



Grill winner **Elmer Miller** with **Darrin Sand**.



Grill winner **Mike Sauber** with **Darrin Sand**.



Aaron Hopkins, a local New Town EMT, picks up the pumpkin he won.



MWEC celebrates Co-op Month

National Co-op Month is observed annually in October. This year, Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative (MWEC) decided to get the local communities involved. Each office location – Williston, Stanley and New Town – held a “Thank Que” barbecue, where the public was served hamburgers, hot dogs and chips to thank them for the continued support of cooperatives.

Though the weather was a bit chilly, many still came out in support. Each employee also sported a pink T-shirt that read “MWEC shining a light on the fight against cancer,” as October is also breast cancer awareness month.

At the New Town location, Kenton Onstad brought a pumpkin to the office that he grew at his property. He had the community take guesses at the weight and the person closest to the actual weight won the pumpkin. That winner was Aaron Hopkins, an EMT in New Town. He guessed 96 pounds and the pumpkin weighed a whopping 98 pounds!

Two Traeger electric grills were raffled and the winners were Mike Sauber and Elmer Miller.

MWEC would like to thank those who came out and had lunch with us. We appreciate your continued support. ■

WRITE A WINNING ESSAY AND WIN A TRIP OF A LIFETIME!

JUNE 9-15, 2018

AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

- To enter the essay-writing contest, you must be a sophomore or junior in high school.
- You and your parents or guardian must be served by Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative.
- If you have a question, contact Jessica George, Mountrail-Williams Electric, at the address listed below, or call 701-577-3765 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is **Jan. 31, 2018**. Emailed entries should be directed to jessicam@mwec.com, and hard-copy entries mailed to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 1346, Williston, ND 58802-1346.

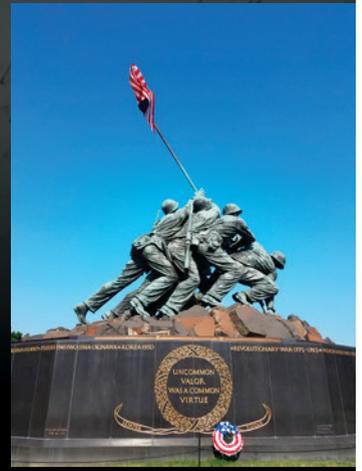
TOP 3 REASONS

TO ENTER THE ESSAY-WRITING CONTEST

1. All-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., compliments of Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative.
2. A whole week to visit unforgettable historic monuments, museums and the U.S. Capitol.
3. A learning experience you'll never forget.

ESSAY QUESTION:

There are approximately 20 million military veterans in the United States today. How shall fellow U.S. citizens honor and look after these veterans, who have served and sacrificed on our behalf? Describe any special connection you may have to a veteran or active-duty member of the military.



CHECK OUT THE ESSAY-CONTEST GUIDELINES AT
www.ndyouthtour.com



You have options with programmable thermostats

BY TOM TATE

Let's start with a little bit of history. Did you realize that the programmable thermostat is more than 100 years old? Honeywell introduced the first programmable thermostat in 1906, naming it the Jewell. It was a simple, clock-powered product that allowed you to establish times for the temperature to go up and down. Anyone who is a fan of the steampunk style (think Victorian technology and style in modern items and clothes) would be proud to have this device on their walls. While crude by today's standards, it was truly a pioneering product.

The basic programmable thermostat offers four programming periods: wake, leave, return and sleep. You set the time of day and target temperature for each period according to the days of the week. The lowest-priced models will offer

you a 5-2 day option. Here, you set the four periods for the work week (Monday through Friday) and the weekend (Saturday and Sunday). The next model will be a 5-1-1 day option. This allows different schedules for Saturday and Sunday. And finally, you can buy a model that allows you to program each day of the week individually. It should be noted that programming each day of the week can quickly become tedious.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established recommendations for proper programming, and over the years, we have seen thermostats that come preprogrammed with its suggestions. Remember the "tedious" comment? Purchasing a preprogrammed model solves that problem nicely. You can override this programming, but it makes for an easy setup. So what

does the EPA suggest? A heating maximum of 68 degrees and a cooling minimum of 78 degrees for those times when you are home. They estimate you can save 1 percent on your energy bill for every degree of temperature change when away. On average, expect to save about 10 percent on your annual heating bill.

