

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



SOUTH DAKOTA STAR QUILTS

**Honoring Cooperative
Legacy With
Time-honored Tradition**
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Rescuing Animals
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Photo by Frank Turner

MANAGER'S MESSAGE

Director Jeff Gustafson speaks to Davison County members at the district meeting on May 29.

DISTRICT MEETINGS HIGHLIGHT PROGRESS, CHALLENGES



Ken Schlimgen
General Manager

As I write this, we have completed five of the eight scheduled district meetings. The final meeting will be held in Aurora County on June 18. I want to extend a sincere thank you to everyone who took the time to attend these important gatherings.

I also want to recognize and thank both Don Klinkner and Jeremy White for their efforts in campaigning for the open board seat representing Sanborn County. Competitive elections are a vital part of our cooperative's

democratic structure, and we appreciate both candidates' willingness to serve. Congratulations to Jeremy White on his successful campaign. He will officially join the board following the Annual Meeting in September.

I hope the information shared at the district meetings was helpful and informative. Much of our discussion focused on the rising costs of doing business—something that has changed dramatically since we began our aging system replacement plan in 2019. Each year, we replace 50 to 60 miles of our oldest overhead lines with buried cable. We've consistently met this target, yet we still have approximately 1,500 miles to go.

Inflation and supply chain delays continue to negatively impact our financial position. While inflation affects everyone, the cost increases for materials like copper, aluminum, and steel have made our projects significantly more expensive. On top of that, unpredictable delivery timelines mean we must maintain larger inventories, often financed through higher-interest borrowing.

During the meetings, I also shared that 67 cents of every dollar we receive goes toward the purchase of electric energy. Looking ahead, we anticipate those energy costs will increase in 2026. If that projection holds true, a rate adjustment will be necessary.

This summer, our crews are tackling several major projects. One of the largest is the installation of electrical infrastructure for the new High Plains Processing facility south of Mitchell. The project remains on schedule, with operations expected to begin this fall. Once online, this new commercial customer

will generate additional revenue to help offset future operating costs.

Another key project underway is the construction of a new service center in Howard. This initiative has been in the planning stages for quite some time, and we're pleased to see it moving forward. Puetz Construction of Mitchell was awarded the contract, and we expect the facility to be completed by December 2025.

We also recently received encouraging news: our cooperative has been awarded a FEMA mitigation grant to replace approximately 1.6 miles of three-phase overhead line south of Chamberlain. The grant will cover about 75% of the costs. Although not originally part of our 2025 plan, we aim to complete this project by the end of the year.

In closing, I shared several key performance metrics at the district meetings, comparing Central Electric's meters per mile, facility charges, and revenue per kilowatt-hour to those of other South Dakota cooperatives. The data confirms that our rates are about average for the state. More importantly, our ongoing investments in system upgrades have led to fewer outages and increased reliability—benefits our members are already experiencing.

Your cooperative remains committed to evaluating where and how we invest in infrastructure to ensure the best possible return on your member dollars. These decisions continue to support our mission of providing reliable energy and services with a commitment to safety and member satisfaction. Thank you again for your continued support and engagement.

Until Next Month, stay safe!

Where Your Co-op Dollar Goes



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 VanWalleghe, Vice President
Director-At-Large - Merl Bechen

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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 April 21, 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 Schlinggen reported on East River Electric Managers' Advisory Committee, Basin Electric updates, Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) activities, Rural Utilities Service, the Mitchell Technical College energy building project and other management activities.

The minutes of the March safety meeting were reviewed.

The board reviewed proposed updates and USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS) loan certifications.

Director Pazour recently completed coursework to earn the Certified Cooperative Director designation.

Director Hofer reported on S.D. Renewable Energy Association activities, SDREA Legislative Committee, and the NRECA board meeting.

Director Gustafson reported on S.D. Rural Electric Association board meeting.

Director Wolbrink updated the board on the East River Electric board meeting and activities.

The Audit Committee reviewed first quarter general manager expenses, director expenses, legal fees and attorney expenses.

