

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Forecasting the Future

**Basin Electric's Vision
for Reliable Energy**
Pages 8-9

**Wind Energy
Association Changes
Name, Advocates For
All Renewables**
Pages 12-13



BALANCING SUPPLY, DEMAND, COSTS AND RATES



Ken Schlimgen
General Manager

Electricity is vital to nearly everything we do — so essential that we often take it for granted and rarely think about how it is produced and delivered to our homes and businesses. Behind the scenes, a team of dedicated experts works around the clock to anticipate how much electricity is needed before we even turn on a light or appliance.

We are all dependent on the electric grid, and ensuring the right amount of electricity is produced to meet our needs is a complex process. It involves accurately forecasting energy demand, planning for adequate capacity and securing enough resources to cover all our needs.

Electricity supply and demand are managed through a market where electricity is bought and sold, much like other goods and services. The supply of electricity fluctuates throughout the day as demand changes due to our habits, weather conditions and other factors. For example, we know that electricity demand peaks in the morning as we start our day and in the evening when we return home and use appliances. Similarly, demand surges during the hottest and coldest times of the year.

During these high-demand periods, the cost of electricity is at its highest. At these times, we face a choice: pay the higher price for electricity or limit the number of appliances we use and minimize electricity purchases during peak price hours.

In 1984, your cooperative made a forward-thinking investment in a load management system designed to

reduce the demand for electricity during peak pricing times. This system relies on remote switches that can temporarily turn off certain appliances and equipment. Most importantly, it is supported by thousands of our members who voluntarily allow these switches to be installed in their homes, connected to their water heaters or air conditioning systems.

Our remote switches are now decades old, and we are in the process of replacing them. If you currently have a remote switch in your home, we will reach out to you by mail with instructions on how to schedule an appointment for one of our employees to install the new switch.

Since your cooperative has thousands of these switches in place, this replacement process will take several years to complete. If you are unaware of having a remote switch, it may be because a previous homeowner had it installed. Please remember that participation in this program is voluntary, and you have the option to continue or opt out of this cost-saving initiative.

We estimate that member participation in the load management program allowed your cooperative to save approximately \$1 million on electricity costs in 2024. As electricity demand grows, prices are expected to continue rising, meaning the savings from our load management system will only increase.

By participating in the load management system, you're helping yourself, your neighbors and the entire cooperative. Together, we can minimize rate increases, reduce the environmental impact of our electric system and enhance reliability.

2025 ELECTRIC RATES

The wholesale cost of electricity is increasing in 2025. Central Electric is seeing a substantial increase in the cost of line replacements, vehicles, equipment, tools, labor and materials. Combined, these increases have prompted the need to adjust electric rates on January 1, 2025. The adjustments include a 7.5% increase in energy rates and allow the cooperative to meet the financial requirements put in place by our lenders, including the USDA Rural Utilities Service.

**CENTRAL ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE
CONNECTIONS**

(USPS 018-963)

Board of Directors

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

CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is the monthly publication for the members of Central Electric Cooperative, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301. Families subscribe to Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. Central Electric Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to cooperative members on matters pertaining to their cooperative and living better with electricity. Also available at www.centralecc.coop.

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

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

Contact Us

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
 Phone: 1-800-477-2892 or 1-605-996-7516

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 www.usda.gov/oascr/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. Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

Board Meeting Summary

The board of directors met Oct. 21, 2024, 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, expected rate increases for wholesale power and construction bid progress for a new Howard outpost building.

Operations Manager Bultje reported that the Fedora substation upgrade project is delayed until spring due to limited availability of electrical breakers.

Director Loudner reported on the SDREA board meeting and related activities.

Director Hofer reported on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and SoDak Renewables board meetings.

Director Wolbrink updated the board on East River Electric governance activities.

The Board reviewed monthly director expenses and the third quarter legal fees.

BOARD ACTION

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to approve a resolution declaring unit #104 2004 Chevy Silverado 1500 as surplus. Motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to adopt proposed changes to Rate Policy 869 - Large Commercial TransCanada. Motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to adopt proposed changes to Rate Policy 872 - Large Commercial POET. Motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve third quarter legal fees and attorney expenses. Motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to accept third quarter general manager and director expenses. Motion carried.

