

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## Dokken's Dogs

**Training Dogs to  
Hunt**

Pages 8-9

**Touchstone Energy  
Anniversary**

Pages 12-13

# EPA Power Plant Proposal Would Jeopardize Electric Reliability



**Ken Schlimgen**  
General Manager

I want to begin this month's column by saying thank you to those members who attended our annual meeting on Sept. 19. As always, the food and conversations were excellent, and I enjoyed

catching up just a little bit with my friends and members.

My presentation centered around three goals of your cooperative. They are safety, reliability and affordability. Regular readers of this magazine know that your cooperative has been actively replacing its aging infrastructure to maintain a reliable system. Since 2018, we have replaced about 60 miles of older overhead lines every year.

Reliability is important. When electric service is interrupted, property, livestock and possibly lives are at risk. We also know that it takes a team to maintain a reliable electric system.

East River Electric Power Cooperative is our transmission cooperative, providing transmission lines and substations that deliver electric power to Central Electric. East River is investing millions of dollars in line replacements, new transmission lines, switchyards and substations to improve reliability across our eight-county service area.

Basin Electric Power Cooperative is based out of Bismarck, ND, and its role is to generate electricity for our needs today, and to forecast, generate and deliver the electricity we need in 5 years, 10 years, and beyond. The process is already complex, and when new rules for power plants are

introduced that are unachievable, it may be impossible.

I have had many conversations with members asking about electric vehicles and if the power grid can accommodate this new technology. My response has been that, given time, the power grid will be fine. The track record shows that utilities and cooperatives have met the challenge of growing electricity demand whenever a new technology comes along. In the 1940s, it was refrigeration and electric motors. This was followed by central air conditioning in every home and farm automation like grain handling, irrigation and modern dairy operations.

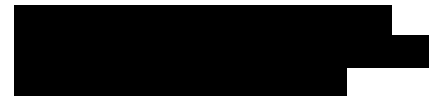
The utility industry is capable of meeting the future challenge of electric vehicle technology, that is unless the EPA ties our hands. Earlier this year, the EPA released a set of draft rules that negatively impact both new and existing coal and natural gas power plants. These proposed rules represent the biggest, most consequential set of rules to regulate power plants and they threaten the reliability and affordability of our nation's electric power supply. Final rules are expected to be published in April 2024.

Our national organization, NRECA, filed comments against these rules in August. NRECA is urging the EPA to withdraw their proposed rules in their entirety. The proposed rules hinge on the adoption of clean hydrogen and carbon capture storage technologies that are not commercially available. The proposed rules also contain timelines that are unrealistic and unachievable. The timelines endanger new and existing natural gas plants and ensure coal units will opt to shut down by 2035. Replacement generation won't be in place due to cost, supply chain issues,

permitting, public opposition and many more reasons.

While this article sounds doom and gloom, I have seen the success that NRECA has had in working with legislators and policy makers on these kinds of issues. I believe we will be able to modify or even eliminate the proposed rules before they are put in place.

Nonetheless, I urge you to keep a watchful eye on the EPA's proposed power plant rules. As you prepare and enjoy the fall harvest, please be aware of your surroundings and stay safe.



**CO-OPS  
GROW** 

**COMMUNITIES**

Electric cooperatives are joining co-ops across the U.S. to celebrate National Co-op Month. As your local electric co-op, our services are shaped to meet your specific needs. We love growing with you, the members we are proud to serve.

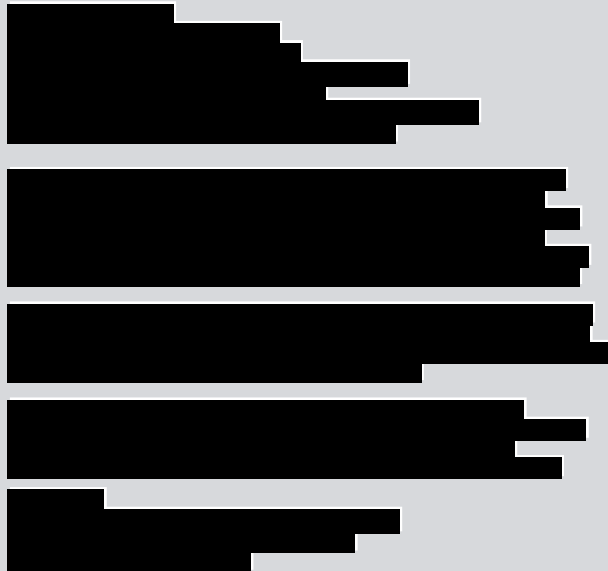


## CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

(USPS 018-963)

### Board of Directors

Aurora County - Duane Wolbrink, President  
 Brule County - Bradee Pazour  
 Buffalo County - Donita Loudner, SDREA Director  
 Davison County - Jeff Gustafson  
 Hanson County - Mark Hofer - Secretary & NRECA Director  
 Jerauld County - Mark Reindl, Treasurer  
 Miner County - Robert Banks - Director  
 Sanborn County - Todd VanWalleghen, Vice President  
 Director-At-Large - Merl Bechen



### Our Mission

Provide reliable energy and services with a commitment to safety and member satisfaction.

