

# Cooperative Connections

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A Mark of  
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WWII  
1942  
HARLEY  
DAVIDSON

## Improving Quality of Life Back Then and Now: A Very Special Mission



**Ken Schlimgen**

General Manager

**Central Electric's board took two actions in May to help the cooperative and our membership.**

Farmers and ranchers formed America's electric cooperatives more than 75 years ago on a mission to secure electricity and improve the quality of life for their families and their communities. Today we are facing a challenge from COVID19 that has negatively impacted the quality of life for many of our cooperative members and business owners. And it's not only affecting our entire service area; it's affecting the entire world.

Last month, I mentioned that your cooperative was operating on thin margins and doing all we can to maintain our current electric rates. I also mentioned that we are actively looking into additional ways to help our membership through this critical time. I am pleased to announce that Central Electric's board took two actions in May to help the cooperative and our membership.

**The first action was to apply for and accept a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan.**

The purpose of the PPP loan program is to provide financial support to businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Electric cooperatives have been specifically declared eligible entities by the U.S. Department of Treasury and the Small Business Administration to receive these funds. There are several reasons for the cooperative's decision to apply for and accept PPP support.

- The economic health of your cooperative is tied to the well-being of our members and communities. Over the past several months, many businesses have had to close doors or reduce employee hours, which impacts our members' ability to pay their bills. Many of our members in agriculture have been significantly impacted by the shutdown of meat processing facilities, a reduction in demand for corn due to the slowdown of the ethanol industry and animal production industry, and overall lower commodity prices.
- The cooperative's Kwh sales are below budget as many businesses and operations have slowed, including the transportation fuel industry which accounts for 30% of Central Electric's annual Kwh sales.
- Central Electric employs 42 full-time employees for critical cooperative functions, including 9 employees who provide in-home services. Due to the uncertainty of how COVID19 will continue to affect our finances and the demand for these services, the PPP funds will help to assure your cooperative operations continue and for vital in-home services to remain available to our members.
- The PPP loan funds do have the possibility of becoming a grant. If that happens, it would relieve much financial pressure and benefit our entire membership.

**The second board action was to authorize the early return of \$750,000 in capital credits beginning July 1.** The retirement will occur several months earlier than budgeted to help meet our members' immediate needs. We know because of the pandemic, many of our members have suffered a loss of income, through no fault of their own. Current members will see their refund as a credit on their June electric bill that is delivered in July. More details on the capital credit retirement can be found on page six in this newsletter.

In closing, I would like to say that Central Electric serves a very diverse membership. This diversity makes us a stronger organization and helps us to complete a very special mission. The values of respect, trust and understanding towards everyone have never been more important than now.

Until next month, take care and be safe!

# CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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).

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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 May 18, 2020 via video conference for the regular board meeting.

The board approved the April 2020 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:

- Update on local COVID-19 cases, how Central Electric has adapted to serve members, and a plan to transition remote employees back into the office.
- Announced the NRECA Regional Meeting is scheduled for September and asked for an attendance count (*Editor's Note: This event has since been canceled*).
- A local request for a Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) loan.
- Electric load decline experience by Basin Electric due to COVID-19.
- Fuel industry and ethanol update.
- Cooperation with the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe on following requested safety protocols when traveling on the reservation for electric maintenance and repair.
- Strategic Planning scheduled for July 2020.

■ East River Manager's Meeting report.

Manager of Member Services/Marketing Patrick Soukup announced the 2020 Basin Electric Bus Tour has been canceled.

Director VanWalleghen reported he has an upcoming committee meeting with the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives (SDAC).

Director Wolbrink reported on the East River Electric board meeting.

Director Hofer reported on NRECA updates.

## Board Action

The board considered and/or acted upon the following:

1. Approved awarding the Youth Tour recipients a scholarship in lieu of the canceled Youth Tour trip.
2. Approved to retire capital credits early in July 2020 originally scheduled to be retired in December 2020 to members.
3. Approved a resolution to accept Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funds.
4. Approved replacement of an aerial truck.

The next board of directors meeting will be held June 15, 2020.

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

Financial Report	April 2020	Year-to-Date
kWh Sales	23,306,264 kWhs	116,251,386 kWhs
Electric Revenues	\$2,518,328	\$11,403,921
Total Cost of Service	\$2,326,815	\$10,924,308
Operating Margins	\$191,513	\$479,613

## Office Closed on July 3

Our office and normal operations will be closed on Friday, July 3 in observance of Independence Day.

In case of an outage, call 800-477-2892 or 605-996-7516.



## Summer Electrical Safety Tips

The summer is a season almost everyone looks forward to – after all, who doesn't love the warm temperatures that summer brings? Hanging by the pool, summer cookouts, and barbecues bring family and friends together. However, safety should still be your priority. If you don't want to ruin your summer fun due to the lack of electrical safety in your home, we've put together a list of summer electrical safety tips to follow:

- **Keep electronics away from the water** – If you've got an outdoor pool, then you might be thinking about throwing a little get together with friends and family – a pool party if you will. However, think twice about putting your new speakers or mp3 player right by the poolside. All electronics should be kept at least 10 feet away from the pool or any other water source. It doesn't matter how careful you are, accidents can and do happen.
- **Use outdoor-rated extension cords** – If you're going to set up your mp3 player or smartphone outside to play some music while you grill out, make sure that you are using the right extension cord. What is the right extension cord? One that is rated for outdoor use. There's a good chance it will be exposed to moisture outside – and an outdoor-rated extension cord will be able to handle small exposure to water.
- **Inspect your extension cords for damage** – Before using an extension cord, inspect it carefully for damage. The last thing you should do is use a damaged cord as it presents a safety risk – especially if you plan on using it outdoors. Any cracked extension cords or exposed wires should not be used outdoors.
- **Install GFCIs** – A GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter) is a device that can help improve the safety of your outlets. Outlets that are near water sources, such as outdoor outlets or bathroom outlets, should have GFCIs installed. A GFCI will shut off the power to the outlet if the circuit is compromised, such as if it gets exposed to water, a spilled drink, etc. This will help to improve the security of your electrical appliances as well as the safety of those in your home.
- **Trim your tree branches** – If the branches on your property are growing a little too close to any power lines, have them trimmed to prevent any downed power lines during high winds or thunderstorms.
- **Don't fly kites or drones near power lines** – If you have power lines that are located relatively close to your home, instruct your children (if you have any) not to fly their kites or model drones in this area. These types of airborne toys should be reserved for flight in wide open spaces, like the park.
- **Know where your breaker box is** – If there's an electrical emergency in your home, then you'll need to know where the breaker box is so that you can shut off the power in a hurry.

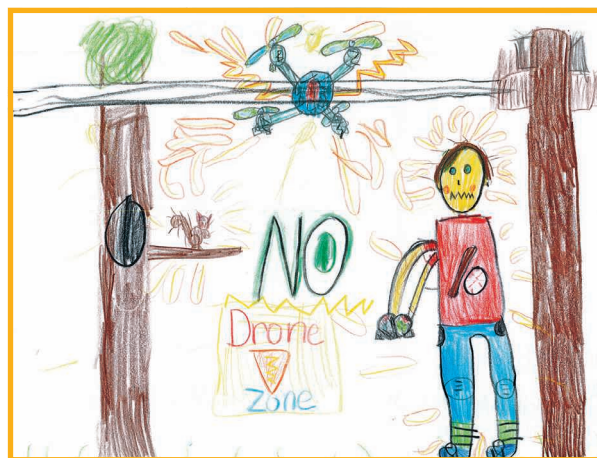
Source: [www.jaffeelectric.com](http://www.jaffeelectric.com)

## Four common culprits of electrical fires

There are 24,000 electrical fires per year across the country. To reduce your risk for damage, check the following areas of your home:

- **Electrical outlets:** Faulty outlets are a leading cause of home fires. As outlets age, so do the wires behind them. Any loose, damaged or warm-to-the-touch outlets should be repaired or replaced.
- **Electrical wiring:** Outdated wiring is another common cause of electrical fires. Frequently tripped breakers, flickering lights and burning smells are warning signs. If your home is more than 20 years old, it may not be able to handle today's increased power load. If you suspect your home's wiring is outdated, contact a qualified electrician.
- **Overloaded cords and outlets:** Extension cords are not permanent solutions. If your big-screen TV, home theater system and other electronics are plugged into extension cords, it's time to have additional outlets installed.
- **Old appliances:** Older appliances are more likely to have loose or damaged wiring, which means they're more likely to catch fire. Check older appliances for damage and determine if it's time to upgrade or replace. Also check to ensure you're using appliance-grade outlets.

## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"No drone zone."**

Alli Bares, 9 years old

Alli is the daughter of Tony and Angie Bares, Sioux Falls, 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.

# Delectable Desserts

## Aloha Cake

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 pkg. (2-layer size) yellow cake mix                                 | instant pudding mix                                |
| 4 tsp. McCormick® Coconut Extract with Other Natural Flavors, divided | 1 (20 oz.) can crushed pineapple, drained          |
| 1 pkg. (4-serving size) vanilla                                       | 1 (8 oz.) container frozen whipped topping, thawed |

Prepare cake mix as directed on package, stirring in 3 tsp. of the coconut flavor. Pour into greased and floured 13x9-inch baking pan. Bake at 350°F. for 30 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool completely in pan. Prepare pudding mix as directed on package, stirring in remaining 1 tsp. coconut flavor. Spread pineapple and pudding over cake. Frost with whipped topping. Refrigerate 1 hour or until ready to serve. Makes 24 servings.

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 188, Total Fat 8g, Cholesterol 28mg, Sodium 221mg, Carbohydrates 27g, Fiber 0g, Protein 2g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Buster Bar Dessert

- |                                     |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1/2 cup butter                      | 1/2 gallon vanilla ice cream         |
| 2/3 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips  | 1-1/2 cups Spanish peanuts, optional |
| 2 cups powdered sugar               | <b>Crust:</b>                        |
| 1-1/2 cups evaporated milk, divided | 1 lb. Oreo cookies                   |
| 1 tsp. vanilla                      | 1/4 cup melted butter                |

Melt butter in heavy saucepan. Add chocolate chips, stirring constantly. Put powdered sugar in mixing bowl; add 1/2 cup evaporated milk, stirring well. Add remaining evaporated milk. Pour mixture into melted butter and chocolate chips, stirring constantly. Bring to a boil, turn heat to medium and boil 8 minutes, stirring often. Remove from heat; add 1 vanilla. Cool completely. **For crust:** Crush Oreo cookies; add butter, mixing well. Press into a 9x13-inch pan. Put pan into freezer. When frozen, quickly spread ice cream over cookie crust. Sprinkle peanuts over crust, if desired, before adding ice cream. Freeze for at least 2 hours. When ice cream layer is completely frozen, quickly pour cooled chocolate layer on top; return to freezer. Can be prepared several days ahead of time.