The annual work plan and budget meeting was scheduled for Nov. 12. The regular board meeting was scheduled for Nov. 18. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

FINANCIAL REPORT	YEAR TO DATE OCT. 2024	YEAR TO DATE OCT. 2023
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales	283,855,653 kWh	283,679,794 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$ 30,712,166	\$ 29,273,306
Total Cost of Service	\$ 30,302,496	\$ 29,065,570
Operating Margins	\$ 409,670	\$ 207,736

Snow Safety

There is no end to the terms for “really big snowstorm,” and those terms come in handy, particularly in America’s snowiest cities. Just check out these average annual snowfall totals in towns of at least 10,000 residents, according to the Farmer’s Almanac:

Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan – 119.3 inches
Syracuse, New York – 114.3 inches
Juneau, Alaska – 93.6 inches
Flagstaff, Arizona – 87.6 inches
Duluth, Minnesota – 83.5 inches
Erie, Pennsylvania – 80.9 inches
Burlington, Vermont – 80.2 inches
Muskegon, Michigan – 79.3 inches
Casper, Wyoming – 77 inches
Portland, Maine – 70 inches

But with really big snow storms – and even everyday, run-of-the-mill snowfalls – comes a risk of death by shoveling. Nationwide, snow shoveling is responsible for thousands of injuries and as many as 100 deaths each year.

So, why so many deaths? Shoveling snow is just another household chore, right?

Not really, says the American Heart Association. While most people won’t have a problem, shoveling snow can put some people at risk of heart attack. Sudden exertion, like moving hundreds of pounds of snow after being sedentary for several months, can put a big strain on the heart. Pushing a heavy snow blower also can cause injury.

And, there’s the cold factor. Cold weather can increase heart rate and blood pressure. It can make blood clot more easily and constrict arteries, which decreases blood supply. This is true even in healthy people. Individuals over the age of 40 or who are relatively inactive should be particularly careful.

National Safety Council recommends the following tips to shovel safely:

- Do not shovel after eating or while smoking.
- Take it slow and stretch out before you begin.
- Shovel only fresh, powdery snow; it’s lighter.
- Push the snow rather than lifting it.
- If you do lift it, use a small shovel or only partially fill the shovel.

- Lift with your legs, not your back.
- Do not work to the point of exhaustion.
- Know the signs of a heart attack, stop immediately and call 911 if you’re experiencing any of them; every minute counts.

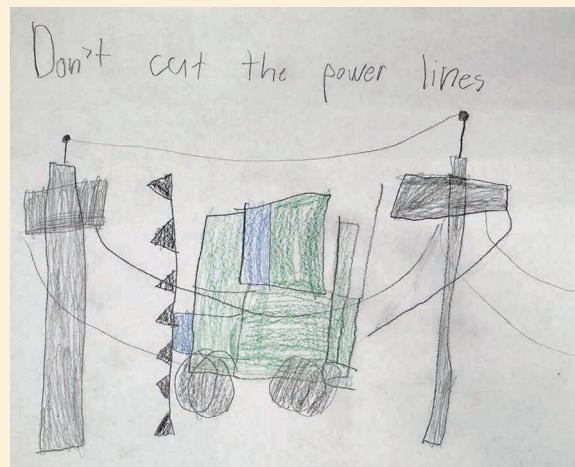
Don’t pick up that shovel without a doctor’s permission if you have a history of heart disease. A clear driveway is not worth your life.

Snow Blower Safety

In addition to possible heart strain from pushing a heavy snow blower, stay safe with these tips:

- If the blower jams, turn it off.
- Keep your hands away from the moving parts.
- Be aware of the carbon monoxide risk of running a snow blower in an enclosed space.
- Add fuel outdoors, before starting, and never add fuel when it is running.
- Never leave it unattended when it is running.

Source: National Safety Council



“Don’t Cut the Power Lines!”

David Raak, Age 7 ½

David Raak cautions readers to be careful when working around power lines. Thank you for your picture, David! David’s parents are Nathaniel and Katie Raak, members of Central 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.

Crockpot GREATNESS

CROCKPOT CORN

Ingredients:

3 16-oz. packages frozen corn
8 oz. cream cheese
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter
2 tbsps. sugar
2 tbsps. water

Method

Place corn in crockpot. Cut cream cheese and butter into small cubes. Add cream cheese, butter, sugar and water to corn. Stir. Cook on high for 45 minutes. Stir. Turn to low and cook for three more hours, stirring occasionally.

Elaine Rieck
Harrisburg, S.D.

