


# Central Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

## Cooperative Connections

SEPTEMBER 2015 VOL. 16 NO. 5



**SWEET GOLD** Pg. 8

# Improving Our Quality of Life



**Ken Schlingen**  
General Manager

In late July, I had the privilege of being a part of a bus filled with Central Electric members to tour and learn about where our electric power comes from. I have chaperoned this trip every year since 1990, and I must tell you that I enjoy it more and more each time I go.

The trip provides an opportunity for me to meet our members and to remember the history of our cooperative. I always think back to how electricity has

changed the quality of life for our families and communities.

When our grandparents formed their electric cooperative, it was not for the purpose of receiving an electric bill in the mail. Receiving reliable and affordable electric power meant improving the quality of life for their family.

We have electricity now, and we typically only think about it when we receive the bill in the mail, or on the rare occasion that it is not available. The mission of improving the quality of life for our members and our communities continues.

**Your cooperative's mission of improving our quality of life is as strong today as it was almost 75 years ago.**

Your cooperative has several programs for our members ranging from scholarships to rebates. Each of these programs benefits the member directly either by helping offset the cost of higher education or reducing the cost of a new energy efficient appliance.

A somewhat lesser known program for our members is the Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) Fund. The REED Fund was created in 1996 by Central Electric and other electric cooperatives in eastern South Dakota to provide supplemental financing for new or expanding businesses, or for assisting with community projects. The ultimate goal of this supplemental financing is to create and retain jobs, improve infrastructure, and improve our quality of life.

Since inception, the REED Fund has helped multiple projects in our area counties. These projects varied from



**The 2015 Bus Tour participants on their way to North Dakota**

assisting the local fire department to helping new businesses get started. You can find more information about the REED Fund by going to [www.eastriver.coop/programs/reed/](http://www.eastriver.coop/programs/reed/).

This October, we are asking our member/owners to participate in a new program titled "Operation RoundUp." This new program generates funds to be used for charitable and educational purposes.

How Operation RoundUp works is each month the participating member's electric bill is "rounded up" to the nearest dollar. The additional amount paid is put into a fund to assist with local needs. On average, each participating member would donate about \$6 each year and in no case would the yearly donation exceed \$11.88.

A separate board will be established to represent each of our area counties and to distribute funds. The board will be responsible for reviewing applications and awarding funds based on the guidelines established in the Operation RoundUp Foundation Policy. All of Central Electric's members will automatically be enrolled in the Operation RoundUp program. If you do not wish to be a part of the program, you can simply call our office, or you can complete and return the form that will be included with your next electric bill.

Your cooperative's mission of improving our quality of life is as strong today as it was almost 75 years ago. We are here because we know our purpose, to improve the quality of life for our families and our communities.





# Central Electric Cooperative Connections

(USPS 018-963)

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

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

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[www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop)



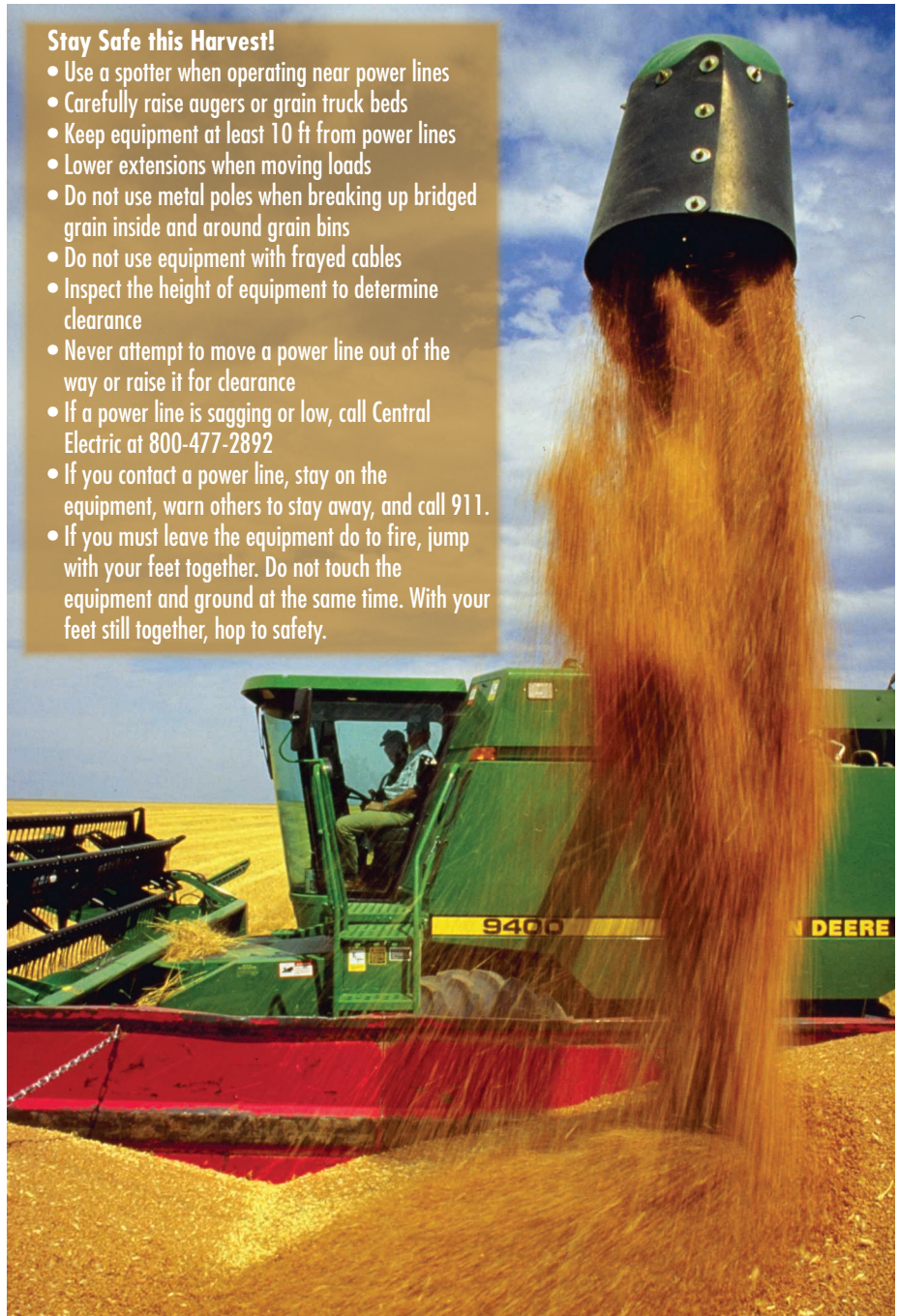
Mission Statement  
Providing Reliable Energy and  
Services at a Good Value

