

# BASIN TODAY

BASIN ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE

| FALL 2021



**TOGETHER  
WE ARE BASIN**



It has been a record-setting year for Basin's Backyard Garden, even as the COVID-19 global pandemic kept the garden off Basin Electric's property. Basin's Backyard Garden HomeGrown volunteers have donated nearly 1,150 pounds of fruits and vegetables from their home gardens in 2021 to local food pantries. Since 2014, garden volunteers have donated 4,396 pounds to local food pantries. Pictured are volunteers at Heaven's Helpers Soup Café in Bismarck, North Dakota, which was the recipient of October's donations. Pictured left to right are Karla Johnson, Kaitlin Rahrhich, Heather Pitsiladis, Basin Electric records coordinator Amanda Dvorak (who delivered the donation), and Craig Schaaf.



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VOLUME 24 | NUMBER 3

## ON THE COVER

Anna Gee is the daughter of Alison Gee, director serving on the Powder River Energy Corp. (PRECorp) board. PRECorp is a Basin Electric Class C member headquartered in Sundance, Wyoming. The Gee family lives near Gillette, Wyoming.

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Use your smartphone barcode scanner to view stories online.

A portrait of Todd Telesz, a middle-aged man with short brown hair, smiling broadly. He is wearing a brown and white plaid button-down shirt over a white t-shirt. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green trees and a clear sky.

# TODD TELESZ

## RELISHING IN THE OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE BASIN ELECTRIC'S STORY

I am extremely excited to have joined the Basin Electric team.

In my brief time so far at the cooperative, I have had the opportunity to meet many employees, members, colleagues at our sister generation and transmission (G&T) cooperatives, and industry leaders. Every day has been the proverbial "drinking from a fire hose or two or three," but I have enjoyed every minute.

Best of all, as I represent Basin Electric in our community, be that the Bismarck, North Dakota, community or our wider member cooperative community and industry, the story I am able to share of serving rural America for 60 years is one to be proud of.

At the end of September, I was asked to appear on a panel discussion at the Lignite Energy Council Fall Conference. Our topic of focus was what people simply refer to as "the ESG factors." ESG stands for Environmental, Social, and Governance. These are the three factors used by rating agencies, investors, and other stakeholders to measure the efforts and impact of a cooperative or company across these three criteria.

Basin Electric's financial team has become very familiar with these factors over the last couple of years as they report progress to rating agencies and seek capital in

the market to finance our operations and projects. The ability to share our cooperative's story as it relates to ESG is essential to making sure we are able to continue to access the cost-effective and efficient capital we need to operate our cooperative, while keeping rates steady for our members.

The good news is, Basin Electric was ESG cool before ESG was cool. As we prepared for the discussion, our team of colleagues provided me mounds of evidence to draw upon. To give you just three bullet points for the E of ESG:

- Basin Electric was the first utility in the nation to require that strip-mined land be returned to rolling countryside. That requirement was written into Basin Electric's first coal contract long before government rules and regulations on mined land reclamation were enacted.
- Basin Electric launched the largest coal-based carbon capture project in the world in 2000. Today, we capture more carbon dioxide each year than is emitted by every registered motor vehicle in North Dakota and Wyoming.
- Basin Electric was the first cooperative to develop, build, and own wind projects. We then went on to build the largest wind projects owned solely by a cooperative in the nation.

Both Basin Electric and our member cooperatives have done a lot of the right things since we were incorporated 60 years ago. It's rural America's way; we don't always boast about what we do, we just do it.

When we discuss the ESG factors, I notice people sometimes start to bristle. The finance, banking, and insurance industries are particularly focused on our environmental performance, and I think it's important we share the progress we've made and where we're going.

When Basin Electric was founded, coal was our main resource for generation. It was readily accessible and abundant, and because our power plants were located right beside the coal mine, there was little to no transportation cost. These coal-based power plants have been the workhorses of the cooperative, providing reliable, affordable baseload power for nearly 60 years.

As Basin Electric grew, we continued to execute our all-of-the-above strategy. We incrementally added natural gas plants, an important resource that provided operational flexibility and fuel diversity. In addition, we could site these plants near where our members were growing. All the while, we added wind generation, both self-owned and power purchase agreements, as that technology became more economical. Today we have almost 1,800 megawatts of wind assets in our portfolio, 400 megawatts of which came online in the last year-and-a-half. In addition, we have more than 300 megawatts of power purchase agreements for solar generation because that, now, is also an economical choice.

It is important to note that Basin Electric has grown almost 50% over the past decade, which is very different from the stagnant growth experienced by other G&Ts and investor-owned utilities during that time. About 80% of our growth has been served by natural gas and wind resources, as well as economy purchases primarily from the Southwest Power Pool and Midcontinent ISO.

In 2000, nearly 85% of our generation was in coal; today, about 40% is in coal, with the balance well-diversified in natural gas, wind, hydro, and more. We have been able to do this while keeping rates affordable because we've been strategic about how and when to diversify our portfolio with resources from a technology- and fuel-source perspective. We have diversified at the right pace for our membership.

We have also invested our members' capital extensively in our coal fleet — nearly \$2 billion. These investments were focused on emissions control technology at our power plants to address sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, and mercury. We spend \$160-180 million every year to operate and maintain that technology. Today, this adds \$5-6 per megawatt-hour to our members' bill each year. We are conscientious stewards of the environment we all share. We are also innovation leaders in our industry. We are tackling the challenge of decarbonizing the economy through partnerships with federal and state governments, research centers, scientists, private companies, and universities. Our decarbonization efforts will focus, as our previous efforts did, on being conscientious stewards of the environment as well as our members' capital.

The leverage point to encourage utilities to adopt more aggressive ESG strategies is primarily via capital providers, banks, institutional investors, and rating agencies. In addition, demographic changes are influential in certain parts of the country. This strategy has been spearheaded by sophisticated and industry-savvy external stakeholders.

G&T cooperatives and utilities in general are huge consumers of capital; we are the second-largest consumers of capital in the U.S. just behind banks. Capital will be the fuel of the future for the energy industry. Our team's relationships and understanding of the capital markets and our investor base is a critical competitive advantage for us and our members.

We need to continue cultivating our historically strong relationships, while at the same time strategically developing new relationships across different pools of capital, and continue to tell our story. I am impressed with the legacy Basin Electric's team of members and employees has built over 60 years and look forward to all of us building upon that legacy of stewardship and innovation for years to come.



*Todd Telesz, CEO and general manager*



East River Electric Board President James Ryken, Paul Sukut, and East River General Manager Tom Boyko.

### Sukut receives East River Electric’s highest honor

Former Basin Electric CEO Paul Sukut received East River Electric Power Cooperative’s highest honor, the Eminent Service Award, during the co-op’s annual meeting Sept. 8, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The award is given annually to individuals who have made significant contributions to East River Electric and the cooperative movement. East River Electric is a Class A member of Basin Electric.

“On behalf of East River and our member systems, thank you for your 42 years of service to the electric power industry and 38 years of service to Basin Electric Power Cooperative and its members,” said East River Electric General Manager Tom Boyko. “The leadership you have provided throughout your career has helped to ensure consumers across the region received safe, reliable, and affordable electric power.”

“Spending most of my career serving co-ops, it means a great deal to me to be recognized by one of our members,” Sukut said. “I’m honored to receive this award and to join the other worthy recipients who have been honored with it in the past.”

<https://bit.ly/SukutAward>

### Dakota Gas directors move forward with new CO<sub>2</sub> pipeline

Dakota Gas directors authorized a project to build a pipeline that will carry captured carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) from the Great Plains Synfuels Plant to a permanent geologic storage reservoir several miles away.

The Dakota Carbon Pipeline will leverage the Internal Revenue Service’s 45Q tax credits for carbon sequestration projects which provide an economic return on the investment.

The reservoir currently being considered is located about one mile below previously mined coal mine land owned by The Coteau Properties Company.

Construction on the pipeline is expected to begin in October 2021. Carbon dioxide injection would begin in the second half of 2022.

<https://bit.ly/DGCpipeline>

### Basin Electric partners with Dairyland Power Cooperative, Allete to add new generation

On Sept. 28, Basin Electric announced its partnership with Allete of Duluth, Minnesota, and Dairyland Power Cooperative of La Crosse, Wisconsin, to develop new natural gas-based generation.