CROCKPOT BAKED BEANS

Ingredients:

2 cans black beans
2 cans red beans (drained)
2 cans great northern
1 can baked beans with brown sugar
1 lb. diced ham
1 heaping tsp. mustard (regular)
2 full tbsps. ketchup
Garlic powder (optional)
1 small onion (chopped)

Method

Mix all ingredients in crockpot except ham. Cook 2 hours on high. Mix in ham and cook another hour on high. Enjoy!

Rose Tucker
Hot Springs, S.D.

CHICKEN FIESTA SLOW COOKER RECIPE

Ingredients:

2 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breasts
1 package slow cooker fiesta chicken seasoning mix
2 cans (14 1/2 oz. each) diced tomatoes, undrained
1 can (15 3/4 oz.) whole kernel corn, drained
1 can (15 oz.) black beans, drained and rinsed

Method

Place chicken in slow cooker. Mix seasoning, tomatoes, corn and beans until blended. Pour over chicken. Cover. Cook eight hours on LOW or four hours on HIGH. Remove chicken from slow cooker. Shred chicken, using two forks. Return chicken to slow cooker; mix well. Serve over cooked rice with assorted toppings, if desired.

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 2024. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

'TIS THE SEASON OF GIVING



The holiday spirit was in the air when Central Electric's volunteer Board of Trustees gathered to award Operation Round-Up grants in December. Seated in the front row from left to right are Trustees Merl Bechen, Clarissa Glaus and Steve Weisz. Standing in the back row from left to right are Trustees Julie Dykstra, Dawna VanOverschelde, Amber Kolousek, Tami Moore, Yvette Isburg and Central Electric Manager of Communications Tara Miller. Not pictured is Trustee LeAnn Moe.

At the meeting, the following organizations were selected to receive a total of \$13,800 to support area projects.

DECEMBER 2024 GRANT AWARDS:

- Chamberlain Health Occupation Students of America (HOSA) - \$1,000 for Educational Class Trip
- Crow Creek Homeless Shelter - \$2,000 for Shelter Supplies
- Dakota Indian Foundation - \$2,000 for Makatoh Reconciliation and Healing Horse Ride
- Gann Valley Abernathy Post 16 - \$1,000 for Legion Grave Markers
- Missouri Valley Ambulance District - \$1,500 for Regional Training
- Plankinton Ambulance Association - \$1,000 for Emergency Medical Supplies
- Quilting for Others of Woonsocket - \$500 for Quilting Supplies
- St. Peter Cemetery of Farmer - \$2,300 for Cemetery Improvements
- The Salvation Army of Mitchell - \$1,500 for Utility Assistance
- Trinity Cemetery of Letcher/Mount Vernon - \$1,000 for Cemetery Improvements



Through Operation Round-Up, participating cooperative members round up their monthly electric bill to the next whole dollar. Contributions are pooled together to support local causes through the grant program. Since 2015, the program has generated more than \$225,000 to support community projects.

Grant applications are accepted every six months. The next deadline to apply is May 1, 2025. For more information, please call Central Electric at 800-477-2892 or visit www.centralec.coop/operation-round-up.

Employee Years of Service



Tony
Mitchell Area Foreman
20 years on Jan. 3



Joey
Journeyman Lineworker
Mitchell Crew
3 years on Jan. 3



Kevin
Journeyman Electrician
19 years on Jan. 16



Ken
General Manager
40 years on Jan. 28



Brandon
Appliance Repair Tech & Electrician
6 years on Feb. 4



Cody
Journeyman Lineworker
Mitchell Crew
10 years on Feb. 9



A historic photo shows a man standing in front of an auger used to dig holes for utility poles.
Photo submitted by Moreau-Grand Electric



Janet Gesinger
Photo by Frank Turner

When the Lights Turned On: Janet Gesinger Remembers the Days Before Power

Frank Turner

Memory is a fickle thing. It's funny how a certain smell or simple photo can evoke vivid memories of an age long past. After all, how can a memory be lost when we can't even remember losing it?

At the age of 89, Janet Gesinger doesn't remember the exact moment when Cam Wal Electric, her local rural electric cooperative, introduced electricity to her childhood farm and ranch 13 miles west of Gettysburg, but she does remember the days without it.

"It's amazing that I can remember some things from my childhood so vividly, but I couldn't tell you what I had for lunch last week," Gesinger laughed.

