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*The sign at the entrance to the White Shield Old Scouts Veterans Memorial Center shows its dedication in 2024.*

HONOR. RESPECT. REMEMBER. WELCOME.

## White Shield Old Scouts Veterans Memorial Center

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

Honor.  
Respect.  
Remember.  
Welcome.

Four simple words. Yet, they mean so much to many United States military veterans and their families.

Those words also summarize the purpose of the Old Scouts Veterans Memorial Center in White Shield.

"This was built for all veterans," describes Veterans Service Officer Bernadette White Bear, as she motions to expansive displays of memorabilia, photographs and emblems depicting the branches of the U.S. military, along with Native American soldiers and scouts from bygone days.

The facility, completed in June 2024, is for local veterans to pay respect to their Native American heritage and culture as well as to the men and women who served their country. It's also a central place to house all the military equipment used by members of White Shield's American Legion Young Hawk/Bear Post 253, White Bear says.

The center is a place where any veteran from any branch of service can come, regardless of who they are or where they live.

Many photographs and artifacts displayed throughout the building pay respect to the Native American culture, recognizing Arikara scouts and veterans who served in every war and conflict since the Spanish-American War

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and who continue to serve today, White Bear describes. She is working to obtain as many photographs as possible of Arikara veterans during their time of service.

Its entrance greets visitors with a tribute in both English and Arikara: "Warriors/veterans, thank you for your service."

The logo of the largest veteran service organization in the country, the American Legion, graces the center of the facility's floor, honoring the national organization founded by an Act of Congress in 1919 following World War I.

A soundproof telemedicine room in the process of completion will enable veterans to meet with doctors without having to travel to distant places, such as the Veterans Affairs medical facility in Fargo, White Bear describes.

Post 253 members forged new friendships and connections when a group serving on the fleet ocean tug USS Arikara visited the area, wondering about their ship's name and if the tribe still existed, White Bear says.

"They came to meet us and felt very welcomed, so now they come to our celebrations to continue that friendship," she says.

Another group of U.S. Marine veterans visited White Shield to honor a fellow Marine and have returned over the past eight years to help each Memorial Day, performing the 21-gun salute and playing "Taps" at 13 cemeteries in the area. The memorabilia they presented to the American Legion is displayed at the center.



*An early photograph of Joseph Young Hawk/Elmer Bear American Legion Post 253 members with United States and Post 253 flags was taken near Elbowwoods circa 1930s along the Missouri River bottoms before the river was dammed.*

For years, American Legion members discussed the need to house documents and equipment in one location, White Bear continues. To her knowledge, the Legion Post didn't have a place to call its own.

"It would always take extra time to put the logistics side together for an event," she adds, as things were stored wherever someone had space.

Now, all items for the protocol of military honor ceremonies are in one location.

"I guess it was our time (to see the project to fruition).



*The entrance to the White Shield Old Scouts Veterans Memorial Center welcomes veterans, active duty military and their families.*

We never had the resources to do it before. Now, we do," White Bear says. "We host honor ceremonies, welcome home for veterans on leave, veteran and auxiliary birthday parties, Memorial Day and Veterans Day events, and legion and auxiliary meetings," she adds.

Community veterans and auxiliary members worked extensively with an architectural firm to design a facility that houses the American Legion, Legion Auxiliary and Old Scouts Society.

Auxiliary members designed a state-of-the-art kitchen space to serve food for events without extra work and time.

"No one goes hungry when these ladies cook," White Bear says with a smile. An honor wall of photographs pays tribute to the founding women of the American Legion Young Hawk/Bear Post 253 Auxiliary, and each is related to White Bear and her family.

She served 22 years and nine days in the U.S. Marine Corps, including two tours in Iraq, yet always knew she would retire "at home." Upon returning to her White Shield roots, she was surprised to learn she was already signed up as an American Legion Post 253 member.

"I decided to remain a member because of my maternal grandfather, William J. Deane Jr., and the stories of his dedication to the American Legion. When you serve that long, you have an obligation to continue to take care of

others. It's just a piece of the dedication that's instilled in you," she says.

But White Bear downplays her participation in the Legion and her role serving at the veterans center. Instead, she described herself as merely one person among many who for years sought to grow the space they needed to provide the services, programs and events they sponsor for veterans and at public events.

