

Verendrye Network News

Verendrye Electric Cooperative • Velva, N.D.

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June 2011



Pure Honda = Pure Fun!

Pure Honda salesman Darin Benno shows a Honda Fury motorcycle.

INSIDE

- Vote, eat, have fun June 9
- VEC to return \$780,000 to members
- Entertaining savings

Vote, eat and have fun at your annual meeting



Bruce Carlson

I am hoping that you will make every effort to attend your annual membership meeting on Thursday, June 9, in Minot at the North Dakota State Fair Center. Come in the late afternoon and enjoy numerous displays, eat a hearty complimentary meal, listen to great entertainment and join me at 6:30 p.m. in the 4-H Hall when the meeting is called to order. There

will be lots of fun children's

entertainment during the annual meeting so don't forget to bring the kids and grandkids.

Who knows, you might even go home winning the \$3,000 door prize, with your chances of winning doubling this year by direction of the board. In other words, if the first name drawn from the total membership is not present, a second name will be drawn for the grand prize. The traditional \$500 cash prize will be given away to a member who is present if the previous drawings are not successful.

The cooperative model means that the member/owner who buys electricity from us controls the business. That is done through the election of directors at the annual membership meeting. Each year, Verendrye has three director seats open – one from each district. We have a race between two candidates in the Eastern District which will be determined by all of the members at the annual meeting. Our cooperative business model is based on all members voting in all three districts since the directors truly do represent the total membership.

Nominations for directors were made at April caucus meetings, but they can also be made from the floor of the annual meeting June 9. There is no more important reason to attend the membership meeting than to vote for representatives of your choice to the board of directors. The board determines the policies of the cooperative, gets help from the auditors and attorney to be sure your business is being run correctly, and directs the manager to correctly implement policies.



Voting for board members begins at 6:45 p.m. at the annual meeting June 9. See next page for more information.

I thank you for the privilege of serving as your general manager strictly at the will of the board of directors. The joke around the office is that I am good to go for another 30 days after the regular monthly board meeting, unless the chairman calls a special meeting! Please review the candidate bios and remember to vote for directors when you attend the annual meeting.

Minot Air Force Base

Verendrye Electric Cooperative's number one key account is the United States Air Force. It purchases 20 percent of our kilowatt-hour sales going to the massive Minot Air Force Base (MAFB) and the missile sites in our service area. It only seems fitting that we would honor the military at this year's annual meeting and learn more about our neighbors north of Minot. Col Mike Dilda will be our featured guest speaker as the commander of the 5th Mission Support Group. Basically, Col. Dilda is the "Mayor of the Base" which happens to be the ninth largest city in North Dakota and certainly the most powerful. The MAFB has the only dual nuclear mission in the United States and perhaps anywhere in the world!

Col. Dilda's job is very important being in charge of all support services necessary to maintain the combat readiness of the base on a 24/7 basis. That includes the electrical

Annual meeting schedule

3:30 p.m. – Registration begins; crafts and booths open in Magic Room; Petting Zoo, clown, jumping castle – FFA Hall.

4:30-6:30 p.m. – Complimentary supper catered by Royal Fork – Magic Room Booths and displays in the Magic Room.

5:30-6:30 p.m. – Melissa Spelchen, a pianist/guitarist/singer, performs.

6:30 and 7:30 p.m. – Magic show.

6:30 p.m. – Business meeting begins

6:45 p.m. – Report of caucus meetings; call for nominations of directors and voting for directors.

(You must be in the 4-H Hall to vote.)

7 p.m. – Keynote Speaker Col. Michael Dilda, commander, 5th Mission Support Group, Minot Air Force Base.

Reports

Board president and general manager
Operation Round Up
Scholarship presentations and employee awards
Resolutions

New and old business

More information about your annual meeting will be available in the annual report which will be mailed to you this month.

power supply which, of course, Verendrye is very intimately involved with. I can promise you a very interesting and educational message from Col. Dilda with a tremendous amount of activity on the base.

Power supply

I also want the membership to come to the annual meeting to learn how your cooperative power supply system is prepared to meet all the growth in the Minot area. I am extremely proud of the member-controlled power supply system that you own all the way from your electric meter back to the generating station.

The only thing we have to sell is good, reliable electricity, which in turn lights your world, heats your homes, cools your milk, pumps your water and runs your businesses.

Verendrye is experiencing all-time record high demands for electricity and new member service requests. I want to show the membership how we are ready to meet those member requirements now and 20 years into the future. The really good news is that we are able to do all this with residential energy rate stability for the next couple of years.

