

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

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Gettings the Lights Back On

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Black Hills Electric Cooperative linemen navigate steep terrain to get the power back on following an intense wind storm in December.
Photo submitted by Black Hills Electric Cooperative

Supporting New Energy While Protecting the Grid

Photo Credit: iStock.com/PhotoTalk



Ken Schlimgen
General Manager

A Difficult Loss

January of 2026 hit our cooperative hard and will not be forgotten. Not because of severe cold or power outages, but because we lost a friend, husband, leader and coworker in an auto accident.

Chandler Bakley, or “Chuck” to those who knew him, was a very special individual. He truly cared about his work, his family, his friends, his coworkers and our members.

Chuck worked for Central Electric since 2021. He started as temporary summer help and was eventually hired as a full-time apprentice lineman on the Mitchell crew.

Chuck married the love of his life, Angie, in October 2024, and was working towards journeyman lineman status. Despite his abbreviated time with our cooperative, he left a real legacy. Please keep Chuck’s family, friends and your cooperative employees in your thoughts and prayers as we mourn his loss. You can read more about Chuck on page 7.

Requirements for Wind, Solar, Batteries, EVs

Every year, we visit with members who express interest in generating their own electricity using what our industry calls distributed energy resources (DERs). The most common DER in our area is small wind generators, followed by solar panels. Battery storage systems and electric vehicles are another emerging resource with capabilities to supply power back to a home or the grid.

These technologies can provide benefits to members and, when connected properly, can also support the broader electric system. As your electric cooperative, we support members using DERs while remaining focused on delivering safe, reliable power.

While each of these technologies operates differently, they all share one important characteristic: they can affect how electricity flows through the system. The electric grid was originally designed to deliver power in one direction—from the substations to homes, farms, and businesses. When power can also flow back onto the system, careful planning and coordination are required.

Safety is our top priority. Our employees must be confident that lines are de-energized before performing repairs. Improperly installed or unapproved DER equipment can energize lines unexpectedly, creating serious hazards for crews and the public. This is why interconnection requirements, inspections and approvals are essential protections—not obstacles.

Reliability is equally important. Voltage fluctuations, frequency changes or equipment operating outside of required standards can impact service quality for neighbors and place additional stress on cooperative infrastructure. When DERs are installed correctly and operate as designed, they can be a benefit. When they are not, they can create challenges that affect a large area.

Your cooperative is committed to working with members who want to add a DER. Our interconnection process helps ensure that equipment meets safety standards, system impacts are understood, and everyone remains protected. These steps allow us to maintain a reliable grid today while preparing for the energy systems of tomorrow. Information on the cooperative’s interconnection process can be found on our website www.centralec.coop.

If you are considering solar, battery storage, a generator, or other energy technologies, I encourage you to contact Pat Soukup, Manager of Member Services and Marketing. Pat has provided more detailed information on page 11, and he can help you make an informed decision on DERs.

Tell Us ‘Who Powers You’

Nominations are being accepted for the annual “Who Powers You” contest hosted by Central Electric and the region’s other Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives. The contest highlights local people and organizations who are making a difference in their communities.

Member-owners, employees, organizations and residents who live, work or support communities within the service territory of the region’s Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are eligible to be nominated. Nominations will be accepted through April 19, 2026. Visit www.WhoPowersYouContest.com for more information.

Until next month, stay safe!

TELL US WHO POWERS YOU!

Let’s celebrate a member or employee you know who goes above and beyond to help others.

They could win up to \$3,000!

Nominate your local hero at
WHOWPOWERSYOUCONTEST.COM



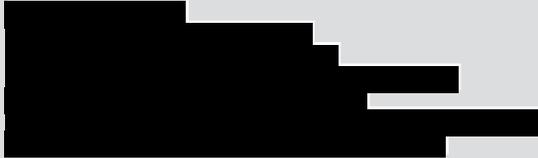
Touchstone Energy®
Cooperatives

**CENTRAL ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE
CONNECTIONS**

(USPS 018-963)

Board of Directors

Aurora County - Duane Wolbrink
 Brule County - Bradee Pazour
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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.

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Contact Us

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

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, 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 State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). 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, Mail Stop 9410, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Board Meeting Summary

The board of directors met on Dec. 15, 2025, 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 the East River Electric Managers' Advisory Committee, Rural Electric Economic Development Fund activities, Basin Electric activities, construction of the new Howard Service Center and other management activities.

The minutes of the November safety meeting were reviewed.

SDREA General Manager Steve Barnett joined the meeting and provided a brief legislative preview.

The annual legislative luncheon was held with area lawmakers.

South Dakota Association of Cooperatives (SDAC) Executive Director Brenda Forman joined the meeting and reported on legislative topics of interest for cooperatives.

The board of directors reviewed a draft service territory consent agreement between NorthWestern Energy and Central Electric. General Manager Schlimgen will work with NorthWestern Energy to finalize the agreement and file it with the Public Utilities Commission.

The board of directors conducted a periodic review of policies.

Directors Bechen, Pazour, and Loudner reported on the Midwest Electric Consumers annual meeting.

Directors Bechen, Gustafson, Pazour, and Wolbrink reported on Board Leadership Training.

Director Loudner and General Manager Schlimgen reported on a recent meeting with the Oceti Sakowin Power Authority (OSPA).

Director Gustafson reported on the SDREA board meeting.

Director Wolbrink reported on the East River Electric board meeting.

Board Action

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to approve a resolution declaring vehicle #99-87 2008 Chevrolet Van as surplus property. The motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve 2025 electric bad debt write-offs for \$12,412.81. The motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve 2025 miscellaneous bade debt write-offs for \$668.35. The motion carried.

