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MANAGER'S MOMENT

Thank a lineworker!

BY MARK DOYLE, GENERAL MANAGER



Mark Doyle

I would appreciate a moment of your time...

National Lineworker Appreciation Day is a time to express our utmost appreciation to the great people who work so hard for us every day. It's our honor to celebrate the hard work, innovation and dedication of electric lineworkers.

As this April 11 approaches, I would appreciate your consideration of the work they do. We think about their jobs when the lights are out, and they are out in severe weather conditions to restore the power. We thank them for that!

I also want you to consider the hard work they do every day to make sure the lights do not go out at all. Every day, they are working hard on your behalf to make sure the system is resilient to maintain reliable delivery to you! In 2020, McLean Electric Cooperative had a reliability rate of 99.98% while maintaining 1,798 miles of line.

Beyond their work is the value they bring to our communities. They are involved in many organizations and are always willing to lend a hand. It's in their nature.

So, as you go about your day with little worry that the power you require is there, thank a lineworker!

As always, feel free to reach out to me with any questions or comments. My door is always open.

Regards,
Mark Doyle, general manager

To our heroes
in hard hats,
thank you for
keeping the
lights on.





PHOTO CREDIT: DIDRIK JOHNSON



NO BARRIERS

"Have you ever stopped to ponder the amount of blood spilled, the volume of tears shed, the degree of pain and anguish endured, the number of noble men and women lost in battle, so that we as individuals might have a say in governing our country? Honor the lives sacrificed for your freedoms."

- Richelle E. Goodrich

A group of veterans hikes through the backcountry on a No Barriers Warriors program event.

MEC accepting nominations for No Barriers Warriors

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

McLean Electric Cooperative (MEC) and one of its financial lending cooperatives, CoBank, honors military veterans by supporting the No Barriers Warriors program.

No Barriers Warriors helps disabled veterans remove emotional and physical barriers they may face by providing opportunities to participate in challenging activities, like rock climbing, hiking or rafting, for example.

These activities can help veterans network with others facing similar challenges, take on the physical or emotional struggles they face, and create a positive, uplifting approach in tackling their daily lives.

As a CoBank member, MEC participates by inviting people to submit the name of a disabled veteran for the program.

"All they have to do is stop by, email us, call, send us that name. ... The (MEC) board nominates them to CoBank and CoBank, in turn, reaches out to the nominee to see if they're interested in submitting an application,"

described MEC General Manager/CEO Mark Doyle. Any qualifying veteran within the region MEC serves can be nominated, he added.

There is no cost to participating veterans or MEC, Doyle continued. Each year, up to 50 participants take part in No Barriers Warriors events, which are held in Colorado.

Participating in No Barriers Warriors through CoBank is an opportunity for MEC and its member-owners to give back and say "thank you" to area veterans.

"We are the land of the free, because of the brave," Doyle stressed. "We should all remember and recognize the sacrifices they made. Veterans are the ones who stepped up."

Nominations can also be emailed to Sonja Moe, sonjadm@mcleanelectric.com, at MEC by May 15. CoBank will reach out to the nominees so they can submit their applications by June 1. For more information or questions on the No Barriers Warriors CoBank program, contact Sonja at 701-463-6700. ■

The potential role of distributed generation

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

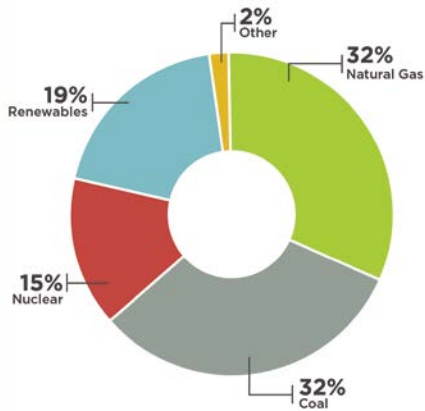


Co-op Energy Sources

Nationally, electric cooperatives use a variety of fuels to power consumer-members' homes and businesses.

This diverse fuel mix supplies co-op members with the safe, reliable and affordable power they depend on.

Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (2019 data)



Coal drives much of the nation's 24/7 electric availability, even as the world pushes toward renewable energy sources.

It's been reliable for more than a century, running in the background to ensure electricity will be available on demand.

It seems it's been there all day, every day.

However, with increasing demands for subsidized renewable energy, the electric industry, including many electric cooperatives across the United States, has adopted an "all-of-the-above" approach to electric generation.