This institution is an equal  
opportunity provider and  
employer.

## Co-op News

### Stay Safe this Harvest!

- Use a spotter when operating near power lines
- Carefully raise augers or grain truck beds
- Keep equipment at least 10 ft from power lines
- Lower extensions when moving loads
- Do not use metal poles when breaking up bridged grain inside and around grain bins
- Do not use equipment with frayed cables
- Inspect the height of equipment to determine clearance
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance
- If a power line is sagging or low, call Central Electric at 800-477-2892
- If you contact a power line, stay on the equipment, warn others to stay away, and call 911.
- If you must leave the equipment do to fire, jump with your feet together. Do not touch the equipment and ground at the same time. With your feet still together, hop to safety.



Central Electric  
will be closed on Monday,  
September 7, 2015  
in observance of  
Labor Day.

## Six Rules for School Safety

**Back-to-school** does not have to mean back-to-worrying. Though safety inside school is ultimately the responsibility of the principal and school staff, parents can take a few basic steps to ensure a safe school experience. These are recommended by the National Association of Elementary School Principals:

- **Learn the school's emergency procedures.**

Emergency plans and phone numbers are usually included in school handbooks and posted in classrooms. Taking a few extra minutes to familiarize yourself and your child with emergency information can give him the confidence he needs to act quickly in emergency situations.

- **Know travel routes to and from the school.**

Make sure you and your child know both primary and alternate routes. In an emergency, roads can be blocked and it's important to have a backup plan.

- **Know and follow school security and safety measures.** These might include signing in when visiting the school, being escorted when walking through the building or wearing a visitor pass. Following these procedures also sets a great example for your kids.

- **Talk with your child about safety. Be specific.**

Talk about instinct and paying attention to funny feelings of fear. Explain what to do if she doesn't feel safe (find a teacher, call 911, etc.). Make sure she knows how to contact you or a trusted neighbor who is likely to be at home.

- **Inform school staff about health and emotional concerns.** Whether your child has a food allergy, a physical disability or has been subject to bullying, make sure to keep your child's teachers and principal in the loop.

- **Get involved.** Talk with the principal about what you can do to increase school safety, such as organizing parents to form a neighborhood watch before and after school. Sometimes parent groups are highly successful in making improvements in traffic safety during drop off and pick up times.

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

## EPA's Greenhouse Gas Regulations Fail to Consider the Economic Impact on Americans

**America's electric cooperatives**, through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) expressed concerns with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) final rules regulating greenhouse gas emissions from new, existing, modified and reconstructed power plants which were announced Aug. 3.

"Any increase in the cost of electricity most dramatically impacts those who can least afford it, and the fallout from the EPA's rule will cascade across the nation for years to come," said NRECA CEO Jo Ann Emerson in early August.

"While we appreciate the efforts intended to help offset the financial burden of rising electricity prices and jobs lost due to prematurely shuttered power plants, the final rule still appears to reflect the fundamental flaws of the original proposal. It exceeds the EPA's legal authority under the Clean Air Act, and it will raise electricity rates for our country's most vulnerable populations while challenging the reliability of the grid.

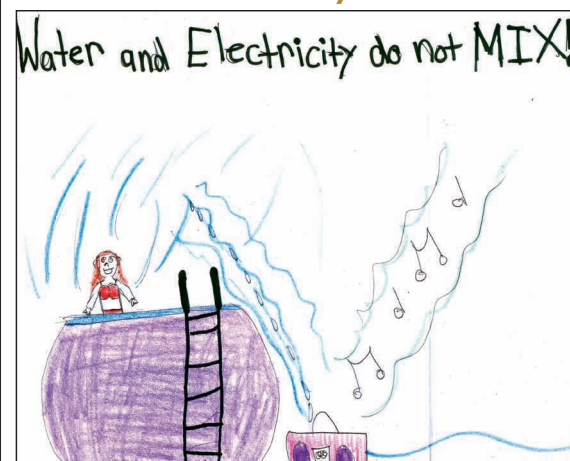
"We will continue reviewing this extremely complex rule and have additional comments on behalf of America's not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives in the coming days."

For more information and an interactive map, visit <http://www.nreca.coop/111d>.



Electric bills for Americans could go up with EPA's final power plant rule.

### Kids' Corner Safety Poster



**"Water and electricity do not mix!"**

**Sally Hakin, 12 years old**

*Sally is the daughter of Tim and Anita Hakin, Herrick, S.D. They are members of Rosebud Electric Cooperative, Gregory, 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.





