

# Cooperative Connections

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Critical Role in  
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# Your Cooperative Operations Remain Solid



**Ken Schlimgen**

General Manager

**This pandemic is an attack to the human side of our business, and people cannot be replaced like broken poles or wires.**

The coronavirus (COVID-19) presents unprecedented challenges for each of us as we adjust to changes in our daily routines. You should take some comfort in knowing your cooperative has a strong record for being prepared for emergencies that can interrupt the delivery of electricity.

We recognize that we provide an essential service to the community and must be prepared to keep our workplace and operations safe during emergencies. Typically, these emergencies have been weather related, but today, we are facing something much different. This pandemic is an attack to the human side of our business, and people cannot be replaced like broken poles or wires.

The health and safety of our members, communities, and employees is always our highest priority. During this challenging time, the cooperative has taken several precautions to limit the spread of the virus while maintaining electric service to our members.

Your cooperative is monitoring the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and our local health officials regarding how to protect our workforce. Our linemen and dispatch center remain ready to respond 24/7 if or when an outage occurs.

We have postponed our Annual Meeting to September 29, and we have closed our offices to public access. Our doors are locked, but we are fully staffed and ready to assist you over the phone, by email or through other means. We are encouraging members to use payment options such as mail, establishing an online account, or making payments by phone. If you are unable to utilize these payment options, there is a drop box located at the Mitchell Office.

We have eliminated employee travel to meetings and are limiting visits into our offices to material deliveries, cleaning services, and only absolutely necessary appointments. We have a large number of employees who are working remotely from their homes, and all our employees are practicing social distancing and proper hygiene.

If you have scheduled service work with us, be prepared to receive a phone call so that we can verify that our visit will be safe for both you and our employee. If you see crews working in the field, please respect their personal space and maintain a safe distance.

We are operating much differently than we were a month ago, but we are still getting our work done and keeping your power flowing. We are closely monitoring this quickly evolving situation and taking necessary actions to protect and continue serving our communities.

There are so many people in our communities that we need to recognize for their role in keeping us safe. Occupations like healthcare workers and emergency responders come to mind quickly, but let's not forget occupations like farmers, truck drivers, janitors, postal workers, teachers, and workers supporting grocery, restaurants, and so many retail stores that we depend on. As you can see, this list is long and certainly not all-inclusive. We should also pray for our leaders who are making hard choices for the common good and offering words of assurance.

All of us at Central Electric know that COVID-19 is a cause for concern. Please be assured that as circumstances continue to develop, we will make decisions with the highest regard for the health and well-being for both you and our employees. I look forward to seeing you in person in September at our annual meeting.

Take Care and Stay Safe.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

(USPS 018-963)

**Board of Directors**

- Duane Wolbrink - President
- Todd VanWalleghen - Vice President
- Bernetta Burghardt - Secretary
- Mark Reindl - Treasurer
- Mark Hofer - NRECA
- Roger Campbell
- Donita Loudner - SDREA
- Darwin "Butch" Morrison
- Jim Headley

**General Manager:** Ken Schlimgen

**Editor:** Courtney J. Deinert - courtneyd@centralec.coop

**Assistant Editor:** Patrick Soukup

CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is the monthly publication for the members of Central Electric Cooperative, PO Box 850, 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 their cooperative and living better with electricity. Also available at [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop).

This cooperative is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found on-line at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202 690-7442) or e-mail at [intake@usda.gov](mailto:intake@usda.gov).

Subscription information: Central Electric Cooperative members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Non-member subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. Periodicals Postage Paid at Central Electric Cooperative, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301, and at additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to Central Electric Cooperative, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301. Address all other correspondence to: Cooperative Connections, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301 Telephone: (605)996-7516; Fax: (605) 996-0869; e-mail: [cec@centralec.coop](mailto:cec@centralec.coop); website: [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop).

**Office Information**

M-F 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
800-477-2892 or 605-996-7516  
[www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop)

**Our office is closed to the public until further notice due to COVID-19.**

**Mission Statement**

Provide Reliable Energy & Services with a Commitment to Safety and Member Satisfaction

**CO-OP NEWS**

**Board Meeting Summary**

The board of directors met on March 16, 2020 at the Betts Road Service Center for the regular board meeting.

The board approved the February 2020 meeting minutes and the February safety meeting minutes. The board then reviewed monthly reports by management including details on operations, member services, communications, service department and the financials.

**Board Report**

Manager Schlimgen updated the board on the following:

- Recent meetings including NISC services and products review, Basin Electric Manager's meeting, SDREA Co-op Day at the Capitol, RESCO services and products review, East River Strategic Planning call, area cracker barrels, and East River Managers meeting.
- Grace Konechne named Scholar of the Week.
- Capital credit balance and history of retirements.
- Annual Meeting to be held on April 6 with the option to postpone.
- 2020 Legislative update and final status of House Bill 1262 as tabled in the Senate Commerce and Utility committee.
- Three (3) recent REED loan applications in the Central Electric area.
- Reviewed precautions Central Electric is taking in light of the coronavirus.

Eide Bailly gave the auditor's report for 2019 via teleconference.

All directors reviewed Policy 746

regarding the safety committee and procedures.

Director Hofer gave a report on the NRECA board meeting.

Director Wolbrink gave a report on the East River Electric board meeting.

**Board Action**

The board considered and/or acted upon the following:

1. Approved a contract with CMC Excavation from Emery, SD.
2. Approved the Auditor's Report by Eide Bailly for 2019.
3. Approved postponing the Annual Meeting to a later date due to COVID-19 concerns.
4. Approved adopting Policy 105 for appropriate use and access of records.
5. Approved revisions to Policy 302 regarding cost share between the cooperative and respective member when upgrading facilities.
6. Approved contract renewal with WAPA, East River Electric, and Mid Dakota Rural Water.
7. Approved a member loan application.
8. Reviewed an amendment to the 2019-22 work plan approved by RUS.
9. Approved Inventory of Work Orders No. 228, 228-1 and 228-3 for a total of \$134,325.55.