Gesinger remembers growing up on the farm during a time when the glow of kerosene lamps helped her family navigate the dark and a cistern well kept their food cool.

"I don't know how we could see with the little lamps, but we did," she said. "People were careful because they knew

what the risks were, carrying around those lamps."

At the age of 9, Gesinger and her three older siblings lost their mother. The profound loss meant that Gesinger had to step up to help her siblings and father keep the farm and ranch going.

"I ended up helping my dad outside more than I did anything inside the house," she said. "We lived in such a remote place. There weren't even gravel roads back then. If I ever wanted to leave the farm, I had to help my brother milk cows and do chores so he would take me into town."

In high school, Gesinger's horizons broadened past the farm, and she began working as a waitress at the Medicine Rock Café where she met her late husband, Robert Gesinger. A year later the couple married and moved to Robert's family farm and ranch just a few miles north of Ridgeview in 1954. The Ridgeview community gained power just one year earlier in 1953, and Janet continues to live there now as a member of Moreau-Grand Electric.

When Janet moved to Ridgeview it was a bustling, small town with a grain elevator, a grocery store with a post office in it, a liquor store, a school, and electricity. Today, nearly all those amenities are a distant memory, but the rural electricity that continues to power the homes of the roughly 25 residents of Ridgeview, including Janet, remains.

"Ridgeview had gotten electricity just before we got married," she said.

Once she lived in a home with electricity, Janet found it hard to imagine life without it. One winter storm in 2010 wreaked havoc on the rural landscape and broke more than 200 utility poles, leaving Robert and Janet without power for 21 days.

"By day three of the outage, we ended up getting a PTO driven generator that could hook up to the tractor," Janet said. "Robert was sure glad when the power came back on, because that way we didn't have to fuel the tractor twice a day to run it – and the cost of diesel to run it."

Reflecting on her experiences, Janet acknowledges the transformative impact of electricity on rural life and finds it hard to imagine a world without electricity.

"It's an amazing convenience that we rely on," Janet said. "People today couldn't live without it because what in the world would ever replace it? We have a lot of technology in this world, but there is nothing that can replace electricity."

PLANNING AHEAD



An aerial view of the Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV near Williston, N.D. Photo submitted by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

FORECASTING THE FUTURE

Basin Electric's Vision for Reliable Energy

Frank Turner

Keeping the lights on in a dynamic world isn't as simple as flipping a switch. It requires a forward-thinking approach, almost like gazing into a crystal ball, to anticipate future energy demand. Energy infrastructure projects begin long before the first shovel breaks ground, and it's a challenge that Basin Electric Power Cooperative confronts every day to ensure consistent and

reliable power amid an ever-changing landscape of new technologies and growing membership.

A new plant or transmission line can take years of planning and coordination by Basin Electric and its member cooperatives. The process is similar to predicting the weather; it all begins with a forecast to determine what energy demand is brewing on the horizon.

Basin Electric works with the members and other stakeholders to

develop highly accurate load forecasts. Those load forecasts are then compared against our existing resource portfolio. If any gaps are identified, resource alternatives are identified and reviewed against each other to arrive at the best resource portfolio outcome.

"Once a need for a new generation project or transmission project has been identified, Basin Electric assembles a project team," explained Matt Ehrman, vice president of engineering and construction at Basin Electric.

"Developing and defining project scope is vital to project success as it's really the foundation for the project," Ehrman continued. "Good upfront planning minimizes project execution

risks later, so Basin places a lot of emphasis on the development work that happens before any detailed engineering design can begin.”

Basin Electric is currently undertaking one of its largest single-site electric generation projects in the last 40 years near Williston, North Dakota, known as Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV. Once completed, this project will add 580 megawatts of natural gas generation capacity to Basin Electric’s energy portfolio. Although the project broke ground in March 2023, planning for the project began in 2021, standing as a testament to the cooperative’s long-term mindset and commitment to meeting its load forecast.

So what goes into the planning of such a major project? Ehrman says everything from identifying project objectives to permitting and contracting strategies to engineering studies all take place within the years leading up to new infrastructure.

“In the case of a generation project, the project site, fuel, water, and transmission sources are identified during the project development phase,” Ehrman said. “After the development phase is complete, the more detailed engineering design work can begin. This is when the engineers really begin to dig into the details of how to arrange and interconnect all of the many different types of equipment



The first gas turbine delivery for Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV. Photo submitted by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

required for a given project. Eventually, those design details are used to develop construction specifications, contractors are selected and construction begins.”

