

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

In pursuit of Walleye

**SD anglers on the
prowl for Walleye**
Page 8

**Living the RV
lifestyle**
Page 12



Powering your life – reliably & affordably

June was filled with above-average temperatures, very little rain and your cooperative's eight District Meetings. As I write this column in early July, our area is being blessed with much needed rain and cooler temps. We are so thankful for the moisture.

My personal thank you to everyone who attended our District Meetings. The format was much more informal than previous years, and members were encouraged to ask questions. The questions led to very good discussions on cyber security, wind turbines, legislative issues, electric vehicles, the cooperatives facility charge, the line replacement program and many other topics. I enjoyed the conversations, and I hope you did to.

The Buffalo County District meeting will be one that your cooperative will remember for a long time. Retiring board members, Butch Morrison and Jim Headley, were honored by Peter Lengkeek, Crow Creek Sioux Tribal Chairman. Peter presented Butch and Jim with a star quilt in appreciation for their leadership and service to the cooperative members in Buffalo County. It was a very special and touching ceremony.

Each year, one third of your directors' terms end, and the membership has an opportunity to elect someone to represent them on the cooperatives board of directors. This year, Mark Hofer was re-elected in Hanson County. Davison County members elected Jeff Gustafson of Ethan to replace Butch Morrison, who is retiring from the board. The director-at-large election will take place at the Annual Meeting in September as Jim Headley has announced his retirement.

I led each of the district meetings by reflecting on how the pandemic impacted the cooperative in 2020 and the steps that were taken to keep the lights on while protecting our employees and our members. I also discussed how the pandemic affected our revenue, expenses, energy sales and overall cooperatives finances. We were very fortunate to be part of a cooperative family that worked together to end 2020 in a positive position.



Ken Schlimgen
General Manager

Our industry is starting to publish statistics gathered from 2020, a year that upended every part of our lives and energy use was no exception. Nationally, the US saw a seven percent decrease in energy use, the largest annual decrease since 1949 when this data started being collected.

Energy use did not just drop, it shifted as well. Commercial energy use fell dramatically as offices and businesses closed or decreased their operations. Residential/farm energy use rose slightly because people stayed home. People slept later in 2020 which shifted the morning energy use peak to later in the day as people simply walked from their kitchen to their home office. It is yet to be seen if people will continue to commute to work in their socks or return to a central office.

The U.S. may not return to pre-pandemic energy usage levels until 2025.

The outlook for annual energy consumption indicates the U.S. will not return to pre-pandemic usage levels until 2025. Partly due to the changes from 2020 and partly because of the energy conservation measures that we have and continue to utilize.

I found it interesting that the reports state that one measure of energy efficiency is called "energy intensity". This calculates how much energy is consumed per dollar of the US Gross Domestic Product. In 2020 that number was about half of what it was 30 years ago, and it is projected to continue to fall over the next 30 years. I interpret that to mean that less of our total income is spent on energy purchases each year.

Budgeting and predicting future energy sales has become much more complicated. Your board and employees understand that providing reliable electricity is a necessity. It is not something we take lightly. We will continue to work with our member owners, and other cooperatives as a cooperative family to power your life – reliably and affordably.

Until next month, be safe!

To contact your cooperative with questions, you may email cec@centralec.coop.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

CENTRAL ELECTRIC

(USPS 018-963)

Board of Directors

- Duane Wolbrink - President
Todd VanWalleghen - Vice President
Bernetta Burghardt - Secretary
Mark Reindl - Treasurer
Mark Hofer - NRECA Director
Roger Campbell - Director
Donita Loudner - SDREA Director
Darwin "Butch" Morrison - Director
Jim Headley - Director At Large

Management Staff

- Ken Schlimgen - General Manager
Brian Bultje - Manager of Operations
Dean Uher - Manager of Finance & Administration
Lincoln Feistner - Sales/Project Manager
Patrick Soukup - Manager of Member Services & Marketing
Tara Miller - Manager of Communications

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.

This cooperative is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found on-line at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form.

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

Contact Us
Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Phone: 1-800-477-2892 or 1-605-996-7516
Website: www.centralelec.coop

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

Board meeting summary

The board of directors met May 17, 2021, at Central Electric Cooperative's Betts Road Service Center for the regular board meeting. The board approved the April meeting minutes. Monthly reports were presented by management, including details on operations, member services, communications, service department and financials.

Systems Coordinator Ryan Mueller reported on IT activities and explained steps the cooperative is taking to protect itself from virtual threats.

BOARD REPORT

General Manager Ken Schlimgen updated the board on the following:

- East River Manager's Advisory Committee
District meetings and elections
Interconnection agreement with commercial member
Third-party power demand response activities
East River electric vehicle rate committee
Property maintenance

East River Director Wolbrink reported on the East River activities. Discussion followed.

S.D. Rural Electric Association Director Loudner reported on SDREA activities. Discussion followed.

BOARD ACTION

- A motion was made and seconded to adopt Large Commercial Rate Policy 872. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
A motion was made and seconded to approve Policy 112 as amended to clarify compensation for participation in virtual meetings and conference calls. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
A motion was made and seconded to appoint General Manager Schlimgen as the delegate for the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (NRUCFC), National Cooperative Services Corp. (NCSC) and Federated annual meetings on June 14, 2021. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
A motion was made and seconded to support a REDLG loan application for Horizon Health. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
A motion was made and seconded to donate 5% of current year CFC patronage capital retirement to the CFC Integrity Fund. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
A motion was made and seconded to approve a member loan for heat pump replacement. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

The next board meeting was scheduled for June 21, 2021.

