

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## South Dakota 4-H Shooting

Shooters Prepare for  
the State Competition  
Pages 8-9

Wild Horses Roam at  
Black Hills Sanctuary  
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Jackson Neprud, 4-H archer for Jones County, poses next to his target.



*Electrician Kevin Johnson trenches in an underground service near White Lake.*

# THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY



**Ken Schlimgen**  
General Manager

If you're like me, you probably have a daily routine. Every weekday, I hop in my car and head to the office. Sometimes, I get a late start and decide to grab a quick breakfast sandwich and a diet coke from the fast-food spot on the south side of Mitchell. It's convenient and gets me the breakfast I need when I'm running behind. I'll admit I do this more often than I should.

Now, why am I sharing this?

As your General Manager, there are many things on my mind each day. Is the cooperative delivering quality service to you? How do we keep attracting and retaining skilled employees? Can we trim costs without compromising reliability? What about ensuring we have enough electricity at a reasonable price in the future? These are just a few of the tough questions we tackle, and they all play a role in the decisions that impact electricity costs.

With the recent rate adjustment, some of you might be wondering about the value you're getting for your electric bill. To put things into perspective, I compared the daily cost of electricity to other monthly expenses. My quick breakfast runs me about \$7, and my daily commute costs around \$3. My cell phone bill averages about \$5 a day, internet and cable come to \$6.50, property taxes are \$16, and water/garbage service is \$6. My home and auto insurance is around \$20 a day—hopefully, I never need to use it!

The average cost of electricity for Central Electric residential/farm members is about \$7 per day, or \$212

per month. That means the average Central Electric residential/farm member can power their home and farm operations for the same price as a breakfast sandwich and a diet coke. Now, to me, that's real value.

Electricity provides benefits that we often take for granted. It powers our homes, keeps food fresh, heats water, charges our devices and maintains a comfortable and safe environment. It's easy to take these benefits for granted, but when you step back and think about it, electricity offers tremendous value. And when you compare it to many other services, it has remained relatively stable, even with the recent rate adjustment.

As a member-owned cooperative system, Central Electric, along with East River Electric and Basin Electric, does everything in its power to ensure your costs stay reasonable and that electricity remains of great value to you. It's not always easy, as there are several factors beyond inflation that impact the price of electricity. Some are within our control but most are not.

Weather, for example, can impact both the demand for electricity and the ability to generate it. Extreme conditions can lead to higher usage and power disruptions. Additionally, government policies and taxes on emissions play a significant role in shaping electricity costs. When we adjust rates, we take all these factors into account—and, as a cooperative, we're mindful of how these adjustments affect you, our member-owners.

Electricity is vital for everything from your home to schools, hospitals and businesses. Rest assured that your cooperative team and I are committed to working every day to ensure that electricity remains a valuable, cost-effective resource for you.

Until next month, stay safe!

**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.centralelec.coop](http://www.centralelec.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.

**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 Dec. 16, 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 reported on East River Electric Managers' Advisory Committee activities, Basin Electric activities, Rural Electric Economic Development fund, Cooperative Finance Corporation, Crow Creek Tribe renewable projects, large load inquiries, and other management activities.

Board President Wolbrink recessed the board meeting for the legislative luncheon held with local legislators and other industry participants.

Directors Reindl, Pazour, and Wolbrink reported on the Midwest Electric Consumers Conference.

Directors Pazour, Gustafson, Reindl, and VanWalleghen reported on SDREA board leadership training.

Director Hofer reported on the NRECA board meeting.

Director Wolbrink updated the Board on East River Electric Power Cooperative activities. Discussion followed.

The board reviewed monthly director expenses.

**Board Action**

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to adopt Policy 603 Load Management. The motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve 2024 electric bad debt write-offs for \$2,990.74. The motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve 2024 miscellaneous bade debt write-offs for \$2,675.16. The motion carried.

The next regular board meeting was scheduled for Jan. 20. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

FINANCIAL REPORT	YEAR TO DATE DEC. 2024	YEAR TO DATE DEC. 2023
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales	347,835,734 kWh	344,166,832 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$ 38,069,932	\$ 35,385,450
Total Cost of Service	\$ 36,458,761	\$ 34,584,068
Operating Margins	\$ 1,611,171	\$ 801,382

# Falls Are Preventable

March is Ladder Safety Month. Whether working from a ladder, roof or scaffolding, it's important to plan ahead, assess the risk and use the right equipment. First, determine if working from a height is absolutely necessary or if there is another way to do the task safely.

