

# Cooperative Connections

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# It Takes a Village



**Ken Schlimgen**

General Manager

**Our village consists of you, the board members, the employees and a long list of other cooperatives in our family that share our principles and goals.**

Recently, I was visiting with a close friend and we were discussing our children. We both were very thankful for the fact that our kids are living independently and, in our biased opinions, making good decisions and contributing to their communities. We talked about how their teachers, friends, family and others have influenced who they have become. The comment made by my friend to sum up our conversation was “It takes a Village.”

According to Wikipedia, “It takes a village” is an African proverb that means that an entire community of people must interact with children for those children to experience and grow in a safe and healthy environment. Some say it means that many people must cooperate to achieve a goal.

As I walked away from that conversation, it came to me that it also takes a village to guide and operate your electric cooperative. Our village consists of you, the board members, the employees and a long list of other cooperatives in our family that share our principles and goals. Many people and organizations cooperating so that we can achieve our goal of providing reliable energy and services with a commitment to safety and member satisfaction.

What role do you have to help your cooperative be successful? Is it to give one of our trucks a pull out of the snow, to participate in a member program, or to sign an easement when we need to build across your property? Those are very important ways to support your cooperative but in my opinion, it goes beyond that.

Each year your cooperative invites you to participate in member meetings. This year the District Meetings will be held in June and the Annual Meeting will be held in September. These meetings give you an opportunity to provide your input as to how the cooperative operates and to listen to what others are saying. Every three years you have an opportunity to run for a board seat or to vote who will represent you on the board. These meetings also provide an opportunity for directors and employees to listen so they can consider your input when making decisions.

In June, director elections will be held in Davison County and Hanson County. In September, an election will be held for the Director-at-Large during the Annual Meeting. We already know our village will be seeing some change. Butch Morrison, Director for Davison County, and Jim Headley, Director at Large, have announced they will not be seeking re-election.

Butch has served our membership since 2003 and has been an important part of our village over that time. When Butch became a board member the cooperative had just gone through a merger, and over the past 18 years many decisions were made to determine its future.

Jim has served our membership since 1996 and he helped guide the cooperative through the merger process in 2000. Jim was also a key player in Basin Electric’s successful efforts to bring the first cooperative-owned wind farm to South Dakota.

Butch, Jim and the rest of our board members have many accomplishments and are important members of our village. It is hard for me to put into words how important they are to me and our cooperative. Their thoughtful advice, experience and active participation at our local, regional and national meetings has helped me so much and has greatly contributed to Central Electric’s success.

As a member-owner, you can call me or your board representative at any time to discuss your cooperative’s operations. I would encourage you to also attend your District Meeting in June and the Annual Meeting in September. While you are there, visit with us, thank your board member for what they do and enjoy good food and fellowship. Your cooperative’s future is filled with many opportunities and challenges and we need a strong village if we are to continue to be successful. I hope to see you there.

*Until next month, stay safe!*



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- 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:** Tara Miller  
taram@centralec.coop

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).

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

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

**Office Information**

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**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 March 15, 2021, at Central Electric Cooperative's Betts Road Service Center and via video conference for the regular board meeting.

The board approved the February 2021 meeting minutes. The board then reviewed monthly reports by management including details on operations, member services, communications, service department and financials.

**Board Report**

Manager Schlimgen updated the board on the following:

- East River Managers' Advisory Committee
- Rural Electric Economic Development and Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program
- Basin Electric Manager Conference
- S.D. Fairground Dakota Event Complex.
- East River operations
- Annual Meeting Minutes
- Rural Utility Service System Operations and Maintenance review
- Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) Safety Performance Report
- 2021 Virtual Legislative Conference
- NRECA supervisory workshop

■ Energy Information Administration  
Derrick Larson from Eide Bailly presented to the board of directors the 2020 audit report via video conference.

Director Wolbrink reported on East River Electric Power Cooperative happenings.

Directors Wolbrink, Campbell and Hofer reported on the NRECA Power Exchange and Tech Advantage Conference.

**Board Action**

The board considered and/or acted upon the following:

- Motion and support to provide a \$2500 donation to the State Fair Foundation. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- Motion and support to approve the 2020 audit report. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- Motion and support to declare unit 9930 and 9930-1 surplus. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- Motion and support to approve amendment to Policy 730 Tuition Reimbursement. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

The next board of directors meeting was scheduled for April 19, 2021, at Central Electric's Betts Road Service Center.

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

Financial Report	March 2021	Year-to-Date 2021
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales	30,157,578 kWhs	97,807,249 kWhs
Electric Revenues	\$ 2,941,171	\$ 9,298,274
Total Cost of Service	\$ 2,893,536	\$ 9,224,092
Operating Margins	\$ 47,635	\$ 74,182

# Eight Tips to Help You Grow Your Garden Safely

Gardening may seem like a safe hobby - and for the most part it is. But it can potentially lead to injury. Emergency rooms treat more than 400,000 injuries each year related to outdoor garden tools, reports the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Trimming trees and tall bushes can take a deadly turn when electricity is involved. Never trim a tree that has grown into a power line. Metal and wood ladders can transmit electricity into your body if you come into contact with a live wire. Instead, ask your electric cooperative to send a professional to trim the tree.