There being no further business, President Wolbrink adjourned the meeting. The next board meeting was scheduled for Jan. 19, 2026.

FINANCIAL REPORT	YEAR TO DATE DEC. 2025	YEAR TO DATE DEC. 2024
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales	346,786,437 kWh	347,854,065 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$ 40,040,544	\$ 38,069,932
Total Cost of Service	\$ 38,733,501	\$ 36,458,761
Operating Margins	\$ 1,307,043	\$ 1,611,171

Ensuring Drone Safety Near Power Lines

As drones continue to gain popularity for recreational and commercial use, their integration into our daily lives should not lessen the consideration of safety – particularly when it comes to flying near power lines. The intersection of drone technology and electrical infrastructure necessitates adherence to safety protocols, regulations, and best practices to protect both pilots and the integrity of electrical systems.

Power lines are essential components of our electrical grid, delivering energy to homes and businesses. However, they can pose serious hazards for drone operators. Collisions with power lines can cause significant equipment damage, leading to costly repairs or replacements. More critically, such incidents can disrupt service for hundreds of members, creating outages that could last for hours or even days.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has established regulations governing drone use, including restrictions on flying in proximity to power lines. According to FAA guidelines, drone pilots must always maintain a visual line of sight with their aircraft and avoid flying over people. When operating near electrical infrastructure, it is crucial to adhere to the regulations pertaining to altitude and no-fly zones.

Drone operators should also be familiar with state and local laws, as some municipalities have designated specific areas as no-fly zones, particularly near critical infrastructure like power facilities. Understanding these regulations is not only a legal requirement but also an essential step in ensuring the safety of all involved.

Best Practices for Safe Operations

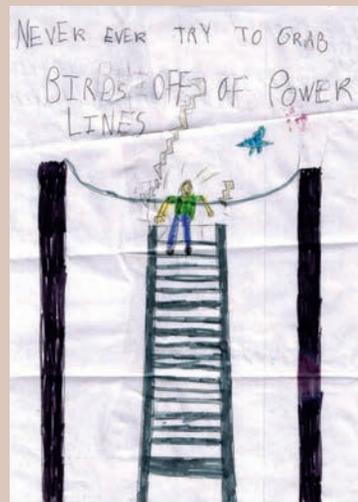
To minimize risks when flying drones near power lines, operators should adopt several best practices:

1. **Pre-Flight Planning:** Before taking off, thoroughly assess the flight area. Identify the location of power lines, potential obstacles, and any relevant no-fly zones. Consulting local maps and aerial photography can aid in understanding the landscape.
2. **Maintain Safe Distances:** When operating near power lines, always keep a safe distance. The FAA recommends a separation of at least 500 feet from energized power lines to avoid potential collisions. Keeping a safe buffer not only protects the drone but also mitigates risks to nearby electrical infrastructure.

3. **Use Technology Wisely:** Many modern drones come equipped with GPS and obstacle avoidance systems that can aid in safe navigation. Utilize these features and ensure that your drone's software is updated to reduce the likelihood of malfunction.
4. **Operating in Controlled Conditions:** Avoid flying drones in poor weather conditions such as high winds, rain, or reduced visibility. Harsh weather not only affects flight stability but can also lead to loss of control over the drone, increasing the risk of accidents.
5. **Emergency Procedures:** In case of a malfunction or loss of control, having an emergency plan in place is vital. Be prepared to communicate with local authorities if a drone becomes entangled in power lines or presents a safety concern.

As the popularity of drones continues to soar, awareness around safety protocols, especially near power lines, has become increasingly critical. By understanding the risks involved, adhering to regulations, and implementing best practices for safe drone operations, pilots can ensure the protection of themselves, others, and vital electrical infrastructure. Responsible drone use fosters innovation while ensuring safety remains paramount in our evolving technological landscape.

"Never ever try to grab birds off of power lines!"



**Naomi Krcil,
Age 8**

Naomi warns readers to never EVER grab birds off of a power line. Great picture, Naomi! Naomi's parents are Andrew and Andrea Krcil from Dante, S.D.

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.

Scrumptious SALADS

MACARONI SALAD

Ingredients:

2 cups macaroni (cooked, drained, rinsed and cooled)
2 or more cups of carrots (chopped or shredded)
1 small chopped onion (optional)
1 cup chopped green pepper (optional)

Dressing

1 cup mayonnaise (Hellmans)
1/4 cup vinegar
1/2 cup sugar
7 oz. sweetened condensed milk
1/4 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper

R. Gregg Fritz
H-D Electric

KARI REDER'S POTATO SALAD

Ingredients:

7-8 lbs. potatoes, Yukon gold or red
1 dozen eggs
1 med. sweet onion
2 cups Mayo
1 tbsp. cream
1/4 cup of apple cider vinegar
1/2 cup of sugar or splenda
1 1/2 tbsps. mustard
2 tbsps. celery seed
Celery salt, salt and pepper to taste

Method

Boil potatoes and eggs, peel and dice. Add the chopped onion. Mix together mayo, cream, apple cider vinegar, sugar, mustard, celery seed, celery salt, salt and pepper. Mix all together well and refrigerate.

Kari Reder
Northern Electric

SUMMER GARDEN PASTA SALAD

Ingredients:

1 lb. thin spaghetti, broken into 1" pieces
1 pt. cherry tomatoes, halved
2 med. zucchini, peeled & diced
2 med. cucumbers, diced
1 green pepper, diced
1 red pepper, diced
1 - 16 oz. can sliced black olives, drained

Dressing:

1 - 16 oz. bottle Italian dressing
1/4 cup parmesan cheese
1 tbsp. sesame seeds
1 tsp. paprika
1/2 tsp. celery seed
1/2 tsp. garlic salt

Method

Cook pasta; drain. Drizzle with 1-2 tsps. olive oil. In large bowl, combine pasta, tomatoes, zucchini, cucumber, peppers and olives.

