

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



South Dakota Art

**Trashyard
Treasures**

Pages 8-9

**The Story of
Dude Dad**

Pages 12-13

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY BENEFITS MEMBER-OWNERS



Ken Schlimgen
General Manager

It's that time of year when the South Dakota Legislature is wrapping up the 2023 session. I don't know how closely each of you follows the issues that our state faces, but I am grateful for the individuals who represent us in Pierre with the goal of improving our way of life.

As the general manager of your cooperative, I have been fortunate to visit with many of you, along with state and federal officials,

to address issues that impact all of us. There are many different viewpoints and opinions from individuals across our state.

As members and employees of a cooperative, we have a long history of standing together and facing challenges. I believe that makes us stronger. Electric cooperatives demonstrate mutual support by helping restore electric service after a disaster. But there is another equally important example of how we support each other – through collaborative legislative advocacy.

Through the efforts of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), electric cooperatives achieved tremendous success in Washington in 2022. Notably, they worked with Congress to pass legislation allowing cooperatives to receive the same incentives as other businesses that invest in renewable energy. This meaningful win for electric cooperatives is a shining example of the power of our network when we get behind a shared goal. In the years

ahead, this legislation will positively impact cooperative members for generations to come.

Electric cooperatives don't agree on issues 100 percent of the time because each cooperative has its own unique makeup. But when we stand together with our cooperative family on issues that impact our communities and member-owners, we can make a difference for millions of hardworking people. That is quite a gift.

Many people don't fully understand the cooperative business model. They don't think companies are looking out for the interests of their consumers and employees, let alone standing up for each other. Electric cooperatives are unique and successful, despite the diversity that naturally comes from being a large family of 42 million people across 48 states. Some might say our differences are what make us stronger.

Electric cooperatives take great strides to help keep electricity reliable and affordable for millions of

people. We invest in our communities, and best of all, we do this together. We look out for one another, spend time together and celebrate the accomplishments of cooperative friends as if they were our own.

Those who came before us embedded that in the cooperative model, and it's our responsibility to carry those principles forward. I could not be prouder of the work the electric cooperatives are doing to improve the quality of life for our members.

Until next month, stay safe!

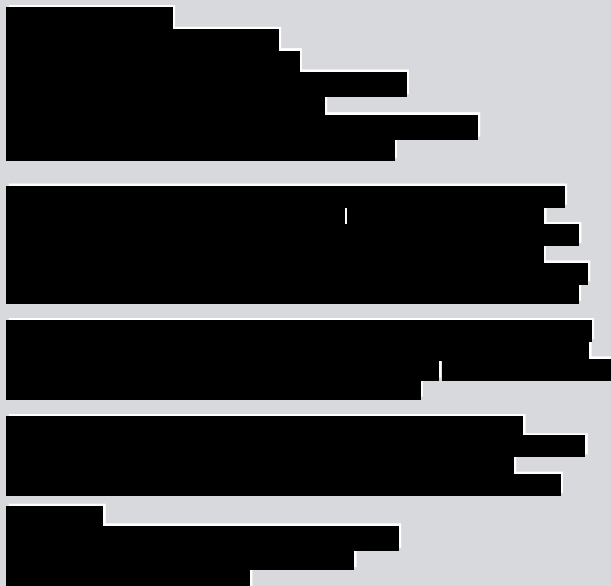
Electric cooperatives demonstrate mutual support by helping restore electric service after a disaster. But there is another equally important example of how we support each other — through collaborative legislative advocacy.

CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

(USPS 018-963)

Board of Directors

Duane Wolbrink - President (Aurora County)
 Todd VanWalleghen - Vice President (Sanborn County)
 Mark Hofer - Secretary & NRECA Director (Hanson County)
 Mark Reindl - Treasurer (Jerauld County)
 Donita Loudner - SDREA Director (Buffalo County)
 Roger Campbell - Director (Brule County)
 Jeff Gustafson - Director (Davison County)
 Robert Banks - Director (Miner County)
 Merl Bechen - Director At Large (All Counties)



Our Mission

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

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Board Meeting Summary

The board of directors met on Dec. 19, 2022, at Central Electric Cooperative's headquarters for the regular board meeting. They reviewed reports by management including details on operations, member services, communications, special projects, the service department and financials.

BOARD REPORT

General Manager Schlimgen updated the board of directors on East River Electric happenings, Basin Electric happenings, Rural Electric Economic Development activities, electric rate adjustments, office security options, strategic planning items and the proposed soybean processing plant near Mitchell.

Area lawmakers and representatives from East River Electric attended the cooperative's annual legislative luncheon to share insights on the upcoming legislative session.

Directors VanWalleghen and Campbell discussed a recent board training they attended in Pierre. Topics included cybersecurity and parliamentary procedure. Discussion followed.