- At least three days before you begin a landscaping project that entails digging, call 811 to have underground utility lines marked.
- Never garden, trim trees or cut the lawn in bad weather. Wet and windy conditions can cause slipping and other hazards. Go inside immediately if you see lightning.
- Outlets protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters should be used for electric tools and trimmers. Never use tools outdoors when it's wet.
- Whenever possible, work in pairs so you're not using electrical equipment when nobody else is around - in case of an accident. And hire a professional if you doubt your ability to complete the job safely.
- Always wear the proper clothing and safety equipment for the task at hand. Gloves, eye and hearing protection, and dust masks can help prevent injuries and illnesses.
- Use the right tools for the job and use them safely. If you are using electric tools, watch where the cord is and unplug tools when not in use.
- Keep garden tools and equipment in proper working order. Equipment that is not maintained properly leaves the door open for potential accidents.
- Stay hydrated, use insect repellent and sunscreen (don't forget your face, neck and ears), and take breaks as needed to rest those hard-working muscles.

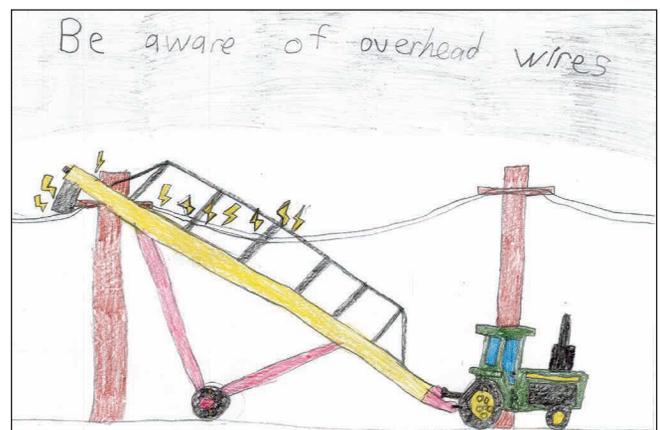
## Did You Know?

- All thunderstorms produce lightning.
- Lightning often strikes outside the area of heavy rain and can strike as far as 10 miles from any rainfall.
- If you hear thunder, you're in the danger zone.

### #StormSafety



## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



### Be Aware of Overhead Wires

**Carter Intveld, 11 years old**

Carter is the child of Glenn and Darci Intveld of Sioux Falls. They are members of Sioux Valley Energy.

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.

# Dig in to These Dairy Recipes

## Tuna Cheesettes

½ c. American cheese	2 tbsp. chopped dill pickles
2-3 hard boiled eggs, chopped	½ c. salad dressing
1 can (7 oz.) tuna	½ tsp. salt
2 tbsp. chopped onion	¼ tsp. pepper

Preheat oven to 350. Mix ingredients and pile on ½ of a hamburger bun to make an open-faced sandwich. Bake for 30 min. Serve warm.

**Ruth Schilberg, Viborg**

## Crustless Cheddar Mini Quiches

Non-stick cooking spray	1 egg
1/2 teaspoon olive oil	1/3 cup sun-dried tomatoes, plus additional tomatoes for garnish
1 leek, cleaned and finely chopped (about 1 cup)	1/2 teaspoon fresh or dried thyme
1 cup reduced-fat shredded Cheddar cheese, divided	
1 cup fat-free milk	

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Lightly spray a 12-cup muffin pan\* with non-stick cooking spray. Heat oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Cook leeks until softened, stirring frequently, about 5 minutes. Divide leeks among muffin cups and top with 2/3 cup of Cheddar cheese. Blend milk, egg, sun-dried tomatoes and thyme in a blender or food processor for about 20 seconds or until tomato is minced. Pour milk mixture over cheese in muffin cups and top each with remaining cheese. Bake 30 minutes or until tops and edges are browned. Cool in pan for 3 minutes; serve warm or cold. Top with additional pieces of sun-dried tomato, if desired.

\*May substitute with aluminum muffin cups or individual custard cups, if desired.

[usdairy.com](http://usdairy.com)

## Scalloped Eggs and Bacon

1/4 cup chopped onion	6 hard boiled eggs, sliced
2 tablespoons butter	1/4 teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons flour	1/4 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 cups milk	1 1/2 cups crushed potato chips
1 cup shredded American cheese	12 bacon strips
1/2 teaspoon dry mustard	

Cut bacon strips into 1 inch pieces and fry until crisp. Sauté onion in butter until tender. Stir in flour, gradually add milk and cook, stirring until thickened. Add cheese and mustard stirring until cheese melts. Place half of the egg slices in a greased 10 X 6 baking dish. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cover with half of the cheese sauce, potato chips and bacon. Repeat layering. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes. Tips: Prepare eggs and bacon the night before and put together the next morning to save time. May also use ham cubes instead of bacon. Double the recipe and use a 9 X 13 baking dish.