Whisk dressing ingredients together. Pour over salad ingredients and toss to coat.

Cover and refrigerate for three hours.

Jane Ham
Cam Wal Electric

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.

POWERING FORWARD

The Next Generation of Load Management is Here



Ryan Mueller
IT Systems Manager

At Central Electric, our mission is to provide reliable power and services, while also helping our members save energy and save money. To ensure these savings continue well into the future, we have officially begun the transition to the next generation of load management technology.

Why We Are Upgrading

The load management program has saved our members more than \$200 million since the mid-1980s. We take great pride in keeping that money in your pockets. This success is only possible through the strong partnership between the cooperative and our members. However, the technology we have relied on for decades is reaching its end-of-life.

To ensure we can continue offering these savings and rebates, we are replacing the old devices that relied on sending signals through power lines. This technology is outdated and no longer supported by our vendors. We are upgrading to modern units that utilize wireless technology. Unlike the older models, these new devices allow us to verify that equipment is working properly, helping us proactively identify and resolve issues.

Project Update: Where We Stand

We have set an ambitious goal to replace 4,000 load management receivers throughout our territory by 2029. We are pleased to report that the project is off to a strong start, with over 1,000 new devices already installed.

- **Completed:** Installations for the Howard, Fedora and Plano substations were finished last year.
- **Coming Up:** Crews will focus on the Wessington Springs, Sand Creek, Letcher, Emery and Farmer substations in 2026. That includes all or parts of Sanborn, Davison, Hanson, Jerauld and Miner Counties.

What to Expect

If you are served by one of the substations scheduled for this year, keep an eye on your mailbox. We will be sending out letters and postcards to members who need their receivers replaced.

The installation process is quick and simple:

- **No Cost:** There is no charge to you for the installation or the new device.
- **Fast Service:** Typical installations take less than an hour to complete.
- **No Interruption:** In most cases, the changeout can be done without a power outage or service interruption.

Action Required

When you receive your postcard, please take action immediately. You can sign up online or call the office to schedule an appointment time that works for you. Thanks for helping us keep our cooperative efficient!



Electrician Ryan Bigge installs a new load management receiver at a member's home. All receivers will be upgraded by 2029.

The Legacy of a Lineman

Mitchell area lineman Chandler Bakley, known to many as Chuck, passed away in an automobile accident on Jan. 16 at the age of 27. This loss impacts the co-op family deeply, affecting both Central Electric and Lacreek Electric in Martin, where his mom, Sherry, and brother, Jordon, both work.

Chandler was born May 5, 1998, to Mike and Sherry Bakley in Pine Ridge. He spent his young years growing up in the family home in Martin where he attended the Bennett County Grade School, Junior High and High School.

While growing up he participated in football, wrestling, baseball, 4-H shooting sports, hunting, fishing and being annoyingly good at anything and everything he tried. During the summers, he spent most of his time working alongside Grandpa Bennett on the family farm, as well as playing cowboy for family and friends.

After high school, Chandler attended Dakota Wesleyan University, graduating with a bachelor's degree in Ag Business and working for Lacreek Electric as summer help.



"AS A COOPERATIVE, OUR MISSION IS TO SERVE OUR MEMBERS AND OUR COMMUNITIES. CHANDLER LIVED THAT MISSION, AND HIS PASSING IS A TREMENDOUS LOSS TO ALL WHO KNEW HIM. HIS LEGACY OF HARD WORK AND GENUINE CARE FOR OTHERS WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN."

**KEN SCHLIMGEN, GENERAL MANAGER
CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

However, one degree wasn't enough for Chandler, as he continued his education at Mitchell Technical College and graduated from the Power Line Construction and Maintenance program. Soon after graduation, Chandler secured a job as an apprentice lineman at Central Electric.

On Oct. 19, 2024, Chandler married Angie McDonnell. The two lived together in Mitchell while Chandler continued working as an apprentice lineman for Central Electric.

Chandler played amateur baseball for the Winner-Colome Pheasants during the summers and was known to regularly attend the "Old Man's" group on Wednesday nights. You could find him out on the local golf course on any given day, or up bright and early hunting in a rural field. Occasionally, he might be spending a

night playing blackjack in Deadwood. If he wasn't out and about, he was probably at home playing Gordon Ramsey in his own kitchen. Chuck had an "all-in" attitude towards anything he was a part of, from a friendly game of cards or cornhole to dominating on the baseball diamond. He made sure the time he spent with family and friends was only of the highest quality, ensuring to give them all the attention and care they needed.

Surviving Chandler is his wife, Angie; parents Mike and Sherry; brother Jordon, wife Noelle, and their children Teagan, Reid, and Maisyn; brother Tyler and wife Anna; sister Erica; and grandmothers Jean Bakley and Toni Milk. He was preceded in death by grandfathers Bennett Bakley and Joe Milk, and great uncle Ron Haag.



Intense wind left the crossarm of a broken three-phase pole hanging after a holiday storm.
Photos submitted by Black Hills Electric Cooperative

GETTING THE LIGHTS BACK ON

Black Hills Electric Cooperative Works Tirelessly Following Holiday Storm

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

In the early morning hours of Dec. 18, powerful winds swept across western South Dakota, leaving much of the Black Hills without electricity. The outage included the home of Bill Brisk, manager of operations at Black Hills Electric Cooperative.

Through wild winds, Brisk set out for his office at the cooperative at 3 a.m., where he discovered that the windstorm was unlike anything he had seen in his 36 years with the cooperative.

