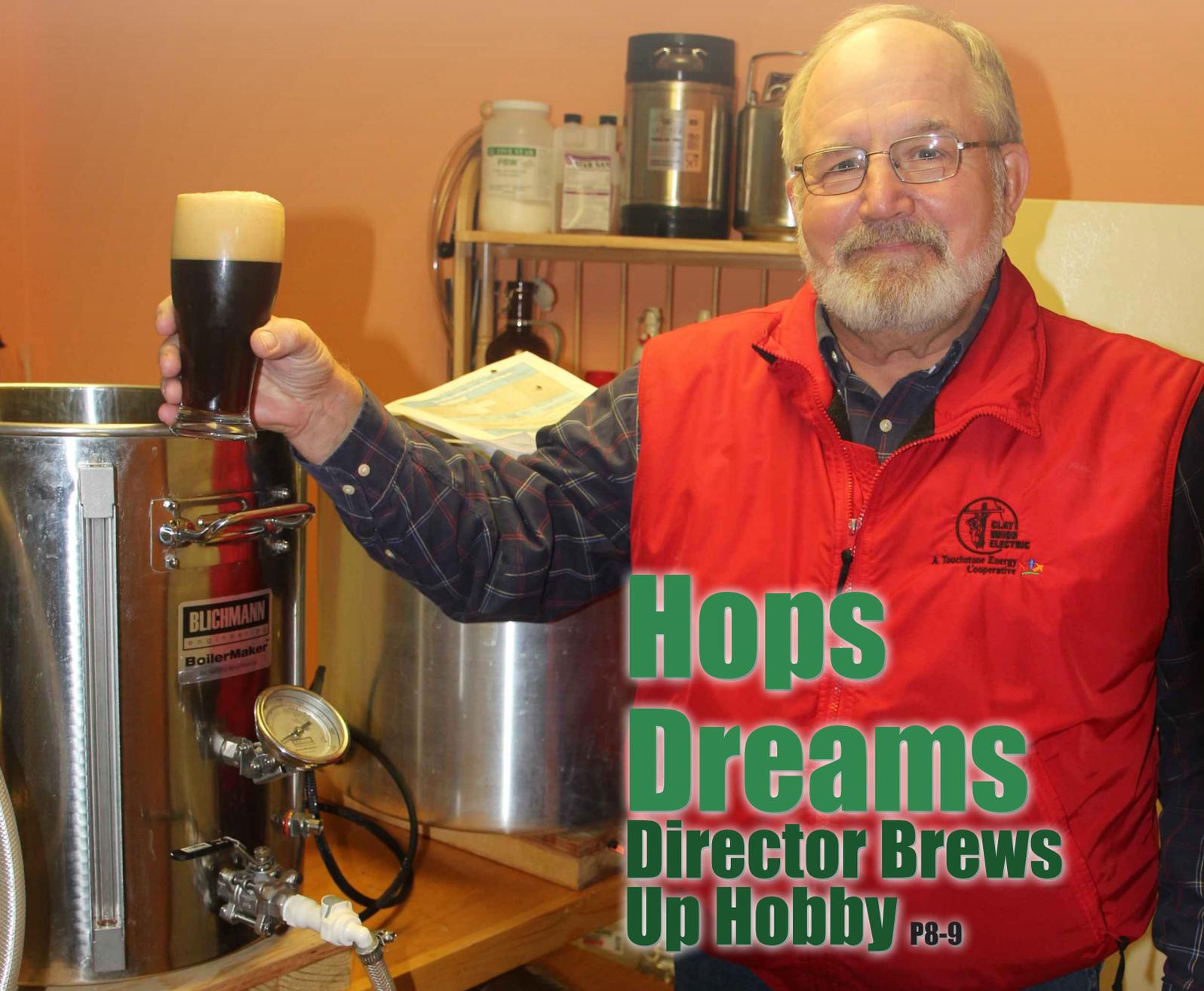


Central Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Cooperative Connections

MARCH 2016 VOL. 16 NO. 11



**Hops
Dreams
Director Brews
Up Hobby** P8-9

The Complexities of EPA's Clean Power Plan



Ken Schlimgen
General Manager

If you were able to attend any of our area District Meetings held in January, you would have heard just a little information on the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) regulation to limit greenhouse gas emissions from power plants. Labeled the "Clean Power Plan," it aims to reduce nationwide carbon dioxide emissions from power plants by 32 percent below the levels recorded in 2005.

The EPA has clearly targeted power plants, especially those that use coal.

The plan requires many power plants to shut down before they have been fully paid for. In these situations, electric rate payers will continue paying for a power plant that no longer operates while also paying for the new replacement power plants through the electric rates.

What does that mean for you, our members? Unfortunately, it probably will mean higher electricity bills. But we're still crunching the numbers. The Clean Power Plan is an extremely complex and far-reaching regulation. In fact, it's probably the single most complex regulation the electric utility industry has ever confronted.

The rule affects cooperatives and their members more than other sectors of the utility industry. This is because cooperatives are unique among utilities.

As you know, Central Electric Cooperative is a not-for-profit organization that provides electricity to 4800 member-owners across eight counties. We don't have investors who can foot the bill for expensive new plants or equipment for which we haven't budgeted.