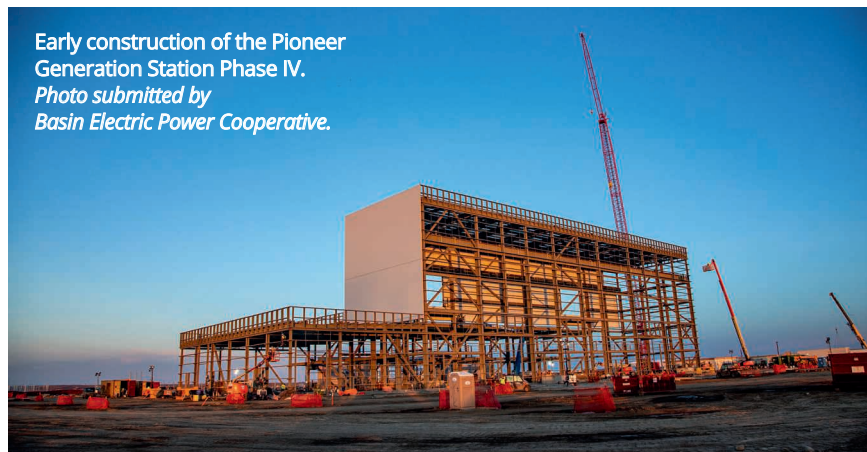
Beyond the demanding complexity of the project itself, Basin Electric’s project team must also navigate regulatory matters and policy. While many projects share similarities, no two are identical when navigating federal, state, and local permitting requirements.

“Large generation and transmission projects can take years to permit, and the permitting duration depends on the project,” Ehrman said. “Basin’s

teams have successfully permitted and executed many projects over the years and as a result have learned a lot about those processes in our service territory.”

Slated to be operational in 2025, Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV will come on board during a time when electricity demand is increasing significantly. The completion of the project will expand Basin Electric’s resource portfolio, which uses a vast diversity of generation resources to serve its member cooperatives. Even still, Ehrman said it still takes a massive effort to stay prepared for what the future may bring.

“Planning and building energy infrastructure is a massive team effort that involves teams from Basin and its membership,” he said. “These are complex projects, and there are challenges involved in all phases of the projects. Basin has extremely talented, dedicated and hard-working teams developing these projects that really enjoy working out all the technical and non-technical details while mitigating risks to achieve success and deliver the best possible outcome for the membership.”



Early construction of the Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV. Photo submitted by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

\$1.25 Million Capital Credit Refunds Issued

Central Electric Cooperative's board of directors has approved roughly \$1.25 million in capital credit general retirements, refunding past margins to cooperative members. The refunds include approximately \$600,000 of Central Electric Cooperative capital credits, \$188,600 of East River Electric Power Cooperative capital credits and \$459,800 of Basin Electric Power Cooperative capital credits.

Revenue margins earned by the cooperative are allocated back to members as capital credits in proportion to the amount of electricity that was billed during the years being retired. Because capital credits are based on electricity purchases, each member's refund amount is different.

Members with active Central Electric accounts received their refund as a credit on their November bills mailed in December. Inactive members are mailed a check to the current address on file.

Former co-op members should contact Central Electric to ensure capital credit payments are sent to the correct address. Please keep a copy of capital credit retirements for your records.

Capital credits are fundamental to the cooperative business model. They are a financial benefit for the membership and ensure strong financial standing. If you have questions, contact the office or visit our website at www.centralecc.coop/capital-credits to view a list of frequently asked questions.

New Howard Foreman



Landon Laible

Help us welcome your new Howard Area Foreman, Landon Laible. Landon and journeyman lineworker Davis Mathison will make up the Howard crew with the upcoming retirements of Tim Neises and Al Spader.

Landon is originally from Howard and holds a degree in powerline construction and maintenance from Mitchell

Technical College. He worked for Central Electric and Sioux Valley Energy as a seasonal utility worker before joining Otter Tail Power Company in 2016.

Landon said his family is excited to move back home from Lake Preston to the Howard area.



THE FUTURE OF LOAD MANAGEMENT IS HERE.

Central Electric Cooperative is stepping into the next generation of energy management, also known as load management. The current devices that manage energy usage on participating members' water heaters, air conditioners and irrigation systems has become outdated and will no longer be supported by the manufacturers. That means we must update the equipment at your home or business to continue managing energy use and expenses.