# Garden Delights

## Cabbage Sloppy Joes

- |                                    |                           |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 lb. ground beef                  | 2 T. lemon juice          |
| 1-1/2 cups finely shredded cabbage | 1 T. white vinegar        |
| 1 medium onion, chopped            | 1 T. Worcestershire sauce |
| 1 celery rib, chopped              | 1 T. prepared mustard     |
| 1/4 cup chopped green pepper       | 1 tsp. salt               |
| 1 cup ketchup                      | Dash pepper               |
| 3 T. brown sugar                   | 8 sandwich rolls          |

In a large skillet, cook beef, cabbage, onion, celery and green pepper over medium heat until meat is no longer pink and the vegetables are crisp-tender; drain. Stir in ketchup, brown sugar, lemon juice, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, mustard, salt and pepper. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes until cabbage is tender. Serve on rolls.

**Stephanie Fossum, Hudson**

## Cucumber Leek Soup

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 T. butter, unsalted  | 1/4 cup fresh mint leaves            |
| 2 large leeks (about 1/2 pound), trimmed, cleaned and sliced     | Black pepper                         |
| 3 large seedless cucumbers (4 cups), peeled and coarsely chopped | Salt                                 |
| 1-1/2 cups low-fat milk  | 3/4 cup low-fat plain yogurt         |
| 1 T. lemon juice   | 1 T. honey                           |
|  | 1/2 cup chopped grape tomatoes       |
|  | 1/4 cup feta or blue cheese crumbles |

In a large skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add leeks and sauté for 5 minutes. Mix in cucumbers; sauté for 1 minute then remove from heat. Add leeks, cucumbers, milk, lemon juice and mint to a blender or food processor; puree for 1 minute. Add pepper and salt to taste; blend together. In a separate bowl, mix yogurt and honey together. Fold into cucumber soup. For best flavor results, chill in refrigerator for 1 hour. When ready to serve, ladle soup into four bowls. Add 2 T. of tomatoes and 1 T. of cheese crumbles in the center of each bowl. Makes 4 servings.

*Nutritional information per serving: 190 calories; 7g total fat; 4g saturated fat; 9g protein; 25g carbohydrate; 3g dietary fiber; 23mg cholesterol; 243mg sodium*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Tomato Soup

- |                             |                     |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| 2 gallons tomatoes, chopped | 1 cup melted butter |
| 1 bunch celery, chopped     | 1/8 cup salt        |
| 1 green pepper, chopped     | 1-1/2 cups sugar    |
| 6 medium onions, chopped    | 1-1/2 cups flour    |

Boil vegetables until tender; strain through a colander. This should yield about 4 quarts juice. Mix together butter, salt, sugar and flour. Add to juice slowly, stirring constantly. Boil 20 minutes; will thicken as it boils. Pour into jars and pressure cook 10 minutes at 5 lbs.

**Diane Bartnick, New Effington**

## Asparagus Cheese Strata

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1-1/2 lbs. fresh asparagus, cut into 2-inch pieces | 2 cups cubed, fully cooked ham |
| 3 T. melted butter                                 | 6 eggs                         |
| 1 loaf sliced bread, crusts removed                | 3 cups milk                    |
| 3/4 cup shredded Cheddar cheese, divided           | 2 tsp. dried minced onion      |
|  | 1/2 tsp. salt                  |
|  | 1/4 tsp. dry mustard           |

In a saucepan, cover asparagus with water. Cover and cook until tender but still firm; drain and set aside. Lightly brush butter over 1 side of bread. Place 1/2 of bread, buttered side up, in a greased 9x13-inch pan. Sprinkle with 1/2 of cheese. Layer with asparagus and ham. Cover with remaining bread, buttered side up. Beat eggs. Add milk, onion, salt and mustard. Pour over bread. Bake uncovered at 325°F. for 50 minutes. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake an additional 10 minutes or until cheese is melted and a knife inserted in center comes out clean.

**Shirley Miller, Winfred**

## Zucchini Supreme Casserole

- |                                       |                          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1/4 cup diced onion                   | 1 cup sour cream         |
| 2 lbs. zucchini, diced (about 6 cups) | 1 cup shredded carrots   |
| 1 can cream of mushroom soup          | Diced chicken or turkey  |
|                                       | 1 pkg. seasoned croutons |
|                                       | 1/2 cup butter, melted   |

Cook onion and zucchini together in a little salted water until soft; drain. Combine soup and sour cream. Add carrots and meat. Fold in zucchini mixture. Toss croutons with melted butter. Place 1/2 croutons in bottom of casserole dish. Spread zucchini mixture over top. Sprinkle with remaining croutons. Bake at 400°F. for 50 minutes.

**Paula Vogel, Ethan**

## Rhubarb Muffins

- |                             |                                  |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2 cups brown sugar, divided | 1 tsp. baking soda               |
| 2 eggs                      | 2 cups diced rhubarb             |
| 1 tsp. vanilla              | 1/2 tsp. salt                    |
| 1 cup vegetable oil         | 1-1/4 cups chopped nuts, divided |
| 1 cup buttermilk            | 2 T. cinnamon                    |
| 3 cups flour                |                                  |

Combine 1-1/2 cups brown sugar, eggs, vanilla, oil and buttermilk. Add flour, baking soda, rhubarb, salt and 3/4 cup nuts. Put in muffin pan. Combine remaining brown sugar, nuts and cinnamon. Sprinkle over top. Bake at 325°F. for 20 to 25 minutes.

**Mary Jessen, Holabird**

*Please send your favorite pasta and crockpot 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 2015. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.*

# “Central Prairie Solar” Installed

Central Electric installed their first solar system in July, named “Central Prairie Solar.” The project is located just south of the building along Betts Road and is viewable to passing vehicles.

The goal of the project is to increase our knowledge regarding solar energy as the demand for renewable energy increases. We hope to serve as a resource for our members who inquire about solar power.

