



# NEWS *Lines*

PUBLISHED MONTHLY FOR THE MEMBER-OWNERS OF NORTH WEST RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## MARCH 2026

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## WE INVITE YOU TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL MEETING

### Tuesday, March 31, 2026

**5:30-7:00pm Meal Served, 7:00pm Business Meeting**  
**Convention Center, 275 12th St SE, Le Mars, IA 51031**

We invite all members in all districts to attend the Annual Meeting to be held on Tuesday evening, March 31 at 7:00p.m. at the Le Mars Convention Center.

The format of the meeting will consist of a short business meeting and a panel discussion, comprised of NWREC CEO & General Manager, Lyle Korver; NWREC Directors, Tom Wagner and Jeff Rehder; and NIPCO Executive Vice President & General Manager, Matt Washburn.



Lyle Korver



Tom Wagner



Jeff Rehder



Matt Washburn

Jill Miller will be providing music before the meeting begins from 6:15-7:00. We will also be announcing the results of the director election and the winners of the \$1,250 scholarships. We will be serving a meal before the meeting consisting of beef, pork, potatoes, vegetables, salad and Blue Bunny ice cream for dessert.

We encourage you to submit questions for the Q&A panel discussion and RSVP for the meal by filling out the orange RSVP/Question Card and returning it to our office by March 20th.

The Annual Meeting will be live-streamed via Facebook. You can watch on our website or our Facebook Page. Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/nwrec](http://www.facebook.com/nwrec) and Website: [www.nwrec.coop](http://www.nwrec.coop). It will also be recorded and available for viewing on our website and Facebook page after the event.

Door prizes will be available to those who attend in person or join online. We will give out a keyword and a number to text it to during the meeting to register for the prizes for those who are joining online.

Prizes include: (10) Ten \$250 bill credits and (20) Twenty \$100 bill credits!

Everyone who returns their ballot and (or) question card to the office by 20th of March will be entered to win one of (10) ten \$100 bill credits!

Annual Meeting packets with ballots for voting were mailed out at the beginning of March to all current North West REC members.

# Director Nominees are Selected

The Committee on Nominations met Tuesday, January 20, to select nominees for election of the Board of Directors of North West REC. They will be voted on and elected at the Annual Meeting of the Cooperative on Tuesday, March 31.

Members of the Committee on Nominations representing all four districts include, and are pictured L to R: Keith Wilbert, Doug Stout, Virdene Otto, Mike Thompson, Jim Holst, Doug Becker, Adam Schmidt, Brad Harvey, and Tracy Wittrock.



## DISTRICT 1 – SIOUX COUNTY BOARD OF DIRECTOR CANDIDATES



**Incumbent**

### JEFF REHDER - HAWARDEN

• **Currently serves on North West REC Board**

- Married to Kelly, three adult children
- Farms near Hawarden with four partners, raising corn, beans and alfalfa, feed cattle, and hogs
- Board Member of Rivers Edge Bank
- Serves as the President of the NWREC Board of Directors
- Director of NRUCFC (National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation)



### JORDAN CHRISTOFFEL - HAWARDEN

- Married to Amanda; four children: Nolan, Hannah, Easton, and Hadley
- I work for AgriVision Equipment Group in Sioux Center and also farm with my brothers near Granville, where we raise cattle, hogs, corn, and soybeans
- Currently a member of the St. Joseph Parish Auction Committee and the Granville Improvement Club
- My hobbies include coaching my children in sports, golfing, and spending time outdoors

## DISTRICT 2 – O'BRIEN COUNTY BOARD OF DIRECTOR CANDIDATES



**Incumbent**

### TOM WAGNER - PRIMGHAR

• **Currently serves on NWREC Board**

- Married to Holly, three children: Garrett, Erin, and Grant
- Farms with brother Jim, nephew Michael, and son Garrett in Primghar area
- Serves as the Treasurer of the NWREC Board of Directors
- Serves as the Treasurer of the NIPCO Board of Directors
- Serves as the Treasurer-Secretary of the Basin Electric Board of Directors