- Discuss the task with coworkers and determine what safety equipment is needed.
- Make sure you are properly trained on how to use the equipment.
- Scan the work area for potential hazards before starting the job.
- Make sure you have level ground to set up the equipment.
- If working outside, check the weather forecast; never work in inclement weather.
- Use the correct tool for the job, and use it as intended.
- Ensure stepladders have a locking device to hold the front and back open.
- Always keep two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand on the ladder.
- Place the ladder on a solid surface and never lean it against an unstable surface.
- A straight or extension ladder should be one foot away from the surface it rests on for every four feet of height and extend at least three feet over the top edge.
- Securely fasten straight and extension ladders to an upper support.
- Wear slip-resistant shoes and don't stand higher than the third rung from the top.
- Don't lean or reach while on a ladder, and have someone support the bottom.
- Never use old or damaged equipment; check thoroughly before use.



### Fall Hazards at Home

Are you a weekend warrior or do-it-yourselfer? If you take on home improvement or other weekend projects, it's important to prepare yourself for physical exertion, especially if you've been sedentary through the winter months, and take extra precautions to prevent falls.

Risky projects, like installing siding, gutters or roofs, are best left to professionals. Saving money isn't worth risking a debilitating or fatal fall.

At home or at work, many of the same rules apply. When taking on a project, remember the following.

- Practice all of the ladder safety tips mentioned to the left.
- Keep the work area clear of hazards and immediately clean up spills.
- Read all instructions and safety precautions on your equipment.
- Don't wear loose clothing that can get caught in equipment.

*Source: National Safety Council*



### "Don't cut trees near power lines."

#### Remington Welsh, Age 11

Remington warns readers to not cut trees around power lines. Thank you for your picture, Remington! Remington's parents are Ryan and Rachel Welsh, members of Black Hills Electric Cooperative.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.

# Hearty FAMILY MEALS

## EASY CREAMY HAMBURGER PASTA

### Ingredients:

1 lb. ground hamburger  
1 lb. cooked pasta  
5 oz. spinach  
1/4 cup butter  
2 cups heavy cream  
1 tbsp. minced garlic  
1 cup grated parmesan cheese

### Method

In a large pan, brown hamburger and minced garlic. Remove any excess grease. Turn heat to low and add the butter and heavy cream. Stir and simmer for a few minutes until the butter melts and it starts to boil. Stir in the spinach and cook for about three more minutes. Stir in the parmesan and cooked pasta. Enjoy!

**Lyndell Todd**  
Rapid City, S.D.

## MINI BBQ BACON CHEDDAR MEATLOAF

### Ingredients:

2 lbs. ground beef  
6 oz. chili sauce  
4 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled  
1 1/2 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese  
1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs  
2 large eggs  
1 tsp. onion powder  
1 tsp. seasoned salt  
1 tsp. garlic powder  
2 tbsps. Worcestershire sauce  
1 tsp. yellow mustard  
1/2 cup BBQ sauce

### Method

Preheat oven to 425°F. Cook and crumble bacon. In a mixing bowl, mix together all meatloaf ingredients except the BBQ sauce. Divide the mixture into eight round loaves. Press a small depression into the middle of the meatloaves. Brush BBQ sauce on top of the meatloaves. Bake for 25 minutes. Turn on broiler and brown the BBQ sauce for two to five minutes.

**Kayla Beaner**  
Centerville, S.D.

## SKILLET CHICKEN POT PIE

### Ingredients:

1/4 cup butter  
1 cup chopped onion  
1/4 cup flour  
2 cups chicken stock  
1 cup milk  
1/2 cup apple cider  
1/2 tsp. garlic powder  
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon  
1/2 tsp. whole thyme leaves  
1/4 tsp. black pepper  
2 cups cubed cooked chicken  
1 large sweet potato, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes (about 2 cups)  
1 cup frozen peas  
1 can (7.5 oz.) refrigerated biscuits, (10 biscuits)

### Method

Preheat oven to 450°F. Melt butter in large ovenproof nonstick skillet on medium-high heat. Add onion; cook and stir five minutes or until softened. Sprinkle with flour. Stir with whisk until mixture is well blended. Add stock, milk, apple cider, garlic powder, cinnamon, thyme and pepper; whisk until mixture is smooth.