The next board of directors meeting will be held April 20, 2020.

*Please contact the cooperative office for more information regarding the board meeting.*

Financial Report	February 2020	Year-to-Date
kWh Sales	30,280,173 kWhs	64,542,213 kWhs
Electric Revenues	\$ 2,929,378	\$ 6,098,395
Total Cost of Service	\$ 2,880,353	\$ 5,842,899
Operating Margins	\$ 49,025	\$ 255,496

## 10 Steps to Avoid Scams

There are thousands of new scams every year and you can't keep up with all of them (we know, we try!). But if you can just remember these 10 things, you can avoid most scams and help protect yourself and your family.

- 1) Never send money to someone you have never met face-to-face.** Seriously, just don't ever do it. And really, really don't do it if they ask you to use wire transfer, a prepaid debit card or a gift card (those cannot be traced and are as good as cash).
- 2) Don't click on links or open attachments in unsolicited email.** Links can download malware onto your computer and/or steal your identity. Be cautious even with email that looks familiar; it could be fake.
- 3) Don't believe everything you see.** Scammers are great at mimicking official seals, fonts and other details. Just because a website or email looks official does not mean that it is. Even Caller ID can be faked.
- 4) Don't buy online unless the transaction is secure.** Make sure the website has "https" in the URL (the extra s is for "secure") and a small lock icon on the address bar. Even then, the site could be shady. Check out the company first at BBB.org. Read reviews about the quality of the merchandise and make sure you are not buying cheap and/or counterfeit goods.
- 5) Be extremely cautious when dealing with anyone you've met online.** Scammers use dating websites, Craigslist, social media and many other sites to reach potential targets. They can quickly feel like a friend or even a romantic partner, but that is part of the con to get you to trust them.
- 6) Never share personally identifiable information with someone who has contacted you unsolicited, whether it's over the phone, by email, on social media, even at your front door.** This includes banking and credit card information, your birthdate and Social Security/Social Insurance numbers.
- 7) Don't be pressured to act immediately.** Scammers typically try to make you think something is scarce or a limited time offer. They want to push you into action before you have time to think or to discuss it with a family member, friend or financial advisor. High-pressure sales tactics are also used by some legitimate businesses, but it's never a good idea to make an important decision quickly.
- 8) Use secure, traceable transactions when making payments for goods, services, taxes and debts.** Do not pay by wire transfer, prepaid money card, gift card or other non-traditional payment method. Say no to cash-only deals, high pressure sales tactics, high upfront payments, overpayments and handshake deals without a contract.
- 9) Whenever possible, work with local businesses that have proper identification, licensing and insurance, especially contractors who will be coming into your home or anyone dealing with your money or sensitive information.** Check them out at BBB.org to see what other consumers have experienced.
- 10) Be cautious about what you share on social media and consider only connecting with people you already know.** Be sure to use privacy settings on all social media and online accounts. Imposters often get information about their targets from their online interactions and can make themselves sound like a friend or family member because they know so much about you.

Source: [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)



**Utility service has never been more important.**

If you're planning landscaping or any other digging projects, contact 811 first – the kids telelearning and adults telecommuting will thank you.

Call 811 or go to your state 811 center's website before digging.

Call811.com/811-your-state




Stay safe during social distancing by calling 811 before starting any new project, so you can stay connected to the internet and utility services you rely on.

Call 811 or go to your state 811 center's website before digging.

Call811.com/811-your-state



## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"Do not play around electrical boxes."**

Kayla Engelbrecht, 9 years old

Kayla is the grand-daughter of Alan and JoAnn Engelbrecht, Brandon, 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.

# Comforting Casseroles

## Chicken-Broccoli-Rice Casserole

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1 lb. chicken tenders or boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch strips | 2 tsp. onion powder                     |
| 1 cup long grain rice  | 1-1/2 tsp. rosemary leaves, crushed     |
| 1-1/2 cups Kitchen Basics® Original Chicken Stock                                  | 1/2 tsp. pepper                         |
| 1 cup milk   | 1/2 tsp. salt                           |
| 2 tsp. garlic powder   | 2 cups fresh or frozen broccoli florets |
|  | 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese           |

Spread chicken and rice in greased 2-quart baking dish. Mix stock, milk and seasonings in medium bowl with wire whisk until well blended. Slowly pour over chicken and rice. Cover with foil. Bake at 400°F. for 45 minutes. Remove foil. Stir in broccoli. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake, uncovered, 15 minutes longer or until rice has absorbed all the liquid and broccoli is tender. Makes 6 (1 cup) servings.

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 317, Total Fat 9g, Cholesterol 69mg, Sodium 492mg, Carbohydrates 31g, Fiber 1g, Protein 28g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Ham and Rye Casserole

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 cup chopped onion                                      | 1 (8 oz) pkg. American cheese, cubed |
| 1/2 cup chopped celery                                   | 2-1/2 cups milk                      |
| 1/4 cup butter   | 3 eggs                               |
| 4 cups cubed rye bread                                   | 1-1/2 tsp. prepared mustard          |
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. ham, cut into strips or may use cubed ham | Salt and pepper, to taste            |

In a saucepan, saute onion and celery in butter until tender. In a 2-quart buttered baking dish, combine onion, celery, bread, ham and half the cheese. In a bowl, beat together milk, eggs, mustard, salt and pepper until well blended. Pour over all; top with remaining cheese. Bake at 350°F. for 1 hour or until golden brown and puffed.