So many area veterans dedicate themselves to helping the community and other veterans, she says, and the new facility provides a better opportunity to continue to grow their efforts.

The center is open to all veterans to assist with completing military paperwork, finding resources and arranging for transportation for medical appointments.

"I also want any veteran to come and utilize the building, to socialize, read, play chess, attend our military functions, just come and relax and be comfortable," White Bear suggests.

Above all, the Old Scouts Veterans Memorial Center is about serving those who served.

"Without our veterans, we wouldn't have the freedoms we have today," White Bear says. ■

## Remembering the POW/MIA

It's a round table, smaller than the others in the room, enveloped with a stark white tablecloth.

A lone, vacant chair sets alongside. A lemon slice sets atop white dinnerware, with simple silverware and a black napkin nearby.

A slender vase with a single red rose, candle and an upside down wine glass also grace the table.

A saltshaker, partially filled with salt, sets alongside the dinnerware.

This is the POW/MIA table.

Each item bears a special meaning: The table is round because our nation's concern for them should never be forgotten. Its smaller size represents how frail one prisoner is against their oppressor.

The lemon is a reminder of their bitter fate.

The vacant chair? It doesn't represent any particular person. Instead, it's every soldier, airman, marine and sailor who won't return to join the others in the room.

White dinnerware and tablecloth? That's the purity of one's response to the call to arms.

Black napkin? It's the darkness of the emptiness felt by their loved ones and families.

A red rose is the reminder of their loved ones.

The wine glass will remain upside down, because they cannot be present at the gathering.

And the saltshaker? Those tiny grains of salt are



gentle tears shed by their families.

The table is a tradition that began with concerns raised for U.S. military personnel prisoners of war and missing in action during the Vietnam War. On display at U.S. Armed Forces dining facilities, ceremonies and memorials, it's also often displayed at Memorial Day and Veterans Day events across the nation.

The POW/MIA table is a special part of the White Shield Old Scouts Veterans Memorial Center.

Every day, it provides a time for reflection and remembrance for all who view it. ■



*Prior to McLean Electric Cooperative acquiring tracked equipment, lineworkers had to try to jockey their large trucks into areas that weren't easily accessible to restore electricity.*

## Co-op readies for winter

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

Winter doesn't officially begin until Dec. 21, but North Dakotans know the weather doesn't exactly pay attention to the calendar.

That's why, regardless of the season, McLean Electric Cooperative (MEC) and its line crews prepare for winter as they would any other time of the year. For starters, they watch the weather.

"We always try to be prepared for any weather, summer or winter," describes MEC Operations Manager Keith Thelen.

Winter means lineworker vehicles and other equipment have added gear familiar to North Dakota drivers, including tow ropes and winter survival gear.

MEC crews also check communication radios to ensure they're operating properly. In addition, trucks are fueled at the end of the day or the conclusion of a power outage, so getting to an outage is not delayed.

Summer and winter storms are really all about two major issues, visibility and mobility, whether it's from heavy rain or blinding snow. In the winter, cold temperatures can provide additional challenges.

The acquisition of special tracked equipment helps line crews access areas to maneuver large vehicles,

such as bucket trucks or a pole trailer, Thelen adds.

MEC also plans ahead for potential problems by keeping adequate materials available. In addition, North Dakota's electric cooperative suppliers are ready to meet additional demands by keeping a trailer loaded with extra supplies when needed.

When more crews are needed to help during major storms, MEC typically contacts a nearby contracting company, Coal Creek Construction in Underwood.

"They're our first call," Thelen says, given their expertise and familiarity with MEC's system.

The state's electric cooperatives also help each other if and when the need arises, summer or winter. For example, MEC crews traveled to southeastern North Dakota to assist Dakota Valley Electric Cooperative when it was hit with an ice storm.

When MEC had major outages in a spring snowstorm that also significantly impacted Burke-Divide, Mountrail-Williams and McKenzie electric cooperatives, neighboring Capital and Cavalier electric cooperatives provided lineworkers to assist MEC crews.

In addition, Central Power Electric Cooperative, the wholesale electric provider for six cooperatives in the

*They may appear to be diamonds draping from a necklace, but ice-laden power lines during a 1983 storm caused major outages throughout many parts of McLean Electric Cooperative's service area.*



state, sent line crews to MEC's service area.

