

# BASIN TODAY

BASIN ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE | SPRING 2024

**STRONG AND  
RESILIENT**





As the days grow longer and the ground thaws, farmers across the membership are beginning their busy season.

Clayton Miller farms around the Draper, South Dakota area, planting corn, milo, sunflower, wheat, and more. He is a member of Basin Electric Class C member West Central Electric Cooperative. His father, Ken Miller, is vice president of the West Central board of directors.



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VOLUME 27 | NUMBER 1

## ON THE COVER

Cacti and succulents may not be the plants that come to mind when you think of the north, but more than 5,000 species are featured in a world-class collection at the Conservatory, an attraction at the International Peace Garden. Located near Bottineau, North Dakota, the garden receives electricity from Class C member North Central Electric Cooperative.

Learn more about the garden in the story “A Cornerstone of Peace: The International Peace Garden” on page 14.

Photo credit: International Peace Garden

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# TODD BRICKHOUSE



## PROPOSED REGULATIONS WILL IMPACT RELIABILITY AND COSTS

This issue of Basin Today is being prepared just before Earth Day on April 22 and will be published shortly thereafter. In the spirit of Earth Day, there are a number of environmental issues I'd like to discuss with you.

By the time you are reading this, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will have published regulations that, if implemented, will adversely impact the reliability of both Basin Electric's system and the United States' electric grid.

Basin Electric employs an all-of-the-above energy strategy to serve our members' power supply requirements. There are many benefits to this strategy — including relatively stable costs and buttressing the intermittent nature of renewable resources with more reliable dispatchable resources — which have allowed us to reduce the carbon intensity of our sales by more than 30% since 2005.

To defend our all-of-the-above energy strategy from the EPA's regulatory overreach, we have had to develop an all-of-the-above legal and regulatory strategy. We are partnering with regional and national trade associations, state and federal elected officials, and partners in the utility and adjoining industries to limit the damage from the EPA's regulatory onslaught.

The EPA's actions also have profound implications for our country. The United States has three geographical and geological strategic advantages that bolster our security and strengthen our economy. First, the Atlantic and Pacific

oceans provide a buffer from foreign adversaries. Second, we have approximately 25,000 miles of navigable inland waterways that facilitate commerce. Third, we have an abundance of natural resources to draw upon for food and fuel.

The EPA is not trying to drain the oceans and inland waterways, nor is it trying to shut down the delivery of products across our waterways. But the proposed regulations will impact how the operators of our nation's electric grid fuel the electricity that flows across transmission lines, which will have both known and unintended consequences on reliability and costs. Reliability is likely to suffer, and costs will likely be higher, which will have adverse implications for standards of living in the United States.

These observations are not meant to be combative or belligerent. On the contrary, Basin Electric has a proud history of environmental stewardship that has emphasized innovation over regulation. In addition to reducing the carbon intensity of our sales, we have achieved even more dramatic decreases in other emissions such as sulfur and nitrogen oxides. We have accomplished this in part by investing nearly \$7 billion in a renewable portfolio that now stands at nearly 2,500 megawatts (MW) versus 1,000 MW a decade ago.

Basin Electric, through our subsidiary Dakota Gasification Company, is also a pioneer in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) sequestration. In the late 1990s, Dakota Gas invested \$100 million to build a 205-mile CO<sub>2</sub> pipeline from Beulah, North Dakota

to Weyburn, Saskatchewan, in order to capture CO<sub>2</sub> in Canadian oil fields. Since 2000, nearly 45 million metric tons have been captured. On Feb. 9 of this year, Dakota Gas began sequestering additional CO<sub>2</sub> adjacent to its facilities, and in this project's first full year we expect to sequester an incremental 1 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>.

While Basin Electric does not yet sequester CO<sub>2</sub> at any of our generation facilities, we are leaders in researching and investing in CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration for generation facilities. Basin Electric hosts the Wyoming Integrated Test Center (Wyoming ITC) at our Dry Fork Station near Gillette, Wyoming. The Wyoming ITC has attracted more than \$100 million for research and development projects for testing carbon capture and storage technologies.

What I've shared above just begins to scratch the surface of Basin Electric's proud history of environmental stewardship. While Earth Day is celebrated on April 22 each year, Basin Electric's commitment to the environment is 24/7/365. And we are committed to providing electric service in a reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible manner.



TODD T. BRICKHOUSE  
*CEO and general manager*

## Lonesome Creek Station and Pioneer Generation Station generate more electricity than ever before in 2023

Lonesome Creek Station near Watford City, North Dakota, and Pioneer Generation Station near Williston, North Dakota, generated more megawatt-hours (MWh) in 2023 than any year since both sites began generating electricity in 2013.

According to Joe Fiedler, Basin Electric manager of Distributed Generation, Lonesome Creek Station ended the year with 1.1 million MWh, and Pioneer Generation Station ended the year with just over 1 million MWh.

Fiedler said these generation totals are a result of the lower than forecasted natural gas prices, the flexibility of the gas fleet to be able to meet load quickly, and the increased electricity needed in the Bakken region where Lonesome Creek and Pioneer Generation Station are located. "Units in the Bakken region ran quite a bit more due to increased load and limited transmission into the area," said Fiedler.

 <https://bit.ly/RecordGeneration>

## Basin Electric installs bridge solution to keep the lights on

Transmission construction is underway, and plans are in the works to add additional transmission in western North Dakota to allow for much needed additional capacity on the transmission system. However, until that transmission comes in service, Basin Electric has worked with the regional transmission organization, Southwest Power Pool (SPP), on solutions to help bridge the gap.

In the case of transmission loading relief, that's where a Remedial Action Scheme (RAS) comes in.

Basin Electric worked with SPP and Western Area Power Administration for the approval and installation of a RAS in western North Dakota.