### Non-Discrimination Statement:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. Central Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

## Board Meeting Summary

The board of directors met July 17, 2023, at Central Electric Cooperative's headquarters for the regular board meeting. They reviewed reports by management including details on operations, member services, communications, service department and financials.

### BOARD REPORT

General Manager Schlingen updated the board of directors on the East River Electric Managers Advisory Committee, Basin Electric activities, Rural Electric Economic Development activities, strategic planning agenda, Co-op Cyber Goals program and other management activities.

Rural Utilities Service GFR Tom Jones reviewed RUS rule changes, the construction work plan, environmental approval process, long-term financial forecast, and provided a summary of the RUS F47 loan application. Discussion followed.

Director VanWalleghen reported on South Dakota Association of Cooperative (SDAC) meeting.

Director Loudner provided a report on the SDREA Board meeting.

Director Wolbrink reported on the East River Electric board meeting. Discussion followed.

Director Hofer reported on items covered at the NRECA Directors Meeting.

The board reviewed monthly director expenses. The audit committee reviewed quarterly director expenses, manager expenses and legal fees.

### BOARD ACTION

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to approve the board resolution raising the corporate debt limit from \$100,000,000 to \$150,000,000. Motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to adopt a resolution to authorize officers of the cooperative to make application to Rural Utilities Service (RUS) in the approximate amount of \$24,321,000. Motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve approve 2nd quarter 2023 legal fees and expenses.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve the 2nd quarter 2023 general manager and director expenses. Motion carried.

There being no further business, President Wolbrink adjourned the meeting. The next board meeting was scheduled for Aug. 21.

FINANCIAL REPORT	YEAR TO DATE JULY 2022	YEAR TO DATE JULY 2023
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales	203,147,709 kWh	200,763,432 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$ 20,271,103	\$ 20,496,979
Total Cost of Service	\$ 19,138,178	\$ 20,361,109
Operating Margins	\$ 1,132,925	\$ 135,870

## October is Fire Safety Month

Is your workplace or home fireproof? Each year, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) celebrates National Fire Safety Month in October. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2016, there were 88 occupational fatalities as a result of workplace fires or explosions. This is down from 2015, in which there were 121. While the statistics show that the number of fatalities due to fires or explosions in the workplace is on a downward slope, any number other than 0 is unacceptable and demands the attention from management, safety professionals and employees in every company. Not only do fires present a severe life safety hazard, they also can be detrimental to business success due to the possible destruction of business equipment and facilities. This campaign serves as a reminder to us all of the importance of fire safety awareness in both the workplace and our home lives.

The safety reminders communicated in the workplace can be easily translated to fire safety in the home. Establish a family emergency action plan, discuss escape routes with family members, and locate fire extinguishers in your home. Additionally, conduct a mock fire drill with your family members to ensure you and your loved ones know how to get out safely. During this drill, outline meeting places that are at a safe distance from the home. Designate a neighbor to contact for help in the event of an emergency. Simple exercises such as the aforementioned could mean the difference maker in your family making it out alive in the event of a fire in your home.

Below are key components to ensuring your workplace and home are fireproof:

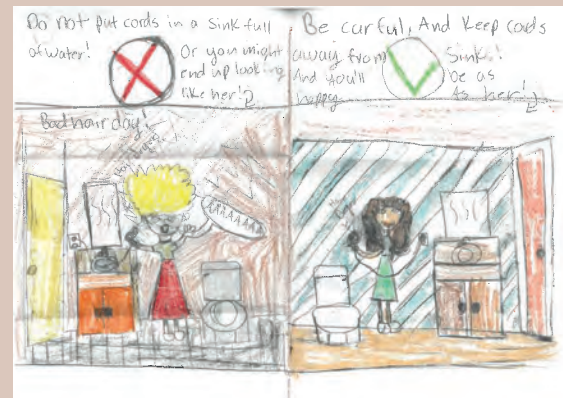
- **Eliminate Clutter** – Exercise good housekeeping. Clutter can easily become a fuel source in the event of a fire, allowing a fire to spread quickly. Furthermore, clutter can restrict access to emergency equipment and exit routes.
- **Fire Extinguishers** – Maintain the appropriate type and number of fire extinguishers. Conduct monthly and annual extinguisher inspections to ensure they are in good, working condition. Provide training for employees on the correct use of fire extinguishers.
- **Chemical Safety** – Use and store chemicals safely. Read hazard warning labels and safety data sheets

to determine flammability and other fire hazards. Ensure your chemical storage areas provide adequate ventilation for the storage of chemical or other hazardous substances.