### MARK DE BOER - PRIMGHAR

- Married to Laura, two children Hayden and Parker
- Farms and Trucks
- Member of Consistory at Christ Community Church in Primghar
- Volunteer at Archer Fire Department

## DISTRICT 3 – PLYMOUTH COUNTY BOARD OF DIRECTOR CANDIDATES



### ADAM SCHMIDT - LE MARS

- Married to Amy; three teenage daughters
- Farms and feeds cattle near Craig; DEKALB/Asgrow seed dealer
- Current church council member
- Southern Sioux Rural Water Board member
- Former president and board member, Farmers Co-op in Craig
- Former Plymouth County Farm Bureau board member
- Enjoys attending and coaching his children's athletic events



### CURITS HINKELMAN - SIOUX CITY

- Married to Sherri; 3 children, 6 grandchildren
- Retired after 20 years with Ritchie Bros. Auctioneers; former Senior Vice President of U.S. Operations
- Active in national and local industry organizations
- Active church member, serving in various leadership roles
- Enjoys time with grandchildren, landscaping, and gardening; farm background
- Looks forward to contributing experience and leadership to the North West REC board

## DISTRICT 4 – IDA COUNTY BOARD OF DIRECTOR CANDIDATES



### DAN HOFFMAN - IDA GROVE

#### •Currently serves on NWREC Board

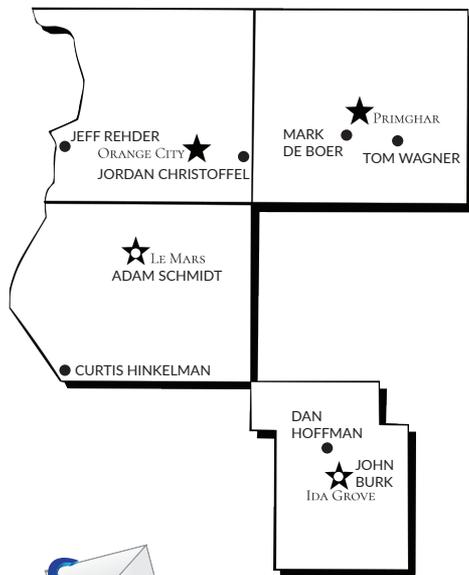
- Wife Jackie, four kids, 10 grandkids
- Lives & farms north of Ida Grove, has farmed whole life; soybeans, corn, oats, and hay, cow-calf operation with son Aaron
- Member of Ida County Farm Bureau
- Current Logan Township Trustee
- Member of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ida Grove
- Past 4-H leader for 25 years
- Hobbies include bowling, hunting, woodworking (has own sawmill)

**Incumbent**



### JOHN BURK - IDA GROVE

- Married to Linda, 4 kids, 7 grandkids
- Farming since 1977
- Past jobs: Retired floorcare position at Horn Memorial Hospital, HS wrestling coach at Ida Grove (now OABCIG), Head MS wrestling coach, Teacher of Ag Mechanics at Audubon HS
- Former Platoon Ldr, Detachment Commander, then Commander of 1034Th S&S Co, IANG
- Enjoys spending time with family, re-purposing or repairing old furniture and appliances, fixing things
- Faith Community Church Sunday School Teacher & Overseer
- Part of the NWREC nominating committee twice
- Past member of Ida County Fair Board, 4-H leader, and Sheep Superintendent



The Annual Meeting of Members will be held at the Convention Center, Le Mars, Iowa at 7:00 P.M. on **Tuesday, the 31st day of March, 2026**, to take action on the following matters:

- The reports of officers, directors and committees.
- The election of one director in District 1, one director in District 2, one director in District 3, and one director in District 4, each for a four-year term.
- All other business that may come before the meeting or any adjournments thereof.

Dated this 1st day of March 2026, A.D.

