

# BASIN TODAY

BASIN ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE

| WINTER 2024

A photograph showing three utility workers in white bucket trucks working on a power line tower. The workers are silhouetted against a bright, cloudy sky. The bucket trucks have the 'Ateco' logo on them. The power lines and tower structure are visible against the sky.

**KEEPING THE  
COOPERATIVE  
CONNECTED**



Mid-December 2023, six Wärtsilä reciprocating gas engines arrived on site for Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV (PGSIV), the cooperative's largest single-site electric generation project since the 1980s. The engines will have a combined net output of 108 megawatts. The fast-starting and stopping ability of this technology allows full output to be reached in just minutes, which ensures a stable and reliable electricity supply regardless of the weather conditions. PGSIV is expected to begin operation by the summer of 2025. You can read more about the engines here: <https://bit.ly/PGSEngines>.



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## ON THE COVER

Linemen from Class C member Park Electric Cooperative in Livingston, Montana, work together to keep electricity flowing to local homes and businesses. With record cold temperatures and severe ice storms across Basin Electric's service territory this winter, linemen have endured tough conditions to restore service for members who were impacted. Photo by Park Electric Cooperative.

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# TODD BRICKHOUSE



## MEASURING OUR MOMENTUM

Beginning a new year allows us to focus on executing our objectives for the current year and measuring our goals from the prior year.

As part of our 2023 strategic planning effort, we developed three cooperative-wide goals that would provide value to our members and a unified sense of purpose within Basin Electric.

As the largest G&T in the country in megawatt-hour sales and geographical territory, we have an obligation to our members, employees, and industry to do things safely, reliably, and affordably. That's why it was a natural fit to have our cooperative-wide goals focus on safety, reliability, and affordability.

In our most recent member surveys, reliability and affordability consistently ranked as top items of importance for our cooperative family. Safety was also a natural selection because there's nothing more important than our employees returning home safely at the end of each day.

After determining our goals, we set measurements that we felt were realistic and achievable.

1. Safety – Decrease our incident rate by 10% compared to 2022.
2. Reliability – Improve generation and transmission reliability compared to 2022 and exceed industry average.
3. Affordability – Achieve a net cost per member megawatt-hour sales equal to or less than \$53.23 and achieve a consolidated net margin equal to or greater than \$199.4 million.

# 3 COOPERATIVE-WIDE GOALS



Basin Electric has a long history of making safety a core value; however, over the last decade we have fallen short of our standards. Whether it's a line of fire injury or ergonomic injury, our team worked hard to prevent and minimize incidents in 2023.

I'm pleased to report that after focusing on transforming our safety efforts at all locations, we met our goal for our most important initiative.

In the electric utility industry, we strive to provide service so dependable that the member at the end of the line doesn't have to pause to think about reliability when they flip a light switch, allowing them to focus on their families, farms, and businesses, among other activities.

As you've likely seen firsthand at your own local cooperatives, the men and women at Basin Electric who are on the front lines of our reliability efforts, operating and maintaining your generation and transmission assets, work very hard to keep those assets online.

While we can't control the weather or the rules of our regional transmission organizations when power shortages occur, we can perform systematic maintenance, commit to secure power purchase agreements, and ensure reliable fuel sources are available to fulfill our responsibility of being a reliable energy supplier to our membership.

I'm pleased to share that we successfully reached our 2023 cooperative-wide goal for reliability.

We did not increase our rates in 2023, so it may feel to you that our affordability goal was satisfied. However, as

detailed below, we came up short of our dual affordability goals.

Let me take a moment to expand on why we set dual affordability goals regarding net income after tax and megawatt-hour net cost. With respect to net cost per member megawatt-hour sales, the rate we charge is ultimately a function of the costs we incur to provide electric service, so controlling costs is an important factor in having an affordable rate. The second affordability goal of consolidated net margin is important because our margins allow us to rotate patronage and continue to invest in our system to ensure future reliability.

It is worth noting that Basin Electric's utility business exceeded its budgeted net margin, but Dakota Gas' financial results were adversely impacted by lower-than-budgeted plant capacity factors and prices for its commodity products that came in lower than budget projections.

Now that the numbers are in and the results are laid out in black and white, we will focus our efforts on executing our 2024 objectives. Safety, reliability, and affordability remain as important in 2024 as they were last year, and we aim to continue tracking our efforts and holding ourselves accountable so our members have the power they need for rural America to continue to thrive.

TODD T. BRICKHOUSE  
*CEO and general manager*

## Todd Brickhouse named Basin Electric's CEO and general manager



Basin Electric's board of directors announced their selection of Todd Brickhouse as the chief executive officer and general manager of the cooperative. Brickhouse had held the position on an interim basis since July 2023.