**Betty Leuthold, Magnolia, MN**

## Summer Peach Dessert

- |                                    |                        |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 14 graham crackers, finely crushed | 24 large marshmallows  |
| 1/2 cup sugar                      | 1/2 cup milk           |
| 1/4 cup melted butter              | 2 cups whipped topping |
|                                    | 3 cups chopped peaches |

Mix graham cracker crumbs, sugar and butter until well blended; reserving a few crumbs for top. Press mixture into a 9x9-inch pan. Heat marshmallows and milk until melted; cool. Fold in whipped topping and peaches. Spread over crust, sprinkling reserved crumbs over all. Chill.

**Elaine Rowett, Sturgis, SD**

## Raspberry Delight

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 2-1/4 cups flour                      | 1/4 tsp. salt                                  |
| 2 T. sugar                            | 2 cups Cool Whip                               |
| 3/4 cup butter, softened              | Topping:                                       |
| <b>Filling:</b>                       | 1 (6 oz.) pkg. raspberry gelatin               |
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened | 2 cups boiling water                           |
| 1 cup powdered sugar                  | 2 (10 oz.) pkgs. sweetened, frozen raspberries |
| 1 tsp. vanilla                        |  |

In a bowl, combine flour and sugar; blend in butter with wooden spoon until smooth. Press into an ungreased 9x13-inch pan. Bake at 300°F. for 20 to 25 minutes or until set (crust will not brown). Cool. In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese, powdered sugar, vanilla and salt until smooth. Fold in Cool Whip. Spread over crust. For topping, dissolve gelatin in boiling water; stir in raspberries. Chill for 20 minutes or until mixture begins to thicken. Spoon over filling. Refrigerate until set. Cut into squares; garnish with additional Cool Whip, if desired. Makes 12 to 16 servings.

**Becki Hauser, Tripp, SD**

Please send your favorite vegetarian, garden produce and pasta recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

# Members to Receive \$750,000 in Capital Credits

The Central Electric Board of Directors approved the retirement of approximately \$750,000 to be retired to members and provide financial relief during this uncertain time.

This year's budget included retiring approximately \$550,000 in Central Electric and East River Electric Cooperative capital credits to members in December. However, in an effort to relieve financial stress on members, the board has activated the equity return five months in advance plus passed through an additional \$200,000 in capital credits retired by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

For active members, the funds will be retired as a credit on their electric bill sent

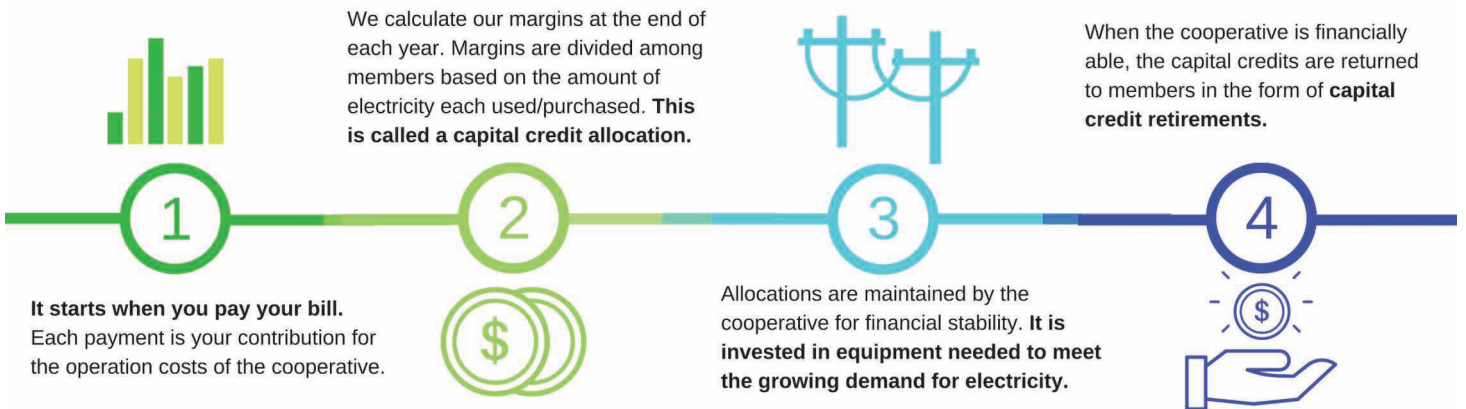
**For active members, the funds will be retired as a credit on their electric bill sent in July.**

in July. This provides convenience for the membership and significantly saves on postage and printing costs. For inactive members, checks will be mailed in early July. The amount received is based on the amount of electricity purchased in previous years.

When someone signs up to receive electric service from Central Electric, they become a "member" of the co-op, not a customer. Electric co-ops operate on an "at-cost basis" and return profits to their members. Central Electric annually allocates capital credits, or equity in the co-op, and retires this equity in the form of capital credits to its members when financially able.

Central Electric is a three-tier co-op model, receiving power from wholesale power suppliers East River Electric and Basin Electric. As member-owners of Central Electric, members are also member-owners of East River Electric and Basin Electric and have a share in their equity.

## Capital Credits Cycle



## Upcoming Survey of Membership

Central Electric members have been selected to participate in a national survey regarding the COVID-19 impact and their cooperative's response. Members will receive an email this summer, and we kindly ask you to complete the 25-question survey.

**Thank you in advance for your time and feedback.** Your opinion is greatly appreciated and valued as we evaluate our response to the pandemic and plan for future events or crises.



# Employee Years of Service



**Tim Harrington**  
Area Foreman  
July 2 - 36 years



**DuWayne Moore**  
Journeyman Lineman  
July 5 - 13 years



**Evan Davis**  
Materials Coordinator  
July 23 - 1 year

# Summer Employees to Assist Operations

Central Electric has hired three part-time summer utility workers to assist with operations during the busy construction season.