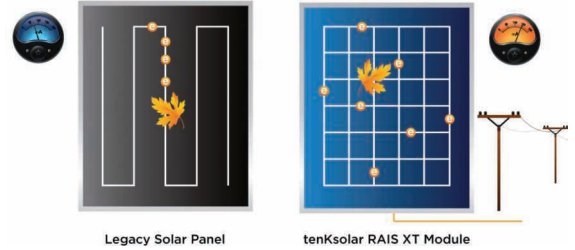
The panels were purchased from tenK solar, based in Bloomington, MN. We chose tenK solar’s panels and design to maximize efficiency.

The project consists of 6 rows of 6 panels, totaling 36 panels. Each panel consists of a grid of circuits, rather than a single row, so that any blockage, such as a leaf, will not disrupt the flow of energy.

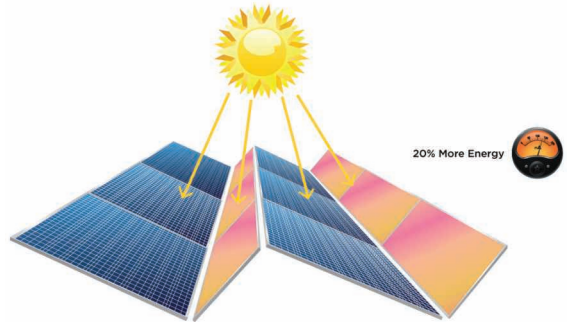
The model angles panels both north and south, as opposed to a single row facing one direction, in order to catch light that would normally fall in between rows.

Installation required several days over the course of a few weeks to set the transformer, anchor the project, attach and wire the solar panels, and trench the underground cable. Central Electric linemen, electricians, and technicians worked together to install the system.

An open house and informational meetings for members will be held later this fall/early spring to offer more data on system equipment and performance. We also plan to assist members who may be interested in utilizing solar energy, specifically solar well pumps.



**The tenKsolar panels consist of a grid of paths for electrons to travel through, as opposed to a single path. This prevents blockage from interrupting energy production.**



**The tenKsolar module angles panels to face both north and south, as opposed to a single row, in order to catch the sunlight that would normally fall in between rows and to maximize the energy generated.**





## Solar Project Installation



1) After preparing the area, crews anchored the poles and attached the rails that the project would set on.



2) Install the transformer & dig the transformer basement. Photo: Tim Harrington, Dustin Weier, & Cody Riggs



3) Set and space the braces that will hold the panels. Photo: Rodney Weber & Daren Hoffer



4) Install the panels at an angle, and attach to the previously set braces. Photo: Ryan Bigge & Rodney Weber



5) After setting all the panels, each is tightened in place and a keeper plug is clipped on. Photo: Daren Hoffer



6) Wire each individual panel underneath, which will eventually be connected to the inverter units.



7) Set the redundant inverter bus, which holds the inverter units and is wired to the panels



8) Trench underground cable from the solar project out to the transformer. Photo: Daren Hoffer & Kevin Johnson

# Members Visit Power Suppliers

This year on the Bus Tour to North Dakota, there were 48 members who participated in the 3-day trip.

The purpose of the trip is to educate members on where our electricity comes from and provide the opportunity to tour these locations.

Highlights included touring Dakota Gasification Company, Antelope Valley Power Station, and Coteau Coal Mine in Beulah, ND.

Additional stops along the way included brunch at the Visitors Center at Capital Lake and touring Oahe Dam in Pierre, and Cathedral on the Praire near Hoven, SD.

If you're interested in participating in the 2016 Bus Tour, watch for more information early next Spring or call our office at 800-477-2892.



Above: Members touring Antelope Valley Station in Beulah, ND.

Below: Members drove down into the mine to watch coal being loaded. Pictured is an \$8 million front loader used for the coal loading process.



# Raising Royalty

## Scientific Process Helps South Dakota Beekeeper Build Better Bees

**J**ON KIECKHEFER, A FORMER AGRONOMIST FOR SOUTH Dakota State University's Cooperative Extension Service, now spends most of his time raising bees west of Volga. But unlike most beekeepers, the Brookings native's primary goal isn't to produce honey.

"I'm not like other commercial beekeepers," he said. "Most do it for pollination and honey production. For the most part I raise and sell queens."

Kieckhefer's interest in honeybees began when he was 12 years old and a dead tree on his family's property turned out to be the home of a bee colony. His father, an entomologist with the United States Department of Agriculture, helped Kieckhefer move that bee colony from a birdhouse to a glass-covered box. The bees were successfully relocated. A dryer vent hose allowed them to come and go and the glass cover on the box allowed Kieckhefer to peek in on them when he wanted.

"I was like any kid fascinated with insects," he said. "I wanted to save them. I wanted to have them and be able to watch them."

That fascination caused him to start keeping his own bee colonies during graduate school at the

University of Kansas. Several of his friends raised bees as a hobby. He began doing the same. When he moved back to South Dakota, the bees came with him. Demand and economics pushed him in the direction of breeding and selling queen bees. At that time, a colony cost \$100 to \$200. A queen cost

\$20 to \$25. His bees wintered well, which attracted the attention of other beekeepers.

"More and more guys wanted to buy queens from me because I kept my bees in the winter," he said. "I didn't do anything special – if they survived they survived and if they didn't, they didn't."