Central Electric Cooperative is more than just poles and lines. We look out for our members every day.

We have this same concern for our community when it comes to regulations that will increase the cost of electricity. Some folks may not notice an extra \$10, \$20, or more added to their bill, but many others are already struggling to get by.

The potential cost increase is why we've been so engaged on this issue. That's the root of our concern because we're ultimately concerned about our members.

We're keeping up the fight and working for legislative and legal solutions in partnership with cooperatives from around the country. Our top concern remains providing you, our members, with safe, affordable and reliable electricity.

To learn more about the Clean Power Plan and how it may affect your cooperative, plan to attend the Annual Meeting on April 5th at the Mitchell Corn Palace.

CPP: What We Know

1 In South Dakota, the DENR* is charged with state implementation. The state's initial State Implementation Plan (SIP) is due September 2016 with the opportunity to request a two-year extension.

*Department of Environment and Natural Resources

2 Electric rates **WILL** go up.

3 The EPA has admitted that **not one** existing coal-fired plant can meet the standards set in the rule.

4 Basin Electric could be forced to spend **\$5.3 billion** for new generation, new transmission, back up generation and legal fees.

5 We could be forced to invest the **same amount** of money over the next **15 years** that we have in the last 50 years.

6 It is a global problem, but there is not a global commitment to act and most nations expect the United States to carry the burden.

Central Electric Cooperative Connections

(USPS 018-963)

General Manager - Ken Schlingen

Managing Editor - Courtney J. Deinert
Assistant Editor - Patrick Soukup

President - Duane Wolbrink
Vice President - Todd VanWalleghen
Secretary - Bernetta Burghardt
Treasurer - James Headley

Central Electric Cooperative Connections is published monthly by Central Electric Cooperative PO Box 850, 25487 403rd Ave, Mitchell SD 57301. Families subscribe to Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. Central Electric Cooperative Connections purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to electric cooperative members on matters pertaining to rural electrification and better rural living.

Subscription information: Electric cooperative members devote 25 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. Periodical Postage Paid at Mitchell, SD 57301 and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Central Electric Cooperative Connections, PO Box 850, Mitchell SD 57301 TELEPHONE (605)996-7516 or 1-800-477-2892; FAX (605)996-0869; e-mail cec@centralec.coop. Design assistance by TDG Communications, Deadwood.

Save the Date: Central Electric Annual Meeting Mitchell Corn Palace April 5, 2016



Office Hours
Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

24 - Hour Service
1-605-996-7516 or
1-800-477-2892

www.centralec.coop



Mission Statement
Providing Reliable Energy and
Services at a Good Value

This institution is an equal
opportunity provider and
employer.

Reminder: Youth Tour Deadline

Youth Tour essays are
due to our office
by March 1st, 2016.

Please see pg. 15
for details on the trip
and how to apply.



Weathering a Winter Storm

When ice and heavy snow bring down limbs and power lines, safety is a consideration indoors and out. Make sure you know how to weather the storm.

When outside, stay away from downed power lines:

- A power line does not need to be sparking or arcing to be energized. Equipment near power lines can also be energized and dangerous.



- Lines that appear to be “dead” can become energized as crews work to restore power or sometimes from improper use of emergency generators. Assume all low and downed lines are energized and dangerous. If you see a downed or sagging line, contact your utility.

- Motorists should never drive over a downed line as snagging a line could pull down a pole or other equipment and cause other hazards.

- Be careful approaching intersections where traffic or crossing lights may be out.

- If you plan to use a generator, know how to operate it safely.

Before a winter storm, you should have supplies on hand and know how to stay warm:

- Always keep a battery-powered radio or TV, flashlights and a supply of fresh batteries. You should also have water, blankets and non-perishable food.

- When power goes out, it often comes back in spikes. This can damage electronics. Keep your electronics safe by unplugging them when the power goes out. Leave one lamp or switch on as a signal for when your power returns.

- To prevent water pipes from freezing, keep faucets turned on slightly so that water drips from the tap. Know how to shut off water valves case a pipe bursts.

- Never use a charcoal grill to cook or heat with inside the home. Burning charcoal gives off deadly carbon monoxide gas. Charcoal grills should only be used outdoors.

- If you live with a child or elderly person, you may need to take them somewhere with power so they can stay warm. If you are healthy enough to stay home safely, there are ways to stay warm: stay inside and dress warmly in layered clothing.

- Close off unneeded rooms.

- When using an alternate heat source, follow operating instructions, use fire safeguards and be sure to properly ventilate.

Source: *esfi.org*

Free Course for Teachers

Teachers from elementary and secondary teachers in Minnesota, Montana, South Dakota and North Dakota are eligible for the 2016 Lignite Education Seminar



The seminar was totally revamped in 2009 and made into a two-credit class which lasts for four days. Participants can receive credit from the University of North Dakota (economics), North Dakota State University (education) or Minot State University (science). This means that teachers who took the class when it was a one-credit course, can take it again if they need a refresher as there is lots of new information.

The seminar, which will be held at Bismarck State College, Bismarck, N.D., will provide teachers with the information and educational materials they need to teach their students about how lignite is mined and used to produce electricity for homes, farms and businesses in the Upper Midwest. In addition, the seminar covers lignite’s economic impact on the region, as well as important environmental issues affecting the lignite industry.