Director Loudner reported on SDREA activities.

Director Wolbrink reported on East River Electric activities.

Schlimgen, Director Reindl, Director Loudner, and Director Wolbrink discussed the recent Mid-West Electric Consumers Association conference.

The board reviewed monthly director expenses.

BOARD ACTION

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to approve 2022 electric bad debt write-offs in the amount of \$3,316.64. Motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve 2022 miscellaneous bad debt write-offs in the amount of \$3,487.81. Motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve updated electric rate policies for 2023. Motion carried.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next board meeting was scheduled for Jan. 23, 2023.

FINANCIAL REPORT	PRIOR YEAR TO DATE DEC. 2021	YEAR TO DATE DEC. 2022
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) sales	361,062,373 kWh	348,300,995 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$ 35,442,954	\$ 34,583,874
Total Cost of Service	\$ 34,287,547	\$ 32,734,669
Operating Margins	\$ 1,155,407	\$ 1,849,206

Spring Planting Safety

Farming equipment has become more massive and technologically advanced over time. While these welcome improvements help farmers cover more ground in less time, taller equipment and longer extensions can bring added challenges around power lines.

As farmers prepare to enter the fields for planting, we urge everyone working in the agricultural field to be alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines, poles and other electrical equipment.



Follow the 10-foot distance rule

To stay safe around overhead power lines, follow safe work practices at all times to help prevent serious and even deadly accidents. Start by making sure everyone knows to maintain a minimum 10-foot clearance from power lines.

This 10-foot rule applies not only to the area underneath the power line, but to the full 360 degrees around it. Not only can electricity change paths if direct contact is made, it can also happen when someone or something gets too close to a power line, and the current jumps, also known as arcing.

Other precautions

In addition to the 10-foot rule, take these steps to help decrease the chances of an electrical-related incident:

- If your machinery or vehicle comes in contact with a power line, do not get out of the cab because you could be electrocuted. Instead, stay where you are and call 9-1-1 to dispatch the appropriate utility to deenergize the power.
- If it is not safe to stay in the cab due to fire or smoke, make

a solid, clean jump with both feet landing at the same time. Hop away with feet together as far as you can.

- If you come across an accident or incident near a downed power line, alert individuals (from at least 50 feet away) to stay in the cab or vehicle as long as there is no imminent danger. Call 9-1-1 and do not approach the scene.
- Have a daily meeting with staff to go over possible hazards. Map out and review routes where equipment will be moved and ensure it will clear power lines.
- Teach anyone working with or for you (including family members and seasonal employees) about power line awareness and proper clearance distance.
- When working around power lines, always use a spotter, who has a broader vantage point than the person in the cab.
- Visually inspect overhead lines, which may not meet height codes due to age or pole damage. If a wire is hanging low, never try to move it; instead, contact your electric utility for assistance.
- Lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.



Take care when plugging in appliances

Stella Nilson

Stella Nilson gives good advice on circuit safety. Overloading circuits is a major cause of residential fires, and she warns people to take care when plugging in appliances. Stella is the daughter of Kyle and Alision Nilson, members of Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber Lake.

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.



SEAFOOD SPECIALTY

SEAFOOD PARTY DIP**Ingredients:**

1 pkg. mock crab sticks
 1 pkg. mock crab pieces
 1 pkg. mock lobster
 1 pkg. salad shrimp
 1 can water chestnuts
 1 medium onion (optional)
 1 c. real mayonnaise
 2 pkg. Philly cream cheese
 Dried parsley, garlic powder, salt, and pepper to taste

METHOD

Grind crab, lobster, shrimp, and water chestnuts. Chop onion. Using a mixer, blend mayo and cream cheese until smooth. Add parsley, garlic powder, salt, and pepper to taste. Combine with seafood. Mix well and refrigerate. Serve with various kinds of crackers.

Kari Larson Reder, Warner, S.D.

WALLEYE CAKES**Ingredients:**

8 oz. walleye (cooked, cooled, and flaked)
 1 1/2 c. mayonnaise
 4 eggs
 1 c. cooked wild rice
 1/2 c. Parmesan cheese
 4 green onions (chopped)
 1 sleeve saltine crackers (crushed)
 1 tsp. crushed garlic
 2 tsps. seasonings (salt, pepper)
 2 tbsp. oil or butter

METHOD

In large bowl, combine walleye, mayo, rice, onion, garlic, and cheese. Add eggs and seasonings. Fold in crushed saltines until the mixture is firm enough to form cakes. Fry in olive oil for 2-3 minutes on each side or until crispy. Serve with topping: 1/2 c. mayo, 1 tsp. garlic powder, and 1 oz. crumbled blue cheese. Mix together.

Dar Duncan, Milbank, S.D.