Table with 3 columns: FINANCIAL REPORT, MAY 2021, YEAR-TO-DATE 2021. Rows include Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales, Electric Revenues, Total Cost of Service, and Operating Margins.

Prepare to protect your devices from power surges

A power surge, or transient voltage, is a sudden and unwanted increase in voltage that can damage, degrade or destroy sensitive electronic equipment in your home or business.

The National Electrical Manufacturers Association estimates that 60–80 percent of power surges are created within a building, such as when large appliances, like air conditioners, turn on and off. Far less common are surges that originate from an electric utility during power grid switching. The most powerful surges can be caused by lightning.

A spike in voltage can be harmful to electrical devices in your home if the increase is above a device's intended operating voltage. This excess voltage can cause an arc of electrical current resulting in heat that damages electrical components. Repeated small-scale surges may slowly damage your electronic equipment and shorten its life span.

Surge Protection Options - Consider protecting your devices and appliances with surge protection. Several levels of protection are available to consumers.

Point-of-use surge protectors protect only the items that are directly plugged into the device. They do not suppress or arrest a surge but divert the

surge to ground. Use point-of-use surge protectors that have an indicator light or audible alarm that alerts you when the surge protector needs replacement.

Service entrance surge protection devices are mounted in or on your main electrical panel or at the base of the electric meter and provide protection for your entire electrical system. These devices cover components that cannot be connected to a point-of-use device, such as outlets and light switches.

Power strips do NOT provide surge protection. Be sure you are relying on the appropriate device for protection.

And remember, power strips and surge suppressors don't provide more power to a location, only more access to the same limited capacity of the circuit into which it is connected. Be careful not to overload the circuit.

Unfortunately, no surge protection device on the market can handle a direct lightning strike. The best way to gird against surges caused by storms is to unplug devices.

SUMMER MEMORIES

Send us your favorite summer photos!



As we approach the end of summer, *Cooperative Connections* would love to see your favorite memories of the season captured in pixels.

We're holding a photo contest called "Summer Memories." Send us your top shot and you could be eligible to win a \$50 gift card!

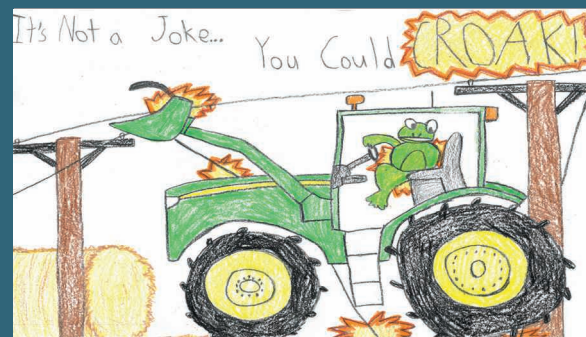
Here are the rules:

- One photo per entrant;
 - The deadline for entry is Aug. 27;
 - Finalist photos will appear in the October issue of *Cooperative Connections*;
 - Send your entry to editor@sdrea.coop.
- Good luck!

Hope Haven fundraising event Sept. 11

Hope Haven will hold a fundraising event on Sept. 11 at Talsma's Trail Park in Avon. The organization offers services and support for children, adults and families, including physical, mental, intellectual, residential, vocational and spiritual needs. For more information, visit www.hopehaven.org.

Hope Haven was misidentified in the July issue of *Cooperative Connections*.



It's not a joke...you could croak!

Creighton Werning, 4th Grade

Creighton is a fourth grade student at Parkston. He and his family live in Emery and are members of Southeastern Electric.

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.

PERFECT PASTA

PAPPARDELLE

Ingredients:

Salted water
 3 tbsp olive oil
 3 tbsp shallots, minced
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 1/4 tsp chili flakes
 1 cup white wine
 2 cups pappardelle noodles
 3/4 cup vegetable stock
 3 tbsp capers (optional)
 2 vine-ripened tomatoes, sliced in wedges
 1 handful baby kale
 1 fresh lemon, juice only
 2 tbsp butter (optional)
 sea salt, to taste
 fresh ground black pepper, to taste
 1 handful fresh basil, torn

METHOD

Bring large pot of salted water to boil. In fry pan on medium-high heat, add olive oil and onions; saute 2 minutes. Lower heat slightly and add garlic and chili flakes. Saute on medium heat 2-3 minutes. Add white wine and deglaze pan. Cook 3 minutes. Remove from heat, keep warm until ready to add freshly cooked pasta. In pot of boiling water, add pappardelle. Cook according to instructions then drain. Place fry pan back on medium heat. Add drained pasta; vegetable stock; capers, if desired; tomatoes; baby kale; and lemon juice. Add butter, if desired, toss well. Cook 2-3 minutes, tossing occasionally, and season with salt and pepper, to taste, and basil. Toss again, remove from heat and serve.