This implementation project brings numerous benefits to member-owners across the cooperative by ensuring we are efficiently utilizing our resources during times of peak electricity usage when energy costs more. By managing energy wisely, we are able to reduce wholesale power purchases, saving money and resources for all.

If you are a participating member, our technicians will eventually need to visit your location to install the new device. We understand that this may cause some inconvenience, but we will communicate with members to set up a time that works best for them. We may reach out with postcards and emails to schedule your load management installation. We appreciate your cooperation as we move toward greater energy efficiency and cost savings.



Plugged In With Patrick



Patrick Soukup
Manager of Member Services and Marketing

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

When Central Electric purchased the 2022 Ford F-150 Lightning electric pickup, as your electric provider, we were most interested in the charger we would get with this extended-range vehicle.

The charger provides valuable insight. It's helpful for us to view the charging cycle and understand the electric demand, which is the amount of energy consumed in a specified timeframe. This data helps us plan for

future needs on the system.

We recently experienced some challenges with the charger. It wasn't working properly and would not charge the batteries. We performed basic troubleshooting ourselves with little success, so I called the technical support phone number for the charger. WOW is an understatement at best.

Through Ford's technical support, I was able to connect to a live person, not an automated system. They walked me through a couple of troubleshooting options, and they

connected the vehicle to the internet so they could check for software updates. They initiated the updates and called me back to inform me that the issue was inside the charger itself and was not a vehicle software problem. They shipped a new charger that day, and it was completely covered under warranty. I didn't know what to say.

When the charger showed up, I received a text that it had arrived. We installed the new charger and everything worked as it should.

The situation that we experienced was incredibly positive. The electric vehicle industry is ever-changing, and sometimes with evolution, technical support is lacking, but not in this case. Ford's technical support exceeded our expectations.

Members interested in electric vehicles and charging technology can call me to discuss the options. It's imperative to know if your current transformer can handle the electric demand. We also recommend researching different options before making a purchase.

2022 Ford F-150 Lightning Charging Expense

MONTH	MILES DRIVEN	KWH USED	MILES PER KWH	*COST TO CHARGE
June	1211	577	2.1	\$ 69.24
July	801	492	1.6	\$ 59.04
August	681	482	1.4	\$ 57.84
September	1065	663	1.6	\$ 79.56
October	1116	626	1.8	\$ 75.12
November	838	579	1.4	\$ 69.48

*Cost to charge is calculated at 12 cents per kilowatt hour.



www.centralec.coop/scholarships



LOOKING AHEAD

An aerial view of the Wild Springs Solar Project near New Underwood, S.D. Photo submitted by East River Electric

Wind Energy Association Changes Name, Advocates For All Renewables

Jacob Boyko

The South Dakota Wind Energy Association is getting a fresh coat of paint this year with a rebrand that will expand the association's advocacy mission to include more forms of renewable energy.

As solar energy generation in the state increases with new and upcoming projects, expanding the association — now called the South Dakota Renewable Energy Association — to include other forms of renewable energy and battery storage was the clear way forward according to association president and Sioux Valley Energy Director Gary Fish.

"The association started out as being very wind oriented, and that's our legacy," Fish explained. "But we also have somewhat migrated to having an energy portfolio where wind coexists

with coal, natural gas and solar, and that was the driver behind changing our name."

The change comes in the wake of South Dakota's first large-scale solar farm near New Underwood, which began commercial operation in March 2024. Basin Electric Power Cooperative will purchase 114 megawatts of the 128-megawatt renewable project.

The association began with the

leadership of East River Electric Power Cooperative in the mid-2000s as the generation and transmission co-op looked for ways to develop wind generation in the state to serve its growing member utilities and bring economic development and job opportunities to the state.

"Wind energy was at that time starting to become a more viable utility-scale source of power generation," said Chris Studer, chief member and public relations officer at East River Electric.



A look on the ground as crews prepare the Wild Springs Solar Project for power generation. Photo submitted by East River Electric

“East River led an effort to build an association of stakeholders in South Dakota that can help advocate for the wind industry.”

It’s a mission that’s propelled South Dakota to being the state with the third highest renewable energy makeup, with more than 54% of in-state power generated from renewable wind and solar resources.

“We’ve gone from essentially zero wind energy to more than 3,000 megawatts of installed capacity in the state,” Studer said. “We have far surpassed what our original goal was.”