**Mary Jo Semmier, Chancellor**

## Very Berry Ice Cream

2 lbs frozen berries (raspberries, blueberries, strawberries or blackberries)	1/2 cup sweetened condensed milk
1 tablespoon honey	1/2 teaspoon salt

In blender, pulse berries, condensed milk, honey and salt until smooth, scraping down sides. Pour mixture into 5-by-9-inch loaf pan. Freeze uncovered 4 hours, or until set.

**Culinary.net**

Please send your favorite dairy recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

# Annual Meeting and Director-At-Large Election in September

Central Electric Cooperative will host its Annual Meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 14, at the Corn Palace in Mitchell.

James (Jim) Headley of White Lake, who currently serves as director-at-large for the cooperative, has indicated he does not plan to run for re-election in 2021.

The director-at-large position represents the cooperative's entire service area and will be voted on and announced at the Annual Meeting. Director terms are three years.

Members with an interest in serving as director-at-large may take out a nominating petition at Central Electric

Cooperative's Betts Road office west of Mitchell by XXX date. Petitions must be returned by the close of the business day at 4:30 p.m. on the petition due date.

When filed, forms must bear the names of at least ten (10) Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. members. Completed petitions must be filed at least twenty-five (25) days prior to the Annual Meeting.

Central Electric's board of directors and staff wish Jim, his wife Cristine and their family the best in the future. A feature article recognizing Jim's years of service will appear in an upcoming issue of Cooperative Connections.

	Meeting Date	Meeting Location	Petition Available	Petition Due
<b>Director-At-Large (All Counties)</b>	September 14, 2021	Corn Palace, Mitchell, SD	August 2, 2021	August 20, 2021

## Attend District Meetings in June

Bring the Family, Enjoy Come & Go Event

This is the second notice to mark your calendar for local district meetings. Each member in attendance will receive a \$10 energy certificate, limited to one per household. Members are encouraged to bring the family for a free meal.

Members residing in Davison County or Hanson County with an interest in serving on the Board of Directors may take out a nominating petition at Central Electric Cooperative's Betts Road office west of Mitchell by the dates provided below. Petitions must be returned by the close of

the business day at 4:30 p.m. on the petition due date.

When filed, forms must bear the names of at least ten (10) Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. members from the director district in which the candidate is seeking election. Completed petitions must be filed at least twenty-five (25) days prior to the District Meeting.

District 4, Davison County, is currently represented by Darwin "Butch" Morrison of Mitchell who is retiring when his term expires. District 5, Hanson County, is currently represented by Mark Hofer of Spencer.

District	Meeting Date	Meeting Location	Petition Available	Petition Due
<b>Aurora County</b>	June 7, 2021	Ag Building, Plankinton, SD	election in 2023	election in 2023
<b>Brule County</b>	June 21, 2021	Ag Building, Pukwana, SD	election in 2023	election in 2023
<b>Buffalo County</b>	June 2, 2021	Powwow Grounds, Fort Thompson, SD	election in 2023	election in 2023
<b>Davison County</b>	June 15, 2021	Fairgrounds, Mitchell, SD	May 3, 2021	May 21, 2021
<b>Hanson County</b>	June 14, 2021	St. Mary's Catholic Hall, Alexandria, SD	April 30, 2021	May 20, 2021
<b>Jerauld County</b>	June 8, 2021	4-H Building, Wessington Springs, SD	election in 2022	election in 2022
<b>Miner County</b>	June 10, 2021	4-H Building, Howard, SD	election in 2022	election in 2022
<b>Sanborn County</b>	June 22, 2021	4-H Building, Forestburg, SD	election in 2022	election in 2022

# Employee Years of Service



**Brian Bultje**  
 Manager of Operations  
 June 9 – 35 years



**Al Spader**  
 Journeyman Lineman  
 June 15 – 34 years



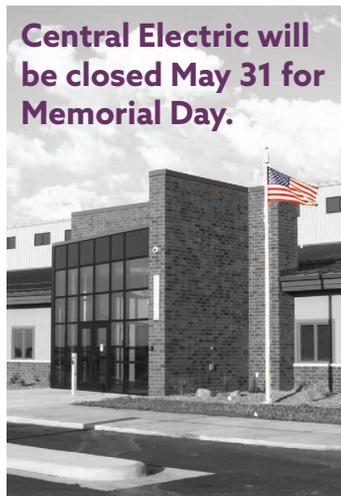
**Gene Gaikowski**  
 Area Foreman  
 June 12 – 4 years