**Martha Mehlhaff, Aberdeen, SD**

## Corn Casserole

- |                                  |                          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 cup broken spaghetti, uncooked | 1/2 cup milk             |
| 1 can cream-style corn           | 1 can whole kernel corn  |
| 1 cup cubed processed cheese     | Diced onions, optional   |
|                                  | Salt and pepper to taste |

Combine all ingredients in a 1.5-quart casserole. Bake at 350°F. for 1 hour, stirring after the first 30 minutes.

**Emily Luikens, Tea, SD**

## Cheesy Potato Beef Bake

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1 lb. ground beef                                      | 2 tsp. butter                 |
| 2 (4 oz. each) cans mushroom stems and pieces, drained | 1 tsp. salt                   |
| 2 (5-1/4 oz. each) pkgs. au gratin potatoes            | 1/2 tsp. seasoned salt        |
| 4 cups boiling water                                   | 1/2 tsp. pepper               |
| 1-1/3 cups milk  | 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese |

In a skillet over medium heat, cook beef until no longer pink; drain. Place in a greased 9x13-inch baking pan. Top with mushrooms. Combine potatoes and contents of sauce mix packets, water, milk, butter, salt, seasoned salt and pepper. Pour over beef and mushrooms. Cover and bake at 400°F. for 30 minutes or until heated through. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake, uncovered, for 5 minutes longer or until cheese is melted. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

**Stephanie Fossum, Hudson, SD**

Please send your favorite dairy, dessert or vegetarian 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 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

## Operation Round-Up Deadline Approaching

**The next application deadline for Operation Round-Up funds is May 1, 2020.**

Funds will be awarded shortly after the deadline to organizations or individuals in our local communities.

Operation Round-Up is intended to benefit people and organizations within the Central Electric service area. The funding is focused on impacting the following categories:

- Community Service
- Environment
- Economic Development
- Disaster Relief
- Emergency Energy Assistance
- Education and Youth

Applications can be found at [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop) or by contacting our office.

Thank you to our members who participate in Operation Round-Up and make this possible. **Since the program's initiation in 2015, our members have invested over \$96,800 back into our local communities!** Your donation makes a direct impact in keeping money local and growing our communities.

The average donation per member is \$6.00 per year. To sign up for Operation Round-Up, visit [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop) or contact our office.



## White Lake Senior Grace Konechne Earns \$250 Scholarship

# Scholar of the Week

Grace Konechne was named the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week for the week of February 24 -29, 2020.

Konechne is the daughter of Merlin and Jacki Konechne and currently a senior at White Lake High School.

In addition to her 4.0 GPA, Konechne is an athlete, musician, and active member of both her school through volleyball, basketball, choir, band, student council, HOBY, and church as an accompanist.

Konechne is also a National Merit® Scholar Semi-Finalist, which Superintendent Robert Schroeder notes is the first time he can recall in White Lake history.

Konechne plans to attend South Dakota State University for data science.

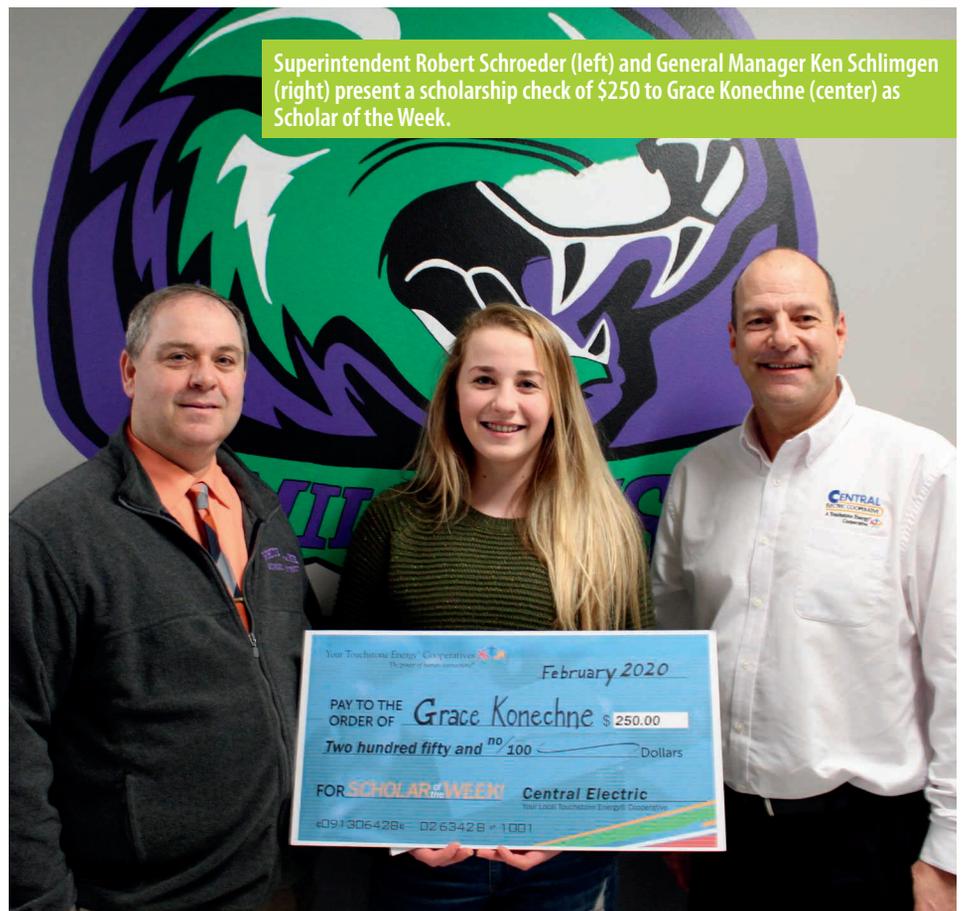
Central Electric Manager Ken Schlingmen

visited White Lake High School to recognize Konechne and present her with a \$250 scholarship.

Konechne was also featured by Dakota News Now and her interview can be found on [dakotane.ws](http://dakotane.ws).