The size of the temperature change to use when away or asleep is another area of discussion. One camp recommends keeping the range narrow, on the theory that the home loses too much of its conditioning and the energy saved is lost as the systems work to get back to the proper temperature. Another says systems run more efficiently when set at a rather modest temperature (cooler for heating and warmer for cooling) and left alone. And the last is the EPA's opinion that a 10- to 15-degree change over an eight-hour period provides the best savings, a change from previous recommendations. A caveat offered by the EPA is that you should not use a programmable thermostat for heat pumps. While fine in cooling mode, they make the heat pump inefficient in heating mode. Specifically designed thermostats are available for heat pumps to overcome this issue. If you have a heat pump, we recommend one of these.

No discussion of programmable thermostats is complete without getting into their "smart" relatives. This fairly new phenomenon really got traction with the introduction of the Nest. Smart thermostats can be

-  Replace light bulbs
-  Unplug
-  Insulate your attic
-  Energy Audit
-  Weatherization
-  Replace Windows
-  Programmable Thermostats
-  Contact Your Electric Cooperative
-  Maintain Your HVAC System

programmed, but their true appeal lies in the ability to “set and forget” them, allowing their software to build a program around the way you live. Their second major appeal is the ability to interact with them via the Web or your smartphone. While expensive, more choices are hitting the market, so if this is an intriguing idea, keep an eye out, as prices are starting to drop.

Experimentation will help you determine the best solution for your home, as each home is different due

to insulation, weather sealing, system efficiencies and how you operate it. That being said, a programmable thermostat will definitely save you money. Pick one of Jewell’s descendants today, and start saving. ■

(Tom Tate writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation’s 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.)



Common energy myths debunked

Rethinking some habits can save money

Misconceptions about energy use are hiding around every corner of your home, and they can take a toll on your utility bills. Don’t be fooled by common energy myths.

Myth: The higher the thermostat setting, the faster your home will heat.

Reality: You might think that walking into a room and raising the thermostat to 85 degrees will make the room warm up quickly. Not true. Thermostats direct a home’s heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system to heat or cool to a certain temperature. Drastically adjusting the thermostat won’t make a difference in how quickly you feel warmer – or cooler – than if you set it at a

reasonable level.

The U.S. Department of Energy recommends setting your thermostat to 78 degrees during summer months and 68 degrees during winter.

Myth: Opening the oven door to check on a dish doesn’t really waste energy.

Reality: Although it can be tempting to check the progress of that dish you’re cooking in the oven, opening the oven door does waste energy. Every time the door is opened, the temperature inside the oven is reduced by as much as 25 degrees, delaying the progress of your dish – and costing you additional money. Try using the oven light and peeking through the window instead.

Myth: Leaving lights, computers and other electric devices turned on is a good idea. Switching them on and off wears them out more quickly and produces sudden power spikes that negate any energy savings.

Reality: If there were ever any legitimacy to this idea, there isn’t anymore. Switching modern appliances and electrical devices on and off frequently will not reduce their life span, and any power surges that might occur are likely to be miniscule. The bottom line is that if you aren’t using an electrical device, it should be turned off.

Myth: Reducing my energy use is too expensive.

Reality: Many consumers believe that reducing energy use requires expensive upfront costs, such as purchasing new, more efficient appliances or making construction upgrades to an older home. The truth is, consumers who make small changes to their efficiency habits – like turning off lights when not in use, sealing air leaks and using a programmable thermostat – can see a significant reduction in energy consumption.

Remember: Energy efficiency doesn’t have to be difficult. Focus small to save big. ■



Lighten the laundry load

Combine clean clothes and energy savings with these helpful hints

Switching your temperature setting from hot to warm can cut a load's energy use in half.