“We get wind in the Hills,” Brisk said. “But nothing like that. In all of the time that I’ve been at the cooperative, I’ve never seen wind that strong.”

Wind gusts were later estimated at more than 100 mph, tearing through the Black

Hills with unprecedented force.

When Brisk arrived, the scope of the damage became clear. Nearly the entire system was down, and more than 11,000 of the co-op’s approximately 11,500 meters were without power. By daybreak, more than 96% of Black Hills Electric Cooperative’s system was dark, the largest outage event in the cooperative’s history.

Although an influx of outage calls from members came in around midnight, Brisk made an early and critical decision; crews would not be sent out while the storm was still raging.

“We began receiving calls around midnight, but I did not have our crews go out, just for the fact that it was just too dangerous,” Brisk said. “Trees were breaking off, conditions were hazardous, and I didn’t want to put our crews in any

dangerous situations.”

Instead, crews waited for daylight, when conditions allowed for safe assessment – the first step of getting the lights back on.

Assessment almost always begins with reporting from the community. Due to an overwhelming call volume during storm events, local reports of outages are forwarded to Basin Electric Power Cooperative’s Security and Response Services. These services relay important updates to electric cooperatives. Dispatchers communicate with linemen via push-to-talk radios and cell phones, tracking linemen from the time they leave the shop until the outage has been restored.

In addition to local reports, linemen also conduct their own assessments. That morning, linemen reported countless uprooted and snapped trees, downed poles and even wires lay broken across forest floors and roadways. In some areas, trees fell into other trees, creating dangerous conditions for anyone working below.

“I believe this was one of the worst storms in our cooperative’s history, including winter storm Atlas,” said Brisk.

As the assessment was underway, line

crews worked to bring downed substations back online first, then main three-phase feeders, followed by smaller distribution lines that bring power directly to homes and businesses. That order helps restore electricity to the greatest number of members as quickly as possible.

In the Black Hills, terrain adds another layer of complexity. Many lines run through dense forest, steep canyons and areas far from maintained roads.

“This isn’t square-mile territory,” Brisk said. “You might have to drive five or six miles just to get around a canyon.”

By midday Dec. 18, it was decided the damage was too widespread for Black Hills Electric to tackle alone. Brisk reached out to Mark Patterson, South Dakota Rural Electric Association’s manager of loss control, to request mutual aid from neighboring cooperatives – reinforcing a long-standing cooperative tradition built on neighbors helping neighbors.

Within hours, assistance began mobilizing. Crews, trucks and equipment arrived from across western South Dakota. Six electric cooperatives and a contractor ultimately sent help, bringing 55 additional linemen to the Black Hills. Those crews came from Butte Electric Cooperative, Cherry-Todd Electric Cooperative, Lacreek Electric Association, West Central Electric Cooperative, West River Electric Association, Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative and Kainz Power Lines, a local contractor based out of Custer.

“I had each operations manager of the responding cooperatives call me and ask what we needed,” Brisk said. “We asked for bucket trucks, digger trucks, chainsaws, attachments for skid steers, and extra line crews, and they sent everything we asked for.”

Days began early and ended late with crews often working 12 to 16-hour shifts. Brisk emphasized safety repeatedly to the crews as they worked among unstable trees, high winds and rugged terrain.

Behind the scenes, the restoration effort extended beyond the field. Office staff coordinated logistics and prepared meals. Lunches were packed daily for crews heading out before dawn. Supplies

were tracked, equipment was staged and communication updates were shared with members.

“It wasn’t just the line crews,” Brisk said. “Everybody stepped up.”

As crews continued working and Christmas approached, it appeared unlikely that power would be fully restored in time for the holiday. The visiting crews made it clear they were willing to stay through the holiday.

“All the outside crews said they weren’t leaving,” Brisk said. “They stayed to help us finish.”

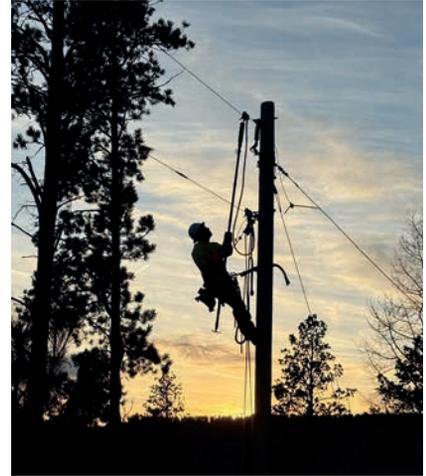
By Christmas Eve, most members had power for the holiday and visiting crews were able to return home. Even still, Black Hills Electric crews continued limited work through the holiday, work that continues today.

“To be truthful, we are still cutting trees, setting poles and repairing lines from this storm,” said Brisk.

The storm was later designated a FEMA-eligible event, requiring detailed tracking of labor, equipment and materials.

Looking back, Brisk said the restoration efforts relied heavily on cooperation and dedication among crews from the assisting cooperatives.

“It’s good to know you’ve got great neighbors,” he said. “When you need help, they come.”



An assisting lineman from West River Electric Cooperative installs a ground on the line to be further worked on.



Damage from the storm not only affected poles, but also uprooted trees.



Bill Brisk, manager of operations at Black Hills Electric Cooperative, gives a morning briefing, updating the cooperative and assisting crews with storm recovery assignments.

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. 5, 2026. If you know somebody on this list, please have them call the office at 605-996-7516 Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Thank you!

