

JULY-AUGUST 2021

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MESSANGER

Cultivating innovation
with Grand Farm

page 6



Contents

Features

3 Grid reliability

As the country sees more examples of grid instability during extreme weather events, Minnkota leaders are driving the national conversation on how to balance reliability, affordability and environmental responsibility.

6 Collaborate, innovate, cultivate, repeat

The agricultural evolution is underway, and the farmers and entrepreneurs of North Dakota and Minnesota want to guide the industry transformation. The Fargo-based Grand Farm initiative is ensuring that leadership through its platform for research, development, partnerships and workforce training.

11 Electrifying agriculture

Efforts to electrify tractors and other farm equipment are advancing quickly and the Red River Valley could be a hotspot for future deployment. An electric John Deere tractor and electric Bobcat compact track loader have been unveiled and should be in the field within the next few years.

12 Minnkota and CoBank “Share Success”

Concern for Community is one of an electric cooperative’s guiding principles – it’s a concept on which Minnkota was founded. The cooperative is turning community-enhancing ideas (supporting health care, farmers and rural communities) into reality with help from a long-time industry partner.



3



6



11



12

On the cover: Grand Farm directors Dr. William Aderholdt (left) and Brian Carroll examine the soil of one of dozens of test plots at the Grand Farm research site south of Fargo, N.D. The initiative is bringing together growers, innovators, investors and local leaders to create an ecosystem of agricultural innovation.

Minnkota Messenger is published six times a year by Minnkota Power Cooperative. Its mission is to communicate Minnkota’s perspectives and concerns to its members, elected officials, employees and other business audiences. For editorial inquiries, call (701) 795-4282 or email bfladhammer@minnkota.com.

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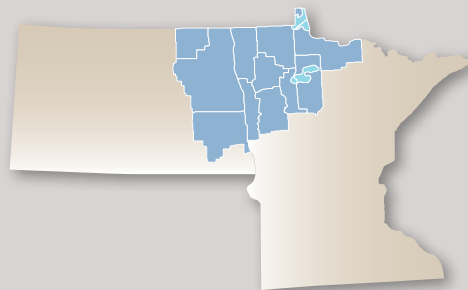
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Minnkota Power Cooperative is a generation and transmission cooperative headquartered in Grand Forks, N.D. It supplies wholesale electricity to 11 member-owner distribution cooperatives, three in eastern North Dakota and eight in northwestern Minnesota. Minnkota also serves as operating agent for the Northern Municipal Power Agency, an association of 12 municipal utilities in the same service region. Together, the Joint System serves more than 159,000 customers.



DRIVING THE DIALOGUE ON **GRID RELIABILITY**

WITH GRID CHALLENGES COMING INTO FOCUS,
MINNKOTA LEADERS ARE WORKING
TO CHART A PATH FORWARD

Last summer, a heatwave gripped California's electric grid and left much of the state sweltering through extended power outages. When winter arrived, a deep freeze in Texas turned power and heat off for millions over four days, the effects of which extended into the Upper Midwest where rotating outages were needed to stabilize the grid.

In the wake of these outage events, Minnkota Power Cooperative leaders have been on the road and online discussing the importance of grid reliability and resiliency with the nation's top regulators and policymakers, as well as local and regional stakeholders. As the electric utility sector continues to go through one of the most transformational periods in its history, questions remain on how ambitious environ-

mental goals will be met while maintaining affordable and dependable service.

"It is an exciting time for our industry, but it can also be daunting," Mac McLennan, Minnkota president and CEO, told members of the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on Energy during a June 23 hearing. "We all want to push for electricity to be a better product – more reliable, more resilient, affordable for every household, and as clean as possible. To reach these goals, we need to work together as utilities, policymakers and regulatory agencies."

About 42% of Minnkota's generation capacity comes from carbon-free sources such as wind and hydropower. Although Minnkota has added a significant amount of renewable energy over the last 15 years

and has been recognized nationally as a leader in renewable energy development, coal remains a critical resource to ensure the reliability of the electric grid.

"Harsh winters in the Upper Midwest can and do severely limit the ability of renewables to operate for extended periods of

time," McLennan testified. "During the recent polar vortex events in 2014, 2019 and 2021, Minnkota received almost no production from our wind facilities for multiple days.

At temperatures of negative 30 degrees, the absence of reliable power is life-threatening."