- **Waste Control and Storage** – Limit the accumulation of flammable or combustible materials and residues as to prevent the risk for such materials contributing to a fire emergency.
- **Exits** – Ensure emergency exit route diagrams are posted and accessible in all areas of the facility for all employees to easily view. Additionally, ensure means of egress are well-lit with regulated exit signs and free from debris or clutter.

Remember it is always better to be proactive rather than reactive and it is best to alleviate hazards or hiccups in times of peace than in times of chaos. Utilize the above tips to reduce the risk for catastrophe or at least minimize the damage.

*Source: Safety Resources, Inc.*



### Keep cords away from water!

#### Maddy Pannell, Age 12

Maddy Pannell advises people it's not safe to plug in appliances around water. Maddy is the daughter of Scott and Kim Pannell from Sioux Falls, S.D., members of Southeastern Electric Cooperative.

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.

# PASTA PERFECT

## ITALIAN SPAGHETTI

### Ingredients:

1-8 oz. can tomato sauce  
1-6 oz. can tomato paste  
1 1/2 paste cans water  
1 small onion, chopped  
2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce  
1 tsp. garlic salt  
1/2 tsp. chili powder  
3 shakes cayenne pepper  
1/8 tsp. black pepper  
1 tsp. basil  
1 tsp. oregano  
1/2 to 1 lb. ground beef

### METHOD

Combine all ingredients except ground beef. Cover and simmer 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Brown beef and add to sauce. Serve over cooked noodles. May add green peppers or mushrooms.

**Gail Keating**  
Flandreau, S.D.

## GARDEN HARVEST PASTA SHELLS

### Ingredients:

2 tbsps. vegetable oil  
2 medium zucchini, shredded  
1/2 cup finely shredded carrots  
2 cups chopped fresh broccoli  
1 small onion, chopped  
Salt and pepper  
1 lb part-skim ricotta cheese  
2 cups shredded mozzarella  
1 egg, lightly beaten  
1/4 cup grated parmesan  
1 tbsp. dried basil  
27.5 oz. jar pasta sauce  
12 oz. pkg jumbo pasta shells, cooked and drained

### METHOD

Heat oven to 350. In a large skillet heat oil, then saute broccoli, zucchini, carrots, and onions until tender. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside. In a large bowl, thoroughly combine ricotta, mozzarella, egg, parmesan, and basil. Add vegetables and stir to combine. Spread 1 cup of the pasta sauce evenly in a 9" x 13" baking dish. Fill pasta shells with the vegetable and cheese mixture and arrange in the baking dish. Spoon the remaining sauce over the shells. Cover and bake for 45 minutes. Uncover and bake another 10 minutes or until bubbly.

**Faye Chambliss**  
Murdo, S.D.

## CREAMY CHICKEN AND BACON PASTA

### Ingredients:

8 oz. spaghetti  
1 1/2 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 3/4-inch chunks  
2 tbsps. flour  
4 slices bacon  
1 cup milk  
4 oz. (1/2 package) cream cheese, at room temperature  
1 1/2 tsps. basil leaves  
1 1/2 tsps. garlic powder  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/4 tsp. coarse ground black pepper

### METHOD

Cook spaghetti as directed on package. Drain well. Meanwhile, toss chicken with flour. Set aside. Cook bacon in large skillet on medium heat until crisp. Drain on paper towels. Set aside. Remove all but 1 tbsp drippings from skillet. Add chicken; cook and stir 4 minutes or until golden brown. Stir in milk, cream cheese and seasonings until well blended. Reduce heat to low; simmer 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Cut bacon into bite-size pieces. Add to skillet. Place spaghetti in serving bowl. Add chicken mixture; toss well. Serve immediately.

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

Please send your favorite 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 2023. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.





## GRANT APPLICATIONS BEING ACCEPTED UNTIL NOV. 1

Fedora Volunteer Fire Department recently received \$1,500 for rescue equipment.

### Tara Miller

Manager of Communications

Every six months, Central Electric Cooperative accepts Operation Round-Up® grant applications from organizations for projects that benefit local communities and area residents. The next grant application deadline is Nov. 1, 2023.

Organizations that have received past grants include municipalities, non-profit groups, cemetery associations, youth organizations, ambulance services and fire departments.

Operation Round-Up® is a voluntary program in which members round up their electric



bill to the next whole dollar each month, and the extra cents accumulate to fund local grants. Since the program's inception in 2015, Central Electric members, employees and board members have invested more than \$180,000 to support area projects.

Grant applicants do not need to be members of Central Electric Cooperative, but eligible projects should positively impact residents in Aurora, Brule, Buffalo, Davison, Hanson, Jerauld, Miner, or Sanborn County.

To access the grant application and complete funding guidelines, visit [www.centraleccoop.org/operation-round-up](http://www.centraleccoop.org/operation-round-up) or contact Central Electric Cooperative at 1-800-477-2892.



White Lake Community Library received a \$250 grant for the local summer reading program.



Canova Cemetery Association received a \$1,400 grant for grounds maintenance.



The City of Emery received \$1,000 for an automated external defibrillator.