SHRIMP PASTA**Ingredients:**

1 can (14 1/2 oz.) diced tomatoes, undrained
 1 can (6 oz.) tomato paste
 1 c. water
 2 tsps. sugar
 1 tsp. basil leaves
 1 tsp. garlic powder
 1 tsp. oregano leaves
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper
 8 oz. pasta, such as linguine or spaghetti
 1 lb. medium shrimp, peeled and deveined

METHOD

Mix tomatoes, tomato paste, water, sugar, basil, garlic powder, oregano, salt and red pepper in large saucepan. Bring to boil on medium-high heat. Reduce heat to low; simmer, uncovered, 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Meanwhile, cook pasta as directed on package, adding shrimp during last 3 minutes of cooking. Drain. Return pasta and shrimp to saucepot. Pour tomato sauce over shrimp and pasta. Toss gently to coat well. Serve immediately with shredded Parmesan cheese, 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 2023. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Unclaimed capital credits

Can you help locate these former members?

The following list of former members had unclaimed capital credits from Central Electric Cooperative as of February 3, 2023. If you have a phone number or address for anybody on this list, please contact our office by phone at 1-800-477-2892 or 1-605-996-7516 during business hours.

A

Adams, Chantelle
Allen, Mary L
Altheide, Gary
Anderson, Ashley
Anderson, Katharina
Americinn Motel Sign
Ashley, Zola or Stulken, Bruce

B

Bad Moccasin, Dawn or Glydon
Bailey, George Jr
Barber, Harold
Baysinger, Dallas
Baysinger, Lawrence
Berg, Mark
Berg, Paul or Joyce
Beurskens, Denice
Bishop, Roger or Bernadine
Boom, James
Bukacek, Becky
Burma, William or Shirley

C

Chaney, James
Collins, Velma or Vernon G
Colombe, Colin
Colombe, Tally
Colwell, Jim or Rita
Comes Flying, Krista
Comes Flying, Lucas
Comes Flying, Theresa
Crow, Rudy Jr
Culhane Motels

D

Darling, Josh
Dise, Josef & Boschee, Kolya
Dixon, Glen
Donelan, Mark
Drapeau, Marianne
Drong, Eugene

E

Eppendanz, Jewel
Erickson, Howard M

F

Fallis, Albert
Fenner, Lowell
Ferguson, Breece
Fleury, John
Fleury, Richard
Forthman, Dennis

G

Gann Valley Station or Lawver, John
Geidel, Matt
Geisler, Fred
Gerlach, Steve – Mitchell
Gerona, Ben
Graham, Cherie
Graves, WM
Gravatt-Felicia, Glenda
Grey Owl, Tina F
Gudahl, Judith

H

Halverson, Arnold or Esther M
Hanson, Mary
Hanson, Robert
Harrison, Evelyn
Harrison, Juanita
Hawk, Sherwood
Hazuka, Roger
Hermans, Eric
Hieb, Patricia
Hiemstra, Merlin J or Keith
Higgins, Raymond
Hines, Scott
His Law, Natalie
Hoenes, Mary
Hohbach, Curtis
House, David
Hossle, Sam
Hutchison, Terrie

J

Johnson, Anthony or Londa
Jones, Clemet
Jones, Everett or Clement
Juhnke, Dennis

K

Keleher, Redel
Keleher, Robert
Kolousek, Rita – Wessington Springs

L

Lake, Carly J
Larsen, Viola or Jerry or Larry
Larson, Edward F
Larson, Jeffrey

Lebeau, Daryl W
Lichtenecker, Clyde
Lopez, Tino
Lyons, Wayne

M

Madsen, Wesley
Mahoney, Fran
Mahrt, Bill or Sargent, Irene
Maier, Jason
Martens, Scott or Haeder, Richard
Martin, Marjean or Bill
May, Darrell N
McFarland, James
McNeil, Terry
Michels, Jeff
Midwest Mobile Communications
Miller, Lyle W Sr
Miller, Tersea V
Mines, Mike
Mills, Patrick
Mlady, Randolph C
Mogck, Ryan
Montieth, Joey
M-T Corner or Youngberg, Jordan
Muchow, Monte
Muhs, Duane
Murphy, Vincent

N

Napolitano, Dennis
Nedved, Evelyn
Nelson, Edith
Neugebauer, Jerald
Niewenhuis, Harlan or Linda
Niles, John
Northrup, Marvin

O

Obago, Russell
Odegard, Carrie
Olson, Arvid
Olson, Kenneth E
Osborn, Regina L

P

Palmer, Dennis
Pastian, Deb
Patton, Paul or Deb
Powers, Jim

Q

Quilt, Karen

(Continued on next page)