 <https://bit.ly/NewBridgeSolution>

## Basin Electric membership growing across all districts

Basin Electric directors approved the 2024 load forecast in February, which shows a projected 3.2% growth each year over the next 10 years; national average growth over the same time period is approximately 0.7%.

The load forecast serves as a baseline for several planning functions at Basin Electric — power supply planning, financial forecasting, and transmission planning; while the load forecast is released early in the year, the financial forecast is released mid-year and forecasts potential rates and capital expenditures required over the coming decade.

The forecast shows a bandwidth addressing the what-if scenarios that come with potential new large loads. It must analyze not only the risks of planning for trending new loads, but also the risk of a lack of planning for new loads.

 <https://bit.ly/BasinElectricGrowth>

## NDPSC approves applications for two Basin Electric transmission projects

The North Dakota Public Service Commission approved siting applications for two Basin Electric high-voltage transmission projects at their March 5 meeting in Bismarck, North Dakota. Commissioners approved a Certificate of Corridor Compatibility and Route Permit for each of the 345-kilovolt (kV) projects: the Pioneer-to-Judson line and the Roundup-to-Kummer Ridge line.

The 15-mile Pioneer-to-Judson line will connect the Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV (PGSIV) project to the Judson substation near Williston. The line is necessary to transmit power from the units under construction at PGSIV to the grid that serves Basin Electric's member cooperatives.

The 32.5-mile Roundup-to-Kummer Ridge line will connect the existing Roundup substation near Killdeer in Dunn County to the Kummer Ridge substation near Johnson's Corner in McKenzie County. The line will ensure a redundant feed to the load being served at the Kummer Ridge substation and will also provide a parallel path in the case of an outage of another nearby 345-kV line.

 <https://bit.ly/TwoProjectsApproved>



A crane set up at Laramie River Station to help with the overhaul of the plant's electrostatic precipitator.

## Laramie River Station outage includes new environmental equipment

Laramie River Station began its quadrennial outage on March 16. Preparations for the outage began in January.

The outage is an opportunity to perform work across the plant, but the largest project is an overhaul of the unit 3 electrostatic precipitator (ESP).

The ESP is an air pollution control device used for particulate removal from flue gas. It is a plant requirement regulated by Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, and equipment needs to be maintained and updated to continue to meet the permit requirements.

Laramie River Station's ESP was originally installed in 1982 and received its first overhaul in 2002.

The expected equipment life of the ESP is around 20 years, and it receives minor annual maintenance and major quadrennial maintenance. "Due to the age and condition of the internal components which are exposed to flue gas, it was costly and not sufficient to continue solely with minor and major repairs to keep the ESP running," Jerrod Isaak, Laramie River Station plant engineer, said.

 <https://bit.ly/LRSOutage>

## Commercial operation begins at Wild Springs Solar

The Wild Springs Solar Project, a 128-megawatt project in Pennington County, South Dakota, began commercial operation on March 28, 2024. Basin Electric will purchase 114 megawatts of the output.

The project, owned and operated by National Grid Renewables, is the largest solar project to be built in South Dakota. Wild Springs Solar is located near New Underwood, South Dakota, in the service area of Basin Electric Class C member West River Electric Association. Construction of the project began in January 2023.

This marks the first time in Basin Electric's history that the cooperative will purchase large-scale solar generation to serve its members.

 <https://bit.ly/WildSpringsSolar>

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Construction is underway at Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV (PGSIV), Basin Electric's largest generation project in North Dakota since the 1980s. PGSIV is planned to be in service in 2025. When complete, the natural gas-fueled, dispatchable generation facility near Williston will be an important component to the cooperative's all-of-the-above energy portfolio.

# DISTRIBUTED GENERATION'S CRITICAL ROLE IN MAINTAINING RELIABLE ELECTRICITY

By Lindsey Chumley

Basin Electric has found the best solution to meet members' power supply needs is through an all-of-the-above energy strategy using dispatchable and non-dispatchable resources. As Basin Electric's membership continues to grow, one resource is proving it's a critical piece of the cooperative's all-of-the-above energy strategy, and that is natural gas generation.

## Dispatchable Value

As electricity needs are ever-growing and market volatility is increasing, dispatchable natural gas-fueled facilities have become more and more valuable. Natural gas generation has a unique ability to swiftly respond to changing load demands, serve as both peaking and intermediate generation, and complement renewable energy sources.

Joe Fiedler, Basin Electric manager of Distributed Generation, describes how the cooperative's natural

gas-fueled units keep electricity reliable. "Most of the units in distributed generation are fast-start units. The jet engines have a 10-minute start up, and the reciprocating engines also have a 10-minute start up. These units are used for variable load. They're dispatched and started quickly, and then they follow the load that's needed for generation. They'll follow the wind; they'll follow the times of day when demand is higher, or demand is less," he says. "So not only are they quick dispatch, but they're also used for regulation during the day to take care of the grid needs more readily than what some of the baseload units can."

Basin Electric's seven natural gas-fueled resources are spread throughout Iowa, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Culbertson Generation Station, Lonesome Creek Station, and Pioneer Generation Station in northwest North Dakota and eastern Montana have been running more frequently recently to keep electricity



reliable in the growing Bakken region of western North Dakota. The facilities are critical for alleviating congestion issues in the region.

Valerie Weigel, Basin Electric vice president of Energy Markets, explains why it's important the units are ready to run. "We've progressively entered periods of heightened awareness (advisories, conservative operations, etc.) sooner each of the preceding five years, whether it's from load growth on the system, units on outage for maintenance, weather related events, or increased congestion from the scaling of variable energy resources. That means our natural gas and peaking units are seeing increased run time and are even more critical. Grid conditions aside, we are seeing increased run hours on natural gas and peaking units. This highlights the importance of maintenance as it impacts our ability to utilize the units. Joe Fiedler and his staff do a great job ensuring our units are available when they're called upon. Even when they're not called upon, unit availability is relevant, and they've done a fantastic job ensuring the units are available," she says.