Steve Brown, Secretary



## REMINDER ABOUT MAILING

Watch your mail for your Annual District Meeting mailing which will include a ballot & return envelope. You will receive your "ballot for director" in this mailing. Be sure to vote and mail your ballot to the cooperative in the return envelope included in the mailing, as the return envelope you send your ballot in with will be used for a random prize drawing of \$100 bill credits. Ballots must be returned to the office, or postmarked by the 20th of March, to be counted in the Director Election!



Lyle D. Korver

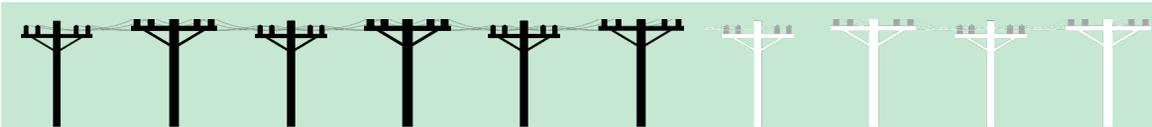
# MANAGER'S *Report*

## Switch Makes Cents Load Management System Update

Forty years ago, we started a new marketing and load management program that we called Switch Makes Cents. It gained widespread acceptance from our members and continues to have strong support today. As a result, 60% of our members have electric heat as their primary heat source and over 90% have electric water heaters.



90% of members have electric water heaters

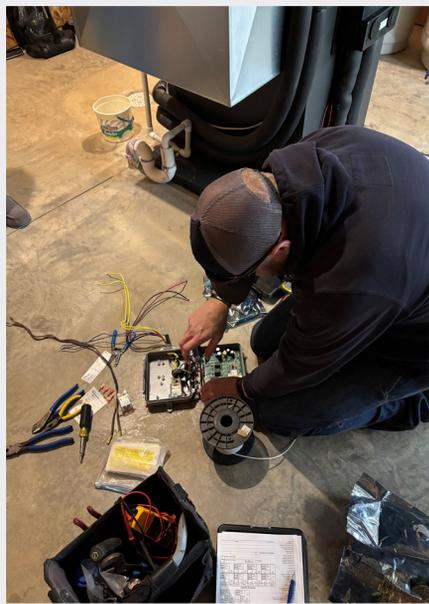


60% of our members have electric heat as their primary heat source

Those members who have electric heat qualify to have their electric heating, air-conditioning, and water heater usage on the discounted Switch Makes Cents rate. A sub meter is installed for those members to register this usage separate from their other usage. We have nearly 5,000 of our members who participate in this very popular program.

The reason a discounted rate is offered with this program is that the air-conditioning and water heater load can be interrupted during peak times to reduce peak demands. This enables the Cooperative to avoid demand charges from our power supplier, and we pass those savings on to the participating members. Annual savings exceed \$1.7 million from the peak demand reductions related to our Switch Makes Cents program.

As you might expect, the technology that is used to shed this load in connection with our load management system has changed significantly over the last forty years. Six years ago, following an extensive review process, we decided to move forward with a new two-way radio frequency (RF) system to replace the original one-way system. In addition to the benefits of two-way, the new system has a lot of other advantages. One of these advantages is that we are able to use the same system for both the metering and load management systems. Another advantage is that we are able to confirm that the load is actually interrupted, when load management is activated.



Relating to the metering side of the system, we are getting successful read rates of over 99%, which is significantly better than our older system. This is providing some increased efficiencies for our billing department, as well as our



member service department. It has also substantially reduced the number of phone calls and follow-up meter reads that we previously had to do.

Our member service team is making great progress in changing out both the meters and the load management switches. We have changed out 15,000 meters and are 99% of the way. With the load management switches, we have changed out almost 5,000 switches, which is approximately 70% of our total number of switches. This has been a real team effort with all of our departments playing an important role.

We want to thank all of our members who have been very cooperative when they receive the phone call from our office about scheduling the change out appointment and with the guys when they have stopped by to do the changeouts. We recognize that this can be an inconvenience, so we really appreciate your willingness to accommodate us and the respect you have given our employees. This new system will be a tremendous new asset for our organization and the members and should provide a number of new efficiencies in our operation for many years to come. We continue to make investments in new technology that helps us to serve our members more efficiently.