Nemadji Trail Energy Center, a proposed 600-megawatt combined-cycle power plant, will be located in Superior, Wisconsin, and interconnect into the Midcontinent ISO regional transmission organization. Basin Electric will own 30% of the project through its subsidiary Nemadji River Generation LLC.

Basin Electric CEO and General Manager Todd Telesz said the partnership helps Basin Electric serve its members with additional generation capacity that is economical, dispatchable, and fuel flexible. “This partnership gives Basin Electric a cost-effective, timely option for serving our members with reliable electricity,” Telesz said. “Furthermore, it demonstrates our commitment to developing resources that fit our all-of-the-above strategy.”

<https://bit.ly/NemadjiTrailEnergy>



Artist’s rendering of Nemadji Trail Energy Center.



Hot sticks allow Basin Electric line workers to work on energized transmission lines.

## Transmission System Maintenance conducts minimal approach distance study

Basin Electric’s Transmission System Maintenance (TSM) division conducted a study to keep its qualified electrical workers safe.

A minimal approach distance (MAD) study was done to determine how far an electrical worker needs to be from energized parts to be safe from flashover, or the arc that occurs when something gets too close to an energized part. Getting too close could result in a fault or electrocution of an electrical worker.

As part of the study, some 15 million scenarios were run and ultimately a safe distance for 115, 230, and 345-kilovolt lines was determined.

 <https://bit.ly/MinimalApproachDistance>

## S&P Global affirms rating

The ratings agency S&P Global affirmed Basin Electric’s rating on Aug. 25, with a long-term senior secured rating

as ‘A’ and a stable outlook. The cooperative’s short-term rating of A1 was also affirmed.

 <https://bit.ly/SPGlobalRatingsAffirmed>

## No injuries, minimal damage after Antelope Valley Station fire

A fire at Basin Electric’s Antelope Valley Station near Beulah, North Dakota, broke out Sept. 23. All employees at the facility were safe and minimal damage occurred.

Fire departments from Dakota Gasification Company were first on the scene and The Coteau Properties Company’s Freedom Mine first responders arrived shortly thereafter. The fire was quickly contained.

The plant was operating at normal production within hours of the fire. No Basin Electric facilities had to shut down because of the fire and there was minimal lost production.

An investigation is underway to determine the cause.

“We are thankful to the first responders for their quick action and most importantly, thankful no one was hurt,” said Troy Tweeten, Basin Electric senior vice president of Operations. “Antelope Valley Station crews jumped in to get the system up and running safely after the fire and did an excellent job returning the plant to normal production.”

 <https://bit.ly/AVSFire>

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# TALKING WITH TODD TELESZ

*By Kalli Senske*

Todd Telesz joined Basin Electric on Sept. 1, 2021, making him the cooperative's sixth-ever CEO & general manager. We asked him a few questions so we can get to know Basin Electric's newest leader.

## **When you were a kid, what did you want to grow up to be?**

I spent a lot of time with my grandfather growing up. He had a small farm, about 40 acres, where we always had a couple of beef cattle we were raising. I actually didn't have store-bought meat until I went to college. We always had horses or ponies as well, and that influenced me because I wanted to be a horse trainer or horse breeder growing up.

## **You grew up the son of a union dad. How has that shaped your perspective of co-ops and electrical workers?**

If I think about the union aspect and the electrical side of things, it was probably the fact that when people come together, they can have an increased amount of power, leverage, and influence overall on their lives and outsized impact on their colleagues, company, and community. That's no different from what we do as a cooperative community.

My dad recognized the value of hard work and showing up every day. He had a blue collar job and I think a lot of days were déjà vu for him, but he did it and never complained. Growing up, his normal shift was 6 a.m.-2 p.m., but some days he'd go in at 4 a.m. so he could get off at noon and attend one of my ball games. Over the course of nine years, he never missed a game. That streak continued as a grandfather as he and my mom were at the vast majority of my kids' sporting and school events. My mother was similar in her role as a registered nurse in the operating room. That work ethic and devotion to family was hugely influential in how I try to live my life.

I think it is disappointing and unfortunate when people forget where they are from. My parents helped me learn not to get too big for my britches. Job position shouldn't matter a whole lot; it's how you treat people and how hard you work. That's just who I am, and I'm honestly proud of where I came from. It's foundational to who I am.

## **What makes the energy industry the right fit for you?**

There are three things that I really enjoy.

The people. I get to work with talented, smart, industrious, committed people across the energy industry.

The importance of the energy industry to each and every one of us. Energy is a basic necessity and necessary to elevate quality of life across the globe. No matter where we are on the planet, people seek out electricity as one of the first things to improve their quality of life. The ability to be part of something that is this important is a lot of fun. Also energy drives not only quality of life but also economic prosperity and resiliency in communities, particularly in rural America where we live and serve. It's critically important for us to maintain being a reliable, affordable, and responsible electricity provider to all of our members. We're critical to the communities we serve and operate in.

The final piece is that I enjoy being challenged and forced to solve issues with a team. The energy industry is one that is always rapidly changing, and I like that aspect. If we look at the front page of the newspaper or watch the evening news and can't recognize that almost every story touches what we do in some way, we may not be thinking really hard about what we do. Whether it's from an economic perspective, a climate perspective, Middle East geopolitics or OPEC strategies, technologies being developed, commodity prices in rural America – all those things can impact what we do and can have an influence on the decisions we need to make. Then to think about how those developments influence the challenges and opportunities we're going to face in the next decade-plus; I find that stimulating. It's something that drives me.

## **Before joining Basin Electric, you were already familiar with many of our members. How has that prepared you for your role as CEO & general manager?**

From a big-picture perspective, understanding the values of members and a cooperative, as well as our importance in rural America, are probably the most critical factors. Being part of a cooperative, the best business model in my opinion, allows us to focus on one thing and one thing alone: the member at the end of the line. Focusing on that helps frame every decision we make.

The relationships I have across the G&T, rural electric cooperatives, and financial sectors will also be an advantage. The ability to discuss the different challenges and opportunities that we're all facing and to share and gather insights will help me in this role.

## **Tell us something that most people wouldn't know about you?**

I played basketball in high school and I could dunk a basketball, even as short as I am. I also held the three-point record in my high school for almost 20 years.

Something my family likes to tease me about is that I was a pool boy in college. In order to help get me through college, my parents helped me a lot, as much as they could, but I borrowed the rest of the money. I actually borrowed more money for college than my parents spent for the house I grew up in. To put myself through college, I had anywhere from two to four jobs. I was an usher at a theater on campus, I worked at a retail store, I tutored students – generally in finance, but most importantly I cleaned pools on the Main Line of Philadelphia. That's a very exclusive area, like Beverly Hills, with 150-200-year-old homes. These are very wealthy families with acres of land. But the best part of the job was it was flexible. There were times I was cleaning someone's pool at 5 a.m., and it allowed me to get back to school or get to my next job in the summer. And it got me outside and away from the city of Philadelphia a bit. It was a fun way to start a lot of days and helped put some money in the bank to get me through college. But my family still likes to joke, "You were just a pool boy."



# “A CONSTANT GIVE AND TAKE”

## BASIN ELECTRIC’S PAUL SUKUT RETIRES AFTER 38 YEARS AT THE COOPERATIVE

*By Tracie Bettenhausen*

When Paul Sukut stepped into position as the fifth CEO and general manager of Basin Electric in 2014, he was the first in the cooperative’s history to do so as a current employee.

He says it was an advantage that helped him get to work immediately.

“The first thing I put on my priority list was to get out to the plants on the electric side and at DGC (Dakota Gasification Company, Basin Electric’s largest subsidiary). I concentrated on the plants because there was some discord with some of the things that had gone

on the previous two years,” Sukut says. “John Jacobs was brought down from Antelope Valley Station to run Operations as senior vice president. John had been here a long, long time and he knew the plants well, he knew the mentality, he knew what needed to be done.”

Sukut says the cooperative had lost good employees in the years prior to him taking over. “You can have all the technology in the world, you can have all the great equipment in the world, but if you don’t have good people like our people are, it’s meaningless. You can’t get anywhere,” he says. “So I tried to concentrate on maintaining our workforce.”