Our annual meeting theme this year is centered on Verendrye's solid foundation, solid values and our solid future. I hope to see you on the evening of June 9 in Minot to visit further about your electric cooperative! Another option is to stop in at the Velva or Minot office. Please remember the coffee pot is always on and there is no higher honor than visiting with our member owners!

Bruce R. Carlson, general manager

Vote for candidates

If you don't know the candidates for the board of directors, the annual meeting is a good place to meet them and learn about why they are running for the board.

This year, Maxine Rognlien and Shawn Kramer are vying for an open seat in the Eastern District that will be open when Orrin Nelson retires. Incumbents Cindy Smith (Western District) and Bob Wolf (Central District), were the only ones nominated in the April caucus meetings, however, candidates can also be nominated from the floor during the annual meeting. Read below for information about the candidates. Complete biographies were published in last month's magazine, as well as in the annual report.



Name: Shawn Kramer
Residence: Denbigh
Occupation: Owns Sandhills Saddlery, where he makes custom saddles.
Family: Wife, Melissa, four children.



Name: Maxine Rognlien
Residence: Towner
Occupation: Retired teacher. Currently serves as McHenry County superintendent of schools.
Family: Husband, John, four children.



Name: Cindy Smith
Residence: Rural Minot
Occupation: Farming and home restoration.
Family: Husband, Mike, three children, seven grandchildren.



Name: Bob Wolf
Residence: Minot
Occupation: Training director, Dakotas Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee.
Family: Wife, Lisa, three children, two grandchildren.

Verendrye to distribute \$700,000 in capital credits

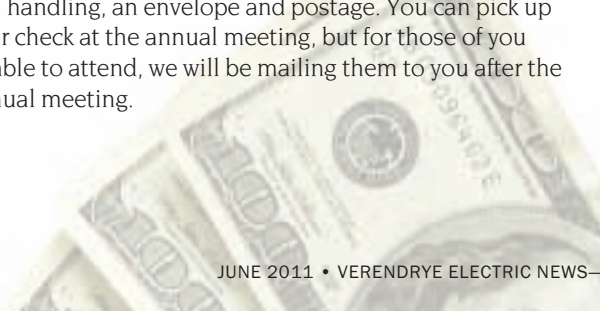
Verendrye Electric Cooperative (VEC) will return about \$780,000 in cash to the membership this year. That is the total of \$700,000 in general retirement checks handed out at the annual meeting and an estimated additional \$80,000 returned to estates.

The common question is: "How does this capital credit program work and why am I getting this check anyway?" Since VEC is a cooperative operating on a "not-for-profit" basis, any operating margins are allocated each year back to the membership based on patronage. In other words, the more money you spend at the cooperative, the more money you get back when the board of directors decides VEC can afford a retirement.

This year, the retirement is going back to the members who bought power from us in 1985 and from the active membership in 2010. This combination "first-in/first-out" and "last-

in/first-out" retirement plan works well for Verendrye Electric Cooperative. Approximately 87 percent of our member-owners are getting a cash retirement this year.

Why don't all members get a check? The answer is Verendrye does not write checks for amounts less than \$5. Anything less than \$5 will add to next year's retirement to get the check up to at least \$5 in order to justify paper, printing, handling, an envelope and postage. You can pick up your check at the annual meeting, but for those of you unable to attend, we will be mailing them to you after the annual meeting.





Pure Honda in Minot is a Level 5 Powerhouse dealership, which means it has access to a large selection of Honda inventory and is able to have a variety of products in stock, including the CBR 600RR sportbike shown below. The business is a Verendrye member located within sight of Verendrye's Minot office along the U.S. Highway 2 Bypass.

Pure Honda sells **FUN!**

by Tom Rafferty
tomdr@verendrye.com

Pure Honda is a good name for a business that has hundreds of Honda products, although the business could have also been named "Pure Fun."

Fun comes in many forms in Pure Honda's 24,000-square-foot building located in southeast Minot just off the Highway 2 Bypass. It has just about every type of motorcycle, ATV, watercraft and multi-use vehicle Honda makes, in addition to some less fun products such as generators, lawn mowers, tillers and snowblowers.

"It's the best business you can be in. We're selling fun," said Keith Braunberger, who is an owner, along with his uncle, LaVerne Berg, and his cousin, Jeremy Berg.

The store has been in its current location for about two years after the owners decided they wanted more room to expand their inventory and services. Pure Honda uses electricity for heating, is served by Verendrye Electric Cooperative and is located within sight of Verendrye's Minot office. The new building allowed them to increase their square footage from 6,000 to 24,000 square feet and it gave them 50 acres that can be used by customers to test ride some of the fun products.