He keeps 500 hives and harvests 15,000 to 20,000 pounds of honey from them per year, which he sells to wholesalers. And if he can help pollinate a local field, he does. But he primarily breeds and raises queens that have specific genetic traits he can

guarantee by tracing their pedigree. They aren't big honey producers but they survive cold northern winters better, resist mites that decimate a hive when they get inside or make them more hygienic, which also cuts down on the mite problem. And it makes it possible for beekeepers to use fewer pesticides. When his bees are paired with bees that have



**Workers act as attendants to the queen when they are in close proximity. The workers face the queen and tend to her needs. A queen is often marked by a beekeeper with a dot of paint on her thorax. The color of paint denotes the year she was raised. Years ending in 0 or 5 are blue. The mark identifies the age of the queen and makes her easier to find in the hive.**

By Susan Smith

**Milkweed is attractive to honeybees as a food resource, but carries a hidden peril with it. Honeybees are often unable to muster enough force to pull the pollen away from the flower. Page 9 Inset: Dandelions are valuable sources of pollen and nectar early in the spring for honeybees.**





a high production value, it's like the best of both worlds.

He uses a process of instrument insemination with his queen bees so that he knows which males with which traits are used in the fertilization process. Bees are everywhere in South Dakota, he said. Without the insemination process, Kieckhefer said it's difficult to know which males the queen mates with. He marks male bees with paint so he knows their original hive and the day they hatched. The average honeybeekeeper is not going to pay for a queen with a specific genetic makeup. But people who breed queens to sell to those producers do see the value in being able to guarantee bees that winter well or have other genetic benefits.

"The value is in the known genetic trait," Kieckhefer said.

That trait can then be used in other stock. The worker bees in a hive create a queen by feeding a female egg more protein – called royal jelly. This causes the ovaries to develop early, creating the queen. Worker bees short of a queen in their colony will choose one or a few cells with eggs inside to feed more of the royal jelly. People think a queen controls a colony of bees, Kieckhefer says, but that isn't completely true. Once the queens stop producing eggs, they are dethroned, so to speak. They will mate shortly after hatching and then keep that sperm for their lifetime – usually two to three years – some live longer. Once that sperm runs out, so does their productive life.

"The queen is there doing the egg laying for the hive," Kieckhefer said. "As soon as workers get upset with her, they just kill her and make a new one."

Kieckhefer sells a couple of different grades of queen – a production grade that can mate with whomever it wants because it is not going to be useful to produce queens with specific traits. Some of those queens go to South Dakota or Minnesota and mostly to hobbyist beekeepers. The pedigreed queens all go to queen breeders on the East or West Coast.

Currently there are more managed honeybee colonies than any time since the 1970s. Honeybeekeepers lose bees

every year to death from natural causes, disease and not withstanding the winter. Beginning in 2006, Colony Collapse Disorder decimated a fair amount of hives. The cause is still unclear. Some blame the mites, some think it's related to pesticides and some even blame cell phone towers and power lines, Kieckhefer said.

"No one has come up with a satisfactory explanation of the vast loss," Kieckhefer said. But beekeepers are a fairly resistant bunch and make up their losses quickly, especially with new bees hatching every day in the summer months.

"Honeybees aren't in great danger of extinction," Kieckhefer said.

There are no native honeybee species in the United States. Colonists brought them all in from Eurasia for the purpose of producing honey, which is still the

main attraction of keeping bees.

"Everyone's after that sweetness," Kieckhefer said.

According to the South Dakota Department of Agriculture, South Dakota typically

ranks in the top five states for honey production, ranking third in 2008 with 21.3 million pounds. The state's bees produce a "highly desirable, mild-flavored and light-colored alfalfa and sweet clover blend." The value of the state's honey crop in 2008 was \$28.6 million. Pollinating South Dakota's cash crop is another major component of beekeeping. It's something a producer typically gets for free via the natural process the bees go through to produce honey, but it adds \$10.7 billion in value to state crops.

Kieckhefer continues to keep bees – enduring daily stings, sometimes in uncomfortable places like inside the nostril or ear drum – because of the addictive quality of the work. Most people who try to keep bees either stop right away, he said, because they hate being stung or become addicted and collect more and more hives.

"There's nothing more relaxing than working with bees," he said. "You stop thinking about yourself and focus on the bees. It's kind of a meditative experience to do that. You're working in their world rather than your own."



Sweet clover is the flower that produces most of the "clover honey" that characterizes much of the honey production in the Dakotas. Sweet clover produces heavy nectar flows and the resulting honey is light in color and mild in flavor. Yellow and white sweet clovers are common plants in roadside ditches and pastures in the Dakotas and migratory beekeeping operations try to time moving their bees into the northern plains to maximize honey crops from sweet clover blooms.



A honeybee colony reproduces by raising a new queen, then one of the queens (usually the old queen) and roughly half of the workers leave to find a new hive location. While the workers are searching for a suitable site to build a new hive, the group of bees – called a swarm – may alight temporarily in exposed locations. The queen in this swarm of bees on a wooden fence post was somewhere in the middle of the mass of bees.

# Operation Round Up<sup>®</sup> to Launch in November

It's the little things that count in life. Being kind to your neighbors, returning a lost wallet, picking up after yourself while enjoying the great outdoors. While each action might not amount to much on its own, if everyone does a little, we see a big impact in our community.

That's the foundation of Operation Round Up—where a little makes a large impact.

Operation Round Up is a program where participating members' bills are "rounded up" to the nearest dollar, and the funds flow into a fund to assist local needs and worthy organizations.

For example, a member with a bill of \$127.56 would be rounded up to \$128.00, and the member will donate \$.44 that month.

The average participating member will donate \$6.00/year, with a maximum donation of \$11.88/year. This donation is tax deductible.

If a member has multiple accounts and chooses to participate in the program, **we will only round up one account per member.**

Funds will be awarded based on an application which is reviewed by a committee to ensure your funds are spent wisely. The awarded funds will be focused towards the following areas: community service, economic development, education and youth, environment, emergency assistance, and disaster relief.

If all Central Electric members were to participate, roughly \$30,000 would be raised in one year. Right now, over 300 coops in the US are participating in Operation Round Up, including several in South Dakota.

