

## Your cooperative, your voice: NVREC board election opportunities

One of the greatest benefits of being a member of Nishnabotna Valley REC (NVREC) is that you're more than just a customer - you're an owner! As a member-owner, you have a voice in how your cooperative is run. Because NVREC is locally owned, operated, and democratically governed, every decision is made with the best interests of our members and communities in mind.

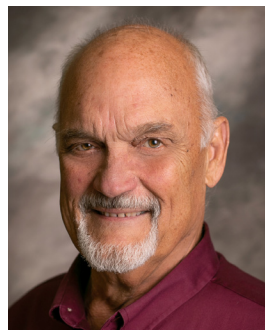


**Galen Grabill**  
Harlan • District 2

Membership means participation, and each year, you have the opportunity to take part in the election process—from nominating candidates to casting your vote. Board directors are elected from the general membership to represent you and help guide the direction of the cooperative.

A nominating committee is assembled annually to identify and recruit members willing to serve on the NVREC board of directors. Board members commit to a three-year term, representing their districts and working on behalf of the entire co-op membership.

This year's nominating committee will meet in early June to prepare the slate of candidates for the upcoming board election, which will take place at the annual meeting of members on August 21, 2025. This year two board seats are up for election:



**Darrell Stamp**  
Walnut • District 7

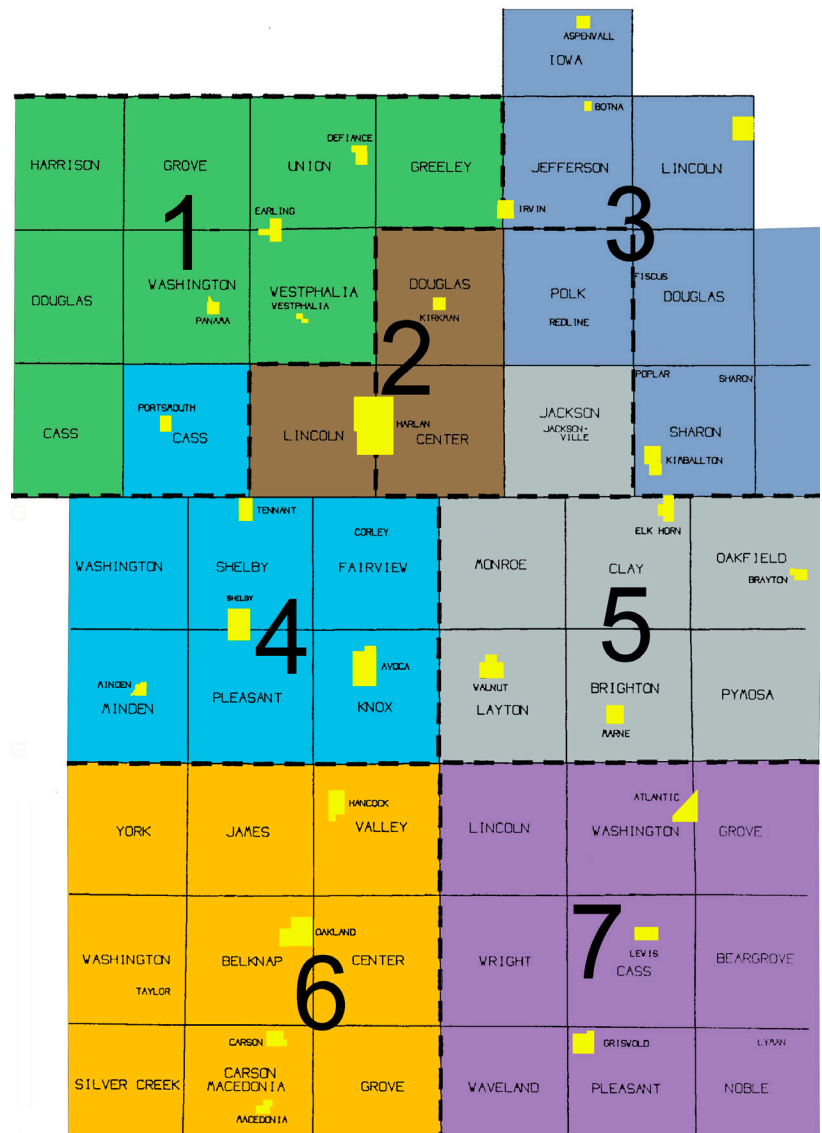
**District 2 - currently represented by Galen Grabill**

**District 7 - currently represented by Darrell Stamp**

If you live in either of these districts and are interested in running for the board, we encourage you to get involved. For more information or to request a copy of the bylaws, please contact Janell Leinen at 712-755-2166.

