

five decades. People ages 30 to 60 moving to rural places has been documented since the 1970s, reinvigorating small-town demographics and social and economic life. These trends paint a complex picture of how our communities are changing and challenging traditional boundaries.

10:15 a.m. Refreshment Break

10:30 a.m. To Boldly Go: Stepping Out from Ordinary to Extraordinary

Ray McElroy, former NFL football player, professional speaker and founder of *Ray of Hope on Earth*

What separates those who experience success from those who constantly find themselves falling short? How do individuals and organizations "boldly go" where they have never been before? McElroy's message will focus on how ordinary people with average talent accomplish extraordinary things. He'll also address perceived reality, the effects of negative self-talk, and offer inspiration for individuals and organizations to create momentum toward greatness!

10:30 a.m. REPAC Silent Auction & NDREC Foundation Raffle closes

11:30 a.m. Adjournment

11:45 a.m. Rural Development Finance Corporation Annual Meeting

Baymont Inn & Suites

DON'T FORGET!

A courtesy bus shuttle will run between NDAREC and the hotels:

- 4:30-8 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 9
- 5:30-8 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 10

A breakfast buffet will be served at NDAREC:

- 7-9 a.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 10
- 7-8:30 a.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 11

The registration deadline for credentialed delegates is 11:50 a.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 10.

COOPERATIVE POWER



83rd Annual Meeting

Feb. 9-11, 2026

NDAREC Headquarters

3201 Nygren Dr. NW | Mandan, ND

NDARECs
North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives
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MONDAY, FEB. 9 – NDAREC HEADQUARTERS

- 10 a.m.** **NDAREC Board Meeting**
Cooperative Center C
- 10 a.m.** **N.D. Managers Association Meeting**
NISC Ray Clouse Community Room
- 4 p.m.** **Resolutions Committee Meeting**
Conference Room 162
- 5-7 p.m.** **NDAREC Welcome Reception**
NISC Dining Hall – Door R

TUESDAY, FEB. 10 – NDAREC HEADQUARTERS

- 7 a.m.** **Registration**
NDAREC headquarters
- 7-9 a.m.** **Breakfast Buffet**
NDAREC headquarters
- 7:30 a.m.** **NDREC Foundation Meeting**
Conference Room 162
- 7:30 a.m. -4 p.m.** **REPAC Silent Auction & NDREC Foundation Raffle**
- 9 a.m.** **Call to Order**
Angela Carlson, NDAREC president
- Presentation and Posting of the American and North Dakota Flags**
Amvets
- National Anthem**
Kailee Gussey, North Dakota Youth Tour participant, Slope Electric Cooperative
- Pledge of Allegiance & Youth Tour Report**
Abby Finke, 2025 North Dakota Youth Leadership Council delegate, Verendrye Electric Cooperative
- 9:30 a.m.** **President’s Message**
Angela Carlson, NDAREC president
- 9:45 a.m.** **Greetings from Gov. Kelly Armstrong** *(invited)*
- TBD** **Remarks from Congressional Delegation** *(invited)*
- 10:15 a.m.** **Refreshment Break**
- 10:15 a.m.** **Credentials Committee Meeting**
Room 162
- 10:45 a.m.** **Communicating Rates and Affordability in a Time of Change**
Amber Allman, NRECA vice president of advocacy, press and member communications
Explaining rates and affordability to members may not be easy, but it’s essential. That’s

especially true today as costs rise and tough conversations ensue. This session introduces key findings from a new lexicon project designed to help make messaging about rates and affordability clearer and more consistent to build trust and reinforce transparency. Walk away with real-world examples and communication strategies you can apply at your cooperative.

- 11:30 a.m.** **Harvesting Hope and Ending Hunger Together: Today, Tomorrow and For Good**
Mark Watne, Great Plains Food Bank honorary co-chairperson
- Watne will highlight the collaborative effort to meet the growing need for food and supporting food pantries across North Dakota.
- 11:45 a.m.** **Lunch**
- 11:50 a.m.** **Registration Deadline for Credentialed Delegates**
- 12:30 p.m.** **Cooperatives, a Crown and her Camera: There’s No Place Like Home**
Kennedy DeLap, Miss North Dakota 2025 and North Dakota Living photojournalist
- Behind her camera, Kennedy DeLap fell back in love with North Dakota, its people and quiet communities. In August 2024, DeLap joined the NDAREC team, crisscrossing the state on photo and story assignments for *North Dakota Living*, all while learning about cooperatives and rural communities – and finding her passion for service. DeLap shares how working for the state’s electric cooperatives positioned her for the crown and puts her storytelling skills to work as Miss North Dakota 2025 – inspiring others to discover their passions and use them to make their communities better.
- 1 p.m.** **NDAREC: Delivering Value So You Can Deliver the Cooperative Power**
Josh Kramer, NDAREC executive vice president and general manager
- 1:30 p.m.** **NDAREC Business Session**
- Call to Order & Notice of Meeting**
- Minutes of Previous Meeting**
- Credentials Committee Report**
- Financial/Audit Report**
Brenna Ohman, NDAREC finance director
- NRECA Report**
Lynn Jacobson, NRECA director
- Election of Officers**

- **President**
- **Secretary**

- 2:30 p.m.** **Refreshment Break**
- 3:15 p.m.** **“Hey Alexa, Where Is the Power?”**
Nate Hill, head of energy policy, Amazon
- Hill will provide an insider look at Amazon’s approach to energy, infrastructure, policy and working with electric utilities.
- 4 p.m.** **NDAREC Business Session reconvenes**
- Resolutions**
- Bylaws**
- Old Business**
- New Business**
- Adjournment of NDAREC Business Session**
- 5-6 p.m.** **Member Reception**
Baymont Inn & Suites
Special entertainment by Jeff Kaul
- 6 p.m.** **Dinner & NDAREC Awards Banquet**
Baymont Inn & Suites

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 11 – NDAREC HEADQUARTERS

- 7-8:30 a.m.** **Breakfast Buffet**
NDAREC headquarters
- 8:30 a.m.** **REPAC Annual Report**
Zac Smith, NDAREC communications and government relations director
- 8:45 a.m.** **How D.C. Developments Impact You**
Mike Partin, NRECA board president and president/CEO of Sequachee Valley Electric Cooperative
- NRECA President Mike Partin will present a national update on NRECA and the major issues surrounding the association and its members. Partin will offer insights into the happenings in D.C. and the energy sector, and more importantly, how those developments affect America’s electric cooperatives.*
- 9:30 a.m.** **Rural Living in 2026**
Ben Winchester, rural sociologist, University of Minnesota Extension, Department of Community Development
- There appears to be a renewed interest in people moving to smaller rural communities in response to the pandemic of 2020. What isn’t well known is this trend – the “Brain Gain” – has been happening for the past