Austin Moore is originally from White Lake and worked for Central Electric in summer 2019. He graduated from Mitchell Technical Institute in Power Line Construction and Maintenance and GIS Mapping. Moore will primarily assist the Kimball crew.



Alec Whitney is originally from Murdo, SD and also graduated from MTI in Power Line Construction and Maintenance. Whitney has also worked for West Central Electric Cooperative for several summers, assisting with materials and the line department. He will primarily assist the Mitchell crew.



Davis Mathison is originally from Madison, SD and a graduate from MTI in Power Line Construction and Maintenance. Mathison will primarily assist the Howard crew.



As part-time summer employees, they will acquire 1,000 hours toward their journeyman license as well as acquire valuable hands-on experience while working with the crews.

## 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) **AmericInn Lodge & Suites, Chamberlain, SD;**  
10% off rack rate (not valid with any other offer).
- 2) **America's Mattress, Mitchell, SD;**  
Free sheets with qualifying purchase of \$500 or greater (1 set).
- 3) **Blessings Repeated, Inc., Plankinton, SD;**  
20% off a purchase of \$10 or more.
- 4) **Buckshots, Letcher, SD;**  
\$1.00 off all Buckshot Burgers.
- 5) **Casey's General Store, 701 N. Main, Mitchell, SD;**  
Free 12 oz coffee or 32 oz fountain pop with 8 gallon fuel purchase.

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.





The Old Fort Meade Museum details the history of Fort Meade, its residents, life as a cavalry officer and military history throughout the 66-year history of the fort.

# FORT MEADE

## Historic Outpost Has Varied Past

Susan Smith

Contributing Writer

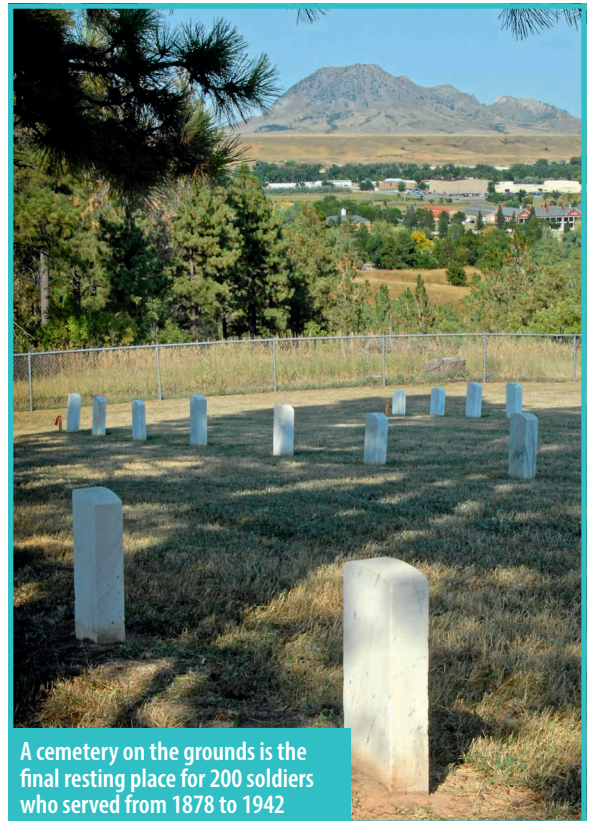
Named for Civil War Gen. George Meade, Fort Meade was built as a peacekeeping military outpost in 1878, two years after the infamous Battle of the Little Bighorn.

The fort provided an early customer base to the town of Sturgis, named for 7th Cavalry commander Col. Samuel Sturgis. According to fortmeademuseum.org, General Phil Sheridan, a Civil War Cavalry leader, selected the location after riding around the then-envisioned mile-square grounds and pointing to the location of future buildings with his saber.

“The fort was established to provide protection for the stage lines and freight routes that came in here as well as the miners and the settlers that came into the area for the many gold locations in the Black Hills and the Deadwood area,” said Robert Kusser, current president of the Fort Meade Museum Board.

Many of the buildings on the grounds of Fort Meade are from the 1900s. One building remains from 1878 and stables that were there from the beginning were rebuilt from wood to stone. Kusser said cannon wheels that are rimmed in steel but have wooden spokes were refurbished and ready for the coming tourist season. Artist Len McCann created figurines of soldiers that are on display in the museum. An exhibit of the U.S. Constitution is also on display. Unfortunately, COVID-19 sidelined many plans for the 2020 season, Kusser said. The museum will be opening for the summer 2020 as soon as possible.

Unlike most forts of the era, where hardly anything of significance remains, Fort Meade is still involved with military training with the South Dakota Army National Guard, which holds officer candidate training each summer. When the fort was officially deactivated in 1944, the Veterans Administration was approached to take over the post hospital, the VA Black Hills Health Care System, which cares for veterans in a 200-mile radius and also maintains the complex. A cemetery overlooking the fort is the final resting place for 200-plus



A cemetery on the grounds is the final resting place for 200 soldiers who served from 1878 to 1942

**Fort Meade is still attached to the South Dakota National Guard, which holds officer candidate training at the fort each summer.**



## Co-ops and the Old Nut Box

soldiers, family members and employees who served from 1878 to 1942, Kusser said. Streets that pass around the original parade field and buildings are still occupied and historically maintained.

“We’re fortunate to still be able to maintain a visual presence of history,” Kusser said.

The 4th Cavalry, one of the units stationed longest, and two separate times at Fort Meade, provided security when President Calvin Coolidge was at the game lodge in Custer State Park, a summer White House in the Black Hills, in 1927. The cavalry unit was deployed to the European theater in World War II.