During the seminar, teachers hear presentations by educators, researchers and lignite industry representatives. One day is devoted to touring mining operations, reclamation sites and coal conversion facilities.

Free lodging is provided in a Bismarck State College dormitory (two people per room). Meals will be provided. Also, transportation will be provided by the Lignite Energy Council for the tour of a mine, power plant and the Great Plains Syntuels Plant.

Kids’ Corner Safety Poster

“The best way is the safe way.”



Merick Olson, 10 years old
Merick is the son of Steve and Maricel Olson, Sinai, S.D. They are members of Sioux Valley Energy, Colman, S.D.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you’ll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.

Savory Seafood



South Dakota Walleye

- 1/3 cup melted butter
- 2 cups soft white bread crumbs
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 12 oz. walleye fillets
- Dash of pepper
- 1 T. sesame seeds

Lightly grease bottom of casserole. Combine butter, bread crumbs and salt. Arrange fish in casserole. Lightly sprinkle with pepper. Top with bread crumb mixture. Sprinkle sesame seeds over all. Bake, uncovered, at 350°F. for 30 to 35 minutes.

Becky Walth, Glenham

Shrimp Boil

- Cheap beer, enough to cover the shrimp by 2 inches
- 1 T. celery seed
- 1 T. cumin seed
- 1 T. caraway seed
- 1 T. poppy seed
- Several lbs. large peel and eat shrimp
- Melted butter, enough for each diner

In a deep soup pot, bring beer and seasonings to a boil. Be sure the seeds have swollen. It is important to allow the seeds to swell in size as this allows the flavor to develop. Add shrimp and boil together for 5 to 10 minutes to insure the shrimp are cooked. Be careful to prevent the pot from boiling over. (You can reuse this liquid to cook more shrimp.) At the end of the time, scoop enough shrimp from the pot for each diner to begin. Don't rinse them off. Peel and dip into melted butter. Note: Don't worry about manners and dining – put newspapers on the tabletop, have plenty of paper towels, peel the shrimp and throw the shells onto the newspaper. When dinner's over, simply remove the place settings, roll up the papers and throw in the trash. Of course, wash your hands before you pet your friendly feline!

Anda Johnson, Spearfish

Fish Tacos

- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1 lb. white fish fillets
- 2 T. lemon juice
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 pkg. taco seasoning, divided
- 2 T. vegetable oil
- Taco shells or 8-inch soft flour tortillas
- Topping: shredded cabbage, chopped tomato, lime juice, chopped cilantro, Mexican shredded cheese and taco sauce

Combine sour cream, mayonnaise, cilantro and 2 T. taco seasoning in bowl. Combine fish, vegetable oil, lemon juice and remaining taco seasoning in bowl; pour into skillet. Cook over medium heat for 4 to 5 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with fork. Fill soft or hard shells with fish mixture. Service with sour cream mixture and various toppings.

Mary Jessen, Holabird

Alaska Salmon Cakes with Yogurt Dill

- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup small-curd nonfat cottage cheese
- 1 T. chopped fresh dill or 1 tsp. dried dill weed
- 1 tsp. lemon pepper seasoning
- 1/4 cup sliced green onions
- 1 (14.75 oz.) can traditional pack Alaska salmon or 2 cans or pouches (6 to 7.1 oz. each) skinless, boneless salmon, drained and chunked
- 3 T. garlic-and-herb bread crumbs
- Vegetable oil
- Yogurt Dill Sauce**
- 1/2 cup nonfat yogurt
- 1-1/2 tsp. finely minced fresh garlic
- Salt and pepper
- 1 T. chopped fresh dill or 1 tsp. dried dill weed
- 1/4 cup grated cucumber (squeeze dry)

In medium bowl, whisk egg lightly. Add cottage cheese, dill, lemon pepper and green onions; mix well. Mix in drained salmon, then sprinkle in bread crumbs and mix well. Shape mixture into 4 patties, 1/2- to 3/4-inch thick and 3 inches in diameter. Heat nonstick skillet over medium-high heat and brush skillet with oil. Fry salmon cakes for about 2-1/2 to 3 minutes per side. Cakes should be crisp and golden on the outside and still moist on the inside. Serve with Yogurt Dill Sauce. To make yogurt and dill sauce, mix yogurt and garlic, adding salt and pepper to taste. Stir in dill and cucumber. Refrigerate, covered, until ready to serve. Makes 4 servings.

Nutritional information per serving: 217 calories (34% from fat), 8 g total fat, 2 g saturated fat, 112 mg cholesterol, 27 g protein, 8 g carbohydrate, 0.5 g fiber, 897 mg sodium, 320 mg calcium and 1800 mg omega-3 fatty acids

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Salmon Loaf

- 1 can pink salmon, drained and mashed
- 1 cup cracker crumbs
- 1 cup milk
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 4 T. butter, melted

Mix together all ingredients; place in a greased 1-1/2-quart casserole. Bake at 350°F., uncovered, for 1 hour.