### Investing in Maintenance for Reliability

In October 2023, Basin Electric's board approved the purchase of spare engines for Lonesome Creek Station and Pioneer Generation Station. The spare turbines were ordered to keep on site for the ability to get the units back online again quickly in case of failure. Equipment will be able to be changed out more quickly than sending it in for repair, a process which can take months.

Fiedler explains the importance of the investment in the spare turbines. "These are jet engines that GE will build. They are direct replacements for the units we are running at those sites. These spares will give us some flexibility

and improve our reliability if we have a major failure on an engine. These engines can be changed out in a manner of seven days or so compared to taking the engine out and disassembling it or sending it in for repair which can sometimes take months," he says.

### Units in Compliance

Because the cooperative has been using the natural gas generation facilities heavily, the environmental, Generation, and Marketing teams have been working together to manage these units to ensure they are in compliance with environmental constraints. All the cooperative's generation facilities have controls in place to ensure environmental regulations are met or exceeded under state programs.

Erin Dukart, Basin Electric director of Environmental Services, says her team works with the Generation and Marketing teams to maintain compliance. "Our facilities have limits on the amount of fuel they combust to ensure that our NO<sub>x</sub> emissions on a 12-month rolling basis do not exceed a certain amount. At the newer units, we're limited in how much they can operate in order to limit the amount of CO<sub>2</sub> they're producing. We are in communication with the Marketing group on a daily and weekly basis to see how these units are in relation to the emission limits or to the run-time limits," she says.

Natural gas generation has allowed the cooperative to provide both stability and adaptability to meet members' changing needs. Basin Electric is committed to investing in maintaining reliability and ensuring environmental compliance as it continues to integrate the resource into its energy strategy, providing the reliable and affordable electricity members depend on.



Wärtsilä contractors performed maintenance work on reciprocating engines at Pioneer Generation Station in 2023-2024. Pioneer ran just over 1 million megawatt-hours in 2023, the most in one year since the facility came online in 2013.



# WHEN THE STAKES ARE HIGH, BE PREPARED

*By Kalli Senske*

Picture this: You're working at Dakota Gasification Company. As you're performing your job an accident happens, and you end up in a threatening situation where you need help. Suddenly your worries turn to relief when you see members from Protection Services and the fire/rescue team arrive to help you.

This is the type of scenario the fire/rescue team is trained to handle. This team plays a vital role at the plant, with employees' safety literally lying in their hands. They are on-call 24/7/365, providing rapid and effective emergency response to a wide range of incidents, including fires, medical emergencies, hazardous material spills, pipeline emergency response, confined space rescues, and high angle rope rescues.

Rope rescues in particular present unique challenges and require specialized skills and knowledge to ensure safe and effective outcomes. In these scenarios, specialized rope techniques and equipment are used to perform rescues in challenging environments within Dakota Gas. This could involve situations such as rescuing workers from confined spaces, retrieving individuals from heights or elevated structures, or extracting personnel from hazardous environments.

Over the past several years, the fire/rescue team completed eight hours of training per year, mostly conducted internally.

Safety and teamwork are two values of Basin Electric, which is why Brian Heinert, Protection Services supervisor at Dakota Gas, and Claude O'Berry, Pipeline Operations & Protection Services superintendent at Dakota Gas, knew it was important to invest in their team by providing them with an advanced training program.

Dawson Kaylor, Dakota Gas maintenance field technician, is lowered via rope by his team during an exercise to practice rope rescues.

Heinert got to work and started getting bids from multiple rope rescue companies.

“Training is important to stay current with OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) and NFPA (The National Fire Protection Association) regulations and recommendations, and we didn’t have the innovations and knowledge to take our training to the next level on our own,” Heinert says.

After researching the industry leaders, Roco Rescue, a widely recognized leader in the field of rescue training, was selected to provide the team with a custom, hands-on training program. An intensive four-day, 40-hour course was developed to dive deep into OSHA and NFPA requirements, ensuring that team members were fully versed in the latest requirements and best practices for rope rescue operations.

“This particular training was chosen because it had all the different types of rescues the team may encounter, like rope rescue, confined space rescue, and high angle rescue,” O’Berry says. “But we also needed to have buy-in from everyone because the commitment would be to give up their four days off to attend. This dedicated group is always open to training to enhance their skills and are willing to put in the extra time, and this venture proved no different.”

Given the range of emergencies the team may encounter at the plant, Heinert and O’Berry decided it was essential every team member who responds to emergencies at Dakota Gas attended the training. Involving everyone helped ensure the entire team has the necessary expertise to respond confidently and competently to each situation, and that everyone shares a consistent approach to rescue operations.

“We decided to send our whole department – fire/rescue team members and the fire brigade team. The trainings were done by specific crews to foster teamwork and comradery. The goal is to train with the people you will fight alongside,” Heinert says.

“Very seldom are we able to send the whole team together as we were with this training, so everyone seemed excited about that,” O’Berry says.

Because having sufficient coverage at the plant is critical, adjustments were needed to the on-call schedule. The team members not attending training a particular week helped by providing any extra coverage needed.

While Roco Rescue conducted the training, North Dakota Safety Council also played a large role by providing a top-of-the-line indoor training facility.

“NDSC provided us with an amazing indoor training facility, helping us receive the highest quality training available. Going forward, we can continue to receive our refresher training there any time of year, which is extremely helpful since we don’t have consistently nice weather here,” Heinert says.