Kusser said beginning in June 1945, 113 POWs were housed at the fort. That number grew to 600 by 1946. They worked in the



Belle Fourche region in agriculture, mainly to help with beet farming. They also did community work and helped convert the fort from an active military post to a veteran’s hospital by doing stonework and creating sidewalks.

After his retirement from state government, Kusser was director of the Fort Meade Museum for several years. The three-story building he still oversees as board president houses numerous artifacts commemorating the history of the fort and recreating what life was like as a cavalry soldier.

The museum is organized around the 66-year history of the fort, with most of that information on the main floor, Kusser said. The lower level includes more military displays and the top floor features a ballroom and views of Bear Butte, the parade field and a view of the prairie. The museum also contains information about the early days of the town of Sturgis.

The Old Fort Meade Museum is located in the historic headquarters building 55, Sheridan Street on Fort Meade, one mile east of Sturgis on Hwy. 34.

There are few things more satisfying for a pack rat than to find just the right thingamajig at the bottom of a growing pile of doodads.

I know a guy who has so much stuff stashed in his storeroom, it’s like walking through a dense jungle forest. You never know when you might need a backup buggy whip. Or the crusty motherboard of a Commodore C64. Or a clutch release bearing for a 1956 Farmall tractor.

Every now and again, I’ll put him to the test...

“I was looking for a book of Green Stamps from June of 1975. Can you sort through all that clutter and see if you can find one for me?”

Or, “Hey, I need a 26-inch inner tube for a 1962 Huffy Aerowind bicycle. Can you help me out with that?”

He hasn’t managed to fulfill any of my quirky requests so far, but he’ll spend all day and half the night searching.

While my own garage is only mildly untidy, I did have one of those pack rat discovery moments recently when I was working on my son’s 2000 Honda 80R. Not that I’m much of a motorcycle mechanic, but I had to crack the carburetor open to clean out the pilot jet and discovered I needed a replacement bolt.

I contemplated a trip to my local Hanks Hardware, but then I remembered what my Dad used to call “the nut box.” Not a very descriptive name, to be sure, but this nut box has some unique characteristics. First of all, it’s not really a box. It’s a round container made of heavy metal that my father had back when he was a young man and a pretty decent mechanic.

And like any good pack rat, I’ve been hanging onto that thing through every change in address and spring cleaning session for decades.

Another unique quality of the nut box is that over the years it has been repainted many times and many colors with the kind of paint that would trigger a code-red biohazard alert by today’s standards.

But the nut box has been around so long even that super industrial strength paint is peeling off. Though I tried to mitigate the damage, a chunk of dime-thick paint flew off when I wedged open the top of the container.

Clawing through a thousand nuts, bolts, screws and some stray nails, I lucked up and grabbed just the size I was looking for. Small victories, I know.

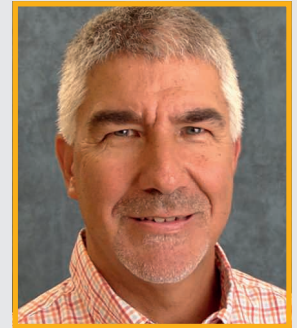
That dip into the nut box came to mind when I received a package from a faithful Cooperative Connections reader. The note inside stated: “I’ve enclosed an ad from a 1961 newspaper you might be interested in. My mom kept some old newspapers in her boxes and I found it there.”

The focal point of this gentle reader’s curiosity was a full-page spread featuring a caricature image of the sun wearing a pair of sunglasses, displaying a wide smile and sporting an incandescent light bulb for a nose.

The headline read: “Casting light on what rural electric cooperatives really mean to South Dakota.” The page was filled with information about what rural electric co-ops are, what they aren’t, and why they’re good for the state.

When it comes to the mission of rural electric co-ops, not much has changed through the decades. Our co-ops are still firmly committed to serving our members as they were on the day they were founded.

Serving homes and businesses the safe, affordable, reliable power they need is what we’ve done and will continue to do. That’s a responsibility and a purpose that will be around even longer than that trusty old nut box.



**Billy Gibson**

editor@sdrea.coop



## UPGRADING YOUR OUTBUILDINGS? MAKE THE SAFE CALL.

Contact your local Touchstone Energy Cooperative before you add, move or upgrade any building on your farm. It's the best way to stay safe around power lines and comply with any regulations.

## RE-ENERGIZING FARM SAFETY



Touchstone Energy®  
Cooperatives

# Annual Pole Testing Scheduled

SBS Inspections is scheduled to begin pole testing on Central Electric's service area beginning the end of June.

The work crews will be driving pickups and ATV vehicles. Pickups will be outfitted with Central Electric Signs to help identify the work crews.



Workers will excavate around each pole, check for pole decay and apply a wood treatment to the pole.

If you have any questions or concerns about the work that is being completed, please contact our office at 800-477-2892 or 605-996-7516.

# Meter Testing Begins

Central Electric began the regular testing of electric meters at the beginning of June.

Central Electric has contracted with Lenny McCall with Chapman Metering to conduct the testing. Members may see a white van with



Members may see a white van with a Central Electric logo enter their yard or on their operation to conduct testing.

Central Electric signage enter their yard and access the electric meter. The technician will not need to enter members' homes.

The technician will practice safe social distancing, and we ask members to please respect his personal space as well.

All members scheduled for tested were contacted by an automated phone call, email, and text message (if available). To update your contact information, please email [billinggroup@centralec.coop](mailto:billinggroup@centralec.coop). For any questions or concerns, contact our office at 800-477-2892 or 605-996-7516.

# Youth Tour Recipients Honored with Scholarship

Every June, electric cooperatives across the nation send high school students to Washington, D.C. for a “once-in-a-lifetime” trip to tour the nation’s capital, visit with legislative representatives, and see democracy in action.