Aurora County 4-H Leaders received a \$1,400 grant for facility wiring upgrades.

## Electric Polaris Ranger XP Kinetic UTV



Central Electric Cooperative recently took ownership of an electric 2023 Polaris Ranger XP Kinetic utility terrain vehicle, shown here on display at Dakotafest in Mitchell. A grant from the Beneficial Electrification League was utilized to help purchase the unit.

As the cooperative studies electric vehicles (EVs), we plan to educate our members about battery charging options and range capabilities. Watch for more information to come as we document our findings and share insights on this emerging technology.

# Brad Schardin

## A Man of Faith, Family, Fast Cars and Community

**Shannon Marvel**

shannon.marvel@sdrea.coop

Four decades ago, Brad Schardin entered the rural electric cooperative world as the Douglas Electric Cooperative Inc. general manager. His success as a leader is something he credits to having a strong supporting cast. Without the help from others working within the various co-ops over the years, he'd be lost.

Those very same people nominated Schardin to be inducted into the South Dakota Co-op Hall of Fame. Schardin was one of the four inductees honored at this year's award ceremony, which was held Aug. 7 in Sioux Falls.

The award is one of the highest honors bestowed on those who have worked to enhance the cooperative idea, its broader acceptance, or the substantial advancement of cooperatives in South Dakota.

Schardin grew up in De Smet and was beginning his teenage years when his father died, leaving him and his mother on their own. That's when Ed and Bill Wilkinson took Schardin under their wing.

"Those guys really taught me a lot," Schardin recalled.

To this day, he helps out at the Wilkinson Ranch, which is located near Lake Preston.

Schardin also made history as an athlete and was the last Black Hills State University Yellow Jacket in recent history to earn 12 varsity letters in his career.

He participated in football, basketball and track from 1978 to 1982. Schardin was co-captain in basketball his senior year and holds the BHSU high jump record of 6' 10". Schardin was a member of the football conference champions in 1979 and track conference champions all four years. The track team also won the District 12 Championship in 1979 and 1980. Schardin was also named the first Walter Dickey

Scholar Athlete at BHSU, according to information from Black Hills State University's Hall of Fame page.

Schardin was inducted into BHSU's Hall of Fame in 2000.

His career in the co-op industry began in 1983. In 1990, Schardin moved to Marion to take over Turner-Hutchinson Electric. Seven years later, he was hired as shared manager of Turner-Hutchinson and Lincoln-Union Electric Company in Alcester. The two cooperatives would consolidate in 2000 to form Southeastern Electric. Three years later, a shared management agreement was entered with McCook Electric and the two cooperatives merged in January 2006.

Schardin served six years on the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Cooperative board.

There were difficult times Schardin had to persevere through during his career, specifically when an employee made contact with electricity. Schardin didn't elaborate on the details of the electrocution, but he said his faith kept him going and his commitment to his employees grew even stronger. "That's why having good, meaningful relationships with the employees is so important," Schardin said.

Between his involvement with his local church where he mentors young athletes, Schardin likes to race cars, specifically Mopar, and organizes car shows within his local community.

As if Schardin didn't have enough on his plate, he bought the local bowling alley in Marion about four years ago. The owners were struggling to keep the alley open and Schardin didn't want to see the community take the loss. So he invested his time and money into the business.

"Families in the community shouldn't have to travel all the way to Sioux Falls, spend \$200 to celebrate their child's



birthday, then drive all the way back to Marion. The bowling alley is a place where people can come have birthday parties or spend time with their family for just a few bucks," Schardin said.

His commitment to community, one of the cooperative principles, is apparent in all aspects of his life.

Chad Kinsley will take over as Southeastern's new general manager. Kinsley graduated from South Dakota School of Mines and Technology with a bachelor of science degree in electrical engineering and has held diverse leadership roles in the manufacturing, medical device, and utility industries. Kinsley previously was the vice president of operations for Black Hills Energy.

Schardin said he believes Kinsley will do a fine job in the role and gave praise to the employees, Southeastern members and the board of directors for their commitment to delivering affordable, reliable energy.

"Brad's main focus is the cooperative member," Schardin's hall of fame biography states. "His greatest concern is how a decision will affect the member at the end of the line, always asking if it will ultimately benefit members with improved reliability and will be worth the cost. Brad holds himself to the highest standards. Having begun his cooperative career at a small co-op, Brad has continued to consider effects on smaller co-ops when collaborating with other distribution cooperative managers, East River, and Basin Electric, and is likely to speak up when he feels it is necessary. Brad lives by the cooperative principle of commitment to community."



# FOR THE LOVE OF HUNTING DOGS

Source: Travel South Dakota

## A Successful Hunt May Depend on Your Dog

Shannon Marvel

With numerous television appearances and A-list clients under his belt, Day County resident and Lake Region Electric Cooperative member Tom Dokken has become one of the premiere hunting dog trainers of our time.

But you won't hear the modest pro brag about himself. Instead, Dokken gives credit to the hard work and the innate capabilities of the dogs themselves.