Through the Scholar of the Week scholarship, Dakota News Now and Touchstone Energy Cooperatives recognize outstanding students across the state who set an example of hard work and high academic standards.

Area school principals and faculty nominate students for this award, based on excellence in the classroom, service in the community and extracurricular participation. The Dakota News Now staff makes weekly selections throughout the school year.



Superintendent Robert Schroeder (left) and General Manager Ken Schlingmen (right) present a scholarship check of \$250 to Grace Konechne (center) as Scholar of the Week.

# Employees' Years of Service



**Curt Guindon**

Area Foreman  
May 1 - 43 years



**Rodney Weber**

Journeyman Electrician  
May 1 - 8 years



**Courtney Deinert**

Mgr of Communications  
May 1 - 6 years



**Dusty Roskens**

Line Superintendent  
May 8 - 25 years



**Wade Brozik**

HVAC Technician  
May 14 - 13 years



**Dustin Weier**

Journeyman Lineman  
May 16 -13 years



**Donn Koster**

Lead HVAC Technician  
May 17 - 21 years



**Paul Koch**

Journeyman Lineman  
May 21 - 19 years

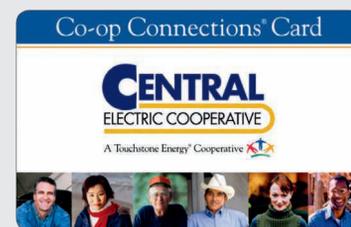


**Aaron Punt**

HVAC Installer  
May 24 - 10 years

**Thank you for your continued years of service to the cooperative!**

## Local Discounts with your Co-op Connections® Card



Your cooperative membership earns you discounts at local participating businesses.

Simply show your Co-op Connections Discount Card and save.

- 1) **OnSight 24/7, Mitchell, SD;**  
10% off products and services.
- 2) **Photography Unlimited, Mitchell, SD;**  
Free session & 10% off your order.
- 3) **The Pin Cushion, Mitchell, SD;**  
Buy 1 Aurifil thread at regular price and get 2nd one at 50% off.
- 4) **Rob's Short Stop, Mitchell, SD;**  
5% off of seafood purchase of \$20 or over;
- 5) **Sun Gold Sports, Inc, Mitchell, SD;**  
15% off storewide, some exclusions apply.
- 6) **Tessiers, Inc., Mitchell, SD;**  
10% discount on residential service or maintenance work only. Cannot be used in conjunction with any other discount or commercial work or installations.

For a full list of ways to save, visit [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop).

To request a card or become a participating business, visit [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop) or call 800-477-2892 or 605-996-7516.





# A DEADLY MISTAKE

## Family Shares Grief to Teach Others

**Shayla Ebsen**

sebsen@eastriver.coop

June 7, 2016, is a day that will be forever imprinted in Greg McCann's mind. It began as a normal June day on his farm in southeastern South Dakota. The crops had been planted and, like every year in June, they were needing to be sprayed. Greg's 35-year-old son, Grant, helped out on the farm and planned to spray the fields that day.

"He went and got the sprayer filled and ready. After he got the sprayer ready and conditions were right, well, then, he went to spray," said Greg. "He called me to see if I could move an irrigator for him and that was the last time I talked to him. He entered the field and the driveway to the field went under a power line."

Unfortunately, Grant didn't drive far enough into the field. He stopped at an angle close to the power lines. As he began unfolding the 90-foot sprayer booms, they touched the energized power line, which instantly electrified the tractor.

"He tried to call Wayne, the young man who runs my farm, but he wasn't able to get through because there was so much static, so we don't know what happened after that," said Greg.

The sprayer was caught in a Bon Homme Yankton Electric Cooperative distribution power line. Co-op Electrician Kevin Meyer was just a few miles away when he and his apprentice received an outage call.

"A radio call came across that another neighbor farmer was out of power as it started out as an individual outage," said Meyer. "We packed up our tools and stuff and left the yard. As we were leaving the yard, I received another call from a supervisor saying that we got a call that there's a



Thirty-five-year-old Grant McCann was involved in a fatal accident involving a sprayer and a power line in 2016.

**There's  
no fix.  
There's no  
second  
chances."**

sprayer that looks like it might have made contact with a line that's probably the first place to go and it's looking like we have more consumers out."

Meyer and his apprentice didn't know what they might discover but knew they had to move fast.

"As we're rolling up on scene, one neighbor was there sitting on the road on his four-wheeler and he just said someone is down in front of the tractor," said Meyer. "It was very tough to see other than you could see someone was there but didn't know who it was and at that particular time, I knew that it could be Greg, Grant or my cousin, Wayne. So, in all that, you're mentally preparing yourself for what you're about to discover."

What they would discover is that Grant made a mistake that would end his life. Rather than staying in the cab and waiting for help, he had stepped out of the sprayer.

"The consequences of that mistake took my only son," said Greg. "He was my friend, my partner, my confidant. Now every day I remember that terrible morning and I see Grant lying dead on the ground. There's no fix. There's no second chances."

No one can know what was going through Grant's head at the moment he left the cab. But Greg wants others to learn from that mistake, so it doesn't happen to anyone else.

"If Grant would've stayed in the tractor and not touched anything, I think he'd be here today. But he didn't," said Greg. "I don't want anyone to have to experience the sadness and the emptiness that I and Grant's family and friends are experiencing and will be experiencing for a long, long time."

## The consequences of that mistake took my only son.

Do you know what to do if a vehicle you're in contacts a power line? First, stay in the vehicle and call 911 for help. If you must exit the vehicle because of a fire, tuck your arms across your body and jump clear of any wires with your feet together, never touching the equipment and ground at the same time. Then shuffle or hop at least 40 feet away with your feet together. Stay away

from the equipment until the authorities tell you it is safe.