A

Adcock, Ron
Altheide, Gary
Andera, Shawn
Andersen, Calvin
Anderson, Ashley
Anderson, Lee
Anderson, Leray
Anthony, Terry or Brenda
Ashley, Barbara
Azure, Ernestine
or Charlene

B

Bachmeier, Kelly
or Lauer, Ray
Bad Moccasin, Bernard
Bad Moccasin, Dawn
or Glyndon
Bad Moccasin, Glyndon
Bickner, Raymond W
Big Eagle, Orlando
or TW Knee
Birkenfeld, Kyle
Blair, Donald or Cindy
Blasius, Glen
Blindauer, Clair or Lavee
Boesen, Lawrence Jr
Butterfield, Karen
Boulware, Alic

C

Casey, Todd
Charron, Tom
Christians, Brice
Clark, Amber
Commercial Bank
Coonhunter Inn,
Jose Rincones
Crowe, Garry D
Currier, Karey

D

Dahl, Kelly
Davidson, Kermit
or Georgene
Determan, Robert or Cella
Dewald, Rose
Dickerson, Charles
Drapeau, Carole E
Drapeau, Leann

E

Edinger, Wayne
Eldeen, Arnold
Ellingson, Bridgette
Erickson, Don
Erpenbach, Marie
or Graves, Carol

F

Fastnacht, Blake
Felicia, Sharon
Foley, David
Fougner, Lynn A
Fredericks, John
FSG Ag Ventures

G

Gerlach, Norman or Doris
Geppert, Lawrence
Geppert, Sylvia
Ghan, Richard
Gonzales, Tina
Graves, Dennis
Gudahl, Judith or Robin

H

Hall, Camille
Hall, Frankee
Hansen, Thomas W
Harrison, Bridget
or Cruz-Navarro, Martin
Hawk, Kathy
or Maynard Hawk
Hawk, Maynard
Heiman, Morgan or Rob
Herke, June
His Law, James
His Law, Jeremy
Hoff Jr, Alex or Hoff, June
Hoffman, Marty
Hohn, Delmar
or Hohn, James D
Holzbauer, Ryan
Houser's Auto Service
or Houser, Allen
Howard, Nick
Hoyt, Eugene E
Hurley, Don
or Hurley, Carol

J

Jensen, Leslie
or Jensen, Mary Louise
Jennings, Keith
Johnsen, Lana
Johnson, Michael Sr
Johnson, Todd
or Kirkie, Lucy
Johnson, Wendell

K

Kaemingk, Chad
Karlen, David C
Kenobbie, Roger
Kewley, Clarence
or Kewley, Bernice
King, Jean
Kirkie, Ronnette
Knecht, Nanette
Koch, Dave
Koch, Gerald
Koch, John
Korzan, Gene
or Korzan, Betty
Kuyper, Darcy

L

Ladue, L W
or Ladue, Irene
Landon, Jerry
Larson, Clarence
Lawver, John
Lebeau, Daryl W
Leiferman, Dennis
or Leiferman, Marilyn
Letcher, Tony
Lokken, Richard W
Lundholm, Danny
or Lundholm, Brenda

M

Markus, Dennis
McCauley, Ted Sr
or McCauley, Kris
McGhee, Alyce
McKenzie, Kenneth M
McManus, Allen R
Medicine Crow, Conrad
Mentele, Nancy
Mika, Frank

Miller, Edward
or Miller, Margie
Miranda, Bernadette
Mitrevic, Viesturs
Mutziger, Terry
Murphy, Lucille
or Hegg, Stanley

N

Neises, Dave
Nicholson, Charlotte
Nicholson, Jerry
or Nicholson, Charlotte
North, Jack L

O

Olson, Randal C
Orgen, Lynn
Olds, Scott
Overholt, Nate
Overweg, Gary

P

Parent Child Center
HeadStart
Perkin Family Restaurant
Plamp, Delmar
Popular Mortgage Servicing
Pro Realty
Pomani, Clevia R

R

Reinicke, Orlynn
Reynolds, Scott
or Reynolds, Kelly
Ruml, Owen

S

Sandness, Tim
Sandness, Timothy
Sazue, Brandon
Schaefer, Larry
Schneider, Justine
Schroeder, Alan R
Schultz, Denny
Shields, Allen
Shields, William Jr or
Shields, Pauline
or Quilt, Trish
Shillingstad, Mark
Shottenkirk, Heath

Schulz, Marshall
Sinkie, Chuck
Sky King Investments
Smith, James
or Smith Schutz, Susan
Sonne, John
Squires, Shawn
Stern, Ray
or Stern, Sharon
St John, Dondee
St John, Kirby
or Taylor, Shell
St John, Lorri
Stoltz, Craig
Storm, Allen Mrs
Styles, Dorothy
Swenson, Brent

T

Tarabetz, Orlyn
Thompson, WM D
Thompson, Quentin
Tomko, Melanie
Toupal, Bill H
Tuffs, Gloria
Turner, Jean
Tyler, Brianna

V

VonEye, Gary D
or VonEye, Diane
Voice, Willard
Voss, Kyle

W

Waldner, John Jr
Weidler, Vincent W
White, Annet
Wiese, George
or Wiese, John
Wingen, Alice J
Wright, Joyce
Wulff, Echo

Y

Young, Rex

Z

Zoss, Dalen

Is Renewable Energy Right For You?

Photo Credit: Touchstone Energy Cooperative



Patrick Soukup
Manager of Member Services and Marketing

Research Before Committing to Wind and Solar Projects

Interest in wind and solar energy is on the rise. If you've driven by Central Electric's Betts Road office, you may have noticed the solar panels on the south end of the property. Installed in 2015, the system consists of 36 panels and was projected to produce 1,400 kilowatt-hours of energy per month. It has actually produced about 1,260 kilowatt-hours per month. Learn more by visiting our website at

www.centralelec.coop/solar-energy.