Basin Electric Power Cooperative is a wholesale generation and transmission cooperative provider for electric cooperatives in nine states, including McLean Electric Cooperative (MEC). Its 2020 resource pool was a mix of coal (more than 40%), wind energy, natural gas, hydropower, fuels, recovered energy and market purchases.

Looking back 22 years, coal provided almost 85% of Basin Electric's electric generation in 2000, followed by hydropower and fuels, such as oil, jet fuel and diesel.

In today's energy world, individual consumers in some regions are also testing their renewable energy options, considered "distributed generation," described MEC General Manager/CEO Mark Doyle. It's not necessarily a new concept, although more people are becoming interested in exploring technology involving solar and wind generation.

Distributed generation includes individual generators, which traditionally have been used as backup electric sources during major power outages or for powering large engines, such as irrigation systems. However, in today's electric industry, distributed generation

could also include a member-consumer's solar or wind generation system.

Basically, it's an individual or business's generated electric source.

Safety is the foremost concern with distributed generation, Doyle added, because it connects with a consumer's electric system and, therefore, MEC's system. That interconnectivity could cause a dangerous backfeed of electricity if something is done incorrectly, regardless of the source of the distributed generation.

Improper installation and other issues could also cause degradation to MEC's system, Doyle added.

In an effort to be proactive regarding distributed generation, MEC and other electric cooperatives in North Dakota are working with a rural utility consulting firm to identify an interconnect policy so distributed generation can fit within MEC's system and operation. Currently some questions exist: Does it fit? Can it fit? Could it be beneficial to both MEC's member-owners and those investing in their own distributed generation system?

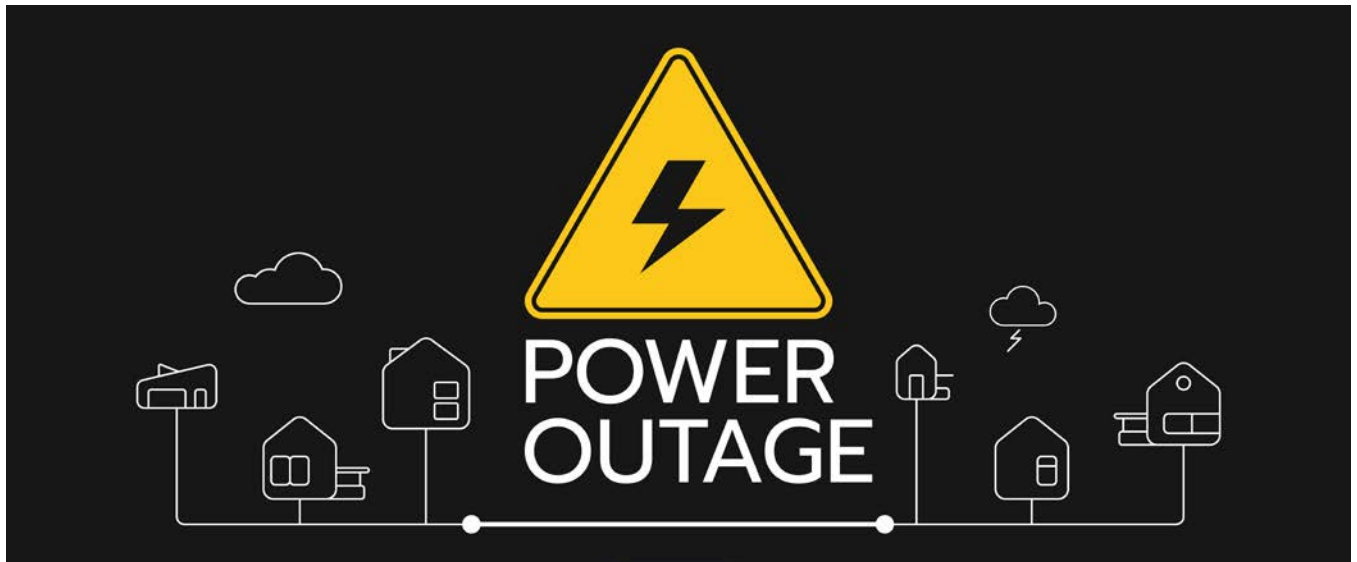
Could it be dangerous? Could it fit in the electric industry's mantra of "all of the above," when it comes to a viable and electric generation source? Would it be available at times when it could beneficially help supply MEC's load demand needs? Would it be cost-effective to the cooperative as a whole?