Midwest Energy Summit

North Dakota energy leaders, policy-makers and regulators discussed lessons learned from these events and how their state plans to chart its path forward during the Midwest Energy Summit on June 8 in Fargo. The event was driven by Minnkota member Cass County Electric Cooperative and facilitated by the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber. McLennan participated in a grid reliability panel that included North Dakota Lt. Gov. Brent Sanford, North Dakota Public Service Commission Chair Julie Fedorchak, Xcel Energy President for Minnesota and the Dakotas Chris Clark and Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) Executive Director of External Affairs Brian Tulloh.

While North Dakota is looking for solutions to ensure its residents have 24/7 power, it is part of two multi-state grids where the decisions of other entities have enormous impacts. Minnkota participates in the MISO market, where renewables currently

account for about 10% to 12% of the grid's resources. Tulloh said challenges begin to emerge as that percentage increases.

"We begin to see at above about 30% renewable energy penetration significant stability issues in the grid and significant changes that need to be managed somehow," Tulloh said, referencing MISO's Renewable Integration Impact Assessment.

"As you get up into the 50% range, those challenges become increasingly more expensive," he added, emphasizing the importance of time and planning to reach these ambitious goals.

Fedorchak responded that the costs of the energy transition cannot be ignored and that there are serious consequences to mistakes or missteps.

"That's not a small matter," she said. "What they're talking about – when it gets a lot more complicated at 50% – is, it's really serious and very expensive, to the tune of \$500 billion to achieve what's been thrown out there as plans for the MISO territory."

Grid stability challenges quickly become an issue of public safety and security, Fedorchak said.

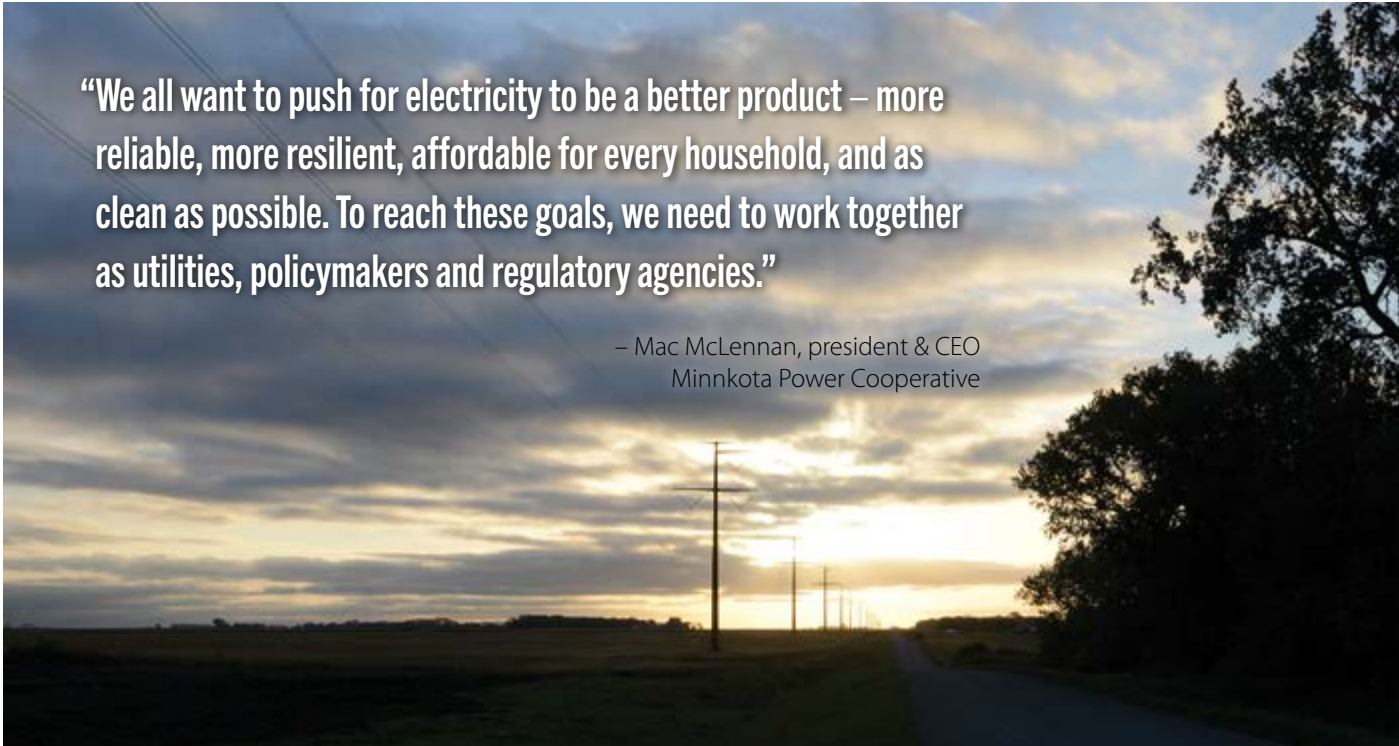
"What I took away from the February event, was if we don't have power, our society quickly becomes pretty unmanageable," Fedorchak said. "If you look at Texas, they didn't have water, they didn't have telephones, they didn't have heat. Our whole society is built on reliable power. We can't do without it."