Operation Round Up will take effect on the bills sent out in early November, or the bills for October's usage. **Every member will be automatically enrolled in the program initially.** However, participation in Operation Round Up is voluntary.

Anyone wishing not to participate may notify us by

- 1) Calling our office at 800-477-2892,
- 2) Submit the "Opt In/Out Form" at [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop),
- 3) Fill out and mail the form below.



**Above: Through Operation Round Up, Sioux Valley Energy (Colman, SD) donated \$1,250 to Progress, Inc. for the purchase of a dual seat bicycle. Progress, Inc. provides training to people with developmental disabilities and uses the bike to develop clients' strength and flexibility, traffic safety education, and community integration. Below: Lyon-Lincoln Electric (Tyler, MN) donated \$1,500 to United Way for Imagination Library which provides books to children ages 0-5.**



## OPERATION ROUND UP OPT IN/OPT OUT FORM

Member Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Yes! Keep me signed up for Operation Round Up.**

**No, please remove me from Operation Round Up.**





# Best Wishes to Rolfes on His Retirement



Accountant Denny Rolfes will retire on August 14 after 33 years with the cooperative.

Rolfes began with Intercounty Electric in October 1981. He was working as an accountant for Wenk Brothers in Madison, and noticed the open position at Intercounty through an ad in the Mitchell paper. Rolfes was searching for a job in the area to be with his wife, Becky Martinek, who had accepted a teaching job in Mitchell.

Former Manager Loren Noess offered Denny the position and he accepted since he thought the job had a career possibility—and here he is 33 years later.

Rolfes met his wife Becky, who was originally from Mitchell, while at college in Madison at Dakota State University. They were married in 1976, the summer before his senior year in college. Rolfes graduated from DSU with a four year degree in Business Administration. Rolfes stayed and worked in Madison while Becky finished school, and they had a son there in 1977.

Prior to attending DSU, Rolfes had been offered a full-ride scholarship for accounting to the Watertown Business School. The program included one and a half years of school and then job placement following. However, Rolfes did not want to limit himself to accounting. While his parents were upset, Rolfes turned down the scholarship and pursued his Business Administration degree.

While at Intercounty, Denny held the positions of Work Order Clerk, assumed the role of Billing & Accounting Supervisor after Ferne Brimmer retired, and moved to Accountant after the consolidation of Intercounty and Tri-County Electric.

Rolfes has experienced several major changes in the cooperative in addition to the consolidation. When he first began, Intercounty had only owned their first computer for two years. Only one person could use the computer at a time, and it was located in Esther Pederson's work area. Rolfes learned quite a bit about how line was built since he reviewed each individual staking sheet by hand with the foremen to go over the needed material. Another large change came when all meters were changed to AMR metering, and members no longer needed to read their own meter for their bill.

As a Work Order clerk, Rolfes kept all inventory by hand on 3x5" index cards that had to be balanced also by hand. And even if it took him 3 days to do it, Rolfes made sure that inventory balanced each month—which wouldn't surprise anyone who knows him. The employees joke about Rolfes keeping a paper clip inventory. However, joking aside, the employees respect the excellent and thorough job Rolfes has done for the cooperative.

One of Rolfes' scary experiences during his career occurred shortly after he started his job in the early 80's when prime interest rates were at 20%. He said this meant double-digit rate increases for the cooperative for a couple years in a row. He remembers about 1/3 of the farms going under financially, and employees worried about getting to keep their jobs.

Despite all the changes, Rolfes says the one thing that hasn't changed is the reason we exist in the first place—to provide reliable electric service at a reasonable cost. He also adds the employees haven't changed. The employees are still as dedicated today to the cooperative principles and to their jobs. Rolfes' adds his favorite part of his career is the people he's worked with over the years, including those here at the cooperative and others across the state during accounting functions.

Rolfes feels fortunate to be here today, as he didn't think he'd get to see retirement. In October 2009, Rolfes was diagnosed with cancer and needed surgery to remove a tumor on his spine in his neck. He took four months of leave from his position for surgery and to recover his health. He's fought to be here today, and we're happy to celebrate with him.

During retirement, Rolfes plans to golf some more and spend time with his girlfriend, Sue. He also plans to travel and has plans to take a 10-day Caribbean cruise in January.

Central Electric thanks Rolfes for his service to the cooperative and wishes him the very best in his retirement!

## Sprinkel Promoted



Congratulations to Teresa Sprinkel who has been promoted to Accountant. Sprinkel previously held the position of Data Processing Coordinator and has been with the cooperative for 9 years.

# Under the Stars

## Drive-in Movie Theaters Draw Movie Fans

**O**UDDOOR DRIVE-IN MOVIE THEATERS MAY BE A RELIC of the past in much of rural America, but in a few South Dakota communities, they are still packing in the crowds for full-length movies under the stars.

For a couple of generations, the term “big screen” forever will mean a massive, flat movie screen sticking above the prairie with a first-run movie viewed by families from the comfort of their automobiles. It’s Danny Zuko and Sandy from the movie “Grease,” a memory of a simpler time when a date on a summer night meant a trip to a double-feature or a dusk-to-dawn extravaganza on a holiday weekend.

Only a handful of drive-in theaters continue to operate in South Dakota, but the owners of those that still show movies say business is strong.

“This past year has been excellent, just phenomenal,” says Ron Maier, owner of the Pheasant Drive-In in Mobridge. “Really, I can’t believe it.”

Maier, who says he grew up in and around the movie-theater business, “can’t remember a time when I wasn’t around the movie business.”

He has gone digital with the business, as have other remaining outdoor theaters. The movie companies, he says, quit offering film a couple of years ago. The conversion was a significant investment, but Maier says it has been worth the effort.

“We’re seeing a lot of repeat customers, a lot of people bringing their grandchildren,” he said. “It’s maybe some nostalgia. They kind of remember the good old days.”