As the study progresses, MEC is also looking at a possible distributed generation interconnect policy, Doyle continued, which would dictate a formal contractual agreement between the cooperative and a distributed generation owner.

For example, it would address the rate MEC would pay for any electricity it purchases, which would be excess above what the distributed generation owner would be using at the time, along with safety standards and other issues. The policy would provide a consistent response as to how MEC addresses distributed generation.

The goal would be to implement a policy recognizing the potential role distributed generation – renewable energy sources, in particular – could play in the future, while ensuring a mutually beneficial relationship for MEC and its member-owners as a whole, Doyle continued – those with or without some type of distributed generation electric source.

"It's all-of-the-above integration," he added. ■



A different outage

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

Lightning storms, high winds, heavy snow, tornadoes or dreaded ice in the dead of winter – Mother Nature has a history of unleashing weather, causing electrical outages, ever since electricity was invented.

Despite improved equipment, materials and state-of-the-art technology, Mother Nature still puts people in the dark until line crews can restore power.

But in today's changing world, as electric generation shifts toward increasing use of renewable sources, something else can also put electric consumers in the dark – rolling blackouts.

The scenario of electric outages occurring in one region of the United States, while weather impacts another region 1,500 miles away, hit parts of the country in February 2021, including North Dakota and McLean Electric Cooperative (MEC) member-owners, when a major winter storm slammed into Texas and other areas of the southern United States.

Back in McLean County, people experienced the region's coldest weather of the entire winter without disruptions of electric service. However, the Texas storm sent a large portion of the nation's electric grid reeling. Decisions were made to implement outages elsewhere to lessen the potential greater damage to an even larger portion of the country.

That's a rolling blackout. Essentially, it's the controlled implementation of temporary electric power outages with the goal of helping to bring balance to the electric supply and demand, basically mitigating potentially

bigger problems. They're typically done because of a major weather event, such as the Texas 2021 ice storm or blistering heat of a California summer.

It's just that now as the world shifts to renewable electric generation sources, regional transmission organizations such as Southwest Power Pool (SPP) have indicated rolling blackouts could occur more than just during extreme weather events, McLean Electric General Manager/CEO Mark Doyle explained.

SPP oversees the electric grid and wholesale power market in 17 states, including North Dakota and parts of Texas. Some MEC member-owners and others in North Dakota – and elsewhere – found themselves without electricity when SPP directed its transmission operators to curtail use, resulting in controlled, rolling blackouts, amid the extreme weather conditions.

Solar and wind energy is dependent on its availability and whether or not it is producing electricity at the time it's needed to meet electric demands.

In addition, transmission systems must also be available to get it to the region where it is needed at the time it's needed. Its stability as an electric supply source is dictated by its availability and ability (to get to market), Doyle described.

Even with today's advanced technology, renewable energy sources do not operate at full capacity and full availability.

In the past, coal and nuclear generation provided the bulk of continuous electric power. Wholesale electric providers could go on the electric market, adjusting to meet demands.

However, renewable energy doesn't run 24/7.

One major issue is the lack of available infrastructure

and capability to get renewable assets onto the electric grid to fill gaps of availability as they arise, Doyle added, even though the electric industry is working to identify and address those issues.

With increasing dependence on renewable energy, if availability and ability are lacking, rolling blackouts could potentially be increasingly necessary to adjust to meet electric demand.

Rolling blackouts have occurred elsewhere in the United States in the past, including in the summer.

“(North Dakotans are) not used to that,” Doyle admitted. While there weren’t rolling blackouts within SPP’s service area during the winter of 2021-22, the regional transmission organization did issue resource alerts to inform its members when there were higher-than-anticipated load demands. Alerts were also issued in the summer of 2021, when parts of the United States experienced above-normal heat.

The February 2021 situation prompted many in the electric generation, transmission and distribution industry, including MEC, to assess their own approach to dealing with such scenarios.

“We’re trying to be proactive,” Doyle continued, should rolling blackouts become more commonplace.

Some of the ways the cooperative is looking to mitigate possible issues in the event of rolling blackouts include studying more demand-side load-management capabilities and options – how MEC itself could make

adjustments within its own system to shift load demands.

For example, if MEC could adjust the service load from one substation to another, it might mean a substation wouldn’t have to be shut down and therefore prevent a power outage for its member-owners.

