

# Verendrye Network News

Verendrye Electric Cooperative • Velva, N.D.

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July 2011

## Neighborhood FLOODING

*This photo shows the National Guard traveling through a flooded neighborhood in Minot. Verendrye Electric estimated up to 1,060 accounts will be affected by flooding in and around Minot and in rural areas along the Souris River. Both of VEC's offices remained opened during the flood, although a dike was built around VEC's Velva office as a precaution. VEC urges members to call us with questions about their accounts. Because of press deadlines, we were unable to get a full report in this issue, but look for complete coverage in next month's issue.*

PHOTO COURTESY NATIONAL GUARD

### INSIDE

- Annual meeting highlights
- Visit area farmers' markets
- Co-op Day at the Fair
- Lineworkers recognized by highway patrol

# Annual meeting highlights

## VEC's relationship with the Air Force

Verendrye Electric Cooperative (VEC) has provided power to the Minot Air Force Base since the 1950s and VEC sells more electricity to the base than any other member. The cooperative's deep history with the base and commitment to providing it with reliable, affordable energy, set the stage for one of the Air Force's own to speak at Verendrye's 2011 annual meeting.

Col. Michael Dilda, commander of the 5th Mission Support Group at the base, spoke about how growth of the base and growth of the local economy is benefiting Verendrye members.

"The good news story to me and for Verendrye Electric is growth, growth, growth," Dilda said. "As the base grows, business with Verendrye also grows. It's a win-win situation for both of us."

Dilda, who has been at the base for about a year, said he and his wife, Mary Beth, have received a warm welcome by the community.

"This really is like joining friends and family," Dilda said.

Verendrye is ready to take on an even larger role as the base's energy provider. Although Verendrye serves the base, it does not own and maintain most of the electrical infrastructure on the base. However, Verendrye has submitted a bid to purchase the infrastructure and take over the maintenance of it. A decision could come within a year or sooner.

### Ready for growth

Bruce Carlson, manager of VEC, told the members the



Keynote speaker Col. Michael Dilda, commander of the 5th Mission Support Group at the Minot Air Force Base, discussed growth at the base and in the Minot area.



Harold Haugstad, who serves on VEC's Election Committee, hands out ballots at this year's annual meeting.

cooperative is ready to handle new growth. Verendrye, a distribution cooperative, works closely with Central Power Electric Cooperative, a transmission cooperative that delivers power to Verendrye, and Basin Electric Power Cooperative, which produces power. By working together, the cooperatives have invested in additional infrastructure to serve Verendrye's needs for years to come.

"The cooperative is in very good shape and we are built on a very solid foundation," Carlson said.

VEC Chairman Everett Dobrinski said the cooperative added 478 new accounts in 2010 and could exceed that number in 2011.

### Gov. Dalrymple congratulates members



Gov. Dalrymple

Verendrye was pleased to welcome Gov. Jack Dalrymple, who spoke to the membership after he and his wife, Betsy, had dinner with members.

Dalrymple congratulated Verendrye Electric on having another successful year and thanked everyone who helped fight flooding in the area.

"Verendrye Electric Cooperative is a source of pride for the entire state,"

Dalrymple said.

Dalrymple also talked about how North Dakotans are known for working together when disasters strike. He praised Verendrye for being one of the cooperatives that helped

restore power to cooperatives in the west this spring after a storm knocked out power to thousands of people.

"It's this incredible spirit of giving and caring for our neighbors that makes North Dakota a special place," Dalrymple said.

### New board member elected, incumbents re-elected

Verendrye welcomes Maxine Rognlien as its newest board member. Maxine, from Towner, defeated Shawn Kramer, of Denbigh, for a seat in the East District that was open after Orrin Nelson decided not to run after serving 12 years.

During her speech, Rognlien said her experience teaching and encouraging her students to give back to the community make her a good candidate for the board.

Incumbent Cindy Smith of the West District and Bob Wolf of the Central District, were both re-elected without opposition. Verendrye thanks all candidates for participating in the cooperative's democratic process and running positive campaigns.

More than 3,500 people attended this year's annual meeting. Having a well-attended meeting is a tradition at Verendrye Electric. The meeting is a great place to learn about the cooperative, have a voice in how the cooperative is being operated and to have fellowship with members and employees at Verendrye.

"We really feel that communication is critical to understanding and to have a strong cooperative," Dobrinski said.