Two practices can reduce the amount of energy used for washing clothes: using less water and using cooler water. Unless you're dealing with oily stains, the warm or cold water setting on your machine will generally do a good job of cleaning your clothes. In addition to saving wear and tear on your clothes, switching your temperature setting from hot to warm can cut a load's energy use in half.

Laundry tips

- Wash your clothes in cold water using cold-water detergents whenever possible.
- Wash and dry full loads. If you are washing a small load, use the appropriate water-level setting.
- Dry towels and heavier cottons in a separate load from lighter-

weight clothes.

- Don't over-dry your clothes. If your machine has a moisture sensor, use it.
- Clean the lint screen in the dryer after every load to improve air circulation and prevent fire hazards.
- Periodically, use the long nozzle tip on your vacuum cleaner to remove the lint that collects beneath the screen in the lint screen slot of your clothes dryer.
- Use the cool-down cycle to allow clothes to finish drying with the heat remaining in the dryer.
- Periodically inspect your dryer vent to ensure that its vents, intakes and hoses are not blocked. This will save energy and may prevent a fire. Manufacturers recommend using rigid venting material – not plastic vents that may

collapse and cause blockages.

- Consider air-drying clothes on clotheslines or drying racks. Air-drying is recommended by clothing manufacturers for some fabrics.

Long-term savings tips

Look for the Energy Star and Energy Guide labels on new appliances. Energy Star clothes washers clean clothes using 35 percent less water and 20 percent less energy than standard washers.

Energy Star does not label clothes dryers because most of them use similar amounts of energy.

When shopping for a new clothes dryer, look for one with a moisture sensor that automatically shuts off the machine when your clothes are dry. Not only will this save energy, but it also will save the wear and tear on your clothes caused by over-drying. ■

SET THE TABLE FOR SAFETY

Whether testing out a new dish or whipping up a family classic, there's one recipe that should also be included on the menu this holiday season: **safety**. Follow this "Recipe for Kitchen Safety" and help this year's festivities create memories instead of danger.

INGREDIENTS FOR SAFETY

FUNCTIONING SMOKE ALARMS



FUNCTIONING GROUND FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTERS (GFCIs)



VIGILANCE



DIRECTIONS

1 Smoke alarms should be installed in **every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home**. For the best protection, smoke alarms should be interconnected, so that they all sound if one sounds.



2 Test the batteries in each smoke alarm **every month**, replace them **once a year**, and replace the unit every **10 years**.



3 GFCIs are electrical safety devices that trip electrical circuits when they detect ground faults, or leakage currents, that could shock or electrocute someone. GFCIs should be installed where **electricity and water may come in contact**, such as the kitchen. GFCIs should also be tested **every month**. Additional instructions for testing can be found at www.esfi.org.



4 Prevent fires by making sure your oven and stovetop are **clean and free of grease and dust**. You should also clean the exhaust hood and duct over the stove regularly. Lastly, vacuum the refrigerator coils every **three months** to prevent potentially dangerous dirt build-up.



CLEAN APPLIANCES



KITCHEN TIMER



KITCHEN SAFETY



5 **Never leave cooking unattended**. You should not cook if you are sleepy or under the influence of alcohol. Children should also be closely supervised and kept at least **three feet away** from all cooking appliances.



6 It's easy to forget about something that's cooking, especially when you're entertaining guests. **Use a kitchen timer** to make sure your dish doesn't become a fire hazard.



7 **Enjoy!** Being proactive about safety will give you peace of mind and allow you to enjoy your time with loved ones.

ESF1

For more information about **cooking and holiday safety** visit www.esfi.org



Save energy this Thanksgiving!

Thanksgiving is a great time of year to bring friends and families together. It also means spending time in the kitchen to prepare the traditional Thanksgiving feast. If you are looking for good tips on how to put together a cozy winter meal while keeping energy bills reasonable, Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative can help. Energy costs in the kitchen can add up to 15 percent of total home energy use, so it's worth a bit of effort to learn how to use less energy in the kitchen.