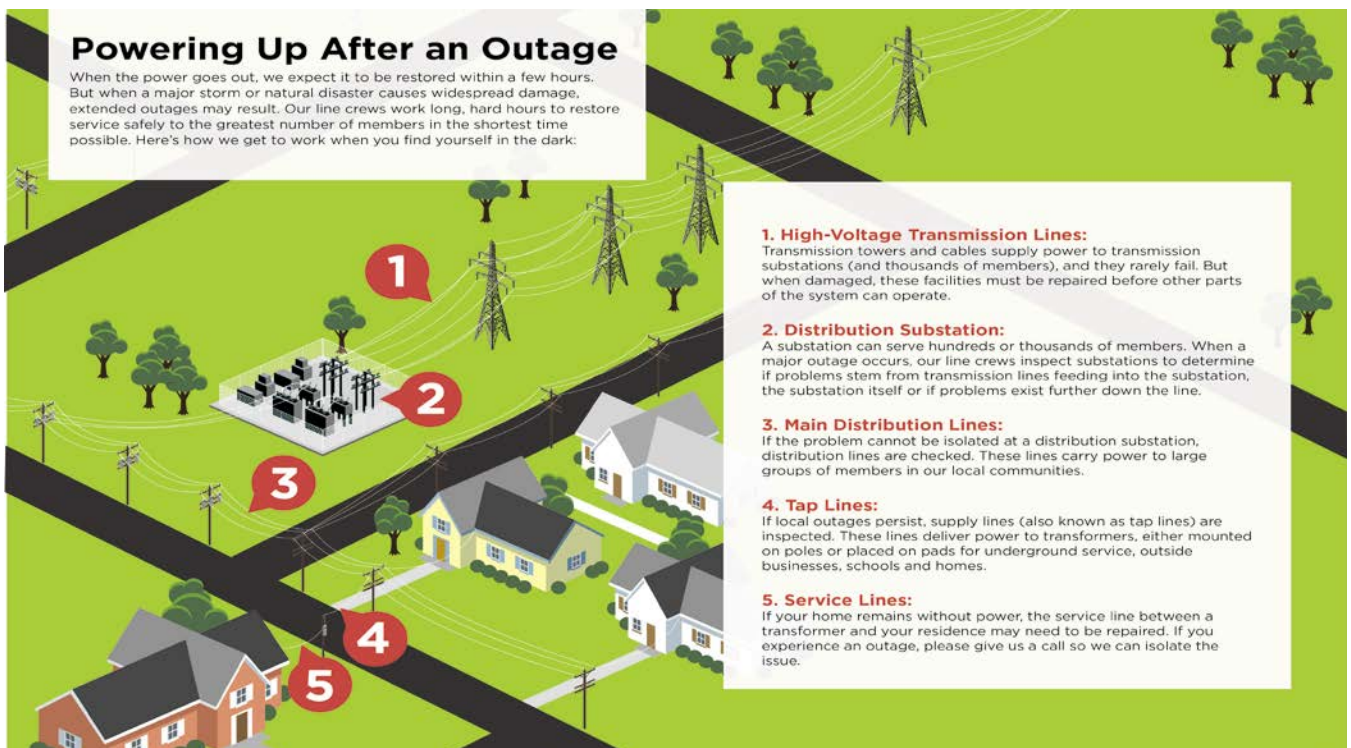
Load management is another option, Doyle added. Already, MEC member-owners have the option of controlling water heaters during periods of peak electric demand, for example. Other ways to adjust the time and amount of electric use could also help alleviate a rolling blackout.

While MEC has adopted advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) to help its member-owners identify their electric usage, technology has advanced with AMI capabilities that in the future could help reduce peak electric load use demand.

Above all, MEC wants to be able to better communicate with its member-owners about rolling blackouts in the event they occur. It’s especially important for the cooperative to work with its large load member-owners, Doyle explained. In some situations, a shift in electric demand from a large load could lessen the need for a rolling blackout.

“We want to be able to systematically better control our own power load shed,” Doyle concluded.

It means MEC could help keep the lights on in the event of a rolling blackout, regardless of whether it’s in McLean County or 1,500 miles away. ■



Powering Up After an Outage

When the power goes out, we expect it to be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm or natural disaster causes widespread damage, extended outages may result. Our line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of members in the shortest time possible. Here's how we get to work when you find yourself in the dark:

- 1. High-Voltage Transmission Lines:** Transmission towers and cables supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members), and they rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.
- 2. Distribution Substation:** A substation can serve hundreds or thousands of members. When a major outage occurs, our line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself or if problems exist further down the line.
- 3. Main Distribution Lines:** If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of members in our local communities.
- 4. Tap Lines:** If local outages persist, supply lines (also known as tap lines) are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools and homes.
- 5. Service Lines:** If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. If you experience an outage, please give us a call so we can isolate the issue.

