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What comes to mind when you hear “riding for the brand?”

Many might say a popular series about a ranch in Montana. Around here (NEA), this man and his use of the phrase come to mind.

Rick Bridge came to NEA in the summer of 1997; having already worked 7 years in the utility business with the town of Pine Bluffs (4 years as an apprentice and an additional 3 years as a journeyman lineman).

Over the last 24 years Bridge has served NEA first as a Journeyman, then in November of 2001 through September of 2010 in the role of Line Superintendent, and in October 2020 he transitioned to Operations Manager and is currently co-managing the cooperative.

Much has changed during his years in the business. Among the things that haven't are his dedication to service and pride in the craft.

The last several years have been extremely busy on the operations front. Although it has been challenging, ultimately NEA is seeing growth and the progress has been welcomed.



Asked about his transitions in leadership roles over the years, Bridge said, “The hardest part is going from being outside all the time to being inside most of the time. Leadership is easy when you're surrounded by people who know their job, take pride in it and are good at what they do.”

We want to congratulate Rick on his advancement and thank him for all his work.

Every person at the cooperative contributes something to the team effort. Our membership is supportive of us and our goal is to provide them with the best service possible.

TRY OUT OUR SMARTHUB!

1. www.niobrara-electric.org
2. Click the Smarthub link in the top right hand corner
3. New users, click the New User link to create a registration.



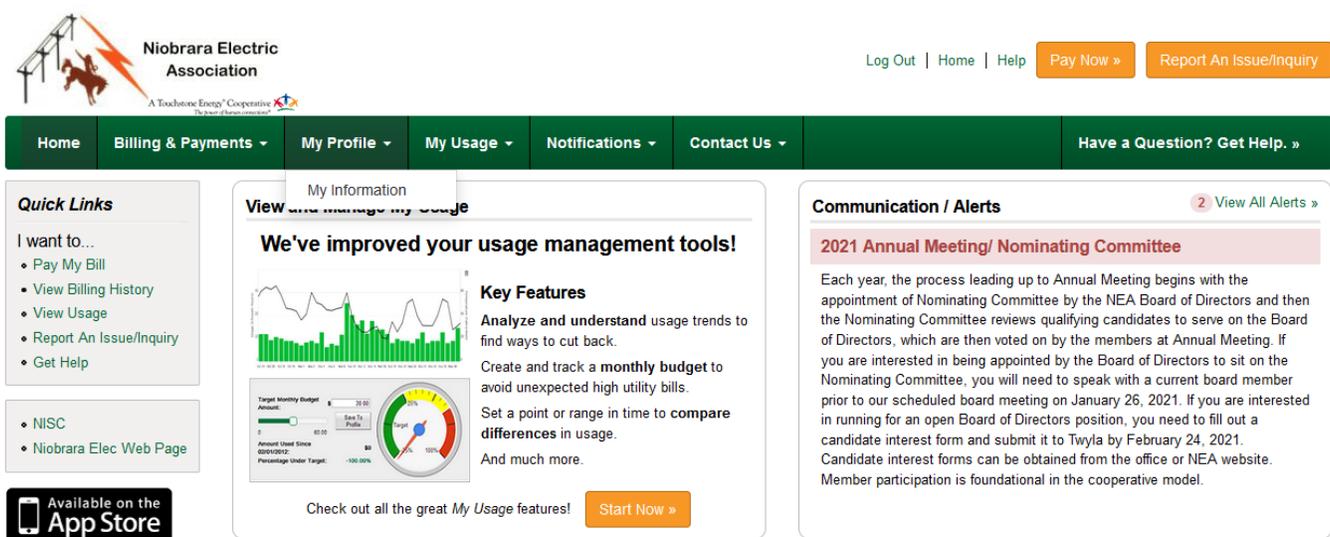
The screenshot shows the Niobrara Electric Association logo on the left, which includes a stylized horse and rider and the text "Niobrara Electric Association" and "A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative The power of human connections®". To the right of the logo is the "New User Registration" heading. Below the heading is a text prompt: "To register as a new user, please enter the following information." There are four input fields: "Billing Account Number", "Last Name or Business", "E-mail Address", and "Confirm E-mail Address". At the bottom right of the form are two buttons: "Submit" (orange) and "Cancel" (white with a grey border).