In the South Dakota Wind Energy Association’s initial stages, the board was composed mostly of utilities and developers focused on studying potential economic benefits and the infrastructure needs that come with increasing generation.

“I think everyone knew we had a great wind resource, but the real issue was having additional transmission to get the power out,” Fish said. “Could we build

the towers? Yes. Could we get the power to market? That was the challenge.”

As the association successfully made the case for wind energy, the membership grew to include other G&Ts and investor-owned utilities, landowner groups, turbine manufacturers, servicing companies and others from the wind energy supply chain.

One of the first large-scale renewable energy wins for the South Dakota Wind Energy Association and rural electric cooperatives was the 2011 commissioning of the 172-megawatt Crow Lake Project north of White Lake, South Dakota. The association membership helped support the launch of South Dakota Wind Partners to bring local residents an opportunity to invest in and own several turbines in the project.

According to East River Electric, the program generated about \$16 million worth of local investment.

“It was a very unique and successful

project that the South Dakota Wind Energy Association had involvement in and advocated for,” Studer said. “The people that invested got tax equity benefits over time, and after about 10 years they sold it back to Basin Electric and got their investments back.”

Moving forward, the association will continue to advocate for a renewable energy-friendly business environment to propel South Dakota energy projects forward.

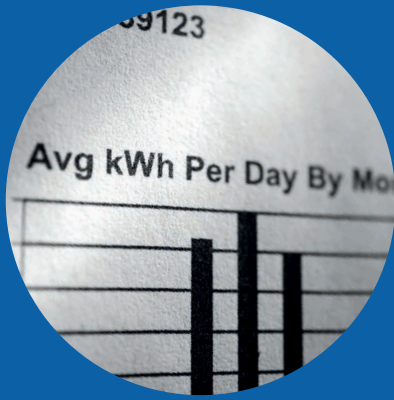
“South Dakota Renewable Energy Association is here to make sure our state’s tax policies are fair, that developers still want to come here and develop renewable energy projects, and that there’s a market for all of the supply chain that’s needed for wind energy and now for solar, as well as the necessary transmission,” Studer continued.

A new South Dakota Renewable Energy Association website and promotional material will debut within the next several months.



The Crow Lake Wind Project near White Lake, S.D., is the largest wind project owned solely by a cooperative in the United States. The \$363 million wind project went into operation in 2011.

Photo submitted by East River Electric



2025 Electric Rate Adjustment

The cost to deliver reliable energy has risen substantially in recent years. Increasing wholesale electric rates and higher costs for equipment, inventory and labor have prompted the need for a rate adjustment.

The revised rates take effect in January 2025 and will be reflected on billing statements received in February 2025. Adjustments have been made to energy charges and facility charges. Energy charges are based on the amount of electricity used. The facility charge supports the cooperative's ongoing operating expenses, such as customer service activities and the replacement of aging power lines, transformers and equipment.

All rate classes are subject to adjustments in facility and energy charges. The impact of the adjustments on individual bills will vary for each member.

Monitor Energy Use

Sign up for SmartHub by visiting www.centralec.coop and clicking "Register for Online Access" at the top of the page.



View energy usage details and billing history by downloading the SmartHub application on your tablet or mobile device.



Want \$10 Off Your Next Statement?

Postage is another rising cost your cooperative is facing, so Central Electric is offering an incentive to go paperless. Earn a one-time bill credit of \$5 by signing up for paperless statements, and another \$5 by signing up for automatic payments.

All of a member's eligible accounts must be enrolled by April 1, 2025, to qualify. Each newly enrolled member is eligible for one \$5 to \$10 bill credit after the requirements are met. Contact the billing department for more information at 1-800-477-2892.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Monthly Rate Comparison

The table below shows monthly rate comparisons from 2024 to 2025. Most members fall under the Farm/Residential Single-Phase rate. Adjustments have been made to energy rates and facility charges. Energy charges are based on the amount of electricity used. The facility charge supports the cooperative's ongoing operating expenses, such as customer service activities and the replacement of aging power lines, transformers and equipment.

The revised rates take effect in January 2025 and will be reflected on billing statements received in February 2025. Tools are available in the SmartHub app to help manage your energy usage. To access SmartHub services, sign up at www.centralec.coop.