Call before you dig!

Planting a tree? Planning construction work? Remember to contact North Dakota One Call first! The first step to any project is safety, and damaging an underground facility while you dig can cause injury or even death.

Numerous utility lines may be buried on your property, ranging from electric and telephone lines to water and sewer lines, but North Dakota One Call will help you locate these lines before your project begins.

Contact North Dakota One Call and utility line owners will locate and mark their lines. These locates do not include any lines you may have installed to your private facilities, such as detached garages, wells or yard lights.

Go online at www.ndonecall.com or call **800-795-0555** or **811**.

It's free, it's simple and it's the law.

The 811 process:

1. NOTIFY

Notify the North Dakota One Call center by calling 811 or making an online request at least two full business days before work begins, excluding weekends and holidays. You'll give the operator information about how to contact you, where you are planning to dig and what type of work you will be doing, or go online to www.ndonecall.com to enter this information. Utility companies who have potential facilities in the area of your dig site will be notified about your intent to dig.

2. WAIT

Wait the required amount of time for affected utility operators to respond to your request.

3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utility operators have responded to your request and marked underground utilities. Compare the marks to the list of utilities the One Call center notified. You can also view your ticket online and see each utility's response for your dig site.

4. RESPECT

Respect the marks. The marks provided by the affected utilities are your guide for the duration of the project. The marks are valid for 21 calendar days.

If you are unable to maintain the marks during your project, or the project will continue past your request's expiration date, please call 811 or go online to file a RESPOT request.

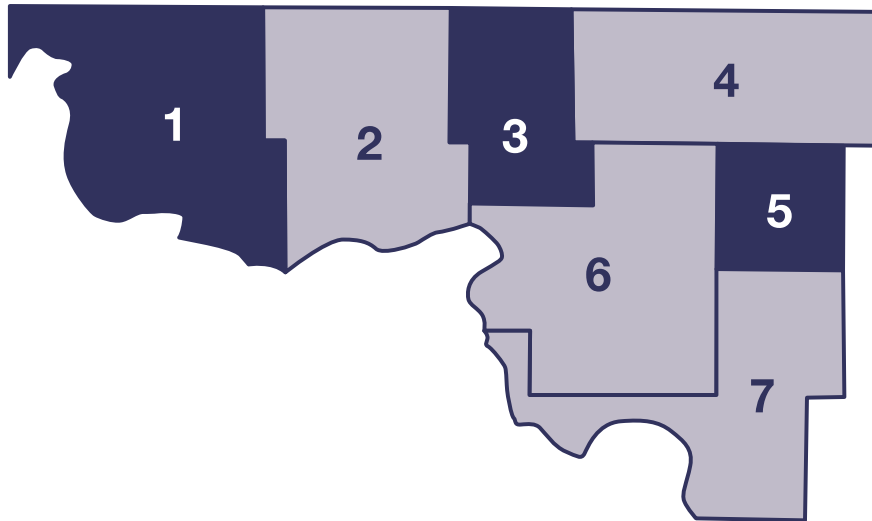
5. DIG CAREFULLY

Dig carefully around the marks. No mechanical excavating can take place within 24 inches on either side of the marked location of the underground facility. If you plan on digging within that 4-foot-wide area, hand digging is allowed, but please dig carefully and cautiously.



Three director seats up for election

DO YOU WANT TO BECOME A DIRECTOR?



Have you ever thought of running for a seat on the board of directors? It is quite simple. Pick up a petition at the McLean Electric Cooperative headquarters in Garrison and secure 15 signatures of members from within your district. You can start circulating the petition right away, but it must be filed not less than 60 days before the annual meeting. Petitions for the 2022 director election must be filed with the co-op by April 22.

According to the bylaws, any member of McLean Electric Cooperative who is a member of this cooperative as a bonafide resident of the district he/she represents, and is in no way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise, can become a candidate for the

board of directors. Directors shall be elected by the members at large.

Director duties

Directors have a fiduciary responsibility to the cooperative. They exercise care, time and responsibility in reviewing cooperative matters. Directors treat cooperative business as if it were their own.

Directors devote a certain amount of time to the cooperative. At a minimum, a director attends each monthly board meeting.