The 70-year-old Minnesota native has been professionally working with dogs over the last 50 years at his training facility, Dokken Oak Ridge Kennels, Inc. in Northfield, Minnesota.

It's one of the largest gun dog training kennels in the region.

His love for hunting alongside a canine

companion harkens back to his teenage years when he'd tag along to go hunting throughout the country with his friend and his friend's Labrador Retriever, Charlie.

"We were probably 16 years old when we started hunting together. He had a lab and I didn't have one. We hunted with that dog just about every weekend."

After a few years, Dokken decided it was time to get his own dog.

And to that dog goes all the credit, in Dokken's eyes.

"I started training her then I started running field trials. I did really well, not because of me, but I had a good dog who did

really well on a national level," he recalled.

After that, Dokken was hooked and knew training dogs was what he wanted to do for a living. He's since established



An adult black lab out hunting



himself as one of the top hunting dog trainers in the world, even bolstering a line of dog training products – Dokken Dog Supply – which is carried in sporting good stores across the country.

“That’s just as a result developing products we wanted for training themselves,” Dokken said of his supply company.

Some of the dogs Dokken has trained have hunted under some big names, including President George W. Bush and country music legend Hank Williams, Jr., along with many major professional athletes.

But it takes some prying to get that kind of info out of the humble Dokken, and he’s quick to emphasize that everyone that he does business with is treated the same, no matter what.

“Every customer is important. One person doesn’t get treated different than the other,” Dokken said.

His facility employs four full-time trainers, as well as office staff.

When Dokken isn’t training one of the 350 hunting dogs that come to his Minnesota training facility each year, he’s at home with his wife, Tina, in Day County.

“My wife and I live north of Webster. That’s our connection with the area. I’ve hunted down in the Lily area for years. We’ve had our place here 18 years or better,” Dokken explained.

“My mom’s family homestead is down in the Selby area, so as kids we’d be back on the farm for a good portion of the summer,” he added.

Dokken said his business trains pretty much any of the sporting, pointing and flushing breeds. But in the Upper Midwest, the more popular breed tends to be the Labrador Retriever.

Dokken has a special place in his heart for labs, which he described as a hardy breed able to withstand the punishing winter conditions known to challenge hunters in South Dakota during pheasant season.

And in South Dakota, pheasants are

king, according to Dokken.

“As far as population of pheasant – up in our area the weather sometimes knocks them back a little bit. Last year we had rain in December, which is a little bit of a factor when it comes to pheasant numbers,” Dokken said.

“The further south and west you get, the population changes too. Regardless, South Dakota numbers will always be top in the U.S.”

Hunters who have a dog in their arsenal have a much greater advantage over those who do not. For one, they can flush birds out of thick cover and, unlike the average human, have an absolute blast doing so.

“Without a dog – if you’re a pheasant hunter – you’re not going to have the ability to get the birds up and get them out of higher and denser cover. Finding birds that you’ve shot is going to be a real challenge as well. A dog is a great conservation tool as well,” Dokken said.

From a training standpoint, Dokken advises dog owners to start teaching their hunting partners good habits when they’re really young.

The earlier the training begins, the more success you’re setting the dog up for down the line.



Dokken with two adult labs

“Try to buy the best bloodlines that you can because if you do, in most cases your success rate just gets higher.”

Dokken says it boils down to three things: teaching, repetition and reinforcement. For the human, practicing patience is crucial.

“A majority the time the dog is not in the wrong, it’s that the dog can’t understand what you want,” he said.

The entire job is a dream for Dokken and his team, and one he hopes to continue for decades more to come.

“It’s what we do,” he said. “It’s a labor of love.”



Source: Travel South Dakota

# A Guide to Choosing Kitchen Appliances



**Brandon Auch**

Electrician & Appliance  
Repair Technician

Choosing the right appliances will help ensure your kitchen is equipped for success. With so many options available, it can be overwhelming. This article helps guide you through the process of selecting appliances that will meet your needs.

## Assess Your Cooking Habits

Before diving into appliance shopping, take a moment to reflect on your cooking habits. Consider how often you cook, the types of dishes you prepare and the number of people you usually cook for. This assessment

will help you prioritize which appliances are must-haves and which are optional.

## Kitchen Layout

Knowing the size and layout of your kitchen helps determine the appliances that will fit seamlessly. Measure the available space for each appliance and consider the flow of your kitchen's design. Make sure there is adequate room for the appliance doors to open without obstructing walkways.

## Budget Considerations

Setting a budget is crucial when shopping for kitchen appliances. Appliances come in a wide price range, so it's essential to determine how much you're willing to spend on each item. Do your homework.

## Appliance Size and Capacity

Make sure the appliances you choose are appropriately sized for your needs. For instance, if you have a large family, a spacious refrigerator and dishwasher might be

essential. Conversely, if you have limited counter space, opt for compact appliances or built-in options. Tailoring your choices to your specific needs will ensure that your kitchen is both efficient and clutter-free.