"People get in a hurry and they don't regard the risk as a risk and one mistake and it's too late," said Greg. "The consequences are so grim and terrible, that there's no good reason not to be really careful and be aware of where you're at and the machinery you're using and where it's located. Once it's done, there's no turning back."

With the spread of COVID-19 into our region as well as the pandemic's financial impacts, everyone has a lot on their mind this year. Letting distractions take your mind away from work in the fields significantly increases the likelihood of farming accidents. Minimize distractions and stay focused in the fields. If you notice your mind wandering at any point, bring it back to the task at hand.

As we enter this year's planting and spraying seasons, remain aware of where electrical equipment is located when you're working on the farm and remember the steps to take if your equipment contacts a power line. You could save your life, or the life of someone you love. Visit [poweringyoursafety.com](http://poweringyoursafety.com) to learn more.



Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives



# PoweringYourSafety.com

KNOW WHAT TO DO IF YOU HIT A POWER LINE

## STAY PUT



If your equipment contacts a power line, stay inside.  
**DO NOT EXIT. Call 911.**

## JUMP CLEAR



If you must exit due to a fire, jump from the equipment so that no part of your body touches the equipment and ground at the same time. Hop or shuffle with your feet together at least 40 feet away.

## STAY AWAY



When you are clear of the area, call for help and keep others away. **DO NOT** approach your vehicle again until utility crews and emergency responders tell you it is safe.

## Renewable Energy Credit Program Available

Central Electric members now have the opportunity to power their homes or businesses with 100% renewable energy harnessed from wind power.

### How does it work?

To participate, members purchase renewable energy credits (RECs).

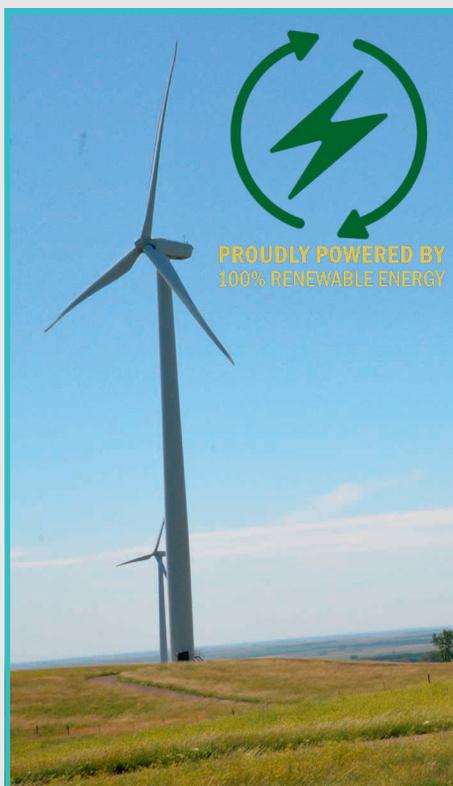
RECs are produced when wind farms generate power. The RECs represent the valuable renewable attributes of that energy form.

### How much does it cost?

The cost is \$1.00 per REC, which equals 1 MWh (or 1,000 kWhs).

If your monthly usage is 1,200 kWhs, your cost is \$1.20 plus tax, in addition to your regular electric bill.

To sign up or for more information, contact our office or visit [www.centralelec.coop](http://www.centralelec.coop)!



## Electric Cooperatives to Purchase Power from South Dakota's Largest Solar Project

### Wild Springs Solar Project

Central Electric Cooperative is adding solar power to its generation mix thanks to a 128 megawatt (MW) solar energy project that will be constructed near New Underwood, S.D., and is projected to be operational by 2022.

On Feb. 18, Geronimo Energy, a National Grid company, and Basin Electric Power Cooperative announced the execution of a Power Purchase Agreement for the Wild Springs Solar Project.

Once operational, Wild Springs will be the largest solar project in S.D. It will be located about 20 miles east of Rapid City.

“For the first time in its history, Basin Electric will buy solar generation on a large scale to serve our members. The board’s decision to add solar generation to our resource portfolio is to continue with our all-of-the-above strategy, as well as solar generation becoming a more economic energy source,” said Paul Sukut, CEO and General Manager of Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

Basin Electric is a not-for-profit wholesale power provider. In S.D., Basin Electric transmits power supply to two generation and transmission (G&T) cooperatives, Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative and East River Electric Power Cooperative.

Central Electric is a member of East River Electric. In 2019, nearly 38 percent of East River’s power supply mix came from wind and hydropower generation. That percent is projected to increase as new renewable sources, including the Wild Springs project, are added to the mix.

“Our cooperative network is always looking to ensure we have a mix of power resources to meet the needs of our membership and

renewable energy is an important part of that strategy,” said East River Electric General Manager Tom Boyko. “This project with Geronimo Energy is an important strategic step as we look to the future in continuing our strong history of providing safe, affordable and reliable power.”

The Wild Springs project has been supported by local and state community members and will bring significant economic benefits to the local area. Current estimations for the project’s economic benefits total over \$17 million throughout the first 20 years of operation, including positive impacts in new tax revenue, construction jobs, new full-time jobs, and charitable funds through the project’s Education Fund. The Wild Springs Education Fund alone will offer approximately \$500,000 in donations to the local school districts connected to the project above and beyond all tax revenue and local spending benefits.

“Historically, there has been a misconception that solar in the northern regions of the United States wasn’t feasible,” stated David Reamer, President for Geronimo Energy. “Both Geronimo and Basin Electric recognized that the addition of solar to its overall generation fleet not only offers customers a clean, economic option for their electricity, but it also diversifies a utility’s portfolio.”

Geronimo’s S.D. operating project portfolio includes the recently completed Crocker Wind Farm, a 200 MW wind project in Clark County. Geronimo also successfully developed the operational Pierre Solar Project, a joint effort with the City of Pierre and Missouri River Energy Services, located in Hughes County.