R

Radensleben, Leonard
Ramada Inn
Rains, Christian
Reider, Dennis or Nyla
Rohrback, Leo or Sally
Rogers, John
Rose, Holly
Ross, Dennis
Ross, Lisa
Ruden, Brian

S

Satterlee, James or Dan
Sazue, Enola
Schaefer, Glenn
Schneider, Lillian
Schoenfelder, Clete
Schulz, Agnes
SD Fireworks or Rich Brothers
Sedgwick, Hugh
Shoots The Enemy, Corbin
Shottenkirk Cattle Co
Simon, Francis
Sloan, William R
Smith, Nann K
Speck, Donn E
Stanton Cubin or Stanton, Duane
Starr, Earl

Stern, Marlyn
St John, Melvina or Madonna
St John, Madonna
St John, Van B or Madonna
Steichen, Phyllis
Stork, Brian
Stulken, Clara
Sullivan, Raymond
Summers, Rayne
Surat, Curtis J
Swaney, Gayla
Sweet, Josh

T

Taylor, Kenneth
Teeslink, Sara
Tegethoff, Harold or Virginia
Thompson, Jolene
TIC
Trebil, Don
Trinkle, Craig & Sandra
Triplett, John R
Truck Arena Café
Trujillo, Bart

V

Van Dyke, L & J
Vanhorn, Keith
Vanwyhe, Darwyn

Vetter, J L or Vetter, Mary J or
Christensen, Margaret
Vetter, Mary J or Christensen,
Margaret

W

Waddell, Andy
Wade, Kristal D
Wagner, David J
Waldner, John Jr
Walker, Verlyn
Warnke, Ila M
Weber, Jerry L
Wendelboe Construction
Wentworth, John
Wiersema, Merry
Wilcox, Ward
Williams, Trevor
Willman, Willard
Wilson, Jewell
Wilson, Lorraine
Wingle, Richard
Winson, Jim
White Mouse, Joy

Z

Zoss, Brooke
Zoss, Riley

Member Rebates & Incentives

Electric Heating Equipment Rebate

Members may be eligible to receive a \$600 cash payment for installation of an energy star electric heat pump system. The structure must receive electric service from the cooperative and each structure is limited to one rebate.

Third-Party Irrigation or Grain Bin Dryer Management Systems

Members may be eligible for a \$750 rebate for a third-party remotely managed irrigation or grain drying system. The equipment must meet specified requirements as defined by the cooperative.

Member Loan Program

Low-interest loans are available for qualifying members who are installing new electric heating equipment or completing a weatherization project. The maximum loan amount is \$20,000 or 80 percent of the installation cost.

Water Heater Rebates

Members may be eligible to receive a rebate of \$9 per gallon of capacity, provided the water heating unit meets specified requirements as defined by the cooperative.

Certain conditions must be met to qualify for rebates and incentive programs. Please contact Patrick Soukup, Manager of Member Services and Marketing, at 1-800-477-2892 for details regarding cooperative rebates and incentives.



TRASHYARD TREASURES

Lee Lindsley of Piedmont turns trash into treasure when he isn't on the clock working for the South Dakota Department of Transportation.

South Dakota Man Welds Junkyard Scraps Into Pieces of Art

Frank Turner

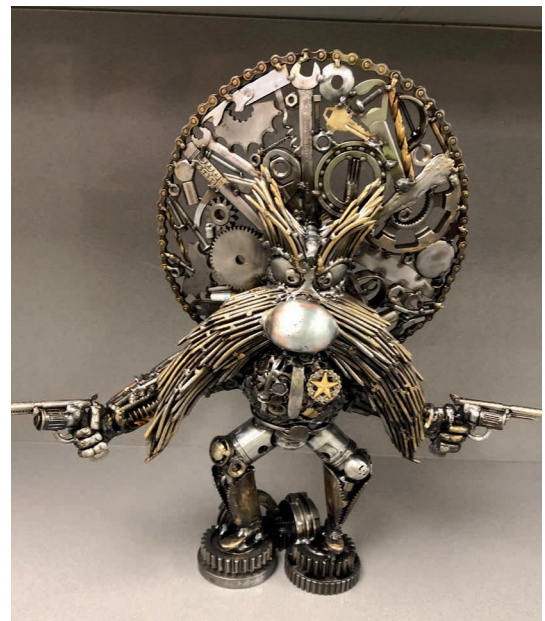
frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Lee Lindsley has a real talent for welding trash into treasure. Given the time, Lindsley can sculpt even the most unwanted junkyard scrap – busted gears, rusted lug nuts and mangled bicycle chains – into an artistic masterpiece.

By day, Lindsley works as a region inspector for the South Dakota Department of Transportation in the Black Hills, but by night, he can be found in his shop putting hours of work into his metallic puzzles, welding them together piece by piece.

