


Verendrye Network News

Verendrye Electric Cooperative • Velva, N.D.

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September 2011

Flood costs Verendrye \$2.4 million



*Verendrye lineworker
Burton Atkinson
removes a damaged
meter from the Holiday
Village Mobile Home
Park in southeast Minot
after the floodwaters
receded.*

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A boy wears protective gear as he helps clean up a gutted home in Minot near Longfellow School.

Flood costs Verendrye \$2.4 million

In addition to destroying homes and personal property, the Souris River also damaged electrical meters, transformers, power poles and even underground lines. It will cost Verendrye Electric Cooperative \$2.4 million and will take several months to repair what was damaged by the river.

“We know we have transformers that have been literally washed away. We have pictures of cabinets and an electrical conductor that is laying at the bottom of a gorge that is 20 feet wide and 20 feet deep,” said Verendrye Manager Bruce Carlson.

Much of Verendrye’s infrastructure continued to work underwater, but as the water receded, the damage was evident. Lineworkers have spent weeks removing damaged meters and repairing infrastructure in entire neighborhoods to get power back on to hundreds of accounts. Workers also inspected about 260 pad-mount transformers (those green boxes used in neighborhoods with underground lines), to determine the extent of the damage.

Verendrye estimated 970 accounts were affected and 670 lost power. About 200 of those accounts had power restored by mid-August.

As crews work on flood repairs, there is still routine maintenance and installation of new accounts from construction in the Minot area. Much of the construction included projects that were planned long before the flood. Verendrye lineworkers and engineers are putting in 10-hour days to keep pace, and contractors will be hired to help do some of the work.

Because of the scope of the disaster, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will reimburse Verendrye for 90 percent of the damage, and it is possible the state will cover some of the remaining 10 percent.



Above and below: Hundreds of meters and transformers like these were damaged in the flood.



Verendrye to serve hundreds of FEMA manufactured homes

Hundreds of people displaced by the Souris River flood will be relocated temporarily to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) homes located in Verendrye's service area.

Verendrye engineers began designing electrical facilities earlier this summer for a site near its Minot office that will hold up to 600 FEMA manufactured homes. The site is located on the west side of 55th St. S.E. in Minot, about a half-mile south of the U.S. Highway 2.

FEMA will pay the monthly electricity bill for people living in that location.

Before the homes were moved to the site, they were staged east of Velva at the former location of the William J. Neal Station, a 50-megawatt power plant that operated from 1951 to 1985 and was dismantled in 2000.

Verendrye Electric staff suggested the site to FEMA officials and Basin Electric graciously donated the use of the land.

"We were very happy to hear that Basin was willing to step in and make a very quick decision to provide the use of this land," said Bruce Carlson, manager of Verendrye. "By working together, we want to help FEMA get these homes ready as soon as possible."

"This is a priority for us and we are working hard to have this area ready for electrical hookups when FEMA is ready to place the homes," Carlson said.

All of the homes are new and have new furniture and appliances in them. The homes come in two sizes - 12- by 40-feet and 14- by 60-feet - and they come with one, two or three bedrooms. The homes are coming from staging areas in Louisiana, Alabama and Maryland and some are coming right off of an assembly line in Indiana.

John Ashton, a spokesman for FEMA, said the homes are built with the harsh North Dakota winters in mind.

"The homes are built to the most stringent HUD standards for northern winters," Ashton said.



These FEMA manufactured homes were staged at the site of the former William J. Neal Station east of Velva. Basin Electric donated the use of the land to FEMA and many of these temporary homes will be served by Verendrye.

Sign up for exciting energy tour!

Free tour takes place Oct. 25

Have you ever wanted to see electricity being made? You can do just that if you sign up for Verendrye's annual fall energy tour.

The free tour includes a ride to Beulah in a comfortable charter bus, a free meal and an exciting tour showing how electricity is made. The bus leaves Verendrye's Minot office at 7:30 a.m. Oct. 28 and returns to Minot around 5 p.m.