He says his next order of business was negotiating a deal regarding a lawsuit with BNSF Railway over rates for hauling coal at Laramie River Station, which was settled favorably for the cooperative.

The very next year, in 2015, Basin Electric bought out of Rural Utilities Service, and also entered into the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) regional transmission market. "Joining SPP could have been the biggest change ever in how we conduct business at Basin Electric," Sukut says.

In 2018, a urea production facility was completed and began producing fertilizer at the Great Plains Synfuels Plant. The urea facility was the largest completed project at the Synfuels Plant since initial construction of the plant in 1984, a major milestone in the pivot to fertilizer production at the Synfuels Plant.

"When you're CEO, it takes a long time to see fruition for a project, but once you get there, it's very satisfying," he says.

While Sukut's time as CEO features several flashy milestones, the decades he spent previously at Basin Electric are what shaped his time working for the membership.

Sukut worked for Eide Helmeke (now Eide Bailly) as an auditor for several years before joining Basin Electric in 1983 as an internal auditor. Because Basin Electric was Eide Helmeke's largest client, Sukut says he spent half a year each year inside the cooperative's walls before he ever worked here as an employee.

"The purchase of the Synfuels Plant (in 1988) defined my career, because then I spent 13 years across the street (in the J&L Building, a Basin Electric location across the street from the Headquarters building) with the Synfuels Plant, and I learned a lot," he says.

## Mentors and lifelong friends

Sukut credits several former co-workers with coaching him through skills he would go on to use throughout his career.

He mentions Howard Easton (manager of marketing and member services), Rich Fockler (manager of operations and engineering), and Kent Janssen (chief

operating officer of Dakota Gas, and later deputy general manager). "Those three guys, as much as anyone, laid the groundwork for Basin Electric. They built Leland Olds Station, they built Antelope Valley, they built Laramie River Station, and so they really set the standard for many of our successes," he says.

Sukut says working with Janssen at Dakota Gas for 11 years also gave him an education in negotiating. "Kent was the master negotiator. I'll never forget it. We were settling the gas contracts, and Mark Foss and I (Foss is now Basin Electric's general counsel) would go back with Kent and we'd make an offer, and they'd say, 'Well, we'll have to come back.' And they'd come back and say, 'Well, if you do a little —' and Kent would say, 'Nope, that offer's off the table, you should've taken the offer we had yesterday.' I saw him at work," he says.

He says Clifton "Buzz" Hudgins, former chief financial officer, "is the one guy I never reported to, but I listened to for 25 years because he was very helpful to me. Kent and Buzz are probably the most influential as far as being mentors."

He also credits Ron Harper, former chief executive officer and general manager, with giving him the experience he needed to step into the role of CEO. "Ron made me his deputy general manager. He taught me a lot of things, and in particular, had confidence in me and in turn gave me opportunity to learn many areas of the cooperative. Ron also gave me good advice about reporting to a board," Sukut says, because Harper had worked for a board as a distribution cooperative general manager for much of his career.

"We've got an excellent board. I really can't say enough," he says. "I know sometimes they think, 'What's this little German doing? What in the world?' But they were so patient. They asked me tough questions, I'm not going to tell you they didn't. But they were always fair. The biggest thing was they were always supportive."

Both directors and employees are what made it tough to retire. "I'm going to miss the people. We have such good people here. Some of my closest friends — board and employees — I've met here," he says.

## Life skills learned on the job

While the people around Sukut provided mentorship and friendship, circumstances at work supplied him with the tools he needed later, too.

Working with Dakota Gas and the risk associated with commodity prices at the Synfuels Plant “transformed me into someone who knew what it meant to run a business that was very high risk,” he says. “It was a commodity play, we had to work so hard for everything we had. We had to save where we could, and we were always on the leading-edge technologically. It gave me confidence. It gave me confidence that we can do things.”

Sukut says the potential for the Synfuels Plant surprises him even today. “It really is a chemistry set on the prairie. It’s amazing to me sitting here 30-some years later how people are still coming to us and saying, ‘Well, let’s try this at the plant. Let’s make jet fuel, let’s make sulfur-free diesel, let’s try some other things,’” he says. “It really opened my eyes to see some of the things you need to do. It really proves without taking a risk, there is no reward.”

Later in his career, he moved from the deputy general manager role into the chief financial officer position. “When I was given the opportunity to be CFO because it was right in my wheelhouse, Ron [Harper] gave me the opportunity to move over from the deputy general manager job. At that time, I felt I would just finish my career here,” he says. “But I am forever grateful to the board for giving me the opportunity to become CEO.”

## Working for the members

Sukut continues on at Basin Electric in a consultant role, and takes opportunities to remind employees about the purpose of Basin Electric.

“Never forget why you are here. We are here for our member systems, we are here for the people who own us. Our mission in life is to deliver the best product at the least possible cost,” he says. “We work hard here to come up with and make good business decisions, decisions that are beneficial to the membership.”

He says the decisions he made at his desk, and those that came to the board table, were never easy, but the cooperative business model and principles give both staff and directors a solid foundation to lean on. “One thing you have to learn about a cooperative like ours is it’s so big that sometimes you benefit and somebody else doesn’t, and the next time the one that didn’t benefit does, and this one doesn’t,” he says. “It is a constant give and take.”

He is quick to mention, the job of the board of directors is also difficult. “If a decision is made and they take it home, it may not always be viewed as positive within their district. They do a very good job doing it,” Sukut says. “They get along well, and they’re able to work through many difficult problems and decisions and they do it for the overall benefit of Basin Electric and its members. . . . I’m still a big believer this cooperative business model really works.”



Sukut testified before the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works in support of the bipartisan Utilizing Significant Emissions with Innovative Technologies, or USE IT Act in February 2019.

# COMMITTEES MEET TO REVIEW BASIN ELECTRIC'S BYLAWS, RESOLUTIONS

*By Kalli Senske*

Basin Electric's 2021 Bylaws Committee met Sept. 13. The meeting was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The role of the committee, which is made up of one manager and one director from each district, is to review proposed amendments to the bylaws and provide recommendations to the membership.

During this year's meeting, members of the committee reelected Vic Simmons, general manager of Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative, as chairperson.

The committee discussed an amendment that would extend the period where Basin Electric could maintain \$300 million in deferred revenues, but tabled the proposed amendment and will take it up again next year.

If any new amendments are proposed, members will have the opportunity to vote at Basin Electric's 2021 Annual Meeting on Nov. 9-11.

The Basin Electric Resolutions Committee, made up of directors from each of Basin Electric's districts and a Basin Electric board member, had its annual review meeting Sept. 13. Like the Bylaws Committee, this meeting was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

After re-electing David Sigloh, director from Upper Missouri Power Cooperative, as its chairperson, the committee reviewed the cooperative's existing resolutions, making small edits and updates. In the Rural Communications Systems resolution (resolution 8), it was discussed to add "Broadband" into the title and content. In the current resolutions under the environmental section (section D-1), the committee discussed adding language about compensation for stranded costs incurred by Basin Electric and its member-owners, as well as adding language to the background section regarding support for efforts that create carbon value through agricultural stewardship activities.

No new resolutions have been brought forward by the membership thus far. The Resolutions Committee will meet again Nov. 9, prior to Basin Electric's 2021 Annual Meeting of the Membership.