Stir in chicken, sweet potatoes and peas. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook and stir 15 minutes or until sweet potatoes are tender.

Place biscuits on top of chicken mixture. Bake 10 minutes or until biscuits are golden brown.

**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 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

# Washington Changes Signal Positive Energy Impacts

**Scott Flood**

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

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The 2024 election centered on widespread frustration with America's economy and immigration. While energy policy didn't receive as much time in the campaigning spotlight, the second Trump presidency is likely to result in significant changes in how our nation approaches its ever-growing demand for electric power. For electric cooperatives, it appears those changes will be positive.

"America is at an energy crossroads, and the reliability of the electric grid hangs in the balance," National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) CEO Jim Matheson explained in a message expressing the association's desire to work closely with President Trump and Congress to protect energy affordability and reliability. "Critical generation resources are being retired faster than they can be reliably replaced. At the same time, electricity demand is skyrocketing as power-hungry data centers and new manufacturing facilities come online. Smart energy policies that keep the lights on are more important than ever."

Shortly after the election, the North American Electric Reliability Corp. (NERC) warned that many regions face an elevated risk of electricity shortfalls in the face of extreme weather such as prolonged cold snaps. NERC, the nation's grid watchdog, reiterated that older power plants are being retired at the same time Americans are using more electricity. While solar and wind farms have been sprouting up, they can't deliver the always-available electricity that coal- and gas-fired plants have long provided. Hurricanes Helene and Milton compounded the problem by damaging critical grid infrastructure.

The first Trump administration scaled back many of President Obama's initiatives to replace fossil fuels with "clean power," so observers expect President Trump's team to overturn many of the Biden administration's energy-related policies. NRECA has been urging officials to eliminate

regulatory burdens such as the EPA's power plant rule – which many believe exceeds the EPA's legal authority – and to encourage the Department of Energy and other agencies to take steps that will eliminate bureaucratic roadblocks and bolster the long-term reliability of the nation's grid.

Electric cooperatives' vision for America's energy future calls for a durable plan to ensure our consumer-members and the largely rural communities they call home will have reliable and affordable access to electricity in the face of the nation's skyrocketing demand.

South Dakota's electric cooperatives are comfortable taking a leadership role in this effort because we have worked hard with elected officials and their staffs to advocate for our members. Policymakers from both parties have consistently commended electric cooperatives as reputable energy providers and engines of economic development that play a vital role in transforming the local communities they proudly serve.

Solidifying a positive and resilient energy future for co-op communities involves a long list of issues and elements. For example, we're pressing Congress and the Trump administration to take concrete steps to overhaul outdated permitting laws that delay or frustrate efforts to build the new infrastructure tomorrow's energy needs demand. We need to address public lands and conservation regulations that make it challenging to operate powerlines, maintain rights of way, and reduce potential wildfire threats. Electric cooperatives are also working to support their consumer-members by maintaining federal programs and tax credits that bolster electric reliability and affordability.

While President Trump has earned a reputation for demanding swift action on his priorities, we need to remember that change doesn't happen quickly in Washington. For example, undoing the EPA power plant rule will require a robust regulatory process, that will take some time to ensure this repeal can withstand expected legal challenges. While the exact path we'll take is still coming into focus, our top priority is the interest of the local communities we serve and the everyday Americans who call them home.

We will continue to strengthen our voice by making sure our representatives at the federal and state level are aware of our concerns and the importance of ensuring reliable, affordable electricity for all Americans.

The strength of the electric cooperative movement and the clout we have when we work together are unsurpassed, positioning us for continued success as we work with the new administration.

# Crafting Memories

## Jaylie's Custom Pens Turns Parts Into Art

Frank Turner  
frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Jaylie Beckman, a member of Grand Electric near Bison, S.D., has a knack for taking something as ordinary as a pen and making it extraordinary.

