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# White Shield School: Moving toward the future

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL



PHOTO BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

2019 marked the first graduating class from the new White Shield School.

Sometimes life goes full circle, bringing someone back to one's roots in a roundabout way.

Wayne Fox had such a journey.

A White Shield High School graduate, Fox went into the education field 19 years ago because he liked coaching, being around students, and helping them on their journey through life.

That journey took him to the Solen-Cannonball School District, to a Minnesota charter school, to South Dakota and then to the Fort Berthold Reservation as New Town's assistant elementary principal and alternative education director.

He circled back to White Shield

as a sixth-grade teacher. Fox was named superintendent – a credentialed superintendent right within the school's own walls – when the district's superintendent retired due to health concerns.

At the time, the walls in the K-12 building had been built in 1952, a new school for students from Elbowoods. It was one of several small communities displaced with the building of Garrison Dam and the formation of Lake Sakakawea. Its first class graduated in 1953, Fox added.

Fast-forward to 2019: Fox, White Shield students, staff and faculty walk through a different school built

from funding provided to the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation through oil and gas revenue generated from reserves beneath the reservation – revenue-sharing in conjunction with the state of North Dakota.

Its doors opened in November 2018. The following May, its first graduates walked the halls together as classmates for the last time.

Perhaps, though, their journey will take them full circle, just as it did with Fox.

Time will tell, but now in 2019, the White Shield School is in full gear to move not just its students, but the community, forward. Together.

The decision by the Three



PHOTOS BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

White Shield School Superintendent **Wayne Fox** melds his experience teaching and serving as an administrator at Minnesota, South Dakota and North Dakota schools, along with mentorship from others, into how he serves as the school's superintendent.

Affiliated Tribal Council to construct a new school came about as a vision by people within the White Shield Segment, driven in part by their segment council representative and Tribal Business Council Executive Secretary Fred Fox Sr.

Funding such a vision was a challenge, Wayne Fox described, and it was through the unique revenue-sharing agreement that the vision came to fruition.

The White Shield Segment felt a

new school was the priority, part of a broader goal to fully prepare and potentially retain students – and perhaps in many ways, the community – for the next coming generation, Wayne continued. It was forward-thinking, he added, because it allowed the school to provide state-of-the-art technology, educational tools for programs such as industrial arts, and incorporating the mindset of “healthy mind, healthy body” through a physical education program, gymnasium and

a soon-to-be-constructed athletic complex and fitness center.

Other ongoing construction within the community also means White Shield students see firsthand how education in fields like architecture, engineering and trades such as construction and welding are actually applied, Wayne continued.

It's all part of a broader vision to retain and better the White Shield community as a whole, he added. For example, just having the new gym with an inlaid Warrior logo – the school's mascot – large seating capacity, and padded chairs with a Warrior logo for volleyball and basketball players from both teams to rest upon brings an enhanced sense of pride to the community.

“Once basketball started (in 2018), the community was starting to come together. ... It's pretty full here on game night, whether it be basketball or volleyball. It's drawing the community as a whole and there is greater interest,” Wayne described.

More families are coming to school events, Wayne described, whether it's for basketball or a Christmas concert, and it's not just parents, he added.

It's elders and others who simply want to enjoy the new opportunity before them in company with neighbors from throughout the White Shield Segment.

White Shield has 150 students in kindergarten through grade 12, Wayne continued, with a spike in elementary enrollment this year. The district, like its neighbors, offers open enrollment, he added, with some students going to nearby Parshall or Garrison, for example, and others coming from those districts to White Shield.

Fall rain and weather delayed the athletic complex construction. When complete, it will include two baseball and softball fields, a



*Elementary girls' volleyball players stretch and warmup prior to playing a match at the White Shield School gymnasium.*

football field, a track and a fitness center adjacent to the school. The district plans to gradually build its athletic program and is looking at the potential interest among students for teams in girls' softball and boys' baseball. They're starting small through junior high programs, but "everybody is looking forward to 'Friday night lights' (varsity

football)," he exclaimed.

New black-and-red playground equipment – the school colors – is in the design phase, Wayne added.