Basin Electric board president Wayne Peltier said the action is a reflection of Brickhouse's record as interim CEO and general manager and his previous service as the cooperative's senior vice president and chief financial officer. "The Board has worked closely with Todd Brickhouse during his tenure at Basin Electric and believes he has the skills, strategic vision, work ethic, and integrity to lead the organization," said Peltier.

 <https://bit.ly/NewBasinCEO>

## Upgrades at Antelope Valley Station increase reliability

Antelope Valley Station, a coal-fueled dispatchable generation facility located near Beulah, North Dakota, is making some equipment upgrades as part of Basin Electric's Aging Substation Infrastructure Replacement Initiative. Basin Electric implemented the initiative in 2018 as the cooperative's approach to strengthen and modernize its transmission infrastructure and help ensure reliability for the cooperative's members.

"Antelope Valley Station is over 40 years old, and there are several pieces of substation equipment that have reached the end of serviceable life," said Ryan Drevlow, Basin Electric electrical engineer III. "Many of the manufacturers of the existing equipment are no longer in business which make procuring spare parts difficult to impossible. Because of this, maintaining the existing equipment becomes more difficult."

 <https://bit.ly/AVSupgrades>

## Basin Electric forms CORE team to evaluate risk and opportunity in carbon capture

Dan Gallagher, Basin Electric director of Commodity Sales and Trading, is leading the carbon opportunity and risk evaluation (CORE) team in an effort to evaluate

risk and opportunity in the carbon capture sector. "The team is set up to complement other groups and organizations within Basin Electric," Gallagher said. "Working with the Horizons Team, whose role is to monitor, analyze, and disseminate information regarding new technologies, CORE looks at development from a business perspective."

Made up of members from various departments, the CORE team keeps their project list concise to effectively review and determine if any of them should be further developed.

 <https://bit.ly/BasinCoreTeam>

## Johnson named as Basin Electric's new chief financial officer



Chris Johnson joined the cooperative as its senior vice president and chief financial officer January 22, 2024.

Todd Brickhouse, Basin Electric's chief executive officer and general manager, stated, "We are delighted to have Chris at Basin Electric. He is an accomplished leader with a skillset that will immediately contribute to our mission, strategy, and objectives."

 <https://bit.ly/NewBasinCFO>

## Deer Creek Station surpasses generation milestone

At about 9 p.m. on Dec. 12, 2023, Basin Electric's Deer Creek Station, a combined-cycle generation facility located near Brookings, South Dakota, surpassed a major generation milestone. The facility generated its 1 millionth megawatt-hour (MWh) of net generation in one year for the first time since the facility went online in 2012. Net generation is the electricity produced by a facility beyond what it needs to power its own systems.

Lower natural gas prices and less wind generation than forecasted contributed to the facility sending a record amount of electricity to the transmission grid, according to Joe Fiedler, Basin Electric manager of Distributed Generation.

 <https://bit.ly/DCSGenMilestone>

## Basin Electric begins preliminary investigation into construction of new generating facility

Dispatchable generation is critical to keeping electricity reliable; facilities with the ability to turn on when electricity is needed and ramp up or down to meet the needs of electricity users help maintain the integrity of the transmission grid.

Because of member load growth in western North Dakota, a Basin Electric team will begin to investigate building a generating facility. The team is looking at the potential of an additional natural gas-fueled power plant to be located within the Southwest Power Pool footprint in western North Dakota – to be completed close to the year 2030.

Because a lead time of several years is required for environmental permitting, equipment purchases, and more, investigation now is important.

 <https://bit.ly/LookIntoNewGen>

## Reliability remains top priority after NERC releases 2023-2024 winter reliability assessment report

The 2023-2024 winter reliability assessment report was recently released by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC). A key finding mentions a higher risk of insufficient electricity during peak winter months due to the complexity of load forecasting in the winter months.

“When we look at Southwest Power Pool and the Midcontinent Independent System Operator areas, where we have a good majority of Basin Electric’s member load, we see an elevated risk in certain conditions,” Val Weigel, Basin Electric vice president of Energy Markets, said. “Those conditions would likely be timeframes where we see higher loads maybe due to weather conditions.”

Extreme cold and icy conditions made its way into North Dakota in January. Basin Electric has implemented all the requirements of a new NERC reliability standard focusing on cold weather preparedness, which includes a cold weather preparedness plan, associated training, and cold weather preparedness maintenance activities.