## Appliance Finish and Style

Your kitchen appliances can significantly impact the overall aesthetics of your kitchen. Choose a finish and style that complements your kitchen's design. Stainless steel appliances offer a sleek and modern look, while white or black appliances can create a classic and timeless appearance. Consider how your chosen finish will harmonize with your cabinets, countertops, and backsplash.

## Cooking Technology

Advancements in kitchen appliance technology have introduced various features that can simplify your cooking experience. When selecting appliances like ovens and stovetops, consider options with convection cooking, induction cooktops, or smart capabilities. These features can enhance your cooking efficiency and convenience.

## Brand Reputation and Warranty

Research appliance brands and read customer reviews to gauge their reliability and performance. Brands with a reputation for quality and durability are generally a safer bet. Additionally, check the warranty terms for each appliance to ensure you have adequate coverage in case of any issues.

Selecting the right kitchen appliances requires careful consideration. By taking all these factors into account, you can create a well-equipped kitchen that meets your needs and enhances your cooking experience.

Contact Central Electric at 1-800-477-2892 if you need a quote for new kitchen appliances or laundry machines. We carry reputable brands, GE and Speed Queen, plus we provide service after the sale.



GE APPLIANCES



Speed Queen  
LAUNDRY

# Reasons to Celebrate!

**National Tradesmen Day** is Sept. 15. This is a time to honor electricians and those whose skills keep our lives running. For this occasion, we recognize the electricians in our service department and others who previously worked as electricians for their contributions as tradesmen.

**National Information Technology (IT) Professionals Day** is Sept. 19, making it a great time to recognize IT Systems Manager Ryan Mueller and IT Systems Coordinator Kelly Kidwiler. Their contributions have streamlined workflows and improved capabilities across all departments.



**Brandon Auch**  
Electrician & Appliance  
Repair  
Technician



**David Henkel**  
Electrician



**Kevin Johnson**  
Electrician



**Dwight Keegel**  
Electrician



**Patrick Soukup**  
Electrician  
& Manager  
of Member  
Services



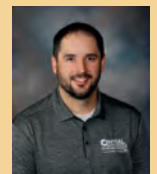
**Ken Schlimgen**  
Electrician  
& General  
Manager



**Rodney Weber**  
Electrician



**Kelly Kidwiler**  
IT Systems  
Coordinator



**Ryan Mueller**  
IT Systems  
Manager





Howard Area Foreman Tim Neises (pictured left) and Jennifer Gross from East River Electric Power Cooperative (bottom right) participated in youth safety demonstrations in Howard on July 18.

## Howard Kids get Hands-On Lessons in Electrical Safety

**Tara Miller**

Manager of Communications

Children don't always understand the dangers of electricity and electrical equipment, such as power lines, substations and utility boxes. In their young, imaginative minds, potentially dangerous surroundings may go unnoticed or appear enticing and fun.

Howard Area Foreman Tim Neises and East River Electric Education and Outreach Coordinator Jennifer Gross recently teamed up for a local summer camp to share electrical safety lessons.

Kids learned about electrical safety hazards on the farm and in town. A variety of experiments helped explain how electricity

travels. A Van de Graaff generator showed the movement of electrons with some hair-raising results. Participants were also able to give friends a static shock.

The pedal power bicycle generator also invoked a lot of excitement. Pedal power turns the concept of electricity from something abstract into something tangible. Kids became power plants, providing the energy necessary to power light bulbs.

By the end of the day, students gained a greater understanding and appreciation for electricity.

Adults should take the opportunity to point out overhead power lines and other electrical equipment to children and explain the dangers. Climbing trees and flying kites can be fun, but doing it near a power line can be fatal.

Central Electric extends special thanks to camp leader Emma Neises for organizing the event and allowing us to spread the word about electrical safety.



## Employee Years of Service



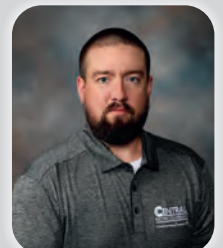
**Jonathan Reichert**  
Plankinton Area Foreman  
13 years on Sept. 1



**Ryan Mueller**  
IT Systems Manager  
8 years on Sept. 1



**David Henkel**  
Journeyman Electrician  
5 years on Sept. 10



**Andrew Baier**  
Materials & Plant Supervisor  
7 years on Sept. 12



**Lincoln Feistner**  
Sales & Project Manager  
22 years on Sept. 17



**Heather Wiczorek**  
Customer Service Representative  
7 years on Oct. 11



**Dwight Keegel**  
Lead Electrician  
33 years on Oct. 16



**Jesse Baker**  
Kimball Area Foreman  
21 years on Oct. 21



## Touchstone Energy Celebrates 25 Years with Commercial Debut

**Frank Turner**

[frank.turner@sdrea.coop](mailto:frank.turner@sdrea.coop)

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives is encouraging member electric cooperatives and their member-owners to pop some popcorn, settle in, and join them in celebrating the organization's 25th anniversary on Nov. 29, when they'll debut their

newest line of 2024 commercials.