While Maier is keeping a long-time business in operation, Roy Reitenbaugh is finding success with his three-year-old twin screens near Hermosa. In a sort of West River version of

the “Field of Dreams” theme, “If you build it, they will come,” Reitenbaugh opened Roy’s Black Hills Twin Drive-In in July of 2012. The drive-in shows movies seven days a week, offers a concession stand and has drawn a steady stream of tourists during the summer.

“We’ve had people from France, Finland, England, Canada, you name it,” Reitenbaugh says. A Canadian family told him they’d planned their vacation two months earlier and a stop at his outdoor



By Terry Woster

**Below:** The concession stand glows as a trailer shows before a Monday night showing at Miller’s Midway Theater this summer.

**Inset:** Popcorn, soda and candy are must-haves in the concession stand. **Opposite Page:** Cars and lawn chairs line the Midway Theater’s lot for the showing of *Minions* this summer.







Photos by Brenda Kleinjon/SDREA

theater was a priority. The price is \$8 for adults and \$6 for children.

Drive-in theaters of old often featured variations of “buck night,” a promotion that allowed a carload – as many people as could fit in the vehicle, trunk and all, sometimes – to attend a showing for \$1 or \$2 or whatever bargain price the market would bear. At Reitenbaugh’s theater, Thursday nights are carload nights, with a \$16 tab for as many people as fit into the vehicle.

“They really believe in it down here,” he says of his carload-night audiences.

Black Hills Electric Cooperative, Custer, S.D., provides the power for the twin theaters. Mike Chase of BHEC says it was unusual to be asked to provide the power to a brand-new drive-in theater, but the job itself was pretty routine.

Over on Highway 14 near Miller, the Midway Drive-In has been in operation since 1953.

The bill featured “Minions” the first weekend in August, followed by “Spy.” Five families currently own the theater, says Mike Donlin, one of the owners.

“Kids’ movies do better than anything else, but we try to cater to different crowds,” Donlin said.

Operating the drive-in is both a business and a way to keep a piece of the past alive, he said.

“People our age know about drive-ins, but their kids and grandkids often have never experienced an outdoor movie,” Donlin said. “In a way, it’s preserving a piece of history. From an accountant’s point of view, I don’t know that these things would pay, but we have five families involved and some day the kids and grandkids, they’ll be the

ones to take it over.”

Donlin started in the drive-in business as a youngster, receiving a lesson on operating the projection equipment on a Tuesday and running the show the next night.

The screen blew down in a strong summer storm in 1968, the Midway’s web site says. It also says, “The screen was rebuilt right away and movies were shown throughout the rest of the summer.”

Friday evenings at the Midway are “Pierre night,” Donlin said. “For some reason, a majority of the audience on those nights consists of folks from Pierre who have driven 70 miles to see a movie, outside, on a big screen, with the last rays of sun disappearing in the west and stars filling the open sky above.

Outdoor theaters may be a dying breed elsewhere, but in a few South Dakota communities, they thrive. Asked what he sees as the future of his business, Maier in Mobridge says simply, “I can’t remember not being around the movie business. I guess I really haven’t thought of slowing down.”

**Gregory: Hilltop Drive-In Theatre**  
33575 US Hwy 18 Gregory, SD • Phone: 605-830-6058

**Hermosa: Roy's Black Hills Twin Drive-In**  
810 Tanaya St., Hermosa, SD • Phone: 605-255-5333

**Luverne: Verne Drive-In Theater**  
US Hwy 75, Luverne, MN • Phone: 507-283-0007

**Miller: Midway Theater**  
US Hwy 14 Midway between Miller and St. Lawrence, SD  
Phone: 605-870-0108

**Mobridge: Pheasant Drive-In Theater**  
1600 20th St W, Mobridge, SD • Phone: 605-845-2021

**Redfield: Pheasant City Drive In Theater**  
17230 US Hwy 281, Redfield, SD • Phone: 605-460-1944

Pheasant City Drive In Theater, Redfield

# Navigating Our New Website

Our website has a new look! Central Electric's new website allows us to present more information in an efficient and appealing manner. Content has also been updated to be more accurate and thorough.

Members can still use [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop) to access our website. That has remained the same.

See below for a quick "how-to" on navigating your coop's website.

The screenshot shows the Central Electric Cooperative website interface. At the top, there is a header with the company logo, address (25487 403rd Avenue, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301), phone numbers (800.477.2892, 605.996.0869), and website (centralec.coop). Navigation links include 'Employee Log In', 'Pay By Phone 856-780-8707', 'Manage My Account', 'Pay Now', and 'Contact Us'. A search bar and a main menu with links like 'Home', 'My Account', 'About Us', 'Member Services', 'Products & Service Departments', 'Safety', and 'Energy Efficiency' are also present.

Key features highlighted by callouts include:

- SmartHub Account Management:** A section titled 'Manage Your Account with SmartHub' offers options to 'View Usage', 'Pay Bill', 'Update Account Information', and 'View Payment & Bill History'. It also features 'Available on the App Store' and 'Get it on Google play' buttons.
- Account Navigation:** A row of icons for 'My Account', '1-Time Pay', and 'Rebates' is located below the SmartHub section.
- Payment Options:** A callout points to the '1-Time Pay' icon, stating: 'Pay your bill using your account number, no password or registration required'.
- Facebook Live Feed:** A callout points to a social media feed, stating: 'Live feed from our Facebook page'.
- Event Announcements:** A callout points to a banner for the '76th ANNUAL SIOUX EMPIRE FAIR', stating: 'Watch here for event, news, and coop announcements'.

