

**MARCH 2023**

# Verendrye NetworkNews

Verendrye Electric Cooperative • Velva, N.D.

Velva: 701-338-2855 • Minot: 701-852-0406

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

## Run for the Verendrye Board

Two ways to get nominated



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## How to run for the Verendrye Electric board

BY RANDY HAUCK

One of the seven cooperative principles is "democratic member control." Every year, your electric cooperative lives this principle by having an open and transparent process of nominating members for the Verendrye Electric Cooperative (VEC) board of directors.

Members who are nominated to serve on the board of directors will have their names placed on the ballot at the June 8 annual meeting. VEC allows two different methods to be nominated. You can be nominated at one of three caucus meetings or by petition.



*Randy Hauck*

### Nominate at caucus meetings

Each year, VEC holds a caucus informational meeting in each of our three director districts. The western director district includes all members who live west of Highway 83. The central director district includes all members who live between Highway 83 and a north-south line approximately through Karlsruhe. The eastern director district includes all members who live east of the central district. Each year, one director is up for election from each director district and directors are elected for a three-year term.

Caucus meetings are scheduled for:

- Tuesday, April 11, in Towner (Eastern District), seat currently held by Maxine Rognlien.
- Wednesday, April 12, in Velva (Central District), seat currently held by Bob Wolf.
- Thursday, April 13, in Ryder (Western District), a vacant seat.

See the follow page for more information on the three caucus meetings. At these caucus meetings, any member can nominate a member from that director district to run for the VEC board of directors. You can even nominate yourself.


### Nominate by petition

The second method to be nominated to serve on the board of directors is by petition. If, for some reason, you cannot attend a caucus meeting and you cannot find another member to attend to nominate you at a caucus meeting, you can be nominated by petition. Petitions and signature rules are available one month before your district's caucus meeting date and are required to be returned to the cooperative headquarters in Velva by noon on your district's caucus meeting day.

Members who are nominated by either method will have their names placed on the ballot at VEC's June 8 annual meeting, where each member in attendance gets one vote. All customers of VEC are members and each member gets one vote, no matter if they purchase 1 kilowatt-hour per month or 1 million kilowatt-hours each month.

When you compare our cooperative model of one-member, one-vote to an investor-owned utility (IOU) model, where only shareholders get to vote (the more shares you have, the more votes you get), we certainly believe our model is better. To look at it another way, most customers of an IOU are not shareholders, so they do not get to vote on who gets to be on their board of directors.

We hope to see you at one of the upcoming caucus meetings and at your electric cooperative annual meeting on June 8. ■



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## Caucus meetings April 11, 12 and 13

The annual district nomination caucus meetings for Verendrye Electric Cooperative (VEC) will be held April 11, 12 and 13 for the purpose of nominating directors for the election that will be held at VEC's annual membership meeting scheduled for June 8.

District caucus meetings are scheduled as follows:

**EASTERN DISTRICT: April 11, noon, The Gallows Club, 1109 Main St., Towner.** This includes all members who live in Ranges 75, 76, 77 and all members who live in Sheridan, Pierce and Wells counties.

**CENTRAL DISTRICT: April 12, noon, VEC Community Room, 615 Highway 52 West, Velva.** This includes all members who live east of Highway 83, in Ranges 82 and 83, and all members who live in Range 78 of McHenry County, and all members who live in Ranges 79, 80 and 81. This means all members living east of Highway 83 and west of the Eastern District.

**WESTERN DISTRICT: April 13, noon, Ryder Community Center, Ryder.** This district includes all members who live west of Highway 83, in Ranges 82

and 83, and all members who live in Ranges 84, 85, 86 and 87. This means all members living west of Highway 83.

The names of all persons nominated at these meetings will be placed on the ballot for election at the annual membership meeting in June. Nominations can also be made by petition. Contact the Velva office to obtain a petition and signature rules. Completed petitions must be received at our Velva office by noon on your district's caucus meeting day. Elected directors will serve for a period of three years.

