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2020 State Record Set

Barron Electric Cooperative's 84th Annual Meeting on August 20 set a state record for attendance with 621 members and guests. Cooperatives adjusted their annual meetings in 2020 due to the pandemic. Attendance, of course, has been down considerably despite these adjustments with approximately 100 members attending a drive-in style meeting. When Barron Electric had the size of crowd that they did, it was unexpected. "We have a strong membership, always have the largest attendance numbers, and this year we had a very unique venue at the Stardust Theater," remarked Dallas Sloan, General Manager of Barron Electric.

The membership bid farewell to Selmer (Sam) Nelson after serving 46 years on Barron Electric's Board of Directors. While a standing ovation was not possible, members honored Sam's service on the board with a 250-car honk salute. He also shared his passion for parliamentary procedure, as demonstrated at this annual meeting, by reviewing changes to the bylaws, which the members approved. William Effertz of rural Cumberland was the newly elected director in district eight replacing Sam Nelson. Incumbents Tim Kessler and Scott Warwick, in districts 2 and 4 respectively, both won uncontested elections for another 3-year term.

Of course, the real news was the size of the crowd. Employees wore face masks and sanitized their hands between each vehicle throughout the registration process while handing out door prizes and lunches as members registered. But, the cars kept coming and coming. The Stardust grounds were full, and it was difficult to fit more cars in. "We sincerely apologize to the members who had difficulty getting in that night. We had three or four times the members show up than we expected. We based our expectation on other annual meetings that were held at similar types of venues that saw low attendance numbers, so this was a shock. We want to thank the Stardust Theater for their hospitality," Sloan commented.

Lois Haynie of Rice Lake was the grand prize winner of a free year of energy, excluding fixed charges. The Turtle Lake Food Pantry collected nearly 300 food items, and they greatly appreciated the support.