Unfortunately, Youth Tour 2020 has been canceled, and this year’s participants will not have the opportunity to attend. In lieu of the trip, the recipients will be awarded a \$1,000 scholarship towards their post-secondary education.

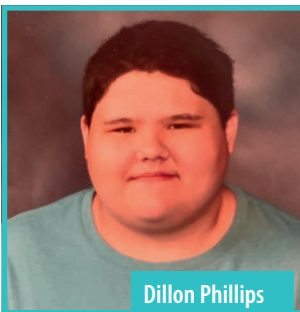
Recipients include Cortney Olinger of Plankinton, daughter of Clinton and Cristy Olinger; Delaney Peterson of Chamberlain, daughter of Chisum and Cindy Peterson; Dillon Phillips of Mitchell, son of Robert Phillips; Katelyn Nicholson of Mitchell, daughter of Layne and Anita Nicholson; and Angela Paulson of Wessington Springs, daughter of John and Holly Paulson.



Cortney Olinger



Delaney Peterson<sup>1</sup>



Dillon Phillips



Katelyn Nicholson



Angela Paulson<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Photo courtesy of Chamberlain Sun newspaper; <sup>2</sup>Photo courtesy of True Dakotan newspaper

# Operation Round-Up® Invests Over \$100,000 into Local Communities

Central Electric members have invested over \$100,000 back into their local communities through participation in Operation Round-Up® since 2015.



Approximately 70% of our members volunteer to “round up” their monthly electric bill to the nearest dollar and donate the extra cents to the charitable fund.

The most recent round of Operation Round-Up funding included donations to the following:

- 1) **Buffalo Hills 4-H Club**, \$1,000 to beautify Gann Valley park;
- 2) **Buffalo County Rural Fire District**, \$1,000 for vehicle extraction equipment;
- 3) **Little Learners Preschool & Daycare in Emery**, \$600 for daycare equipment;
- 4) **Plankinton Ambulance Association**, \$2,000 for necessary ambulance equipment;
- 5) **White Lake City Library**, \$500 for the summer reading program; and
- 6) **Canova Community Improvement**, \$1,000 for baseball field improvement and maintenance.

Our communities are filled with passionate volunteers and workers who want to meet a need or improve quality of life for others. These funds help make that happen with thanks to our cooperative members.

Operation Round-Up funds are awarded to worthy organizations that make a direct impact in the communities of Central Electric members. The next application deadline is November 1, 2020.

For more information about the Operation Round-Up program, please contact Courtney Deinert at 605-996-7516 or visit [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop).



# A MATTER OF TRUST AND SAFETY

The UL symbol marks safety of products for consumers across the globe

**Brenda Kleinjan**

Contributing Writer

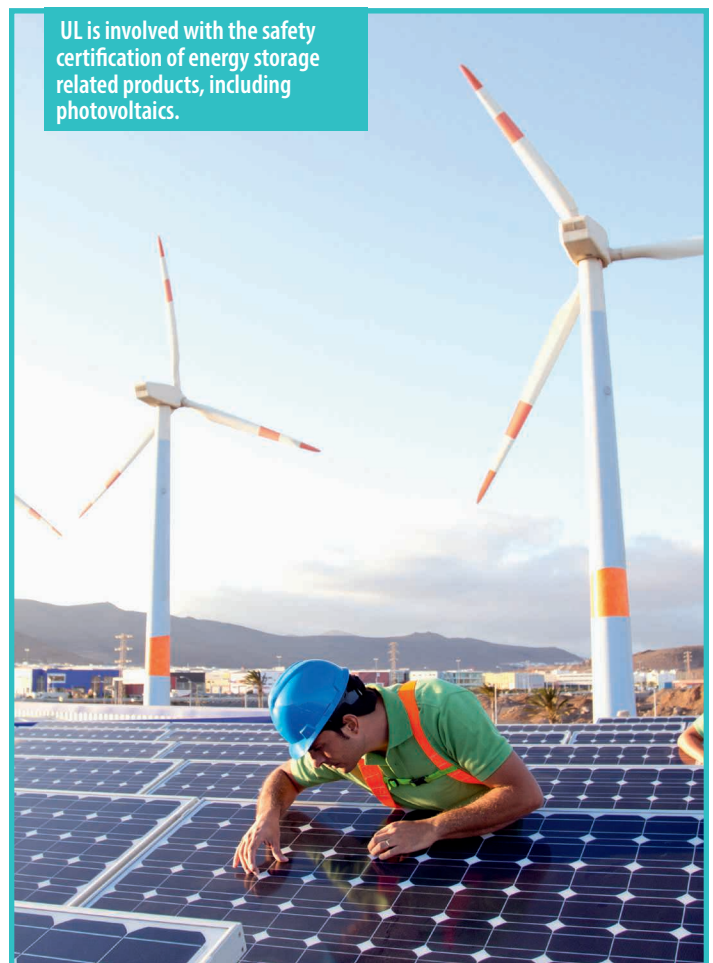
Have you ever examined the hairdryer you use each morning? How about the coffee pot or the cords of your cell phone charger? Chances are they bear a circle with an “UL” inside. If not, they probably should.

That UL symbol is not a talisman but rather an indicator that the product used has been tested and is designed to operate as intended safely.

“When people see that UL mark on the product when they’re shopping – when they see that mark of safety – they know they can trust it has been certified by a third-party organization as safe,” said Jonette Herman, a Standards Engineer/Project Manager for Underwriters Laboratories Inc., based in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

Herman, a South Dakota native, develops safety standards. UL maintains more than 1,600 safety standard documents that define how they test and certify that a product is safe.