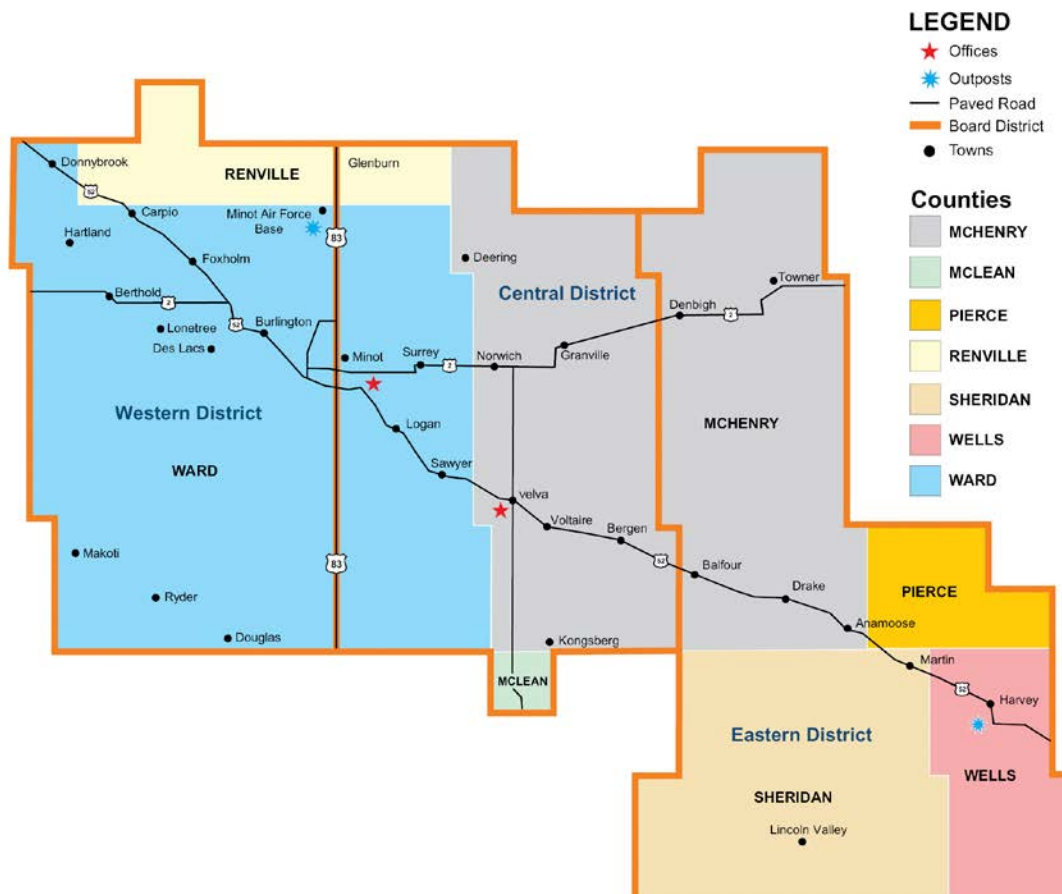
Present directors whose terms of office expire this year are:

EASTERN DISTRICT: Maxine Rognlien, Towner

CENTRAL DISTRICT: Bob Wolf, Minot

WESTERN DISTRICT: Vacant (formerly held by Howard "Bucky" Anderson)

A complimentary noon lunch will be served at all the caucus meetings. All members are encouraged to attend any district's caucus/information meeting. Actual director nominations, however, must be made at the appropriate district's caucus meeting. ■



## Operation Round Up grants \$31,000 to 14 organizations

The Minot Family YMCA was recently awarded a \$2,500 Operation Round Up grant to make bathrooms in the facility more accessible by installing automated door openers. The YMCA is also where Prairie Grit Adaptive Sports provides therapy options for youth and adults with special needs, including physical, mental and emotional disabilities. Prairie Grit also received a grant for adaptive hockey sticks.