Here are some tips to help keep your energy costs down:

- **Keep the oven door closed.** While you may want to check on the progress of a dish you've got cooking in your oven, use the light instead. Every time the oven door is opened, the temperature inside is reduced by as much as 25 degrees, delaying the progress of your dish and, more importantly, costing you more money to get that pot roast perfectly cooked.
- **Check your oven temperature.** A freestanding oven thermometer is a great way to check out how hot your oven really gets. Many ovens vary slightly from the dial you're setting your cooking temperature at.

By testing your oven temperature at several settings (325, 350, 375 and 400 degrees), you can find out if your oven runs hot or cool, and factor an extra 25 degrees or so into your cooking, if necessary. Always check your freestanding oven thermometer to verify the temperature so that you're not needlessly cranking up the heat on an already hot oven!

- **Turn down the heat.** Spending all day in the kitchen? If you've got the oven running and soup on the stove, you can probably turn the heat down a bit. The heat from your oven, not to mention dinner guests, should keep your home warmer than usual, and your furnace won't have to work as hard!
- **Clean your burners.** If you have an electric range, one great way to keep your stovetop cooking efficiently is to keep the reflectors under your burners grime-free. They can be a pain to clean, but regular maintenance can go a long way. You can also invest in some better reflectors that can decrease your stovetop cooking times, which will save you energy (and money!) over time. ■

Unofficial minutes of regular board meeting September 2017

Directors present: Sorenson, Lynne, Grant, Hartsoch, Johnson, Jorgenson, Lalim, Ludwig and and Lahtinen.

Directors absent: None.

Others present: Manager Haugen, attorney Foust and staff members.

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m. at the south Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative office, Williston. Minutes of the Aug. 30 regular board meeting were approved as presented. An executive session was added to the agenda for the meeting, and the agenda approved as amended.

Health insurance presentation: Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative (MWEC) currently has a plan through Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota and is considering an alternative health care plan for MWEC employees beginning Jan. 1, 2018. Dave with NDREC Benefit Trust presented an alternate health insurance plan through Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota. The board considered many options and decided to allow employees the option to choose, beginning Jan. 1, 2018. The board also approved to contribute the difference between two plans for those employees who elect the high deductible health care insurance plan paired with a health care savings account for one year. There was also discussion about giving financial assistance to employees who have elected the high deductible plan who have a high claim, which would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Attorney's report: Attorney Foust gave a progress update on the record title curative for the Osborn Substation land.

Member concerns: The board took a member's letter regarding the "no firearms" posting at MWEC offices under advisement.

Operating and financial report: Jodi Collings presented the operating report for the year to date and for the month of September. The total margins for the year to date is \$14,390,891. OTIER is 2.21; TIER is 2.44; MDSC is 2.13; and equity is 30.73 percent.

Special equipment/work order closeouts: The board approved the closeout of the following special equipment/work order:

Closeout 674.....	\$85,140
Closeout 675.....	\$180,261
Closeout 676.....	(\$8,819)
Closeout 678.....	\$86,928
TOTAL.....	\$343,510

Capital credit retirements: The board approved the retirement of the following revised capital credit accounts for August:

- Patricia Marburger estate
- Larry Horob estate
- Chet Hammers estate
- Jerry Erickson estate
- Flora Smith estate
- The board approved the retirement of the following capital credit accounts for September:
- Katherine L. Greenwell estate
- Hazel Germundson estate
- Liesha Gullison estate
- Arlee Zadow estate
- Lester Severance estate
- Harry Olheiser estate

NRECA – 401K pension plan amendment: The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) 401(k) Pension Plan Addendum No. 1 to Adoption Agreement Additional Eligible Class of Employees was approved as presented. The addendum amends the contributions provision of Paragraph 7 to provide a one-time fixed dollar contribution to all participants who were non-highly

compensated employees during the 2016 year plan and is needed for purposes of the nondiscrimination requirements of the Internal Revenue Code section 401(a)(4) for the 2016 plan year. The addendum serves as a corrective amendment and is intended to meet the requirements of Treas. Reg § 1.401(a)(4)-11(g).