Roxy Cook, Bruce

Fish and Cheese Chowder

- 1 lb. fish fillets, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 T. butter
- 6 T. chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped carrots
- 6 T. chopped celery
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 (10 oz.) cans chicken broth
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- Dash of paprika
- 3 cups milk
- 1 cup grated cheese

Melt butter in saucepan. Add onion, carrots and celery. Cook until carrots and onion are soft. Blend in flour using a bit of the broth so it doesn't get lumpy. Add salt and paprika. Cook 1 minute, stirring constantly. Gradually add chicken broth and milk. Cook until thickened. Add fish; simmer 10 minutes. Add cheese.

Jane Ham, Rapid City

Please send your favorite appetizer, beverage, casserole and dairy recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in June 2016. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

Remembering Four Generations: Flying R Ranch

By Courtney J Deinert

Thirty miles of walking after a winter storm—that's how the Flying R Ranch homestead was claimed.

Richard and Karen Sinkie are the 4th generation to build their lives on the homestead, located approximately eight miles north of Gann Valley. Richard's great-grandfather came by the Kimball train in 1883 to claim the land, but a late spring storm halted plans. He and many others were forced into a boarding house due to the storm. After sleeping on the boarding house floor during the "coldest night of his life," he felt defeated, and was ready to turn around. However, a friend talked him into going back. He returned to Kimball, and walked roughly thirty-one miles north to claim his 160 acres.

Back then, they worked hard work to stay warm, to be able to eat, and to raise a family. Richard said, "It was hard work, but we didn't know any different." Cows were fed with a team of horses, hayrack and pitchfork. They worked the land with a two-row cultivator, disc, and walking plow. For heat, Richard's grandfather and his brothers would gather up cow chips and twist grass or hay. The tighter the bundle, the longer it'd burn. There weren't many trees around, so they used what they had.

The family also kept a coal and wood furnace. In the fall, his grandfather's brother, who was a trucker, would take in a load

of their hogs for payment for a load of coal. The coal usually came from Kimball or Miller. There was a hole in the side of the house foundation, and they shoveled the coal out of the truck and into the basement. Richard can remember lying in bed many mornings and hearing his dad shake the ashes out of the furnace to get it going before Richard came downstairs.

Richard remembers doing his homework by the kerosene lamp. Every fall, they'd get a supply of kerosene. He also remembers having a Kohler light plant, similar to a generator, which they used just in the evening for light.

Some weeks, Richard's grandparents would make roughly four dollars a week, and groceries would cost three dollars. They kept 200 to 300 laying hens and milked six to eight cows. The cream and eggs would pay for any household expenses. Groceries consisted of flour and sugar, but otherwise they raised their own food. They kept a big garden and canned. Mid-summer, they'd butcher 100 chickens, and in the fall, butcher two hogs and one steer. Richard says, "It was real food then too," and had more flavor than what we can buy today. Richard and Karen still keep 30 laying hens—and those eggs can't be found in any store.

One year when the family didn't raise anything, Richard's

Richard and Karen are pictured on their farm with the barn—the heart of the homestead. The barn was built in 1917 by Richard's grandfather.





Above: The barn on the homestead
Below: The house Richard grew up in on the farm. The house is still in excellent condition. Richard and Karen use it for canning, and their sons plan to fix it up someday.

great-grandfather hopped the freight train to Sioux City and worked the winter there for money. “In those days, you didn’t have any help,” Richard said. “You did what you had to do.”

Richard remembers being in his grandfather’s shadow. In the spring, his grandfather would seed oats, and Richard would hurry home from school each day to drive the team of horses. Richard said, “I didn’t know they didn’t need a driver because they followed the row, but [my grandfather] didn’t tell me any different.”

At the heart of the homestead is the iconic red barn. Richard’s grandfather built the barn 1917. With no power tools available, he used gin poles and a team of horses. While the original barn still stands, a straight-wind storm in 1924 took off the roof and top-level. The wind blew the rafters way out into the pasture and drove them so far into the ground that they had to use a team of horses to pull them out. That storm leveled many of the barns in the area at that time. The barn was rebuilt in 1927 and is still in use today.

Other than the farm, Richard’s grandparents also passed along life lessons. When he was eight or nine years old, Richard remembers his grandmother returning from the grocery store and putting some change into a glass. He asked what it was for, and she replied that the clerk had given her too much change. This was it, and she was going to give it back to the clerk next time she goes to the store. He asked, “Why don’t you just keep it?” Richard says, “I got lectured. And I remember that like yesterday.” She did indeed return the change, and Richard said, “They instilled that [integrity] in all of us.”

The country school that Richard went to was just a half mile north from the farm. He’d walk each morning. Each year, a student would be assigned to bring water. You’d bring five gallons at a time and that would last about a week.

Sunday school was split between three classes. One was in the school room, one went into the basement, and Richard’s class was six small kids packed into the back of the teacher’s car.

Punishment for misbehavior at school usually meant losing your recesses, and that did happen once to Richard. North of the school, there was big slew that was frozen over in the winter. The kids would take their sleds and go over there during



their noon hour. “If we left our sleds down there, the teacher would have to let us come down at recess time in the afternoon and get them, which she did.” However, the students failed to return to school one afternoon until about 3:30 PM, and they lost their recesses for two weeks. They never did that again.