When it comes to training, there’s no substitute for hands-on exercises to gain experience for real-world scenarios. The team benefitted by practicing with the tools they would need in a rope rescue situation. They used a rigging system that uses specialized equipment, like ropes, anchors, pulleys, tripods, and belay devices to safely lower or raise individuals to a secure location.

After completing the intense training in rope rescue and other emergency response techniques, Heinert says the team gained a deeper understanding of safety protocols and the importance of adhering to them consistently. This heightened awareness translates into safer practices across all aspects of our operations, reducing the likelihood of accidents or incidents occurring in the first place.

Training is not just an OSHA and NFPA requirement; it’s a fundamental aspect of maintaining readiness and ensuring the safety of personnel – both the rescuer and the individual in distress. Attending ongoing training and having a culture of continued improvement ensures that safety remains the top priority for the Protection Services and fire/rescue team in all aspects of their operations.

“We learned so much about where our deficiencies are and how we can rectify them to stay OSHA and NFPA compliant,” Heinert says. “I can honestly say this was some of the best training I have received, and I feel extremely confident in the readiness of our team.”



Scott Johnson, director of Tax for Basin Electric, leads a team of three tax analysts. Each tax analyst plays a critical role in monitoring income, property, and sales tax for Basin Electric and its subsidiaries.



# HOW WE SERVE... WITH THE TAX TEAM

*By Erin Becker*

As businesses grow, so do their complexities. It's of the utmost importance to have financial professionals available to navigate these changes so fiscal obligations and tax ramifications remain in check.

Scott Johnson is Basin Electric's director of Tax and has served in this role for four and a half years. Johnson leads a team of three tax analysts, each of whom is responsible for monitoring income, property, and sales tax for Basin Electric and its subsidiaries.

The tax department has two overarching responsibilities. First, they keep Basin Electric, and its subsidiaries, compliant on income, property, and sales tax liabilities.

Second, they provide and maintain accurate and timely income tax expenses and deferred income tax balances for the preparation of income statements and balance sheets for Basin Electric and their subsidiaries.

"My favorite part of the job is overseeing the compliance requirements for three different types of taxes (income, property, and sales)," Johnson says. "This requires our department to stay on top of emerging issues and work closely with several other departments within the cooperative."

With teamwork being one of Basin Electric's core values, it's important to highlight the different departments the Tax team collaborates with, as well as the importance of their ongoing communication.

"We work with many different departments within Basin Electric including Property and Right-of-Way, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Accounts Payable, Financial Reporting and Planning, Capital Assets, Settlements, Commodity Risk, Procurement, Human Resources, Marketing, Legal, and many external state departments of revenue," Johnson says.



**AT THE END OF THE DAY, OUR JOB IS TO REDUCE EXPENSES SO BASIN ELECTRIC CAN CONTINUE PROVIDING AFFORDABLE ELECTRICITY TO OUR MEMBERS AT THE END OF THE LINE.**



*Scott Johnson, Basin Electric director of Tax*

It's important the Tax team is kept in the loop when certain transactions are being discussed within the cooperative so the tax ramifications are known ahead of time.

"We are proactive as opposed to reactive. We are always working to improve communication between our group and other departments across Basin Electric," Johnson says.

Continuous monitoring is required to stay informed on the latest changes in tax laws and regulations. Johnson and his team use a tax research tool called Thompson Reuters that sends daily and/or weekly emails detailing various changes. They also receive information periodically from various accounting firms.

Two of the tax analysts are certified public accountants and are required to complete continuing education each year, and some of that may include information on changes in tax law.

When asked what trends or developments could shape the future of tax analysis, Johnson says, "I believe there

will always be changes to tax laws, regulations, and tax rates depending on federal and state income needs and leadership directives. Looking ahead, I foresee possible changes in the way information for the returns and provision is gathered as technology continues to improve."

By ensuring the financial health, compliance, and future success of Basin Electric, tax analysts are an essential asset to Basin Electric's member cooperatives.

As a not-for-profit, Basin Electric's net margin above expenses and reserves does not belong to the utility. It represents an increase in an investment that belongs to our member-owners. Basin Electric's margins must be used to improve or maintain operations, set aside in reserves, or distributed back to the members.

"At the end of the day, our job is to reduce expenses so Basin Electric can continue providing affordable electricity to our members at the end of the line," Johnson says.

## PSST! GUESS WHAT EMPLOYEES ARE SAYING ABOUT BASIN...

Basin Electric's employees are our most important asset. That's why we work hard to retain our employees and attract new talent.

Why do long-term and new employees continue to choose Basin Electric? Find out on our Live Wire blog!



<https://bit.ly/LiveWireBlog>



Steel beams dot the landscape at the site of the new Leland Olds Station 19.5-acre substation.

# BASIN ELECTRIC'S LARGEST SUBSTATION BUILT TO SUPPORT MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

*By Jenifer Gray*

Basin Electric is committed to providing reliable electricity to its members, and this commitment means looking to the future as the membership grows. To meet the expected growth of the membership, construction of a new 19.5-acre substation is underway to replace the 345-kilovolt (kV) substation at Leland Olds Station located near Stanton, North Dakota.

The original scope of the project was to replace the existing Leland Olds Station substation equipment in

its current location under a planned Aging Substation Infrastructure Replacement project. The Aging Infrastructure project takes a holistic look at Basin Electric's aging transmission assets and ranks them according to priority to replace based on many different factors.

As the Aging Infrastructure project progressed, Basin Electric had two new projects that requested to be added at this location. The first project was a Southwest Power

Pool (SPP) generator interconnection and the second, the Leland Olds Station-to-Tande 345-kV transmission project, came out of the SPP Integrated Transmission Planning process. These two additions made connecting to the existing substation location problematic as there was limited space to expand.

