

# CURRENT MATTERS

MARCH 2024

THE NEWSLETTER EMPHASIS MAY BE ON "CURRENT MATTERS," BUT THIS MONTH, WE WILL BE EXPLORING OUR PAST TOO!

The journey of the rural electric system that we have today is indeed a fascinating one. It all began in the heartland of American agriculture, where the need for electricity was felt the most. Let's take a trip down memory lane and understand how we came into existence.

## THE BIRTH OF A COOPERATIVE: A HISTORICAL JOURNEY FOR NOBLES AND MURRAY COUNTIES

In the annals of history, it is often the story of determined individuals who dare to challenge the status quo that truly stands out. The story of Nobles Cooperative Electric is one such story.

It's a tale of a few progressive men who, in the year 1935, dared to dream of an electrified rural landscape in Nobles and Murray counties, changing the pattern of life in these farming areas.

During this era, the majority of farm households were still lit by kerosene lamps and lanterns. Refrigerators, running water and electric lights were mere luxuries that a small percentage of farm families could afford. However, these men held a vision and a strong belief that rural electrification could succeed. They were not discouraged by temporary setbacks or the apathy of their neighbors and friends.

Prior to 1935, only 13,783 (40-32-8) of all Minnesota farmers were receiving central station electric service. The large power companies conducted surveys to justify their position that it would not be profitable to extend their lines into rural areas. Those farmers who did have electricity had to pay the high cost of building the power lines to their farms. Despite this, these progressive groups of men pushed forward, believing in the potential of rural electrification.

## BUILDING THE COOPERATIVE: 1935-1936

In 1935, a series of meetings and discussions were held among the men responsible for introducing rural electricity to Nobles and Murray Counties.

This period saw the early plans being drawn for what is today a prosperous and flourishing cooperative serving approximately 7,335 services. Their efforts led to the formation of a new kind of cooperative undertaking, which was met with skepticism and disbelief by many at the time.

Jay H. Seymour, the first manager of the cooperative, played a crucial role in the formation of the electric system. He traveled throughout Nobles county, urging people to join in the movement. His enthusiasm was infectious, and his friends became equally passionate about the cause. The growing interest led to a general meeting in Worthington on May 6, 1936, where a skeleton organization was set up and directors were chosen to represent every township in Nobles county.

## MERGER INTO A TWO COUNTY COOPERATIVE: 1936-1937

June 2, 1936, marked a significant milestone in the history of this rural electric system. On this day, the articles and bylaws were adopted, and a name was chosen to be Nobles Cooperative Electric. This was a time of intense organizational effort, with farm leaders working tirelessly to create a system that would serve its members effectively.

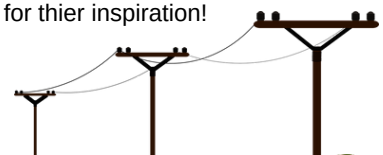
By the end of the harvest season, the cooperative had grown to include 700 members. This growth justified the decision to apply for a loan to build the line. A consolidation with a group from Murray County in early 1937 further strengthened the new cooperative's chances of securing an REA loan. On June 15, 1937, the first stock share was issued, marking the formal establishment of the Nobles - Murray cooperative.

## TODAY'S SUCCESS

The birth of the rural electric system in 1936 was a landmark moment in the history of American agriculture in our area. The determined efforts of the farmers, the Nobles County Extension Service office, and the Slayton unit of the Farm Bureau led to the establishment of a system that transformed the rural landscape. This story serves as a reminder of how collective action and the desire for progress can lead to significant changes.

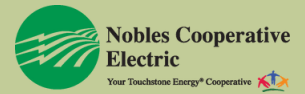
This success is a testament to the patience, determination and hard work of a handful of men who dared to dream and act on their dream. The name Nobles Murray Cooperative Electric was initially used however, by 1955 it slowly became known more commonly as just Nobles Cooperative Electric.

It is a shining example of how a few dedicated individuals can indeed change the old order of life. We thank them for their inspiration!



# IN THE NEWS...

Adam Tromblay, General Manager



## NOBLES COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVES UPGRADE TO ADRIAN SUBSTATION

Preliminary approval has been granted for a conditional use permit to enhance the Adrian Substation. Nobles Cooperative Electric intends to build a new substation just west of the current facility in the southeast quarter of Section 2, Grand Prairie Township. This new substation aims to enhance reliability and safety. The plan is to commence construction this spring, with full operation expected by late fall. Substations are essential in managing and safeguarding the power grid.

