

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Bringing the Light

Electric Cooperatives
Spread Holiday Cheer
Pages 8-9

REED Fund: Powering
Your Community
Pages 12-13

Electric Rates – Change is Coming



Ken Schlingen
General Manager

Most people don't think about electricity until they are out of power or when they receive their electric bill. In the business of delivering electricity, Central Electric's primary focus is on safety, reliability, affordability and meeting financial ratios required by our lenders. I believe your cooperative has been successful in meeting these goals.

RELIABILITY & AFFORDABILITY

It's our job to make sure members have the power they need, today and into the future. Reliability statistics indicate electric service is available to our members 99.96% of the time. This is better than the state and national averages, and reliability should improve as we continue to upgrade infrastructure.

Affordability is more difficult to define, but the numbers prove our rates are below average. While we have many of the same expenses as other electric cooperatives across the country, Central Electric's average revenue collected per kilowatt hour for residential and farm accounts was 11.5 cents in 2022 compared to the national average of 15 cents. Our average revenue collected per kilowatt hour for all account types is 9.5 cents compared to the national average among cooperatives of 12.5 cents.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

When you pay your electric bill each month, about 70 percent of the funds are used to purchase wholesale electricity from East River Electric Power Cooperative. The other 30 percent goes toward the operation, maintenance and

IMPACT OF INFLATION ON ANNUAL EXPENDITURES

Item Description	2020 Price	2023 Price	Units	Annual Increased Expense
25-kVa Transformer	\$ 1,567	\$ 2,511	100	\$ 31,467
35-Foot Pole	\$ 392	\$ 628	300	\$ 23,600
Underground Cable	\$ 1.81	\$ 3.32	480,000	\$ 241,600
Depreciation / Interest	\$ 2,154,324	\$ 4,247,534	3 years	\$ 299,030

expenses of supplying electricity to our members.

WHAT CHANGED?

Like everyone, Central Electric and its industry partners have been negatively impacted by inflation. As a result of rising equipment prices, material prices, labor costs and interest rates, East River Electric is implementing a rate change in January of 2024 that will increase our cost of wholesale power.

In addition to that, over the past two years, Central Electric has experienced an \$850,000 to \$900,000 bump in annual operating expenses. The cooperative has been able to get by, but it's not sustainable.

Management is working with the board to evaluate rate options for 2024. Central Electric recently had an outside firm complete a cost-of-service study that will be referenced to determine necessary changes. All rate adjustments are subject to board approval.

COMMITTED TO YOU

Central Electric is a not-for-profit cooperative governed by elected member-owners, so rate decisions are always made with members top of mind. Many employees are also on our electric lines, and those who aren't have faced rate increases from other utilities, so I can honestly say we are all in this together, myself included.

We know you place a great deal of trust in us to be responsible with your money. That's why we don't charge more

than necessary to operate our electric system. Unspent funds are returned to members in the form of capital credits each year. We think of the financial impact on members before we purchase equipment or complete upgrades to our aging infrastructure. The same is true when we determine rates for the electric service.

Central Electric's commitment to providing reliable, affordable energy is as strong as ever. While electric costs will increase in 2024, electricity remains an exceptional value compared to other living expenses.

TAKE CONTROL OF ENERGY USE

SmartHub offers tools to track and manage energy use. Being mindful of when and how we use electricity can help minimize the impact of future rate adjustments. If you need assistance accessing SmartHub, call us at 1-800-477-2892. Until next month, be safe.

Manage Energy Use with SmartHub.

View energy usage and billing history. Visit www.centraleccoop.com to learn more.

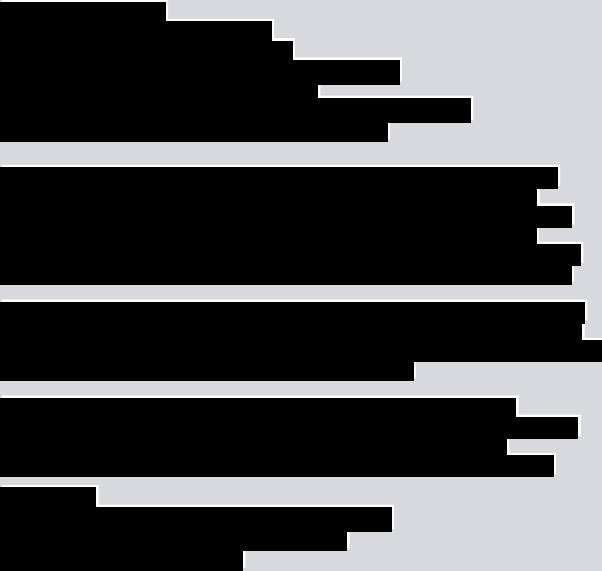



CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

(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 Sept. 18, 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 Schlimgen updated the board of directors on the East River Electric Managers Advisory Committee, Basin Electric updates, Rural Electric Economic Development activities, soybean processing plant status and other management activities. He shared details on East River Electric's next generation load management system options.