 <https://bit.ly/NERCReliabilityAssessment>

## Wind power purchase agreement with Basin Electric now commercial

ENGIE North America’s North Bend Wind project began commercial operation on Dec. 22, 2023. Basin Electric has a 25-year power purchase agreement to purchase the output of the approximately 200-megawatt wind project.

The project consists of 71 wind turbines on some 47,000 acres located in Hughes and Hyde counties in South Dakota, inside Basin Electric’s service area.

 <https://bit.ly/NorthBendWind>

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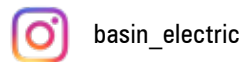
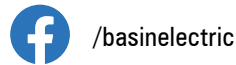
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## CONNECT WITH US



# EASEMENT BRINGS CONTINUED LONG-TERM POWER AND RELIABILITY TO MEMBERS

*By Jenifer Gray*

Strong relationships don't happen overnight. They are created and built upon over the years through mutual respect, trust, and a common goal. For many years, Basin Electric, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative have nurtured a close relationship in order to provide reliable power to their members.

In the mid-1970s, Basin Electric constructed the Leland Olds Station-to-Watertown 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line across roughly a mile and a half of the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation. Since then, Basin Electric lineworkers have been maintaining the transmission line across Tribal land, creating a lasting relationship that still exists today.

One of the easements secured for the transmission line was contracted for a 50-year term through the BIA. That contract expired in March 2023, which meant a new easement needed to be acquired for the existing facility. By using the existing right-of-way, Basin Electric avoided the cost of a reroute which helps rate stability and keeps power affordable for members.

While considering next steps, it was determined that to provide long-term, reliable power, the new easement would again need to be for a term of 50 years, which is the maximum term the BIA can grant per federal regulations. In this case, the reservation was the only route and easement pursued because the transmission line already existed.

With the help of Dave Page, general manager of Basin Electric Class C member Whetstone Valley Electric

Cooperative, and Gene Sass, one of the co-op's lineworkers, Basin Electric was put in touch with the right Tribal representative. "Gene has developed solid relationships with our members and stakeholders to improve our service to them," Page says. "He knew just who to call regarding this project."

"Knowing the contract was expiring in 2023, we reached out to the Lake Traverse BIA Realty Office in 2018 to inquire about a new 50-year easement grant and was told it was too early to start the process," Mike Murray, Basin Electric director of Property and Right-of-Way, says. "In August 2022 we really geared up and started to work hard to secure an appraiser to determine the value of the easement."

Janine Renville, deputy superintendent of Trust Services at the BIA, says there are a lot of steps involved in submitting an application for a right-of-way project. "Application packages must include the application or letter of intent and maps of the location of the easement. Landowner information is provided to the applicant, and we let them know that appraisals are needed. Once the appraisals are done, we submit those to the Appraisal Valuation Services Office for review and approval."

Jerry Haas, Basin Electric senior Property and Right-of-Way specialist, says the BIA was great to work with from start to finish. The BIA acknowledged the expiring easement and Basin Electric's need to pursue a new contract. David Lawrence, independent consultant working as a contracted appraiser for the Sisseton-Wahpeton-Oyate Tribe, and the staff on the





**THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN TRIBAL LEADERS, BASIN ELECTRIC, AND WHETSTONE VALLEY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE IS IMPERATIVE FOR CONTINUED GRID RELIABILITY IN OUR REGION.**



*Dave Page, general manager Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative*

Realty Office team were very helpful and kept an open line of communication going throughout the process. They provided clear direction to keep everything on schedule. “We didn’t run into any issues aside from the looming deadline,” Haas says. “There was a lot of back-and-forth follow up in the final weeks to get the easement approved.”

After the appraisals were approved, consent forms were sent to the landowners of each allotment affected by the right-of-way; the BIA needs a majority of the landowners to consent in order for the right-of-way to be approved. “Once we obtain the required number of consents back from the landowners, we issue a Grant of Right-of-Way to the applicant approving the right-of-way. Once payment is received, we scan the complete right-of-way package for recording at the Land Titles & Records Office, and the complete recorded package is then sent to the applicant for their records,” Renville says.

From ensuring the maximum 50-year term, to the negotiation of the value of the easement, to the completeness of the right-of-way application which helped the process move along efficiently, all parties

involved appreciated how smoothly the process went. With only a week to spare before the contract expired, Basin Electric received the new signed contract for the easement on March 20, 2023, roughly eight months after the process began.

Murray is quick to point out that this achievement was due to a total collaborative effort between the BIA, Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative, and Basin Electric staff from Engineering, Environmental, the Office of the General Counsel, and Right-of-Way.