McLennan said that the outage events in Texas and California are not once-in-a-hundred-year events, but will continue to happen if the country closes baseload and dispatchable resources, like coal, natural gas and nuclear, without adequate replacement.

"The reality check we have is that there has to be a long-term energy transition," McLennan said. "We can be as excited about it as we want to be, but we have to also be practical and work our way through in a defined manner. Otherwise, we're going to



Minnkota CEO Mac McLennan (left) discusses grid reliability at the Midwest Energy Summit on June 8 in Fargo. Photo courtesy of Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber.



“We all want to push for electricity to be a better product – more reliable, more resilient, affordable for every household, and as clean as possible. To reach these goals, we need to work together as utilities, policymakers and regulatory agencies.”

– Mac McLennan, president & CEO
Minnkota Power Cooperative

have more events like we did in February.”

EPA Administrator shows interest in Project Tundra

While reliability and resiliency of the grid must be prioritized, Minnkota also recognizes the need to make reductions in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. The cooperative and its members are currently in the process of evaluating Project Tundra – an effort to install carbon capture technology at the coal-based Milton R. Young Station near Bismarck, N.D. Project Tundra is designed to capture 90% of CO₂ emissions from the flue gas, which is the equivalent of permanently taking 800,000 gasoline-fueled cars off the road. The CO₂ would be safely stored more than one mile underground near the plant’s site.

Stacey Dahl, Minnkota senior manager of external affairs, provided an overview of Project Tundra during a June 3 meeting with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Michael Regan and other energy leaders in Bismarck. The meeting followed a commitment Administrator Regan made to Sen. Kevin Cramer during his confirmation process, where he agreed to consult rural electric cooperatives on EPA regulations.

Regan said the Biden administration has a “positive viewpoint” of carbon capture technology, and that his role is to support the president’s goals to reduce emissions.

“The creative ingenuity in terms of the thinking around carbon management and reduction, I think, has been really refreshing,” Regan said during his visit.

“There’s no doubt there’s huge potential,” he said of carbon capture. “And right here in North Dakota we’re seeing leadership.”

By Ben Fladhammer / Photos submitted



Stacey Dahl (foreground), Minnkota’s senior manager of external affairs, updates EPA Administrator Michael Regan (far right) on Project Tundra.



Collaborate, innovate, cultivate, repeat

FARGO-BASED GRAND FARM INITIATIVE
LEVERAGES LOCAL, GLOBAL PARTNERS
TO ELECTRIFY THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

Dr. William Aderholdt stood at the edge of cropland near Horace, N.D., holding the fruit of many months of field work. It wasn't a potato or sugar beet – the typical yields of the region – but rather a bright yellow sensor stamped with a Soiltech logo.

The pint-sized technology was co-developed with farmers in Idaho and tested in the heart of the Red River Valley. The unit is planted into the ground at the beginning of the growing season and collects standard data like soil temperature and moisture. However, this device sticks with the crop throughout the supply chain, with an impact sensor that determines inefficiencies in transport and where bruising of potatoes or beets may occur. It

remains through the end of the line, giving producers insight into the location and conditions of storage.

Soiltech Wireless developers were drawn to North Dakota as a product test area because of the market prospects, but it was the connections and resources they found that will keep them there. The company has begun working directly with American Crystal Sugar and hopes to open an office in Fargo – all from an initial partnership with Aderholdt and his team at Grand Farm.



Dr. William Aderholdt holds a wireless sensor being tested at Grand Farm that will follow a potato or sugar beet crop from planting to harvest to storage.



“This is the sort of win that we think about when we have this platform people can build on,” said Aderholdt, who directs Grand Farm’s Program Management Office. “To those businesses, this is the best place to be.”