The Operation Round Up program recently awarded \$31,000 in grants to 14 organizations. The grants included funds for rural fire districts, accessibility projects, community facilities and more.

Operation Round Up was created in 1996 and has granted over \$1.3 million to almost 1,300 projects in Verendrye's service area.

The program works by Verendrye members voluntarily rounding their bills to the nearest dollar each month. The money is deposited in an account and a board decides how to awards grants. The board is elected from members of the Member Advisory Committee. For more information, visit [www.verendrye.com](http://www.verendrye.com) or call Tom Rafferty at 852-0406. Applications are on Verendrye's website and the next deadline to apply is April 15. ■



From left are **Tia Huber**, the YMCA's mission advancement director, Verendrye Member Services Manager **Tom Rafferty** and **Nick Gray**, the YMCA's associate executive director.

Organization	Purpose	Amount
Anamoose Rural Fire Protection District	Upgrade emergency lighting of a fire truck	2,500
Burlington Fire Department	Replace structure fire helmets	2,500
Central Cinema Theatre, Harvey	Purchase and install a new cinema audio processor	2,000
Douglas Fire Protection District	Mounted fuel-injected motorized water pump	2,500
Energy Share	Low-income heating assistance	2,500
First Lutheran Church of Harvey	Repair elevator	2,500
McClusky Public School PTO	Support PTO	300
Minot Commission on Aging	Can rack and utility cart	2,500
Prairie Grit Adaptive Sports	Specialized hockey sticks	1,500
Union Silos/Minot Area Council on the Arts	Create North Dakota's largest piece of art	2,500
Youthworks	Small renovation for Youthworks	
	Short Term Care and Assessment Center	2,500
Young Men's Christian Association	Accessible bathroom doors	2,500
North Dakota State Fair Foundation	Accessible bleachers	2,500
Drake Fire Department	Replace nozzles and hose	2,422
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$31,222</b>





This photo, taken on Jan. 11, shows the Operation Round Up board members, left to right, **Ashley Bruner**, Drake, the late **David Norton**, Minot, **Sandra Hanretty**, Towner, **Laurie Dannwitz**, Minot, and **Kristi Howe**, Velva.

## Round Up Board president passes away

**C**ondolences to the family and friends of David Norton, who died Jan. 28 in a Minot hospital. Norton served on the Operation Round Up board for five years, recently being named president of the board. Norton, a retired teacher in Minot, had also previously worked for Verendrye Electric Cooperative in the member services department in the 1980s. His funeral was Feb. 4. Arrangements were handled by Thomas Family Funeral Home in Minot.

### Board welcomes new member

**Sandra Hanretty**, Towner, was elected to the Operation Round Up board in November last year and attended her first meeting in January. She replaced Keith Reinowski, Anamoose, who had served six years on the board. Verendrye Electric Cooperative thanks Keith for his years of service to Operation Round Up.

The board is elected from Verendrye Electric's Member Advisory Committee, which meets each November. For more information about the Member



Advisory Committee or Operation Round Up, contact Tom Rafferty at 701-852-0406. ■

## Verendrye signs up its first time-of-use rate for EVs

In January, Verendrye Electric Cooperative reached a milestone by having its first member on a time-of-use rate for his electric vehicle (EV).

Bob Pritchett, of Rice Lake, went on the rate on Jan. 17. He will receive a reduced rate when he charges his EV on the off-peak hours from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. and a higher rate when charging outside of the off-peak hours.

"The rate is designed to incentivize people to charge their vehicles during off-peak hours," said Member Services Manager Tom Rafferty. "We know there's not a lot of EVs on our system, but the number is growing and we want to be prepared for the future." To incentivize people to go on the rate, Verendrye also offers a \$500 rebate to help offset the costs of equipment and labor. To go on the rate, a submeter has to be connected to the outlet or EV charging system and it has to be a 220-volt service.