When not on the clock, Lindsley is busy tackling his next project, investing anywhere from 30 to 100 hours into each sculpture. The end result often portrays a snapshot of rural life in the Black Hills: a life-size hunting dog made from a mix of old tools and spent rifle rounds, a miniature snowmobile standing on a displaced piston and a gun-slinging Yosemite Sam with a beard fashioned from old nails.

“Metal sculpting is some-



Famous cartoon character Yosemite Sam is one of Lindsley's favorite metal creations.

thing that anyone can do if they put their mind to it,” said Lindsley. “All I do is throw parts of junk together.”

In many ways, Lindsley’s passion for sculpting and welding echoes the resourcefulness of the very artwork he makes. When Lindsley began his metal sculpting journey, he didn’t have a formal education or even a background in art to guide him. Instead, he relied on his welding skills and the bits of scrap he had available to make his remarkable artwork.

“It’s hard to put a price on these pieces, but if my artwork does sell, I want to donate a portion of the sale to a charity.”

It was Lindsley’s second cousin Chris Degen, a teacher at Mitchell Technical College, who inspired Lindsley’s first foray into metal sculpting four years ago. Degen recalls gifting Lindsley’s son, a former lineman, a simple lineman made from nuts and bolts during the holidays. The quirky Christmas gift became a catalyst for the two to start creating new projects and bouncing new ideas off each other. According to Degen, Lindsley just ran away with the idea.

“He went crazy with it,” Degen laughed. “Lee started making sculptures that went way above and beyond what I was doing. I would put an hour into my project, and he would put one hundred into his.”

Taking another step forward in his hobby, Lindsley began researching works and art pieces posted online by world-famous metal sculptors, including metal sculptors John Lopez – a South Dakotan – and Brian Mock, whose masterpieces provided Lindsley a roadmap of what can be accomplished.

Since embarking on his metal sculpting journey, Lindsley has completed more than 18 metal sculptures, and his hobby continues to blossom. For the first time ever, Lindsley put one of his sculptures

up for sale in A1 Al’s Pheasant Ranch in Emery S.D. Since November, Lindsley’s metal hunting dog has stood proudly in one of the ranch’s hunting cabins, waiting for a buyer, and although the dog hasn’t left the shelf just yet, Lindsley said he is

excited to see his work out in the open and visible to the public eye.

“It’s hard to put a price on these pieces, but if my artwork does sell, I want to donate a portion of the sale to a charity,” he said. “We will see what happens.”



Lindsley’s metal German shepherd sits proudly in his workshop.



BE ALERT. BE PREPARED.

**BE AROUND TO FARM
AGAIN NEXT YEAR.**

Fieldwork can feel like second nature. But, complacency when operating around power lines can be deadly.

Staying alert and being prepared can help prevent catastrophic accidents. Knowing what to do if an accident does occur can be the difference between life and death.

RE-ENERGIZING SAFETY



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Contact your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative or visit **YourCoopPower.com** to find safety tips and make a plan.

Tell us about a difference-maker in your community

Nominations are now open for the “Who Powers You” contest being hosted by Central Electric Cooperative and the region’s other Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives. This is the contest’s second year, and the goal is to recognize people who are making a positive difference in the lives of others.

Nominations will be accepted through April 7, 2023. Three final winners will be selected based on the impact that they have on the community. Weekly finalists will be featured on the Keloland Living television program.

The Who Powers You contest grand prize winner will receive a \$3,000 prize. The second place winner will receive \$1,500 and the third place winner will receive \$500.

“This contest showcases our commitment to the communities we serve,” said Tara Miller, manager of communications at Central Electric Cooperative. “These individuals aren’t in it for the recognition, they are simply good people doing their part.”

Volunteers, first responders, teachers, non-profit workers and other outstanding community members are just some of the people one could consider nominating.

To learn more about the Who Powers You contest and nominate someone from your community, visit WhoPowersYouContest.com. We look forward to recognizing finalists from Central Electric’s communities.

YEARS OF SERVICE



Norton

17 years on March 1



Lindsey

8 years on March 2



SIGN UP FOR THE 2023

BASIN ELECTRIC BUS TOUR



Patrick Soukup

Manager of Member
Services & Marketing

Have you heard the story behind the switch? If not, you're in luck, because Central Electric's annual Basin Electric Bus Tour is scheduled to hit the road July 19-21, 2023.

The tour will help you gain a greater understanding and appreciation for our electric power supply, and the hardworking people who help generate that power.

Basin Electric's core business is generating and transmitting wholesale bulk electric power primarily to its 131 member rural electric systems, which are located in nine states: Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Wyoming, North Dakota and South Dakota. Its largest subsidiary, the for-profit Dakota Gasification Company, owns and operates the Great Plains Synfuels Plant near Beulah, ND, which gasifies lignite coal, and captures some of the carbon dioxide emissions (CO₂) and sends them to depleted Canadian oil fields for geologic sequestration.