These kinds of ag technology innovations are the harvest reaped by the Grand Farm ecosystem of growers, researchers, developers and entrepreneurs. Grand Farm is a nonprofit initiative powered by the Emerging Prairie entrepreneurial hub in Fargo. Its mission is to help agriculture start-ups come together to build the farm of the future, creating industry leadership in ag autonomy, data visualization, soil and crop health, public policy and more.

On July 22, Grand Farm organizers invited community and industry leaders, tech investors, policymakers and the general public to its Innovation Site just south of Fargo, N.D. More than 70 attendees turned out for the North Dakota Innovation Acceleration Day event, one of dozens of gatherings and conferences hosted by the program each year. The agenda showcased the potential of Grand Farm, moving from tech demonstrations and test plot tours to startup funding and investment opportunities.

“At Grand Farm, we really believe in innovation through collaboration,” Grand Farms Ecosystems Director Andrew Jason



Participants of Grand Farm's North Dakota Innovation Acceleration Day were treated to tours of several of the site's test plots.

told the crowd, kicking off the day with a backdrop of sunflowers and soybeans. “We aim to be the facilitator that brings people together to solve the big problems in agriculture. And I think today is a prime example of the power of our partners.”

Pillars for progress

Grand Farm was born in 2019 with a five-pillar vision to enhance agriculture in the Midwest and, ultimately, around the world. The vision starts with bringing in-

novators and motion-makers together – the ecosystem developed with events like Innovation Acceleration Day. From there, Grand Farm helps entities through an “innovation platform,” or system of collaborative projects and resources.

“The third pillar is the test site itself, a place where people can come, they can learn, they can experience and see what the future of agriculture will look like and what their role could be in that,” explained Grand Farm Director Brian Carroll as he walked



More than 70 people attended the July 22 event south of Fargo, which included a panel discussion from agriculture-based startups who have received support from North Dakota's Innovation Technology Loan Fund (LIFT).



Joe Heilman of Intelligent Ag gives a demonstration of the company's newly debuted Recon SpraySense system, which uses the latest app technology to ensure sprayer nozzles are working at the highest efficiency.

through a test plot of corn. He continued on to describe the fourth Grand Farm pillar, upskilling the workforce – a goal realized through the development of a software coding program that has already graduated five cohorts, most of whom are filling the gap of technology-trained workers needed for the

flood of new positions within many of the ag startups in Grand Farm's ecosystem. Carroll says that before entry-level enrollees begin the program, they are making an average of \$20,000 a year. After their 20-week training, they are making an average of \$55,000 a year.

"A big part of the Grand Farm is understanding what the workforce development is,

and creating those capabilities so that people can come in and work on the farm," Carroll said.

The final pillar of public-private partnerships is where all elements come together to impact the future of agriculture, using the resources of Grand Farm as a platform

for partners to try new things, in a low-risk test environment, to better inform tomorrow's public policy. "What we want to do is energize communities. We want people to be excited about agriculture here, within this region," Carroll said. "And how we'll measure our success is by how many partners we build."

If partners are the indication, Grand Farm's success is off the charts. The program started with three partners in 2019, grew to nine partners in 2020, and has already ballooned to more than 50 partners in 2021. The directors hope to have 100 by the end of this year, joining partner powerhouses like CHS, Microsoft and North Dakota State University in working on research and development projects collaboratively. Grand Farm facilitated 41 projects in 2020 and already has more than 300 projects active in 2021. To host more and more projects, the test sites have expanded from 40 acres to 140 acres, and demand is growing.

"The one common thing that all of our partners talk about is the need for more space," Carroll said, and then pointed to



Dr. William Aderholdt describes a Signum hardware sensor system currently in development at Grand Farm. The system will allow a farmer to plug in any sensors they want (for moisture, temperature, pH levels, etc.) to collect and visualize any data that is important to the crop's success.



the large, white event tent across the field. “Eventually we want to replace that tent with a makerspace, a conference center, a place where corporations, educators, and organizations can come together to meet and collide, but also work on things that lead to a common purpose.”

Growth in a new world

The COVID pandemic created endless challenges for businesses and developers, but it also bloomed opportunity and renewed determination for Grand Farm. Aderholdt says a key set of 2020 projects was almost halted until 2021, but the pioneering drive of their partners was more voracious than the virus.