Uher reviewed the draft copy of the cooperative's IRS Form 990 - Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax for calendar year 2022. Discussion followed.

Directors Loudner, Hofer and Wolbrink reported on NRECA Region 6 meetings. Wolbrink shared information on the EPA's power plant proposal that could put electric reliability at risk. Discussion followed.

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

The board reviewed monthly director expenses.

BOARD ACTION

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to adopt a resolution to approve the general retirement of Capital Credits to members for an amount not to exceed \$600,000. Motion carried.
A motion was made and seconded to adopt a resolution to approve the retirement of Generation and Transmission (G&T) Capital Credits to members for an amount not to exceed \$523,466.22 less estate forfeitures and other adjustments. Motion carried.

There being no further business, President Wolbrink adjourned the meeting. The next board meeting was scheduled for Oct. 16.

Table with 3 columns: FINANCIAL REPORT, YEAR TO DATE SEPT. 2022, YEAR TO DATE SEPT. 2023. Rows include Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales, Electric Revenues, Total Cost of Service, and Operating Margins.

Be Prepared for Winter Driving

Prepare Your Car for Winter

In addition to annual maintenance, here are some tips to winterize your car:

- Test your battery; battery power drops as the temperature drops
- Make sure the cooling system is in good working order
- Have winter tires with a deeper, more flexible tread put on your car
- If using all-season tires, check the tread and replace if less than 2/32 of an inch
- Check the tire pressure; tire pressure drops as the temperature drops
- Check your wiper blades and replace if needed
- Add wiper fluid rated for -30 degrees
- Keep your gas tank at least half full to avoid gas line freeze

Remember to keep your car's emergency preparedness kit fully stocked, too.

Before You Start Out

- Clean your car's external camera lenses and side mirrors
- Remove dirt, ice and snow from sensors to allow the assistive-driving features, like automatic emergency braking, to work
- In frigid weather, you may want to warm up the car before you drive
- To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, never leave a vehicle running in your garage – even with the garage door up
- If the forecast looks iffy, wait out the storm; if you must travel, share your travel plans and route with someone before you leave

How to Avoid a Crash

AAA offers the following driving tips:

- Avoid using cruise control in wintry conditions
- Steer in the direction of a skid, so when your wheels regain traction, you don't have to overcorrect to stay in your lane
- Accelerate and decelerate slowly
- Increase following distance to 8 to 10 seconds
- If possible, don't stop when going uphill

If visibility is severely limited due to a whiteout, pull off the road to a safe place and do not drive until conditions improve.

Avoid pulling off onto the shoulder unless it is an absolute emergency. Limited visibility means other vehicles can't see yours on the shoulder.

Know Your Car's Capabilities

My Car Does What? is a national campaign to help educate drivers about the safety features built into vehicles. Search for your car and find out what safety features are already built in.

Traction control is now standard on most new vehicles. This function helps your vehicle gain traction on snowy, icy or wet surfaces, particularly when accelerating from a stopped or slowed position, or when trying to make it up a slippery hill.

Anti-lock braking system (ABS) helps you steer in emergencies by restoring traction to your tires and is standard on most new vehicles. ABS may vibrate or pulse when engaged. This is normal. Continue to press and hold pressure to the brake pedal.

Remember, you are your car's best safety feature. Take precautions to ensure you arrive safely at your destination. If you become stranded in an unfamiliar area, do not leave your car. Light flares in front and behind the car and make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked by snow, mud or objects.



Don't Dig Near Power Lines

Hayes Schomp, Age 10

Hayes Schomp cautions people to be careful where they dig. Hayes is the son of Thad and Devan Schomp from Eklton, S.D., 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.