Board Action

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to adopt revised Policy 402 Collections. The motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to donate \$12,500 to the Mitchell Technical College energy services capital fundraising campaign over five years, giving \$2,500 per year starting in 2025. The motion carried.
- First quarter general manager expenses, director expenses, legal fees and attorney expenses were accepted.

There being no further business, President Wolbrink adjourned the meeting. The next board meeting was scheduled for May 19, 2025.

FINANCIAL REPORT	YEAR TO DATE APRIL 2025	YEAR TO DATE APRIL 2024
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales	122,322,872 kWh	124,063,262 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$ 13,927,429	\$ 13,042,754
Total Cost of Service	\$ 13,524,201	\$ 13,006,180
Operating Margins	\$ 403,228	\$ 36,573

Playground Safety

Source: National Safety Council

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, each year, more than 200,000 children go to U.S. hospital emergency departments with injuries associated with playground equipment.

As the weather warms up and trips to the park become frequent, take a moment to familiarize yourself with the risks on playgrounds and how you can prevent injuries.

Check for Playground Hazards

Nearly 80% of playground injuries are caused by falls. Watch out for these potential hazards when taking kids to the playground, and report any hazards observed.

Improper ground surfaces: Surfaces around playground equipment should have at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel, or mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials. Playgrounds should be free of exposed concrete footings, rocks or tree stumps.

Overcrowded play areas: The area under and around play equipment should be a minimum of 6 feet in all directions while swing set areas should be twice the height of the suspending bar both in back and front of the swings. Structures more than 30 inches high should be at least 9 feet apart.

Unprotected elevated areas: Platforms higher than 30 inches should have guardrails or barriers.

Head entrapment spaces: Openings between rails, bars, rungs and even ropes of cargo nets should be less than 3 1/2 inches or more than 9 inches.

Sharp points and edges: Playground equipment should be free of protruding bolt ends, "S" hooks, and other sharp points and edges.

Visit the American Academy of Pediatrics webpage on playground safety to learn more.

Avoid Strangulation Hazards

The American Academy of Pediatrics cautions that children should not wear or play with anything that could get caught on equipment and become a strangulation hazard.

- Never attach or allow children to attach ropes, jump ropes, clotheslines or pet leashes to play equipment.
- Leave sweatshirts with drawstrings and necklaces at home.
- Remove bike helmets when playing on the playground.

Be Cautious of Too Much Sun Exposure

Playgrounds should have full or partial sun protection between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., peak exposure time.

- Limit playtime at peak sun exposure time and know the signs of heat illnesses.
- Avoid burns; if playground equipment is hot to the touch, it is too hot for your child's bare skin.

Allow Only Age-Appropriate Activities

The Consumer Product Safety commission lists age-appropriate equipment in the Public Playground Safety Handbook. There is no substitute for parental supervision, especially for young children.



"Don't go outside during lightning storms!"

Marah Kinnunen, Age 8

Marah warns readers about the dangers of going outside during a lightning storm. Thank you for your picture, Marah! Marah's parents are Reuben and Sarine Kinnunen from Hayti, 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.

Delectable CHICKEN

CHICKEN MILANESE

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. McCormick® Chicken Parmesan One Sheet Pan Seasoning Mix
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 lb. thin-sliced boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 tbsp. oil

Method

Preheat oven to 400°F. Empty Seasoning Mix into shallow dish. Add Parmesan cheese. Brush chicken with oil. Coat evenly on both sides with Seasoning Mix. Discard any remaining Seasoning Mix.

Place chicken in single layer on foil-lined shallow baking pan sprayed with no stick cooking spray.

Bake 15 minutes or until cooked through, turn chicken halfway through cook time.

McCormick.com

SWEET AND SOUR CHICKEN

Ingredients:

- 3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 2 tbsps. fat or oil
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 tbsps. cornstarch
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 20 oz. can pineapple chunks (drained, reserving juice)
- 3 tbsps. soy sauce
- 3/4 cup green pepper strips
- 1/4 cup onion (thinly sliced)

Method

Cube chicken into one inch squares; brown in fat. Add water. Cook in water until tender. In another pan combine cornstarch, salt, brown sugar, vinegar, pineapple juice and soy sauce.