## SLAYTON EXPLORES ESTABLISHING ITS OWN MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC UTILITY

The city of Slayton is considering establishing its own municipal electric utility, which involves acquiring utility assets from Xcel Energy and gaining approval from Slayton voters through a special election that will be held on May 14, 2024.

The city's motivation for this move stems from their belief that they can offer superior service compared to their existing provider, potentially at an equal or lower cost. While the city's current provider is a for-profit utility, municipal utilities operate as non-profits.

Slayton has identified customer service and reliability as the primary concerns with Xcel. City Administrator Josh Malchow expressed optimism, stating that with the right partnership, they can enhance outage response, (506-37-157) communication, construction/renovation timelines, public safety incident responses and overall customer service.

In discussions with various electric utility operators, Nobles Cooperative Electric emerged as a likely partner if the vote succeeds. In partnership with the city of Slayton, Nobles Cooperative Electric would manage maintenance, operations, power supply, billing and collections.

Existing members of Nobles Cooperative Electric will not have any changes from this partnership. The cooperative assures that its experienced team is fully equipped to meet the needs of both the city of Slayton and its current members.

## LINWORKER APPRECIATION DAY IS ON MONDAY, APRIL 8TH!

#THANKALINWORKER

### To the Top!

#### Training Stages for Electric Lineworkers

Known for their strength and agility, lineworkers are dedicated to ensuring our communities have reliable power. Safety is always top priority on the job, which is why lineworkers spend thousands of hours training as they advance their skills.

*Here's a look at the career progression of a lineworker.*

#### Crew Leader

A crew leader is an advanced position that requires supervising lineworkers on job sites, coordinating with contractors and directing daily activities for crews.

#### Journeyman Lineworker

Post-apprenticeship and with roughly 7,000+ hours of training under the belt, journeyman lineworkers are fully trained in their field. They repair, update and install overhead and underground power lines, as well as other electrical equipment.

#### Apprentice Lineworker

Before reaching lineworker status, they are required to work as an apprentice. Apprentice lineworkers earn competitive wages while receiving hands-on training and experience in the field. They typically spend four years in their apprenticeship.

#### Groundperson/Linehelper

Many lineworkers begin their career as a groundperson, or linehelper. They assist line crews with tools, keeping job sites safe and operating smaller equipment.

*Regardless of stage, all lineworkers continue education and training throughout their career. Training and testing requirements vary from utility to utility.*



### THE ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE HELD IN A CONFERENCE CALL FORMAT

Toll Free Dial-In Number: 800-717-1738  
Conference ID is needed: 07978

Join the annual meeting conference call on Monday, April 15 at 7 p.m.:

- Before the conference call start time, dial in using the dial-in number provided.
- Please wait for the conference call to begin.

If you would like to submit a question for the annual meeting conference call, please email us no later than 3 p.m. on April 15 at [nce@noblesce.com](mailto:nce@noblesce.com).

## ANNUAL MEETING

MONDAY, APRIL 15TH  
7:00PM

WATCH THE MAIL FOR YOUR ANNUAL REPORT AND BALLOT PACKAGE.

CONFERENCE CALL STYLE ANNUAL MEETING WITH ELECTIONS TAKING PLACE BY MAIL.

# NOBLES COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC MOVES FORWARD WITH A NEW OFFICE FACILITY IN SLAYTON



Nobles Cooperative Electric has decided to construct a new office facility in Slayton. Lineworkers will continue to operate from the existing warehouse sites in Worthington and Slayton.

For several years, the board has been planning for an updated building as part of their growth and planning strategy. In the fall of 2023, a prospective business interested in benefiting the residents of Nobles County proposed repurposing the current cooperative office building for a new use. This discussion accelerated the project timeline for an updated facility for Nobles Cooperative Electric's office personnel.

The cooperative has decided to update the office facility in Slayton, aiming to upgrade the existing warehouse by extending the office area on-site.

The project will be funded through the allocated cash on hand from the board's long-term planning budget.

Construction is set to commence on June 3, 2024, with an estimated completion by the year's end. The new facility will enhance interactions with the public and staff, while ensuring the security of data, employees and members. It will focus on energy efficiency and offer expanded space for member and employee gatherings and meetings.

The goal of the new facility is to improve coordination, (39-10-7) communication and member privacy, while adhering to state and federal regulations and complying with ADA requirements.

The office structure located outside of Worthington is over 50 years old and does not have the space for future

growth or technological upgrades needed by the cooperative.

Discussions regarding the future of the current office building, to be repurposed for another business in Worthington, are still ongoing.

In the upcoming months, members can find more information in Nobles Cooperative Electric's Current Matters newsletter (539-41-73) and on the cooperative's website.