As an organization, Underwriters Laboratories is dedicated to fostering safe living and working conditions to people throughout the world.



“We do that through science and hazard-based safety engineering,” said Herman. Simplified, Herman says they look at an object and determine where the hazards might be.

“I grew up in Pierre. In high school, I always thought I’d be good at making sure that things work the way they should,” said Herman. That led her to the University of Minnesota where she pursued a degree in electrical engineering.

“I remember looking at my hairdryer and seeing that UL mark and wondering what it was about. After college, I moved out to North Carolina and found that UL was located there,” Herman said.

That was 27 years ago. Since then Herman has worked on making products from chainsaws to appliances to motors and batteries safer.

“Several years ago, I worked on the chainsaw standards. We were finding a lot of those injuries were due to fatigue and the operators not wearing personal protective equipment (PPE). That’s when accidents were occurring,” Herman said.

UL continued to analyze the equipment.

“Instruction manuals include important information that people should read,” Herman said. But, knowing that many people don’t read the manuals, UL seeks to ensure that “safety is built into the product as much as possible.”

“That’s part of that safety-based hazard approach. We

look at the product and how it’s used,” Herman said.

Worldwide, UL has more than 14,000 employees. In the non-profit portion of UL which Herman works, there are more than 200 people dedicated to research and education.

Today, Herman’s work focuses on wire positioning devices, motors and generators and energy storage, and energy distribution, among other areas.

“We’re constantly seeing new technologies introduced. All this innovation inherently creates risk.”



## Underwriters Laboratories

More than 400 panels and committees work with UL in developing the standards for various products. The panels and committees are comprised of an array of stakeholders including producers of the products, regulators and consumers.

“It’s important for consumers to educate themselves. How do they know a new product is safe? Looking for that certification on the product is helpful to the consumers.”



**Jonette Herman**  
Standards  
Engineer/Project  
Manager  
Underwriters  
Laboratories, Inc.



UL is working to make lithium ion battery storage safer. Herman cautioned that excessive damage to a product with a lithium ion battery, such as caused by repeated dropping, could cause it to go into thermal runaway, causing it to overheat and potentially catch fire.



Human trafficking in South Dakota is showing signs of growing due in part to the coronavirus pandemic. This crime impacts individuals across the demographic and geographic spectrum.

## PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE

### Coronavirus emboldens trafficking predators

By Billy Gibson

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

Becky Rasmussen is clear in her contention that her vocation is a clarion call coming straight from her Creator.

In her heart and in her soul, Rasmussen carries a deep concern for those who find themselves victimized by human trafficking - whether it comes in the form of labor or sexual exploitation.

Rasmussen, executive director of Call to Freedom in Sioux Falls, traces the path that led her from a partially satisfying professional position to running a program dedicated to steering victims clear of their perpetrators and helping survivors rebuild their lives.

The journey began when she received what she describes as a direct and unambiguous message from a higher power.

At the time, she was signed on as a volunteer for the program that later became the present-day Call to Freedom non-profit organization. When one of the program leaders appealed to her to take the reins, Rasmussen listened carefully for that still small voice.

“I’m a prayer girl. I’m the type who steps out in faith and sees what kind of plan God has in store for me,” she said. “I was prompted by prayer to get involved.”

Rasmussen led the program’s transition to full non-profit status, attained in January of 2016, and managed to hold down two jobs along the way. Today, Call to Freedom boasts a contingent of 18 staff members - including eight case managers - who facilitate a wide range of services such as victim identification, safety assessment, housing, transportation, medical care, counseling trauma/addiction, education/employment and legal advocacy.

It’s a prescribed glide path to freedom that includes the following key components: victim referral, emergency assistance, intake

Youth of all ages can become a target.



and assessment, implementation and referrals, long-term care and self-sufficiency.

### Marissa’s Housing Project

It was during a trip to the Sturgis Rally the previous year that Rasmussen discovered her true calling. When speaking to civic groups, she often recounts the story of a young woman named Marissa to illustrate the plight of those who fall prey to trafficking and find themselves in the clutches of an oppressor.

Amid all the frenetic fervor of the 75th anniversary of Sturgis, she noticed a young girl who wore a certain disturbing look on her face. Rasmussen immediately recognized it as the terrified, distance gaze of teenager who had unwillingly slipped under the power of a dark and sinister force.

There was a quick and strong connection.

“Something just prompted me to go up to her and introduce myself,” she recalled. “In two minutes she was crying and was scared and was looking around. She said she couldn’t talk and she

said I had no idea of how horrible her day had been.”

Working in conjunction with the program Free International, Rasmussen tapped into a database later that day and discovered Marissa was one of 117 girls in the region between the ages of 12 and 18 who were identified as victims. In fact, the teen was reported by family members as missing on two separate occasions, once in October of 2014 and then in May of 2015.

Rasmussen pointed out that the fact Marissa had been reported as missing twice is part of a known cycle of reverting back into victimhood and is a result of traffickers who use a variety of techniques designed to keep their subjects under their control. Some of those nefarious tactics include depriving the victim of housing and financial resources, separating them from their families and devising ways to push them into a legal morass with the judicial system.

The day after finding out more information about Marissa’s background, Rasmussen felt convicted to find her and offer to help. She waded into the massive crowds at Sturgis and went on a determined quest to find the troubled teen.

As Rasmussen describes it, locating Marissa once again set the wheels in motion for the formation of the Call to Freedom non-profit and also the creation of the Marissa Housing Project.