## PRIZE WINNERS

\$500 cash	Richard Gehl, Minot
\$50 cash – early bird	Skylar Crosby, Minot
\$100 cash – early bird	Robert Lakoduk, Minot
Electric barbecue grill	Duane Weinman, Harvey
Electric shop heater	Jerry Neuhalphen, Burlington
George Foreman grill	Leonard Pietsch, Minot
Screwdrivers/extension cord	Josh Mosser, Minot
4 steins/serving tray	Shirley Anderson, Minot
Wine tote with wine/caps	Donlee Grad, Harvey
\$25 Cenex gift card	Susan Davy, Minot
\$25 Cenex gift card	Ronald Tonnesson, Towner
T-shirts/ranch rodeo tickets/carnival pass	Sheldon Baglien, Velva
Medora Musical tickets	Reinhold Grosse, Minot
Medora Musical tickets	Ronald Hensen, Glenburn
Medora Musical tickets	Lawrence Hauser, Berthold
Dirt bike	Marlee Peters daughter of Terra Peters, Minot
iPod	Kasey Austin, granddaughter of Duane and Elsie Mae Swanson, Minot
Pink trike	Michael Warsocki, son of Thomas Warsocki, Minot



Rich Gehl, center, won the \$500 cash prize. Presenting the prize were VEC Chairman Everett Dobrinski, left, and VEC Manager Bruce Carlson.



Bike Winner: Marlee Peters, of Minot, won the kid's bike at this year's annual meeting.

# FARMERS' MARKETS PROVIDE MORE THAN FRESH FOOD

*Laurie Grade and her daughter, Morgan, of Drake display their vegetables last summer. Farmers' markets are growing in popularity because of the healthy, fresh foods, but also because they have become places for the community to come together.*



Ripe red tomatoes, red hot peppers, crunchy carrots and crisp cucumbers are popular attractions at summertime farmers' markets in a community near you. But in some places, the markets are much more than a place to get food from the people who grow it.

In Verendrye Electric Cooperative's service area, there are a number of farmers markets. Farmers markets in the area can be found at Velva, Drake, Anamoose and two markets in Minot.

Maria Effertz Hanson, director of the McHenry County Jobs Development Authority, said some of the farmers' markets have turned into a way to get people to their community.

"In Anamoose, it's been a huge success, Effertz said. "It's really done well."

Bonnie Dockter, market manager for the Anamoose Market in the Park, said the event also includes entertainment for children, crafts, canned and baked goods, \$1 hamburgers and even music.

"We like to see it as a social event every week," Dockter said. "It's a nice evening, especially in the summertime." Dockter said the Anamoose market also provides vendors a place to sell baked

and canned goods, woodwork, pottery and other items. The market is part of the North Dakota Farmers Market Growers Association (NDFMGA), an

organization that helps growers market their events, obtain grants for markets and to educate growers and customers. Marvin Baker, who owns North Star

## Markets in VEC territory:

Market	Location	Schedule
Anamoose	Anamoose City Park	Mondays, 6 to 8 p.m., July - September
Drake	Drake Threshing Grounds along Hwy. 52	Wednesdays, 5 to 7 p.m., July - third week of October
Harvey	Lincoln Ave. & 10th St.	Tuesdays and Saturdays, July - October
Minot Oak Park Farmers Market	Oak Park, Minot	Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday, beginning at 9 a.m. and Thursday also at 4 p.m., July - October
Minot North Prairie Farmers Market	One block north of Burdick Expressway and Broadway	Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., mid-July - mid October
Velva	Corner of Hwy. 52 and Hwy 41 adjacent to Cenex	Wednesdays, 5 to 6:30 p.m., beginning July 6, 5 to 6:30 p.m.



*Lucille Loftessness, Granville, shows off her fresh vegetables and baked goods at a farmers market last year.*

Farms in Carpio, said the interest in buying local food has exploded in recent years. He credits organizations like the NDFMGA and North Prairie Farmers Markets for helping spread the popularity of buying fresh food locally. Baker said there were only about 14 markets associated with the NDFMGA in 2005, compared to 56 today.

Baker's wife, Ilene, is the market manager for the North Prairie Farmers Market in Minot, located one block north of Burdick Expressway and Broadway, she said the market has doubled in size in a year.

So how do you find out where and when there is a farmers' market? While much of the advertising includes signs and word-of-mouth, a few resources are available online.

The NDFMGA has information about farmers' markets, including a list of farmers' market locations and times, a vendor directory at [www.ndfarmersmarkets.com](http://www.ndfarmersmarkets.com) and on Facebook. Information about North Prairie Farmers Markets can be found at [www.northprairefarmersmarket.com](http://www.northprairefarmersmarket.com) and on Facebook.