Without space to expand, alternatives were considered. "After much thought and many internal discussions, Basin Electric made the decision to construct a new Leland Olds 345-kV substation across the highway on land already owned by the cooperative and directly adjacent to many transmission lines making connections convenient," Derik Johnson, Basin Electric manager of Transmission Systems Maintenance (TSM), says.

The size of the substation is directly correlated to the number of connections coming in and out. The new Leland Olds 345-kV substation will have nine terminals which includes two 345/230-kV transformers, two 345-kV reactors, and room for growth, making it one of the largest 345-kV substations Basin Electric will have. This type of investment in the bulk electric system is required to ensure the cooperative can continue to provide reliable electricity to its members.

Initial work began on the new substation in 2020, with the first few months focused on creating a plan to keep employees and contractors safe throughout construction and commissioning of the new site. Design and engineering of the project also began in early 2020, and material procurement has been ongoing since the beginning of the project as well. Over the course of approximately two years, the Right-of-Way team obtained permitting for the site.

Grading began in the fall of 2022 with the foundations being laid in 2023. "We installed over 700 foundations totaling about 5,000 cubic yards of concrete," Nate Miller, Basin Electric senior electrical engineer and project coordinator, says. "This allowed us to transition into the general construction phase in November."

Tyler Bosch, Basin Electric construction coordinator III, oversees and coordinates onsite construction activities at the new substation. "I typically meet with our contractors the afternoon before or first thing in the morning to get an idea of that day's activities," he

says. "From there it could be anything from overseeing a concrete pour, to inspecting material deliveries, or helping solve issues that arise during construction."

One of the biggest potential hazards onsite is working under live overhead lines, so the TSM team installed temporary structures at the site to raise the line clearance heights. This way, construction crews could safely work without power line interference before grading of the site could start.

"We've had TSM come out multiple times to measure distances to the overhead lines so we can determine how far away we need to stay," Bosch says. "If we aren't able to keep our minimum approach distance, we'll coordinate with TSM to request an outage so we can complete our tasks safely and then get the line back into service."

With the foundation work completed last summer, crews worked through winter, including the cold weather snap in January when temperatures dipped below freezing for over a week, erecting steel beams and trying to get as much done as they could over the winter months. "We ran with a minimum crew through the winter, but the contractor plans to ramp up to around 15 to 20 contractors on site when we hit peak construction this summer," Miller says.

Once the steel has been put up and the frost is gone, crews will transition into digging in the underground conduit and grounding. Next steps include moving the transmission lines from one substation to the other. "We are hoping to start cutting over the lines this fall at which point the substation will be energized and operational," Bosch says. Due to the nature of the substation, both the existing and new substation will be energized during the cutover process.

Bosch says this is by far the biggest substation project he has ever worked on, as the average size of a Basin Electric substation is around 10 acres. "It's rewarding to be involved in the process from start to finish. When I first started on the project it was a parcel of cropland, and by the end of construction it will be one of the largest substations Basin Electric owns and operates."

Construction is scheduled to be complete the summer of 2025.

People from all walks of life visit the International Peace Garden to revel in the beautiful floral displays and enjoy the welcoming, peaceful atmosphere the garden provides.