The following is a brief summary of the discussions and decisions from the December & January Board Meetings:

- Received monthly safety meeting reports. Management reported that the employees worked another year without a lost time accident. This is the third consecutive year of no lost time accidents and 12th out of the last 14 years.
- Membership applications of new members were approved.
- Manager Korver provided an update on operations, kWh sales, staffing changes and service reliability.
- Received financial reports from Curt Ahrenholz, Finance Director.
- The Board approved the 2026 Operating Budget.
- Heard reports from Director Wagner on the recent NIPCO and Basin Board Meetings.
- Director Rehder gave a CFC Board Report.
- Approved Operation Round-Up donations on several charitable organizations and medical emergency situations.
- Julee Kovarna gave an update on Billing Department activities, including the new billing statement and the increases we have seen with members signing up for Smart Hub.
- Rob Driesen gave an update on Member Services activities, including the progress that is being made with the load management switches and metering replacement project.
- James Vondrak shared a technology and cyber security update.
- Manager Korver reported on several economic development projects that are underway.
- The Board reviewed plans for the Annual Meeting that is scheduled for March 31.

# Pole Maintenance Program

You probably don't pay much attention to the utility poles found throughout North West REC's service territory, but did you know these tall structures are the backbone of our distribution network?

Strong, sturdy utility poles ensure a reliable electric system, which is why we routinely inspect the thousands of poles found on our lines. Throughout the year, our crews check poles for decay caused by exposure to the elements. They know which poles are oldest and conduct inspections through a rotational process. Typically, a standard wooden distribution pole is expected to last more than 50 years.

Occasionally, poles need to be replaced for other reasons besides decay and old age. Weather disasters, power line relocation, and car crashes are potential causes for immediate replacement. When possible, North West REC communicates when and where pole replacements will take place so that you stay informed of where crews will be working.

One of the key ongoing maintenance programs we do annually, in order to try to improve our service reliability, is pole testing and treating. Each year we test and treat approximately 3,900 poles.

Poles that are rejected due to excessive rotting conditions are replaced. The other poles are treated with a pole treatment which significantly extends the life of the pole. The very low 2% or lower rejection rate we typically have each year is a strong indication of the strength of the Cooperative's system.

**This spring you will see contractors working in O'Brien, Plymouth, and Ida County. Please contact our office if you have any questions about the work they are doing.**



## ARE YOU SWITCH SMART?

A frequently asked question we get when people sign up for Switch Makes Cents is, "How much money will it save me?"

When you opt in to participate in the Switch Makes Cents load management program, you will have the benefit of avoiding demand costs as well as receiving a reduced energy rate just for opting in to Switch Makes Cents. Visit our website at [www.nwrec.coop](http://www.nwrec.coop) or call the office for all our current rates.

The **Electric Heat Partial Control Rate** is applicable for homes and buildings that have electric heat as their primary heat source without any backup heat source. This rate applies to all electricity used for heating, cooling, and water heater usage.

The **Interruptible Electric Heat Rate** is applicable for homes and buildings that have electric heat as their primary heat source and agree to have a load management switch installed. This rate applies to all electricity used for heating, cooling, and water heater usage.

YES, please enter our names in the drawing for the trip. We understand that if our names are drawn, we will be billed \$100.

Our first and second choice of dates:

June 24-26	1st	2nd	3rd (please circle)
July 8-10	1st	2nd	3rd
July 15-17	1st	2nd	3rd

I/we  have  have not participated in this tour in the past.