"It was a really, really good move for us," Braunberger said.

Being large is good for business because it allows them to keep a wide variety of inventory. Because of the size of the shop, Honda has given it a designation as a Level 5 Powerhouse dealership. That's the highest designation and there are only 43 in the United States. Having the designation means they have access to special inventory. Their showroom has 75 units, but they also have a large warehouse where several other products are stored.





Pure Honda sells fun products like motorcycles, ATVs, scooters, multi-use vehicles and watercraft, but it also carries generators, pumps, lawn mowers, snowblowers and tillers.

The store stocks more than 300 units and has a large section of accessories. Braunberger said they have about \$4 million in inventory. Their Web site, www.purehondaminot.com, has photos and information about their products, including new and used inventory.

The large size also allowed the owners to make the store easily accessible and customer friendly. The store's showroom is bright and organized and includes a lounge area with a couch and flat-screen TV. The shop is designed to easily drop off motorcycles and ATVs with a ramp built into the floor that raises and lowers to allow easy unloading from pickups. Vehicles can also be driven into the shop.

The store has special parking spots for motorcyclists and the North Dakota Motorcycle Safety Program leases space on the lot for hands-on safety training and a classroom inside for classroom training.

Business has been good at the dealership, with the area's booming economy helping sales. Braunberger said they do sell a number of ATVs and generators to oil field companies and the growing population of the base brings additional business. They have a total of 15 employees and a full-service shop with experienced technicians.

During the winter, they also sell Ice Castle brand ice fishing houses, but their busy time is when spring arrives.

"When the sun comes out, it's a zoo in here," Braunberger said.

***"It's the best business
you can be in.
We're selling fun."
—Keith Braunberger***



ENTERTAINING SAVINGS

Home theaters. Video game systems. Cell phone chargers. Electronics that didn't even exist a few short years ago now consume a large portion of electricity.

In fact, some of the largest, high-resolution TVs can use as much electricity each year as a new, conventional refrigerator.

There are ways to ease the electronic overload on your electric bill:

- **Shop wisely.** Look for the Energy Star label, which is given by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to identify energy-saving products in more than 60 categories, including home entertainment and consumer electronics.

- **Unplug the vampires.** Most modern homes never quite shut down for the night. Although lamps may be off, dark rooms are typically spotted with tiny red and green electronic lights.

All of those little lights and seemingly "sleeping" electronics are using more electricity than most would think. For the average homeowner, vampire electronics represent about \$100 per year in electricity costs, according to Energy Star.

Unplugging these vampires effectively drives a stake into their energy-consuming hearts.

Unplug rarely used electronics altogether. And plug other appliances into a power strip, and switch it off when those appliances aren't being used.

Unfortunately, some family room electronics, such as set-top boxes and downloading devices like TiVo, can't be turned off, because that would disrupt the digital data-gathering you've pro-



grammed them to do. But with a so-called smart power strip (about \$20 to \$40), you can completely turn off your TV while leaving the always-on DVR plugged in.

- **Reduce the brightness of your TV.** Your new plasma or LCD TV is set by the manufacturer to look good in the showroom. This doesn't mean it's going to perform equally well in your living room. So adjust the brightness and contrast settings of your television to extend its life span, save electricity, enhance picture quality, and cut energy use by as much as 25 percent.

- **Turn it off when it's not in use.** Kind of obvious, isn't it? But old habits are hard to kick.

- **Unplug those chargers.** Unplug those battery chargers or power adapters whenever they're not in use, because even if they're not connected to electronics, they can still consume energy.

- **Sleep and hibernate.** Your TV may have this power saver option to minimize energy use. And your PC and laptop will certainly have sleep and hibernate features to reduce power consumption during periods of inactivity. Enable these

features and you'll be doing your energy bill – and the planet – a huge favor.

- **Reconsider that plasma TV.** A typical plasma TV (less than 40 inches) consumes 441 kilowatt-hours of electricity per year, according to the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy. That translates into about \$50 (based on 11.3 cents per kilowatt-hour). Opting for an LCD (liquid crystal display) TV will cost about \$8 to operate annually – for an annual savings of about \$42 over the plasma. Of course, weigh your decision against the cost of a new TV.

When to turn off computers

If you're wondering when you should turn off your personal computer for energy savings, here are some general guidelines to help you make that decision.

Though there is a small surge in energy when a computer starts, this small amount of energy is still less than the energy used when a computer is running for long periods of time. For energy savings and convenience, consider turning off:

- the monitor if you aren't going to use your PC for more than 20 minutes
- both the CPU and monitor if you're not going to use your PC for more than two hours

Make sure your monitors, printers and other accessories are on a power strip/surge protector. When this equipment is not in use for extended periods, turn off the switch on the power strip to prevent them from drawing power even when shut off. If you don't use a power strip, unplug extra equipment when it's not in use.