A relationship, much like a contract, sets the foundation for continued collaboration and success, and benefits the communities in which our members live and work. With the renewal of the 50-year contract comes continued reliability to our members, including Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative, which in turn serves a portion of the Lake Traverse Reservation.

“Reliability is a growing demand for our consumers,” Page says. “The alliance between Tribal leaders, Basin Electric, and Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative is imperative for continued grid reliability in our region.”



The Leland Olds Station-to-Watertown 345-kilovolt transmission line crosses roughly a mile and a half of the Lake Traverse Indian Reservation.

John Schwab, apprentice instrumentation technician at Leland Olds Station.



## HOW WE SERVE... WITH INSTRUMENTATION

*By Kalli Senske*

Many processes and systems within a plant happen so automatically that it's easy to forget someone had a role in getting everything set up just right. Cue the instrumentation technicians.

At a basic level, instrumentation techs help the plant utilize automation. They install, test, calibrate, and maintain instruments in order to manipulate measured variables such as temperature, pressure, emissions, and flow.

The instrumentation techs at Leland Olds Station are in charge of the logic, or programming, that controls the plant. While the control room operators monitor screens and run the actual processes throughout the entire plant, the instrumentation technicians manage the logic working in the background.

"The logic might say that a certain system has to be working before another can run, or it could say that a motor has to be running a certain amount of time before a system can begin running," John Schwab, apprentice instrumentation tech at Leland Olds Station, says. "Everything is programmed so that when it's time to run a system, everything runs smoothly just like it should."

Often, control room operators are the first to know that something isn't functioning correctly. When they do, they'll submit a work request to the planning and scheduling department. They will build a work order package and send it to the instrument techs for repairs and troubleshooting.

"The control room operators are monitoring the units 24/7, so they notice problems right away. They'll submit a work request, and we will start troubleshooting as soon as we

receive a work order. If it is a problem we can't figure out, we get the mechanics and electricians involved, too," Schwab says. "The problem could be the logic or it could be a physical issue, so we'll work with them to troubleshoot and get it figured out."

In a perfect world, once automations are set up it would be as simple as pressing a button for everything to run smoothly. In reality, instrumentation techs are continually calibrating equipment to ensure the proper functioning of automated equipment.

"Wear and tear happens at a plant, so maybe the timing of a system firing up needs to be extended for five seconds because a valve needs more time to open now and the mechanics are unable to get to it or the unit has to be off to replace the valve, for example," Schwab says.

Testing doesn't just happen in the control room.

"Whenever we do testing, we go into the field to look at actual equipment. One of us will be at the computer and another at a turbine during a calibration. Then based on what we see, we'll adjust the limits and run the test again until it meets the tolerances the computer is asking for," Schwab says.

Schwab says one of the best learning experiences he's had since he began his apprenticeship a year ago was working on the Leland Olds Station Unit 1 outage last spring.

"We learned a lot about different things we need to do for outages, like turbine valves we have to test and set the limits on that we don't work with regularly. It was a big success, especially because we have a lot of new guys in the shop," Schwab says.

Outages like this are critical for the plant to continue functioning at the level it needs to maintain reliability for the membership.

Schwab's apprenticeship will end when he has reached 6,000 work hours and three years of experience.

"At first I did a lot of shadowing other instrumentation techs, but now I'm getting to do a lot more on my own," Schwab says.

While taking instrumentation classes, Schwab was able to utilize Basin Electric's tuition reimbursement program, which reimburses employees for classes towards approved degrees.

Even though Schwab is newer to his role, he's not new to power plant work. Growing up, his dad was a control room operator at Leland Olds Station, and he previously worked at Antelope Valley Station in operations, working his way up from a temporary position to an equipment attendant. He says the best part of his job is all the people across the plant he gets to work with.

"We get to work with a lot of different people in the plant and do a variety of stuff, and I really like the guys in the shop. They're a good bunch," Schwab says. "And I have to say that working straight days now is pretty nice compared to shift work."

Every job within a power plant plays a role in maintaining reliability, but Schwab is grateful he found his niche and can now support the membership as an instrumentation tech.

"Problems like the control system not working correctly can cause major issues if they aren't caught early and corrected, and that can mean lost production time for the plant," Schwab says. "Of course, we fix issues when they come up, but we stay on top of regular testing so we can avoid issues and keep everything running smoothly. We know what we do is important for the members at the end of the line who rely on us for power."