The school board sought input from faculty and administrators as the board worked with architects on building design and details such as classroom equipment.

It's a two-story building with

## Co-op serves new school

The new White Shield School is designed with energy efficiency in mind, incorporating an abundance of natural lighting, energy-efficient windows and doors, motion sensor lighting in restrooms and classrooms, and state-of-the-art remote monitoring heating and cooling system.

McLean Electric Cooperatives (MEC) serves the White Shield community and its school. "We worked well with McLean Electric Cooperative to help us with our energy needs and questions," Superintendent Wayne Fox added.

McLean Electric and its members also benefit from the new White Shield School. "It is great to work with the forward-thinking people of White Shield. The energy efficiency aspects of the school are first-class. The school is a great example of how to manage energy use and still provide all the needs for electricity in today's world. Cooperative members like the school help McLean keep rates stable. We look forward to working with the White Shield community on several future projects. We also learn from each other when working with some of the cutting-edge technology. Thank you for the opportunity to serve the people of White Shield," McLean Electric Cooperative General Manager/CEO Marty Dahl expressed.



The White Shield School "Warrior" logo greets students, faculty and guests alike.

elementary students on the main level; senior high students on the second. That helps manage student traffic flow and interaction, as well as maintenance logistics, Wayne described, with maintenance staff assigned to a specific level for duties.

Wayne Fox walked different hallways in the old, one-story school. He played on a different gym floor as a White Shield student. He knows the school and community, its history. Now, as its superintendent in its new facility, he walks the halls and visits with students, answers a staff member's question, and mused, "I'm blessed to be part of that history as it goes further on." ■



Elementary student classrooms are located on the main floor of the White Shield School, while senior high school students attend classes on the second story.

## Filling staff needs

Like many rural schools across North Dakota, White Shield was challenged to fill its entire faculty and staffing needs, especially with a new facility that could offer expanded curriculum. That's when Superintendent Wayne Fox drew upon a recommendation from one of his mentors, New Town's Mark Bluestone, and approached his school board about the possibility of reaching out to a program bringing foreign educators to the school.

The district provided housing and even furnishings and after going through the lengthy certification and verification process, was able to hire enough accredited staff to meet the program needs. The lone exception is the current need for an industrial arts instructor, which is also a common shortage in the state.

In another innovative way to address its staff shortage, the district uses a team-teaching method in its first and second grades classrooms. Two instructors alternate, teaching classes for a week and then switch with the other instructor for another time period. The instructors work well together, Fox explained, and students pick up on their infectious enthusiasm. "They (instructors) come with ideas to make it work and make it great," he continued.

# Life hacks for the holidays

Thanksgiving is a favorite holiday, as family and friends reunite to feast and give thanks. The one drawback, however, is that the holiday contributes to an annual increase in energy use, due to a usual drop in temperatures, lights staying on longer, and appliances operating more frequently. Here are some energy-saving tips which can help lower the unwelcome tradition of higher energy bills following a Thanksgiving celebration:

## TURKEY TIPS

- How much turkey can you and your guests really eat? Be sure to get the right size bird. A smaller turkey takes less time to cook and saves energy.
- It takes longer to cook the turkey when it is stuffed with dressing, so cooking the dressing separately can actually reduce oven usage.
- Adding side dishes that can be cooked at the same temperature while the turkey is cooking can also reduce oven use. Just make sure to adjust the cooking time to accommodate different temperatures.
- Resist the urge to check on your food as it cooks. Each time you open the oven door, you'll reduce the temperature inside by 25 degrees.

## HOSTING

- Turn down the thermostat, whether it's manual or programmable. With all the heat from your kitchen and a house full of people, your home will stay plenty warm.
- If you are hosting a large gathering, use a cooler stocked with ice to hold drinks. You'll free space in your refrigerator and prevent cold air from escaping from frequent door openings.

## AFTER THE FEAST

- Don't wash dishes by hand because an Energy Star-certified dishwasher uses less than half as much energy as washing dishes by hand and uses less water.
- Let the leftovers cool before placing them in the fridge, because your refrigerator has to work harder to cool them.

