



2003 Inductees



Brian Meyer

For 30 years, attorney Brian Meyer championed electric and telephone cooperatives in the state Legislature.

As lobbyist with the South Dakota Rural Electric Association, he helped craft and lobby for many bills, including major legislation that provided territorial protection for cooperatives and allowed cooperatives to provide members with additional services.

For 20 years, he served as legal advisor and chief lobbyist for the South Dakota Association of Telephone Cooperatives. This was in addition to serving as legal counsel for a number of telephone cooperatives in the state.

“Throughout his involvement with South Dakota’s telecommunications cooperatives, Brian has always been looked upon as a leader, an innovator and a problem solver. He was a person the telecommunications cooperatives turned to during some of the most turbulent times in the history of our industry,” wrote Richard Coit, administrator of SDATC.

He received his law degree at the University of South Dakota in 1969 and started his own practice in Onida in 1972. The Meyer and Rogers Law Firm moved to Pierre, S.D., in 1979.

Meyer died Sept. 2, 2003, at the age of 59.



Don Paulsen

Don Paulsen spent more than 40 years working for cooperatives in western South Dakota.

His early working career was spent as a bookkeeper with West River Electric Association in Wall, S.D., before he enlisted in the U.S. Army. In 1953, Paulsen returned to West River Electric where he served as office manager for the cooperative, and, beginning in 1954, Paulsen also served as office manager of the newly incorporated Golden West Telephone Cooperative, in Wall. When the two cooperatives ended their joint management agreement, he became Golden West’s first general manager in 1964, a position he held until his 1991 retirement.

According to Paulsen, the greatest satisfaction in his career came from developing and completing the underground, private line telephone system for the rural areas, a network that linked town and country residents together with reliable communication services.

While Paulsen was at the helm of the cooperative, which is now known as Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative, it grew to more than 10,500 customers.

“The results of Don’s efforts touched the lives of rural telephone patrons in South Dakota and impacted the future of telephone cooperative members across the nation,” wrote Golden West manager George Strandell.