*Your voice matters –  
help shape the future of your cooperative!*

### Board District Map



Because Nishnabotna Valley REC is a cooperative, the membership elects a board of directors to represent their interests. Directors are responsible to the members for helping guide the cooperative, establishing rates and policies.

# CALL BEFORE YOU DIG – It's the law and it's for your safety

As the weather warms up and outdoor projects begin, we want to remind all Nishnabotna Valley REC members to contact Iowa One Call before starting any digging project. Whether you're planting a tree, installing a fence, or doing any other work that involves disturbing the ground, it's essential that you call 811 or visit ***IowaOneCall.com*** to submit a locate request. This simple step is required by law and is critical to keeping you, your neighbors, and utility infrastructure safe.

Once you contact Iowa One Call, you will be issued a ticket number, and utility locators have 48 hours commencing at 6:00am the next business day (excluding weekends and holidays) to respond and mark the underground utilities in your project area. For Nishnabotna Valley REC members, we contract with USIC to perform these locates. They will identify and mark any NVREC-owned underground electric lines up to the meter. However, please be aware that USIC does not locate any underground wiring beyond the meter, as those are considered the member's personal responsibility.

If you need assistance locating your personal underground electrical lines, you must call NVREC directly at 712-755-2166 to request this service. There is

a fee associated with locating member-owned underground lines, and this service is scheduled separately. When making this request, be prepared to provide your Iowa One Call ticket number, which our crews will use to reference the locate request and ensure we're identifying the correct area.

Digging without contacting 811 first can result in serious consequences. Not only might you hit fiber optic cables or water lines, which could disrupt communication and water service to your home and community, but striking a gas line or electrical wire



can be deadly. The risks include explosions, fires, electrical shock, or even loss of life. It's simply not worth the gamble. Always know what's below before you dig.

Taking the time to follow the proper steps isn't just about following regulations – it's about protecting your

property, your neighbors, and the lives of everyone involved. Let's work together to ensure that every digging project in our communities is handled safely and responsibly.

***Call 811 or visit IowaOneCall.com before you dig.***

A screenshot of the Iowa One Call website homepage. At the top, the logo "IOWA 811 ONE CALL" is visible. Below it, a teal banner contains the text: "Ticket Talk 'two-way' communication will soon be available to all Iowa One Call Users! See how it works [here](#)". A red arrow points to the word "here". Below the banner, a red bar says: "The new relocate feature is now live! [Click here](#) to watch a video tutorial on how to use it." The main content area features a large image of an excavator bucket with the text "2025 Iowa Excavation Safety Awareness Webinar" and "Covering changes 2024 Iowa Code Chapter 480 & the two-communication process offered in our ticket management system". A button "WATCH THE RECAP VIDEO" is below. At the bottom, a section titled "Submit & Manage Tickets" has the text: "Contacting Iowa One Call is easy! Simply click one of the buttons below to submit your ticket information quickly and efficiently. You can also search to view the status and Positive Response of a ticket." There are four buttons: "EXCAVATORS CLICK HERE", "HOMEOWNERS CLICK HERE" (highlighted with a red box and a red arrow), "SEARCH FOR A TICKET", and "DESIGN PROFESSIONALS".

This screenshot from the Iowa One Call homepage shows where homeowners should click to begin a locate request. Also marked is the new Ticket Talk feature, which allows for two-way communication between the person submitting the ticket and the utility locators. Ticket Talk helps both parties clarify details, ask questions, or receive updates during the locate process.



# Controlled burns can quickly turn costly

A controlled burn can quickly become an uncontrolled one, so take precautions before burning on your land or in a ditch. Controlled burns are used for various reasons, including vegetation and weed management.

If the area you choose to burn is near a utility pole or if it spreads more quickly and farther than you thought it might, your controlled burn could get expensive.

Fire damage to a power pole is usually evident by blackening and scorch marks, but even slight discoloration can cause serious problems. In some cases, the pole can look like it has little damage on the outside, all the while burning from the inside out.