Last year, Jaylie and her mother, Jenny, ordered a custom nursing-themed pen advertised on Facebook as a gift for her sister-in-law, a nurse at West River Health Services in Hettinger, N.D. When the surgery department manager saw the pen, she wanted 10 more for their entire team.

“At first, we said, ‘Wait, we bought them from somebody else.’ But then we thought, if they make can make them, we can too,” Jenny said. “It all exploded from there.”

Encouraged by the growing interest in her community, Jaylie embraced the challenge. Inspired, she began exploring TikTok and other social media for new ways of making pens and ordering supplies for her new endeavor: Jaylie’s Custom Pens. Combining beads with pens, Jaylie began transforming basic parts into something that is truly one of a kind.

In May 2024, Jaylie and Jenny opened their first vendor booth at the Bison Spring Vendor Fair, showcasing nursing, faith-based and graduation themed pens.

Since then, the two have traveled across northwest South Dakota and southwest North Dakota, displaying Jaylie’s beautifully



Jaylie Beckman selling pens at a vendor show in Timber Lake.  
*Submitted Photo*

crafted pens at trade shows in Faith, Hettinger, Buffalo and beyond. Their booth now hosts a wide variety of customized pens with themes ranging from monster trucks and rubber ducks to butterflies – and Jaylie’s personal favorite, a pen topped with a focal bead that proudly states, “Cat Mom.” In total, Jenny estimates that Jaylie has sold more than 500 pens from their last eight craft shows.

“I really love it,” Jaylie said.

Beyond the fun aesthetic, Jaylie’s pens have also provided both her and her family a way to process a profound loss within their family. In January 2024, Jenny lost her granddaughter, Jaylie’s niece, to a farm accident. In her memory, Jaylie and Jenny created purple pens with Minnie Mouse beads to help raise money in a silent auction for a commemorative park.

“Creating these pens gave Jaylie something to focus on and put her energy toward during that difficult time,” said Jenny. “I think it kept her mind off of it and I know it helped me.”

Jaylie continues to take custom requests for pens. She has also expanded her inventory to include bracelets, Crocs charms, stickers and keychains. Those interested can find her work on the Jaylie’s Custom Pens Facebook page, where she shares updates on her latest projects.



Jaylie Beckman’s favorite custom pens proudly state, “Cat Mom.”  
*Photo by Frank Turner*



West Central Electric CEO Jeff Birkeland, left, is the retired archery coach, and IT Coordinator Derek Wolf, right, is a first-year rifle coach for Jones County, South Dakota.

# SOUTH DAKOTA 4-H SHOOTING

## Shooters Prepare for the State Competition in April

Jocelyn Johnson  
jocelyn.johnson@sdrea.coop

Dedicated practice is the price each marksman pays to qualify and compete at the South Dakota 4-H Shooting Sports state event.



Sophie Wolf takes aim during a weekly practice.

This year, hundreds of shooters will compete on April 25-27 to showcase marksmanship. Their hard work will be on display as every shot will impact the final score. Among these competitors is a dedicated group from Jones County, South Dakota. For the past two decades, employees from West Central Electric Cooperative in Murdo, S.D., have dedicated their time to coaching various 4-H shooting disciplines.

“It’s the cooperative giving back to the community and promoting our youth,” said Jeff Birkeland, CEO of West Central Electric. “A few years ago, we took 41 kids to state, and we brought home 43 state trophies. I’m proud of our kids.”

Birkeland coached archery for 15 years and happily recounted the experience with his two boys during that time.

“Kids want to shoot. We have the best participation in shooting sports

than we have in anything else.”

Birkeland’s son, Jacob, competed for 10 years in shooting sports among other 4-H competitions.

“While I explored many aspects of 4-H, shooting sports became my primary focus,” Jacob said. “I began my journey in shooting sports with BB gun and was introduced to archery. Archery quickly became my main area of competition, and it has been an incredibly rewarding and impactful part of my 4-H experience.”

This experience offered him a competitive edge as well as bonding memories that Jacob vouches as life shaping.

“One of the greatest highlights of my time in 4-H has been the lasting friendships and memories I’ve built along the way,” Jacob said. “Whether it was constructing a trophy shelf with my grandpa, having archery competitions against my dad to see who had to do the chores or representing South Dakota at the national shooting sports event – each experience has contributed to my personal and professional growth. I would not be where I am today without it.”