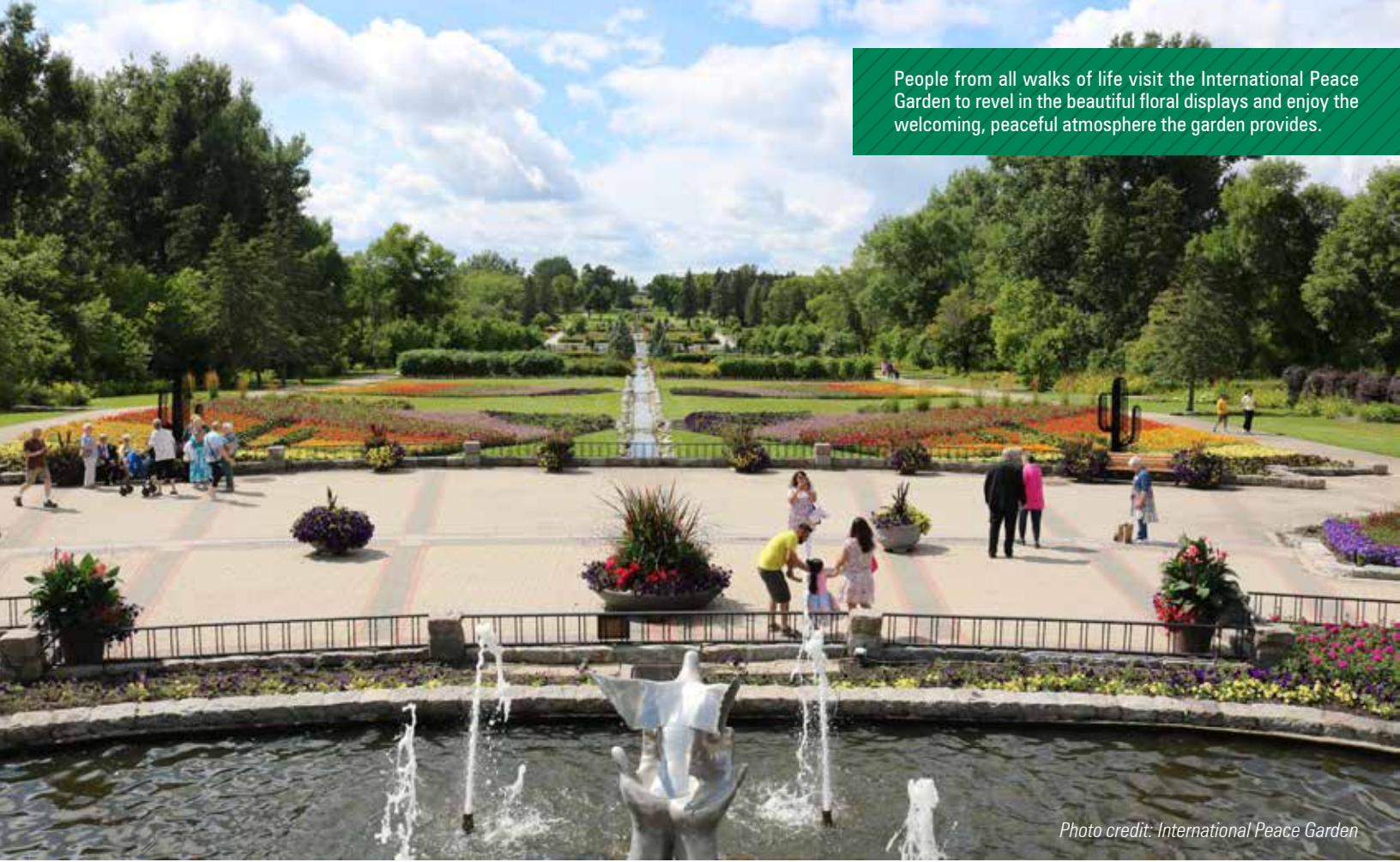


Photo credit: International Peace Garden

# A CORNERSTONE FOR PEACE: THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE GARDEN

*By Erin Becker*

The world we live in is busy, and “busy” is a word that’s frequent in most of our vocabularies. We’re busy caring for and keeping up with our family schedules. Busy trying to chip away at our never-ending to-do lists. Busy being active members of our community. Busy, busy, busy. If only there was a place of solace.

Located in the heart of the Turtle Mountains resides the International Peace Garden, a 2,400-acre garden that naturally has a calming effect on its visitors. The International Peace Garden is a member of North Central Electric Cooperative, a Basin Electric Class C member.

The International Peace Garden is constructed around the geographic center of North America with territory residing in both North Dakota and Manitoba, Canada. Standing amidst its beauty, it’s hard to imagine the planning (and dreaming) it took to construct such a place.

“It all began in 1928 when a group of horticulturists and gardeners had the foresight and passion to form a place that focused on peace and friendship between Canada and the United States,” Tim Chapman, CEO of the International Peace Garden, says. “The mission of the Garden is to advocate for peace through conservation, education, recreation, arts, and culture.”



Today, approximately 40,000 people visit the International Peace Garden annually. Some of the most popular attractions in the Garden are listed below.

### The Dedication Cairn

A cairn is a human-made pile, or stack of stone raised for a purpose. It was dedicated on July 14, 1932.

### The Conservatory & Interpretive Center

This newly renovated building houses a restaurant, gift shop, horticulture library and most importantly, the Conservatory. The Conservatory is home to the Vitko Collection, one of the world's most diverse collections of cacti and succulents that includes several rare and endangered species.

### 9/11 Memorial

The 9/11 Memorial includes iron remnants from the collapsed towers at the World Trade Center.

### Floral Clock

The large clock received from the Bulova Watch Company in 1966 was replaced the summer of 2005 with a new clock from St. Louis, Missouri. The Floral Clock, measuring 18 feet with 2,000 to 5,000 plants, displays a unique floral design each year.

### Children's Natural Play Area

The play area centers around animals native to the Turtle Mountains. Components include climbing nets in the turtle area; bridges, dams, and lodges in the beaver zone; and a wolf-themed gathering circle with a fire ring at its center. Local indigenous communities advised on content that incorporates traditional teachings and native storytelling into each of the park's play areas.

A variety of services are offered at the garden including wedding/venue rentals, camping and cabin rentals, and many picturesque locations for professional photography. The International Peace Garden also hosts an array of events throughout the year.

One would be remiss not to mention the International Music Camp (IMC) when talking about the International Peace Garden. Conveniently located on the southeast quadrant of the Garden, IMC offers weekly summer camp sessions where students immerse themselves in choral, band, orchestra, fiddle, guitar, and piano lessons, just to name a few. While the camp's name speaks of its foundation in music, IMC also offers one week summer camp programs in dance, creative writing, painting, drawing, theatre, and other fine arts disciplines.

"Our relationship with the International Peace Garden is truly a partnership and one of mutual success," Tim Baumann, co-director of International Music Camp says. "We're proud of the number of people we bring to the International Peace Garden for the first time, and we're grateful that we can rent facilities from the International Peace Garden to make our programs a success."

One theme remains true when visiting with both the International Peace Garden and International Music Camp – they are grateful for their local electric cooperative that offers reliable electricity throughout the year.

Headquartered in Bottineau, North Dakota, North Central Electric is responsible for providing electricity services to five counties in north-central North Dakota. Both the International Peace Garden and IMC lie in their service area.

The International Peace Garden is a unique account when it comes to power infrastructure. Electricity is provided by numerous lines throughout the 2,400-acre park as opposed to a single line. Without electricity, popular displays like the sunken garden fountains, the floral clock, and the conservatory would lose their functionality – taking away from the "magic" of the garden.



**FROM SUN-UP TO SUN-DOWN, WE NEED ELECTRICITY TO MAKE CAMP SUCCESSFUL, AND WE APPRECIATE ALL NORTH CENTRAL ELECTIC & BASIN ELECTRIC DO TO KEEP OUR LIGHTS ON.**

*Tim Baumann, co-director of the International Music Camp*



“We can’t afford to lose power for long,” Chapman says. “Especially during the cold, winter months – that would be detrimental to our plant production as well as the succulent/cacti collection in The Conservatory.” Chapman says. “When our power went out during the ice storm in 2022, we were so thankful for North Central Electric’s quick response time, how they talked us through the process, and kept us informed on their progress.”

Likewise, International Music Camp depends on their electricity needs to feed, house, and entertain their 2,000 campers throughout the summer.