Members who have not attended past tours are given first chance to participate. All other members will be placed on a standby list and will be contacted if openings become available.

For more information, call 1-800-477-2892 and ask for me, Patrick, or find details on our website at www.centralec.coop/basin-electric-bus-tour. Thanks for your interest in learning about Basin Electric Power Cooperative, our regional generation and transmission power supplier.





THE STORY OF DUDE DAD

Taylor and Heidi Calmus play with their kids (Theo, Juno and Otto) on a playset Taylor built. The family will welcome another baby in March.

Howard Grows More Than Corn

Tara Miller

Central Electric Cooperative

His kids may only know him as dad, but Jimmy Kimmel, the entire internet and 7 million followers can't be wrong – Howard native Taylor Calmus has evolved into a new-age celebrity. Better known as Dude Dad, Calmus is an accomplished actor, video producer, digital content creator, author, builder, television show host and comedian. Besides making regular appearances on Jimmy Kimmel Live, Calmus has also shared the screen with home remodeling experts Chip and Joanna Gaines, acclaimed actor Anthony Anderson and several YouTube stars.

Calmus is the son of Larry and Julie Calmus. He grew up west of Howard with siblings Zach and Maggie, and graduated from Howard High School in 2005. He now lives in Fort Collins, CO, but Calmus credits much of his creativity to his rural upbringing.

"Growing up in rural South Dakota was awesome because it forced us to create our own fun. My parents were big advocates of that. They would say, 'Go outside and

find something to do.' It enabled us to be creative," Calmus said.

His mom, Julie, agrees. "We were sticklers. We didn't let them play Nintendo or watch tv all day." Instead, the kids often spent time outside constructing BMX bike ramps, among other things.

Building Strong Connections

Now a dad himself, Calmus enjoys putting his ingenuity and building skills to work for his kids. "Building things with your kids is one of the best ways to bond with them," he said. "I've made carnival rides, backyard bike parks, multiple tree houses, a boat, just so many things. Being a dad gives you permission to imagine the impossible like kids do. It allows me to connect with them."

Calmus and his wife Heidi, who is originally from Fargo, have three children and another baby due in March. Heidi is often the subject of her husband's videos. Calmus puts his acting skills to work, sporting a long brunette wig as he comedically embellishes her life. Luckily, Heidi is a good sport, and they often share reaction videos in which she critiques his performance.

The couple went on tour this year, performing comedy shows as a team in North Dakota, South Dakota and Colorado. Calmus said without his wife, they would not have experienced this level of success. "Heidi believed in me before I did. Without her, Dude Dad wouldn't exist today."

The Evolution of Dude Dad

Success didn't happen overnight, Calmus explained. Early on, he would often pick up work doing set construction for tv shows and movie projects to make ends meet.

"When I moved away, I worked hard to make it in Hollywood as an actor, and I had some success," he said. "Then, when Heidi was pregnant with our second child, it was clear to me that I needed to do something more stable to support a family. That's when we created Dude Dad."

Mastering the Dude Dad brand took a great deal of time and commitment. Calmus constantly brainstormed new ideas for videos that would align with the brand and appeal to viewers. After all, the more views his content generates, the more income he earns from paid advertising on the various platforms.

A humble individual, Calmus doesn't necessarily consider himself famous. He said, "I think my content caught on faster in



Taylor and Heidi perform stand-up comedy as a team. They recently sold out shows in Fargo, Sioux Falls, and Fort Collins.

South Dakota because I have family here.”

But the numbers don't lie. Dude Dad content has more than 1 billion views on Facebook and roughly 150 million views on YouTube. So, his reach is far greater than just the state of South Dakota.

“With TikTok and other apps, there are a billion new creators every year, so it's a challenge all the time,” Calmus said. “Anybody can make videos online now, but not everybody can stand in front of an audience and perform comedy. It's been a fun and rewarding challenge. Now we get to see the people who are connecting with our content.”

Calmus authored a book entitled “A Dude's Guide to Baby Size” to help expectant dads understand their baby's size throughout pregnancy. He shares guy-friendly size comparisons for reference, such as a lug nut, a tape measure, a pound of ground beef and a football.

Giving Back

Because of his success, Calmus has been able to give back in unique ways. In 2019, he partnered with HGTV “Fixer Upper” star Chip Gaines to raise \$1.49 million for St. Jude's Children's Hospital. This partnership led to Calmus's television show, Super Dad, where he helps other dads build custom backyard play areas for their children.

Calmus is also a champion for Horizon Health Foundation's Smiles for Miles program. He helped the non-profit raise more than \$20,000 in a single day to provide free dental care for local kids.