Pritchett, a retired mechanic and 22-year member of Verendrye Electric, owns a new Chevy Bolt that he and his wife often drive to Minot, about 60 miles round trip.

"I love it. It's quiet and it's cheaper to operate than gas," Pritchett said. "I always want to save. I'm on a fixed budget."

If you are interested in how the program works, contact Tom Rafferty at 852-0406. ■



**Bob Pritchett** of Rice Lake became the first Verendrye member to sign up for a time-of-use rate where he gets a discount to charge during the off-peak hours of 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.



## Learning about EVs

Verendrye Electric Cooperative brought its 2020 all-electric Chevy Bolt to Minot High School's auto tech program in January. Member Services Manager Tom Rafferty spoke to students in the program about how much energy it takes to operate the car, costs to operate and how Verendrye and other utilities are planning for an increase in the amount of EVs that is to come. The battery on the Bolt is on the bottom of the car. It can store 66 kilowatt-hours of electricity. In the winter, the car gets about 2 miles per kilowatt-hour and up to 4 miles in the summer. The range of the car is around 120 miles in the winter and up to 260 in the summer. At a cost of 10 cents a kilowatt-hour, it costs \$6.60 to fully charge the battery.



## Verendrye hires three full-time employees

**V**erendrye congratulates three new full-time employees that were recently hired.

Grant Meyer and Riley Keller were both hired as full-time apprentice lineworkers. Each of them had been working part time for Verendrye the past several months. Grant is from Minot and Riley is from Des Lacs. They both graduated from lineworker school at Bismarck State College.

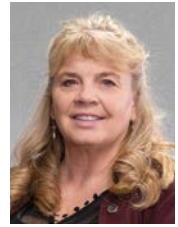
Verendrye also recently hired Julie Wallace full time as a customer service representative in Verendrye's Minot office. She previously worked at Quentin Burdick Job Corps. ■



*Meyer*



*Keller*



*Wallace*

## Three VEC lineworkers graduate

**C**ongratulations to Verendrye lineworkers Cade Bright, Nathan Engelhart and Kolter Schell for graduating from the apprenticeship program offered through the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC). They were three of 14 graduates from across North Dakota recognized at the January awards ceremony of the Apprenticeship Training and Safety Conference.

"On behalf of NDAREC, I'd like to congratulate this year's graduates," says NDAREC Safety Services Director Christy Roemmich. "It is critical for North Dakota's electric cooperatives to plan for the future and train our workforce. Apprenticeship is an important part of that plan. Our apprentices recognize the value of paid on-the-job training coupled with a robust educational component that helps build generational greatness in our industry."

Over the past 64 years, more than 700 people have completed the program. To graduate, apprentices must complete 8,000 hours of on-the-job



*Bright*



*Engelhart*



*Schell*

training and more than 400 hours of study.

NDAREC is the statewide trade association for 16 electric distribution cooperatives and five generation and transmission cooperatives operating in North Dakota. The distribution cooperatives provide electricity to more than 250,000 North Dakotans. NDAREC services include legislative advocacy, line worker safety training and professional development services, cooperative business development, and communication services including publication of the *North Dakota Living* magazine. ■

## Employees presented with Life Saver Award

**C**ongratulations to Verendrye Dispatcher Pat Gingles and Lineworker Kevin Voeller for being given the Live Saver Award from the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC).

The award recognizes cooperative employees whose heroic actions contribute to life-saving efforts of another person.

Last summer, Voeller was working on a job just outside of Minot when he began to hear a man struggling to breathe. When he found the man, Voeller performed comfort care and made sure the man could breathe.

Because of minimal cell service, Voeller used the radio in his truck and asked Gingles to call 911 to get

an ambulance to the scene. The man survived, but may not have without the help of Voeller and Gingles.

Every year, Verendrye employees are trained in CPR, first aid, mayday radio procedure and many other topics.