## BASIN ELECTRIC'S 2021 BYLAWS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

DISTRICT	MANAGER	DIRECTOR
District 1	Thomas Boyko	James Ryken
District 2	Curt Dieren	David Hansen
District 3	Tom Meland	Mark Brehm
District 4	Matthew Washburn	Louis C. Reed
District 5	Duane Highley	Rick Gordon
District 6	Doug Hardy	Russ Bloom
District 7	Vic Simmons	Dwight Rossow
District 8	Claire Vigesaa	David Sigloh
District 9	Kevin Mikkelsen	Tim Velde
District 10	Mike Easley	Jim Collins
District 11	Ken Kuype	Dave Onken

## BASIN ELECTRIC'S 2021 RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Gary Bachman**, East River Electric Power Cooperative
- David Hansen**, L&O Power Cooperative
- Sheri Haugen-Hoffart**, Central Power Electric Cooperative
- Louis C. Reed**, Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative
- Jack Finnerty**, Tri-State Generation & Transmission Association
- Russ Bloom**, Central Montana Electric Power Cooperative
- Dwight Rossow**, Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative
- David Sigloh**, Upper Missouri Power Cooperative
- Jim Erk**, Grand Electric Cooperative
- Philip Habeck**, Members 1<sup>st</sup> Power Cooperative
- Dave Onken**, Corn Belt Power Cooperative
- David Meschke**, Basin Electric board representative



# LIVING THEIR BEST LIVES

## EAST RIVER ELECTRIC SUPPORTS INDIVIDUALS WITH DIFFERING ABILITIES THROUGH LOCAL ORGANIZATION

By Angela Magstadt

Photos courtesy of LifeScape and East River Electric Power Cooperative

A little boy with severe mobility challenges seems to always be far away from the rest of the kids on the playground because they can run around and he can't. With the help of innovation and some techy engineers, that child can now keep up with the rest of the kids using a battery-powered car that he can drive using his head movements. The look on his face when he drives away in the car? Pure joy.

There is a little girl who can move her eyes, but that is the extent of her mobility. In years past, only those who knew her best could read her emotions, and that was the only communication they shared. Today thanks to technology, she can "talk" to anyone she wants by using her eye movements to spell on a computer that then speaks what she spells. The technology proves she is a regular girl whose body just doesn't do what she wants it to do, but now her intelligence, humor, and spirit shine.

Not too far from the little girl, the parents of a young man are heartbroken when they drop their son off at a specialty school away from where they live. The school offers more services than the public school in his community can provide. The young man lives at the school during the week and goes home on the weekends. Before long, he can't wait to come back to the school on Monday because there, he isn't different. He has friends who are each dealing with some sort of challenge just like he is. At the school, he is just one of the guys. His parents say they are so thankful he has finally found his community. A place where he feels he belongs.

All of these are true, inspiring stories about children from South Dakota and are made possible through LifeScape, an organization with the goal of helping disabled children and adults live their best lives.



“We all want to be happy, productive, and contribute to the world around us. The only difference with the individuals we support is their bodies maybe don’t work the same way as most of ours do,” says Jessica Wells, president of the LifeScape Foundation (formerly Children’s Care Hospital and School and South Dakota Achieve). “These people just need the world adapted a bit so their bodies can do what on the inside they want to do.”

The thing is, the technology and services that help make this possible are not free. That’s where East River Electric Power Cooperative and its commitment to community comes in. For nearly 60 years, East River, a Basin Electric Class A member headquartered in Madison, South Dakota, has hosted an annual “mountain oyster” feed to benefit LifeScape. The event has grown to include a raffle and silent auction and has raised nearly \$850,000 over the years to help with therapies, equipment, and anything else that helps fill a need for the individuals LifeScape serves. Basin Electric supports LifeScape, as well, matching a portion of East River Electric’s donations through its Charitable Giving Program.

“This event is a great opportunity for East River and the entire community to rally together for a great cause,” says Jennifer Gross, education and outreach coordinator at East River Electric. “It’s important to the East River family to support these children and adults because we want them to live their best lives, too.”

Wells says most charity events have a cycle – they’re successful for a while and then slowly decline – but this event has been hugely successful for 57 years. “And, the fact that the committee for the event consists of East River employees makes it even more impressive,” she says, “The committee has continued to choose to support LifeScape through almost 60 years of different employees. That is absolutely amazing.”

Wells says the funds raised at the event go to wherever there is the greatest need. Last year, it helped LifeScape quickly respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by allowing the organization to purchase protective equipment and the technology needed to help patients do their therapies remotely, allowing them to sustain the progress they had made pre-pandemic.

Funds have also been used to support programs LifeScape offers, including:

- LifeScape’s specialty hospital which helps kids recover from illnesses, accidents, and surgeries. It is a place for people who don’t need a full-service hospital but require more care and therapy than can be provided at home.
- Behavioral therapies for children with conditions such as autism, helping them learn to self-regulate their responses and emotions and learn skills to integrate well into society.
- LifeScape serves some very rural areas, many of which don’t have the services some children need. LifeScape sends speech, occupational, and physical therapists to schools that don’t have them.
- Adult services such as group homes and supported employment, allowing adults with differing abilities to live as independently as possible.

“East River’s support of LifeScape is a testament to its culture – they truly care about the people in the communities they serve,” Wells says. “Their generosity makes a difference in people’s lives – it makes miracles possible. It allows us to ask the people we support what they want to do and what they want to be, and helps us give them the technology and skills to make that happen.”



April Cundy and her mom, Linda.



<https://bit.ly/EastRiverLifeScape>

Read about longtime LifeScape client April Cundy, her connection to East River Electric, and how her she inspires those around her with her positive demeanor and beautiful artwork in the LiveWire blog post “Basin Electric member supports organization changing people’s lives.”



# USING THEIR NOODLES

## HOW DAKOTA GROWERS PASTA WORKS WITH NORTHERN PLAINS ELECTRIC

*By Tracie Bettenhausen*

The Dakota Growers Pasta plant in Carrington, North Dakota, comes from co-op roots.

“It was a group of North Dakota farmers who pulled together to say, ‘Let’s do something more with our durum wheat crop to provide more value to us as growers,’” says Jason Jarrett, Dakota Growers plant manager.

The plant was built in 1993 and started production in October that year. Initially, the plant did grain handling and milling using durum wheat which was turned into semolina, a flour used to make pasta. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the cooperative doubled its production capacity to keep up with demand.

In 2010, the 1,200 or so farmer-owners of Dakota Growers decided to sell their investment. “We grew into

the third or fourth-largest dry pasta manufacturer in the United States throughout that time period,” Jarrett says. “In 2010, the farmers, the owners, decided that they were satisfied with where the investment had grown and sold the business.”

Today, Jarrett works for 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue Food and Provisions, which has owned the Dakota Growers plant since 2018. 8th Avenue Food and Provisions is a private-label food company that has interests in peanut butter and nut butter production, pasta, and snacks like nuts and dried fruits. It’s owned by Post Holdings and Thomas H. Lee Partners.

“From a pasta perspective, we are a multisite pasta company. There is the Carrington site, which is the largest production site from a capacity perspective.

Virtually every department that's a step in the process is consuming electricity at some level, but it's concentrated in grain handling (pictured), milling, and production.

We have a facility in New Hope, Minnesota, and then we recently acquired a facility in Winchester, Virginia. With that transaction has come the purchase of the second-largest retail pasta brand in the United States, Ronzoni, which had been owned by the prior owner in the Winchester acquisition," Jarrett says. "That couples up fairly well with our Dreamfields label, which is a Dakota Growers label. That's a bit smaller in scope and distribution throughout the country."

## Using resources wisely

Dakota Growers, which is a member of Northern Plains Electric Cooperative, a Basin Electric Class C member headquartered in Carrington, sources its wheat from northwest North Dakota, Montana, and Canada. It comes in by both truck and rail.