HOLIDAY FAVORITES

OYSTER STEW

Ingredients:

- 1 qt. medium/large oysters
- 1 medium onion (diced)
- 2 qts. half and half
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 lb. real butter (no cheating here)
- 3 tbsps. Worcestershire Sauce

Method

Before you know it, Christmas Eve will be here so get ready the traditional Oyster Stew. In a saucepan, saute onions and oysters with the butter. Simmer until the oysters crinkle. In a crock pot, add half and half, cream of mushroom soup, and Worcestershire Sauce. Then, add the oysters, onion and butter. Season to taste with fresh ground black pepper and salt. Simmer for six hours on low heat (high heat will curdle the milk). Serve with oyster crackers.

Kari Larson- Reder
Warner, S.D.

BETTER THAN CANDY PIE

Ingredients:

- 1 nine in. chocolate ready crust
- 1 cup sliced bananas
- 1/4 cup chopped, dry roasted peanuts
- 1 small pkg. instant butterscotch pudding
- 2/3 cup dry milk
- 1 1/4 cups water
- 2 tbsps. peanut butter
- 3/4 cup whipped topping
- 2 chocolate graham crackers, chopped

Method

Mix together dry milk, pudding, and water with wire whisk. Add peanut butter. Cover bottom of pie crust with bananas. Spread pudding mixture over bananas. Spread whipped topping next. Sprinkle with chopped peanuts and chopped graham crackers.

Janet Ochsner
Box Elder, S.D.

CHRISTMAS CRACK BARK

Ingredients:

- 1 sleeve saltine crackers, (about 35 crackers)
- 1 cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 1/8 tsp. sea salt
- 1 1/2 tpsps. pure vanilla extract
- 1 pkg. (10 - 12 oz.) chocolate chips, semi-sweet, milk or dark chocolate

Method

Preheat oven to 400°F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper or foil. Spray lightly with no-stick cooking spray. Arrange crackers on baking sheet in single layer so that the edges almost touch. Heat butter and brown sugar in two-quart saucepan on medium heat. Bring mixture to a boil, stirring frequently. Simmer two to three minutes. Remove from heat; stir in salt and vanilla. Pour caramel sauce over crackers and spread to evenly coat crackers. Bake six minutes. Remove pan from oven. Sprinkle chocolate chips over caramel layer. Let stand five minutes. Spread chocolate chips into an even layer on top of caramel. Refrigerate 2 hours or freeze 30 to 45 minutes or until firm. Break or cut into pieces to serve. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator up to one week.

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.

Scholarships Available

Central Electric Cooperative is offering the following scholarships to members or their dependents in 2024:

- \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship (Must be the dependent of a member with primary residence served by Central Electric)
- \$1,000 Jay Headley Memorial Scholarship (Must be the dependent of a member and pursuing a bachelor's degree in an agriculture-related field)
- Two \$500 Central Electric scholarships (Must be a member or the dependent of a member in a specified major at Mitchell Technical College)

Basin Electric and Jay Headley Memorial Scholarship applications are due on Feb. 1, 2024. Mitchell Technical College scholarships are administered by the school foundation.

Complete eligibility requirements and applications are available online at www.centraleccoop.com/scholarships. Recipients are selected by external judges not affiliated with Central Electric Cooperative.

H.S. Juniors can Apply for Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C.



The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and Central Electric Cooperative invite high school juniors to apply for a trip to Washington, D.C.

The educational trip takes place June 16-22, 2024. Participants will meet for orientation in Sioux Falls on Saturday, June 15, fly out on Sunday, June 16, and return on Friday, June 22. A commercial bus will be used for transportation while in the nation's capital.

Applicants must be high school juniors living in Aurora, Brule, Buffalo, Davison, Hanson, Jerauld, Miner or Sanborn County. Interested students must complete the online application at www.centraleccoop.com/youth-tour by Feb. 1.

Mitchell Christian Senior Named Scholar of the Week

Central Electric Cooperative and Mitchell Christian High School are pleased to recognize Joseph Tegethoff, the son of Todd and Jen Tegethoff, as the Touchstone Energy® Scholar of the Week for Nov. 26-Dec. 2, 2023.

According to Char Speidel, a teacher at Mitchell Christian, Tegethoff is a great role model for younger students. She explained he is active with the National Honor Society, robotics team, basketball, track, cross country, band, choir, All-State Chorus, school praise team and the spring play. He is also the Student Council President.