Call Sandee Michalenko today at (701) 852-0406 or toll-free at (800) 472-2141 to reserve your spot.

THE TOUR INCLUDES:

- **Antelope Valley Station, Beulah** – Get a chance to look into the boiler, stand next to the massive generator and see a breathtaking view from the top of the facility, which is taller than the state Capitol building.

- **Great Plains Synfuels, Beulah** – Get a tour of the only commercial-scale plant in the U.S. that turns coal into natural gas. It is also known as the world's largest carbon-capture project because it pipes carbon dioxide to Canada, where it is used in enhanced oil recovery and is sequestered.

- **Coteau Freedom Mine, Beulah** – Drive down into a coal mine where you will see a massive dragline and trucks capable of hauling more than 200 tons of coal in one load.



See massive machinery such as this during the free energy tour.

HELPING MAN'S BEST FRIENDS

The North Central Research Extension Center is known for growing several varieties of pure seed. This summer, the center also became known for having several varieties of dogs, cats, birds and other pets that were displaced because of the flood that ravaged Minot and Burlington.

The center, operated by North Dakota State University (NDSU), is located one mile south of Minot on U.S. Highway 83. It became a makeshift animal shelter after the first emergency location for pets – the North Dakota State Fairgrounds – was unavailable because of flooding.

Dave Bosh, president of the Souris Valley Animal Shelter, said at its peak, the center held more than 500 dogs, 185 cats, birds, bunnies and guinea pigs.

"We had a little bit of everything," Bosh said.

The emergency shelter was managed by the Souris Valley Animal Shelter, but other organizations and volunteers played a big role in helping. Organizations that helped included Noah's Wish, Humane Society of the United States and the International Fund for Animal Welfare. Bosh said the shelter received many donations, including an air-conditioning unit from Fargo, a semitrailer from Grand Forks and many other items. Verendrye donated \$500 worth of free electricity to the center to help defray costs of running fans and air conditioning in barns as temperatures reached 100 degrees in July.

The pets received good care at the shelter. All of the dogs were walked twice a day and cages for all of the animals were cleaned and sanitized twice a day. Owners were allowed to come in and see their pets, and workers made sure strangers were not allowed to wander through the barns and handle the pets. Bosh said some owners were not able to come and help, but that was OK because of the circumstances.

"We wanted the owners to care of their houses so they would be able to take their pets home," he said.

Bosh thanks NDSU for allowing them to set up the shelter.

"NDSU has been spectacular to us," Bosh said.



A volunteer walks a dog at the North Central Research Extension Center south of Minot that was set up as an emergency animal shelter, taking in pets of those whose homes were flooded.

Donate to the Souris Valley Animal Shelter

Although the Souris Valley Animal Shelter (SVAS) received many donations of supplies and had volunteers, having the emergency shelter did put a strain on its finances.

Many paid workers put in long hours and their permanent shelter was above capacity during the crisis. Bosh said it is also possible they will be inheriting some new pets if some of the owners do not come back for them.

If you would like to donate to the SVAS, a fund has been established at First Western Bank & Trust in Minot. Make the check out to SVAS Flood Relief and mail it to First Western Bank & Trust, 900 S. Broadway, Minot ND, 58701.



Both of these photos show 31st St. S.E. looking north. The photo on the left was taken July 9, which was approximately two weeks after the Mouse River crested. The photo on the right shows a family of ducks crossing the same road July 18. In this area of Minot, Verendrye serves Holiday Village Mobile Home Park, Sun Prairie Grain and other businesses.

Verendrye members received \$152,000 in rebates

Rebates increased for flood work

A program that puts money in the hands of people who improve energy efficiency in their homes or businesses has returned \$152,000 to Verendrye members so far. People should apply for rebates soon because the program ends Dec. 31, or earlier if the program runs out of funding.

The North Dakota Utility Rebate Program can also help flood victims if they need new equipment such as water heaters and heating and air-conditioning units as they repair their homes.