“North Central Electric has been a great partner for IMC,” Baumann says. “Our campers spend roughly six days with us, and it’s of the utmost importance that we give them a positive experience while they’re here. This includes functioning air conditioners, running water pumps, proper lighting for performance venues, and

so forth. From sun-up to sun-down, we need electricity to make camp successful, and we appreciate all North Central Electric and Basin Electric do to keep our lights on.”

The International Peace Garden and IMC also play an integral role for their surrounding communities.

“Whether it’s sending children to music camp, an opportunity for employment, or a destination for a family trip, we’re lucky to have them as part of our community,” says Pete Erickson, member services manager for North Central Electric.

The International Peace Garden has witnessed key events in America’s history including the Great Depression, World War II, and 9/11. Through it all, it remains a shining example of peace between nations, while offering a place of solace, in such a busy world, for visitors from around the globe.



# HEIMLICH HEROES

By Alison Kirsch

During the week of Jan. 22, electricians at Laramie River Station were attending a ControlLogix class in Gillette, Wyoming, when an unexpected event occurred.

The electricians started their day with some breakfast in the hotel before leaving for their class. When a stranger began coughing repeatedly, Kevin Collins, electrician I, and Bryan Burkett, electrician II, looked to him to ask if he was okay. When the individual pointed towards his throat, it was evident that something needed to be done. The man was choking.

Collins quickly began performing the Heimlich maneuver. However, the blockage remained.

When Jim Moody, electrician I, came down the stairs of the hotel, he expected to enjoy a normal morning with a cup of coffee. But when he saw the scene around him, he immediately took action. "They had their backs to me, but it was obvious what they were doing," Moody says. It was then when Collins asked Moody to take over. "I did it four, five, or six times before he finally said, 'You got it!'" As the tense situation deescalated, relief filled the dining room.

Collins and Moody didn't see the man again until that evening. After their class, they began walking from the parking lot into the hotel when the man stopped them. "He came over, shook both of our hands, and told us again how much he appreciated us for saving his life," Moody says.

Moody attributes the quick action taken during the event to the biannual CPR/AED classes provided by Laramie River Station. "I've had many CPR classes, and Basin is really good about it," Moody says. "We go over it every other year. We're prepared for it." It was this preparedness that potentially saved a man's life. "It was the first time I've ever had to do anything like that, but I think that the training helped me know what to do and not panic," Moody says.

Gilbert Ortiz, electrical supervisor at Laramie River Station, says he is not surprised by the heroic actions taken by his team. "I see these individuals in action daily. This is of no

surprise to me as they perform at high levels day in and day out," he says.

Ortiz believes that safety training at Laramie River Station serves as a continuous reminder of how important safety skills are, on or off the job. "Having a good safety culture with continual education gives employees a well-rounded tool bag to react in time of need," Ortiz says.

The biannual CPR/AED training at Laramie River Station provides hands-on training and teaches attendees how to effectively respond to emergency situations. "Whether it be hands-on CPR training with mannequins or approaching an individual in need, the curriculum outlines emergency action steps necessary to guide you on how to check and give emergency care for an injured or ill person and how to care for the individual in need," Ortiz says.

This type of scenario happens when least expected. The safety training at Basin Electric stands as a continuous reminder of how essential safety skills are, both on and off the job.



Pictured at Laramie River Station from left, Kevin Collins, electrician I; Brian Burkett, electrician II; and Jim Moody, electrician I.

## NEW EMPLOYEES



**Paul Harvala**, originally from Mandan, North Dakota, began working as a protection services specialist at Dakota Gas on Jan. 15.



**Alex Hayward** began working at Headquarters as an electrical engineer on Jan. 15. A Bismarck, North Dakota native, he previously worked at CMTA in Fargo, North Dakota as an electrical engineer intern. He received a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from North Dakota State University in Fargo.



**Dawson Kaylor**, from Hazen, North Dakota, began working as a maintenance field technician at Dakota Gas on Jan. 15. He previously worked as a mechanic at The Coteau Properties Co. in Beulah, North Dakota. He received an associate's degree in diesel mechanics from North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton.



**Kelly Marthaller** began working at Headquarters as a process operations field technician at Dakota Gas on Jan. 15. A Bismarck, North Dakota native, he previously worked at MDU Resources in Bismarck.



**Kevin Ripplinger**, from Upsala, Minnesota, began working at the Beulah (North Dakota) Transmission Systems Maintenance outpost as a journeyman-lineman on Jan. 15. He was previously employed by 3C Construction as a journeyman lineman in Mandan, North Dakota.



**Shauna Scott** began working at Headquarters as an administrative assistant on Jan. 15. Originally from Mandan, North Dakota, she was previously employed by Bismarck (North Dakota) State College as an administrative.



**Loagen Senn** began working as a maintenance field technician at Dakota Gas on Jan. 15. He was previously employed by Michael Foods in Chaska, Minnesota, as a maintenance technician. He is originally from Beulah, North Dakota.



**Josh Swift**, originally from Riverside, California, began working at Dakota Gas as a process operations field technician on Jan. 15. He was previously employed by Ringneck Energy in Onida, South Dakota, as an operations manager.



**Chris Johnson**, originally from Stone Mountain, Georgia, began working as senior vice president and chief financial officer at Headquarters on Jan. 22. He previously worked for Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association as vice president of finance. He received a bachelor's degree in accounting from Georgia State University and a master's degree from the University of Georgia.



**Zachary Cofer** began working as a process operations field technician at Dakota Gas on Jan. 29. He is originally from New Salem, North Dakota.



**Kyle Masset**, from Linton, North Dakota, began working as a process operations field technician at Dakota Gas on Feb. 12. He was previously employed by Straight Line Directional Drilling & Geothermal in Watford City, North Dakota, as a laborer.