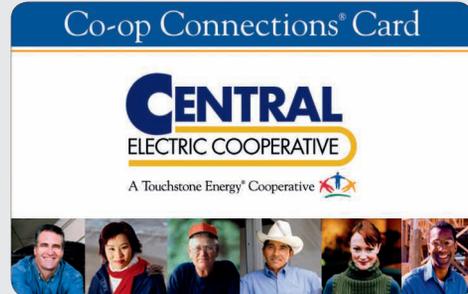
**Daniel Koupal**  
 Journeyman Lineman  
 June 10 – 2 years



**Davis Mathison**  
 Apprentice Lineman  
 June 1 – 1 year



## 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.

- **County Fair Food & Fuel, Mitchell, SD;** \$0.05 discount/gallon of fuel
- **Dakota Sunset, Mitchell, SD;** \$0.05 discount/gallon of fuel
- **Daylight Donuts & Coffee Mitchell, SD;** Donut and regular coffee for \$1
- **Double D Body Shop, Woonsocket, SD;** \$5 off windshield chip repair
- **Gene's Photography, Mitchell, SD;** 1/2 price on session fees
- **Genevieve's Print \*Art\* Design, Wessington Springs, SD;** 15% off labor for services
- **Graham's Interstate Sinclair, Mitchell, SD;** \$0.07 off gallon of gas or fuel
- **Hair Expressions Salon, Chamberlain, SD;** \$25 off 1st set of eyelash extensions or \$20 off spa facial with microdermabrasion

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.centraleccoop.com](http://www.centraleccoop.com) or call 800-477-2892 or 605-996-7516.





SDSU Extension Master Gardener Ruth Smith prepares for a local spring plant sale. Photos by Billy Gibson.

# MASTER GARDENERS

## Extension Program Seeks to Spread the Love of Gardening

**Billy Gibson**

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

Sorry, Walt Disney. The happiest place on earth for Ruth Smith isn't located in Florida or California. It's found in the serene confines of her garden in Pierre, S.D.

A retired educator, Smith experiences relaxation and contentment while growing herbs, vegetables and florals in her terraced backyard garden. After spending a career in public education and dedicating herself to the development and guidance of local students, Smith now finds her bliss by focusing her efforts on cultivating fresh produce and plants.

She even confesses a proud affinity for something that most people absolutely abhor – weeding.

“I actually like weeding. I like tending to the plants and bringing them up with some tender loving care,” Smith said. “I always tell people this is my happy place. Some people like to take a boat out on the river or go hunting. This is what we like to do.”

The “we” Smith refers to includes her husband, Mark. Both enjoy gardening and both have been through the Master Gardener program administered by South Dakota State University Extension.

As current president of the Prairie Potters Master Gardeners Club based in Pierre, Smith is an enthusiastic proponent of serving as an ambassador for horticulture education both locally and throughout the state. She and Mark completed the training

and course work required to become Master Gardeners about 10 years ago, although Mark is currently on “inactive” status.

The goal of the program is to turn gardening enthusiasts into expert volunteers who share their research-based knowledge with community members across the state. Since the program's inception in 1985, more than 400 Master Gardeners have logged nearly 80,000 hours of volunteer service answering questions from the public and hosting community programs.

It's that public interaction that interests Smith. She enjoys attending local farmer markets, plant sales, workshops, school programs and other community events.

“The fun part is getting out among people and helping them solve



Mark Smith repairs a retaining wall in front of his home in Pierre.

## Master Gardener Clubs in SD

Club Name	Area
Brookings Area Master Gardeners	Brookings
Coteau Prairie Master Gardeners	Watertown
Custer County Master Gardeners	Custer
Dakota Prairie Master Gardeners	Miller
Fall River Master Gardeners	Hot Springs
Garden Gate Master Gardeners	Winner
Harding County Master Gardeners	Buffalo
Huron Area Master Gardeners	Huron
Minnehaha Co.	Sioux Falls
Missouri Valley Master Gardeners	Yankton
Northern Hills Master Gardeners	Spearfish
Pennington County Master Gardeners	Rapid City
Perkins County Master Gardeners	Bison
Prairie Partners Master Gardeners	Aberdeen
Prairie Potters Master Gardeners	Pierre
South Central Master Gardeners	White River

any problems they're encountering and giving them suggestions on how they can get better results for their efforts," she said. "We love to have conversations with people and we're not afraid to say we don't know something. We can always find out the answers and get back with them."

So, what's the question she gets asked the most? "Hmmm. It's probably, 'Something is wrong with my tomato plants. What should I do?'"

Rhoda Burrows is a horticulture specialist with SDSU Extension and works frequently with Master Gardeners. She said interest in the program has grown since the pandemic struck in March of 2020. While participants weren't allowed to attend in-person events as representatives of the program through most of last year, online teleconferences were held with many new prospects joining in.

"It's just such a fun group to work with," she said. "They're so enthusiastic and they have a deep hunger for knowledge and a heart for helping out each other in their communities. After the pandemic when people were restricting their movements, they discovered that gardening can be a good, wholesome family activity. Gardening is a source of fresh produce and more people are appreciating the benefits of healthy eating."