“They said, ‘We have to get out there. In fact, we’re going to do MORE than expected,’” Aderholdt said, recalling one conversation. “The idea was that they were going to be future-looking, to help people not so much focus on the problems of the present, but into the future.”

Before COVID hit, around 90% of Grand Farm’s efforts were local. When virtual meetings became common, it became easier for directors to communicate with innovators worldwide. Grand Farm quickly became an international talking point, and companies from around the globe are still reaching out daily to ask how they can get involved, start a project or participate in an event.

The Grand Farm ecosystem has gone global, but the heart of the hub remains in the region, and that was evident in the conversations happening during Innovation Acceleration Day.

“The Grand Farm concept has gone from a dream to real possibilities,” said event attendee Marshal Albright, president and CEO of Cass County Electric Cooperative

(CCEC). “It has created an entrepreneurial buzz that will inspire innovation because of the opportunities and strong support from our local communities and state programs.”

CCEC assisted Grand Farm in bringing electricity to the test site, and Carroll says he sees the cooperative model as a design element of Grand Farm.

“That’s just what we have done here in rural areas in order to organize and face common challenges. So that’s what the Grand Farm is at its essence,” he said, acknowledging that power needs will be a major discussion point in designing the more electrified farm, and community, of the next generation.

“If we’re looking at the growth of rural communities, it’s not just about the farms – it’s the education systems, the health care systems and all the things that need to come in to support that growth. I think energy is a big piece of that,” Aderholdt added. “If you look at any sort of electric vehicles or tractors that are coming up on the farms ... all of those are extremely dependent on a stable and reliable electric grid.”

By Kaylee Cusack / Photography Michael Hoeft

Cass County Electric Cooperative CEO Marshal Albright (second from right) discusses an all-electric loader prototype with the Bobcat Innovation team.



Electric landscape of lifting and loading

DOOSAN BOBCAT INTRODUCES
GROUNDBREAKING MACHINERY FOR A MORE
ELECTRIC AND AUTONOMOUS JOBSITE



Justin Odegaard

At a July innovation event at Fargo's Grand Farm test site, Doosan Bobcat demonstrated the power of a new family of loaders and excavators that harness the benefits of electrification and remote operation.

Bobcat was one of the first in the field to unveil an all-electric compact track loader prototype in 2020. Now, the machine is getting closer to hitting the common work site.

"As the industry leader, we have been looking down the path of electrification for some time. A couple of years ago, we really started getting serious about it," said Laura Ness Owens, vice president of marketing for Doosan Bobcat North America. "We're really excited to be at this step of starting to debut our all-electric loader."

Although no commercial rollout date has been set, the T7X is already impressing crowds lucky enough to see an on-site demonstration. The all-electric loader contains a lithium-ion battery pack that powers the electric drive motors and lift actuators with enough runtime to

keep steady strength throughout a typical workday. The only fluid contained in the machine is coolant to cool the electronics. The loader contains no hydraulics system and boasts enhanced precision (the lack of hydraulics allows smooth control) as well as controllability of horsepower.

With added benefits like whisper-quiet operation, powerful torque and lower annual operating costs, Bobcat's innovation team believes the technology will open some eyes to doing things in a new way.

"Our customers are generally diehard diesel people, and they will be for a long time," said Bobcat Acceleration Manager Justin Odegaard. "On one side, we have customers who are looking for environmentally friendly, zero emission-type equipment that they can put on a jobsite that fits the eco-friendly requirements of that job. There is demand out there for projects like that. As we started getting into it, what's more exciting for us is all the advantages that come along with it."

Bobcat Intelligent Operator was

also displayed at the Grand Farm event, with features like object avoidance, automated navigation and jobsite mapping. Additionally, Bobcat showed off MaxControl Remote Operation, which allows an operator to use a mobile device to semi-autonomously backfill, load trailers, pick rocks, open gates, avoid debris and more.

Developers know that North Dakota and northern Minnesota may take a little longer than other areas to fully adopt electric and autonomous machinery, but they know the demand will be here sooner than most expect.

"This is our home state. We started this company based on the innovative spirit up here, and we've been here for 60-plus years. We're excited to bring these technologies here," Ness Owens said. "I think when people see the power that they can get out of the products, when they see the opportunity they provide, they absolutely will take hold and we'll see more and more of them come into play."