The historic milestone will commemorate a quarter-century of Touchstone Energy's drive to establish a universal brand – seen on t-shirts, logos, and even soaring hot air balloons – for co-ops nationwide. Select commercials from the lineup, which will feature on the Touchstone Energy website, will highlight the local South

Dakota prairie landscape and local co-op employees with Sioux Valley Energy.

Touchstone Energy Board of Directors President and Sioux Valley CEO Tim McCarthy said he is glad to see South Dakota being represented on a national scope. "We are excited to be celebrating this historic milestone," said McCarthy. "Touchstone Energy continues to be an invaluable resource for co-ops in South Dakota and throughout our nationwide network."

Touchstone Energy's journey began 25 years ago when a group of movers and shakers recognized the need for an outward-facing organization that would connect the image of



co-ops across the nation. Although individually small, cooperatives from all around the nation believed a unified brand would broaden and strengthen their presence. Together, these co-ops owned and operated more distribution lines than any other sector in the electric utility industry and served more than half of the American landmass. On Nov. 26, 1998, 17 founding co-ops established Touchstone Energy, powering through a time of regulatory uncertainty.

“In the late ‘90s, there were some revolutionary things happening in the energy industry,” said Jana Adams, executive director of Touchstone Energy. “The cooperatives really wisely said: as individual entities we are small, but if we come together and create a recognizable brand, we will have a better opportunity to compete in this evolving energy landscape.”

From the start, Touchstone Energy was set on making an impression. By purchasing six iconic Touchstone Energy branded hot air balloons and sponsoring notable events such as the famous NASCAR Talladega 300 race, Touchstone Energy quickly transformed into a nationally recognizable brand.

To date, Touchstone Energy’s membership has grown to nearly 700 co-ops, which now reaches more than 30 million member-owners across 46 states. Along with this remarkable growth, Touchstone Energy has enhanced its services, including advertising, social media management, and web development, among others. Over time, Touchstone Energy’s wide range of services, said Adams, have become a crucial communication resource for their membership.

“Our first national ad was in the early 2000s, and to this day, we run advertisements in every single zip code served by a Touchstone Energy cooperative,” said Adams. “We are

constantly innovating and giving our cooperative members the opportunity to highlight the great work they do and the achievements they have.”

Looking back on the last quarter century, Adams said Touchstone Energy is thrilled to connect to its original roots and celebrate its longstanding service to co-ops across the country.



Touchstone Energy celebrates 25 years while producing new commercials in South Dakota.



“We encourage everybody to join us on Nov. 29 for our 2024 national ad premier and to celebrate the 25 years behind us, but more importantly the many years ahead of us where we continue to work together,” she said.







Mike Adolph, left, checks in with an employee during a break from construction on Aug. 22 in Watertown. Photo by Shannon Marvel

## REED Fund Helps Finance Summit-Based Manufacturer

Shannon Marvel

On the northwestern edge of Watertown, just east of Jefferson Elementary School, a sea of hard hats, brightly colored safety materials, utility trucks, commercial vans, and lumber piles spans across several blocks.

It's hard to differentiate between the houses under construction as most contractors rarely deviate from the methods they've relied on for years. Especially when framing a house.

But one construction crew's telehandler towers above the rest. The steel trusses and wall panels hoisted into the air are also not typically seen in residential construction, but using steel in lieu of timber is just as effective.

And thanks to financial assistance through the Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) Fund, Skyview Construction is able to provide steel

trusses and wall panels to the local home building industry.

Contractors usually use the platform framing method, which allows the use of dimensional lumber pieces instead of the larger, natural wood pieces which are harder to come by in the supply chain.

Lumber used in construction has become more difficult to secure and more expensive.

That's why the owners of Skyview Construction, LLC in Summit decided to manufacture trusses and beams out of steel themselves then use those

products to build homes.

But that required purchasing two very expensive pieces of equipment.

After visiting with American Bank and Trust about ways to finance the new venture, Skyview Construction owners Mike, Jackie, and Gerry Adolph reached out to Dave Eide, the general manager of Codington Clark Electric Cooperative to see if their business qualified for REED funding.

Eide was happy to help.



Gerry Adolph, Mike Adolph, and Jackie Adolph stand in the doorway of a townhome built with steel members that the family manufactured themselves.

Photo by Shannon Marvel



The REED Fund worked with American Bank and Trust to help secure financing that offered Skyview Construction a loan with more amicable terms.

Codington-Clark Electric provides financing through REED to help business start-ups and expansions, create and retain jobs and assist communities with facilities, services and infrastructure needs.

The Adolfs were able to secure the funds through the REED Fund to purchase the machine that will form the steel members for the rafters, floor trusses, and walls, and the rotating telehandler that will be used to place the components on-site.

That was in January. Within the last month, the Adolfs and their crew of around nine men completed construction of four twin home units using the wall panels and trusses they manufactured right on their own property in Grant County.