Each student had a chore assigned to them. Chores included dusting erasers, wiping off the blackboard, taking out the garbage to the burning barrel, and taking the flag up and down every morning and night and folding it properly. They said the pledge of allegiance every morning. School went from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM—just in time to get home and do chores.

Richard had a cow to milk every night. And if the cow stuck her foot in the bucket, you’d give the milk to the eager cats and start over. He remembered the cows rapping their tails around his neck, trying to swat flies.

Richard’s dad gave him a heifer calf from one of his cows when Richard was 10 years old, and that’s what started Richard’s stock herd of cattle. Richard had eight cows when he got out of the army, probably valued at about \$150 per cow at that time. He bought his Holstein dairy cows at the time for about \$250-300 each.

Richard had been on the farm all his life, except for his two years in the military. Back in **CONTINUED ON PG 14**

Hops Dreams

Director's 25-year Hobby Grows Gallons at a Time

By
Brenda Kleinjan

ATTENDING A CONVENTION IN LINCOLN, NEB., 25 years ago gave Clay-Union Electric Corporation director Terry Munter a sip of a hobby to come.

While in Lincoln, he found a dark beer on tap at a time when dark beer was hard to find. Down the street was a store selling home brewing kits and the chemistry clicked for the former industrial arts teacher.

"I bought the materials and made my first batch," Munter recalled, and then continued with a slight grimace. "It was less than desirable."

He persisted on and after four or five batches got

one that wasn't too bad, he said.

Now, a quarter-century later, the Vermillion, S.D., man continues to tweak recipes as he seeks a combination of three, consistent base beers (a red a light and a dark) that he hopes will become the foundation for a brewing license and eventual bar that he envisions with brewing partner Lars Aga. And, add to that plan is the desire to form a cooperative for area hops growers. (The flowers – also called seed cones or strobiles – of the hops plant gives beer its flavoring.)

Munter describes the beer making process as a





Left: Lars Aga and Terry Munter look at hops flowers left after the harvest on Aga's Clay County farm. **Below:** A wipe board in Munter's brewing area reads like a chemistry teacher's chalk board, with notations made about different batches of beer. **Inset:** Hops give beer its flavor. Here, Munter shows commercially-purchased hops. **Opposite Page:** Munter's hobby has grown from a single pot on his kitchen stove to a series of boilers in a space mostly dedicated to his hobby.

simple one – but with many variations. One takes water, grain (typically barley), hops and yeast, apply heat and then cooling.

Munter's hobby has evolved from those first batches made on the kitchen stove to larger batches made in a space dedicated to the process (and laundry).

The kitchen stove has been replaced with digitally-controlled electric boilers, calibration instruments, plate chillers and other equipment gathered in his quest to consistently produce a good brew.

Munter believes the key lies in the water.

"It's ALL about the water," said Munter.

To make five gallons of beer, Munter starts with 6.5 gallons of water and then adds the grains. Through a process of sparging (washing) and mashing, the raw beer – or wort – is formed and then brought to the electric boil kettle where the hops are added for flavor. Hops added early in the process dictates the taste of the beer while hops added later gives the beer its aroma.

When the mash tun is processed, it is heated at 150 to 155 degrees.

But one degree is critical, Munter notes.

"Every beer style has a different mash temperature," Munter said

For Munter, it comes back to the water.

"The pH is very important," said Munter, noting that a good beer will have a pH of 5.2 to 5.4.

The difficulty for Munter is that his local rural water starts at a pH of 7.2, which while good for many things, is not good for Munter's quest of a good glass of beer.

Munter's solution to his water dilemma? He builds his own.

"We start with pure water," Munter said. He takes local water through reverse osmosis and mixes with other sourced water to develop the characteristics he has found will develop good beer. (It

comes in handy that his son is a biochemist in water engineering.)

"Water is the secret and then consistency. If I could make any wish, it would be consistency," Munter said.

Once the beer has boiled and then cooled through a plate chiller, it begins its fermenting process. Munter adds yeast which starts eating the wort's starches.

Munter will take measurements of the wort with a refractometer to determine the mixture's specific gravity.

His goal is to have an alcohol content of 7.2 percent to 7.5 percent, depending on the type of beer being made.

The primary fermenting process takes nine to 12 days and then the brew continues to a secondary fermenter.

The beer is then kegged and stays under pressure for 15 days. His beers have a shelf life of one month to 2.5 years, depending on the type.

While Munter and Aga have been using purchased hops in their beers (and experimenting with hops grown on a couple of plants in Munter's back yard), they have hopes of incorporating locally-grown hops

grown on Aga's farm west of Vermillion. He has begun a trellis system to support 410 hops plants, which, when mature, could produce more than 2,400 pounds of hops in a good year.

Once established, the harvesting of the hops will be a growing issue.

Aga's 410 plants are still immature, but in their first season it took four days to harvest the plants by hand. That time will increase once the plants reach maturity.

Mechanical harvesting equipment is cost-prohibitive for an individual producer, but Munter and Aga have hopes of forming a cooperative of hops growers for the purchase and use of the equipment.



Sub metering: What does this mean to our Members?



By Patrick Soukup
Manager of Member Services & Marketing

Central Electric has been utilizing sub meters since 1984 to provide a discount electric rate to our members that utilize electricity to heat their homes. The member benefits from the monthly savings, but it also allows the member to know exactly how much their electric heating equipment is costing them each month.