Rouxbe.com

SUMMER GARDEN PASTA SALAD

1 # thin spaghetti, broken into 1" pieces
 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
 2 zucchini, peeled & diced
 2 cucumbers, diced
 1 green pepper, diced
 1 red pepper, diced
 1 (16 oz.) can sliced black olives, drained

Dressing:

1 (16 oz.) bottle Italian dressing
 1/4 c parmesan cheese
 1 T sesame seeds
 1 tsp paprika
 1/2 tsp celery seed
 1/2 tsp garlic salt

METHOD

Cook pasta and drain. Drizzle with small amount of olive oil to prevent sticking and stir to combine. Combine pasta with veggies and black olives. Whisk dressing ingredients together. Pour over salad ingredients and toss until coated. Cover and refrigerate 3 hours or overnight.
Jane Ham, Rapid City

PIZZA NOODLE HOT DISH

Ingredients:

1 lb. ground beef, browned and drained
 1/2 c. chopped onion
 1 jar pizza sauce
 Salt and pepper to taste
 3 c. noodles, cooked and drained
 1 jar spaghetti sauce
 1 pkg. pepperoni slices
 Mozzarella cheese for top

METHOD

Mix ingredients together and put in a greased 9 x 13 pan. Bake at 350* for 20 minutes. Sprinkle 8 oz. of mozzarella cheese on top and place back in oven to melt.

JOAN ANTONEN, ARLINGTON

SPAGHETTI PIZZA

Ingredients:

1/2 lb spaghetti
 4 eggs
 1 c. milk
 Salt & pepper
 7 oz. pepperoni
 1/2 lb hamburger
 1/2 lb pork sausage
 1 onion
 1 lg jar spaghetti sauce
 2 c. mozzarella cheese

METHOD

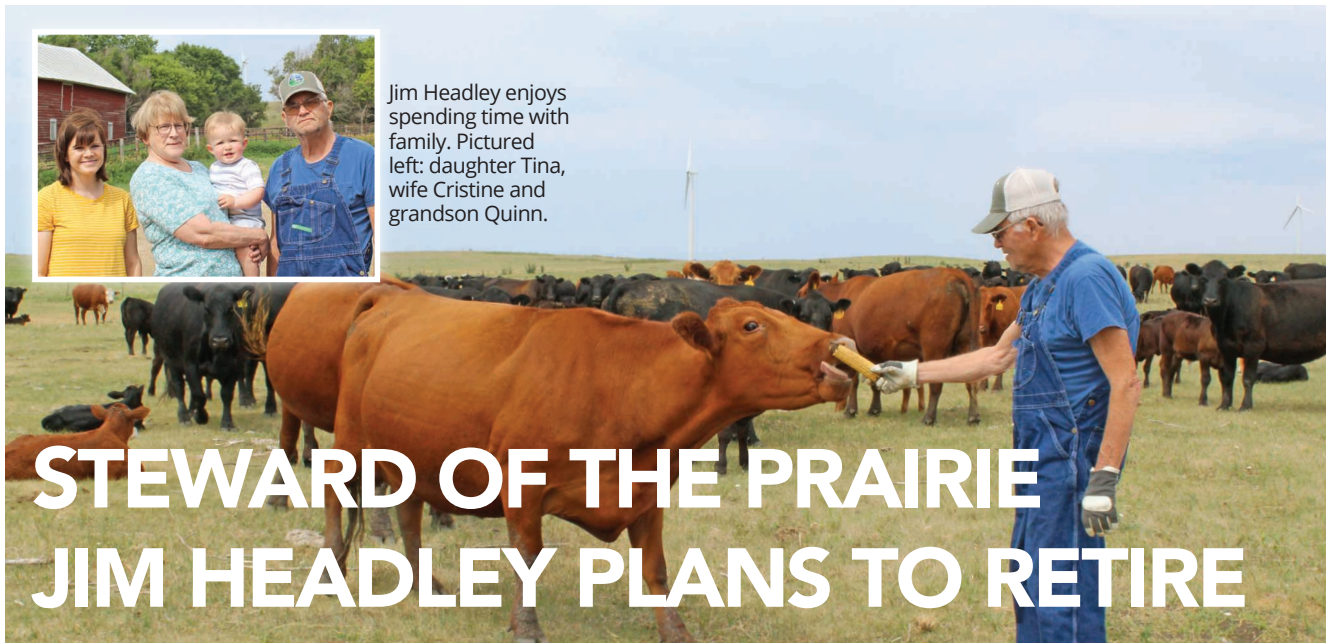
Cook spaghetti, drain, and put in the bottom of a 9x13 casserole dish. Mix eggs, milk, salt, and pepper to taste and pour over noodles. Spread pepperoni over the above. Brown hamburger, sausage, and onion and put over pepperoni. Pour spaghetti sauce over all. Sprinkle mozzarella on top. Bake at 350° for 45 min.

Ruth Morman, Volin

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.



Jim Headley enjoys spending time with family. Pictured left: daughter Tina, wife Cristine and grandson Quinn.



STEWARD OF THE PRAIRIE JIM HEADLEY PLANS TO RETIRE

Jim Headley hand-feeds livestock as wind towers turn in the background. This ritual often involves grandson Quinn tagging along.

Headley reflects on 25 years with the board of directors

“I’ve always believed, without electricity, we would have nothing.” Those words were spoken by Jim Headley, retiring director-at-large for Central Electric Cooperative. The White Lake area farmer and rancher recently shared his thoughts on an evolving industry and energy landscape as he exits the board following 25 years of distinguished service.