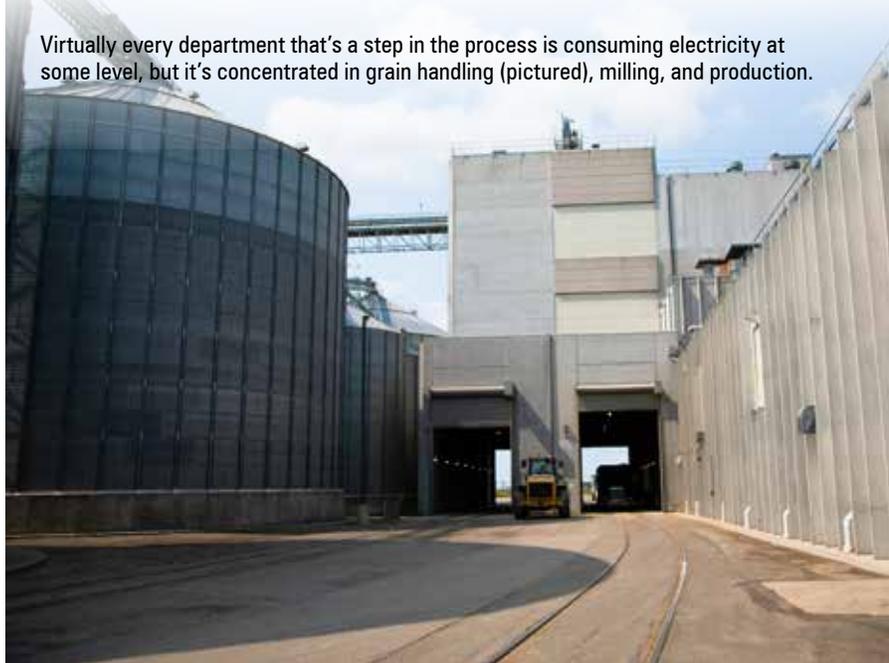
Drought conditions in central to northwest North Dakota have been categorized as extreme to exceptional, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

"Every crop year is a bit different, but this one has some added challenges to it," Jarrett says. "I think producers are seeing that their yields are definitely down. The quality, though, is holding steady. Good to very good quality, proteins and hard counts are holding the level that we all need."

When the plant was operated by the co-op, the farmer-owners were responsible for delivering their own grain for processing. Today, a grain merchandiser at the plant works directly with farmers, maintaining contact and building relationships, and also works with commercial grain elevators to buy the grain needed to make enough pasta to fill contracts.

"There is a team behind him at the corporate office, but they have to work harder in a year where supply and demand is a bit out of kilter," Jarrett says. "There are enough connections and experience there that we can be successful buying at the right price, buying the right quality, and then converting it to finished goods. But there is going to be more effort this year to make that happen with the drought pressure that's there."

Jarrett says over time, North Dakota farmers have been replacing their wheat acres with other, higher-margin crops like soybeans and corn.



Dakota Growers makes a large variety of pasta shapes including penne and spaghetti (shown on page 14).



From grain handling to production to packaging, Dakota Growers is Northern Plains Electric's largest member, using about 3.5 million kilowatt-hours per month.



“We’re fortunate that just north of Carrington we have an NDSU (North Dakota State University) research center, and we have in recent months worked with them to make sure that we get in front of the North Dakota farmer and educate about durum,” he says. “The opportunities, the breeding program that has built better durum varieties, will help growers manage the agronomic risks that they have, as well as help us make quality pasta products.”

Having grown up on a North Dakota farm himself, Jarrett knows farmers are very tuned in to their input costs and margins. “There is a competition to maintain enough wheat acres to services our customers,” he says. “Durum is a viable crop that we want producers to continue to consider in their crop rotation because there is a market for it. There are a number of competing crops for the North Dakota farmer’s acres, and we want to make sure we keep durum in front of the producer.”

Jarrett says sustainability and energy conservation are important to the bottom line. “We’re always committed to improving yields in a variety of ways. So getting the most out of that wheat, getting the most out of our power input, we’ve incorporated capacitors, we’ve looked at ways to utilize the North Dakota climate, heat pumps and things like that, to harvest cold air to drive back into our processes to manage temperatures,” he says. “Those are the ideas we’re working with Northern Plains on over time to see how we can become a better steward of electrical power.”

## Reliability and rates

The Dakota Growers pasta processing plant is Northern Plains Electric’s largest member, using about 3.5 million kilowatt-hours per month. Seth Syverson, Northern Plains Electric general manager, says Dakota Growers “is an important part of both the community and the cooperative.”

“Virtually every department that’s a step in the process is consuming electricity at some level, but it’s concentrated in grain handling, milling, and production,” Jarrett says.

Northern Plains Electric has been a good partner in ensuring power is reliable at the plant, Jarrett says. “We’ve enjoyed a high level of reliability over the 28 years this plant has been in operation,” he says. “There are five transformers that feed power into the building, so we’ve got some redundancy. Northern Plains has done a good job at helping us be able to reroute power with switchgear that we put in with their help in the last 10 years. This switchgear helps route power if a transformer would fail, so we’re still able to keep much of the priority pieces of the facility running by calling them and asking them to reroute power as needed.”

Dakota Growers’ two sister plants (in Minnesota and Virginia) don’t have the cooperative advantages the North Dakota plant does as a member of Northern Plains Electric: service and price.

Seth Syverson, Northern Plains Electric general manager, says the co-op works to keep an open line of communication with Dakota Growers because they understand the importance of maintaining reliability and affordable rates. Syverson is pictured at right with Jason Jarrett, Dakota Growers plant manager.





Having reliable electricity means the difference between making sure customers have pasta to put on grocery shelves or not.

“You don’t see that, normally, in manufacturing sites where you have that ability to work with your local provider,” he says. “And the price of our electricity is lowest at our plant here in North Dakota.”

Jarrett says having reliable electricity means the difference between making sure customers have pasta to put on grocery shelves or not. “If we lose power, we’ve got all this product, particularly in pasta processing, that’s in process. A long goods dryer has about six hours of finished goods in it from beginning to end. If you lose fans and pumps, that product is lost, unable to go to the customer,” he says. “We’re able to recycle it back to the mill, but we’re not going to cover an order somewhere. That’s anywhere from 35,000 pounds of product per production line across eight production lines if they are all running.”

He says the plant has lost power very few times, and didn’t at all during the February energy emergency event, in which some cooperative members were forced into an outage due to the extreme demand across the Southwest Power Pool system.

“We didn’t sustain any downtime from that. We got warned, we got a phone call. They were on top of letting us know that load shedding may occur, but we did not lose power,” he says. “Both parties have focused on

continuous improvement. We’ve had outages, but we’ve come together, we’ve put battle plans together to improve. It’s been a good organization to work with, and we need to keep that up because that’s what keeps a facility like this successful.”

Jarrett says the plant is taking measures to improve customer service with farmers who bring in grain directly to the plant, including an additional commercial grain scale to improve unloading capacity. “We’ve never been built to be a commercial grain handler. We’re a commercial food processor, so we’re not always the fastest at taking a truckload of grain, inspecting it, and completing the unload as efficiently as a commercial handler does,” he says. “With our proposed improvements, we are trying to reduce the time onsite for the farmer from an hour down to a maximum of 40 minutes.”

Syverson says the cooperative serves a wide range of members throughout its service area, and relationships across all members are key. “We maintain an open line of communication with Dakota Growers to address items of concern which may be electrical rates, reliability, or facility improvements,” he says. “We understand the importance of maintaining a high level of reliability and keeping electrical rates affordable to ensure the success of a facility like Dakota Growers.”

**DAKOTA GROWERS PASTA PRODUCTS ARE  
“SHIPPED TIP TO TIP, COAST TO COAST, AND SOME OVERSEAS,”  
ACCORDING TO JASON JARRETT, DAKOTA GROWERS PLANT MANAGER**



**10 MILLION**  
bushels of wheat  
processed per year  
(when plant is fully loaded)

Capacity for  
**300-310 MILLION**  
pounds of finished  
pasta products



**30 TRUCKLOADS**  
of finished goods  
shipped each day



A diesel exhaust fluid (DEF) railcar is loaded at the Great Plains Synfuels Plant. Records were set for DEF production and sales in July and August.

# DEF-INITE ADVANTAGES

GREAT PLAINS SYNFUELS PLANT'S ABILITY TO SHIFT PRODUCTION HAS MEANT MILLIONS FOR DAKOTA GAS THIS SUMMER

*By Angela Magstadt*

This summer, Dakota Gasification Company's Great Plains Synfuels Plant broke all-time production and sales records for diesel exhaust fluid (DEF). A record was set in July, then was shattered in August when the plant produced nearly three times as much DEF as a normal month.

The increased production came at a time when DEF prices soared, a result of five major production facilities conducting planned and unplanned maintenance outages. As the market for DEF increased, the Synfuels Plant shifted its normal production to making less granular urea so additional DEF could be produced.

"This is a clear advantage the Synfuels Plant has – as commodity prices change, so can its product slate," says Daniel Schaaf Gallagher, Basin Electric manager of commodity sales and trading. "We've shifted production a day or two here and there since the urea plant was built, but this is by far the most dramatic shift – it's the most significant amount of product for the longest period of time."