The discount rate for electric heating is offered by Basin Electric Power Cooperative to Central Electric. Central Electric then can provide the discount to each of our members. In order for Central Electric to receive this discount, the electricity used by our members for electric heating must be measured and the total Kwh usage reported to Basin Electric. The discount rate for electric heating is \$.056 per kilowatt.

There are some minimum requirements that need to be met before the sub meter can be put into service. To qualify, the heating equipment must be a permanently installed electric heating system and/or heat pump system. This means boilers, geothermal heat pumps, air source heat pumps, and electric baseboards heaters all qualify. Heaters that use a cord and plug do not qualify since they are not permanently installed. The electric heating equipment must be a total of at least 8000 watts or a heat pump system. If the electric heating equipment qualifies the home for the discount rate, the water heater and A/C system are also allowed to receive the discount, if those items are connected to the load management system.

Central Electric bears the cost of labor and materials for installing the sub meter equipment, but we do charge a connect fee of \$30. In most cases, the connect fee is recovered in the first few months from the savings received through the discount rate.

If you are installing an electric heat pump or any other type of electric heating equipment, please notify our office. We would appreciate knowing your plans so that we can verify that our transformer and main electrical equipment are sized appropriately. We also ask that you call us a second time when the electric heating equipment is installed. We need your notification to tell us you are ready for the sub meter to be installed. Do not assume that because we have upgraded your

transformer that we have scheduled your sub meter installation as well. We are not able to track how everyone's installation is progressing. We rely on our members to call us when their installation is completed.

We have installed several hundred sub meters since 1984. We have noticed recently that there are many sub meters that did not record any electrical usage in 2015. If you are no longer using the electric heating equipment, or the building

Check your sub meter. You will typically find them in your basement or in any building where there is electric heat.



Good: A working submeter will have a good, clear reading. This is saving you money!



Bad: A blank meter is not reading, so the member is not receiving the discounted rate. Check to see if the breaker is off.

***Note: if a sub meter isn't reading, the member is still being charged for those Kwhs. The usage is charged at the regular rate and not the discounted rate.**



Bad: A partial screen reading can be the sign of a faulty sub meter. Call Central Electric as soon as possible.

Electric Co-op Day

Energizing the Grassroots

ENGAGING IN THE POLITICAL ARENA AND MAKING their members' voices heard has been part of the electric cooperative DNA since their emergence 80 years ago.

Those early co-op leaders waged hard-fought battles in state legislatures to create electric cooperatives. They also recognized that working together, their voices carried more weight than any one did alone.

In the years since, electric cooperatives still work to make sure the voices of more than 335,000 South Dakotans who receive power from an electric cooperative are heard.

For the past four years, electric cooperatives in South Dakota have hosted Electric Co-op Day at the Capitol as a way to bring co-op leaders to Pierre to participate in the legislative process. The day is designed to help educate and connect. Some years, there are specific pieces of legislation that co-ops are advocating for. Other years, it's simply an opportunity to observe and be present.

During the day, electric cooperative directors, employees and members attend committee hearings, speak with their elected officials and watch the legislature in action. There's time spent observing, time spent learning

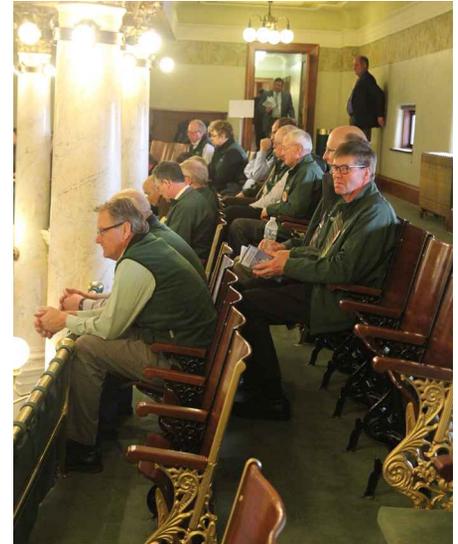


By
Brenda Kleinjan





Left: The South Dakota Senate welcomed the state's electric cooperatives to the chamber during the 2015 Legislative Session. Groups are regularly recognized this way. **Below:** Electric cooperative directors and employees observe the S.D. Senate from the Senate Gallery during the 2015 Co-op Day at the Capitol. **Below left:** H-D Electric director Steve Hansen is ready to put barbecue sauce on Rep. Lee Qualm's pork sandwich. **Opposite Page:** Participants of the 2015 Co-op Day at the Capitol pose for a photo with Sen. Scott Parsley and Rep. Tom Brunner. Weather had some participants leaving early and not waiting for the photo.



and time spent conversing.

For many co-op employees and directors, it's an eye-opening experience. Observing a bill on its journey through committee hearings, and floor debates can sometimes be baffling. Throughout the day, the process becomes less intimidating.

By design, Electric Cooperative Day at the Capitol is held toward the end of the legislative session. The 2016 event is Feb. 23, the 26th of the 91st Legislative Session's 38 days. This year, it is the day before "Crossover Day" the day which bills must emerge from the body where they originated. (In South Dakota, bills are introduced either on the House side or the Senate side. They are considered by committees in the originating body, and, if successful, proceed to that body's full chamber. After floor debate, the bill can be sent to the other side to be considered. If it fails to leave the chamber it started in, it is essentially done.)