## Tax Credits Extended on Energy Efficient Home Purchases and Upgrades

# Maximize Savings



**Lincoln Feistner**

Sales/Project Manager

Not only will energy efficient purchases save you money on your electric bill, but there are current tax credits available for you to maximize your savings.

The following credits are available retroactively beginning January 1, 2018 through the end of this year, December 31, 2020.

These credits are only available on existing homes or renovation and not new construction.

### Air-Source Heat Pumps

Heat Pumps that are ENERGY STAR® certified meet the requirements for this tax credit.

**Tax Credit Amount: \$300**

#### Requirements

- Split Systems
  - HSPF  $\geq$  8.5
  - EER  $\geq$  12.5
  - SEER  $\geq$  15
- Package Systems
  - HSPF  $\geq$  8
  - EER  $\geq$  12
  - SEER  $\geq$  14

### Central Air Conditioning

Air conditioners recognized as ENERGY STAR® Most Efficient meet the requirements for this tax credit.

**Tax Credit Amount: \$300**

#### Requirements

- Split Systems
  - SEER  $\geq$  16
  - EER  $\geq$  13
- Package Systems
  - SEER  $\geq$  14
  - EER  $\geq$  12

### Advanced Main Air Circulating Fan

An advanced main air circulating fan is an efficient fan, or blower motor, which blows the air that your furnace heats up through the duct system.

**Tax Credit Amount: \$50**

#### Requirements

- Must use no more than 2 percent of the furnace's total energy.

Other tax credits are available for energy efficiency improvements such as insulation, roofing, windows, doors, skylights, electric heat pump water heaters, and even renewable energy systems.

For all tax advice, please contact your tax professional as they can best assist you.

If you have questions about whether your purchase meets the energy efficiency requirements, give us a call.



## Spring Prizes for All Ages

While our members are home-bound, we have something for all ages to have some fun and win!

### Bucket Truck Design Contest

**Eligibility:** All kids 16 & under

**Rules:** Request a cardboard bucket truck by visiting [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop). Design and assemble your bucket truck. Then post a picture to Facebook with #CECBucketTruckContest or email to [cec@centralec.coop](mailto:cec@centralec.coop).

**Prize:** Ten (10) entries will be drawn to receive a stainless steel water bottle.



### Senior Scholarship Drawing

**Eligibility:** Member-dependents who are currently high school seniors and plan to enroll in a post-secondary institution

**Rules:** Visit [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop) and complete the cooperative quiz. Fill out your information at the end.

**Prize:** Ten (10) participants will be drawn for a \$100 scholarship.

### SmartHub \$25 Energy Certificate Drawing

**Eligibility:** All members

**Rules:** Sign up for a SmartHub account at [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop). If you already have an account, log in and follow the instructions in the notifications to enter.

**Prize:** Fifty (50) members will be drawn for a \$25 energy certificate.

**All entries must be completed by May 10th.**



# 3M ABERDEEN PLAYING CRITICAL ROLE IN COVID-19 RESPONSE

Plant Is Producing Millions of N95 Respirators

**Ben Dunsmoor**

[bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop](mailto:bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop)

Standing outside the 430,000-square-foot 3M plant in Aberdeen, S.D., you can hear the whirl of productivity. The Aberdeen plant makes N95 masks which have been one of the most crucial pieces of personal protective equipment for frontline personnel responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Andrew Rehder, the manager of the 3M Aberdeen plant, told *Bloomberg Businessweek*, in a story published in March, that the Aberdeen plant has been operating at ‘surge capacity’ since the end of January.

“I just think as we’ve continued to see things spread across the world, it’s put more responsibility on us to make sure that every day and every minute we’re making every mask we can,” Rehder told Bloomberg.

It has also put a responsibility on Northern Electric Cooperative to ensure the 3M plant has a consistent and reliable source of power. Northern Electric has served the plant with electricity since it was constructed in 1974.



N95 respirators are loaded onto a jet at the Aberdeen Regional Airport in April. The masks produced at the 3M Aberdeen plant are being shipped directly to areas of the country that need them the most. (Photo Courtesy: 3M Twitter account / [twitter.com/3M](https://twitter.com/3M))

“We know the 3M plant in Aberdeen is playing a critical role in the response to this global pandemic,” Northern Electric Cooperative CEO/General Manager Char Hager said. “Northern Electric also recognizes that our co-op plays a crucial role in supplying 3M with reliable electricity and we take that responsibility seriously.”

The masks being produced in Aberdeen are being shipped across the country just as fast as they are being manufactured. A jet has been sitting at the Aberdeen Regional Airport during April to transport N95 respirators from the Aberdeen plant directly to areas of the country that need them most.

3M CEO Mike Roman said in a blog post on the company’s website that 500,000 masks were shipped from the Aberdeen plant at the end of March to New York and Seattle. Both of those cities have recorded some of the largest number of COVID-19 cases in the country. 3M expects a total global output of 1.1 billion masks this year and they are planning investments in the next 60 to 90 days that will double that capacity to 2 billion masks globally within the next 12 months.

“We continue to act with urgency to address this crisis from every angle and do all we can to protect our heroic nurses,

doctors and first responders,” Roman said in a statement on the company’s website.

This isn’t the first time the Aberdeen plant has been called upon to increase production during an emergency. The plant has also played a critical role in making masks for the SARS, bird-flu and H1N1 outbreaks, as well as the Mount Saint Helens’ eruption, Hurricane Katrina and numerous forest fires.

**“We know the 3M plant in Aberdeen is playing a critical role in the response to this global pandemic.”**

– Char Hager, Northern Electric CEO/General Manager

Northern Electric Cooperative has been in contact with local and corporate 3M managers and executives to ensure the Aberdeen plant has the power supply it needs as the company responds to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We have communicated our response plans to 3M officials and have assured them that our crews will be ready and

available to respond to any emergency or outage,” Hager said. “We have also been in contact with our wholesale power supplier, East River Electric Power Cooperative, and we have told 3M that supplying their plant in Aberdeen with reliable electricity is the top priority for our cooperatives.”