Tegethoff works as a lifeguard and performs volunteer maintenance work at the school in the summer. He was also involved with an Eagle Scout project to clean up bike trails. He has also performed homeless outreach and participated in mission trips.

After high school, Tegethoff wants to study pre-med at the University of South Dakota and work towards becoming a pediatrician.

“Motivated students like Joseph prove there is a bright future ahead. He should be proud of his accomplishments in the classroom and community,” said Tara Miller, Central Electric Cooperative’s manager of communications.

Tegethoff receives a \$250 scholarship from Central Electric Cooperative and is eligible for additional scholarships that will be given away this spring at the annual Scholar of the Year banquet.

Tegethoff was featured on Dakota News Now for his accomplishments, and you can find the story at www.dakotanewsnow.com by typing Joseph Tegethoff in the search tool.

The Scholar of the Week program is a partnership between Dakota News Now, Central Electric Cooperative and other local Touchstone Energy Cooperatives that captures the commitment electric cooperatives have to the communities they serve.



Mitchell Christian senior Joseph Tegethoff (right) accepts the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week award from Tara Miller of Central Electric Cooperative.

Employee Years of Service



DeEtte
Accounting & Cust. Svc. Supervisor
26 years on Dec. 1



Davis
Apprentice Lineman
3 years on Dec. 1



Chandler
Journeyman Lineman
2 years on Dec. 16



Tara
Manager of Communications
3 years on Dec. 16

Mission Complete for Seasonal Utility Workers

November marked the final month on the job for seasonal utility workers Chase and Elijah.

Since May, these two assisted operations crews to fulfill or add to their 1,000 working hours required after completing powerline school at Mitchell Technical College.

proved to be great help to the line crews this year, and we wish them the best as they progress in their careers.



Chase



Elijah

Henkel Promoted to Metering/Load Management Position

Journeyman electrician Dave Henkel has been promoted to a metering and load management position at the cooperative. Henkel will gradually start taking over the responsibilities of Doug Schley as he plans to retire in the coming months.

In this role, Dave will be responsible for installing and troubleshooting Verizon metering systems, among other tasks. He will also play a crucial role in the installation and replacement of load management receivers.

Dave started at Central Electric in 2018 and has continued to demonstrate the ability to take on additional responsibilities. If you see Dave, please congratulate him on this well-deserved promotion.



Dave Henkel

LIGHT PARADE



BRINGING THE LIGHT

Electric Cooperatives Spread Holiday Cheer

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

While Santa's elves are hard at work at the North Pole, South Dakota's electric cooperatives are working to bring their own magic to their local neighborhoods, illuminating local parades with festive lights. Black Hills Electric Cooperative is just one of many examples of how a co-op can not only bring light but also creativity to their community.

Every December, Black Hills Electric crafts an exceptional float for the annual Custer Parade of Lights. For Bill Brisk, the manager of operations at Black Hills Electric, the parade isn't merely an event – it's a cherished tradition for their co-op.

As the parade approaches, the Black Hills Electric workshop bustles with

activity, mirroring Santa's very own workshop. Guided by a design from Brisk, linemen and staff assemble their unique Christmas float – crafting, welding and fabricating many of their designs from scratch.

“Just a few nights before the parade, we host a family night where we bring out the families of our employees,”



said Brisk. “The co-op provides food and drinks and we all work together to finish the float.”

In just two weeks, the co-op repurposes discarded equipment and scrap parts into creative masterpieces. One year, the co-op created an oversized shopping cart from old pipe laying around the shop. The next, they used retired meter loop pipes, guy wires, and meter covers to create palm trees and coconuts for a beachside Santa scene. Even Willie Wirehand, the co-op’s safety mascot, has been outfitted for a festive float. Despite being fabricated from old parts, the end result is always something worthy of a debut at the North Pole.

“Most everything we do is built in our shop.” said Brisk. “We do all

of the fabrications ourselves, and we haven’t had a flop yet.”

Luckily, the co-op’s efforts haven’t gone unnoticed. Since 2015, they’ve clinched an award every year at the Custer Parade with the only exceptions being 2020 and 2021 when the pandemic halted festivities. Their trophy collection holds a wide range of awards, boasting awards like the Rudolph’s Choice Award, Best Light, Best Music and most recently, the Custer Fruit Cake Award.