More information about the Master Gardeners program can be found by visiting [www.extension.sdstate.edu](http://www.extension.sdstate.edu). Those interested in becoming part of the program can contact SDSU's Extension Master Gardener Coordinator Aimee House Ladonski at 605-782-3290.

## McCrary Gardens is an Inspiration for Horticulture Hobbyists

Gardeners are typically passionate self-starters and don't require much outside motivation. But McCrary Gardens is an ideal place to go for those gardeners looking for an ounce of inspiration over the summer months.

Created in 2012 on the Brookings campus of South Dakota State University, McCrary Gardens features a 25-acre garden and 45-acre arboretum along with a 9,300-square-foot Education and Visitor Center.

While visitation was down in 2020, McCrary Gardens is expecting a busy summer and welcomes gardening enthusiasts to see the ever-changing display of flowers, vegetables, herbs and more.

New to the facility this summer is a Native American medicinal garden area, a "three-sisters" garden with beans, corn and squash, as well as a pollinator garden designed to attract bees and butterflies. Professors and instructors from the Native American studies department collaborated as consultants on the project.

McCrary Gardens is open to visitors on Wednesday through Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

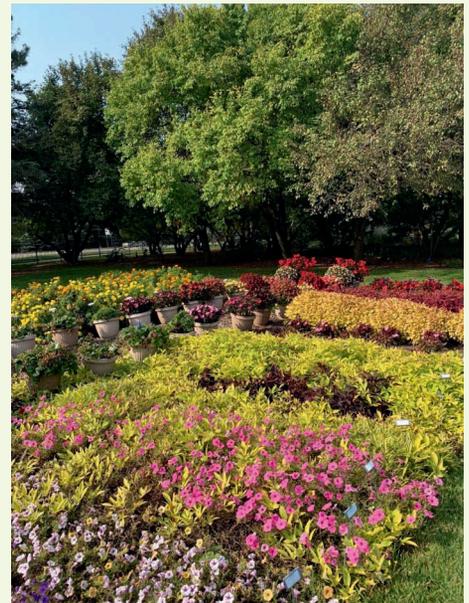
"There is always something new that's growing and blooming, and we have numerous annual beds that are planted each year," said Director Lisa Marotz.

What is expected to be a spectacular summer will culminate in the annual Garden Party held each year on the first Friday in August. While plans are still being finalized, past events have included food vendors, live music, games and free admission for the day.

"Pretty much everything we have is in bloom at that time. We want to invite everyone to come out and see what we have to offer," Marotz said.

McCrary Gardens is a privately-funded \$4.2-million facility that was the vision of founder and SDSU professor S.A. McCrary.

Last August, McCrary Gardens was named as a benefactor of an endowment from the estate of Frank and Mildred Denholm. A gift of more than \$422,000 went to the gardens while an additional gift of the same amount went to The South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum, which is hosting an exhibit entitled, "Electrifying Rural South Dakota," through Sept. 1.





Heating & Cooling Systems

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# Pole Testing Planned Late May Through July 1

Central Electric Cooperative's pole inspection program is scheduled from late May through July 1 for southern Davison County and southern Aurora County.

The cooperative has again contracted with SBS Pole Inspections to complete the testing. SBS will utilize a crew of three to five workers who have performed testing in our area in previous years.

Members may notice the crew digging around poles or riding ATVs and pickups along power lines. Crews will identify themselves by using Central Electric magnets on vehicles and other possible means.

The inspection program is intended to detect poles with potential faults and prevents future unplanned outages or damages. Approximately 5,000 poles will be tested.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Central Electric by calling 1-605-996-7516 or 1-800-477-2892.



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

## Safety in the Field



Pole damaged from a disc during planting season.

Each year Central Electric crews respond to incidents involving farm machinery contacting power lines and equipment.

As planting season wraps up, farmers will be operating sprayers, haying equipment and other machinery that could damage power poles and put them at risk.

Accidents can happen to anyone, and many occur while completing routine activities that are performed on a regular basis. This is a dangerous situation that can be avoided.

Remember to "Look Up and Look Out" for all overhead and underground power equipment. If you do contact a line, here's what to do:

**STAY PUT** and **CALL 911** or your electric utility. Staying in the equipment is the safest place for you to be.

**KEEP OTHERS AWAY** from equipment to prevent electrocution.

In case of fire, **JUMP CLEAR** from the tractor or vehicle. Do not touch the tractor and ground at the same time.

**HOP** or **SHUFFLE** away from equipment with your feet together until you're at least 40 feet away. Walking or running puts you at risk for electrocution.



A student at the Korkow Rodeo School learns the “lift, charge and stay back” method of saddle bronc riding under the watchful eye of former champion Chad Ferley. Photos by Billy Gibson

# Class is in Session

## Rodeo School Teaches Youngsters the Basics of the Sport

**Billy Gibson**

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

Jeff Reis saw that his son was in big trouble, so he quickly hurled himself over the heavy metal railing and sprinted across the rodeo arena toward the bucking chute.