4. After filling out your information, check the I'm not a robot box as well as the agreement for terms and conditions, then submit.

Congratulations, your registration will be complete.

You will receive an e-mail with a temporary password for you to login and change your password for future access.

Once your Smarthub account has been created, your home screen will look like this. From this screen you can use the drop boxes on Billing & Payments, My Profile, My Usage, Notifications, etc to see your bills, go paperless, set up auto pay, review usage, receive notifications, and more.



The Smarthub site is very user friendly. If you have issues using the site, please feel free to call our office and visit with Julie in Billing for support.

The addition of Smarthub has been extremely useful to our members and the cooperative. We encourage everyone to use this option for information and payment.



- If you see downed power lines, or other damaged electrical equipment, notify NEA as soon as possible because the lines could be live.
- Just because power lines are damaged does not mean they are dead. Stay away, and instruct others to do the same.
- Power lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live and dangerous.
- Downed power lines, stray wires, and debris in contact with them all have the potential to deliver a fatal shock.
- Stay clear of fallen power lines and damaged areas that could hide a hazard.
- Treat all power lines as if they are energized until there is certainty that power has been disconnected.
- If a power line has landed on the ground, there is the potential for the area nearby to be energized. Stay far away.
- Do not attempt to drive over a downed power line.

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Touchstone EnergySM

Office Hours

Monday—Friday

7:30 am—5:00 pm

Outages 1-800-322-0544
or 307-334-3221

Phones are answered 24 hours a day.

Phones will be answered by Niobrara Electric Association during office hours and SRS will take all other calls and dispatch NEA personnel.

Work begins on the 2021 Annual Meeting

Each year, the process leading up to Annual Meeting begins with the appointment of Nominating Committee by the NEA Board of Directors.

At the January Board Meeting, the NEA Directors appointed the following nominating committee members: Richard Ladwig, Denzel Coffey, Ken Dixon, Cheryl Lund, Dan Hanson, Rod Nelson, Jon Woodrum, Donald Mack and Jack Buhr.

It is the responsibility of the Nominating Committee to meet and officially nominate persons they have reviewed and qualified as able to serve on the NEA Board of Directors.

In 2021, current board members Andy Greer, Andy Barnette and Jim Dunn have expiring terms. Andy Greer has announced his decision to not run for re-election in May. Directors Andy Barnette and Jim Dunn have chosen to run again for another 3 year term.

With Greer's decision not to seek re-election, district 1 will definitely see a change in representation.

In addition, John Hester, JD Wasserburger and Bill Wilson had their expiring terms extended due to the COVID 19 issues with holding our Annual Meeting in 2020 and having elections. All three will be up for re-election of a 2 year term at the 2021 Annual Meeting.

The Nominating Committee will meet in late February to discuss nominations for the board. If you are interested in running, visit with members of the Nominating Committee and/or call the NEA office and speak with Twyla. Member participation is foundational in the cooperative model.

Candidate interest forms can be obtained from the office or website and must be completed for review prior to the Committee's meeting.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District

John Hester	1	Keeline, WY	President
Andy Barnette	2	Lusk, WY	
David Keener	3	Marsland, NE	Sec./Treas
Bill Wilson	3	Harrison, NE	
Jack Hammond	1	Lance Creek, WY	
Jim Dunn	3	Harrison, NE	
Neal Wurdeman	2	Lusk, WY	
Andy Greer	1	Lance Creek, WY	
JD Wasserburger	2	Lusk, WY	Vice President

Board Minutes

- Rick Bridge gave an Operations and Safety Report—no accidents or near misses. Discussion are being held with Anadarko to build a line from the Manning Tie and the Oneok project will be completed by the end of February or March.
- Office Manager Shawna Glendy and Operations Manager Rick Bridge will look into budget and will get a cost from contractor Ward regarding Tie line. Work schedules were also discussed.
- Director Keener spoke on NREA business.
- Director Greer spoke on WREA business.
- Director Wilson spoke on Tri-State business.