As cooperative members explore the potential of renewable energy, it's critical to understand the challenges you may encounter. In most cases, South Dakotans will need to maintain electric service, even with a robust solar system, to ensure they have power when they need it.

Let's take a deeper dive. Here are some things cooperative members should consider before they decide to purchase and install a renewable energy system.

Review Energy Usage

Call us and check the SmartHub app to review your past energy usage. Pay close attention to how your energy use fluctuates throughout the day. Having that information will help you determine the size and type of system you may need. Call Central Electric for assistance with analyzing historical energy usage data.

Follow All Safety Precautions

Most wind and solar systems are grid-connected. Because of the two-way flow of electricity, the excess energy your system collects during the daytime flows into your cooperative's lines. Improper connection and maintenance of your system may endanger people and grid reliability. Central Electric requires a signed interconnection agreement, certain equipment specifications, a wiring permit and proof of liability insurance.

Understand System Requirements

Most wind and solar systems are designed to provide a portion of the electricity you need, but they won't meet 100% of your needs. At night and on cloudy days, you will need more power than your system can produce. That means you'll still be connected to your cooperative's power lines. Because these systems are grid-connected, energy can flow both ways. As you begin exploring renewable energy systems, be sure to obtain our interconnection agreement requirements.

Make Your Home More Energy Efficient

Adding insulation, sealing air leaks and completing other basic improvement projects make sense for several reasons. You can immediately cut your energy costs. Your cooperative offers energy audits to members by a qualified auditor to help.

Contact Your Electric Utility Before Investing

Central Electric can offer a third-party perspective on renewable energy projects. We want to make sure you are happy with your system and that the process meets our requirements. The earlier you contact us, the better.

With the right planning and support, renewable energy can be a valuable resource for cooperative members. However, in most cases, South Dakotans will need to maintain electric service so they have power when they need it.

Before signing any contracts for wind or solar equipment, please contact Central Electric. Sharing the estimated energy production and return on investment with your cooperative will help ensure the numbers you see are real.

Call me with any questions to help ensure the system you are considering meets Central Electric's requirements before investing in this type of project.

IN MOST CASES, SOUTH DAKOTANS WILL NEED TO MAINTAIN ELECTRIC SERVICE SO THEY HAVE POWER WHEN THEY NEED IT.

Basin Electric Bus Tour for Members

July 14-16, 2026



Call 1-800-477-2892 for more information.



What Can You Do With 1 Megawatt?

Factory

Facilities with heavy machinery can draw 1 MW of power.

Big Box Stores

1 MW will power a typical large retail store.

Office Building

1 MW can power several medium-sized office buildings.

Hospital

1 MW will power a small hospital.

Power Plant

Typical outputs:

Coal: 500 MW to 1 GW

Gas: 50 MW to 1 GW

Nuclear: 500 MW to 1.5 GW

1 MW is 1 million watts of power.

School

0.5 MW will power a medium-size public school.

EV Charging

1 MW can power four Tesla Supercharger V3s simultaneously.

Data Center

1 MW will power one small data center.

Other facilities that can draw up to 1 MW of power:

- High-speed rail
- Large farms
- Wastewater treatment
- Stadiums

Residential

1 MW can power 750 to 1,000 homes.

WHAT IS A MEGAWATT?

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

If you're a regular Cooperative Connections reader, you've probably seen the term "megawatt" countless times. From articles about new power generation facilities, energy-saving tips, major infrastructure projects or energy policy, megawatts come up again and again. But what does a megawatt actually mean?

Watts, Kilowatts, Megawatts & More

A megawatt is a unit of power that measures the speed at which energy is generated or used at a given time. A megawatt is 1,000 kilowatts (KW), or 1 million watts.

You may recognize watts from the labels on everyday household items like light bulbs and phone chargers. These numbers indicate the amount of power the device draws while operating.

Here are the wattages for some common household items:

- LED Light bulb – 5-20 Watts
- Refrigerator – 350-800 Watts
- Desktop PC – 100-800 Watts
- LED Television: 30-300 Watts
- Microwave – 700-1,200 Watts
- Hair Dryer – 1,500-2,000 Watts
- Clothes Dryer – 1,800-5,000 Watts

At East River Electric Power Cooperative, the generation and transmission cooperative that sells power to member co-ops in Eastern South Dakota and Western Minnesota, Jennifer Gross uses a modified bicycle to help put power into perspective.

The bike is stationary – the pedals power a small generator wired to several different kinds of light bulbs. Gross, who is East River's education and outreach coordinator, says the "pedal power bike" demonstrates energy use in a tangible way and highlights the difference of energy-efficient products.

"It's actually quite difficult for the person pedaling to generate electricity consistently for more than a few minutes," Gross said.



Jennifer Gross demonstrates energy generation and consumption. Submitted Photo

"When they're pedaling to power the inefficient, old-school incandescent light bulbs, they can pedal for about one minute and not even keep it at 200 watts the whole time."

The electric grid experiences the most strain during peak demand times – the hours before and after work and school when most people are home doing laundry, watching TV etc.

In communities with hundreds to thousands of homes and businesses, electricity demand grows large enough to be measured in megawatts – the unit equal to 1,000 KW.

Your electric co-op's electricity is generated by Basin Electric Power Cooperative, which was formed in the 1960s by electric co-ops in the upper Midwest to generate electricity for co-ops. Serving over 3 million consumers across nine states, Basin generates power from its owned and leased assets, which include coal, natural gas, solar and wind. Basin's generation capability is so massive that it's measured in gigawatts – the unit equal to 1,000 MW.

Basin reports a maximum generating capacity of about 8,427 MW – or 8.427 GW. That figure reflects every available generation resource running at full output, including the oil-fueled peaking units used during times of high demand, along with purchases from the Western Area Power Administration and the Southwest Power Pool energy market.