According to Schaaf Gallagher, there are a lot of moving parts that need to go smoothly for a transition like this to be successful. "Normally, we have orders come in, we prepare them, fill the rail cars that are on site, and fill

trucks when they come in. These last few months, we've been managing about 150 extra rail cars, increased truck traffic, working to maintain storage levels, and ensuring all orders are filled and shipped on time. We also need to make sure we are still producing enough urea to fill the orders we've committed to. There is constant and significant coordination between marketing, production, and logistics," he says.

"When we first built the urea plant, I would have said there was no way we could have produced and shipped as much DEF as we have the last few months," says Trinity Turnbow, Synfuels Plant assistant plant manager and process operations manager. "The job process operations field technicians have done loading and moving product without any big hiccups has been outstanding, and the collaboration between all the groups that are involved has been really good. This has gone better than I ever could have imagined. It's helping our customers get the products they need and it's helping Dakota Gas' bottom line."

The shift to producing an increased amount of DEF has had a significant financial impact for Dakota Gas with the plant seeing revenue millions of dollars over budget.

Knowing when to shift production takes many different factors into consideration, and having Basin Electric's marketing department is a definite advantage. Marketing helps ensure the plant is aware of market conditions including product prices, domestic and global supply, local and regional logistics, and input considerations. In addition, marketing helps communicate plant issues in detail to N-7, LLC (the joint marketing partnership between Dakota Gas and OCI N.V.) so N-7 can make the best decisions on Dakota Gas' behalf. Ultimately, this allows the plant to focus more closely on maximizing production and increasing efficiencies as well as help N-7 focus on customer relationships and competitive awareness.

Another advantage of the N-7 partnership is that it is able to give Dakota Gas an expanded market view because it sells products across the country. N-7 is actively participating in the import market as well, so it

has increased insight on the international markets. "This wider viewpoint allows Dakota Gas to pivot production based on the anticipation of customer needs, which is a huge advantage," says Zach Jacobson, Dakota Gas' marketing account manager.

In addition to increased demand and high prices on DEF, urea and natural gas prices have been higher than normal as well.

Urea saw steady price increases in the Northern Plains region this summer as a result of limited supply due to the maintenance outages as well as Hurricane Ida impacting imports. While supply was down and prices were up, DEF margins were still higher than those of urea, which is why the Synfuels Plant focused on DEF production.

Natural gas prices have changed dramatically over the last several of months, increasing from \$3.15 in June to about \$5.45 in late September. Increased prices are the result of several factors including strong U.S liquid natural gas exports, lower than anticipated storage injections, decreased production due to Hurricane Ida, and a very warm summer across the country. Schaaf Gallagher says increased natural gas prices could lead to another production shift. Just as the plant can modify production with products such as DEF and urea, it also has the ability to lower the production of certain fuels and chemicals, such as tar oil and naphtha, to produce more natural gas, if the price is right.

All the reasons Dakota Gas has committed to doing whatever it takes to successfully shift production whenever it makes sense to do so boils down to one "why" – Basin Electric's membership. "The ability to make these modifications benefits our members because it allows us to make strategic decisions about where to sell, what to sell, and how to sell it in order to bring the most profit back to Dakota Gas," Jacobson says. "And, the fact that Basin Electric is a rural cooperative and many of Dakota Gas' fertilizer products end up in the hands of farmers and retailers in our members' communities is a great benefit to our members, too."



## FORMER BASIN ELECTRIC CEO ROBERT L. MCPHAIL HAS DIED

*Compiled by Tracie Bettenhausen*

Robert L. “Bob” McPhail, Basin Electric CEO and general manager from 1985-2000, died on Sept. 28.

Under McPhail’s leadership, Dakota Gasification Company, a Basin Electric subsidiary, was formed to purchase the Great Plains Synfuels Plant in Beulah, North Dakota, in 1988, which was in danger of closing. McPhail said Basin Electric didn’t have much choice. “Buying the plant was a defensive move. At the time (1988), we had just turned the corner on controlling our costs and had started reducing wholesale rates. They had peaked in 1987 and we could see a trend developing for lower rates,” he explained. “And then here’s something (the potential closing of the Synfuels Plant) that could have added another six mills on our rate base which would

have pushed our member rates over six cents . . . that would have been a crushing blow for us if we hadn’t gotten involved in bidding for the Synfuels Plant.”

Later, as the Synfuels Plant faced financial challenges, McPhail and his management team responded by initiating an international energy venture involving Great Plains. They secured a contract to sell carbon dioxide from the Synfuels Plant to Canadian oil fields for enhanced recovery. Today, the project has captured and sequestered 41 million metric tons of carbon dioxide.

In addition to serving as CEO and general manager at Basin Electric, he also served in leadership roles in Basin Electric’s subsidiaries.



**BOB'S KEEN BUSINESS SENSE COUPLED WITH HIS UNDERSTANDING OF OUR MEMBERS AT THE END OF LINE WAS AN ASSET ALL THE YEARS THAT HE WAS BASIN ELECTRIC'S CEO.**



*Paul Sukut, former Basin Electric CEO and general manager*

When McPhail was interviewed for a story published in *Basin Today* magazine at his retirement, he said, "It's just amazing when you look at what Basin Electric was when it started and where we are today...it's a small miracle. No one thought a group of farmers and ranchers could put together a great organization like Basin Electric."

McPhail received Basin Electric's prestigious Cornerstone Award in 2005. He was only the third recipient to receive this award. The Cornerstone Award, Basin Electric's highest honor, recognizes individuals whose leadership has been a "cornerstone" in the mission of the Cooperative.

Todd Telesz, Basin Electric CEO and general manager, says the legacy McPhail has left behind speaks for itself. "Mr. Bob McPhail was a well-respected and transformational leader, both at Basin Electric and throughout the energy industry at a national level. The decisions that needed to be made and put into motion during his 15 years here as CEO and general manager were substantial, and that our cooperative became stronger following his tenure is a testament to his ability to work with our consumer-owners and to lead a team of highly talented colleagues at Basin Electric, Dakota Gas, and beyond," Telesz says. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to Mr. McPhail's family and all Basin Electric employees who knew and worked with him."

Former Basin Electric CEO and general manager Paul Sukut worked closely with McPhail and remembers him fondly. "Bob's legacy was really established by the 1988

purchase of the Great Plains Synfuels Plant, Sukut says. "Bob sent three of us – Kent Janssen as chief operating officer, Mark Foss (now senior vice president and general counsel), and myself – over from Basin Electric to manage the business. Bob was always extremely supportive of us and the plant as we battled through tough economic times as well as the legal battles with the former owners. Bob's prediction upon the purchase that the plant would be extremely beneficial to the Basin Electric membership proved to be very accurate. Bob's keen business sense coupled with his understanding of our members at the end of line was an asset all the years that he was Basin Electric's CEO."

McPhail's obituary read, in part: "Bob left this world as a very loved man. He was always a man in service of his fellow men. Education was something so extremely important to him – and through his generous heart, he helped so many receive their degrees. Bob was a man of unshakable conviction. He was a man of integrity and honor. His faith was strong and built on a firm foundation. While his successes as a manager and business man are endless, he will most be remembered as an amazing husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and a devoted son of our Almighty God. His love for his family was unwavering and unconditional. He spent his entire life to ensure that his family never struggled with the poverty he experienced as a child. He always enjoyed going to work and felt that he was making a difference in the lives of others, as well as in his country. He went from serving his country to protecting and serving his family and community."



**MR. BOB MCPHAIL WAS A WELL-RESPECTED AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADER, BOTH AT BASIN ELECTRIC AND THROUGHOUT THE ENERGY INDUSTRY AT A NATIONAL LEVEL.**



*Todd Telesz, Basin Electric CEO and general manager*

# ACHIEVEMENTS TO BE PROUD OF: MILITARY ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM BASIN ELECTRIC'S VETERANS

*By Kalli Senske*

They say that the greater the challenge, the greater the sense of accomplishment. Many in the military community have encountered situations that challenge them in ways most civilians don't experience. In honor of Veterans Day on Nov. 11, we talked with four veterans at Basin Electric and asked them to share one of their proudest moments while serving.