**WE STAY ON TOP OF REGULAR TESTING SO WE CAN AVOID ISSUES AND KEEP EVERYTHING RUNNING SMOOTHLY.**

*John Schwab, apprentice instrumentation technician at Leland Olds Station*





# SCHEDULED OUTAGES PROVIDE RELIABILITY FOR MEMBERS

*By Jenifer Gray*

For most people, a power outage means having to bring out the candles and keep the refrigerator door shut until the lights come back on. For the crews who work at Dakota Gasification Company's Great Plains Synfuels Plant, a facility that produces synthetic natural gas, fertilizers, chemicals, and more from the gasification of coal located in Beulah, North Dakota, and Laramie River Station, a coal-based dispatchable generation facility located in Wheatland, Wyoming, an outage is something else entirely.

Basin Electric is committed to providing reliable electricity to its members, and it's through carefully planned and managed outages at its facilities that maintenance, repairs, and upgrades are completed to help ensure the reliability our members expect.

Scheduled outages play a crucial role in maintaining reliability and efficiency. Just like a race car driver pulls over during a race to receive maintenance, regular maintenance at our plants ensures that Dakota Gas can continue to manufacture products and Laramie River Station can continue generating electricity.

## **Dakota Gasification Company**

Dakota Gas completed its fall outage activities in October. During this outage, what was scheduled as a "brown" plant outage turned into a "black" plant outage. The fundamental difference is that during a brown plant outage some of the utility systems, including one train of the oxygen plant, would remain in service throughout the outage. Unfortunately, a large motor in the oxygen plant failed about a week into the brown plant outage,

so Dakota Gas went black, which lasted for 18 days. The combination of both the brown plant and the black plant outage lasted approximately 35 days. The plant's nitrogen distribution system remained in service the entire outage, which is critical to safety. While the motor in the oxygen plant was down, nitrogen was purchased from an outside source and delivered by truck.

Historically, all outages provide the chance to make improvements in the plant, but the black plant outage provided a unique opportunity to repair steam systems and utility systems that are common to both trains of the plant. This includes replacing valves that deteriorated over time. In turn, these valves provide isolation for performing various levels of maintenance. This outage included replacing the ductwork and dampers between the boilers and flue gas desulfurization. During a previous boiler outage, the dampers would not close properly, so an additional outage was required to isolate that boiler for maintenance. With the ductwork and dampers repaired, the system will be safer and provide the ability to isolate the boilers when maintenance is required.

"The outage allowed us to perform work on common systems like the steam and cooling piping throughout the plant that are rarely out of service," Dale Johnson, senior vice president and plant manager at Dakota Gas,

says. "For example, there was a large chunk of plastic weighing about 3,000 pounds that was created in a cooling tower fire. This chunk was floating in the cooling tower sump and was damaging the screens on the inlet to the cooling water pumps. This chunk of plastic, plus a bunch of smaller material, was removed from the sump, and this work could only be done during a plant outage."

During the outage, over 4,000 tasks such as equipment repairs, rebuilds, and replacements were completed throughout the plant. "Going into this outage, I think we were all concerned about the boiler duct replacement project. That was probably the most complex project for this outage, and it went very well," Johnson says. "The evaporative cooler replacement in the oxygen plant was another large, complex project that went well."

"Outages in general provide opportunities to repair, replace, or improve process equipment that cannot be maintained during operation; this brings equipment back to where they're designed to operate or to make equipment improvements, which ultimately improves efficiency and reliability," Brian Dillman, maintenance manager at Dakota Gas, says. "Proper maintenance is essential to maintain safe and reliable equipment to support production, which supports our members in providing value-added products and revenue streams."



Crane and scaffolding on site to replace the boiler ductwork during Dakota Gas' brown plant outage.



Dustin Rothe, Laramie River Station electrical engineer III, next to the upgraded 480-volt switchgear, which includes the transformer, the load center, and the motor control center, during their 2023 fall outage.

## Laramie River Station

Facilities like Laramie River Station provide long-term power generation, and that's why scheduled outages and regular maintenance are so important. They ensure these dispatchable generation facilities operate reliably so members can continue receiving the power they rely on.

Basin Electric coordinates all outages to make sure there's no disruption in power. "Our outages are scheduled during the spring and fall months when demand for power is typically lower," Levi Mickelsen, plant manager at Laramie River Station, says. "Outages are a major effort and require all hands on deck, as well as many contractors who bring technical oversight and additional manpower to help complete the work. During these outages we clean, inspect, repair, and restore the unit to as new of condition as possible, ensuring the unit is available and reliable."

