



# North Dakota Rural Electric Cooperatives Foundation

**Powering rural communities  
— together**

## The Foundation Exchange

Summer 2026

### **Introducing the NDREC Foundation: Investing in Rural North Dakota**

The North Dakota Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDREC) Foundation is dedicated to enhancing rural quality of life by stimulating the economy and improving lives.

Established as a nonprofit organization in 2018 and recognized as a 501(c) 3 public charity in 2019, the NDREC Foundation exists to heighten rural development with a focus on sustaining and enhancing essential services. It provides a pathway for individuals, organizations and partners to join rural electric and broadband cooperatives in supporting rural development initiatives and contributing to activities that address challenges facing small towns, businesses and rural residents.

The Foundation has played a vital role in sustaining and strengthening access to healthy, affordable food. Other projects have focused on supporting workforce development and safety education. As the Foundation's capacity continues to grow, future efforts may also help address needs related to child and elder care, rural healthcare and rehabilitation support.

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*Photos: Interior and exterior of the Velva facility, top right photo shows stakeholders touring the facility*

## Velva Facility to Serve as Regional Grocery & Local Food Hub

The North Dakota Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDREC) Foundation has received a commercial property in Velva as a donation for use as a north-central regional grocery and local food hub. The facility will provide shared storage and distribution space for North Dakota-grown foods and products purchased cooperatively by rural grocery stores in the north-central region. It will receive grocery products, combine and deliver orders for multiple small-town stores, and store and ship local farm products to rural communities. The goal is to improve access to fresh, healthy and affordable foods by fostering collaborative purchasing and distribution of conventional groceries and local foods.

The NDREC Foundation also recently received a walk-in freezer as a donation from Fairchild Equipment Company of Fargo toward the initiative. The refrigeration unit, which can serve as a cooler or freezer, is approximately 1,500 square feet and can be enclosed in the distribution center. The unit, along with included pallet racking and wire decking, was taken down in pieces and transported to the Velva facility. The freezer/cooler unit will be put into service once the facility becomes operational.

The foundation plans to ultimately transfer the property to the food hub cooperative or organization expected to be formed by interested independent grocers and local food producers.

Learn [more](#).

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## Foundation Awarded USDA Grant to Improve Food Access

The NDREC Foundation has been awarded a \$95,000 USDA grant from the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) Food Access and Retail Expansion (FARE) Fund. Grant dollars will be used for technical assistance to establish a regional grocery re-distribution center and food hub that will aggregate and distribute conventional groceries and locally produced foods. With the number of rural grocery stores in North Dakota rapidly declining and a shrinking grocery supply

chain, the new facility will strengthen purchasing power, lower wholesale costs, and expand access to fresh, affordable and locally produced foods.

Grant activities include defining the optimal business structure and operating model, completing a cost-benefit analysis and financial projections, and engaging distribution, processing, and other potential partners to inform a viable and sustainable development plan.

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## Rural on the Rise Conference Sept. 29

Join us in elevating rural North Dakota by supporting and planning to attend Rural on the Rise, an annual one-day event for rural champions, to be held Sept. 29 at the NDAREC Cooperative Center in Mandan.

This year's keynote speaker, Lorie Vincent, CEcD, brings national expertise in strengthening rural communities, small businesses and regional economies. Her sessions — “Stand Up Rural America: Forging a New Path of Growth and Prosperity” and “Regionalism: Winning Together Instead of Losing Alone” — will offer practical, actionable ideas to help community leaders and volunteers propel their towns from surviving to thriving.



Hosted by the North Dakota Rural Electric Cooperatives Foundation, the event is coordinated by NDAREC's rural development services team with support from a USDA Rural Cooperative Development Grant.

Click [here](#) to explore partnership opportunities and register.

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## Foundation Supports Summer Training Camp



The NDREC Foundation received a \$30,000 grant from the N.D. Department of Commerce State Energy Program to offer a hands-on lineworker and electrical trades summer camp for 25-30 high school students. The five-day camp, being held May 31-June 5, at the NDAREC Lineworker Training Center in Mandan and on the Bismarck State College campus, counts as an elective workforce development class and is designed for students seeking preparation for, and industry experience in, the career fields of electrical transmission and distribution, including substation work.

*Photo: Student attends summer training camp*

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## Opportunities to Donate

## **Give Back to Rural Communities**

Your contribution to the NDREC Foundation helps us strengthen communities, support local businesses, and create opportunities in rural North Dakota.

### **Ways to Give**

- Memorials and honorary tributes – honor loved ones with a contribution in any amount
- Cash donations
- Fundraisers

### **How to Donate**

Mail a Check to:  
NDAREC Foundation  
P.O. Box 727  
Mandan ND 58554

### **Donate Online**

To learn more about the NDREC Foundation or to donate, please visit our website.

[Visit our Website](#)

NDAREC | 3201 Nygren Dr NW | Mandan, ND 58554 US

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