When asked why he ran for the Tri-County board back in 1996, Jim said other directors approached him and sparked his interest. Tri-County Electric merged with InterCounty Electric in 2000 and formed what is now known as Central Electric Cooperative. When the co-ops joined forces, Jim was instrumental in keeping the board size to a minimum, stating it was the responsible thing to do. He believes smaller boards save members money and govern more effectively.

“It was a different world back then,” Jim said. “We didn’t have the technology.” Cybersecurity is an emerging threat he thinks power cooperatives should take seriously to protect members and the grid.

However, according to Jim, the primary issue currently facing rural electric consumers involves municipalities annexing territory outside city limits. He explained the long-term effects, including how it may potentially cause rural consumers to pay higher rates for electricity because the cost is spread over fewer members.

Wind Power on the Prairie

Jim led the effort to bring a large, first-of-its-kind wind farm project – Prairie Winds – to White Lake. His leadership in wind development earned him the Basin Electric “Cooperative Spirit Award” in 2011.

Prairie Winds spans 135,000 acres and consists of 108 wind turbines with the capacity to generate 162 megawatts of electricity annually. It is the largest wind project owned solely by a cooperative in the United States, and it was the first community-owned wind investment partnership with more than 600 South Dakota investors. Basin Electric Power Cooperative secured 100% ownership after 7 years, per the original contract agreement with shareholders.

For the Birds

“A lot of the negative press you see about wind farms is simply not true,” Headley stated, as he stood at the base of a wind turbine on his property. The only noticeable sound coming from the spinning turbine was the internal cooling system, and it was not much louder than a whisper. He said on windier days, you may hear a faint noise a quarter of a mile away.

A trusted steward of the prairie and avid bird enthusiast, Jim also said the claims that wind turbines are detrimental to the bird population are false, at least in this area. He said, according to scientific research that was conducted on his property, the five main bird species native to the area fly 10-15 feet in the air and could never reach the approximately 100-foot height where the turbine blades are closest to the ground.

A Humble Representative of the People

As the director-at-large, Jim represents all members in Central Electric's territory. At the 2021 Buffalo County District Meeting, fellow Director Donita Loudner and Crow Creek Sioux Tribal Chairman Peter Lengkeek presented Jim with a star quilt to thank him for his many years of dedicated and compassionate service to the Tribe. This was a memorable tribute that holds special meaning to him. Jim's pastures are home to unique Native American artifacts, including a large rock-formed turtle, which is more discernable from the sky than the ground. Turtles are sacred in Native American culture. Jim sees it as his responsibility to preserve these artifacts and to do his part in representing all segments of the population in his role.

Background, Family and Life on the Farm

The Headley ranch sits approximately 12 miles northwest of White Lake. Jim's mother, Dorothy (Baughman) Headley, was originally from the White Lake area. Jim and his wife Cristine, moved to South Dakota from northern New Jersey in 1971. He majored in park management at South Dakota State University, where he planted some of the first spruce trees in the now well-known McCrory Gardens.

Before Jim farmed full-time, he worked for Victor Surgical Gut Manufacturing company out of Chicago. They served 16 packing plants from North Dakota to Texas, and from Illinois to Colorado. Johnson and Johnson purchased gut string for surgical sutures, and several other companies purchased gut string to produce tennis rackets.

Jim had good help to keep the farm going and family fed when he was on the road. Wife Cristine did chores – everything from forking hay to feed the cows, to pulling lambs, she kept it all running smoothly while raising four kids. She did almost every job you can think of on the farm. "I usually take her with me to open gates," he confirmed.



Headley (center) accepts the Cooperative Spirit Award from Basin Electric Power Cooperative in 2011.

The Headleys had four children. Their son Jay of Lake Norden passed away in 2002 in a boating accident on Lake Poinsett when he was only 30 years old. Jay's children, Jack and Sydney, later moved to Colorado with their mother Ashley, and Jack passed away in 2016. For nearly 20 years, Jim has generously donated a portion of his board compensation to fund the Jay Headley Memorial Scholarship for dependents of Central Electric members.

Jim and Cristine's daughter Tina Ludens, her husband Dustin and their son, Quinn, live near White Lake. Son Todd Headley, his wife Andreea and their children, Sophia and Anderson, live in Fort Collins, Colorado. Daughter Sarah Weiss and her husband Danny live in Sioux Falls.

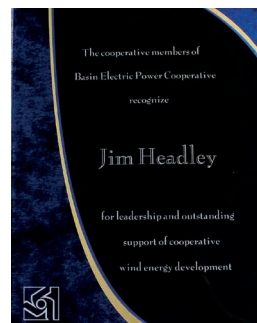
Besides serving on Central Electric's board, Jim also serves on the Patten Township Board. In the past, he was active with the White Lake School Board, Aurora County Zoning Board, GF&P Regional Advisory Board, United Methodist Church Board and Cemetery Association. He is currently a member of Farmers Union, Farm Bureau, Dakota Rural Action and the Jerauld County Game and Fish Club.

Jim said he will miss attending Central Electric's board meetings and the lively discussions that ensued. He hopes South Dakota's electric cooperatives will take a more progressive stance on renewable energy and protecting cooperative territory for the benefit of rural members.