Jackie and Mike reflected on their journey into the steel manufacturing and construction industries.

The couple wanted to start a construction business after going through the extensive process of building a group of townhomes and their own home a few years ago.

Mike's mother, Gerry Adolph, is also an owner of Skyview Construction.

The family has been in the seeding and erosion control and real estate investing business together for the last 18 years, and agreed to expand into the housing industry.

They had planned to build with wood, but the soonest the equipment and necessary supplies could be delivered was at least three years down the road. It also would've cost at least \$3 million.

"So how it went down, we were going down the wood side pretty hard. Like we were going to put

in a big fancy factory with robots and everything," Mike said. "And then the equipment cost so much and it would've put us three years out. I didn't want to wait three years. Then someone asked if we had looked into steel. So we looked into the steel and it made sense."

The program the Adolfs use to manufacture the steel wall panels and trusses maps out the design and provides a detailed view of the project.

"It labels each piece and even tells you how many nails or screws to put in each connection and where to put them for that design," Jackie explained.

Their existing employees would also work as laborers for the construction outside of the seeding and soil erosion season.

The software allows the workers to assemble components without any guess work.

"While we have an experienced building supervisor, the guys that are installing it, they really don't have much construction experience. They've never done this. But it's laid out so well by the software," Mike said.

"The biggest thing with steel is they can do this with minimal experience."

The steel parts are manufactured at the Adolph's shop in Grant County.

Once the structure's design has been completed within the software, steel is ran through a machine and manufactured into the proper stud or truss material.

"Our goal right now is to do a whole house in a week or two— print it, assemble the components in the shop, and then send it out to the jobsite and have it up in a couple of days," Jackie said.

"We're hoping when we get to the single-family homes, it's going to be a little bit quicker," Mike added.

Eide noted how the insulation used with steel framework is at a higher rating and uses a Zip system, creating a more energy efficient temperature control system.

"This is just a really cool project and the owners provide the market with a product that no one else had before," Eide said.

To learn more about the REED Fund, go to [www.reedfund.coop](http://www.reedfund.coop).



Jackie Adolph points to a label on one of the steel components, which was generated by the design software to ensure the pieces are properly assembled. Photo by Shannon Marvel



**Oct. 7-8**  
**Fort Pierre Horse Races**  
 Stanley County Fairground  
 605-223-2178

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.

**SEPT 22-23**  
**Holiday Arts & Crafts Fair**  
 9 a.m.  
 Davison County Fairgrounds  
 Activity Center  
 Mitchell SD  
 605-359-2049

**SEPT 22-24**  
**Coal Springs Threshing Bee**  
 Meadow, SD  
 605-788-2229

**SEPT 23**  
**German Fest**  
 Webster, SD  
 605-380-0588

**SEPT 23**  
**Springfield Dakota Senior Meals Fall Festival**  
 9 a.m.  
 Springfield Community Building  
 Springfield, SD

**SEPT 24**  
**Annual Bazaar & Fall Fest**  
 4-7 p.m.  
 St. John the Baptist Catholic Church  
 Wagner, SD

**SEPT 30**  
**Day of Wellness**  
 10 a.m.  
 Sturgis Armory  
 Sturgis, SD

**SEPT 30**  
**Mission Quilt and Bake Sale**  
 Zoar Lutheran Church  
 Revillo, SD

**SEPT 29-30**  
**Junkin' Market Days**  
 Ramkota Exhibit Hall  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-941-4958

**OCT 6-7**  
**Holman Acres Pumpkin Fest & Vendor Show**  
 Philip, SD  
 605-441-1060

**OCT 7**  
**Spirit of Dakota Award**  
 Huron Event Center  
 Huron, SD  
 605-352-6073

**OCT 12-19**  
**"In Flanders Fields" Art Exhibition & Silent Auction**  
 Vermillion Public Library  
 Vermillion, SD

**OCT 14**  
**Oktoberfest**  
**Leo Lonney Polka Band**  
 6 p.m.  
 Menno, SD  
 605-660-1839

**OCT 19-21**  
**Fall Fundraising Rummage Sale**  
 Spearfish Senior Center  
 Spearfish, SD  
 605-642-2827

**OCT 21**  
**Fall Festival**  
 11 a.m.  
 18473 U.S. HWY 83  
 Onida, SD  
 605-788-2229

**OCT. 28-29**  
**Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Association**  
 Ramkota Hotel Exhibit Hall  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-731-9155

**NOV 11**  
**Sisseton Area Merchants & Crafters Holiday Extravaganza**  
 Sisseton, SD  
 605-698-7425

**NOV 12**  
**Lutefisk, Lefse & Meatball**  
 4-7 p.m.  
 Trinity Lutheran Church  
 Chamberlain, SD  
 605-730-0553

**NOV 24**  
**Parade of Lights**  
 7 p.m.  
 Dakota Avenue  
 Huron, SD  
 605-788-2229

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