## KELBY HOVEY

**Pilot and safety officer at Headquarters  
C-12 pilot, North Dakota Army National Guard**

As I reflect on proud moments during my time served in the military, my mind is flooded with deployment memories. My team was tasked with flying our C-12 aircraft throughout the Horn of Africa to support ground forces. Each day was different – one day we flew military personnel to remote airstrips while the next flight involved delivering mail (and even turkeys on Thanksgiving). It was gratifying to perform a job that helped others more easily accomplish their missions and improve morale.

## JAIME RIDDLE

**Maintenance planning supervisor at Dry Fork Station  
Cryptologic technician maintenance E5, U.S. Navy**

The proudest moment for me was completing Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist (ESWS) on USS Yorktown CG-48. ESWS was a program where you went and learned all divisions of the ship, both operation and mechanical, on-the-job training, and studying for a final knowledge test on the entire ship. The purpose of this was in wartime, if/when something bad happened, you could assist in other areas if needed. After completion, the award is presented by the captain. Completing this enabled the ship to basically have back-up people if something happened in wartime. Then if a certain area needed more people, they had a group of people with knowledge of the entire ship that could fill in. It also gave bonus points which applied to future advancements.



## TODD ISAAK

Lead mechanic at Leland Olds Station  
Petty officer third class, U.S. Navy

While anchored in the Gulf of Oman, my ship would have up to four ships on the port and starboard side tied to her. We would sometimes work around the clock to make repairs to make sure ships were 100% battle ready. One particular job stands out the most. I was assigned to rig out a gas turbine engine out of the engine room. I believe it was on a fast frigate. A ship is engineered and built around the equipment so people were looking at me asking, "How are you getting this thing out of the ship?" My team was able to achieve this task without damaging the turbine or anything else.

Our ship photographer took some photos for our cruise book of us rigging the turbine, and every few years I would look through the book and see a photo of 19-year-old me. It was a proud moment!



## JOSHUA WOLFF

Boiler attendant at Antelope Valley Station  
Corporal, North Dakota Army National Guard

One of my proudest moments of my military career isn't for me or my own self acclaim. It came in the eyes of my family and fellow soldiers. I joined when I was 17. A big inspiration for me joining was my father who served in the military himself. I always had an interest in the military, but as I matured it grew stronger. My parents had to sign a waiver for me starting my training while still in high school by doing what they called split ops. I would go to basic training during my summer and come back to graduate high school. They seemed hesitant, but I assured them I was going to do it when I was of age and didn't need their consent. After my first deployment at age 19, you realize that the soldiers you deploy with bond like a family. After the tour was completed, I received a pretty high award for a person of my lower rank. My family was allowed to be there for that ceremony. It was a very emotional time for me to show them that I handled my duty and helped my fellow soldiers. I know I put my family through a mess of emotions with being deployed twice, but it was a proud moment for me. I was able to do something that was honorable.

Service awards



**Bud Bussard**  
40 years  
Backshift maintenance supervisor  
*Laramie River Station*



**Gavin McCollam**  
30 years  
Vice president of engineering and construction  
*Headquarters*



**Sherry Walker**  
30 years  
Changehouse attendant  
*Dakota Gasification Company*



**Lawrence Anderson**  
25 years  
Gas production shift supervisor  
*Dakota Gasification Company*



**Brad Bergstad**  
25 years  
TSM Maintenance planner/scheduler supervisor  
*Menoken TSM*



**Dave Eustice**  
25 years  
Process operations shift superintendent  
*Dakota Gasification Company*



**Mike Merck**  
25 years  
Process operations field technician  
*Dakota Gasification Company*



**Rick Schantz**  
25 years  
Process operations field technician  
*Dakota Gasification Company*



**Rick Volk**  
25 years  
Section manager of gas production  
*Dakota Gasification Company*



**Kurt Albers**  
20 years  
Warehouse field technician  
*Dakota Gasification Company*



**Dale Call**  
20 years  
Lead yard equipment operator  
*Laramie River Station*



**Dennis Candrian**  
20 years  
Senior electrical/instrument/control systems engineer  
*Dakota Gasification Company*



**Dale Dauenhauer**  
20 years  
Mechanic  
*Antelope Valley Station*



**Bill Foster**  
20 years  
Scrubber supervisor  
*Antelope Valley Station*



**Dana Jensen**  
20 years  
Senior electrical engineer  
*Headquarters*



**Tim Johnson**  
20 years  
Lead electrician  
*Leland Olds Station*



**Jay Lundstrom**  
20 years  
Lead load forecast analyst  
*Headquarters*



**Ryan Martens**  
20 years  
System administrator  
*Dakota Gasification Company*



**Brian Matthews**  
20 years  
Water treatment operator  
*Laramie River Station*



**Jim Reis**  
20 years  
Warehouse supervisor  
*Leland Olds Station*



**Tammy Roehrich**  
20 years  
System administrator  
*Headquarters*



**Tim Rogness**  
20 years  
Area inspection specialist  
*Dakota Gasification Company*



**Dave Rudolph**  
20 years  
Manager of NERC compliance  
*Headquarters*



**Kris Schmidt**  
20 years  
Coal/yard supervisor  
*Leland Olds Station*



**Eric Schwab**  
20 years  
Maintenance planner/scheduler  
*Antelope Valley Station*

## Service awards



**Kelly Snyder**  
20 years  
Electrician  
*Leland Olds Station*



**Robert Starr**  
20 years  
Mechanic/welder  
*Laramie River Station*



**Jeremy Steinhausen**  
20 years  
Operations shift supervisor  
*Laramie River Station*



**Boyd Trester**  
20 years  
Electrical engineering manager  
*Headquarters*



**Amy Windmeier**  
20 years  
Maintenance planning/  
scheduling supervisor  
*Laramie River Station*



**John Worthington**  
20 years  
Operations shift supervisor  
*Laramie River Station*

## We will remember ...



**Michael Lawson** passed away on Sept. 17. He started working at Laramie River Station (Wheatland, Wyoming) in 2006 as a mobile equipment mechanic. He was promoted to water treatment operator in September 2018 and was still working in that position when he died.

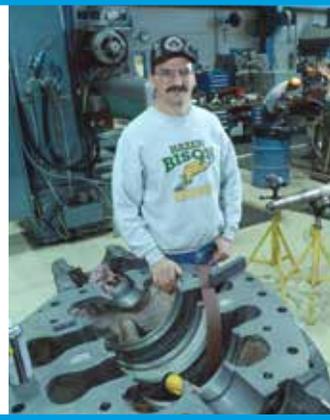
Jay Houx is the water treatment plant supervisor and Lawson's supervisor when he passed. "Mike was one of the most conscientious and hardest-working individuals I've ever had the privilege to work with. Mike was well-respected by all of his coworkers at Basin Electric. He was always willing to roll up his sleeves and help anyone. Mike will be missed here at the water treatment plant and by everyone who had the pleasure of knowing him."



**Curtis Sailer** passed away on Sept. 22. He began working at Dakota Gasification Company's Great Plains Synfuels Plant in 1983 as a process operations field technician. He advanced to the highest level field technician and worked in the gas production area until he announced his retirement on May 17, and his last day at the Synfuels Plant was June 2.

"Curt was the A/C-crew rotation day operator in the gasification unit," says Jesse Eckroth, gas production shift supervisor and Sailer's supervisor when he passed. "Aside from normal operator duties and turnaround planning, he had a large role in getting our plant-wide online unit logging system up and running. He also was instrumental in helping develop the new tagging system by making sure all bleeds and isolation points were entered into the software for every piece of equipment in our area. We missed him when he started vacationing out to retirement in June. We send our deepest condolences to Curt's family."

# RETIREES



**Sheldon Berger**, control room operator at Antelope Valley Station (AVS), retired on Aug. 6 after a 37-year career with Basin Electric.

“Sheldon was an excellent operator at AVS. He always had a positive attitude and was very well-respected by his co-workers,” says Duane Poitra, superintendent of operations. “I am very appreciative of the time I worked with Sheldon and wish him all the best in retirement.”

“I enjoyed my time at AVS and all the people I worked with,” Berger says.