Matthew Birkeland, left, stands with Hayzen Sealey, right, at the spring state competition.

Derek Wolf, IT coordinator for West Central Electric and first-year coach for Jones County 4-H, said, “We begin practicing once a week in January. We work on safety first – getting the kids comfortable with their firearms. Then, we step into practicing for competition.”

Each county competes in three matches leading up the state competition, and every participant must make a qualifying score in at least one match to qualify for state.

“We encourage every kid to enter and compete in all three matches,” Birkeland said. “It’s better to practice at it instead of getting to state and having the wheels fall off.”

The art of practicing perfectly is what brings these competitors to state. Birkeland noted that those who practice, will win. And those who overcome a disappointment may come home with the trophy.

“It teaches those kids a lot about life,” Birkeland said. “You practice and practice, you put the time in and then one thing happens – one flinch,

one mistake and it’s over. Emotionally, hopefully it strengthens them a bit. Instead of breaking down and crying, you better be able to handle it...Limit your problems. Don’t increase them with a mental meltdown.”

Wolf agreed with this sentiment and described how overcoming a bad shot and being mentally tough is sometimes more important than being a skilled shooter.

“There are a lot of kids who find success in this, so I find it rewarding to be involved as a coach,” he said.

Wolf’s daughter, Sophie, competes in .22 rifle and archery and remarked that the highlight of the competition was that it challenged her and made her a stronger competitor. She trains twice per week for several hours while preparing for the state competition.

“I feel excitement when I compete,” Sophie said. “I love the challenge.”

In 2024, more than 1,600 participants competed in various disciplines at the spring state shooting event. These disciplines

are pistol, archery, rifle, hunting and western heritage. An additional 270 participants competed in the fall state shooting event for shotgun and muzzleloading. Each year, the top five shooters win trophies and this year’s winners may be chosen to represent at the 4-H Shooting Sports National Championships in Grand Island, Neb., on June 22-27. Last year, South Dakota tied for 2nd place with Missouri at the national event.

John Keimig, South Dakota State University Extension Youth Safety Field Specialist, emphasized that the shooting program is made great by the people who volunteer.

“One of the great things about small communities in South Dakota is people who give their time to volunteer,” said Keimig. “If it wasn’t for people who volunteer, we wouldn’t have this successful program – whether it be volunteers who work full-time for an electric cooperative or farmers and ranchers. They are the backbone of this program.”



Archers stand on the line at South Dakota’s spring state competition.

# Unclaimed Capital Credits

Members accrue capital credits each year they have electric service with the cooperative. The former members listed below had unclaimed capital credit checks from Central Electric Cooperative as of Feb. 7, 2025. If you know somebody on this list, please have them call the office at 800-477-2892 or 605-996-7516 during business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Thank you!

### A

Anderson, Katharina  
Arias, Maria  
Armstrong, Douglas F  
Ashley, Loren L

### B

Baker, Dan  
Baker, Milton  
Bagola, Michael  
Bartunek, Robert  
Beigh, Gary  
Belford Township Hall  
Bender, Maynard  
Berg, Larry  
Big Eagle, Bryan or Levi  
Big Eagle, Laura  
Big Eagle, Marcella  
Big Eagle, Tamara  
Bowker, Rocky  
Brandenburg, Gaylord  
Budnik, Michael  
Bustamante, Omar

### C

Cashman, Mike  
Chirillo, Keith D  
Cole, Sarah  
Collins, Jon  
Crane, Tom  
Creamer, Gene

### D

Dakota Wing Shooting Paradise  
Delfs, Marion or Eunice  
Dewaard, Timothy J  
Dugdale, Richard

### E

Ellwanger, Joshua S  
Erickson, Darin  
Erickson, Martha or Elaine

### F

Fallis, Albert  
Felicia, Angie  
Fleury, Ronald  
Fouberg, Stanley  
Franek, Maxine  
Freeman, Lynne E or Crystal  
Freidel, Ann

### G

Gebel, Jennifer  
Graham, Cheryl  
Goss, William  
Graves, WM

### H

Hall, Lavon  
Hall, Roger W  
Halley, Leeroy  
Hanks, Eileen  
Hammer, Ken L  
Haskell, Jonathan  
Hawk, Sherwood  
Hazuka, Roger  
Hegg Realtors-Rick Sawwell  
Hoenes, Mary  
Holiday Inn-Sign