Service Type	2024 Base Charge	2024 Energy Usage Blocks	2024 Rate	2025 Base Charge	2025 Energy Usage Blocks	2025 Rate
Farm/Residential Single-Phase (Policy 800 applies to most members)	\$63.45 Facility Charge	0 to 900 kWh 901-1200 kWh >1200 kWh	\$0.121 \$0.096 \$0.087	\$65.00 Facility Charge	0 to 1200 kWh >1200 kWh	\$0.130 \$0.103
Farm/Residential Three-Phase (Policy 801)	\$108.10 Facility Charge	0 to 900 kWh 901-1200 kWh >1200 kWh	\$0.151 \$0.123 \$0.087	\$110.00 Facility Charge	0 to 1200 kWh >1200 kWh	\$0.162 \$0.132
Farm/Small Commercial Single-Phase (Policy 840)	\$63.45 Facility Charge +KVA size	100 kWh Per KW Excess kWh Non-Coinc. KW	\$0.096 \$0.054 \$15.83	\$65.00 Facility Charge +KVA size	100 kWh Per KW Excess kWh Non-Coinc. KW	\$0.103 \$0.058 \$17.017
Farm/Small Commercial Three-Phase (Policy 843)	\$108.10 Facility Charge +KVA size	100 kWh Per KW Excess kWh Non-Coinc. KW	\$0.096 \$0.054 \$15.83	\$110.00 Facility Charge +KVA size	100 kWh Per KW Excess kWh Non-Coinc. KW	\$0.103 \$0.058 \$17.017
Congested Area Single-Phase (Policy 802)	\$40.30 Facility Charge	0 to 900 kWh 901-1200 kWh >1200 kWh	\$0.121 \$0.096 \$0.087	\$43.00 Facility Charge	0 to 1200 kWh >1200 kWh	\$0.130 \$0.103
Discounted Electric Heat Sub Meter (Policy 804)	\$4 Sub Meter Charge	All Energy Usage	\$0.06	\$4 Sub Meter Charge	All Energy Usage	\$0.065

Note: This is a rate snapshot and may not show all rate factors for each service type.

Questions?

Phone: 1-800-477-2892 or 1-605-996-7516
 E-mail: billinggroup@centralec.coop
 Website: www.centralec.coop

REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo to win a Blackstone electric grill!

Your Phone Number: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____



JAN. 11
Snow Queen Coronation
7 p.m.
Aberdeen Civic Theater
Aberdeen, SD
SDSnowQueen.com

Photo courtesy of South Dakota Snow Queen Festival

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.

UNTIL DEC. 26
Christmas at the Capitol
8 a.m.-10 p.m.
Pierre, SD
605-773-3178

UNTIL DEC. 31
Garden Glow at McCrory Gardens
5-9 p.m.
Brookings, SD

UNTIL DEC. 31
Hall of Trees
12-4 p.m. Mon.-Sat.
The Mead Museum
Yankton, SD

DEC. 31
American Legion Post 15 Save the Last Dance 2024
8 p.m.-12:30 a.m.
El Riad Shrine
Sioux Falls, SD
605-336-3470

DEC. 31-JAN. 1
New Year's Eve in Deadwood
Deadwood, SD
800-999-1876

JAN. 5, FEB. 2
American Legion Post 15 Pancake Breakfast
8:30 a.m.-12 p.m.
1600 W. Russel St.
Sioux Falls, SD
605-336-3470

JAN. 7-9
Dakota Farm Show
Tue. & Wed. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Thurs. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
USD DakotaDome
Vermillion, SD

JAN. 11
Coats for Kids Bowling Tournament
Meadowood Lanes
Rapid City, SD
605-393-2081

JAN. 15
46th Ranchers Workshop
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Community Events Center
White River, SD
605-259-3252 ext. 3

JAN. 18
Breakin' the Winter Blues Chili Cookoff
Main Street
Hill City, SD

JAN. 26
Supper Supper Fundraiser Rapid Valley United Methodist Church
5:30-7:30 p.m.
Tickets \$6
5103 Longview Dr.
Rapid City, SD

JAN. 31-FEB. 8
Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo
Central States Fairground
Rapid City, SD
605-355-3861

FEB. 14-17
11th Annual Frost Fest
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Brookings, SD
605-692-7444

FEB. 21-22
Women in Blue Jeans
Highland Conference Center
Mitchell, SD
www.womeninbluejeans.org

FEB. 22
Bellator Titans Charter Casino Night Fundraiser
6-11 p.m.
316 2nd St.
Aberdeen, SD

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