By Kaylee Cusack / Photography Michael Hoefft



Red River Valley could be hot spot for electric tractor growth



Each harvest season in the Red River Valley is ushered in by the steady rumble of diesel tractors. But experts believe the future of this frenzied time on the farm may soon be reduced to a gentle hum.

The low-noise operation of electric tractors could bring a stillness back to the prairie, along with benefits to farmers ranging from cost and maintenance savings to lower emission levels. Several major manufacturers, including John Deere, have invested substantial resources into electric tractor development and are expected to have commercially available models within a few years.

What does it mean for members in Minnkota Power Cooperative's service area? Research from EnSave and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) indicates that eastern North Dakota and northwestern Minnesota are among the best areas in the country to advance electric tractor technology.

"The vast amounts of harvested cropland in the Red River Valley creates great potential for electrification of tractors," said Keith Dennis, NRECA's vice president of consumer member engagement. "As batteries continue to be lower in price and more widely available, there will be more and more opportunities to save money and increase performance by switching to electric technology in a wide variety of applications."

One of the first all-electric models to emerge in fields this fall

is the Monarch. Starting at \$58,000, this small electric tractor has a 55-kilowatt-hour (kWh) battery (70 horsepower) and can operate for more than 10 hours. Larger tractors are also in the works, most notably John Deere's Sustainable Energy Supply for Agricultural Machinery (SESAM) tractor, which features a maximum output of 400 horsepower from a 150-kWh battery and can operate for about four hours. The SESAM can perform typical mixed mode operations, with a recharge time of around three hours.

Although initial capital costs are expected to be higher, farmers will see substantial operational savings because electric tractors don't require regular oil changes, part replacements or tune-ups. Electric tractors can also be placed on cooperative off-peak programs, which provides a lower electric rate for charging during overnight hours

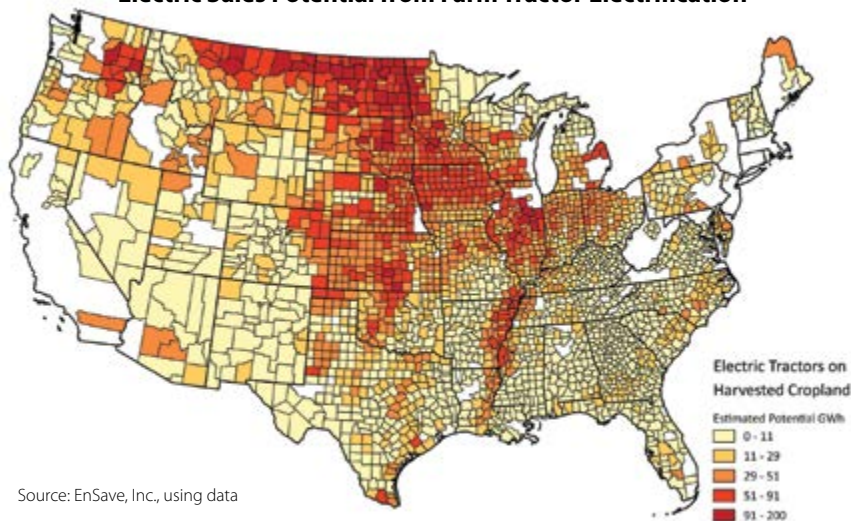
and other times when there is less demand for electricity. The 150-kWh John Deere SESAM battery could be fully charged on an average off-peak rate for about \$10.

In addition to tractors, electrification of utility task vehicles (UTVs), skid steers, robotic feeders and other equipment has the potential to provide financial and environmental benefits for the region's growers.

"There are increasing opportunities for beneficial electrification on farms," Dennis said. "From pumping water, to moving materials, to heating spaces, almost anything that can be done with direct combustion of fuel has the potential to be electrified as technology develops. While some folks associate electrification with electric cars, there are many off-road vehicles, for example, that can be electrified."

By Ben Fladhammer / Photography John Deere, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Electric Sales Potential from Farm Tractor Electrification



Source: EnSave, Inc., using data derived from USDA-NASS (2013)

Minnkota and CoBank team up to “Share Success”

MINNKOTA POWER COOPERATIVE AND SQUARE BUTTE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE DONATE \$20,000 TO LOCAL PROGRAMS

Minnkota has partnered with financing provider CoBank once again to help fund organizations that support the region’s rural communities. As a part of CoBank’s 2021 Sharing Success program, Minnkota and Square Butte Electric Cooperative distributed a total of \$20,000 to three initiatives. Those donations will be matched by CoBank.