First Person \_\_\_\_\_

Second Person \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

*Clip this coupon and return to cooperative by April 30, 2026.*

## Energy Trail Tour 2026

North West Rural Electric Cooperative and Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative invite you to join us for one of three Energy Trail Tours being offered this summer. This 3-day adventure will allow you to experience, first-hand, how your power providers convert energy from water, wind, and coal into electricity. View coal being mined and see how those mines are then returned to productive farm and native grass lands. Enjoy interactive walking tours through a hydroelectric and coal-fired energy generation facility and other stops along the way. Meet other cooperative member-owners while traveling together across the Dakotas on-board a motor-coach bound for the North Dakota's Energy Loop. \$100 per couple covers your lodging, meals and entry fees. The remainder of your tour costs are covered by North West Electric Cooperative.

Twelve lucky couples from North West REC will be selected at random from those who sign up.

# Bid Form - Vehicle for sale

#1 - FOR SALE - 2015 Chevrolet Silverado K1500 Lt, (179,396 miles as of 1/27/26)



This vehicle will be sold on a bid basis and "as is". Bids can be mailed to North West REC, PO Box 435, Orange City, IA 51041, or bids can be dropped off at any of the three cooperative offices. Bids will be accepted until 4:00 pm, Wednesday, April 8, 2026. We reserve the right to accept or reject any bid. The sale will be on a cash basis only. Please call 712-707-4935 or 800-766-2099 to set up a time to see it. The vehicle will all be available for viewing at the Orange City office 1505 Albany Place SE.

Name of individual submitting bid: \_\_\_\_\_ Bid: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

# THE POWER QUIZ

NORTH WEST REC

1. When is North West REC's Annual Meeting?
2. When is the deadline to return your ballot & RSVP/question card?
3. Name someone who is running for director:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Acct. # \_\_\_\_\_

Find the answers within the content of this newsletter, our website or Facebook posts and you could win a prize of \$10 off your electric bill. Send your answers to [powerquiz@nwrec.coop](mailto:powerquiz@nwrec.coop) or you can send your written answers to North West REC, PO Box 435, Orange City, IA 51041. You may mail your entry along with your electric bill payment, but remember the deadline is April 2. Each month, ten names will be randomly drawn from all correct entries for a \$10 bill credit. Members who answer the questions correctly and participate at least three times throughout the year will be eligible for 2 - \$250 bill credits, through a random drawing, at the end of the year.

## POWER QUIZ *Winners*

Alvin Bleyenbergh - Sioux Center  
 Duane Mulder - Sioux Center  
 Rodney Renken - Le Mars  
 Gregg Roepke - Kingsley  
 Phillip Kleinhesselink - Alton

## JANUARY 2026

Donna Huls - Merrill  
 John Ymker - Sioux Center  
 Greg Mills - Hartley  
 Duane Popken - Le Mars  
 Robert Book - Akron



# ARE YOU SWITCH SMART?

What electric rate can you qualify for if you have all electric heat?

Answer: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Acct. # \_\_\_\_\_

What do you know about the Switch Makes Cents program? Find the answers within the content of this newsletter, our website or Facebook posts and you could win a prize. Send your answers to [switchsmart@nwrec.coop](mailto:switchsmart@nwrec.coop), fill out the question form online, or send your written answers to North West REC, PO Box 435, Orange City, IA 51041. You may mail your entry along with your electric bill payment, but remember the deadline is April 2. Each month, one name will be randomly drawn from all correct entries for a \$25 bill credit.

## North West Rural Electric Cooperative

P.O. Box 435  
 1505 Albany Place SE  
 Orange City, IA 51041-0435

OFFICE HOURS:  
 Monday through Friday  
 7:30 a.m. till 4:00 p.m.

Orange City office open during noon hour

Le Mars office open 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.  
 Tuesday through Thursday

Ida Grove office open 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.  
 Wednesdays

PHONE:  
 (800) 766-2099

24/7 outage reporting using the SmartHub app or [nwrec.smarthub.coop](http://nwrec.smarthub.coop) Or call 800-766-2099 anytime

Pay your bill online anytime using SmartHub



Outside Depository Box Available For After Hours Payments

This institution is an equal opportunity employer, provider, and lender.

Lyle D. Korver  
 CEO & General Manager

Curt Ahrenholz  
 Finance & Office Services Director

Emily Vander Velde  
 Editor



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