That’s where Casey, a high school senior bull rider and student at the Korkow Rodeo School, was getting set for his final run of the day. But things weren’t proceeding as planned. While Casey was going through his preparations, the agitated bull began climbing up the railing and turning toward the unwelcomed antagonist straddling his back.

Casey was able to get a grip on the top rail of the chute and the spotters eventually pulled him free, but not before his father had gotten halfway across the arena floor.

“Bulls have done this before, but I haven’t seen one get that high or be able to turn the way this one did,” Jeff recalled. “When it spun and belly rolled and started pulling Casey away from the spotters, I panicked because I thought something truly catastrophic was about to happen.”

Thanks to the spotters and handlers and his own quick reflexes as a multi-sport

athlete, Casey escaped the few seconds of terror injury-free. The recalcitrant animal got everyone’s attention and made a big scene, but it did nothing to diminish Casey’s grit and determination. Even his father was a bit surprised at what happened next.

Casey made it clear he wasn’t nearly finished with that bull.

“I couldn’t believe his mentality after that,” Jeff said. “He was shook up, but he went out and got a new spur strap that had broken off, fixed all of his equipment, got his rope back on and rode that same bull.”

Lots of lessons were learned during that dust-up, but then that’s the purpose of the Korkow Rodeo School. Having completed its 36th year in April, the school is one of the oldest and most established of several similar schools operating across the state that offer instruction to hundreds of eager young riders and future champions.

Jim Korkow, owner of the Anchor K Ranch east of Pierre, said the school tends to separate those who are genuinely interested in rodeo from those who “might want to go looking for a set of golf clubs.”



Jeff Willert preps a saddle bronc student for the youngster’s first ride.

Though last year’s school was canceled, dozens of students of various ages and skill levels returned to the Anchor K this time around to learn the basics of saddle bronc, bareback and bull riding, and also ways to stay safe.

Korkow’s son T.J. runs the annual three-day school, which is led by a team of skilled riders and instructors as well as a physical trainer and other highly-experienced support staff. Each year the school attracts dozens of riders from several different states.

Instructor Chad Ferley is a two-time PRCA World Champion saddle bronc rider and five-time NFR qualifier from Oelrichs who has participated in the event

**SD HS Rodeo Assn.  
Regional Qualifying  
Rodeos:**

June 4-6 - Huron,  
Highmore, Buffalo, Wall  
June 11-13 - Watertown,  
Winner, Dupree, Sturgis

**State HS Finals Rodeo:**

June 15-19 - Ft. Pierre, SD

**National HS Finals Rodeo:**

July 18-24 - Lincoln, NE

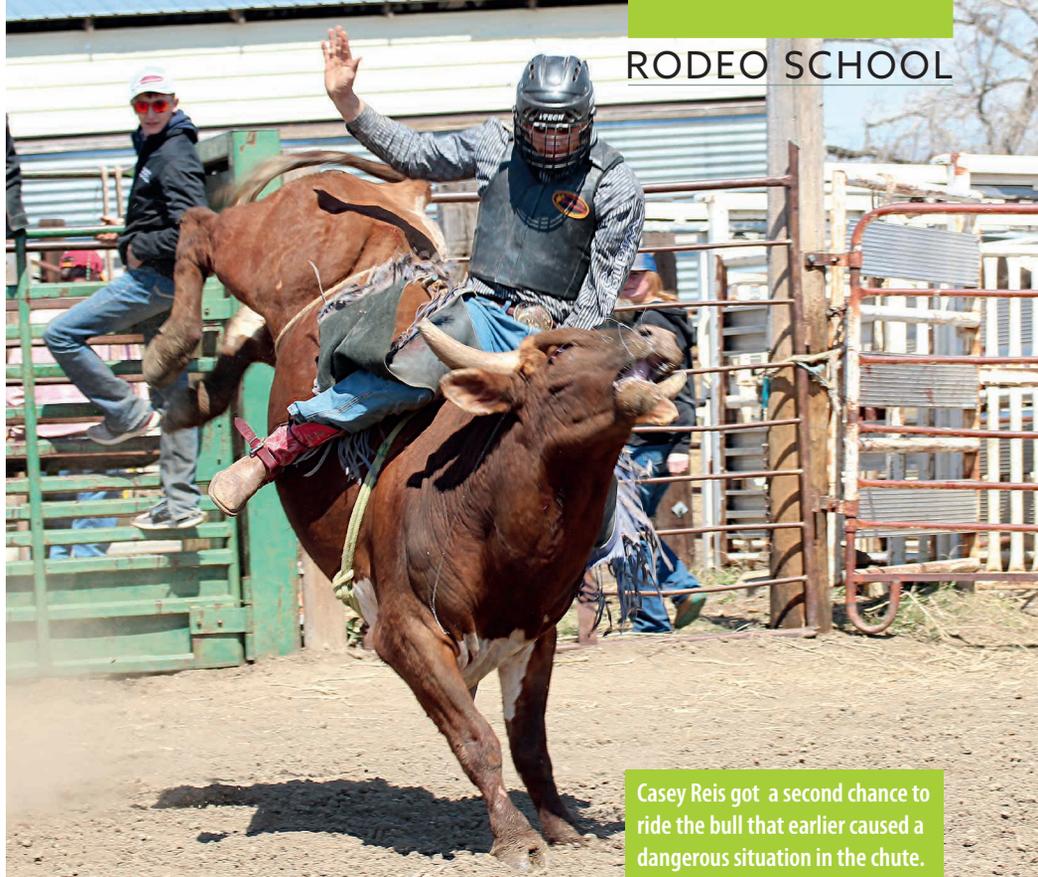
for the past 12 years. Ferley, a member of Black Hills Electric Cooperative in Custer, said students don't leave the school ready for the pro circuit but are there to learn the basics... at least after the initial shock wears off from that maiden voyage that takes the young rider from zero to 90 in a split second.