The NRECA Retirement Security Plan Addendum No. 1 to Adoption Agreement Additional Eligible Class of Employees was approved as presented. The addendum amends the Normal Retirement Benefit provisions of Paragraph 7 to provide certain participants with a one-time minimum fixed dollar benefit or frozen minimum accrued benefit and designates the minimum fixed dollar benefit or frozen minimum accrued for each of the designated participants. This addendum is also needed for purposes of the nondiscrimination requirements of Internal Revenue Code section 401(a)(4) for the 2016 plan year and serves as a corrective amendment and is intended to meet the requirements of Treas. Reg. § 1.401(a)(4)-11(g).

Meeting reports:

NRECA – Director Grant, Director Lynne and Director Sorenson attended and gave a report on the Region VI meeting held in Minneapolis, Minn.

RESCO – Director Sorenson gave a report on the annual RESCO meeting he attended.

Upper Missouri Power Cooperative (UMPC) – Director Jorgenson gave a report on the September UMPC meeting he attended. The draft minutes from the meeting, along with a written report and the general manager update were made available. The board discussed the possibility of current members self-generating electricity and what that could mean for MWEC.

Basin Electric Power Cooperative– Director Jorgenson gave a report on Basin Electric Power Cooperative. The minutes of the Board Audit Committee from April; board minutes for August; written report on second strategic planning session; and the Basin Update for September were made available.

NDAREC – Director Grant presented and discussed the 2018 budget plans and the directory app that should be available in early 2018. The board was also provided with the RDF funding status and the proposed NDAREC dues increase.

Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) – A letter to Manager Haugen was provided with MWEC system's fiscal year 2017 patronage capital allocation of \$1,379,056 and retirement of \$689,528. The Sept. 11 CFC Solutions News Bulletin was also made available.

Executive session: The board broke for executive session to discuss employee matters. The board came out of executive session and approved a motion to ratify the actions taken in the executive session.

Manager's report:

Safety – Manager Haugen reported there were no lost-time accidents and one vehicle accident in September.

Southwest Power Pool (SPP) – Manager Haugen reported MWEC has been presented with a settlement offer and the FERC attorneys for MWEC are prepared to submit a counteroffer. The counteroffer was discussed with the board. The operating cost allocation for SPP based on the 2017 budget figures for billing periods beginning Jan. 1, 2017, was made available, as required by FERC. Fifty-eight percent of its operating costs are allocated to market facilitation, monitor and compliance; 29 percent of its operating costs are allocated to scheduling, system control and dispatch; and 13 percent of its operating costs are allocated to reliability planning and standards development.

Reliability and outage report – The reliability and outage report was made available. There were 199 outages in August.

MWEC building update – The meeting minutes for the last two owners meetings with FCI Constructors Inc. and the PIE roofing observation report No. 8 were made available. Some of the board members participated in a walkthrough of the office building. The project is currently under budget and the contractors believe the deadline will be met.

Manager Haugen presented options for generators for the MWEC campus. The board took the options under advisement.

Manager Haugen discussed a presentation he made for Fitch representatives who visited Williston in September.

Manager Haugen discussed the article, "Continuous Innovation: Disrupt or be Disrupted" in the September issue of *Electroindustry*. This article explores business disruption that has forced industry revolution through the decades. Business disruption is not a new phenomenon, but the current era of accelerated disruption, which began in 2005 with the introduction of advances in technology such as the iPhone, Napster, Craigslist, Amazon, Netflix and social media platforms, among countless others, is forcing change more rapidly than in prior eras. These advances in digital technology have resulted in 50 to 80 percent revenue declines in many industries in a very short time span and have forced industries to close altogether. The article surmises we are at the precipice of the next major industrial revolution that will be globally widespread and accelerate faster than ever before with the hopes of additive manufacturing, robotics, virtual and augmented reality, and drones and driverless vehicles, and further discusses how business leaders must approach this impending revolution in order to thrive and remain relevant.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. ■

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- Cheryl HartsochTreasurer
- Blaine JorgensonSecretary
- Larry Johnson..... Director
- Aaron Lynne Director
- Garrett Lalim Director
- Luke Lahtinen..... Director
- Dick Ludwig..... Director
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