In all cases the result is the same: the utility pole is compromised and will most likely need to be replaced, compliments of the person who started the burn. The fees passed on to the person who caused it are substantial – usually in the thousands of dollars.

The damage could also cause a power outage or other serious service issues including energized lines falling near or on the ground, creating a potentially deadly situation.

So what can you do to prevent burn-related damage to a power pole?

## Plan your burn before you begin

Check the fire danger forecast to ensure there are no burn bans in effect and for weather conditions such as wind direction, wind speed, and humidity.

If there are power poles in the planned burning area, clear all vegetation and weeds at least four feet around

the base of the pole. Wet the base of the pole with water before beginning your burn.

If your fire gets out of control, gets too close to a power pole, or if the pole catches on fire, call 9-1-1 first, then call Nishnabotna Valley REC at 800-234-5122.



This landowner was careful. Their recent controlled burn west of Harlan did minimal damage to the Nishnabotna Valley REC power poles in the right-of-way.

# Shining the light on community volunteers in June

Guided by our cooperative commitment to community, Nishnabotna Valley REC and Iowa's electric co-ops are excited to once again participate in the statewide Shine the Light contest in June to celebrate local volunteers.

Sponsored by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of Iowa, the contest will accept nominations beginning June 1 and select three winners who will each receive a \$3,000 donation to their local charity or non-profit organization.

"We've been truly inspired by the contest entries we received in our first two years," remarked Erin Campbell, director of communications for the Iowa Association of

Electric Cooperatives.

Member-consumers and employees of Iowa's electric cooperatives are eligible to nominate local volunteers during the month of June.

If you receive electricity from Nishnabotna Valley REC, you're a co-op member-owner and we encourage you to nominate someone who is making a positive impact in the community.

The volunteer being nominated does not need to be a co-op member-consumer. Minors may be nominated with consent from their parents or legal guardians.

Visit [IowaShineTheLight.com](http://IowaShineTheLight.com) for contest rules and to submit an entry.





# Scholarships awarded to students from area schools

Nishnabotna Valley REC is proud to recognize the recipients of the 2025–2026 college scholarships, awarded through Basin Electric Power Cooperative and the Nishnabotna Valley Foundation. We extend our sincere appreciation to all the students who applied and offer heartfelt congratulations to this year's scholarship winners.

NVREC's scholarship program reflects our commitment to one of the cooperative's core principles: education. Applicants were asked to share their understanding of the cooperative business model and describe how its guiding principles have shaped their high school experience, influenced their involvement in school and community, and how they plan to carry those values into their future careers.



**Jeb Sonderman**  
Harlan Community HS

Jeff Sonderman and  
Courtney Dandy

**\$1,000 Basin Electric  
Power Cooperative  
scholarship and a  
\$1,000 Nishnabotna  
Valley Foundation  
(NVF) scholarship**



**Brock Loudy**  
Harlan Community HS  
Josh and Stephanie Nielsen  
**\$1,000 Employee  
Dependent Scholarship**



**Laynie Gawley**  
IKM-Manning HS  
Steve and Andria Gawley  
**\$1,000 NVF Scholarship**



**Abby Gohlinghorst**  
Griswold Community HS  
Dan and Danette Gohlinghorst  
**\$1,000 NVF Scholarship**



**Kathleen Schmitz**  
Harlan Community HS  
Jeff and Jana Schmitz  
**\$1,000 NVF Scholarship**



**Brylie Andersen**  
Audubon Community HS  
Shane and Cara Andersen  
**\$1,000 NVF Scholarship**



**Colton Hansen**  
Audubon Community HS  
Greg and Rachel Hansen  
**\$1,000 NVF Scholarship**



# Keep cool without breaking the bank: Summer energy tips for your home

After a long and unusually cold winter, many of our member-owners saw higher-than-usual heating bills. Now, as temperatures rise and air conditioners kick on, it's a great time to take control of your energy use and keep summer electric bills in check.

At Nishnabotna Valley REC, we understand the challenges that come with changing seasons—and we're here to help you stay comfortable while being energy smart. A few simple changes can make a big difference in your monthly bill, without sacrificing your comfort.