Dawn Murray, the executive director of the Custer Chamber of Commerce, expressed her admiration. “They really go all out. Beyond the parade, they even participate in our scarecrow decorating contest. I remember one year they had a scarecrow up in a

bucket truck, which was really cool.”

Yet, for Black Hills Electric, Custer is just the beginning. The co-op has grand visions for a broader festive footprint. With a service area that stretches from just south of Terry Peak to Nebraska, Brisk sees even more opportunities to shower communities with holiday cheer.

“It’s a festive time of year and something that we want to extend out to different towns in our service territory,” said Brisk. “Seeing the kids’ eyes brighten when we light up our float for the first time really makes the whole thing worth it, and if we can spread that to more of our members, all the better.”





Recent Grant Awards

Through Operation Round-Up, participating cooperative members round up their monthly electric bill to the next dollar. Several Central Electric employees also contribute through payroll. Member and employee contributions are pooled together to support local causes through the grant program.

Below are pictures from recently completed projects that received support from Operation Round-Up. The board of trustees reviews grant applications two times each year. Grant recipients from the November 1 deadline will be announced soon. The next deadline is May 1. To learn more about the program, visit www.centralec.coop/operation-round-up or call 1-800-477-2892.



The Town of Stickney received \$1,200 for playground equipment.



Rosedale Fire Department received \$3,000 for an updated grass fire unit to be used locally and for neighboring fire departments.



Little Tikes Daycare, a non-profit child care center in Alexandria, received \$1,000 for a new washing machine.



The Salvation Army received \$1,000 for the Compassion Kitchen program.



Dakota Counseling Institute received \$2,200 for low-income housing improvements.



Plankinton Ambulance Association received \$800 for CPR training equipment.

Holiday Open House

Please visit our Mitchell office on Betts Road for baked goodies, cider and coffee during our Holiday Open House.

December 18 - 22, 2023
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



Holiday Closings

Our office will be closed on the following days in observance of the holiday season.

Thanksgiving: Closed November 23 & 24
 Christmas: Closed December 25 & 26
 New Year's: Closed January 1



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

1-800-477-2892
www.centralec.coop



WATCH OUT THIS WINTER!

- *When plowing, avoid electrical cabinets, poles, wires and other equipment*
- *Never touch a downed power line*
- *Treat everything near downed power lines—such as trees or debris—as dangerous*

RE-ENERGIZING SAFETY





Garretson Childcare helpers are getting ready to help grow their daycare.

REED FUND

Powering Your Community

Shannon Marvel

shannon.marvel@srea.coop

The community development financial institution powered by rural electric cooperatives in South Dakota is about to reach a major milestone.

The (Rural Electric Economic Development) Fund's total dollar amount in projects impacted is anticipated to reach \$1 billion by the end of 2023, according to Eric Fosheim, Economic Development Manager for REED.

REED also exceeded 10,000 in jobs impacted (created or retained) since its creation in 1996.

"Currently, we sit at just over \$998 million in total projects impacted," Fosheim said in October.

The REED Fund is a 501(c)3

corporation and operates as a revolving loan fund that provides financing for economic development projects in rural areas.

Those projects that receive REED Fund dollars must promote growth and be a catalyst in creating more business, wealth and job opportunities within the rural community. The projects are also expected to improve infrastructure and economic base in rural areas.

The REED Fund provides financing from the federal government and other lender, in addition to revolving interest payments collected over the years. The REED Fund does not use money generated by electric rate charges.

Fosheim said that as of September 30, REED has issued 401 loans for a total of \$125.26 million.

"This includes \$104,174,418 in loans made using REED dollars and \$21,082,793 from the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program," Fosheim said.



Central Electric General Manager Ken Schlimgen, left, delivers REED funding to Mitchell Technical College.

Fosheim said it isn't entirely surprising that the \$1 billion was hit this year.

"REED has seen steady growth over the years, but typically sees higher than normal application volume in times of rising interest rates. In addition, costs are rising as well, so total project costs for each individual project have been higher as well.

Dakota Energy General Manager Chad Felderman has been on the REED Fund board since 2018.

He said the impact the REED Fund has on local communities is unique, noting that the businesses the fund helps aren't necessarily ones that Dakota Energy provides electricity to, but are ones that help our communities, "which in turn helps our members where they live," he said.

"It is gratifying to help our hospitals, fire departments, and schools purchase equipment so our small communities can provide those essential services," Felderman said.

One of those projects funded by REED is the Huron Regional Medical Center dialysis building.