"After their first ride, they always say it was a whole lot faster than they thought it was going to be," Ferley said. "At first, most of them just black out. We're here to give them the basics, talk to them after each ride and tell them what they did wrong and what they did right, and give them the information they can apply and practice on down the line as they ride more horses."

Fellow instructor Jeff Willert is a PRCA World Champion saddle bronc competitor, five-time NFR qualifier and member of West Central Electric Cooperative. He said he enjoys passing on to youngsters all the tips and tricks that he learned throughout his successful rodeo career.

"With bronc riding, we tell them to lift, charge and stay back," he said. "But things happen so fast, and it's hard for them to pay attention because as soon as that chute opens, they lose their train of thought. You just try to drill things into their head and they eventually get it. It's trial and error. The more you ride, the more you learn."

Ken Korkow said throughout more than three decades of operating the school, one particular student stands out among all the others. An uninitiated 42-year-old gentleman from Alaska came to the ranch



Casey Reis got a second chance to ride the bull that earlier caused a dangerous situation in the chute.

with the intention of checking off an item from his bucket list of things he'd never done before, Korkow recalled. Organizers always make a point to match the stock with the rider's level of experience, so the instructor set up the non-traditional student with a black angus pasture bull.

"He managed to stay on it for longer than I thought he would," Korkow said. "The instructor blew the horn at six seconds when he saw the guy was about to come off, but he blew it early just so he'd think he made it the whole eight seconds. But all the kids who were around got excited for him and went out there and cheered for

him and gave him high-fives. It was quite a moment I'll always remember."

While some express concern about the future of rodeo in the age of youngsters getting more involved in technology, Willert said he doesn't share that concern.

"It can be rewarding from many stand-points," he said. "There are still a lot of kids who don't spend all day playing video games. They see the value of hard work and the farming and ranching lifestyle and they respect the culture. They understand that while some things may be difficult, it's all worth it when you can walk away knowing that you've stood up to the test."



A young rider hangs on just before getting thrown to the ground.



Central Electric Cooperative is seeing increased interest in solar power. Informational sessions will be held this summer for interested members.

# CONSIDERING SOLAR?

## Important Steps Required Before Installation Begins



**Patrick Soukup**

Manager of Member Services and Marketing

With the warm air in our faces and planting season behind most of us, we get to enjoy the warm rays of sunshine. Summer is here!

I have received more calls than usual on solar inquiries. The discussion usually starts with a question that I will ask our member – What are your intentions?

Central Electric has options for solar and renewable energy. For example, we have a Renewable Energy Credit (REC) Program available to Central Electric members. The REC represents the valuable renewable attributes of wind energy. We also offer kits for solar well pumping, a successful program for the member group. Currently, we do not sell solar for your home or business.

If solar is ultimately the option you choose, we still need to have a conversation about your energy use and consumption. We are the experts in energy use. We have the technology to analyze when you are using electricity, helping you to decide what type of system is best for you.

As always, Central Electric is here to help. Contact our office before you embark on a residential, commercial or agricultural solar project. You'll be glad you did.

Please review these 10 tips members should know prior to starting a solar project.

# 10 Tips Before Installing Solar Panels

1. Make your home or farm as energy efficient as possible. This involves checking for LED lights, motors, air leaks around doors and windows and insulation in your attic and sidewalls.
2. Conduct research, research and more research before investing in a solar system. Your electric cooperative has resources available. We can supply you with materials that guide the decision-making process and point you to reputable contractors.
3. Understand how a solar system meshes with your cooperative's system. Central Electric is available to discuss rate structure, interconnection, essential safety precautions and answer your solar questions.
4. Review energy use to determine what size system to install. If your solar provider is not asking for this information, they might not have your best interest in mind! The system that makes sense for you versus the system a provider wants to sell you may not align.
5. Tally upfront costs. If you purchase a solar system, as the owner, you will be responsible for the purchase price as well as ongoing maintenance and repair costs. If leasing is the option you prefer, you will pay less initially, but you'll likely have higher ongoing

costs. Don't forget about permitting requirements.