"It becomes second nature when you are called on to do first aid," said Operations Manager Tim Krumwiede. "I'm proud of both Kevin and Pat." ■



*Gingles*



*Voeller*

## Verendrye to hold hearings on demand response, EVs

**V**erendrye Electric Cooperative (VEC) is holding a public hearing from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. April 25 regarding electric vehicles (EVs) and demand response.

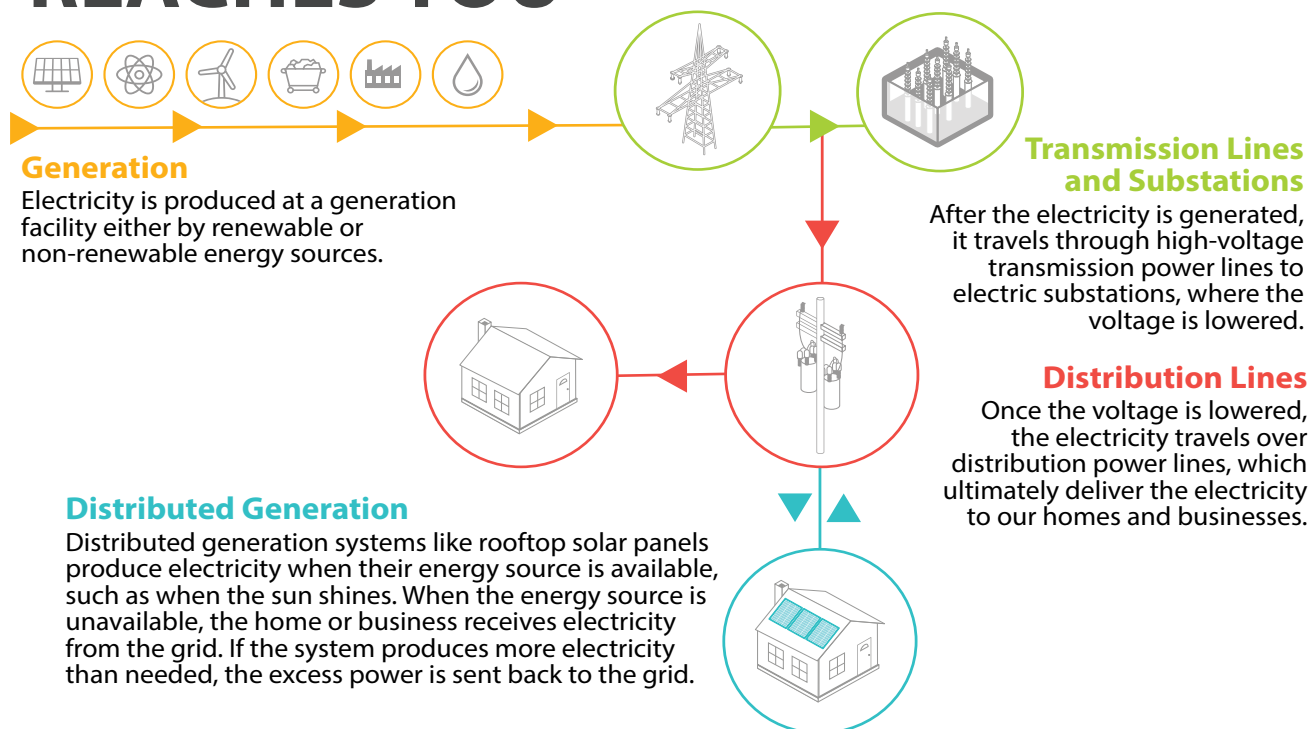
The hearing will be held in VEC's Minot office at 1225 Hwy. 2 Bypass East.

New rules established under the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act (PURPA) require VEC and other utilities to hold this type of hearing. The purpose

of the hearing is to allow the public to provide input on promoting greater transportation electrification and utility demand response (also known as load control).

The hearing will include a brief presentation about VEC's current EV and demand response programs and will allow time for public comments. If you have any questions, contact Tom Rafferty at 701-852-0406. VEC is an equal opportunity employer and provider. ■

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