**Jennifer Will** began working as a nurse at Dakota Gas on Feb. 16. She previously held the position of registered nurse at Coal County Clinic in Center, North Dakota. She earned bachelor's degrees in psychology and sociology, and an associate's degree in nursing.



**Josh Diede** began working as a maintenance field technician at Dakota Gas on Feb. 26.



**John Filibeck** began working as a maintenance field technician at Dakota Gas on Feb. 26. Originally from Glen Ullin, North Dakota, Filibeck previously held the position of maintenance technician II at Ormat Technologies in Saint Anthony, Glen Ullin, and Manning, North Dakota. He received an associate's degree in diesel technology.



**Noah Gerhardt**, originally from Mandan, North Dakota, began working as a maintenance field technician at Dakota Gas on Feb. 26. He previously worked as a technician II for Penske Truck Rental in Bismarck, North Dakota.



**Tom Seibold**, a Mandan, North Dakota, native joined the team at Dakota Gas as a process operations field technician on Feb. 26. He was formerly employed by Signal Peak Energy in Roundup, Montana, as a belt man. Seibold has also worked as an irrigation technician for 20 years.



**Erin Becker** began working as a staff writer/editor at Headquarters on March 4. The Maddock, North Dakota, native previously worked for Northern Pulse Growers Association as a communications and marketing specialist. Becker has also worked as an international marketing specialist for the North Dakota Department of Agriculture and an outreach coordinator for National Medical Resources. Becker earned bachelor's degrees in marketing and public relations and advertising from North Dakota State University in Fargo.



**Tucker Erickson**, from Beulah, North Dakota, began work as a maintenance field technician at Dakota Gas on March 4. He previously worked at Erickson Trucking LLC in Beulah as a truck driver. He earned an associate's degree in H-VAC and sheet metal from Bismarck (North Dakota) State College. He is certified with the Environmental Protection Agency and Gastite and holds certification in black iron pipe installation.



**Mark Soper**, from western Nebraska, joined the team at Stegall DC Tie as a lead systems protection technician on March 6. He previously worked for Tri-State G&T as a substation maintenance foreman.



**Jonathan Decker**, a Gillette, Wyoming, native began working as a system protection apprentice at the Gillette Transmission Systems Maintenance outpost on March 11. He was previously employed by Belle Ayr Coal Mine in Gillette as an electrician. He spent eight years as an infantry and ammunition specialist and equipment operator in the Army. He received an associate's degree in industrial electricity.



**Jacob Engelter** joined the team at Dakota Gas as a maintenance field technician on March 18. Originally from New Salem, North Dakota, he previously worked for Butler Machinery in Bismarck, North Dakota, as a diesel technician.



**Bob Groves** was hired on March 18 as vice president and chief information officer at Headquarters. Before joining the cooperative, the Michigan native worked as a self-employed consultant. Groves earned a bachelor's degree in business management and master's degrees in finance and information technology.

## NEW EMPLOYEES



**Chris Kolstad** began working as an electrical and instrumentation and controls technician at Pioneer Generation Station on March 18. The Glasgow, Montana, native previously worked for Montana-Dakota Utilities Company as an operations coordinator.



**Emilee Hausauer-Johnson** began working at Headquarters as a service dispatcher I on March 25. The Bismarck, North Dakota, native previously worked at Copper Dog Coffee LLC as an assistant manager. She earned an associate's degree in liberal arts.



**Tina Job**, from Lincoln, North Dakota, began working as a senior administrative assistant at Headquarters on March 25. She previously worked for the Burleigh County Sheriff's Department as an administrative assistant.



**Timothy Nagel** began working as a business systems analyst at Headquarters on March 25. The Bismarck, North Dakota, native previously worked at CVS Aetna as a senior project manager. Nagel earned a Project Management Professional certification, a master's degree, and a bachelor's degree in information technology software engineering.



**Stacy "Fuzzy" Snook** joined the team at Laramie River Station as a hardware technician on March 25. The Laramie, Wyoming, native previously worked as the owner and CEO of Wyosnooks LLC.



**Jonah Zimmerman** joined the team at Headquarters as a mechanical engineer on March 25. Before joining the cooperative, the Hazen, North Dakota, native worked for Doosan Bobcat as a design engineer.

## RETIREES



**Donald Pindell**, mechanic/welder at Laramie River Station, retired on Feb. 2 after nine years with the cooperative. Previously, the Wheatland, Wyoming, native worked for Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 192 as a steamfitter/welder.

His history with Basin Electric is extensive. He started his apprenticeship in 1978 at Laramie River Station during its construction.

In retirement he plans to travel and spend time with family, especially his grandkids.

## WE WILL REMEMBER



**Curtis Strandemo**, 60, passed away on March 18 in a Bismarck hospital. Strandemo was a service dispatcher at Headquarters and had worked for the cooperative for four years.

"Curtis was more than just an employee or a co-worker, Curtis was our friend and a friend to everyone that knew

him," Jolene Johnson, Basin Electric manager of Security and Response Services, says. "He was truly the guy that would give the shirt off his back for anyone that needed it. Through his illness, Curtis stayed strong, upbeat, and continued to have a great sense of humor. We will miss his infectious spirit and unlimited generosity."

# SERVICE AWARDS



**Chuck Cox II**  
30 years  
Water treatment operator  
*Laramie River Station*



**Justin Bentz**  
20 years  
Mechanic I  
*Leland Olds Station*



**Paul May**  
20 years  
Lead electrician  
*Laramie River Station*



**Anthony Michlitsch**  
20 years  
Plant superintendent  
*Leland Olds Station*



**Jon Sheldon**  
20 years  
Lead mechanic  
*Leland Olds Station*



**Corey Wamsley**  
20 years  
Yard operator  
*Leland Olds Station*

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