The program allows residential members to receive up to \$5,000 in rebates and commercial members to receive up to \$15,000 by installing things like water heaters, heating and air-conditioning units, lighting and insulation as long as it meets certain requirements. Rebates are also available to those who install renewable energy projects such as wind turbines and solar panels.

Randy Hauck, Verendrye's member services manager, said the project has been well-received since it began in June 2010.

"The program has provided some real savings to a lot of people," Hauck said. "In addition to rebate checks, they will see long-term energy savings."

More than \$90,000 of the rebates went to commercial pro-



Taylor Martin, an electrician with Main and Holmes Electric, installs lighting near Herberger's in the Dakota Square Mall.

jects. One of Verendrye's largest accounts, the Dakota Square Mall, received rebates for upgrading to energy-efficient lighting.

Chuck Massey, manager of the mall, said applying for the rebates was easy because Verendrye worked with the mall from start to finish. The mall received a \$15,000 rebate, and another \$1,000 rebate from Verendrye.

The mall is now enjoying better lighting that will also be less expensive to operate. In total, the mall replaced 449, T-12 fluorescent light fixtures with T-5 fluorescent fixtures, reducing its wattage from 70,000 watts to 32,000 watts.

"We've had lots of comments about the quality of the lighting," Massey said.

Assuming all of the lights are on for 12 hours a day, the project will save the mall 13,700 kilowatt-hours each month, or \$1,000 off of their monthly electricity bill.

"Overall it should be a nice energy savings," Massey said.

The North Dakota Utility Rebate Program began June 2010 with funds provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Cooperatives received a total of \$2.4 million. If you have questions, call (800) 472-2141 and ask for member services, or go to www.verendrye.com.

Poletop rescue

Shawn Buchmeier, a Verendrye lineworker, practices a poletop rescue on a pole in back of Verendrye's Minot office. Lineworkers receive training in poletop rescue in case someone becomes knocked unconscious on a pole and cannot climb down. During training, participants are tethered to a safety rope for fall protection. They must climb the pole with all their gear, connect another rope to the dummy and lower the dummy safely to the ground.



Norsk Høstfest set for Sept. 28-Oct. 1

The question on the minds of lots of folks has been, how has the Minot area's historic and devastating flood affected Norsk Høstfest? Will there be a Høstfest in 2011?

The answer is a resounding "YES!" Sandbags, heavy equipment and lots of hard work on the part of volunteers, National Guard troops, city workers and crews rescued the All Seasons Arena from the clutches of the Mouse River. Warehouses where Høstfest supplies are stored experienced water damage, but cleanup continues and all will be ready well before Høstfest time. So be assured: the show will go on as planned!

Mark the dates on your calendar – Wednesday through Saturday, Sept. 28, through Oct. 1, for family fun and entertainment with a Nordic touch. The 34th annual Norsk Høstfest – North America's largest Scandinavian festival – will bring history and heritage alive for four full days this fall. For further information, visit www.hostfest.com or call the Norsk Høstfest office at (701) 852-2368.

Rooms needed for Høstfest guests

Can you help? Needed more than ever this year are Minot-area folks who will volunteer a room in their private homes as places for out-of-town Norsk Høstfest visitors to stay. Many homes that would normally have been available for housing Høstfest guests were demolished or badly damaged by the flood. Other Minot homes that might have had rooms available are now housing friends and relatives who lost their homes to the flooding. Thus, rooms for Høstfest visitors are at a premium.

If you can open your home to out-of-town guests during Høstfest week, please call the Norsk Høstfest office, (701) 852-2368, for more information. If you agree to help fill the need for accommodations, you will be sent a housing form to fill out and return. This is a win-win situation for both visitors and hosts: Homeowners make new friends and earn extra funds to spend at Høstfest and visitors are assured of a welcoming place to stay.



Martina McBride will perform Sept. 27 and 28 during Norsk Høstfest. For a complete schedule and event information, go to www.hostfest.com.

Y's Men's Rodeo set for Oct. 6-9

The flooding may have dampened the spirits of the people of Minot, but it won't rain on the Minot Y's Men's Rodeo.