"(Central Power) got their transmission line up and came down to help us," Thelen says.

Despite the drive to restore electricity to member-owners as quickly as possible, safety is and always will be the priority, Thelen says. Safety checklists are reviewed, and safety committee meetings ensure everyone is ready for winter – trucks, gear and people, he adds.

That mindset also extends to every other time of the year. Safety is important, regardless of the season, weather or job. ■



*Electric cooperatives didn't always have the modern conveniences of bucket trucks and adaptive equipment. The task of replacing a pole broken during a winter storm with a new one was often left to hard work and ingenuity.*



*A McLean Electric Cooperative lineworker climbs a pole with power lines laden in thick ice during a major 1983 ice storm.*



## As winter nears, use generators safely

Electric generators certainly make life easier during an extended outage. However, it's critical for proper safety precautions to be taken to prevent accidents that could affect you, a family member, neighbor or cooperative lineworkers.

Our line crews take necessary precautions before they work on downed power lines. But even with all the safety measures, our workers' lives remain in your hands.

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 into the power line.

Transfer switches isolate utility power and generator power to prevent backfeeding, which can be deadly. This protects you, your neighbors and repair crews from electricity backfeeding onto power lines. This can seriously injure anyone near those lines, especially co-op

crews working to restore power.

Transfer switches also protect the home from electrical fires caused by short circuits and improper connections. Transfer switches should only be installed by a qualified electrician.

Generators can be temporarily or permanently installed.

A standby generator is wired directly into a house by a qualified electrician and should include a transfer switch.

For the safety of everyone, never connect a generator directly to your home's wiring unless your home has been wired for generator use and a transfer safety switch has been installed by a professional.

Portable generators do not permanently attach to the home and can power only the appliances plugged into the generator, so consider essential electrical needs when choosing. To avoid backfeeding into the utility electrical system, the portable generator should never be plugged directly into the home. ■

### Is your generator ready?

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

Test your generator now to make sure it is working, then operate it at intervals throughout the year. Regularly running your generator will also keep you

familiar with the operating procedures.

The fuel should be fresh, battery charged, electrical connections good, filters clean and cooling system well maintained. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions on engine maintenance.



# FEELING THE HEAT

Hot water is one of those comforts we often take for granted. But water heating can amount to 12% of your monthly energy use. You can save with some simple tips. That leaky faucet, for example, can lead to gallons of wasted water and create a “drain” on your monthly bill. Here are some tips from McLean Electric Cooperative.:

- **Lower the temperature.** For most households, a 120-degree setting on your water heater may work fine.
- **Insulate the tank.** Install water heater wrap, also known as water heater blanket, per manufacturer’s instructions.
- **Maintain.** Drain 1 to 2 gallons from the bottom of your water heater each year to reduce sediment buildup.
- **Insulate exposed hot water lines.** In addition to insulating the tank itself, consider adding insulation to the first 6 feet of both the hot and cold water pipes connected to the unit.
- **Fix dripping faucets.** You can significantly reduce hot water use by simply repairing leaks in fixtures, such as faucets and shower heads. A leak of one drip per second wastes 1,661 gallons of water and can cost up to \$35 per year.
- **Use either cold or warm water for most laundry loads.** Cold water is always sufficient for rinsing.
- **Fill the dishwasher before starting it and use a shorter cycle.**
- **Install non-aerating, low-flow faucets and showerheads.** Purchase quality low-flow fixtures for around \$10 to \$20 a piece and achieve a water savings of 25% to 60%. ■