Laramie River Station, which consists of three coal-based generation units that have the capability of producing up to 1,700 megawatts of dispatchable electricity, is upgrading their 480-volt switchgear, which includes the transformer, the load center, and the motor control center. Dustin Rothe, electrical engineer III at Laramie River, is the site contact and coordinator, helping complete these electrical upgrades at the plant. "Currently, we have long-range engineering plans through at least 2030 for the 480-volt switchgear upgrades for the scrubbers, coal yard, and water

treatment areas," Rothe says. "We will complete the 480-volt switchgear upgrade for the main plant during the 2024 spring outage."

A brand-new standby load center in Unit 3 was installed a few years ago in preparation for tying into their emergency diesel generator. The standby load center and essential motor control center for Units 1 and 2 have been connected to the emergency diesel generator since the plant was built. "In 2024, we will complete the work to tie the emergency diesel generator to Unit 3," Rothe says. "The emergency diesel generator will kick on and power the standby load center and essential motor control center to provide power to critical pieces of equipment during a black plant."

The plant has also added a few new cross-feed connections, providing multiple options to keep the plant running in case of equipment failure or routine maintenance and ensuring continued reliability for Basin Electric's members.

While scheduled outages are essential for maintaining the reliability of power plants, Dakota Gas and Laramie River Station strive to minimize the duration and frequency of these events to ensure production and a stable electricity supply for members. Advanced planning, coordination, and effective communication are key elements in managing scheduled outages without compromising reliability.

# SOUNDING THE ALARM:

HOW DAKOTA GAS' AUSTON BILES IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN WESTERN NORTH DAKOTA

By Alison Kirsch



Auston Biles (center) helps give a donation to the American Red Cross on Basin Electric's behalf. Also pictured are Zoe Wergeland Manstrom, American Red Cross of Western North Dakota executive director (left), and Jennifer Holen, Basin Electric charitable giving administrator (right).

Growing up, Dakota Gas senior safety coordinator Auston Biles always knew he wanted to help people, but didn't quite know where to begin. That is, until he saw an ad in the paper requesting firefighter cadets at his local fire station.

He began work at 16 years old, starting out by washing equipment while undergoing training. "As I learned more skills and how to apply them, seeing them in action is when it really sunk in that I wanted to make a difference," Biles says.

This prompted Biles to start taking emergency medical responder courses at 17, and by 18 he had hit the ground running. He has worked in various capacities as a first responder all over the United States, including fire, wildland fire, dive rescue, search and rescue, and as an emergency medical technician (EMT). "I have seen folks on their worst day wondering what they are going to do in the next hour, day, week as they watch their worldly possessions go up in flames," Biles says. His experience as a first responder drove him to do more.

Biles began serving on the American Red Cross board of directors for western North Dakota in 2017. In 2018 he was voted in as chairperson, a position he has held ever since.

Biles' role as a board member involves networking with businesses and individuals to help raise donations, educating public and private groups about programs the Red Cross has to offer, giving presentations about local

disasters, and working with national teams to put together disaster resources for large scale incidents. "From the very start of the Red Cross, it has been about alleviating human suffering and using the power of volunteers to spread the love and generosity of others," Biles says. He works as a liaison for the Red Cross in multiple functions, including volunteerism.

One of Biles' passions is participating in the "Sound the Alarm, Save a Life" program, an effort to install free smoke detectors nationwide. The Red Cross-sponsored event involves boots on the ground volunteers going door-to-door offering to install smoke detectors free of charge to families. During the time of installation, volunteers share fire safety information and help families create emergency plans in case of disaster.

Biles' first Sound the Alarm event in Dickinson, North Dakota, stands out in his memory. "We had knocked on many doors and heard a lot of 'nos' that day," Biles says. Then finally, they received a 'yes' from a single mother with two kids. Biles was just finishing up the family's training when the mom began to cry. She explained that her family had experienced a kitchen fire in their home the previous year, which was put out immediately. "Their home didn't have one smoke detector in it. She was so thankful that the Red Cross was coming through to install smoke detectors and save her family's lives while they slept," Biles says. This moment solidified Biles' purpose in working with the Red Cross.

Since then, he has conducted five more Sound the Alarm events throughout western North Dakota. For Biles, the benefit of his service is clear. "It is so rewarding to help those families make their homes safer and in turn raise awareness and save lives," Biles says.

The Red Cross is currently looking for more volunteers. Through his time working with the Red Cross, Biles has found that there is something for everyone to do. "We always hear of the Red Cross helping out in these far away natural disasters, but they are constantly working in our own backyards as well," Biles says. "If you have a passion, they have an opportunity for you to use it."