"We are proud to support HRMC in sustaining and expanding local access to critical medical services right here in our community," Felderman said.

Douglas Electric Cooperative General Manager Jay Spaans echoed Felderman's sentiment, noting that the REED Fund is special because co-ops get to loan money to businesses that they don't always serve.

"For us, it is just about making

improvements in the community. Sure, we would like to serve the load, but even if the new load doesn't reside in our territory, we still will fund the loan," Spaans said. "It is all about the greater good for our communities."

West River Electric CEO Dick Johnson also serves on the REED Fund board. He's one of the first board members to represent a co-op in the western part of the state. The REED Fund was originally set up by co-ops in eastern South Dakota. After two decades of successful growth and development, the REED Fund decided to allow co-ops in western South Dakota to join in 2017. Johnson said West River Electric was one of the first western co-ops to be accepted into the REED Fund.

"It was one of the best things we could ask for. We were struggling with our own revolving loan fund but we had primarily loaned to government entities, no businesses," Johnson said.

"When we became members of REED that gave us another tool in our toolbox to offer our members who were interested in our area or needed to expand their businesses or infrastructure."

West River Electric hasn't had many loans, but Johnson is still encouraged by what he's seen as a board member.

"Sitting on the Board and seeing the applications and the impact we are having on the economy of small towns all over South Dakota is phenomenal," Johnson said.

Johnson had high praise for the folks at the REED Fund office in Madison, calling

them a "class act" who really understand the region's rural areas.

"They work hard to say yes and somehow make it work. The fact that the local co-op board can help make the decision to move a project forward is unheard of – real boots on the ground who are in the communities we serve and understand what is needed to thrive," Johnson said. "It is a unique model just like the cooperative business model."

Did You Know

From 2018 to 2022, electric cooperatives in South Dakota spent \$5.7 Billion on capital investment, operations, and maintenance activities and retired \$102.8 Million in capital credits paid to consumer-members.

Through these expenditures, co-ops drive economic benefits in their local communities and throughout the state.

Over the five-year period, electric co-ops in South Dakota are responsible for:

STATEWIDE IMPACT

- \$4.2 Billion to South Dakota's Gross State Product (GSP)
- An average of 5,848 jobs in South Dakota each year
- \$2 Billion in labor income in South Dakota
- \$194.1 Million in federal taxes
- \$423 Million in state taxes
- \$418.4 Million in local taxes

All of these impacts occur in counties where electric cooperatives operate, showcasing the substantial local economic benefits that co-ops provide in the communities they serve.



Participants celebrate the groundbreaking for the National Music Museum in Vermillion.