On an even larger scale, the total installed generation capacity in the U.S. reaches the terawatt level, totalling about 1.3 TW, which is equal to 1,300 GW, 1.3 million MW or 1.3 billion KW – enough to simultaneously run about 1 billion hair dryers!

$$\begin{aligned}
 &1 \text{ Million Watts} \\
 &= \\
 &1,000 \text{ Kilowatts} \\
 &= \\
 &1 \text{ Megawatt} \\
 &= \\
 &1/1,000 \text{ Gigawatt}
 \end{aligned}$$

Your Co-op's Megawatts

As a co-op member, you're a part-owner of Basin Electric's generation resources. Here's a look at several of those facilities.



Antelope Valley Station
Beulah, N.D. • 1984
900 MW • Coal



Bison Gen. Station
Epping, N.D. • 2030
1,490 MW • Nat. Gas



Pioneer Gen. Station
Williston, N.D. • 2013
822 MW • Nat. Gas



Crow Lake Wind
White Lake, S.D. • 2011
172 MW • Wind



Wild Springs Solar
New Underwood, S.D.
2024 • 114 MW • Solar



MOVING A MOUNTAIN

Dakota Energy Cooperative raises line so the home can pass underneath.
Photo submitted by Dakota Energy Cooperative

Co-ops Assist Historic Home On Trek Through Rural South Dakota

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Jeff and Sherri Johnson had been waiting for years to build their dream home on their McCook County land, but with ongoing supply chain challenges, it was becoming increasingly difficult – and expensive – to build on their rural acreage.

When Sherri saw the sale listing for a beautiful historic home in northwest South Dakota, she knew that it was more than a house; it was a dream come true.

"I had a dream a few years ago about a blue house moving, and I saw this house that had been on the market for a while in Lemmon," Johnson recalled. "I saw the house, and then I remembered the dream, because when God gives us a dream, it just goes deep in there and you remember."

She knew she had to act, and soon after, the Johnsons were the proud owners of the 1910 prairie-style home. All they had to do was get it to their land north of Montrose.

Sherri and Jeff contacted Milbank House Movers to figure out just how exactly to transport a 100-ton house over 400 miles.

"For a 37-foot tall loaded, 2 ½ story house, this was one of the longest moves we have done," explained Josh Wendland from Milbank House Movers. "We had to reach

out to all of the power companies along the moving route to get their input as to how far they felt we could travel each day with how many power lines we would have to deal with on any give segment of the route. It was determined that the total move of 421 miles should be segmented into seven travel days on the road ranging from 14 miles the first day up to 98 miles on the furthest traveled day."

At Moreau-Grand Electric, crews found the house was too tall to pass under their lines even if they raised them up with their bucket trucks.

"We had to totally just cut some of the lines, the structure was so tall we couldn't lift them up high enough," said JJ Martin, the co-op's member services director.

Martin said power outages were pretty minor in the service territory until the house reached the US 212/SD 63 junction west of Eagle Butte, where the Western Area Power Administration had to cut its transmission line taking the southern portion of Moreau-Grand Electric's service territory offline.

"Once the structure moved through, we put the lines back up, and the outage only took about an hour or two in total," Martin said. "After that, there were a few minor distribution outages until they finally

crossed the Cheyenne River."

At East River Electric, the generation and transmission cooperative serving co-ops in eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota, operations dispatch worked in advance to identify power line crossings along the route that would need to be lifted or disconnected.

"We have a lot of our line measurements for these situations, but if it's an odd route, we go and get new measurements of lines that we may not have measured – like if they're trying to go through an area to avoid bigger infrastructure or bridges," explained Clayton Tanner, East River's system operations superintendent. "Depending on how close the load will get to our infrastructure, we decide whether we have to have our guys on scene to watch it go through, or if we have to switch that line out and ground it because there's a chance of it arcing over. There have even been cases where we've dropped the line to the ground and had them drive over it."

The house crossed 12 of East River Electric's transmission lines; nine of the lines had to be de-energized, three of the lines were lifted, and crews watched the house pass underneath in two other locations.

Despite the home's unprecedented journey, spending a week trekking 421 miles across rural highways through eight electric cooperatives, the house arrived in one piece.

The house joins another historic building on Jeff and Sherri's land: a 1903 rural schoolhouse that sat in Turner County for much of its life before being moved to Minnehaha County to serve as a Methodist Church, and finally to McCook County in 2011 when Sherri and Jeff purchased the building to move it and restore it to its former turn-of-the-century glory.

When asked if she had ever thought she'd get this far along with the house moving project, Sherri nodded an affirmative yes.

"We already did it once with the church," she said. "I wished we could have been able to do this about 10 years ago, since it probably would have fit a little better. But you know what? Things work out exactly the way they are supposed to."

History of the House

Known as the Ole Quamman house, the 1910 prairie style foursquare house spent the last 115 years on 2nd Avenue in Lemmon. Ole Quamman was one of the first businessmen to arrive in Lemmon, which was founded just three years before in 1907. Quamman created the town's Petrified Wood Park & Museum in 1933 to showcase petrified wood from Perkins County. At its Lemmon address, the house featured two flowerpots decorated with petrified wood on its walkway – those traveled with the home to McCook County.

The South Dakota State Historical Society writes that the interior of the home is "lavishly styled" and features some of the latest design ideology of the time.

It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2015, but lost its eligibility after the move. Sherri is applying to get the house back on the list for its architectural significance and level of preservation. She also plans to do the same with her historic church.

Sherri and Jeff Johnson with their new home on its foundation in McCook County. It sits on land that has been in Sherri's family for generations.