Most PCs reach the end of their "useful" life due to advances in technology long before the effects of being switched on and off multiple times have a negative impact on their service life. The less time a PC is on, the longer it will last.

How to be a "Super Energy Saver"

FOLLOW THESE SIX SIMPLE STEPS!

- 1 Turn off all the lights when you leave the room.
- 2 Shut down the computer when you are not using it. (If you need help, ask mom or dad.)
- 3 Unplug electronics like cell phones, video games and televisions when not in use.
- 4 Set your thermostat to 78° in the summer and 68° in the winter.
- 5 Don't hold the refrigerator door open for long periods of time.
- 6 Change the light bulbs. Help your mom or dad change regular light bulbs to CFLs like Charlie.

FIVE RULES FOR ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- 1 Always ask an adult for help when you need to do something that uses electricity.
- 2 Don't yank or pull cords from an electrical outlet.
- 3 Never overload outlets with too many plugs.
- 4 Keep electrical stuff away from water. Water and electricity don't mix.
- 5 Never touch a power line, especially if there is one that may have fallen down.

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives

www.touchstoneenergykids.com

Which gaming system is most efficient?

The Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) tested three top-selling video game systems to find out where they ranked in terms of power consumption. And the winner?

Results from the experiment showed that a Nintendo Wii system uses six times less power than a Sony PlayStation 3 or Microsoft Xbox 360 in active mode.

EPRI tested each system for one hour of active play. EPRI found that the Nintendo Wii system used an average of 13.7 watts, the Sony PlayStation 3 used an average of 84.8 watts, and the Microsoft Xbox 360 used an average of 87.9 watts.

"We included only a small sample of the many gaming systems available, but it reveals that the differences in energy use can be significant," said Mark McGranaghan, vice president of power delivery and utilization for EPRI.

The EPRI tests also found that all three systems now demand less power than their earlier versions.





VEC recovered quickly after blizzard

Left: Verendrye Lineworker Dean Torfin repairs an insulator damaged during an April 30 blizzard that knocked out power to about 270 members. Right: Aaron Haaland, a Berthold area farmer, helped Verendrye Electric Cooperative (VEC) crews by pulling their trucks through muddy fields. All members were back on the night of May 1. Most of the damage was from wire breaks and tie wires being pulled off insulators, as well as from twisted and broken cross arms. Only a handful of poles in VEC's system broke during the storm. After repairs were made, VEC sent crews to Burke-Divide Electric Cooperative to help repair damage which was much more severe.

Thank you letters

Special thanks to the two lineworkers (Jim Hagen and Justin Bullinger) who came out in the March blizzard to restore the power to our farm. They performed above and beyond the call of duty. Again, a special thanks. - Harold and Mamie Hass, Balfour

The following letter was written by Nora Pederson, of Minot, in response to VEC Member Services Technician Allen Kersten helping her with an electric heat problem.

I am very pleased with these thermostats and I think it solved my problems. I think his name was Allen – a very nice gentleman – and I wish you would thank him for me. Thank you. - Nora

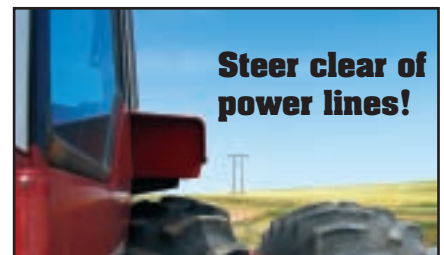
Second \$100 e-bill winner announced

Congratulations to Jason Hoium of Minot who won a \$100 bill credit by checking his account online in April. To encourage the use of e-bill, Verendrye Electric Cooperative started a contest in March allowing members a chance each month to win \$100 until the end of the year.

You can enter the contest simply by registering for online access to your bill, or if you already have an online account, simply log on once each month. If you are not already registered online at www.verendrye.com, you will need your account number and a valid e-mail address to get registered. Once you have the information ready, click on the red "my-e-bill" tab toward the top of the home page. After clicking on "my e-bill," there is a link for new users to register for online account access.

Verendrye encourages all of its members to view their bills online because you can see your bill before it is mailed to you, you can see previous bills and payments, you can access usage and cost data and you can update your account quickly and easily.

The information online is available via a secure server, and Verendrye does not release any of your information to third parties. You have the option of viewing your bill online and receiving it in the mail, or you can choose to receive it online only and receive a 50 cent credit each month.



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