## Here are six easy ways to reduce your electricity usage this summer:

- **Use a programmable thermostat:**

For stand-alone air conditioners, set your thermostat a few degrees higher when you're away from home, and program it to cool down before you return. Every degree you raise your thermostat can save up to three percent on cooling costs.

- **Keep your AC unit clean and maintained:**

Dirty filters and coils reduce efficiency. Replace filters monthly during high-use months, and schedule a annual tune-up if you haven't already.

- **Close curtains and blinds during the day:**

Blocking out direct sunlight helps keep your home cooler and reduces the need for air conditioning.

- **Cook smart:**

Use the microwave, slow cooker, or grill outside instead of heating up the oven. Keeping heat out of the house makes it easier (and cheaper) to stay cool.

- **Seal leaks and insulate:**

Small air leaks around windows, doors, and ductwork can let hot air in and cool air out. Weatherstripping and insulation go a long way in maintaining a steady indoor temperature.

- **Use fans wisely:**

Ceiling and box fans help circulate air and make you feel cooler, allowing you to raise your thermostat a few degrees. Just remember to turn them off when you leave the room!

Small steps add up—especially when they become part of your everyday routine. By managing your energy use wisely, you can ease the burden on your wallet while still enjoying a cool, comfortable summer.

**For more energy-saving tips or to explore home efficiency rebate programs, visit [NVREC.com](http://NVREC.com) or give us a call at 712-755-2166. WE'RE HERE TO HELP!**



## Want an easier way to stay on top of your electric usage and billing?

SmartHub is a free, secure app available to all NVREC members that puts the power in your hands – literally. With SmartHub, you can monitor your daily and monthly electricity use, compare usage from previous years, and see how weather or lifestyle changes might be impacting your bill. It's a great tool for budgeting and identifying ways to reduce energy consumption.

SmartHub also makes managing your account more convenient than ever. You can pay your bill directly from your smartphone, tablet, or computer, set up automatic payments, and even receive important alerts from NVREC.

**If you would like help getting started, or have questions about using the app, give us a call! We are happy to help walk you through the setup process and show you how to make the most of your account.**



# Stay safe around water this summer:

## *What you need to know about ESD*

Summer vacations at the lake will soon be here—a time for boating, swimming, and making memories on the water. But amidst the fun, it's important to be aware of a silent and often deadly threat: electric shock drowning (ESD).

This hidden hazard occurs when electric current leaks into fresh water, causing paralysis or electrocution to unsuspecting swimmers.

Most commonly found near docks and marinas, ESD is typically the result of faulty wiring on boats or shore-side electrical systems. With no visible signs of danger, prevention and education are critical to keeping everyone safe.

### **About electric shock drowning (ESD):**

- ESD is the result of electricity leaking into fresh water and passing through the body, causing death.
- Lower levels of electrical current can cause skeletal muscular paralysis, making the victim unable to swim. This results in drowning.
- Higher levels of electricity will result in electrocution.
- Although ESD can occur in any body of water, the majority of ESD deaths have occurred in public and private marinas and docks.
- Typically, the electricity entering the water and causing ESD originates from faulty wiring of the dock, marina, or boats connected to a shore power supply.
- If an electric fault occurs on a boat while connected to shore power, and the boat or marina is not properly wired to meet current American Boat and Yacht Council and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) standards, the water surrounding the boat will become energized.
- When looking at an area of water surrounding a boat, marina or dock, there is no visible warning or way to tell if that water is energized or will become energized with electricity.
- Water that is safe to swim in one minute could be deadly the next.
- It is difficult to track ESD. In many cases, a death is recorded as drowning, and there are not signs of electrocution on a victim's body.



### **For first responders:**

- There is no visible warning or way to tell if water surrounding a boat, marina or dock is energized. Because of that, if someone is in trouble, do not jump into the water if there is a power supply near the water. You could become a victim yourself.
- If there is any chance electricity is involved, turn off the shore power connection at the meter base and unplug shore power cords. Make sure the electricity is off before jumping in the water to help the victim.
- There is no immediate, visible way of determining if ESD was the cause of a victim's death. Unlike electrocution on dry land, if a victim is electrocuted in the water, there will not be any burn marks on the body.