### I

Iowa Beef Packers

### J

Jacobson, Lillian  
Jensen-Schmitz Farm  
Jerome, Giovanna  
Jetty, Alfred  
Johnson, Joseph E  
Jones, Ronald W

### K

Keefer, Kerry  
Keleher, Redel  
King, Nellie  
Kirkie, Kendra or Hansen, Bob  
Knight, John J

### L

Larter, Albina L  
Lassiter, Teresa  
Lichtenecker, Clyde  
Lindsley, Helen  
Loon, Emma or Rolland  
Lutz, Marilyn S  
Lutz, Robert

### M

Mann, Ryan  
Marks, Randy  
Markus, Cheryl  
Martinez, Teresa  
Matthews, Joden  
McKee, Elvis  
Medicine Crow, Mitzi  
Meisenhoelder, Josh  
Mentele, Donald  
Merkle, Don  
Meyer, Charles M  
Miller, Lisa  
Mines, Mike  
Morgan, Sherry  
Muchow, Monte  
Murtha, John W

### N

Nelson, Steven W  
Nopens, Dolores

### O

Oberembt, WM C Jr  
Olson, Arvid  
Olson, Michael S

### P

Pagel, Anna M  
Pease, Mary E  
Pitz, Becky  
Powell, Jerry

### R

Rabbit, Colleen  
Reardon, Everette  
Rentschler, Henry  
Rose, Holly  
Roth, Lonnie R  
Ruden, Brian  
Rumbolz, Lyle

### S

Schilling, Lynnette  
Schnabel, Randy  
Scott, Leroy & Gene  
Simon, Francis  
Smith, Frank or Willrodt, WM  
Spider, Rhonda C  
Sprinkel, Stacy  
Stahnke, Bryce  
Stange, Dean  
Stern, Dale  
Stokes, Chris  
Streff, Gregory  
Stuntebeck, Ed or Sherri

### T

Tegethoff, Harold or Virginia  
Thomson, Leslie  
Thompson, WM D  
Traversie, Lori

### V

Vandrongelen, Clareon  
Voice, Cheryl

### W

Wager, Duane  
Wallum, Tom  
Weber, Julie  
White Mouse, Lavern  
Willrodt, William  
Winker, Nancy  
Wounded Knee, Leroy

# Member Rebates & Incentives

As a member of Central Electric Cooperative, you may be eligible for rebates or incentives. Certain conditions must be met to qualify. Please call 1-800-477-2892 for details regarding cooperative rebates and incentives. Thanks for being a valued member-owner!

## Electric Heating Equipment Rebate

Members may be eligible to receive a \$600 rebate for installing an electric heat pump system. Conditions apply, and the structure must receive electric service from the cooperative.

## Irrigation/Grain Bin Dryer Management Systems

Members may be eligible to receive a \$750 rebate for a third-party remotely managed irrigation or grain drying system. Conditions apply, and the equipment must meet specific requirements.

## 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.

## Member Loan Program

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



# TELL US WHO POWERS YOU!

We know our co-op community is filled with people making a difference. Let's celebrate them! Nominate a hero in your community who goes above and beyond. **They could win up to \$3,000!**



Nominate your local hero at  
[WHOPOWERSYOUCONTEST.COM](http://WHOPOWERSYOUCONTEST.COM)



# RUNNING FREE

Photos by Alvis Uptis

## Wild Horses Roam at Black Hills Sanctuary

**Jacob Boyko**

[jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop](mailto:jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop)

In the southern Black Hills, a watchful eye will catch a rare and breathtaking sight: a herd of wild mustangs galloping freely across thousands of acres of grassland in the Cheyenne River Valley.

For the Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary staff and the hundreds of rescued horses they care for, it's just another day on the ranch.

The sanctuary operates like most working ranches, says Susan Watt, the president and CEO of the Institute of Range and the American Mustang. Staff regularly travel over 15 miles across the 10,000 acre ranch to fill water troughs and set out hay, mineral blocks and horse cake. It's a trek that takes them across picturesque grasslands, hills, bluffs and the muddy banks of the Cheyenne River. A bulwark against suburban sprawl, the land remains as nature intended.