The board and staff at Central Electric wish Jim and his family the best on the journey ahead. Less time in meetings leaves more time for driving grandkids around in the Kubota to hand-feed cattle, among other activities. Jim's term on the board will officially end following the cooperative's annual meeting in September.



Headley led efforts to build Prairie Winds, the first community-owned wind investment partnership in the nation. Basin Electric now has 100% ownership in the project, and it is the largest wind project owned solely by a cooperative in the United States.



Jim's Noteworthy Awards:

Southeast Advisory Panel Recognition for Commitment to Wildlife Resources (2012)

Basin Electric Cooperative Spirit Award (2011)

National Wildlife Federation's South Dakota Conservationist of the Year (2001)

Prairie Pothole Joint Venture Stewardship Award (1995)

Society for Range Management Excellence in Grazing Management Award

In hot pursuit of Walleye



Aydan Johnson landed this Walleye on his 12th birthday at Cow Creek north of Pierre. Photos by Billy Gibson

SD anglers pursue walleye for fun and charity

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Walleye fishing isn't always all about fishing for walleye.

That was the case at the annual SDREC Employee and Vendor Walleye Fishing Tournament held earlier this summer at the Cow Creek Recreation Area north of Pierre. For most of the more than 100 walleye whisperers who participated, the event was mostly about hanging out together, swapping fish tales - some of them true - and catching up with one another.

The tournament also raised \$500 for the state's rural electric cooperative Line Patrol charity.

For Evan Buckmiller, general manager at Kingsbury Electric Cooperative in DeSmet, the tournament presented a prime opportunity to spend time with family and interact with his cooperative colleagues. While his team failed to place, he enjoyed being out on the water with his wife and dad.

"It was a little hot, but we had beautiful weather and caught a lot of fish...just not as many as we wanted," said Buckmiller. "I'd never been a part of this event, so it was fun seeing all the boats taking off at the same time. It was also good to see people you don't normally get to see, or you haven't seen since you worked a storm together years ago. You get to connect with your friends and linemen you went to school with. That's the fun part about events like this."

Roger Crom, former manager of loss control services at the South Dakota Rural Electric Association in Pierre, served as a volunteer to help coordinate the event. Crom said while he likes to fish, he takes satisfaction with staying on dry land and meeting the competitors as they come in to weigh their catch and tell of their exploits on the lake.



The dawning of a new summer day brings the promise of fun and a full string of walleye by the afternoon.

“I just enjoy being a part of it every year,” Crom said. “It’s a lot of fun getting together with old friends and meeting new friends and getting to know the young linemen that are now part of the program. It’s not just one or two co-ops, it’s like a big family that comes out year after year. There’s a lot of camaraderie. Everybody works together and we also have a lot of fun together.”

For the record, the winning team of Roger Squires, Ryan Squires and Ron Koosman took top honors, despite temperatures soaring into the 90s and water levels that were unusually low. The crew representing H-D Electric and Dueco prevailed over a field of more than 30 teams with a total weight of 18.03 lbs. Their largest walleye weighed in at 3.05 lbs.

The East River Electric team of Tim Dockendorf, Doug Engbrecht



Crew members of the Captain Crawdaddy prepare to launch at Cow Creek.

and Robert Hanson landed the largest walleye at 4.04 lbs. (Search YouTube for Cooperative Connections Plus to see a video of the event.)

It’s no secret that the Missouri River system boasts some of the best walleye fishing in North America and is one of the top walleye habitats on the continent.

While there are many other walleye fishing tournaments held throughout the state in the spring and fall, one that stands out is the Tom and Matt Hill Memorial Tournament.

The fifth annual event, set for July 31 at the West Whitlock Recreation Area near Gettysburg, is held each year in honor of the Hill brothers who died in a boating accident on Brush Lake in December of 2016.

Born and reared in Volga, the siblings were avid hunters and fishermen. They were finishing up a day of duck hunting and were heading back to the landing to meet their father when their boat suddenly capsized.

The tournament is held to raise funds to support local youth outdoor programs in honor of the brothers. Proceeds have gone toward purchasing safety hunting vests for youngsters, hunting gear and safety training.

Sheila Gross, Energy Services Specialist at Sioux Valley Energy in

It’s no secret that the Missouri River system boasts some of the best walleye fishing in North America.

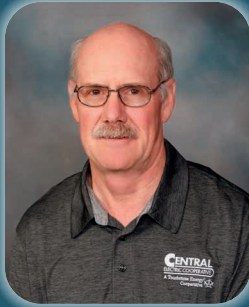
Colman, lost her brother and great-nephew in a fishing accident in January. As word spread, friends and family of the Hill Memorial Tournament and Fishing 4 Miracles jumped into action with an outpouring of support to the Berwald family. To express their gratitude, several of Gross’ family members plan to participate in the tournament to help contribute to the safe enjoyment of fishing and hunting.

“The Hill Brothers Committee is an amazing group of people and they do so much to support the community and those who have been impacted by tragedy. They have blessed my family in our time of loss and have brought great comfort,” she said.

A rules meeting will take place on Friday, July 30, at the Whitlock Bay Supper Club. An open house will be held from 1-5 p.m. with a meal from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.