## SERVICE AWARDS



**Jeremy Perkins**  
30 years  
Mechanic/welder I  
*Laramie River Station*



**Darren Huber**  
25 years  
Telecommunications  
supervisor  
*TSM-Wheatland*



**Paul Kaiser**  
25 years  
Transmission line supervisor  
*TSM-Menoken*



**Charles Affolter**  
20 years  
Maintenance planner/  
scheduler  
*Leland Olds Station*



**Ryan Ahlschlager**  
20 years  
E&I maintenance supervisor  
*Dakota Gasification Company*



**Donovan Eslinger**  
20 years  
Telecommunications  
supervisor  
*TSM-Menoken*



**Christopher Goettle**  
20 years  
Senior electrical engineer  
*Headquarters*



**Aaron Knutson**  
20 years  
Lead lab technician  
*Leland Olds Station*



**Casey Stern**  
20 years  
Mechanic supervisor  
*Antelope Valley Station*



**Jim Tosseth**  
20 years  
Maintenance coordinator  
*Headquarters*



**Greg Wheeler**  
20 years  
Multimedia specialist III/  
Senior AV producer  
*Headquarters*



**Jeremy Wittenberg**  
20 years  
Enterprise system  
administrator III  
*Headquarters*



**Jason Wiest**  
20 years  
Control room operator  
*Antelope Valley Station*



**Greg Zahn**  
20 years  
Maintenance planner/sched-  
uler/warehouse supervisor  
*Antelope Valley Station*

## RETIREES



**Dale Frederick**, maintenance field technician at Dakota Gas, retired on Jan. 26 after nine years with the cooperative.

“Working with some of the most talented people has been one of the best experiences,” says Frederick.

In retirement, he plans to take a vacation and expand his grain cleaning business.



# NEW EMPLOYEES



**Abby Helm**, a Medina, North Dakota, native began working at Dakota Gas on Sept. 25 as a process operations field technician.



**Cory Rebel**, process operations field technician, began working at Dakota Gas on Oct. 9.



**Ryan King**, environmental coordinator, began working at Headquarters on Sept. 25. Originally from Bismarck, North Dakota, he was previously employed with KC Harvey Environmental as a senior reclamation scientist. King earned a bachelor's degree in construction management and a master's degree in natural resources management from North Dakota State University in Fargo.



**Kimberly Schumacher** began working at Headquarters on Oct. 9 as an accounting analyst II. The Rapid City, South Dakota, native previously worked for Western Steel and Plumbing in the accounts payable department.



**Brandon Meier** began working as a laborer at Antelope Valley Station on Sept. 25. The Beulah, North Dakota, native previously worked as an automotive technician at Eide Ford in Mandan, North Dakota. Meier is a certified Ford chassis technician and is a North Dakota National Guard combat engineer.



**Nasser Alkhamis** began working at Headquarters as an electrical engineer on Oct. 16. He previously worked for AT&T as a specialist RAN design engineer. Alkhamis holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering.



**James Rueb** began working at Antelope Valley Station on Sept. 25 as a laborer. Originally from Beulah, North Dakota, he was previously employed with Swanson & Youngdale as a painter foreman.



**Dustin Anton** began working at Headquarters as a desktop application analyst on Oct. 23. The Bowman, North Dakota, native previously worked for Computer One as an IT consultant. Anton earned a degree from the North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton.



**Brandon Shonk**, electrician II, began working at Laramie River Station on Sept. 25. The Broomfield, Colorado, native was previously employed with Molson Coors as an instrumentation controls electrician II.



**Skye Atkinson** began working at Headquarters as a member revenue specialist on Oct. 23. The Bismarck, North Dakota, native previously worked at the North Dakota State Auditor's Office as an auditor. Atkinson earned a bachelor's degree in business administration and human resource management.



**Joshua Sackman**, operator, began working at Dry Fork Station on Oct. 2. Originally from Cheyenne, Wyoming, he was previously employed with Faribault Energy Park-NAES Corporation as an auxiliary plant operator. Sackman earned an associate's degree in power generation technology from Bismarck (North Dakota) State College.



**Brendan Kennedy** began working at Headquarters as a desktop application analyst on Oct. 23. Originally from Kansas City, Kansas, he previously worked for Associated Pool Builders as a contract administrator. Kennedy earned a master's degree in IT management from Colorado State University Global and holds a graduate certificate in cybersecurity.

## NEW EMPLOYEES



**Jonathan Lubobo** began working at Headquarters on Oct. 23 as an electrical engineer. He earned a degree in electrical power engineering from Cullen College of Engineering at the University of Houston, Texas.



**Sharla Wierson**, chemical lab field technician, began working at Dakota Gas on Oct. 23. The Glendive, Montana, native previously worked for American Crystal Sugar as a lab foreman and at Rock'n 50s Cafe.