Cook until slightly thick, stirring constantly. Pour sauce over hot chicken. Let stand at least 10 minutes. Add green pepper, onion, and pineapple chunks. Cook two to seven minutes until warmed through. Serve over hot rice. *Makes 4 servings.

Jan Grage
Clay-Union Electric Member

CHICKEN POT PIE

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. prepared pie crust (top and bottom)
- 1/3 cup butter or margarine
- 1/3 cup chopped onion
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1 3/4 cup Progresso™ chicken broth (from 32 oz. carton)
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 1/2 cup chicken/turkey (shredded, cooked)
- 2 cups frozen mixed vegetables (thawed)

Method

Heat oven to 425°F. Prepare pie crusts as directed on box for two-crust pie using nine inch glass pie pan. In two quart saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion; cook two minutes, stirring frequently, until tender. Stir in flour, salt and pepper until well blended.

Gradually stir in broth and milk, cooking and stirring until bubbly and thickened. Stir in chicken and mixed vegetables. Remove from heat. Spoon chicken mixture into crust-lined pan. Top with second crust; seal edge and flute. Cut slits in several places in top crust. Bake 30 to 40 minutes or until crust is golden brown. During last 15 to 20 minutes of baking, cover crust edge with strips of foil to prevent excessive browning. Let stand five minutes before serving.

Cindy Foster
Codington-Clark Electric Member

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.

Get SmartHub Today

Managing your electric account has never been easier, thanks to SmartHub. The phone app puts all your account information in one place—secure, convenient and right at your fingertips.

SmartHub allows you to:

- **Track energy use.** View daily, weekly or monthly trends so you can stay on top of your consumption and avoid billing surprises.

- **Pay your bill.** Make one-time payments, set up autopay or schedule payments in advance.

- **Go paperless.** Reduce clutter and get notifications when your bill is ready.

- **Stay in the loop.** Receive important updates from your co-op about member meetings and more.

Call our office if you need assistance with SmartHub. Whether you're at home, at work or on the go, SmartHub makes it easy to manage your electric service. If you haven't signed up yet, Central Electric encourages you to give it a try.



Member Discounts

Did you know that your cooperative membership earns you discounts with local and national retailers? Simply download the Co-op Connections app or request a Co-op Connections card to gain access to these discounts and more.



BUSINESS	TOWN	DISCOUNT
605 Vision	Chamberlain	15% off services and materials. Cannot be combined with insurance or other offers.
AmericInn Lodge & Suites	Chamberlain	10% off rack rate. Not valid with any other offer.
Hair Expressions Salon	Chamberlain	\$25 off 1st set of eyelash extensions. \$20 off spa facial with microdermabrasion.
NAPA Auto Parts	Chamberlain	10% off non-sale items.
Ken's Service	Gann Valley	10% off tire repair services.
Overweg Motorsports (NEW!)	Kimball	5% off motorsports repair work only up to \$150 max per year.
Overweg Repair (NEW!)	Kimball	5% off repairs up to \$250 max per year.
America's Mattress	Mitchell	Free set of sheets with qualifying purchase of \$500.
County Fair Food & Fuel	Mitchell	7 cent discount per gallon on fuel purchases.
Dakota Sunset	Mitchell	5 cent discount per gallon of gas or fuel.
Daylight Donuts & Coffee	Mitchell	Donut and regular coffee for \$1.
Floor Tec Cleaning & Restoration	Mitchell	\$50 off duct cleaning. 10% off carpet cleaning.
Graham's Interstate Sinclair	Mitchell	7 cents off per gallon of gas/fuel.
M & H	Mitchell	5 cents off per gallon of gas.
Merchandise Outlet	Mitchell	10% off pair of boots. Some exclusions apply. Not valid with other discounts.
Miedema Sanitation	Mitchell	10% roll-off construction boxes.
Mueller Lumber Company	Mitchell	10% off lumber and regular priced in-stock merchandise. Excludes power tools and sale items.
New Leaf Body Spa	Mitchell	\$5 off 60 minute massage.
On Sight 24/7	Mitchell	10% off products.
Photography Unlimited	Mitchell	Free session and 10% off your order.
Sun Gold Trophies	Mitchell	15% off storewide. Some exclusions apply.
Tessiers Inc.	Mitchell	10% discount on residential service or maintenance work only. Cannot be used with any other discount.
The Pin Cushion	Mitchell	Buy 1 Aurifil thread at regular price and get 2nd at 50% off.
Two Dreams Boutique	Mitchell	10% off in-store order.
Williams Musical & Office Equipment	Mitchell	10% off regular price.
Blessings Repeated Inc.	Plankinton	20% off a purchase of \$10 or more.
Hometown Family Health (NEW!)	Plankinton	\$1 off any nutrient injection.
Genevieve's Print*Art*Design	Wessington Springs	15% off labor for services.
Double D Body Shop	Woonsocket	\$5 off windshield chip repair.