6. Search for incentives, rebates and tax credits. One database offering details is [www.dsireusa.org](http://www.dsireusa.org). This site has an interactive map showing federal and state incentives, credits, exemptions, grants, loans and rebates for residential, commercial and industrial projects. In addition, your electric cooperative staff and contractor should have up-to-date details about local incentives.
7. Accept short-term and long-term responsibilities. If you purchase a Photovoltaic (PV) system, you must meet the requirements of Central Electric's interconnection agreement. A PV system consists of solar panels, an inverter and other hardware that uses energy from the sun to generate electricity which may flow back into the power grid. Members pay the cost of connecting to the grid. State and local officials are responsible for conducting safety inspections, but it's your responsibility to notify them in advance about the installation. As the owner of the system, you'll be responsible for maintenance and system repairs.
8. Follow all safety precautions. Most solar systems are grid-connected.

Because of the two-way flow of electricity, excess energy the system collects during the daytime flows into your cooperative's lines. This shoulders you with the responsibility of maintaining electrical equipment and considering the safety of cooperative lineworkers or others who may encounter a downed power line. Improper connection and maintenance of your system may endanger people and the reliability of the grid.

9. Choose a reputable solar contractor for installation. As with any major home improvement project, purchasing from the right contractor is every bit as important as the product you are purchasing. Due diligence is critical to help ensure you get a suitable system for a fair price that is installed correctly within the timeframe you expect. Service after the sale is imperative.
10. Maintain good records. Keep files with your pre-purchase research and pre-installation data. Retain bids, contracts, inspection reports, maintenance records and information you may need to refer to in the future. In addition, you may want to track system performance, so establish a method to compare your actual system performance with predictions provided by the solar contractor.



Solar panels were installed in 2015 at Central Electric Cooperative's headquarters on Betts Road west of Mitchell.

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

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**May 21-23**

State Parks Open House and Free Fishing Weekend, All State Parks and Recreation Areas, SD  
605-773-3391

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**May 22**

La Framboise Island Bike Race, Steamboat Park, Pierre, SD  
605-224-7054

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**May 22**

Take the Reins Horsemanship Clinic, Reclamation-Ranch, Mitchell, SD  
605-770-2867

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**May 31**

PPQG 25th Annual Quilt Show, Harding County REC Center, Buffalo, SD  
605-641-5591

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**June 3-5**

Annual Black Hills Quilt Show and Sale, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD  
605-394-4115

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**June 3-6**

Wheel Jam, South Dakota State Fairgrounds, Huron, SD  
605-353-7340

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**June 4-5**

State BBQ Championships, South Dakota State Fairgrounds, Huron, SD  
605-353-7354

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**June 4-6**

Black Hills Blues Stomp and Swamp Romp, Rush No More RV Resort and Campground, Sturgis, SD  
605-347-2916

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**June 4-6**

Lake Andes Fish Days, City-wide, Lake Andes, SD  
605-487-7694



Czech Days, June 18-19, 2021 (Photo by Travel South Dakota)

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**June 5-6**

18th Annual Wessington Springs Foothills Rodeo, Wessington Springs Rodeo Grounds, Wessington Springs, SD  
605-770-5720

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**June 5-6**

Siouxland Renaissance Festival, W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD  
866-489-9241

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**June 12**

Yankton Ribfest, Downtown, Yankton, SD  
866-260-2134

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**June 17-20**

South Dakota Shakespeare Festival, Prentis Park, Vermillion, SD  
605-622-0423

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**June 18-19**

Czech Days, Lidice Street, Tabor, SD  
605-463-2478

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**June 18, 25**

River City Friday Nights, Downtown, Chamberlain, SD  
605-234-4416

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**June 18-19**

Wild Bill Days, Main Street, Deadwood, SD  
605-578-1876

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**June 19-20**

Aberdeen Arts in the Park, Melgaard Park, Aberdeen, SD  
605-226-1557

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**June 19**

Helping with Horsepower ATV/UTV/4-Wheeler Poker Run, Reclamation-Ranch, Mitchell, SD  
605-770-2867

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**June 25-27**

I-90 Scavenger's Journey - Stickney to Kadoka, I-90, SD  
605-999-7287

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**July 3**

SDANG Poker Run, The Depot, Mitchell, SD  
605-770-2867

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**July 15-17**

2021 National Targhee Sheep Show and Sale, Spink County Fair Grounds, Redfield, SD  
702-292-5715

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**August 21**

Plankinton Pheasant Fest, Plankinton, SD  
605-942-7767

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**August 21**

Take the Reins Horsemanship Clinic, Reclamation-Ranch, Mitchell, SD  
605-770-2867

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**September 11-12**

Fall Harvest Festival, Delmont, SD  
605-928-3792

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.