Even though the State Fair Center in Minot sustained some flooding damage, the Minot Y's Men's Rodeo will take place there Oct. 6-9.

For the fifth year, Minot will host the Ram Badlands Circuit Finals Rodeo, the championship event for pro rodeo in North and South Dakota. Nearly 100 cowboys and cowgirls will compete in seven events for the title of Badlands Circuit champion.

The rodeo is a fund-raiser for Triangle Y Camp at Garrison, and the Minot Y's Men's also donate time and labor each spring with a workday for camp maintenance. The event's Tough Enough to Wear Pink campaign also raises funds for cancer patients at the Trinity Health Care Exercise Rehabilitation program at the Minot Family YMCA. Fans at the Friday, Oct. 7, rodeo performance will be encouraged to wear pink to show their sup-

port for the program.

The 2011 rodeo will serve as a kind of "pick-me-up" for the Minot area, said Chairman Fred Beuchler. "The community is going to need something. We've been beaten down." About one-quarter of the area was flooded, with 11,000 people evacuated and 4,100 homes damaged. "The rodeo will be a piece of normalcy" for the citizens of Minot, Beuchler said. "We even talked about planning a kickoff party for the rodeo, to get some rah-rah spirit back."

Beuchler grew up on a farm/ranch south of Minot and enjoys being part of the rodeo committee. "For me, it's the rodeo spirit, working with a variety of people, and raising money for a good cause. I went to (Triangle Y) camp, and I have two young kids who will go to camp someday. It's a huge part of why I'm involved with this." Beuchler is a lifelong Verendrye Electric/Touchstone Energy customer.

This year's Minot Y's Men's Rodeo will be Oct. 6-9, with performances at 6:30 p.m. Oct. 6-9 with a 1:30 p.m.



Barrel racing is one of the exciting events at the Y's Men's Rodeo.

Sunday, Oct. 10 matinee. Tickets are available online at www.MinotYsMensRodeo.com and go on sale at the Dakota Square Mall on Sept. 24. The rodeo is sponsored by Touchstone Energy® Electric Cooperatives and 4-Bears Casino & Lodge. For more information, visit the Web site at www.MinotYsMensRodeo.com or call (701) 852-5577.

FARM SAFELY around POWER LINES



As we observe National Farm Safety and Health Week Sept. 18-24, Verendrye Electric Cooperative reminds you to work safely on the farm and ranch. We care about your safety.

The following tips will help keep everyone on the farm safe:

- Look over work areas carefully for overhead power lines and utility poles.
- Make sure there are ample clearances of power lines when moving large machinery such as combines, grain augers, sprayers and tractors.

Do this every year as equipment sizes or soil conditions may change. A newer, larger piece of equipment may no longer clear a line. And shifting soil may also affect whether or not machinery avoids power lines from year to year.

- When planning new construction, consider existing power lines.
- Be extra careful when working around trees and brush that often obstruct power lines.
- Train all farm workers on how to properly operate machinery to avoid overhead power lines.



Lori Soltis, director of The View on Elk Drive, makes a toast to celebrate the fifth anniversary of The View in July. The View offers resort-style living in home-style surroundings with health services for people 55 and older. Soltis said the View has 68 residents and provides lots of activities which include boating on area lakes, happy hour in the View's pub, music and other entertainment. The View on Elk Drive is located on a hill in southwest Minot, providing residents a spectacular view of Minot. Verendrye has been proud to provide power to The View since it opened.



On June 25, we had an outage from a terrific wind. There were many branches broken in our farmyard and a small 12- by 14-foot granary was moved about 100 feet and left upright. When the VEC crew came to restore power, they had to remove a tree from our road to get here. This old cancer patient thanks the crew for this extra (effort). It was sincerely appreciated.

—Orlin Oium, retired VEC director

Fifth e-bill winner announced

Congratulations to Steven Gursky of Norwich who won a \$100 bill credit in July by participating in the e-bill program.

To encourage the use of e-bill, Verendrye 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 handy 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.

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