The cooperative will continue to operate warehouse facilities for their lineworkers in Slayton and Worthington, which are strategically positioned to serve members promptly and effectively.

The design concept and architectural blueprints for the office expansion are in progress and are being compiled by engineers at WiDSETH based out of Mankato, Minnesota.

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No coupon code necessary. Discount applied at checkout. Customer assumes responsibility for all sales tax. While supplies last.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Lengthen the life of your clothes dryer with regular cleaning. Clean the lint filter after every load, which improves air circulation and safety. Check the lint trap opening and use a vacuum to remove any lint that's fallen inside the opening.

If you use dryer sheets, check the lint filter for residue buildup. Remove any residue with hot water and a nylon brush or toothbrush. Over time, dryer sheets can leave a film on the filter, which can affect the performance of the motor.

[www.noblesce.coop](https://www.noblesce.coop)



**MARCH AUTO PAY WINNER - CRAIG BANGASSER**

Take a minute to sign up for Auto Pay and you may win a \$25 bill credit. A winner is chosen each month.



# NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

**ZACH SCHAFFER**  
JOURNEYMAN LINeworker

Zach Schafer joins us with close to two decades of experience as a lineworker.

Following his education at Mount Ayr Community Schools in Mount Ayr, Iowa, and Northwest Iowa Community College in Sheldon, Iowa, Zach gained valuable experience at Southwest Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative and Alliant Energy.

Zach currently resides in Windom with his wife, Tracy. During his free time, he enjoys hunting and fishing.

Let's give a warm welcome to Zach as he becomes part of our cooperative family!

## Country Cupboard

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 teaspoon instant yeast
- 1 1/2 cups room temperature water

### NO KNEAD BREAD

#### DIRECTIONS:

1. Mix. Whisk together the flour, salt and yeast in a large bowl. Stir in a bit of room-temperature water until the dough starts to form. It'll look a little bit weird at first, just trust us when we say it'll all come together.
2. Let the dough rest. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let it just sit on the counter at room temp overnight. Just forget about it until morning.
3. Form the dough. Remove the dough from the bowl and shape it into a ball.
4. Bake. Line your Dutch oven or big oven-safe pot with parchment paper. Warm it up in the oven for a half hour or so (without the dough). Add your dough, add the lid, and bake for 30 minutes. Lift off the lid and bake for another 10ish minutes until the top gets a beautiful golden brown.
5. Dunk away! Get ready to tear into this warm homemade bread and dunk and scoop it in all the things!

#### GET CREATIVE

- Transform it into a gluten-free or wheat-free version by substituting the flour.
- Incorporate herbs such as rosemary, thyme, garlic or any other favorites of yours.
- Create a cheesy variation by blending in cheeses like cheddar or feta.
- Enhance it with chopped olives or how about some oatmeal and sunflower seeds?
- Include dried fruit like cranberries or raisins with cinnamon for added flavor.
- Become a bread artist!



### Want your recipe featured?

Do you have a delicious **SOUP RECIPE** that you're willing to share? Send it to Nobles Cooperative Electric, ATTN: Tracey, P.O. Box 788, Worthington, MN 56187, and be sure to include your name, address, telephone number and NCE location number. All entries must be received by March 25. The winning recipe will be featured in the next edition of Current Matters, and the lucky winner will receive a \$10 credit toward their (8-30-72) electric bill.



Nobles Cooperative  
Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

### OFFICIAL MONTHLY PUBLICATION

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507-836-6107 or 800-776-0517

### WEBSITE

[www.noblesce.coop](http://www.noblesce.coop)

### EMAIL ADDRESS

[nce@noblesce.com](mailto:nce@noblesce.com)

### OFFICE HOURS

7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Monday through Friday  
Oct. 1 - April 30

### 24-HOUR OUTAGE SERVICE

800-776-0517

### GOPHER STATE ONE-CALL

800-252-1166 or 811

### ELECTRICAL INSPECTOR

Nobles and Murray County  
Luke Pieske  
507-316-8664

### GENERAL MANAGER

Adam Tromblay

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ronald Schwartz, President - 220-8148\*  
Lee York, V. President - 879-3497\*  
Cindy Hokeness, Sec./Treas. - 478-4965\*  
Jerry Beckering, Director - 227-4074\*  
Timothy Bickett, Director - 605-670-5294  
Gary Clarke, Director - 605-201-1903  
David Dorpinghaus, Director - 605-695-7816\*  
\*Telephone prefix 507

### NEXT BOARD MEETING

March 26, 2024

*This cooperative is an equal  
opportunity provider and employer*