Directors learn about the industry as a whole by reading other materials and by attending state and national meetings. An understanding of the issues facing the industry is vital.

To help directors with their responsibilities, training is offered

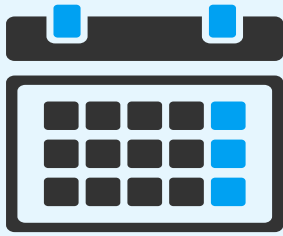
through the electric cooperative's statewide organization. Courses cover director duties and liabilities, understanding the electric business, board roles and relationships, strategic planning and financial decision-making.

Directors who currently serve the cooperative find the duty extremely rewarding.

This year, the districts up for election are:

- **District 1** - Parshall is currently served by James Odermann.
- **District 3** - Garrison is served by Rod Stockdill.
- **District 5** - Turtle Lake is served by Troy Presser.

Three directors will be elected at the McLean Electric Cooperative annual meeting, Tuesday, June 21, in Garrison.



McLean County community calendar:

Events and activities to see and do

McLean County community food pantry April distributions:

- **Community Cupboard of Underwood:** 4-6 p.m. April 7 and 10 a.m.-noon April 23, 208 Lincoln Ave. Like us on Facebook, Community Cupboard of Underwood, for food pantry distributions, thrift store and other information.
- **Garrison Area Resource Center and Food Pantry, Garrison:** April 28, noon-2 p.m. and 5-7 p.m., former Lazy J's building back door.
- **Our Savior Lord's Food Pantry, Max:** April 18, noon-3 p.m. and 5-7 p.m., Max City Hall, 215 Main St.
- **The Lord's Pantry, Turtle Lake:** 2-4 p.m. April 14 and 10 a.m.-noon April 23, Trinity Lutheran Church, 515 Kundert St.
- **Wilton Food Pantry, Wilton:** "Mini" distributions every Friday, 11:30 a.m. until gone; full food distribution, April 21, 4-6 p.m., Wilton Senior Citizens Center, 42 Dakota Ave.

Area food pantries often experience high needs for these items: baked beans, pork and beans, canned fruit, tuna, chicken, cereal, oatmeal, granola and breakfast bars, juice, mac and cheese, hamburger and tuna helper, pancake mix, syrup, pasta, pasta sauce, peanut butter, jelly, rice side dishes, soups and household items such as body wash and soap, dish soap, laundry detergent, shampoo and conditioner, toilet paper, toothpaste and toothbrushes. Contact local food pantries for drop-off information or a

list of additional needs in your community.

April activities:

- **April 2:** Wilton PTO Sweetheart Dance, Wilton Memorial Hall.
- **April 6-10:** Crafting Weekend, Camp of the Cross, Lake Sakakawea. Contact the camp, 701-337-2245, or visit www.campofthecross.com for registration and details.
- **April 9:** Maple Sugaring Day, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Fort Stevenson State Park, Garrison. Contact the park, 701-337-5576, for more information.
- **April 10:** Easter Extravaganza Party, free for children ages kindergarten through sixth grade, Camp of the Cross, Lake Sakakawea. Contact the camp, 701-337-2245, or visit www.campofthecross.com for registration and details.
- **April 16:** Annual Children's Easter Egg Hunt sponsored by the Underwood Civic Club, Underwood Poolside Park beginning at 10:30 a.m.
- **April 16:** Lunch with the Easter Bunny, Cubby Hole, 5 Main St., Garrison, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
- **April 22:** Blood Drive, Garrison City Auditorium, 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
- **April 30:** Operation Round Up application deadline.

Nonprofit organizations and communities throughout McLean County are encouraged to contact Patricia Stockdill, stockdill.patricia@gmail.com, or telephone 701-337-5462, to submit their community events. ■

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Larry Gessele, president
701-447-2461
District 7, Mercer

Darcy Klain, vice president
701-448-2408
District 4, Ruso

Rod Stockdill, secretary-treasurer
701-337-5462
District 3, Garrison

Clarence Behles, asst. secretary-treasurer
701-337-5362
District 2, Garrison

Troy Presser, director
701-447-2855
District 5, Turtle Lake

Karen Hanson, director
701-448-2636
District 6, Washburn

James Odermann, director
701-743-4415
District 1, Parshall

STAFF:

Mark Doyle, General Manager/CEO
Keith Thelen, Operations Manager
Lucas Schaaf, Engineering Manager
Wendy Kinn, Finance Manager

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