Note: Discounts may be subject to change. Limits and exclusions may apply.

Become a Participating Business

Central Electric wants to add your business to the list! We offer the Cooperative Connections Discount Card and phone app to our members at no cost.

The only cost to your business is the discount you offer. For more information, email cec@centralec.coop or call 605-996-7516. Special thanks to all participating business partners!

Your Wiring, HVAC and Appliance Experts



Lincoln Feistner
Sales & Project
Manager

At Central Electric, we understand your unique needs and offer a wide range of services, including residential and agricultural wiring, heating and cooling solutions and home appliance sales and service. Our goal is to provide you with dependable service that keeps your world running smoothly.

Electrical Wiring Services

Whether you are adding a new structure, updating an existing structure or converting overhead wires to underground, Central Electric is here to help. Our licensed electricians have extensive experience to meet your needs.

Heating and Cooling Solutions

Your cooperative offers quality heating and cooling solutions. Our team of HVAC professionals can perform routine maintenance or install an entirely new heating and cooling system in your home.



Home Appliance Sales and Service

Durable and efficient home appliances are getting more difficult to find these days. That's why we only carry the most reliable brands, including GE and Speed Queen. Central Electric offers a wide selection of appliances designed to withstand everyday use. Plus, you get service after the sale.

Why Choose Central Electric?

As a cooperative, we are committed to providing exceptional service and high-quality products tailored to meet your needs. Our experienced team is dedicated to offering reliable solutions that enhance your home's efficiency and comfort.

Members and non-members can rely on Central Electric for all their electrical wiring, HVAC and home appliance needs. Call us at 605-996-7516 for a free estimate on your next project.



Jeremy White of Letcher was elected to serve as Sanborn County's next director at the district meeting in Forestburg.



Director At Large Merl Bechen addresses the crowd at the Jerauld County district meeting held at the Springs Inn Cafe.



Director Bob Banks of Fedora addresses the crowd during the Miner County district meeting in Howard.



Buffalo County members visited Central Electric's booth to register for the district meeting during the Fort Thompson health fair.

District Meetings Connect Members with Their Co-op

We extend special thanks to all cooperative members who attended the district meetings in May and June.

The meetings in Jerauld, Miner and Sanborn Counties included director elections. Mark Reindl of Wessington Springs ran unopposed and will continue to represent Jerauld County for three more years. Bob Banks of Fedora ran unopposed and will continue to represent Miner County for three more years. Todd Van Walleghen did not seek reelection after 15 years of board service, and Jeremy White of Letcher was elected to fill the Sanborn County seat.

Member engagement is critical to help ensure a bright future for the cooperative. If you couldn't attend this year, we hope to see you there in 2026.



SOUTH DAKOTA STAR QUILTS

Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative directors present retiring manager Melissa Maher (left) with a star quilt.
Photo by JJ Martin

Honoring Cooperative Legacy With Time-honored Tradition

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Across the prairie, few gifts carry as much meaning as a star quilt. For many, these quilts are more than just blankets – they are acts of honor. Rooted in Native American culture, particularly among Lakota, Dakota and other tribes of South Dakota, star quilts have long been used to mark some of life’s largest milestones, including graduations, marriages, memorials and moments of deep community respect.