*Verendrye's Velva office had a dike built around it to protect it from floodwaters. VEC's Minot office was not in the path of the flood.*

## Verendrye to waive charges for accounts without power

Verendrye Electric will not be charging its members a facility charge for the days their homes or businesses were without power because of flooding. Verendrye will also waive all late fees and disconnect/reconnect fees that were related to flooding issues.

Normally, Verendrye charges a facility charge each month as long as a meter remains in place at a home or business. The facility charge is the same flat rate each month regardless of energy usage. Because many people were not able to have their meters removed before floodwaters inundated their property, Verendrye has decided they should not have to pay the facility charge for the days they did not have power.

"It's the right thing to do to waive these charges," said Community Relations Manager Tom Rafferty. "We know that recovering from this flood is going to take a while and we want to help our members through these difficult times."

Keep in mind that if you did have power for a portion of the month, your facility charge will be prorated and you will have to pay for all of the electricity consumed.

If you are one of the affected members and you have already been charged a facility charge, please call Verendrye and we will work with you to credit the charges back to your account.

Verendrye estimates up to 1,060 accounts might be affected by flooding. So far there are about 600 accounts that have been inundated. Despite the flooding, our offices in Minot and Velva remain open. People can call us for billing inquiries during normal business hours and they can call to report outages or safety concerns day or night. Verendrye's number is 1-800-472-2141. The cooperative's website, [www.verendrye.com](http://www.verendrye.com) <<http://www.verendrye.com>> , also has information about how the cooperative is handling flood issues.

## RYDER RODEO JULY 16

A rodeo will be held on July 16 in Ryder that includes food and entertainment. The event is the sixth annual and features the Western Edge Bullriders.

Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 at the gate. Children 7 and under are free. A steak supper will be served from 4 to 6 p.m. in the Ryder Park. Admission to the supper is \$10 at the gate and \$8 with an advance ticket. There will be refreshments and concession stands and a street dance with the band, Firehouse, in the evening. The event is hosted by the Old Ryder Jaycees Community Club.

## Lineworkers recognized by Highway Patrol

Lineworkers Justin Bullinger and Jim Hagen were honored by the North Dakota Highway Patrol for their efforts in helping a girl trapped upside down in her car in March.

They received the Colonel's Award for Excellence after being nominated by Trooper Scott Guenther. The award, which was approved by Col. James Prochniak, superintendent of the North Dakota Highway Patrol, is given to state employees and citizens who go above and beyond the call of duty. Guenther and Sgt. Steven Fischer surprised Bullinger and Hagen with the award during a safety meeting at Verendrye's Velva office in May.

Bullinger and Hagen received the award for helping Stephanie Schnellbach, a senior at Surrey High School, who became trapped in her car and encased in snow after rolling it south of Deering on Ward County Road 23.



*VEC lineworkers Justin Bullinger, blue shirt, and Jim Hagen, tan shirt, received the Colonel's Award for Excellence because of their efforts to save Stephanie Schnellback following an accident. Highway Patrol Trooper Scott Guenther presented the award and Schnellbach and her father Jim, were also present.*

## Asmundson retires, Thomas leaves VEC to farm

In their school days, Curt Hall and M.J. Asmundson learned the three R's together – reading, writing and arithmetic. In June, Asmundson followed Hall and learned her fourth R – retirement.

The two were classmates in Berthold and worked together for many years. Hall retired in February after 35 years as a lineworker, and Asmundson retired at the end of June after 13 years as secretary/receptionist.

"We started first grade together and we graduated together," M.J. said. "Curt is eight days older than I am, but he's been here 100 years longer than I have," M.J. joked.

Jodi Thomas, who has worked for Verendrye since 2001, is leaving the cooperative to spend more time farming with her husband, Kenny. Thomas was a customer service representative in the Velva office.



*Asmundson*



*Thomas*

## VEC hires two new employees

Verendrye welcomes new employees to its Velva and Minot offices to replace M.J. Asmundson and Jodi Thomas.

Kristie Hoff was recently hired as a customer service representative in the Velva office. She is from Velva and her father, Vern Moldenhauer, was a Verendrye Electric Cooperative lineworker for several years before retiring. Hoff is married to Ryan and they raise and train horses in their spare time. Before coming to work for Verendrye, she worked for the North Dakota State Fair as the competitive exhibits director and human resources and payroll director. She has a bachelor's degree in communications and public relations from Minot State University.

Liz Benham was recently hired as the secretary/receptionist in the Minot office. Before coming to work for Verendrye, she was employed by the North Dakota State University Extension Service in Minot. She and her husband, Shawn, live in Minot and their daughter, Amber, who graduated from high school this year.



*Hoff*



*Benham*

## Verendrye wins awards for advertising, center pages

Verendrye recently received awards from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) for its communications work.