CO-OP HAPPENINGS

YEARS OF SERVICE



Doug Schley
Metering Systems
Coordinator
36 years on Aug. 26



Patrick Soukup
Manager of Member
Services & Marketing
6 years on Aug. 17



Tim Olinger
Journeyman
Lineworker
3 years on Aug. 6



Craig Sealey
Journeyman
Lineworker
3 years on Aug. 27

T&C FIRE DEPARTMENT RECEIVES REED FUNDING

T&C Fire Department in Woonsocket, S.D., recently received a \$135,000 Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) loan issued by Central Electric Cooperative. The funds are being used to finance a building addition on the existing fire hall, originally built in 1976.

T&C Fire training officer and board member Rick George said, “The addition gives us room to build for the future.” He gave a tour of the facility and shared how the added building space enables them to plan ahead and mitigate challenges facing rural fire departments. George also explained how space constraints created safety hazards, such as when trucks were leaving the building while firefighters were gearing up and gathering equipment.

“We are proud to show our support for T&C Fire Department,” said Central Electric General Manager Ken Schlimgen. “Rural fire departments provide critical

services throughout our service area, and they need resources to make it happen. The community benefits from these improvements.”

The REED Fund partners with local banks, other loan funds and state and federal agencies to provide gap financing for community and economic development projects. It can be utilized to help organizations start or expand business operations and to assist communities with improvements to facilities, services and infrastructure.

Approximately 81 percent of REED’s lending is established in communities of less than 4,000 people, and 98 percent of REED-financed projects have local ownership.

“One of Central Electric Cooperative’s core principles is



Central Electric Cooperative General Manager Ken Schlimgen presents the REED loan to T&C Fire Department President Alan Linke and Fire Chief Travis Coulthard.

commitment to community, and leveraging the REED Fund is a great way to support organizations in the communities we serve,” Schlimgen said.

To inquire about REED financing for a community or economic development project, please contact Central Electric at 800-477-2892 or the REED office at 605-256-8032.



Go paperless!

Login to SmartHub or call 1-800-477-2892 for billing options.

ANNUAL MEETING AND DIRECTOR ELECTION SEPTEMBER 14

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, 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 in length.

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

beginning Aug. 2. Petitions must be completed and returned by the close of the business day at 4:30 p.m. on Aug. 20. When filed, forms must bear the signatures of at least 10 Central Electric Cooperative members.

The board of directors and staff look forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting!



Aurora County
Duane Wolbrink, Director



Brule County
Roger Campbell, Director



Buffalo County
Donita Loudner, Director



Davison County
Butch Morrison, Director (seated)
Jeff Gustafson, Director-Elect



Hanson County
Mark Hofer, Director



Jerauld County
Mark Reindl, Director



Miner County
Bernetta Burghardt, Director



Sanborn County
Todd VanWalleghen, Director

DISTRICT MEETINGS BRING CO-OP MEMBERS TOGETHER

District meetings were held throughout June in all eight counties served by Central Electric Cooperative. Traditionally, the meetings have been hosted in January, but they were postponed this year due to covid-19 concerns with large gatherings.

We thank our members who attended their local meeting, as well as the 4-H groups and local businesses that served meals. Board members and staff engaged in several meaningful discussions with members during the district meetings. Question-and-answer sessions allowed members to gain insight on cooperative happenings.

At the Davison County district meeting, Jeff Gustafson of Ethan was elected to the board of directors. Gustafson has worked for the S.D. Department of Transportation for 34 years. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from South Dakota State University. He also has 12 years of school board experience and has served a volunteer coach for youth sports activities.

Gustafson will fill the seat of retiring Davison County director Darwin "Butch" Morrison of Mitchell following Central Electric's annual meeting on September 14. Morrison has served on the board since 2003.

The board will review attendance and other factors to determine when future district meetings may be held. Thanks again to those who attended!

RV TRIPPING

RV campers make new friends and enjoy new experiences on the open road. *Photo by South Dakota Travel*

Vic and Barb Simmons adopt the RV lifestyle when visiting new places and creating lasting memories on the road

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Decisions, decisions...

When Vic Simmons starts to sense the allure of the open road, he has some decisions to make. He can crank up his Jeep Cherokee and join all the brand loyalists out there who rally around the phrase, "It's a Jeep thing: You wouldn't understand."

Or he could go grab his gloves and his riding gear, fire up his orange 2017 Harley-Davidson Street Glide and experience the wind rush and beauty of the natural landscape on two wheels. Or he can climb into the command-and-control center of his massive 40-foot Meridian "diesel pusher" motor coach.

But who wants to be burdened by making tough decisions when the highway is calling? Most of the time he makes it a little easier by attaching the bike or the Jeep and

heading out into the great wide open.

Simmons, who just turned 65, serves as general manager of Rushmore Electric in Rapid City. But he has plans of retiring early next year and that means lots of travel time in the future with his wife Barb and whoever else wants to join the adventure.

The passenger list usually includes a host of grandchildren as it has from the beginning of Simmons' foray into the world of recreational vehicles and RV life.

He and Barb invested in their first RV about 12 years ago by purchasing a pre-owned 32-foot Class C model Jamboree, the kind that's built on a truck chassis and resembles a van with a large camper shell and a sleeping chamber over the roof.