Electric cooperatives hold Electric Co-op Day toward the end of session for a variety of reasons. One, other groups who have similar functions throughout the session are typically held at the beginning of session. Two, Electric Co-op Day is an opportunity for co-ops to say thank you to the legislature by hosting a noon meal under the capitol dome.

Want to learn more about South Dakota's Legislative Process? Go to <http://legis.sd.gov/>

Minnesota Legislature

Directors' Day at the Capitol

During the Minnesota Rural Electric Association annual meeting March 21-23, cooperative board directors and managers spend a day at the Minnesota Capitol discussing electric generation, transmission and delivery policy issues with legislators. The directors and managers serve as the frontline for explaining the cooperative position on recently introduced bills being discussed at the Capitol and how they impact electric rates and reliability for rural member-owners.

Grassroots Day at the Capitol

Each legislative session, MREA member distribution cooperatives select delegates from among their employees, directors, member-owners, key account customers and others to meet with state legislators at the Minnesota Capitol. The event is timed to coincide with final committee debates on electricity proposals.

Grassroots advocates share professional and personal expertise on bills that have a critical impact on the day-to-day operations of the cooperatives and the quality and affordability of electricity to the member-owner. The day motivates and engages grassroots advocates in electric issues and strengthens relationships with legislators.



the 50-60's during the draft, Richard and his buddy decided over a pitcher of beer that they would volunteer for the draft and "get it over with." They volunteered for the October draft and both spent 16 months in Korea. Richard was part of the 17th field artillery battalion and surveyed for eight inch guns in target areas. When his lieutenant offered him the battalion mail clerk job, he "couldn't take it fast enough." He'd drive the jeep 20 miles each day down by Seoul to pick up the mail.

Richard said, "Looking down the throat of an enemy sure gives you a different outlook on life." But looking back on his experience, he's glad he served and he'd do his duty in Korea again. "Except he doesn't like rice anymore," Karen added.

Karen (Gilbertson) is originally from Valley City, ND. Karen is an electrician and met Richard while doing some electrical work on the farm house. They met again later when they both worked at the bar in Miller, "Lips Honda Lounge."

Richard and Karen have seven kids, 17 grandkids, and 4 great-grandchildren. Their sons, Brett and Lee Sinkie, will be the 5th generation on the farm. They do have a feeling the farm will stay in the family for a while since their 12 year old grandson recently made the remark, "Someday when I own this place..."

Richard and Karen ranched with a cow/calf operation and also ran a dairy operation for 41 years. They recently sold the dairy cows in 2000, and Richard says he "dearly loves sleeping later in the morning." In 1969, Richard purchased the Quarter Horse Digest publication which covered all 50 states and three foreign countries. He ran that for 20 years.

In 1971, he began sale management for a quarter horse breeder. Shortly after, he began auctioneering. He managed sales and auctioneered in eight states and Canada for about 30 years and ran about 30 sales a year. He also began farm sales and remembers having to stop the sale every hour at the fairgrounds because the coal train would go by, and it would be too loud to talk over.

Karen has managed the Dakota Wild Wings hunting lodge for about 16 years and still does all the electrical work on the farm and in the house. Karen wired their shed on the farm, and when the inspector came to look it, he said, "My, you do nice work." She keeps her wiring nice and straight.

They do consider themselves semi-retired and have taken some time to travel, including to Branson, Missouri and also on the Central Electric Basin Bus Tour.

Richard remembers when electricity came to the homestead: "The REA lit the place up." He said it's the best thing that ever happened to them. They didn't need wind to power their wells and had the convenience of appliances.

For a portion of his life, Richard didn't know what an air conditioner was. He struggled with asthma and hay fever growing up, so he'd lie up at night fighting for air and hoping for a breeze to come through the window. He said, "I remember when we got the first air conditioner. I thought I'd died and gone to heaven."

The longest time they ever went without power was for two weeks in the 60s, perhaps the winter storm of '68-69. The



Richard and Karen, along with sons Brett and Lee, were honored as a 2015 Century Farm Recipient for owning their land for 100 years or more. The award was given by the South Dakota Farm Bureau and South Dakota Department of Agriculture at the South Dakota State Fair last September. Photo retrieved from sdfbf.org

storm took down a lot of line, and they remember milking cows by hand. They knew the crews were working day and night to repair the damage. They just did what they had to do.

Sometime in the 1990s, a storm came through in October. Their oldest son got snowed in there and stayed for four days. They played cards by the kerosene lamp. Karen kept winning, and the men tried to claim she was cheating in the dark. Her son brought out a blow torch at some point and said, "Well, we've got to warm this place up some way," and that's how they warmed up the house.

They also recalled losing power for five days in the winter of 2005-6. They did get a generator after that, but haven't had to use it since—and we're all thankful for that.

While Richard and Karen have received an offer to sell their place, they aren't interested in going anywhere else. They love where they are at and want to see it passed down in the family.