Photo by Jacob Boyko



The house crosses the Oahe Dam – officially entering east river South Dakota.
Submitted Photo



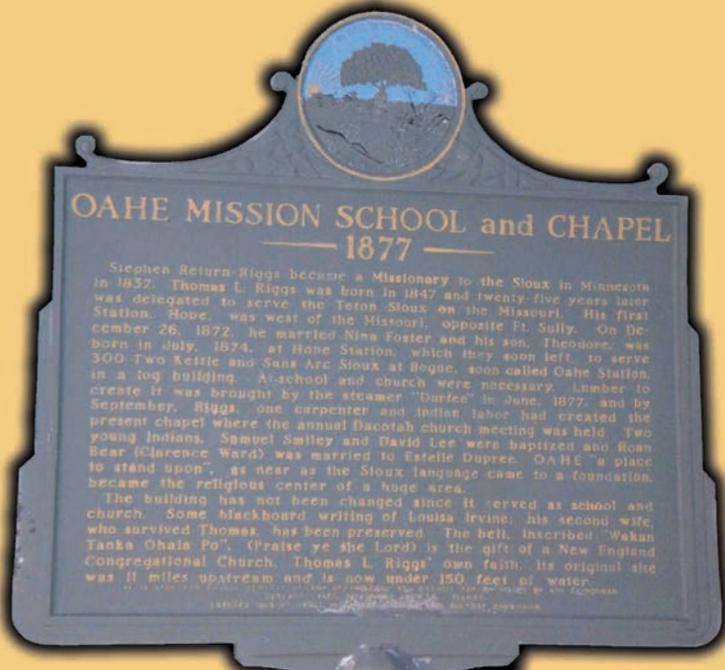
The house rounds one of the final corners. Southeastern Electric Cooperative was on the scene to connect power.
Submitted Photo



In the application to add the house to the National Register of Historic Places, the South Dakota State Historical Society writes that the interior of the home has an "elegant Arts and Crafts design."
Submitted Photo

FROM SHERRI'S JOURNAL

The only place I wanted a picture of the house moving along its 400-mile journey was at the Missouri River crossing. I was plenty early on the morning of Nov. 17, 2025, when I parked my car at Oahe Dam Visitor Center. It was cold, windy, and still dark outside as I aimed my headlights at the Oahe Mission School and Chapel historical marker. I started reading the sign, but abruptly stopped when I read '...at Bogue...' Bogue was the maiden name of my 3x great grandma. Not only was I reading a sign about a building being moved as I waited for my historic house to move across the dam, but the name on the sign perfectly connected to a name in my ancestry. Daylight eventually dawned, the clouds broke, and sunlight lit up the house as it crossed the river. I had planned a picture, but God did so much more that morning. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than we all ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us. (Ephesians 3:20)





MARCH 7
Ag Day
 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Washington Pavilion
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-6000

Washington Pavilion Photo

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 MARCH 15
Chamberlain-Oacoma
Burger Battle
 At Participating Restaurants
 Chamberlain, SD
 Oacoma, SD
 ChamberlainSD.com

FEB. 27-28
8th Annual Cabin Fever Auction
 Taxidermy, Saddles,
 Western Items
 9 a.m.
 Davison Cty. Fairgrounds
 Mitchell, SD
 605-530-1083

FEB. 28
Fire & Ambulance Fundraiser
 Silent Auction, Free-Will
 Offering Meal
 5 p.m.
 Aurora Cty. Ag Building
 Plankinton, SD

MARCH 5
Mitchell Chamber Lunch
& Learn: Kiwanis Club
 12-1 p.m.
 Chamber Board Room
 Mitchell, SD

MARCH 5
SD Jazz Festival
 7:30 p.m.
 Johnson Fine Arts Center
 Aberdeen, SD

MARCH 7
Free Christian Men's Event
 The Barn at Aspen Acres
 8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
 Spearfish, SD
 Register: RiseUpMen.com

MARCH 7
Night at the Races
& Happy Hour
 7 p.m.
 Community Center
 Chamberlain, SD
 605-730-1046

MARCH 14-15
Philip Area Annual
Rod & Gun Show
 Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Sun. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
 American Legion Hall
 Philip, SD
 605-859-2135

MARCH 14
St. Uhro Finnish Festival
 11 a.m. Main Street Parade
 12 p.m. Community Ctr. Lunch
 Lake Norden, SD

MARCH 14
SNOLF (Snow Golf) Tournament
 Webster, SD
 Contact: Buster's Resort
 605-345-2787

MARCH 20-22, 27-29
Mighty Corson Art Players
 March 20-21, 27-28: 7:30 p.m.
 March 22, 29: 2:30 p.m.
 Corson Playhouse
 Corson, SD
 www.mightycorson.com

MARCH 20-21
Badlands Quilters Getaway
 Fri. 5:30 p.m. Start
 Sat. 8 a.m. Start
 Wall Community Center
 Wall, SD
 605-279-2807

MARCH 28
Enhanced Concealed
Permit Class
 12-6 p.m.
 Davison Shooting Club
 3260 W. Havens Ave.
 Mitchell, SD
 www.permit2carrysd.com

MARCH 28
VFW Teener Baseball Benefit
Vegas Night
 Social: 4:30 p.m., Meal: 6 p.m.
 Tyndall, SD

APRIL 3
Bachelors of Broadway:
Gentlemen of the Theatre
 7 p.m.
 Johnson Fine Arts Center
 Aberdeen, SD

APRIL 9-11
Annual Schmeckfest
 German Heritage Celebration
 Freeman, SD
 605-925-4237
 www.schmeckfest.com

APRIL 18
Tri-Valley Chorus
75th Annual Show
 4 p.m.
 Centerville, SD
 605-201-9398

Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.