## LIGHTING OPTIONS

- Get in the habit of turning off every light except in occupied rooms. In most cases, lighting can be turned off in outdoor areas or the garage. Make the switch to more energy-efficient lighting options, such as LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy, and last 25 times longer on average, compared to incandescent lighting.



McLean Electric Cooperative lineworker **Loren Desjardins** stands alongside a plaque honoring his great-uncle Carl Hanson and others who helped incorporate the cooperative in 1945. Desjardins, Minot, came to McLean Electric in April.

**Karen Thompson**, rural Max, joined the McLean Electric Cooperative Finance Department in June.

## New employees join McLean Electric Cooperative

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

**L**oren Desjardins had ties to McLean Electric Cooperative (MEC) long before he ever dreamed of applying for a lineworker position.

Desjardins' great-uncle, Carl Hanson, was one of McLean Electric's founding members, part of a determined group of McLean County farmers working to incorporate the cooperative and electrify rural homes and farms throughout the county.

Fast-forward nearly 75 years and Loren is now a lineworker with that same cooperative, joining MEC in April.

Originally from Minot, Desjardins knew he wanted to someday have the opportunity to work at McLean Electric, after becoming familiar with it while working with MEC Services. "I always liked it down here," he added, especially because he spent so much of his youth fishing Lake Sakakawea. Nowadays, though, he's just a short drive to the lake.

A lineworker since 1997, Desjardins worked at neighboring Verendrye Electric Cooperative, based out of its Minot office.

Desjardins' wife, Desiree, a family nurse practitioner and owner of Lakeview Health Clinic, Minot, specializes in bone and joint health. The couple plans to build on their rural property southeast of Garrison, which will be Loren's first opportunity to be a member of the electric cooperative system he serves.

Like most lineworkers, Loren loves the outdoors for both work and recreation. Despite what are often adverse weather conditions, one of the most gratifying aspects of being a lineworker, Loren believes, is "getting the lights back on after a storm or outage and really seeing the people appreciate it." Storm events – especially ice storms – truly underscore the definition of teamwork and focus, he added, tying a bond among crew members as they work together, focused on the task of

restoring electricity.

Like Loren, McLean Electric's newest staff member is also an MEC member. Karen Thompson and her husband, Jeremy, have lived on their rural Max farm 23 years. They have two sons, Nick and Josh, both currently attending the University of Jamestown.

Thompson joined McLean Electric in June as its Finance Department accountant. Some of her duties include payroll and accounts payable processing.

"What attracted me to McLean Electric was the opportunity to work for a cooperative in a rural community. The MEC staff has been very welcoming and accommodating to work with," she added.

When she's not at work, Thompson is often spending time with family and friends, cooking or soaking up the North Dakota outdoors on long walks. ■



# Treat electricity with **respect** on farms, ranches

Electricity is a necessity for hardworking farmers and ranchers, but electrical hazards on a farm or ranch can be dangerous, even deadly. Electrical safety is key to prevent fires, injuries, electrocution and potential death.

McLean Electric Cooperative urges you to watch for electrical hazards around the farm or ranch, and follow these tips:

## Electrical panels

- Always use properly sized fuses or breakers in the boxes. Use of the proper size will prevent overheating of the wire from excess current. If a fuse is repeatedly blown, or a breaker is repeatedly tripped, find the cause.
- Periodically check the panel and boxes for spiderwebs, and mouse and insect nests, particularly the older installations that may not be sealed properly. Cleaning around the panels can help to prevent overheating.

## Outlets

- It is preferable that all outlets be of the three-prong grounded type.
- In areas that tend to remain wet or where water is nearby, a ground-fault circuit interrupter is necessary. These devices can interrupt a power surge in as little as 25/1,000 of a second. Adapters to plug into three-prong outlets are available to provide protection at the outlet. In addition, ground-fault circuit interrupter breakers are available to protect a whole circuit.