**Lori Brown**, manager of financial operations at Headquarters, retired on Sept. 7 after 29 years with the cooperative. She first joined Basin Electric as administrative assistant to the chief financial officer. In 2001, Brown transitioned to a financial analyst role and was promoted to her final role of manager of financial operations in 2014.

“In March of 2020 when we were all sent home, Lori was the first to raise her hand and volunteer to be the one critical person in the office to continue to do cash operations (certain parts of these functions cannot be brought home). Not only did she do what she needed for her role to keep financial operations running smoothly, but she became the resource for all departments. Employees from across the cooperative referred to her as the lifesaver,” says Susan Sorensen, vice president and treasurer.

“I will miss Lori’s nurturing and caring personality, her reliability and dedication, and her willingness to help with anything with a smile and positive attitude. I’ll miss her constant reminders of how great Basin Electric is to work

for, her insight and ability to recognize star performers, and her expertise and knowledge – she knew exactly what to do when those out-of-the-ordinary problems came up. And I’ll miss her genuine loyalty to me, her team, our team, and all of Basin,” says Sorensen.

In her retirement, she looks forward to camping, fishing, wintering in Florida, and enjoying her grandchildren.



**Kurt Capouch** retired from his position of multimedia specialist at Headquarters on Sept. 7. Before joining the cooperative, he worked in broadcast television and audiovisual production.

“Working for Basin Electric awarded me the opportunity to do the work that I have pursued over the past 41-plus years but in a way that made me appreciate what I do even more,” says Capouch. “The best and probably most important aspect of any place is the people you get to work with; my immediate co-workers at Headquarters and those in the several states in the region that I got the pleasure to meet and work with. It truly is a gifted group of people that keep the power flowing, and I certainly respect and appreciate everyone’s effort. I’m honored to say that I worked for Basin Electric Power Cooperative.”

“Kurt was very diligent in making sure he was prepared and carried through every project he worked on to the end, always paying close attention to each detail. His commitment to always getting it right was unmatched,” says Joan Dietz, communications manager. “Kurt was dedicated to Basin Electric, and I always appreciated his expertise. We will miss Kurt and all he did for our team.”

Capouch plans to continue working on a freelance basis. “I am hoping that time slows down a bit, and I can enjoy all that life has to offer, most importantly with family, my

wife, children, son-in-law and grandchildren, my cat and my grandpuppy, and maybe even get to see my siblings a bit more," says Capouch.



**Garry Fuhrman**, warehouseperson at Leland Olds Station, retired on Sept. 9 after 37 years with Basin Electric. He joined the co-op in 1984 as a scrubber attendant at Antelope Valley Station, then transferred to Leland Olds Station in 1995 where he was a boiler attendant and coalman before taking his most recent position.

"Garry was a dedicated, dependable employee. He was very organized, and I could always depend on him to get any task done in a timely manner," says Jim Reis, warehouse supervisor. "Garry has a great sense of humor, and always had a joke to share with anyone that came to the parts window or a delivery person. His positive attitude will be missed by all."



**Tom Schwab** retired from his position of labor relations specialist at Headquarters on Oct. 2. He began his career with Basin Electric in 1983 when he worked in operations at Antelope Valley Station.

He moved to a mechanic role in 1988 and took a leave of absence in 2004 to work in the IBEW (International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers) Union office until 2010. Schwab transferred to Leland Olds Station in 2014 where he worked as a mechanic, and then transferred

back to Antelope Valley Station as a planner until 2015 when he transferred to his most recent role at Headquarters. Before joining Basin Electric, Schwab worked as a surveyor for Kaiser Engineering.

"Tom was dedicated to the cooperative, working at multiple locations and in a variety of positions. This created a dynamic and determined foundation for his most recent role as labor relations specialist," says Erica Petrowitz, human resources manager. "Tom is honest and knowledgeable. I always appreciated how I could rely on him to assist in any situation that would arise. He is also thoughtful and kind – always making sure treats were in plentiful stock in Human Resources. I wish Tom the best in his retirement. It is very much earned."

In his retirement, Schwab plans to travel to warmer climates in the winter and continue fishing, golfing, and playing cornhole.



**Jamie Zacher**, lead instrument technician at Antelope Valley Station, retired on Oct. 9 after 37 years with the cooperative.

"Jamie was a reliable and professional employee who was very dedicated to the plant," says Derek Grimm, supervisor of instrumentation and controls. "He had a lot of knowledge that he shared with others."

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## New employees



**Tyler Ekstrom**, laborer at Antelope Valley Station, began work on June 14. Originally from Bismarck, North Dakota, Ekstrom previously worked as a boiler attendant for Johnson Controls International in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Before that, he worked as a boiler operator for University of North Dakota in Grand Forks. Ekstrom earned a degree in process plant technology from Bismarck (North Dakota) State College.



On June 28, **Ashley Gerving**, began work as a service dispatcher at Headquarters. She previously worked as a certified nursing assistant at Sanford Medical Center in her hometown, Bismarck, North Dakota. Gerving is currently pursuing an associate's degree in business.



**Jake Magness** began work on July 5 as a survey technician at Headquarters. He previously worked as a foreman at Wittrock Construction LLC in Bismarck. The Fargo, North Dakota, native earned an associate's degree in engineering technology from Bismarck State College.



**JoDee Hanson**, auditor, began work at Headquarters on July 12. Before joining the cooperative, she owned two branches of The UPS Store; one in Bismarck, and one in her hometown, Jamestown, North Dakota. Hanson also previously served as the executive director of the Jamestown Area Chamber of Commerce. Hanson earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and business administration from Jamestown College.



**Jeff Jackson**, process operations field technician at the Great Plains Synfuels Plant, began work on July 19. He previously worked as an operations manager at Patterson-UTI Drilling in his hometown, Dickinson, North Dakota.



On July 19, **John Kusler** began work as a process operations field technician at the Great Plains Synfuels Plant. Before joining the cooperative, he worked as a field operator for Gevo in Luverne, Minnesota. The Bismarck native earned a degree in process technology from Bismarck State College.



**Nicholas Reid** began work on Aug. 16 as an operations technician at Pioneer Generation Station near Williston, North Dakota. Before joining the cooperative, he was a mechanic/welder at Talen Energy in Colstrip, Montana, which is his hometown.



**Joshua Hall**, protection services specialist at the Great Plains Synfuels Plant, began work on Aug. 23. He previously worked as a field supervisor at DXP Safety Services in his hometown Minot, North Dakota.



**Jonathan Volk** began work on Aug. 23 as a system protection apprentice at the Huron, South Dakota, Transmission Systems Maintenance outpost. He previously worked for Hoerner Lawn Care in his Bismarck, his hometown. Volk earned a degree in instrumentation and controls from Bismarck State College.

## Employees receive degrees

The following Basin Electric and Dakota Gasification Company employees earned degrees from accredited institutions of higher learning over the past year.



**Tom Leingang**, auditor at Headquarters, earned a master of business administration degree in business operations. He graduated from University of Mary (Bismarck, North Dakota) in December 2020.



**Evan Gowen**, support center representative at Headquarters, earned a bachelor's degree in information technology management. He graduated from University of Mary in April 2021.



**Terri Seyfang**, administrative assistant at Laramie River Station, earned a bachelor's degree in business management. She graduated from Western Governors University (Millcreek, Utah) in April 2021.



**Callie Thompson**, accounting analyst at Headquarters, earned a bachelor's degree in accounting and financial services and banking. She graduated from University of Mary in April 2021.



**Billie Weltikol**, warehouseperson at Beulah (North Dakota) Transmission System Maintenance, earned a master of business administration degree. She graduated from University of Mary in April 2021.



**John Gusewelle**, fixed equipment engineer at Dakota Gas, earned a master's degree in welding engineering from Ohio State University (Columbus) in May 2021.



**Haley Hildenbrand**, chem lab field technician at Dakota Gas, earned a bachelor's degree in professional chemistry. She graduated from Minot (North Dakota) State University in May 2021.



**Daniel Larson**, mechanical engineer at Deer Creek Station, earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering. He graduated from South Dakota State University (Brookings) in May 2021.



**Forrest Pifer**, draftsman at Headquarters, earned an associate's degree in electric power technology. He graduated from Bismarck (North Dakota) State College in May 2021.

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