, isn't a large cooperative in terms of the number of accounts it serves, yet its location between Minot and Bismarck also helps sustain its diversity and growth, he continued.

Doyle was familiar with MEC through his work with CoBank, so he applied when the opportunity arose to work with a cooperative such as MEC and live in an area with its outdoor opportunities such as McLean County. He succeeds Marty Dahl, who retired as general manager/CEO after nearly 12 years with the cooperative.

Doyle was also familiar with the area through his passion for the outdoors, hunting in western McLean County and fishing Lake Sakakawea.

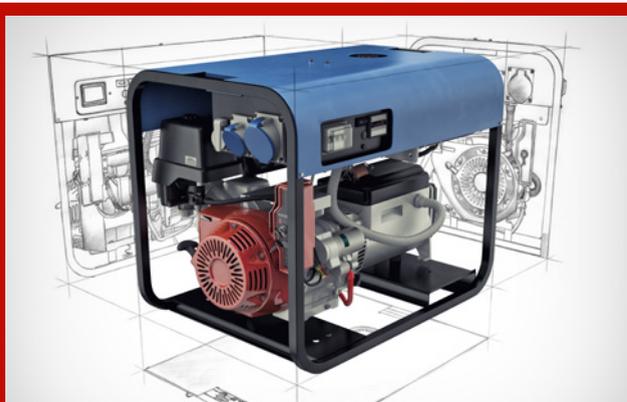
He and his wife, Julie, own Watson Real Estate, where Julie is a realtor and will be managing broker. They will expand their business to the area. The Doyles will live near Underwood until they can find a rural property, possibly along Lake Sakakawea or Lake Audubon, he added.

While Mark and Julie are moving to become part of the MEC family, their daughter, Tori (Victoria), and her husband, Nick, farm near Cavalier and have three boys. Another daughter, Alexa, attends the University of North Dakota and their son, Michael, is at Mayville State University.

Mark is excited to join McLean Electric and live in McLean County, a cooperative strong in load diversity and a region equally strong in opportunities. Economic development is also something Mark cares deeply about and he is eager to be part of helping to grow the area he now calls home. ■

Be prepared for winter's wrath

McLean Electric Cooperative strives to provide you with reliable, uninterrupted service every day of the year, but sometimes Mother Nature creates unavoidable power outages. McLean Electric wants you to remain safe during severe winter weather, so consider preparing now for the possibility of power outages this winter.



Operate generator safely

If your standby electric generator has been in storage since last winter, make sure it is still operating properly – before an outage occurs.

And always follow the manufacturer's recommendations on how to use your generator. Most important is the transfer switch that disconnects the farm or home from the power line and connects it to the generator. It must be a double-throw transfer switch which prevents the generator from feeding electricity back onto the power line. This protects the lineworkers who may be working to restore your service.

If you have additional questions, please call McLean Electric. We will be glad to work with you to make sure your generator is used properly.

Stay away from downed power lines

Mother Nature isn't always kind to power lines. Winter winds, snow and ice often prove to be too much for utility poles and power lines. If you see a downed power line or utility pole, contact McLean Electric immediately.

Do not go near the line or the pole. Just because it's on the ground doesn't mean it's safe to approach.

During an outage

To prevent an overload on the system while power is being restored, take these steps:

- Turn off every inside light except one.
- Turn down your thermostat.
- If the outage lasts more than 60 minutes, turn off your electric water heater.
- Make sure your kitchen range is off, both the surface and the oven.
- Turn off all unnecessary appliances and unplug sensitive electronic equipment.
- When power comes back on, slowly switch your appliances and lights back on and gradually return your thermostat to its normal setting.



PHOTO CREDIT: NORTH DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives General Manager and Executive Vice President **Josh Kramer** illustrates a point during a meeting. Kramer has served in his position since 2016.

Strength in numbers; strength in working together

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

It didn't take McLean Electric Cooperative's (MEC) incorporating board of directors long to recognize the importance of strength in numbers.

MEC officially incorporated Aug. 26, 1945. It joined North Dakota's statewide electric cooperative organization, the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC), less than three months later in November 1945.