## Extension cords

- Many times, an extension cord that is being used “temporarily” can become “permanent.” If a piece of equipment is going to stay in one place for any length of time, it should have a properly grounded outlet. Extension cords can be damaged over time, creating hazards.
- Make sure extension cords are properly rated for their intended use, indoor or outdoor, and meet or exceed the power needs of the appliance or device being used.
- Inspect cords for damage before use. Check for cracked or frayed sockets, loose or bare wires and loose connections. Never use a cord that feels hot or is damaged in any way.
- Do not run extension cords through walls or ceilings. Do not nail or staple electrical cords to walls.

## Outside hazards

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines. A driver's vantage point from the cab may not be sufficient.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines, at all times, in all directions.
- Look up and use care when raising any equipment such as ladders, front-end loaders or augers. The number one electrical hazard on a farm is the potential contact from a grain auger.
- Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always remember to lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, contact your electric cooperative. ■



## McLean County community calendar:

# Events and activities to see and do

BY PATRICIA STOCKDILL

### McLean County food pantries:

- **Community Cupboard of Underwood:** 4-6 p.m. Nov. 7 and 10 a.m.-noon Nov. 16 (food and turkey), 208 Lincoln Ave.
- **The Food Pantry, Max:** 1-3 p.m. and 5-7 p.m. Nov. 18, Max City Hall.
- **The Lord's Pantry, Turtle Lake:** 2-4 p.m. Nov. 14 and 10 a.m. to noon Nov. 23, Trinity Lutheran Church.

### November:

- **Nov. 6:** Foot Care Clinic, 8:30-11:30 a.m. and 1-4 p.m., Northland Health Center, Turtle Lake. \$25. Contact 701-448-9225 for appointment and insurance pricing options. Walk-ins welcome.
- **Nov. 9:** Fall Frenzy, Wilton Memorial Hall.
- **Nov. 20:** Foot Care Clinic, 8:30 a.m.-11:30 a.m. and 1-4 p.m., Northland Health Center, Turtle Lake. \$25. Contact 701-448-9225 for appointment and insurance pricing options. Walk-ins welcome.

- **Nov. 23:** Turtle Lake Hospital Auxiliary Holiday Craft Fair, Turtle Lake American Legion, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Lunch proceeds benefit Turtle Lake Hospital.
- **Nov. 28-29:** McLean Electric Cooperative office closed. Happy Thanksgiving!
- **Nov. 29-30:** Dickens Village Festival, Garrison. Visit [www.dickensfestival.com](http://www.dickensfestival.com) for details.
- **Nov. 30:** Small Business Saturday, Washburn.

### Early December:

- **Dec. 1:** North Dakota Firefighters Museum (freewill offering) waffle, French toast and sausage brunch, Garrison Fire Hall, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- **Dec. 1, 6-7:** Dickens Village Festival, Garrison. Visit [www.dickensfestival.com](http://www.dickensfestival.com) for details.
- **Dec. 4:** Foot Care Clinic, 8:30-11:30 a.m. and 1-4 p.m., Northland Health Center, Turtle Lake. \$25. Contact 701-448-9225 for appointment and insurance pricing options. Walk-ins welcome.

- **Dec. 4:** Santa Day, Dakota West Credit Union, Turtle Lake, 3:30-6 p.m. Sleigh rides, weather-permitting, with open houses at all local businesses.
- **Dec. 6:** Angel of Hope Memorial Service, Garrison Wilderness Park, 7:30 p.m.
- **Dec. 7:** Holiday Craft and Bake Sale sponsored by the Kountry Kids 4-H Club (with concessions), Underwood City Hall, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- **Dec. 7:** Santa Day, Washburn.
- **Dec. 9:** Santa Store, Turtle Lake American Legion. Shopping for all community children to purchase items for families, friends and teachers. Children will go home with wrapped gifts, 3:30-6 p.m.

*McLean County organizations and communities can contact Patricia Stockdill by emailing [stockdill.patricia@gmail.com](mailto:stockdill.patricia@gmail.com), or calling 701-337-5462, to submit listings. December and early January listings for the December issue are due Oct. 25.*

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Office: 701-463-6700  
Toll-Free: 800-263-4922  
Fax: 701-337-5303  
Email: [mclean1@mcleanelectric.com](mailto:mclean1@mcleanelectric.com)  
Website address:  
[www.mcleanelectric.com](http://www.mcleanelectric.com)