The Aberdeen 3M plant is the city’s second-largest employer with 650 employees. But, Rehder told *Bloomberg Businessweek* that the plant now has more than 700 employees who are working around the clock to make sure health care workers and first responders across the country have the masks they need to protect them from COVID-19.

“People are very proud to work in a place that is making respirators, especially with the need that is out there now,” Rehder said.

Hager said the increased production at the plant in Aberdeen and the hard work of 3M employees is a perfect example of rural America stepping up to help the country during this time of uncertainty.

“We are proud of the work they do at the plant and we are proud of our co-op employees who are dedicated to keeping the lights on for 3M and for all our co-op members,” Hager said.



Northern Electric Cooperative is the power supplier for the 3M plant in Aberdeen which has been operating at ‘surge capacity’ since January in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



# Understanding OPIOID ADDICTION

Jocelyn Romey

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One in four people who are prescribed opioids struggle with addiction. This is only one statistic from the South Dakota Department of Health that resonates how powerful and potentially dangerous opioids can be.

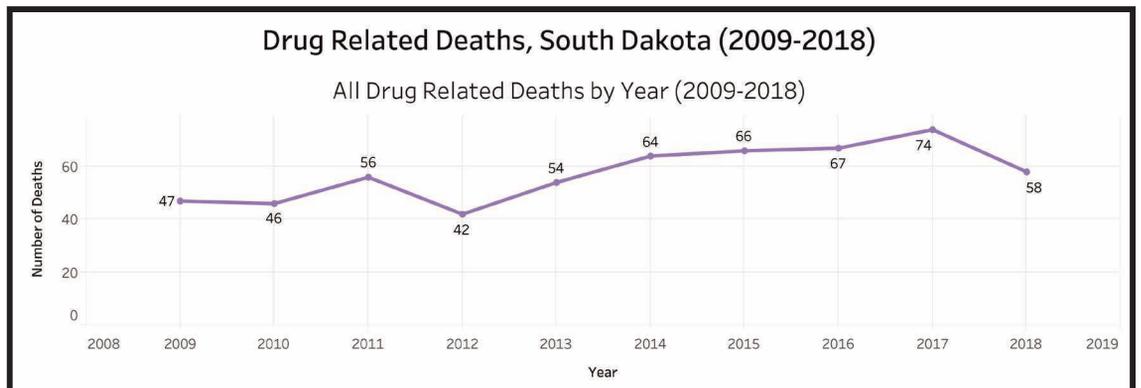
Opioids are a strong narcotic commonly prescribed for chronic pain after injury or surgery. Many know of the extreme addiction and destructive use of heroin – an unlawful opioid, but other opioid addictions may not be as visible if prescribed. A dependency can begin before anyone is aware of an addiction. Unintentional misuse or overdose of prescription opioids are also risks for anyone who takes them.

“My addiction started out very innocently. I had a back issue and so I was prescribed some Vicodin for it...and then I couldn’t stop, I couldn’t turn back. I felt hopeless,” said one woman from Pierre in an Avoid Opioid Prescription Addiction video. “Opioids deserve to be treated with respect. I think the seriousness of it isn’t always understood by people until it’s too late. People do recover and they can recover.”

An opioid addiction is actually considered a disorder and the National Institute on Drug Abuse has labeled drug addiction and opioid use disorder as a chronic disease characterized by drug use that is difficult to control despite harmful consequences. Many people mistakenly think that

## Prescription Opioid Side Effects

- Increased sensitivity to pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- Constipation
- Sleepiness and dizziness
- Dry mouth, itching and sweating
- Confusion
- Low energy and depression
- Low levels of testosterone which can result in lower sex drive



those who use drugs lack willpower or moral principles and that they could stop their drug use simply by choosing to. In reality, quitting usually takes more than good intentions or a strong will.

Due to the harmful nature of these drugs, there are risks associated with taking opioids – addiction, long-term health problems, paralysis and death. In South Dakota, opioid-related deaths are lower than the national average, but the numbers have been on a steady rise since 2012.

Research shows that drug overdose deaths tend to overly impact rural communities despite having lower drug use rates than urban communities. In 2009, deaths from drug overdose surpassed deaths from motor vehicle accidents in the U.S. Sixty percent of these drug overdose deaths in rural areas are due to injection-related HIV, hepatitis C and other bloodborne infections while using illicit prescription opioids and heroin.

More in-depth statistics on opioid vulnerability assessments by county are available through South Dakota’s Department of Health website or via <https://doh.sd.gov/statistics/VulnerabilityAssessment.aspx>.