### **For water recreation enthusiasts:**

- Do not swim around docks with electrical equipment or boats plugged into shore power.
- If you are in the water and feel electric current, shout to let others know, try to stay upright and swim away from anything that could be energized.
- If you are on the dock or shore when a swimmer feels electrical current, do not jump in. Throw them a float, turn off the shore power connection at the meter base, and unplug shore power cords. Try to eliminate the source of electricity as quickly as possible. Then call for help.

### **For dock owners:**

- All electrical installations should be done by a professional electrical contractor familiar with marine codes and standards and should be inspected at least once a year.
- Have a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) breaker installed on the circuit(s) feeding electricity to the dock. A GFCI will trip the circuit and cut off power quickly if there is a problem.
- The metal frame of docks should be bonded to connect all metal to the AC safety ground at the power source.
- Neighboring docks can also present a shock hazard. Make your neighbor aware of the need for safety inspections and maintenance. Marinas and docks should comply with the National Electrical Code and NFPA standards.



# NVREC promotes safety at Kids Fest event

In April, Nishnabotna Valley REC participated in Kids Fest in Harlan, a free community event hosted by Myrtue Medical Center that emphasizes children's health and safety.

Held every three years, Kids Fest draws a large crowd of families and community members eager to learn more about staying healthy and safe.

NVREC was excited to be part of this well-attended event and share important electrical safety

information in a fun and engaging way.

One of the highlights of our booth was LED Lucy, our friendly and educational mascot, who brought smiles to many young faces.

Children were thrilled to meet Lucy and interact with her while learning about the importance of staying safe around electricity. Her presence helped make electrical safety memorable and approachable for kids of all

ages.

NVREC handed out a variety of giveaways, including pencils, stickers, and other prizes – all featuring helpful electrical safety tips. These items served as a fun reminder for children and their families to practice safe habits at home and in their communities.

Our team enjoyed the opportunity to speak with parents and children about how to prevent electrical accidents and stay safe around power lines and

equipment.

We're grateful to Myrtue Medical Center for hosting such a meaningful event and allowing NVREC to be part of it. It's always rewarding to connect with our community, especially when we can help educate the next generation about the importance of safety.

We look forward to participating in future Kids Fests and continuing to support events that promote the well-being of local families.



Myrtue Medical Center's mascot "Myrt" and Nishnabotna Valley REC's LED Lucy at the Kids Fest event.



NVREC Lineman Jeremiah Ruby shares a moment with his son Rhett as they pose with LED Lucy.



RJ Bielenberg, resource deputy for Harlan Community School District, stands alongside LED Lucy.



1317 Chatburn Avenue, PO Box 714 • Harlan, Iowa 51537  
Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 7:30am to 4:00pm  
Summer Office Hours: (May 29 - September 3)  
Monday-Thursday, 7:00am to 4:30pm; Friday 7:00 - 11:00am  
Telephone: (712) 755-2166 • Fax: (712) 755-2351  
Website: NVREC.com • Follow us on Facebook!

Outages after hours, holidays, weekends: (800) 234-5122

*Nishnabotna Valley Rural Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.*

President.....Donna Olson  
Vice President .....Gene Kenkel  
Secretary-Treasurer.....Bryan Greve  
Director .....Dave Applegate  
Director .....Darrell Stamp  
Director .....Tom Pattee

Director .....Galen Grabill  
Chief Executive Officer .....Bill McKim  
Director of Operations .....Kert Barnum  
Manager of Administrative Services.....Kara Meiners  
Communication Specialist.....Janell Leinen



Nishnabotna Valley REC  
PO Box 714  
Harlan, IA 51537

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## Shape the future of NVREC:

*Board election opportunities await*

See page 1 for information about serving on  
your electric cooperative's board of directors.



**HELP YOUR FAVORITE CHARITY  
WIN \$3,000 THIS JUNE!**

See more on page 3 or visit  
**[IowaShineTheLight.com](http://IowaShineTheLight.com)**

**The Nishnabotna Valley REC office will be  
CLOSED**

for Memorial Day on Monday, May 26  
and for Independence Day on Friday, July 4.



**Planning a  
digging project?**

**CALL 811 FIRST!**

See page 2 to learn how  
it keeps everyone safe!

**SUMMER  
OFFICE HOURS BEGIN  
THURSDAY, MAY 29**

**Monday - Thursday  
7:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

**Friday  
7:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.**

**Summer hours will  
remain in effect through  
Wednesday, September 3**