Merry Christmas from Central Electric Cooperative



Ken Schlimgen
General Manager



Duane Wolbrink
Aurora County Director
Board President



Bradee Pazour
Brule County Director



Donita Loudner
Buffalo County Director
SDREA Director



Jeff Gustafson
Davison County Director



Mark Hofer
Hanson County Director
Secretary



Mark Reindl
Jerauld County Director
Treasurer



Robert Banks
Miner County Director



Todd VanWalleghen
Sanborn County Director
Vice President



Merl Bechen
Director At Large



Brandon [redacted]
Appliance Repair Technician



Andrew [redacted]
Materials/Plant Supervisor



Jesse [redacted]
Kimball Area Foreman



Chandler [redacted]
Apprentice Lineman



DeEtte [redacted]
Accounting & Customer
Service Supervisor



Wade [redacted]
HVAC Technician/Installer



Brian [redacted]
Manager of Operations



Dusty [redacted]
Journeyman Lineman



Evan [redacted]
Materials Coordinator



Lincoln [redacted]
Sales/Project Manager



Gene [redacted]
Wessington Springs
Area Foreman



Heather [redacted]
Administrative Assistant



Dave [redacted]
Metering &
Load Management



Kevin [redacted]
Journeyman Electrician



Dwight [REDACTED]
Lead Electrician



Kelly [REDACTED]
IT Systems Coordinator



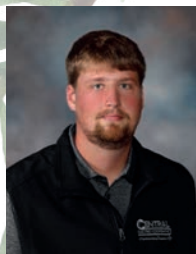
Paul [REDACTED]
Journeyman Lineman



Donn [REDACTED]
Lead HVAC Technician



Daniel [REDACTED]
Apprentice Lineman



Davis [REDACTED]
Apprentice Lineman



Tara [REDACTED]
Manager of
Communications



DuWayne [REDACTED]
Journeyman Lineman



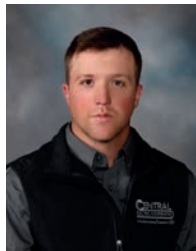
Ryan [REDACTED]
IT Systems Manager



Tim [REDACTED]
Howard Area Foreman



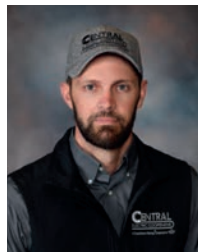
Tim [REDACTED]
Journeyman Lineman



Chase [REDACTED]
Apprentice Lineman



Joey [REDACTED]
Apprentice Lineman



Aaror [REDACTED]
HVAC Technician/Installer



Jon [REDACTED]
Plankinton Area Foreman



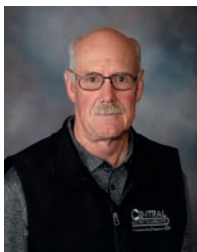
Cody [REDACTED]
Journeyman Lineman



Dusty [REDACTED]
Line Superintendent



Tony [REDACTED]
Mitchell Area Foreman



Doug [REDACTED]
Metering System
Coordinator



Craig [REDACTED]
Journeyman Lineman



Patrick [REDACTED]
Manager of Member
Services & Marketing



Al [REDACTED]
Journeyman Lineman



Gary [REDACTED]
Journeyman Lineman



Norton [REDACTED]
Journeyman Lineman



Dean [REDACTED]
Manager of
Finance & Administration



Rodney [REDACTED]
Journeyman Electrician



Dustin [REDACTED]
Staking Technician



Heather [REDACTED]
Customer Service Rep.



Lindsey [REDACTED]
Customer Service Rep.

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



Dec. 14-17
Christmas at the Cathedral
 521 N Duluth Avenue,
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-988-3765

DEC. 8-9
Junkin' Market Days
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo
 Center
 Sioux Falls, SD

DEC. 8
**Alexandria's Winter Festival,
 Courthouse Trees**
 5-7 p.m.
Parade of Lights
 7:30 p.m.
 Alexandria, SD
 mudderkendra@gmail.com

DEC. 9
**Alexandria's Winter Festival,
 Nativity Petting Zoo &
 Downtown Festivities**
 Alexandria, SD
 mudderkendra@gmail.com

DEC. 9
Parade of Lights
 5:30 p.m.
 Wessington, SD

DEC. 10
**Hill City Senior Saturday
 Breakfast**
 Hill City Center
 Hill City, SD

DEC. 17
Christmas Cantata
 3 p.m.
 Hermosa United Church of
 Christ
 Hermosa, SD

JAN. 26-27
**Reliance Area Community
 Development 29th Annual
 Dinner Theater**
 6 p.m.
 Reliance Legion Hall
 Reliance, SD

FEB. 23-24
**Women in Blue Jeans
 Conference**
 8 a.m.
 Highland Conference Center
 Mitchell, SD

NOV. 24
Parade of Lights
 7 p.m.
 Dakota Avenue
 Huron, SD

NOV. 25
Mid-Winter Fair
 Gregory Auditorium
 Gregory, SD
 605-830-9778

NOV. 30
Christmas on the Prairie
 5 p.m.
 Miller, SD

DEC. 1-2
Christmas in the Hills
 Hot Springs, SD

DEC. 1-30
Trees and Trains Exhibit
 SD State Railroad Museum
 Hill City, SD

DEC. 1-30
**Holiday Express and Holiday
 Express Spiked**
 1880 Train
 Hill City, SD

DEC. 2
**Rapid City Garden Club's
 62nd Annual Wreath and
 Centerpiece Sale**
 8 a.m.
 Central States Fairgrounds
 Rapid City, SD

DEC. 2
**6th Annual Holiday Party,
 Tour of Homes, Silent
 Auction**
 4 p.m.
 Olive Grove Golf Course
 Groton, SD

DEC. 2
Parade of Lights
 6 p.m.
 Redfield, SD

DEC. 2
Tabor Parade of Lights
 Vendor Fair
 4 p.m.
 Parade of Lights
 5:30 p.m.
 Tabor, SD
DEC. 3
**Hartford's Hometown
 Christmas**
 7:30 a.m.
 Hartford, SD

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.

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