VEC received an Award of Merit for an advertisement showing Member Services Representative Rob Orts conducting a safety demonstration to children, and an Award of Mention for the overall quality of VEC's center pages which appear each month in *North Dakota LIVING*.

The advertisement was designed by Odney Advertising of Minot and it included a Verendrye electric file photo. VEC's center pages are edited by Community Relations and Communications Manager Tom Rafferty and designed and published by the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives in Mandan.

The awards were presented in May during the NRECA's Spotlight on Excellence Luncheon in Denver. Verendrye competed against cooperatives of a similar size from across the United States to win the awards.

"It's a great honor to receive national

### Verendrye Electric Cooperative: A Powerful Part of Your Community

At Verendrye Electric Cooperative, we're more than power lines. We're in your schools, teaching children about how we generate electricity and how to use it wisely and safely. We're in your communities, with board members and employees in towns all across the region. We're in local offices, with customer service representatives ready to take calls, answer questions, and serve our members. We live and work in the communities we serve. That's the power of human connections.

[www.verendrye.com](http://www.verendrye.com)

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recognition for our communications work," said Manager Bruce Carlson. "Communications are important to tell

members how their cooperative is being operated and what it means to be a part of a cooperative."

## Rafferty earns Certified Cooperative Communicator designation



Rafferty

Tom Rafferty, community relations and communications manager for VEC, recently passed an exam to become a Certified Cooperative Communicator (CCC).

The CCC program is offered through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association as a way to improve the knowledge of communicators who work for electric cooperatives. In addition to passing the exam, communicators are also required to submit a portfolio of work that is graded. After receiving the designation, the communicator must complete one credit of education each year that is

related to his job.

Some of the subjects CCC candidates must learn include the history of cooperatives, how electricity is generated and distributed, government regulation of cooperatives and public relations and communications strategies.

Bruce Carlson, general manager of VEC, said the CCC designation is a significant accomplishment.

"We are proud of Tom for completing the CCC program," Carlson said. "It's an accomplishment that improves his ability to communicate with the members of the cooperative."

## Third \$100 winner announced

Congratulations to Sarah Wiley of Minot, who won a \$100 bill credit by checking her account online in April.

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](http://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 they can see their bills before they are mailed, they can see previous bills and payments, they can access usage and cost data and they can update their accounts 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.

## Dollars for Scholars recipients named

Verendrye supports the Dollars for Scholars program by contributing \$500 scholarships to each of the six Dollars for Scholars districts in VEC territory. The recipients of the awards are:

- **Karissa Dean**, Glenburn, who will be attending Bismarck State College, enrolling in the school's power plant technology program. Her parents are Patrick and Scarlet Dean.

- **Nathan Dean**, Velva, who will be attending Dakota College at Bottineau. His parents are Brian and Stephanie Dean.

- **Summer Dieterle**, Kief, who will be attending Bismarck State College. Her parents are Myron and Phyllis.

- **Rachael Rott**, Anamoose, who will be attending Jamestown College. Her parents are Jim and Kimberlee.

- **Taylor Peterson**, Minot, who will be attending Concordia-Moorhead. Her parents are Steve and Judy.

- **Kristi Tonnessen**, Towner, who will be attending North Dakota State University. Her parents are Terry and Pam Tonnessen.



Karissa Dean



Nathan Dean



Summer Dieterle



Rachael Rott



Taylor Peterson



Kristi Tonnessen

## Operation Round Up grants awarded

Operation Round Up grants filled many needs in May, ranging from assistance in purchasing a sand-bag machine for flood fighting, to medical assistance for individuals and organizations that help others.

The Verendrye Electric Trust Board, which oversees the Operation Round Up program, approved 13 grants for \$14,250 in May.

The program received special recognition at the annual meeting when the Mid-Dakota Chapter of the Farm Safety Program was presented with a \$1,500 check to purchase helmets for children and to teach them about safety.

Faye Knutson was presented with the Farm Safety Check and several children were on stage displaying their helmets.

"We would like to thank the Operation Round Up board for keeping our kids safer," Knutson said.

The next deadline for applications is Aug. 15. Contact Verendrye Electric Cooperative for more information or go to [ww.verendrye.com](http://ww.verendrye.com) and click on the Operation Round Up banner on the home page.



*The Mid-Dakota Chapter of Farm Safety received a \$1,500 Operation Round Up grant during the annual meeting on June 9. The grant is being used for the helmet safety program where kids receive a free helmet after taking a safety course.*

### VERENDRYE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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**LOOK UP! Power lines may be overhead.**