Other visible content includes a 'Welcome' message, an 'Employment Opportunity Available' notice for a Systems Coordinator, and a 'Service Rate Change' table. The footer contains logos for 'POWERED BY Touchstone Energy Cooperatives', 'SHOW IT AND SAVE', 'Learn Play Zone', and 'COOPERATIVE ACTION NETWORK', along with the copyright notice: '© 2015 Central Electric Cooperative. All Rights Reserved.'



# ARE YOU GROUNDED?

## GFCI OUTLETS CAN HELP!

Did you know there are different types of electrical outlets? Each are designed for different purposes; however, there is one specific type that stands high above the rest—the ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) outlet. GFCIs have saved thousands of lives and cut the number of electrocutions in half since the 1970s. If your home lacks GFCI outlets, don't fret—you can learn how to "get grounded."

GFCIs are the most efficient outlet in protecting from electrical shock. If it senses a loss of current, the outlet switches off power to that circuit. These devices can either be installed in your electrical system or built into a power cord. The third hole at the bottom of the outlet is known as the "ground" slot, and it monitors electrical currents that flow through the left "neutral" slot and the right "hot" slot on each outlet. A GFCI can react faster than a blink of an eye to any imbalance of power by immediately shutting off the electrical current. These outlets are now a requirement in all places where water could potentially come into contact with electrical products such as bathrooms, garages, outdoors and kitchens. GFCIs are not exclusive to three-prong outlets. They can be installed into standard outlets, and there are even portable devices available when installation is not practical.

GFCIs should be tested at least once a month to ensure they are working effectively. The first step you need to take is to test an item, such as a lamp, that visibly powers on when plugged in. Push the "reset" button to prepare the outlet then push the "test" button. Did your lamp turn off? If it did, the GFCI is working properly. Now, hit the "reset" button once again to power it back on. If your lamp did not power off, then contact Central Electric to have a certified electrician correct the problem.

Next time you have a free moment, take the time to look around your house. If you're not "grounded," consider updating your electrical outlets to GFCIs!

Sources: Electrical Safety Foundation International, Consumer Product Safety Commission



## Residential Wiring - Agricultural Buildings

## Grain Handling Systems - Lighting

## Trenching Equipment - Electric Heating Systems

Services Available for both Members & Non Members

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**605-996-7516**  
**1-800-477-2892**  
**www.centralec.coop**  
**25487 403rd Ave**  
**Mitchell SD 57301**

**August 20-23**  
Kool Deadwood Nites  
Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

**August 21-23**  
Summer Arts Festival  
Riverside Park  
Yankton, SD, 605-665-9754

**August 27-30**  
Hugh Glass Rendezvous  
Lemmon, SD, 605-393-5832

**August 27-30**  
Prairie Village 53rd Annual  
Steam Threshing Jamboree  
Madison, SD, 605-256-3644 or  
800-693-3644

**August 29**  
Blackout Motors Show and  
Shine, Noon to 7 p.m.  
Yelduz Shrine Center  
Aberdeen, SD, 605-645-8790

**September 3-7**  
South Dakota State Fair  
Huron, SD, 605-353-7340

**September 3-7**  
CRST Labor Day Fair  
Powwow and Rodeo  
Eagle Butte, SD, 605-964-6685

**September 4-6**  
LifeLight Festival  
Worthing, SD, 605-338-2847

**September 4-6**  
Flavor Days, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Spearfish, SD, 605-645-1880

**September 5**  
Roughstock Challenge, 7 p.m.  
Tripp County Rodeo Grounds  
Winner, SD, 605-842-1533



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

## Events of Special Note

**September 6**  
Studebaker and Packard Car  
and Truck Show and All Makes  
of Car Parts Swap Meet  
Custer, SD, 605-431-4502

**September 12-13**  
Twin Rivers Old Harvest  
Festival, Kuchen Festival  
Delmont, SD, 605-779-5291

**September 5**  
Third Annual Rush-No-More  
Car Show and Shine  
Sturgis, SD, 605-347-2916

**September 11-13**  
James Valley Threshing and  
Tractor Show  
Andover, SD, 605-881-5978

**September 12**  
Sidewalk Arts Festival  
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7397

**September 12**  
Foothills Bud Light Bull Bash  
6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Jerauld  
County 4-H Rodeo Grounds  
Wessington Springs, SD  
Contact Larry Powell at  
605-770-4370 or Brian Berge-  
leen at 605-539-0014

**September 17-18**  
St. Joseph's Indian School  
39th Annual Powwow  
Chamberlain, SD  
605-234-3452

**September 19**  
Sweat for Vets 5K Run/Kids 2K  
Run/2K Walk, 10 a.m.  
Cabelas, Mitchell, SD, Register  
by Sept. 1 to get T-shirt and  
early bird discount, Contact  
Angie Mueller at  
605-770-0617

**September 19**  
Waldner Family Singers  
7 p.m., \$5 tickets  
1905 Opera House  
Wessington Springs, SD  
Contact Cheryl Kleppin at  
605-539-9753

**September 24**  
Business After-Hours Mixer  
5:30 to 7 p.m., Darrel's Oil  
Wessington Springs, SD

**September 25-26**  
Holiday Arts Fall Craft Show  
Masonic Temple, Mitchell, SD  
Contact Nancy VanOverschelde  
at 605-248-2526 or email  
nanvan@santel.net

**September 26**  
Family Health and  
Safety Festival  
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
First Presbyterian Church  
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-371-1000

**September 26**  
South Dakota Women's Expo  
South Dakota  
State Fairgrounds  
Huron, SD, 605-353-7340

**September 26**  
Great Downtown  
Pumpkin Festival  
Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

**September 26-27**  
Pioneer Power Show  
Menno, SD, 605-387-5770

**October 17**  
27th Annual Fall Craft Fair  
9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Elementary  
Gym, Wessington Springs, SD  
Contact Cheryl Kleppin at  
605-539-9753