"Wild horses have been part of North America since time immemorial," Watt explained. "We have a large population of American mustangs, Spanish mustangs, horses with blood lines that trace back to Spain and Portugal, and a small herd of Choctaw Indian ponies that were part of the Trail of Tears

– They are a very important part of American history we need to preserve."

The story of the sanctuary begins in the late 1930s with a young man named Dayton Hyde. At 13 years old, Hyde left his home in Michigan for his uncle's cattle ranch in Oregon after hearing captivating tales of the wild west's excitement and beauty.

Once he arrived, Hyde was completely enthralled by the western lifestyle. With each passing year, his connection to the land and the wildlife strengthened, shaping his identity as a cowboy, conservationist and writer.

Decades later in 1987, while on a trip to Nevada to purchase cattle, Hyde came across corrals of wild horses the federal government had rounded up using low-flying helicopters. Devastated by the idea of the free-roaming herds confined to pens, Hyde was inspired to create a refuge for wild horses where they could run free.

Hyde petitioned congress to allow him to take some of the captured horses and create a sanctuary. South Dakota Governor George Mickelson, who had learned of Hyde's ambitions and was supportive, invited Hyde to inspect a piece of land known as Chilson Canyon near Hot Springs, S.D.

For nearly 40 years now, that piece of land plus Hyde's hard work has given hundreds of wild horses another chance to roam wild. However, it's a luxury very few wild horses receive.

Since 2020, the Bureau of Land Management has reported

# WILD HORSE SANCTUARY

rounding up over 40,000 wild horses to control herd populations, which can grow rapidly in the wild. Their fates vary; At government holding pens, they await auction where if sold they'll be rehomed with owners who agree not to sell them for slaughter outside of the U.S.

According to Watt and other wild horse advocacy groups, those assurances don't always matter.

"The horses are supposed to be protected from slaughter," she continued, "But unfortunately, you put them in a trailer and cross the border into Canada or Mexico and they don't always check to see what's in the trailer."

The horses that come to the sanctuary are generally in "emergency situations," Watt said, which means the horses are being sent to slaughter or their previous caretaker died or is unable to take care of the horses.

In addition to preserving the herds of wild horses, Hyde envisioned the sanctuary as a means to protect and preserve the land's natural beauty and rich historical legacy, which includes long-ago remnants of human activity.

"This particular tract of land was the location for ancient petroglyph writings that ancient man did on cliff walls," Watt explained. "And we're protecting the pioneer history of this land; Our buildings that we use are pioneer homesteads."

Though Dayton Hyde passed away in 2018, his legacy lives on. Today the sanctuary is home to several hundred wild horses, a herd of cattle, thousands of acres of pristine prairie

and the inextinguishable spirit of the wild west.

"He used to say every ache and pain he ever had was from a horse," Watt laughed. "What Dayton Hyde really wanted was to protect this land from subdivision, to let it be for wildlife and wild horses, and keep it safe and protected. I think South Dakota should be immensely proud of what Dayton Hyde has done."

For more information about the Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary, visit [www.wildmustangs.com](http://www.wildmustangs.com).



(Above) Dayton Hyde, founder of the sanctuary.  
(Below) The sanctuary encompasses more than 10,000 acres of land along the Cheyenne River near Hot Springs, S.D.  
*Photos by Alvis Uptis*



## BUS TOUR



## **BASIN ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

All aboard! We are Bismarck bound to tell our members the story behind the switch.

Central Electric Cooperative's traditional Basin Electric Bus Tour will hit the road again July 16-18, 2025.

Attendees are sure to have fun and make lifelong friends while learning about the cooperative and our electric power supply.

Members who have not attended past tours are given first chance to participate. Previous participants interested in attending will be placed on a standby list and contacted if openings are available.

For more information, call 1-800-477-2892 or visit [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop) and click on Member Programs. Registration details are on page 15.

Let's make it a trip to remember!



**CENTRAL**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# Register to Attend Central Electric Cooperative's Basin Electric Bus Tour

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July 16-18, 2025

Complete this form to be considered for the 2025 Basin Electric Bus Tour. Participants must be 18 or older to attend. Seating is limited, so sign up early. Members who have not participated in past tours will be given first opportunity to attend. Past participants will be placed on a standby list and contacted if openings are available. The passenger list will be finalized in June. Members will be contacted at that time to confirm attendance and provide the required documentation.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever participated in the Bus Tour?