Most recently, Taylor and Heidi performed

a live show in Fort Collins and donated the proceeds to a neighborhood family who sadly lost their father.

“He left behind two little kids who are friends with our kids, and we just wanted to be there for them however we could,” Calmus shared.

Making the Family Proud

Reggie Gassman, Calmus's uncle, is the Manager of Customer Electrical Services at Sioux Valley Energy in eastern South Dakota. He said he's proud of his nephew's accomplishments.

“When the kids were little, Taylor and Zach were already making home movies. His success creating videos doesn't surprise me at all,” Gassman said. “He takes something from normal, everyday life and sees it from a different angle.”

Gassman joked, “I told Taylor acting genes run in the family because I was named best actor in the junior class play. That's like the Emmys of Canova!”

Calmus said both sides of his family – Calmus and Gassman – are naturally funny and talented in different ways. While Gassmans are widely known for their baseball skills, his uncle Kurt (and his mustache) have famously inspired some of Dude Dad's most iconic characters.

He's Still Just Taylor

Despite his growing list of accomplishments, he's still the same guy his family knows and loves.

Calmus's mom Julie shared, “Since he was two years old, Taylor was always entertaining people and goofing around. His older brother Zach is just as clever, so there's always laughter when the family gets together. It's pretty cool he's been able to make a living doing that.”

She said when strangers recognize her son as Dude Dad, she chuckles. “He's still just Taylor to us.”



“Husbands of Target” is a viral video with more than 80 million views that Taylor developed in collaboration with other digital content creators.

ONLINE SAFETY

Information provided by KidsHealth.org from Nemours Children's Health. © 1995-2021. The Nemours Foundation/KidsHealth®

Keeping your kids safe online

The Internet can be wonderful for kids. They can use it to research school reports, communicate with teachers and other kids, and play interactive games.

But online access also comes with risks, like inappropriate content, cyberbullying, and online predators. Using social media apps and websites where kids interact, predators may pose as a child or teen looking to make a new friend. They might prod the child to exchange personal information, such as address and phone number, or encourage kids to call them, seeing their phone number via caller ID.

Parents should be aware of what their kids see and hear online, who they meet, and what they share about themselves. Talk with your kids, use tools to protect them, and keep an eye on their activities.

Online Protection Tools

Online tools let you control your kids' access to adult material and help protect them from Internet predators. Many Internet service providers (ISPs) provide parent-control options. You

can also get software that helps block access to sites and restricts personal information from being sent online. Other programs can monitor and track online activity.

Getting Involved in Kids' Online Activities

More important than blocking objectionable material is teaching your kids safe and responsible online behavior, and keeping an eye on their Internet use.

Basic guidelines to share with your kids for safe online use:

- Follow the family rules, and those set by the Internet service provider.
- Never post or trade personal pictures.
- Never reveal personal information, such as address, phone number, or school name or location.
- Use only a screen name and don't share passwords (other than with parents).

- Never agree to get together in person with anyone met online without parent approval and/or supervision.
- Never respond to a threatening email, message, post, or text.
- Always tell a parent or other trusted adult about any communication or conversation that was scary or hurtful.

Basic guidelines for parental supervision:

- Spend time online together to teach your kids appropriate online behavior.
- Keep the computer in a common area where you can watch and monitor its use, not in individual bedrooms. Monitor any time spent on smartphones or tablets.
- Bookmark kids' favorite sites for easy access.
- Check your credit card and phone bills for unfamiliar account charges.
- Find out what, if any, online protection is offered by your child's school, after-school center, friends' homes, or any place



where kids could use a computer without your supervision.

- Take your child seriously if he or she reports an uncomfortable online exchange.

If you're aware of the sending, use, or viewing of child pornography online, call the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at (800) 843-5678 or go online to their CyberTipline. They'll make sure the info is forwarded to law enforcement officials for investigation. Contact your local law enforcement agency or the FBI if your child has received child pornography via the Internet.

Watch for warning signs of a child being targeted by an online predator. These can include:

- Spending long hours online,

especially at night

- Phone calls from people you don't know
- Unsolicited gifts arriving in the mail
- Your child suddenly turning off the computer or other device when you walk into the room
- Withdrawal from family life and reluctance to discuss online activities

Talk to your kids! Keep an open line of communication and make sure that they feel comfortable turning to you when they have problems online.