NDAREC isn't much older than MEC. It was established in 1942, explained NDAREC General Manager and Executive Vice President Josh Kramer.

"The originators realized that electric cooperatives needed a unified voice and political clout in order to effectively advocate on behalf of cooperative members and our

industry," he continued.

One reason for a voice is that electric cooperatives across the United States had to have secure funding, so they could viably afford to construct thousands of miles of power lines within service areas through the availability of low-interest loans.

Heated debates accompanied federal legislation creating the Rural Electrification Administration responsible for electrifying rural America. It sometimes took heated debates to keep funding and the agency functioning in coming years.

Over the years, NDAREC's role as the umbrella trade association for its members has evolved and grown to meet the ever-changing electric industry and needs of its cooperative members, including MEC.

"Today, the services we provide

on behalf of our members include communication and government relations, safety training, community and cooperative development, employee and director education, and more. All services advance our cooperative mission at the local, state and national level," Kramer described.

McLean Electric consumers benefit by the cooperative's NDAREC membership in many ways because of that evolving role. For example, NDAREC facilitates supervisory courses for employees and on-the-job training in specific job arenas. It also facilitates conferences for cooperative engineers, member service directors, managers, communicators and others to help each aspect within a cooperative learn through networking and training.

Board directors are encouraged

to take a litany of courses to help them better serve their cooperative and its members. NDAREC and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) provide a board leadership training program with three tiers of advanced educational courses.

“When you’re elected to the (electric cooperative) board, there’s a lot to learn and know, but we’ll help you get there,” Kramer emphasized.

A short list of director training classes includes strategic planning, understanding the electric cooperative industry – and the electric industry in general – risk oversight, ethics and governance, director duties and liabilities, disaster preparedness, communication skills, evaluating and improving board performance, and evolution of the electric cooperative power supply, among a long list of additional courses.

NDAREC has 21 members among North Dakota’s electric cooperatives. Being part of NDAREC means members have the power of working together, rather than 21 cooperatives going in different directions in search of the same things, Kramer continued.

“As the trade association that represents electric cooperatives, the service we provide saves cooperatives time, money and resources, and improves quality, which in turn also benefits cooperative members,” he said.

In addition to its education and training role, communications is paramount for the industry. NDAREC helps cooperatives communicate with their local pages in the association’s magazine, *North Dakota Living*, yet they also communicate with the media on a variety of levels – from social media to traditional print and electronic – while communicating with

government officials on local, state and national levels.

Kramer cites examples of the importance of communication: Power supply and the COVID-19 pandemic. As America becomes increasingly urbanized, it’s important to educate not just electric cooperative consumers, but people and government officials alike, about the nation’s power supply and how it functions.

Most recently, August sweltering heat caused rolling brownouts and blackouts in states relying predominately on renewable solar and wind energy. Not that long ago, portions of Minnesota and Wisconsin teetered on the edge of a similar situation during weeks of sub-zero winter weather when wind doesn’t blow to power wind turbines.

“Both renewable and nonrenewable energy resources are important to the nation’s power supply and as conversations about our energy future evolve, we must recognize that each energy source plays a role, yet has limitations, pros

and cons. We promote a domestic, diverse and abundant energy mix, leveraging the strengths of all forms of electrical generation, a strategy that will allow cooperatives to continue to provide safe, affordable and reliable electricity, in all conditions,” he explained.

Other strategies supported through NDAREC include:

- Environmentally friendly programs and policies promoting energy security. That includes comprehensive planning, research and development of new energy technologies, carbon capture, utilization and storage, renewable energy, energy efficient tools, and conservation.
- Work with federal agencies to accomplish missions in ways that provide adequate timeline and reasonable regulatory certainty. In other words, don’t establish mandates that aren’t technologically feasible.
- NDAREC also supports



A McLean Electric Cooperative lineworker practices techniques used to safely remove an injured lineworker during a pole-top rescue training session. The training session uses a dummy to simulate an injured worker. Ongoing safety training and certification is part of how electric cooperatives such as McLean Electric and their statewide organization, the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, promote safety among all employees.

hydropower, such as that generated by the Garrison Dam power plant, and opposes selling or privatizing hydroelectric assets or changing its rate structure, which would lead to increased rates for cooperative members as others compete for hydropower supply.