No  Yes (Year: \_\_\_\_\_ )

Do you require special accommodations?

No  Yes (Details: \_\_\_\_\_ )

Emergency Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail this form with a check for \$25 per person made out to Central Electric Cooperative to be considered for the bus tour.

**Central Electric Cooperative**  
**Basin Electric Bus Tour**  
**PO Box 850**  
**Mitchell, SD 57301**



**MARCH 14-15**  
**St. Patrick's Day**  
**Weekened**  
 Fri. 5 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.  
 Deadwood, SD  
 605-578-1876

*Photo courtesy of  
 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.

**FEB. 15-MARCH 15**  
**Chamberlain-Oacoma**  
**Burger Battle**  
[www.chamberlainSD.com/events](http://www.chamberlainSD.com/events)

**FEB. 21-22**  
**Women in Blue Jeans**  
**Conference**  
 Highland Conference Center  
 Mitchell, SD  
[www.womeninbluejeans.org](http://www.womeninbluejeans.org)

**FEB. 22**  
**Plankinton Fire &**  
**Ambulance Fundraiser**  
 5-7 p.m.  
 Ag Building  
 Plankinton, SD

**FEB. 28-MARCH 1**  
**Mardi Gras Weekend**  
 8 p.m. Fri.-10 p.m. Sat.  
 Main Street  
 Deadwood, SD  
 605-578-1876

**MARCH 6**  
**SD Jazz Festival Concert**  
 Aberdeen Community Concert  
 Association  
 7:30 p.m.  
 NSU Johnson Fine Arts Center  
 Aberdeen, SD  
 Tickets Available at Concert

**MARCH 8-9**  
**Philip Area Annual Gun Show**  
 Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
 Sun. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.  
 American Legion Hall  
 Philip, SD

**MARCH 8**  
**Epiphany Sausage Sale**  
 10 a.m. until gone  
 Parish Hall  
 Epiphany, SD

**MARCH 8**  
**Minnehaha County**  
**Pheasants Forever Banquet**  
 5 p.m.  
 El Riad Shrine  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-376-8219

**MARCH 14-15**  
**Badlands Quilter Weekend**  
**Getaway**  
 Fri. 5 p.m., Sat. 8 a.m.  
 Community Center  
 Wall, SD  
 605-685-5718

**MARCH 15**  
**VFW Teener Baseball Bingo**  
**Benefit**  
 5 p.m.  
 Tyndall Auditorium  
 Tyndall, SD

**MARCH 22**  
**Annual Banquet & Bash**  
 Britton Area Chamber of  
 Commerce  
 5:30 p.m.  
 Britton, SD  
 605-448-8130

**MARCH 26**  
**Hill City Garden Club**  
**Trip to Central Asia**  
 1 p.m.  
 Kathryn Cleveland  
 Hill City Super 8  
 Hill City, SD

**MARCH 29**  
**Ready. Set. Grow!**  
 9 a.m.-12 p.m.  
 Couteau Prairie Master Gardeners  
 Codington CTY Extension Complex  
 Watertown, SD  
 605-838-7098

**APRIL 4**  
**Mitchell Technical College**  
**2025 Alumni Gathering**  
**Cornhole Tournament**  
 5 p.m. Social  
 6:30 p.m. Tournament  
 The World's Only Corn Palace  
 Mitchell, SD  
 605-995-7342

**APRIL 4-5**  
**Annual Schmeckfest**  
 German Heritage Celebration  
 748 S Main St.  
 Freeman, SD  
 605-925-4237

**APRIL 4-6, 11-13**  
**Women Playing Hamlet**  
 April 4-5, 11-12: 7:30 p.m.  
 April 6, 13: 2:30 p.m.  
 Mighty Corson Art Players  
 Corson, SD  
[www.mightycorson.com](http://www.mightycorson.com)

**APRIL 5-6**  
**Youth & Family Kids Fair**  
 Sat. 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.  
 Sun. 12-4p.m.  
 The Monument  
 Rapid City, SD  
 605-342-4195

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