# McLean County community calendar: Events and activities to see and do

## McLean County area food pantry November distribution and donation thrift store dates, times and locations:

- **Garrison – Garrison Area Resource Center & Food Pantry:** Noon-2 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. Nov. 20.
- **Makoti, Parshall, Plaza, Roseglen, Ryder, White Shield and others in need – Community Food Pantry:** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Nov. 22, 181 Ellsworth St., Makoti. Community Thrift Store: 3-6 p.m. Tuesday, 4-7 p.m. Thursday and 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday, except holidays, 181 Ellsworth St., Makoti.
- **Max – Our Savior Lord’s Food Pantry:** Noon-3 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. Nov. 17, Max City Hall, 215 Main St.
- **Turtle Lake – The Lord’s Pantry:** 2-4 p.m. Nov. 13 and 10 a.m.-noon Nov. 22, Trinity Lutheran Church, 515 Kundert St.
- **Turtle Lake – Free Community Clothing Share & Exchange Store:** Noon-6 p.m. every Thursday, 221 Main St.
- **Underwood – Community Cupboard of Underwood food distribution:** 4-6 p.m. Nov. 6, and Nov. 22 turkey basket distribution from 10 a.m.-noon, 208 Lincoln Ave. Like us on Facebook (Community Cupboard of Underwood), for distribution dates and thrift store updates.
- **Underwood – Community Cupboard of Underwood Thrift Store:** 1-5 p.m. every Tuesday.
- **Washburn – McLean Family Resource Center:** McLean County residents can contact the center, 701-462-8643, for an appointment to pick up baskets along with more information or assistance through the center’s services, 205 Seventh St.
- **Washburn – McLean Family Resource Center Clothing Outlet:** 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, 205 Seventh St.
- **Wilton – Wilton Food Pantry mini distributions:** 11:30 a.m. until gone every Friday. Full food distribution 4-6 p.m. Nov. 20, Wilton Senior Citizens Center, 42 Dakota Ave.
- **Wilton – The (free) Clothes Closet:** 3-5 p.m. Nov. 20, First Presbyterian Church, 401 Dakota Ave.

Area food pantries often experience high needs for the following items: baked beans, pork and beans, canned fruit, tuna, chicken, vegetables, cereal, oatmeal, granola and breakfast bars, juice, macaroni and cheese, hamburger and tuna helper, pancake mix,

syrup, pasta, spaghetti, Alfredo and pasta sauce, peanut butter, jelly, rice side dishes, soups and chili, 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 locations, information or a list of additional needs in your community.

## November and early December events:

- **Nov. 11:** Veterans Day. Please support community events commemorating our nation’s military veterans service.
- **Nov. 11:** Veterans Honor Ceremony, Old Scouts Veterans' Memorial Center, White Shield, 11 a.m.
- **Nov. 22:** Turtle Lake Hospital Auxiliary Annual Holiday Fair, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Turtle Lake school gym, featuring vendors, basket raffles, Grandma’s Attic and lunch beginning at 11 a.m.
- **Nov. 24:** Hunter’s Brunch sponsored by Audubon Refuge Partners, Audubon National Wildlife Refuge along the south shore of Lake Audubon. Hunters and non-hunters alike are invited to the annual freewill brunch on the first day the refuge opens for upland bird hunting.
- **Nov. 27-28:** McLean Electric Cooperative office closed for Thanksgiving.
- **Nov. 28-29:** Fort Stevenson State Park Dickens Geocache. Four ornament GPS coordinates are announced each Friday of Garrison’s Dickens Village Festival, Garrison.
- **Nov. 28-29:** Dickens Village Festival, Victorian holiday events and activities for all ages, Garrison. Visit [dickensfestival.com](http://dickensfestival.com) for information and ticket sales.
- **Nov. 29:** Small Business Saturday Vendor and Craft Show, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Washburn Memorial Hall, 805 Main Ave., Washburn.
- **Dec. 5-6:** Fort Stevenson State Park Dickens Geocache. Four ornament GPS coordinates are announced each Friday of Garrison’s Dickens Village Festival, Garrison.
- **Dec. 5-6:** Dickens Village Festival, Victorian holiday events and activities for all ages, Garrison. Visit [dickensfestival.com](http://dickensfestival.com) for information and ticket sales.
- **Dec. 6:** Angel of Hope Memorial, 7:30 p.m., Wilderness Park, Garrison.

Nonprofit organizations and communities throughout McLean County can contact Patricia Stockdill at [stockdill.patricia@gmail.com](mailto:stockdill.patricia@gmail.com) or 701-337-5462 to submit community events. ■

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701-743-4415  
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**Lucas Schaaf**, Engineering Manager  
**Wendy Kinn**, Business Manager

Office: 701-463-6700  
Toll-Free: 800-263-4922  
Fax: 701-337-5303  
Email: [mclean1@mcleanelectric.com](mailto:mclean1@mcleanelectric.com)  
Website address:  
[www.mcleanelectric.com](http://www.mcleanelectric.com)