“For us, it’s not just a matter of poles, wires and steel. Although that’s our core mission, we’re also invested in helping our communities thrive,” said Stacey Dahl, Minnkota senior manager of external affairs. “This is at the heart of what we do as cooperatives.”

Minnkota’s gifts include a \$7,500 donation to the Altru Health

Foundation and a \$2,500 donation to Farm Rescue, a nonprofit that helps farm families complete planting, harvesting and livestock care when a major health crisis or natural disaster strikes. Volunteers have assisted hundreds of families across the Midwest since the effort began in 2005.

“If you look at what Farm Rescue does, it’s hard to imagine a more deserving program,” Dahl said. “The agricultural community is central to our membership. Helping those in need is a big part of how we began as a co-op, so Farm Rescue’s mission of helping farm families dealing with illness or injury is in perfect alignment with what we do.”

“This funding support helps to

pay for volunteer lodging, meals and in-state crisis case travel expenses when they are planting, haying, harvesting or providing livestock feeding assistance to these families,” said Farm Rescue development officer Tim Sullivan. “We are grateful for the local and regional support from all our generous sponsors, donors and volunteers.”

Minnkota has contributed to Altru in several ways throughout the past year to assist the health system’s teams through the challenges that came with the regional spread of COVID-19.

“We knew as the pandemic continued to escalate, Altru’s employees were critical heroes in our community – we couldn’t have made it through without them,” Dahl said.



The Altru Health Foundation team accepts a Sharing Success gift from Minnkota’s Brita Endrud. From left to right: Ashley Stocker, Altru Health Foundation; Kristi Hall-Jiran, Altru Health Foundation; Brittany Caillier, Altru Health Foundation; Nolan Higdum, Altru Health Foundation; Brita Endrud, Minnkota; Ana Wilebski, Altru Health Foundation; Emily Buteau, Altru Health Foundation.



Farm Rescue

Minnkota's Brita Endrud (left) presents a donation check to Tim Sullivan, development officer for Farm Rescue.



"Their mission is to serve not only Grand Forks residents with high-quality medical care, but also many of our surrounding rural areas. That's an essential part of maintaining vibrant communities."

"Minnkota's generosity will have a significant impact on Altru patients and families throughout the region," said Brittany Caillier, Altru Health Foundation director of philanthropy. "This support impacts patients directly in need of assistance, provides our care teams with the tools and technology needed to do their best work, and even supports wellness initiatives across our region such as keeping kids safe or promoting preventative cancer screenings. We value the synergy between Minnkota and Altru – knowing that our teams are needed around the clock in good weather or bad, sickness or health."

Square Butte Electric Cooperative, Minnkota's power partner and owner of Unit 2 of the coal-based Young Station near Center, used the Sharing Success program to donate \$10,000 toward new playground equipment for Center's Moch Lehmkuhl Park – a project that was estimated to cost more than \$60,000.

"This project is one that had a significant gap between available grants and the total project cost,"

said Craig Bleth, Minnkota senior manager of power production. "The playground equipment is really nice, really colorful, and I'm sure it will be enjoyed by kids for years to come. The community really appreciated the gift, especially when combined with the matching funds from CoBank."

CoBank established the Sharing Success program in 2012 and has since partnered with customers like

Minnkota to contribute more than \$56 million to local causes. The effort supports schools, hunger relief programs, volunteer fire departments and countless other organizations that make rural communities stronger. This year, in response to the pandemic, CoBank raised its maximum match per customer to \$10,000.

CoBank customers who are interested in becoming a part of Sharing Success are urged to learn more and review the program guidelines at CoBank.com/citizenship.

By Kaylee Cusack / Photography Michael Hoeft



Moch Lehmkuhl Park

Minnkota senior manager of power production Craig Bleth (middle left) presents Center Park Board president Chad Hoffman with a donation to support the new equipment installation at Moch Lehmkuhl Park. They are joined by Mike Jacobson (far left) and Justin Bornemann (far right), who both work for Minnkota and serve on the park board.

Kemnitz recognized for lifesaving effort



Minnkota lineworker Ryan Kemnitz (right) receives the LIFEguard on Duty award from MREA's Andrew Skokie (left) and Terry Ehli.

Minnkota lineworker Ryan Kemnitz has been honored once again for his quick thinking and fast action to protect others from danger.