The Marissa Housing Project is a seven-unit apartment complex that provides a safe haven for victims who receive the support, stability and separation from their perpetrators necessary to achieve

**“It’s a problem that’s proliferating.”**  
Becky Rasmussen



long-term success and integration back into society.

## Coronavirus Impact

Like many other areas in the post-Covid world, the pandemic has changed the dynamic when it comes to human trafficking. And not in a positive way.

In fact, Rasmussen noted, the impact of the pandemic is creating a situation that has even more traffickers crouching low in the weeds, just waiting for a prime opportunity to pounce.

The financial stress and economic hardship that comes as a consequence of a locked down community only compounds problems for those already susceptible to captivity and emboldens those set on exploiting others.

As the unemployment rolls expand, fraudulent offers of modeling contracts, high-wage processing plant positions and other means of employment look more enticing to those facing financial ruin.

Adding to the problem is the fact that at the same time the potential for trafficking is increasing, services have been more scant. There is a statewide network of safe places where victims can receive assistance in Mobridge, Pierre, Rapid City, Pine Ridge Reservation, Sioux Falls, Watertown, Winner and Yankton.

However, most of those services are currently operating with limited resources

and are working to build back up to full strength when possible.

“It’s a problem that’s proliferating as we see our shelter numbers declining and resources designed to help are struggling,” Rasmussen lamented. “It’s important, especially now, that if a recruiter comes up to you and offers a job opportunity that sounds too good to be true, stay away. Be aware of those tactics.”

She pointed out that pornographers are blatantly attempting to capitalize on the pandemic - and consequently creating more victims - by offering “free 30-day memberships” on pornography websites.

One of the more popular websites, Porn Hub, has seen a 12 percent increase in activity over the past few months.

“We see that where there is pornography, especially child pornography, there is human trafficking,” she said.

## How to Help

Recognizing the signs of trafficking can go a long way toward addressing the problem, Rasmussen said. Because human trafficking impacts all levels of society across

**IF YOU ARE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER,  
PLEASE ASK FOR HELP.**

**NHTRC**

NATIONAL  
HUMAN TRAFFICKING  
RESOURCE CENTER

1-888-373-7888

Call 24 hours a day,  
7 days a week.  
Confidential.

Text HELP to  
233733 (BeFree)

Open 2pm-10pm CST

**CALL 911 if you are in an emergency.**

every demographic and geographic profile, many subtle indications can go unnoticed.

“We see problems in farming communities as well as population centers throughout the state,” she said. “It happens to the poor and the middle-class alike. Everyone needs to stay on the lookout for the signs.”

Those interested in supporting Call to Freedom’s mission can contribute in a number of ways, including purchasing a Freedom Candle, direct monetary donations, in-kind donations of hygiene and household products and volunteering.

Visit [www.calltofreedom.org](http://www.calltofreedom.org) to find out more about the organization’s mission.



Trafficking victims suffer the pain of separation and despair.

## Register to Win!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### August 4-6

Minnesota Farmfest  
28269 Hwy 67, Polk, MN  
800-881-1007  
www.idealgroup.com/  
farmfest

### September 3-5

South Dakota State Fair:  
Perfect Vision of Fun,  
1060 3rd St. SW, Huron, SD  
800-529-0900  
www.sdstatefair.com

### July 3, 18, 25 and August 1, 22

The Murder of Miss Kitty  
Comedy Mystery Dinner  
Theater, Holiday Inn Express  
& Suites, Deadwood, SD,  
605-580-5799

### June 19, 26 and July 3, 10

River City Friday Nights, 6  
to 10 p.m., Live music, beer  
garden, vendors, food trucks,  
games and activities, Main  
Street, Chamberlain, SD,  
605-683-9051

### June 27

Railroad Day, Prairie Village,  
Madison, SD, 800-693-3644

### June 28

Variety Show, Prairie Village,  
Madison, SD, 800-693-3644

### July 18-19

Charles Mix Saddle Club  
Fourth Annual SDRA Rodeo,  
Geddes, SD, 605-680-1580

### July 18-21

Senior Games, Rapid City,  
SD, Contact Eric Holmes at  
605-394-4175



### July 3:

Independence Day celebrations at  
Mount Rushmore National Memorial  
[www.nps.gov/moru/planyourvisit/  
independence-day-events.htm](http://www.nps.gov/moru/planyourvisit/independence-day-events.htm)

Photo courtesy: travelsouthdakota.com

### July 21-25

98th Annual Days of '76 PRCA  
Rodeo, Arena, Deadwood,  
SD, 1-888-838-BULL,  
www.DAYSOF76.com

### July 23-24

Jr. Miss Rodeo South Dakota  
Pageant, The Lodge and Days  
of '76 Rodeo, Deadwood, SD,  
605-641-8604,  
jrmissrsd@gmail.com

### July 24-25

Senior Games, Brookings,  
SD, Contact Traci Saugstad at  
605-692-4492

### July 26

15th Annual Car Show  
Langford, SD, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
605-493-6597

### July 31-August 1

Senior Games, Yankton,  
SD, Contact Kristi Hauer at  
605-665-4685

### July 31-August 1

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

### August 1

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

### August 1

Foothills Classic, Wessington  
Springs, SD, 605-350-1687

### August 8-9

Threshing Show, Twin Brooks,  
SD, [www.threshingshow.com](http://www.threshingshow.com)

### August 8-10

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

### August 22

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

### September 7

Hidewood Valley Steam  
Threshing Show, 1 p.m.,  
47326 183rd Ave., Clear Lake,  
SD, 605-881-8405

### September 12-13

Fall Harvest Festival,  
Delmont, SD, 605-928-3792,  
[www.twinriversoldiron.org](http://www.twinriversoldiron.org)

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.