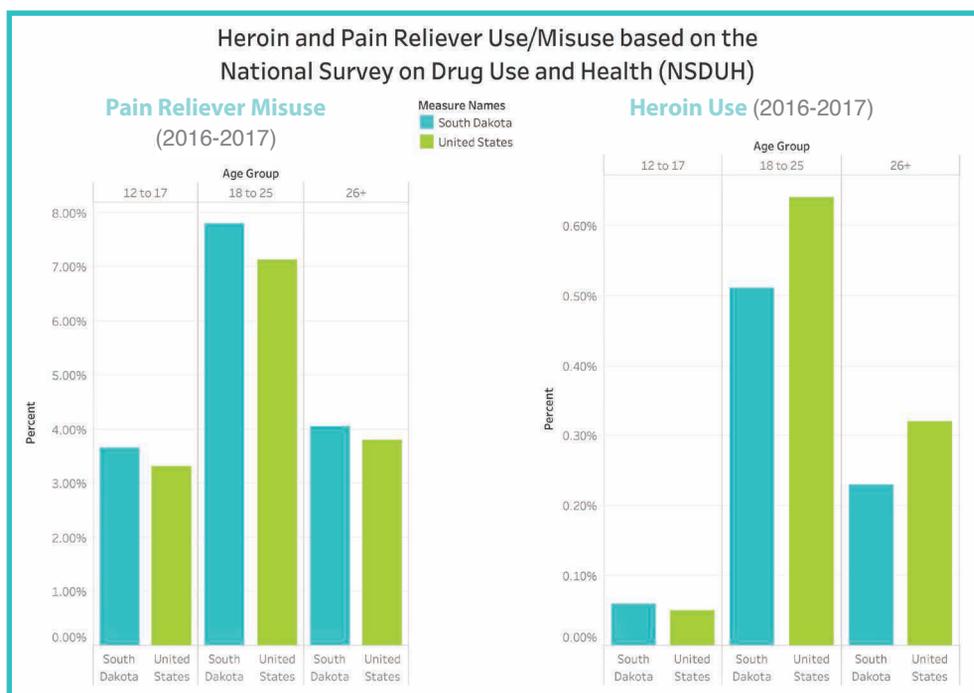
People who are addicted to opioids may seek and use them compulsively despite harmful consequences. The following are common warning signs of misuse, abuse or addiction to opioids given by South Dakota’s Department of Health.

- Neglecting responsibilities at work, school or home because of drug use.
- Using drugs under dangerous conditions or taking risks such as driving while on drugs.
- Drug use that results in legal trouble such as stealing to support a drug habit.
- Drug use that causes problems in relationships such as arguments with family members and loss of friends.
- People affected by drug addiction may stop participating in activities they once enjoyed and may use drugs even when they realize the drugs could be causing problems.

Source: South Dakota Department of Health

## Commonly Prescribed Opioids

- Actiq
- Astramorph
- Codeine
- Conzip
- Demerol
- DepoDur
- Dilaudid
- Duragesic
- Duramorph
- Endocet
- Exalgo
- Hydrocodone (Vicodin)
- Hydromorphone
- Fentanyl
- Lorcet
- Lortab
- Meperidine
- Methadone
- Morphine
- MS-Contin
- Norco
- Oxycodone (Oxycontin/Oxecta)
- Percocet
- Roxicet
- Roxicodone
- Tramadol
- Ultram
- Ventura



### Resource Hotline

Call **1-800-920-4343**. Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It's free and confidential.

Our trained specialists can connect you with **Opioid Care Coordination**, social support, counseling, treatment options, and services in your area.

Find out **what happens when you call the Resource Hotline**, and how we can help you or a loved one.

### Opioid Texting Support

Text **OPIOID** to **898211** to connect with local resources that best fit your needs. Answer a few questions and get help for yourself or a loved one who is struggling.



**Note:** Please make sure to call ahead to verify the event is still being held.

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## May 15-17

State Parks Open House and Free Fishing Weekend, Pierre, SD, 605-773-3391

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## May 23-24

Annual SDRA Foothills Rodeo, Wessington Springs, SD, 605-770-4370

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## May 29-30

South Dakota Regional Senior Games, Sioux Falls, SD, Contact Nick Brady at 605-978-6924

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## June 4-7

Wheel Jam, SD State Fairgrounds, Huron, SD

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## June 5-6

Senior Games, Spearfish, SD, Contact Brett Rauterhaus at 605-722-1430

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## June 5-6

SD BBQ Championships, SD State Fairgrounds, Huron, SD

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## June 5-7

Fort Sisseton Historical Festival, Lake City, SD, 605-448-5474

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## June 5-7

Regional Qualifying High School Rodeos:  
■ Rodeo Grounds, Wall, SD, 605-529-5868  
■ Rodeo Grounds, Highmore, SD, 605-529-5868  
■ Tipperary Arena, Buffalo, SD, 605-529-5868  
■ Heartland Arena, Huron, SD, 605-529-5868

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## June 6-7

Siouxland Renaissance Festival, Sioux Falls, SD, 866-489-9241



**May 9:**  
Traditional Wacipi at the Dignity Statue, Chamberlain, SD, 605-234-5472

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## June 11, August 13 and October 8

Kids Mystery Dinner Theater, Brookings, SD, 605-692-6700

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## June 12-14

Regional Qualifying High School Rodeos:  
■ Tripp County Fairgrounds, Winner, SD, 605-529-5868  
■ Rodeo Grounds, Sturgis, SD, 605-529-5868  
■ Rodeo Grounds, Dupree, SD, 605-529-5868  
■ Derby Downs Arena, Watertown, SD, 605-529-5868

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## June 16-21

SD State High School Finals Rodeo, Stanley County Fairgrounds, Fort Pierre, SD, 605-529-5868

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## June 25-27

Red Power Round Up, Fairgrounds, Huron, SD, 605-460-0197  
redpowerroundup2020.com

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## June 26-27

Senior Games, Madison, SD, Contact Bernie Schuurmans at 605-270-3327

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## July 14

Rock Nobles Cattlemen 2020 Summer Beef Tour, Nobles County Fairgrounds, Register Before June 1: \$20, After June 1: \$40, Worthington, MN, 507-967-2380, www.mnsca.org

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## July 31-August 1

Plein Air & Arts in the Garden, Wessington Springs, SD, Call 605-354-3826

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## August 1

Rockin' Ribfest BBQ Competition, Wessington Springs, SD, Call 605-505-1135

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## August 1

Foothills Classic Car, Truck & Motorcycle Show, Wessington Springs, SD, Call 605-350-1687

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## August 22

World of Outlaw Sprint Car Races plus Wissota MWM, Dakota State Fair Speedway, Huron, SD, 605-352-4848

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## October 7-8

Energize! Explore Innovative Rural Communities Conference, Milbank, SD, <https://extension.sdstate.edu>

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.