On July 7, during regularly scheduled pole-top bucket rescue safety training, Kemnitz was presented the LIFEguard on Duty award from the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA). The honor is a recognition of his brave

response to a July 2019 situation near Bemidji, Minn., in which Kemnitz witnessed a bucket truck operator who was fixing a traffic light accidentally make contact with a power line. Kemnitz used his lineworker safety training to ensure the operator was OK, make sure no one approached the snapped power line, and extinguish the grass fire that was burning near the truck. He also stood his ground when a contractor

wanted to move the snapped line off the road before the correct safety steps had been taken.

Minnkota Safety Manager Jason Uhler says Kemnitz's skills, take-charge mentality and perseverance likely saved lives that day.

"Minnkota is so fortunate to have knowledgeable, dedicated employees like Ryan Kemnitz," Uhler said. "The information sharing about the incident around our region has also helped in the education of countless other lineworkers and electrical workers, all of whom can learn from the positive outcome of Ryan's actions."

The LIFEguard on Duty program is a new MREA initiative to recognize individuals who go above and beyond to keep others safe. Kemnitz was previously honored Aug. 3, 2020, with the North Dakota Safety Council's (NDSC) prestigious Lifesaver Award.

Minnkota joins coalition supporting carbon capture

Minnkota Power Cooperative has joined more than 160 companies, labor unions, conservation and environmental groups and other organizations to call on congressional leaders to advance policies that support the development and deployment of carbon capture technology. A letter was sent in early August encouraging Congress to focus on a suite of core priorities that are pivotal in keeping America's energy, indus-

trial and manufacturing sectors on track to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. These priorities include:

- Providing a direct pay option for the federal Section 45Q tax credit;
- Extending the commence construction window for the 45Q credit;
- Enhancing 45Q credit values for industrial and power plant carbon capture and direct air capture;
- Eliminating annual carbon cap-

ture thresholds in the 45Q program that deter innovation;

- Financing the buildout of regional CO₂ transport and saline geologic storage networks; and
- Robust funding for commercial scale demonstration of carbon capture, direct air capture and carbon utilization technologies.

To read the letter, please visit scalingcarbonmanagement.com.

Minnkota communications team wins national awards

Minnkota's communications department is being recognized on the national stage for the third year in a row, winning two honors from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Spotlight on Excellence Awards for efforts in 2020. The program recognizes outstanding work produced by electric co-op communication and marketing professionals across the country.

Minnkota won a first-place Gold award for Best Individual Ad for its "All In on All-of-the-Above Energy" ad that was launched in February 2020. The video ran regionally as a

paid advertisement on Facebook, YouTube and select video streaming services, and it was also utilized as a print ad in several cooperative newsletters. The submission was judged against other generation and transmission cooperatives and statewide organizations.

A runner-up Silver award for Best Feature Story was presented to Minnkota for the piece "Dinos, drive-ins and democracy," which was published in Minnkota Messenger last year. The story is a feature highlighting PKM Electric Cooperative's innovative, pandemic-safe annual meeting at the local drive-in



theater. The story was an at-large submission and competed against cooperatives of all sizes nationwide.

The Spotlight on Excellence Awards consist of 16 categories that reflect the scope of cooperative communications, including writing, graphic design, marketing campaigns, etc. Entries are judged by industry peers.

North Dakota receives 'A' grade for clean air

The American Lung Association recently released its "State of the Air" Annual Report for 2021, giving North Dakota "A" grades for lack of ozone, also known as smog. Bismarck was ranked as one of the cleanest cities for its lack of ozone and 14th out of the top 25 cities for low, year-round particulate levels. In addition, Fargo was also among the top-ranked cleanest cities for lack of ozone.

The American Lung Association is not alone in its assessment of North Dakota's air quality. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has also designated North Dakota as one of only 17 states to meet all of the nation's strict federal ambient air quality standards.

The American Lung Association has compiled the annual report each of the past 21 years, using local data that is submitted to EPA. This year's report covers the years 2017 to 2019. During this time period, the state

experienced haze from out-of-state wildfires, which led to a rise in particulate levels in several counties.

The American Lung Association's State of the Air Report can be found at stateoftheair.org.



The journey of electricity is more complicated than some may think. Minnkota Power Cooperative generates electricity from coal, wind and hydro resources and transmits it through power lines to local substations. From there, our member cooperatives and municipals deliver the electricity to farms and communities around our region. It all takes teamwork, and we're thankful for our many power partners.

HOW ELECTRICITY GETS TO YOUR HOME