COVID-19 presented significant issues for electric cooperatives, members and communities, Kramer continued. “Ensuring that cooperatives have access to the necessary resources to keep employees and members healthy and safe, while keeping the lights on during a pandemic is obviously the priority,” he stressed. “In North Dakota, more than 250,000 people

depend on electric cooperatives to power their homes, farms, schools, businesses and industries.”

That’s about one-third of North Dakota’s population. “The pandemic has proven how connected we are – when our member-consumers hurt, our communities and cooperatives hurt,” Kramer said. The pandemic underscored the importance of being part of a cooperative family and working together, he added.

Kramer became NDAREC’s executive vice president and general manager in July 2016 when Dennis Hill retired. Both Hill and Kramer have rural connections: Like Hill, who grew up on a family farm served by MEC and a rural telecommunications cooperative near Roseglen, Kramer has farming

in his background. He grew up on an Emmons County dairy farm served by KEM Electric Cooperative and BEK Communications Cooperative.

“I have many memories of tagging along to annual meetings with my grandparents and learning about the value of our cooperatives,” he described.

Another important connection NDAREC has with its electric cooperatives and their members connects the industry and its emphasis on safety and training with the importance of ensuring a safe and adequate workforce: NDAREC partners with Bismarck State College (BSC) to provide the college’s Lineworkers Program. The partnership began 50 years ago, Kramer described.



PHOTO CREDIT: NORTH DAKOTA ASSOCIATION OF RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

Co-ops support rural development

Rural development is more than jobs.

It’s more than quality of life.

For some McLean County residents, rural development means another chance at life.

The most recent example is demonstrated in a project providing the Garrison-Max Ambulance District with a \$130,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDL&G) Program 0 percent loan. It will help fund the headquarters expansion to better serve the district.

The program also helped the Underwood Ambulance Department upgrade with a new ambulance, as well as earlier projects in other McLean County communities.

The Rural Electric and Telecommunications Development Center at the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) facilitated the loan. Its director, Lori Capouch, said North Dakota and Georgia are the only two state electric cooperative associations operating rural development centers in the entire country. The Center is funded by NDAREC member cooperative dues and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Cooperative Development program.

The Center provides a variety of services:

- Organizational and business development guidance.
- Business development analysis.

North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives Rural Development Center Director **Lori Capouch** speaks at a conference. The Center helps advance rural development across North Dakota’s small communities and rural areas, working through the 21-member electric cooperatives and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Cooperative Development Loan and Grant Program.

Students train at a site provided by NDAREC that offers outdoor training, classroom facilities and equipment storage for the program. Approximately 1,700 students have completed the Lineworkers Program since its inception.

“Students receive instruction in all facets of power line construction, equipment operation and maintenance.” Kramer described.

They receive classroom instruction, indoor and outdoor lab work, and even prepare for North Dakota’s commercial driver’s license exam through BSC’s Lineworkers Program.

“Electric cooperatives take pride in the responsibility they have to ensure that there is access within our state to education and training for

the highly skilled lineworker trade,” Kramer continued. “This is necessary in order to maintain the workforce needed to continue to provide safe, affordable and reliable electricity to cooperative members.”

Safety and safety training are also paramount, with training extending beyond the BSC program through NDARECs Apprenticeship, Training and Safety (AT&S) program. NDAREC also emphasizes and promotes safety by recognizing cooperatives participating in the national Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP), no Occupational and Safety and Health Administration recordable accidents, safe driving and no lost-time on-the-job accidents.

MEC and Garrison line foreman

Nathan Ruud were honored with the RESAP award at the 2020 AT&S conference.

October is designated as National Co-op Month, an opportunity to recognize the role the diverse types of cooperatives play in the lives of many Americans.

In North Dakota, electric and rural telecommunications cooperatives are critical, allowing members to stay connected while living and working remotely.

They are part of the fabric that makes North Dakota such an agricultural and energy leader in not just the state, but the nation and world.