When asked about the best thing that electricity has done for them, they couldn't pinpoint one thing better than another. However, Richard said, "Without it, you're living in the dark. That's all there is to it."

Share Your Story!

Do you or does someone you know remember when electricity came to the home? We'd love to hear your story!

Central Electric Cooperative is made up of many long-term, loyal members —some who have been with us since the beginning! Let us recognize your membership and feature your story.

For those interested, please contact Courtney Deinert or Patrick Soukup at 800-477-2892 or cec@centralelec.coop.

These feature stories were generated by a member's idea. After seeing articles honoring the longevity of the cooperative employees, he asked that we recognize the longevity of those who make up the cooperative — our members.

Youth Tour

JUNE 10-17, 2016 - WASHINGTON, D.C.

What is it? An all expense paid trip to Washington DC.

Who is eligible? Central Electric is sponsoring up to eight lucky students to the Youth Tour. You must be a junior in high school whose primary residence is located in Aurora, Brule, Buffalo, Miner, Jerauld, Sanborn, Davison or Hanson counties or a dependent of a Central Electric member whose primary residence receives electric service from Central Electric. Children of Central Electric employees and directors are not eligible.

What does it cost? The tour is funded by the electric cooperatives of South Dakota who participate in the week-long event. Funding for each participant provides transportation, room and board, entertainment and sightseeing.

How do I apply? Submit an essay, not to exceed 1,000 words, on the following topic:

“As a member-owned, not-for-profit utility, Central Electric Cooperative strives to improve the quality of life for our members. Discuss the benefits of your cooperative membership.”

Essays must be typed and include a cover sheet that states the essay title, entrant’s name, email address, and phone numbers as well as the parent’s/guardian’s name, address, email address, and phone numbers and the school they attend. Winners will be asked to submit a digital photo for use in the cooperative’s newsletter and announcements.

Send your essay to “Washington Youth Tour Contest”, Central Electric Cooperative, PO Box 850, Mitchell SD 57301 by March 1, 2016. All essays remain the property of Central Electric Cooperative.

One student from each county or director district may be awarded a trip to Washington DC.



WWW.CENTRALEC.COOP
WWW.YOUTHTOUR.COOP

Regional Dateline

February 24-28

SD State Dart Tournament
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

February 26-27

SD High School State Wrestling
Tournaments, All Classes
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
Rapid City, SD, 605-224-9261

February 26-28

Sioux Empire Wacipi
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

March 3

Brantley Gilbert
The Blackout Tour, Rushmore
Plaza Civic Center Ice Arena
Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

March 1

Lil' Wayne: The Dedication
Tour, Sioux Falls, SD
605-367-7288

March 4-5

SD High School State Debate
and IE Tournament, Central
High School, Aberdeen, SD

March 4-5

Holiday Arts Spring Craft
Show, Friday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Masonic Temple, Mitchell, SD
Contact Nancy VanOverschelde
at 605-248-2526 or
nanvan@santel.net

March 5

Mitchell Area Safehouse
"Night at the Races"
6:30 to 9:30 p.m.
Highland Conference Center
Mitchell, SD, Tickets can be
purchased at County Fair, \$35



PHOTO COURTESY OF MAKENZIE HUBER/SDSU COLLEGIAN

To have your event listed on this page, send complete information, including date, event, place and contact to your local electric cooperative. Include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Information must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to your event. Please call ahead to confirm date, time and location of event.

Events of Special Note

March 5-8

2016 Summit League
Basketball Championship
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

March 26

Easter Egg Hunt, 10 a.m., City
Park, Wessington Springs, SD
Contact 4-H Extension Office
at 605-539-9471

March 10-12

SD High School State A Girls
Basketball Tournament
Civic Arena, Watertown, SD
605-224-9261, www.sdhsaa.com

March 10-12

SD High School State B Girls
Basketball Tournament
Huron Arena, Huron, SD
605-224-9261

March 12-13

2016 Gun Show
American Legion Hall
Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Sunday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. MST
Philip, SD, 605-859-2635
605-859-2280, 605-859-2892
or 605-859-2219

March 17-19

SD High School State AA Girls
Basketball Tournament
Premier Center, Arena
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-224-9261
www.sdhsaa.com

March 17-19

SD High School State AA Boys
Basketball Tournament
Premier Center, Sioux Falls
Arena, Sioux Falls, SD
605-224-9261

March 17-19

SD High School State A Boys
Basketball Tournament
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
Rapid City, SD, 605-224-9261

March 17-19

SD High School State B Boys
Basketball Tournament
Barnett Center, Aberdeen, SD
605-224-9261

March 18-20

South Dakota Taxidermy
Competition and Convention
Watertown, SD, 712-540-5868

March 19-20

Curt Carter Memorial Gun
Show, Watertown, SD
605-793-2347

April 1-3

Annual Hats Off to the Artists
Art Show, Faulkton, SD
605-598-6525

April 2-3

Professional Bull Riders
Built Ford Tough Series
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

April 8-10

Sioux Empire Film Festival
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-4616

April 9-10

Dakota Territory Gun Show
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

April 14

Red Green "I'm Not Old - I'm
Ripe" Tour, Sioux Falls, SD
605-367-4616

April 23

Jeff Dunham: Perfectly
Unbalanced Tour
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288