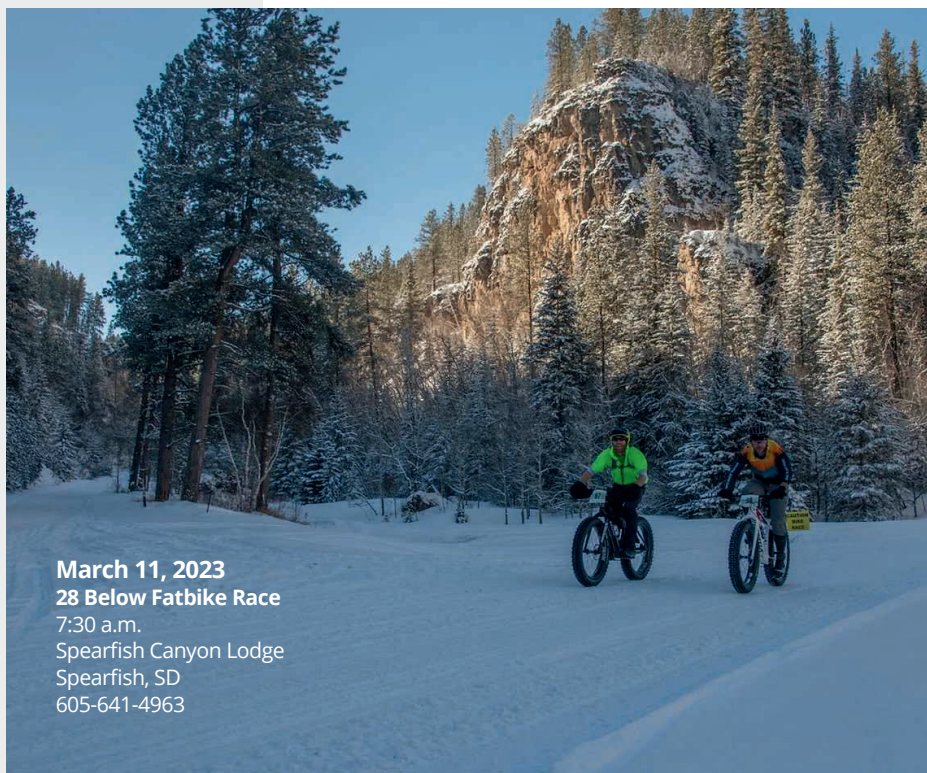
The Internet and Teens

As kids get older, it gets a little trickier to monitor their time spent online. They may carry a smartphone with them at all times. They probably want – and

need – some privacy. This is healthy and normal, as they're becoming more independent from their parents. The Internet can provide a safe "virtual" environment for exploring some newfound freedom if precautions are taken.

Talk about the sites and apps teens use and their online experiences. Discuss the dangers of interacting with strangers online and remind them that people online don't always tell the truth. Explain that passwords are there to protect against things like identity theft. They should never share them with anyone, even a boyfriend, girlfriend, or best friend.

Taking an active role in your kids' online activities helps ensure that they benefit from them without being exposed to the potential dangers.



March 11, 2023
28 Below Fatbike Race
 7:30 a.m.
 Spearfish Canyon Lodge
 Spearfish, SD
 605-641-4963

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.

FEB. 24-25
Women in Blue Jeans Conference
 Highland Conference Center
 Mitchell, SD
www.womeninbluejeans.org
 605-999-6298

FEB. 25
Helping with Horsepower karaoke fundraiser organized by 401 Create by LifeQuest
 3 p.m.-5 p.m.
 401 N. Main St.
 Mitchell, SD

MARCH 1-7
"In Flanders Fields" Art Exhibit & Silent Auction
 Vermillion Public Library
 Vermillion, SD

MARCH 11
28 Below Fatbike Race
 7:30 a.m.
 Spearfish Canyon Lodge
 Spearfish, SD

MARCH 18
Shamrock Shuffle Fun Run
 12 p.m.
 Main Street
 Presho, SD
 605-895-2559

MARCH 18
Shriners Kids Fun DAY
 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Scherr-Howe Event Center
 Mobridge, SD
 605-845-2500

MARCH 21
Knee High Naturalist: Birds
 Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center
 Custer, SD

MARCH 23
Helping with Horsepower County Fair Booth
 Collecting County Fair stamps to benefit programs.
 3 p.m.-6 p.m.
 1305 W Havens Ave
 Mitchell, SD

MARCH 24-25
Schmeckfest
 Freeman Academy Campus
 Freeman, SD
 605-321-7351

MARCH 30
"The Wildest Banquet Auction in the Midwest"
 5:30 p.m.
 South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance
 Sioux Falls, SD

MARCH 31-APRIL 2
70th Annual Hayes Play: Trouble in Tumbleweed
 Hayes Community Hall
 Hayes, SD

APRIL 1
East Dakota Chapter NWTF 30th Banquet
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-940-0702

APRIL 2-4
"The Psychic-a Murder Mystery of Sorts" Community Theater Performance
 Town Players Theater
 Watertown, SD
 605-882-2076

APRIL 21-22
Junkin' Market Days, Spring Market
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds
 Expo Building
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-941-4958

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