Organizations such as NDAREC, working with MEC, help strengthen that role. ■

- Cooperative development strategies.
- Assist to obtain research and development startup funds.
- Startup administrative services.
- Professional referrals.
- Sponsor business and cooperative director and manager conferences and seminars.
- Coordinate local and state rural development efforts.

The Center is a liaison for other local, state and federal rural development entities and can assist with grant writing, Capouch continued. “What better to do the work than cooperatives?” she asked.

Even though, applicants and loan and grant recipients aren’t always electric or telecommunications cooperative members. Cooperatives recognize and support the cooperative principle of “Commitment to Community,” and are happy to support projects in small communities across rural North Dakota, Capouch added.

The Center underscores the importance of the broad-based definition of community and the philosophy that when one benefits, all benefit, and the quality of life extends across a broad area.

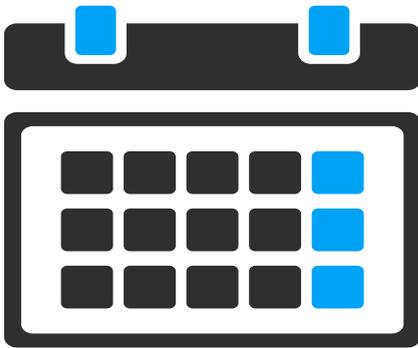
The Rural Development Center doesn’t advertise its services extensively. Instead, Capouch credits word of mouth and local cooperative employees working within their communities and service areas to identify local needs. Her advice to a potential nonprofit organization or business: “Just pick up the phone and call. ... If we’re not the right group, we’ll help you find out who could be.”

More information on the Rural Electric and Telecommunications

Development Center is available on the NDAREC website, www.ndarec.com, clicking “Rural Development” or call Capouch, 701-663-6501 or toll-free 800-234-0518, or email capouch@ndarec.com. ■



Retiring McLean Electric Cooperative General Manager/CEO **Marty Dahl** presented a \$130,000 check representing a 0 percent loan to Garrison-Max Ambulance District Board President **Sandra Nelson-Olzweski**, left, and Co-manager **Amanda Melby**. The loan helps fund expansion of the district’s headquarters facility. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program provided funding for the loan, which was facilitated by the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives Rural Development Center and McLean Electric Cooperative.



McLean County community calendar:

Events and activities to see and do

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

McLean Electric Cooperative celebrates its 75th anniversary in June 2021, delayed due the COVID-19 pandemic. Please follow our website, Facebook page and your *North Dakota Living* local pages for details and the date, so we can celebrate together in the coming year.

McLean County food pantry distributions:

- **Community Cupboard of Underwood:** 10 a.m.-noon Oct. 17 and 4-6 p.m. Nov. 5, 208 Lincoln Ave.
- **Garrison Area Resource Center & Food Pantry, Garrison:** Oct. 22, noon-2 p.m. and 5-7 p.m., back door, former Lazy J's building.
- **Our Savior's Lord's Food Pantry, Max:** Oct. 19, 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. Oct. 8 and 10 a.m.-noon Oct. 24, Trinity Lutheran Church, 515 Kundert St.

- **Wilton Food Pantry, Wilton:** "Mini" distributions every Friday, 11:30 a.m. until gone; full distribution, 4-6 p.m. Oct. 15, Wilton Senior Citizens Center, 42 Dakota Ave.

PLEASE NOTE THAT SCHEDULED EVENTS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE PENDING COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS. PLEASE FOLLOW HEALTH GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONTACT EVENT SPONSORS FOR DETAILS AND UPDATES.

Tentative October events:

- **Oct. 10:** North Dakota Firefighters Museum Hall of Fame banquet and Hall of Fame induction ceremonies, Garrison City Auditorium, Garrison.
- **Oct. 31:** Annual Halloween Trunk or Treat, downtown Wilton, 6 p.m. (tentative). ■

McLean County organizations and communities can contact Patricia Stockdill, (stockdill.patricia@gmail.com) or telephone 701-337-5462 to submit 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:

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Keith Thelen, Operations Manager
Lucas Schaaf, Engineering Manager
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