"When our three girls were little, Barb's parents used to take them

camping, and to this day they always talk about how much they enjoyed those trips," Simmons said. "So, when it came time for us to have grandkids, we wanted to have a way to create those same kinds of memories for our own grandchildren."

Inevitably, as the family grew the smaller that 32-foot camper became. Besides, the vehicle was a bit top-heavy and caused some white-knuckle driving in high winds, and according to Vic, "Barb's idea of roughing it is staying at a hotel without a swimming pool." So, after three summers an upgrade with more space and more amenities was in order, and Simmons graduated to a 37-foot motor coach.

After a few years, he sold that RV to Lacreek General Manager Josh Fanning, who used it for family vacations and to take his daughter to weightlifting and track competitions in far-flung places.

Soon afterwards, Vic and Barb acquired their "forever RV," a 40-foot Meridian they purchased



Vic Simmons of Rushmore Electric enjoys climbing behind the wheel and piloting his 40-foot recreational vehicle.

a few years ago when Vic began planning out his retirement.

Simmons, who prides himself on always buying pre-owned vehicles, purchased the RV sight-unseen... well almost.

"I found it at a dealership in Lincoln," he recalled. "It had 17,000 miles on it and looked like it was in good shape. My son-in-law was in Lincoln, so he went to the dealership and Facetimed me and walked through it and it looked nice. It was set up to pull the Jeep or the trailer for the motorcycle, so we got it. I don't usually do business like that, but..."

With Vic soon retiring and Barb already retired from her



Vic and Barb Simmons use their RV to visit new places and create lasting memories.

job as the pharmacy technician program director at Western Dakota Technical Institute, the two have lots of traveling plans in their future.

One hitch, however, is finding places to park. RV sales shot through the roof nationally last year as people sought to escape the confines of their homes under lock down conditions and explore the outdoors.

"You can hardly find any good camping spots," Simmons said. "Camping just became something that people felt safe doing, and it got them out of their homes. A neighbor of mine had a travel trailer for sale and it sold in just a few minutes after he posted it."

Simmons said his travel adventures have taken him from North Carolina on the eastern seaboard to Washington state on the Pacific, and also all the way down to El Paso.

His plan is to "go to places I haven't been," although when asked if there's one place he would like to re-visit he's quick with an answer.

"Door County in eastern Wisconsin. I just fell in love with the place," he said. "It's on the peninsula above Green Bay and is just gorgeous

'GREAT 8' UNIQUE RV CAMPGROUNDS IN SD

Here are the state's top eight unique campgrounds, according to the state Department of Tourism:

Wessington Springs City Park Campground

Wessington Springs

Castlewood City Park Municipal Campground

Castlewood

Lake Carthage Campground

Carthage

Custer's Gulch RV Park

Custer

Cedar Pass Campground

Badlands National Park

Rafter J Bar Ranch

Hill City

Fish 'N Fry Campground & RV Park

Deadwood

Rocky Point Recreation Area

Belle Fourche

with a beautiful campground and a friendly community and shops and restaurants on Sturgeon Bay. The sunrises and sunsets are awesome."

His plans for himself and Barb are the same he had for his grandchildren when he invested in his first RV: meet new people, explore new places and make lasting memories.

Oddly enough, many of those new people are encountered not at state parks, camp sites or in restaurants, but at the fuel pump.

"When you're driving a car and stop for gas, nobody will come up and talk to you," he said. "But if you're on a motorcycle or in an RV, it's amazing how many people want to come up and talk to you all the time about where you're going and where you've been. They also like to talk a lot about gas mileage."



South Dakota trucking industry keeps rolling along despite challenges

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

While the two major political parties bicker back and forth about addressing the nation's crumbling infrastructure, substandard roads and other federal issues can be a real problem for people like Mick O'Connor.

Owner of Mick O'Connor and Son Trucking operating out of Mitchell, he oversees a fleet of 11 haulers and dump trucks along with his wife, Carla, and his son, Mike.

Mick launched the business in 1972 and has faced all manner of obstacles and challenges dating back to the Middle East oil embargo back in the 1970s that brought fuel shortages and high prices.

Over the years, there have been strict permitting regulations, soaring insurance premiums and economic downturns. Having cleared all of those hurdles in the past, he was braced to contend with any problems brought by last year's global pandemic. Fortunately for O'Connor and others in the trucking industry in South Dakota, there were a few figurative bumps in the road but business soon kept rolling right along.

"We kept people socially distanced like everybody else," O'Connor said. "Our business wasn't impacted as negatively as some industries, so we were lucky in that regard."

The industry hasn't been completely unscathed, however. Like other business owners navigating

through the post-pandemic environment, O'Connor is having to face challenges such as finding qualified employees and dealing with supply shortages and kinks in the supply chain.

Specifically, O'Connor is keeping his attention focused on the tire market. With big rigs that have up to 18 axles and can weigh up to 195,000 lbs., O'Connor and other trucking company owners purchase plenty of tires.

For Barry Selland, owner of the family-owned Selland Trucking company out of Woonsocket, the immediate need is for vehicle parts. Looking to expand his fleet of 30 flatbed and step-deck rigs, Selland is awaiting delivery on three new Kenworth trucks.