**Brady Helm**, laborer, began working at Antelope Valley Station on Nov. 2. The Bismarck, North Dakota, native previously worked for Bobcat as an engineer technician. Helm earned an associate's degree in process plant technology from Bismarck State College.



**Samantha Botteicher** began working as a service dispatcher at Headquarters on Nov. 6. Botteicher is a native of western Pennsylvania and has lived in North Dakota for the past 10 years.



**Haakon Distad** began working as a laborer at Laramie River Station on Nov. 6. Originally from Wheatland, Wyoming, Distad previously worked for Continental as a field supervisor.



**Cameron Hall**, laborer, began working at Laramie River Station on Nov. 6. Hall previously worked for the Platte County Sheriff's Office as a deputy.



**Benjamin Marquez**, laborer, began working at Laramie River Station on Nov. 6. Prior to this position, the Wheatland, Wyoming, native worked for Ideal Completions Services as a supervisor.



**Jessica Reece** began working at Laramie River Station on Nov. 6 as a laborer. Originally from Glendo, Wyoming, Reece was previously a stay-at-home mom.



**Shawn Sturgeon**, laborer, began working at Laramie River Station on Nov. 6. The Wheatland, Wyoming, native previously worked for Renewal by Anderson as a safety manager. Sturgeon has also worked for the Decker Coal Company and is a U.S. Navy veteran.



**Austin Carrillo**, electrical engineer, began working at Antelope Valley Station on Nov. 20. The Robstown, Texas, native previously worked for Andretti's IKG in grill support. Carrillo earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of Texas at San Antonio.



**Brett Miller**, journeyman lineman, began working at the Williston, North Dakota, Transmission System Maintenance outpost on Nov. 27. The Cando, North Dakota, native was previously a traveling union lineman.



**Brandon Eagleson**, process operations field technician, began working at Dakota Gas on Dec. 18. The Bismarck, North Dakota, native previously worked for Northern Plains Heating & Air as an installer.



**Casey Mischel**, real time trader II, began working at Headquarters on Dec. 18. The Mandan, North Dakota, native was previously self-employed as a consultant. Mischel earned a degree in computer information systems from the University of Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota.



**Cody Baker**, chemical laboratory field technician, began working at Dakota Gas on Jan. 2. The Honey Creek, Wisconsin, native previously worked for ANI Pharmaceuticals as a chemist.



**Levi Dikoff** started working at Antelope Valley Station on Jan. 2 as an electrician II. The Glendive, Montana, native previously worked for IBEW Local 714 as an electrician.

Dikoff graduated from the North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton with an associate's degree in construction electrical and industrial electrical.



**Preston Eagleson**, process operations field technician, began working at Dakota Gas on Jan. 2. The Bismarck, North Dakota, native previously worked for Targa Badlands as a crude terminal technician.



**Christopher Jorgenson** began working as a process operations field technician at Dakota Gas on Jan. 2. The Beulah, North Dakota, native previously worked for Doosan Bobcat as an assembler.



**Brandt Klinnert**, IT budget and resource analyst, began working at Headquarters on Jan. 2. The Breckenridge, Minnesota, native previously worked as a senior personal loan officer at Gate City Bank in Bismarck, North Dakota. Klinnert earned an associate's degree in business management.



**Dillon Koski**, protection services specialist, began working at Dakota Gas on Jan. 2. The Glasgow, Montana, native previously worked for Hi-Line Ford, Inc. as a parts technician.



**Brooke Meyer** began working at Headquarters as a compensation and benefits analyst III on Jan. 2. The Bismarck, North Dakota, native previously worked for MDU Resources Group as a senior compensation analyst. Meyer earned a bachelor's degree in business administration with a concentration in human resources from the University of Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota. She is PHR and SHRM-CP certified.



**Remington Rusch** began working as an operator at Montana Limestone Company on Jan. 4. The Byron, Wyoming, native previously worked for Sidon Irrigation as a laborer.

## WE WILL REMEMBER



**Tim Moon**, 56, died Jan. 7 in a hospital in Casper, Wyoming. He was a mechanic/welder at Laramie River Station and had worked for the cooperative for nine years.

"Tim's death was a complete surprise and left all of us here at the plant in shock," Levi Mickelsen, Laramie River

Station plant manager, says. "Tim was a great employee, and we are going to miss him here at the plant. He also was an all-around wonderful person and a pleasure to be around. My thoughts and prayers go out to his wife and kids – they lost the best husband and dad one could have way too early in life."



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