"We're waiting on certain parts to arrive before we can get them here," said Selland, whose company specializes in hauling structural steel



More than 8 million workers are employed in the U.S. trucking industry.

and manufactured goods all across the country and into Canada. “A representative at Kenworth told me there are some headlight parts that have been on order since the first of the year. We had a water pump go out and there was only one pump in the six-state area.”

Selland admitted being surprised that the pandemic wasn’t more disruptive to his industry. At first, he said, he felt the situation was going to impact trucking as heavily as the economic recession did in 2008.

“Things quickly started to slow down and it felt like another recession was coming,” he said. “But

then, just as quickly as it slowed down, it picked back up again and just took off. And it’s been going great ever since. We’re getting good loads and doing a lot of business.”

Both O’Connor and Selland said a national dearth of qualified drivers and general labor shortages are problems not particular to the post-pandemic business world. One concern they share, however, is that the average age of available drivers is rising. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median age of a private fleet driver is 57 years old while drivers in training are at a median age of 35.

More than 3.5 million U.S. workers are employed as professional drivers with nearly 8 million employees in the industry, accounting for almost 6 percent of the workforce. Truckers log a combined 300 billion miles every year.

“There are always things to deal with,” Selland said. “But we’re optimistic about the future. People in this industry in South Dakota all work well together. We work with our state officials, law enforcement and others involved to make sure we continue to get products delivered where they need to be as safely and as efficiently as we can.”

QUESTIONS ABOUT SOLAR ENERGY? THE PUC HAS ANSWERS

Seeking answers about state laws and regulatory policies regarding solar energy and electric vehicles?

The South Dakota Public Service Commission (PUC) has put together a list of frequently asked questions on these topics and more.

PUC officials have indicated that ratepayer inquiries on these topics have increased over the past several months, so they drafted a document entitled “South Dakota Electric Service Laws” to edify utility customers and cooperative members.

Under the heading “Solar Energy” some of the subjects include:

- Solar leasing
- Solar power for your home

- What are the benefits of solar energy?

- What challenges does solar energy face?

- What do I need to know when considering or installing a solar energy system?

- What will I get paid for my solar generation?

The document also provides information on electric vehicle charging, such as where existing EV charging stations are located throughout the state and a summary of rules governing the establishment of charging stations by independent business owners.

According to Trevor Jones, general manager of the South Dakota Rural

Electric Association in Pierre, the PUC’s document will help deliver useful information to electric cooperative members.

“The legislature and the PUC are working very hard to establish rules and regulations in an industry that’s continuing to evolve at a very rapid pace,” he said. “They’re focused on making sure the guidelines are fair and consistent and take into consideration the challenges faced by utility providers to deliver affordable, accessible power balanced against the needs and expectations of consumers.”

The document can be found at <https://puc.sd.gov/Publications/electricsolarfaq.aspx>.

REGISTER TO WIN!

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

Your Phone Number: _____
Your E-mail Address: _____

August 26-29
**58th Annual Steam
Threshing Jamboree**
Photo by Travel South Dakota



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.

JULY 23-25
Arlington Days
Various Locations, Arlington, SD, 605-983-5251

JULY 27-31
Days of '76 Rodeo & Parades
Various Locations, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

JULY 29-AUGUST 1
Bruce Honey Days
City-wide, Bruce, SD, 605-627-5671

JULY 29, AUGUST 5, 19
The 1880 Train Old West Shootout
222 Railroad Avenue, Hill City, SD, 605-574-2222

JULY 31
Chislic Festival
Freeman's Prairie Arboretum, Freeman, SD, 605-496-9946

AUGUST 5-7
90th Anniversary Union County Fair
The Fairgrounds, Alcester, SD, 605-356-2321

AUGUST 5-14
Sioux Empire Fair
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7178

AUGUST 6-7
Huron Senior Games
Various Locations, Huron, SD, 605-491-0635 or 605-353-8533

AUGUST 6-7
Rummage Sales
Citywide, Wessington Springs, SD, 605-505-1135

AUGUST 7
Foothills Classic Car, Truck and Motorcycle Show
Wessington Springs, SD, 605-505-1135

AUGUST 7
Rockin' Ribfest
City Park, Wessington Springs, SD, 605-505-1135

AUGUST 12-15
Annual Custer County Fair
Custer County Fairgrounds, Hermosa, SD, 605-255-4145 or 605-393-7055

AUGUST 13-15
Fort Pierre Trader Days & Backyard BBQ Competition
Various Locations, Fort Pierre, SD, 605-223-7603

AUGUST 17-19
Dakotafest
2300 E Spruce Street, Mitchell, SD, 877-611-8161

AUGUST 20-22
Yankton Riverboat Days
City-wide, Yankton, SD, 605-665-1657

AUGUST 21
Plankinton Pheasant Fest
Plankinton, SD, 605-942-7767

AUGUST 21
Take the Reins Horsemanship Clinic
Reclamation-Ranch, Mitchell, SD, 605-770-2867

AUGUST 25-29
Corn Palace Festival
604 N Main Street, Mitchell, SD, 605-995-8430

AUGUST 26-29
58th Annual Steam Threshing Jamboree
Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 605-256-3644

SEPTEMBER 11-12
Fall Harvest Festival
Delmont, SD, 605-928-3792

SEPTEMBER 12
Annual Antique Car & Tractor Parade
Main Street, Farmer, SD, 605-239-4498

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