Electric cooperative leaders Donovan Young Man, a former director of Lacreek Electric who was honored shortly before his passing earlier this year, and Melissa Maher, the former manager of Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative, recently accepted star quilts from their cooperatives in recognition of their many years of service to their member-owners.

So what makes the star quilt such an honor? According to International Quilt Museum Collections Manager Jamie Swartz, the quilts are special because they take an incredible amount of skill and experience to assemble.

Many star quilts are block quilts, constructed from dozens or even hundreds of small fabric pieces carefully cut and stitched together. At the heart of the design is an eight-pointed star, a

shape that demands near-perfect precision.

“There are so many small pieces that make up a star quilt,” Swartz said. “When you are combining so many small pieces together to make a large, over-all design, there is more room for error. A small mismeasurement can create bumps, ripples or puckers in the patchwork.”

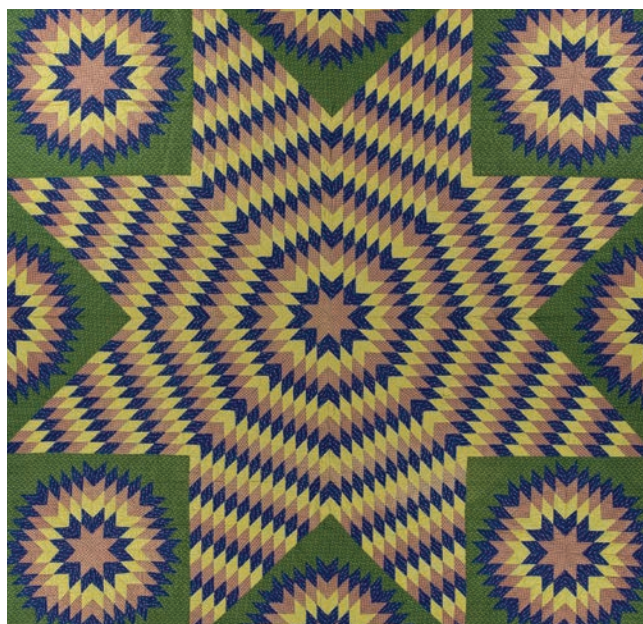


Photo Courtesy of the International Quilt Museum, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1997.007.0123

That level of precision, care and time-honored tradition a star quilt represents is a part of what makes it such a meaningful gift. In recent years, the practice of gifting star quilts has been embraced by some electric cooperatives as a way to express a deep appreciation for their employees who have dedicated a lifetime of work to their cooperatives and communities.

Remembering Donovan Young Man

Before his passing earlier this year, Donovan Young Man was honored by his cooperative at the Lacreek Electric annual meeting with a star quilt for his 31 years of service to Lacreek Electric, serving as a director for both his cooperative and the South Dakota Rural Electric Association. Specifically, the cooperative honored Donovan's commitment to both his cooperative and community.

Lacreek Electric CEO Josh Fanning said Young Man was known for both his calm and steady presence, and his exceptional ability to bridge tribal relations, fostering understanding and unity within the community.

In his community, Donovan was known for his profound impact on his community's youth. For 41 years, he devoted himself to the Oglala Lakota County School District, leaving a lasting legacy of dedication, education, and empowerment for the youth. Beyond education, Donovan served his community in many other ways, including as a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council.

"Donovan had a lasting impact on our cooperative," Fanning said. "His wisdom, leadership, and steady guidance helped shape its direction and strengthen its foundation. His contributions will be remembered and felt for years to come."

"We chose a star quilt because gifting one is a deeply meaningful gesture in our area – an expression of profound respect, honor and the warmth of community," Fanning continued. "In many Indigenous cultures, the star quilt represents the highest form of recognition, symbolizing heartfelt gratitude for the recipient's enduring contributions. It also serves as a guiding light, reflecting the inspiration and direction they provide for future generations."

Honoring Melissa Maher

Moreau-Grand Electric honored Melissa Maher with a star quilt at the co-ops annual meeting in October for her 40 years of service at the cooperative. In addition to Maher, the cooperative also presented Larry Hieb with a quilt for his 55 combined years of service as both an employee and director.

Maher joined the cooperative in 1984 as manager's secretary. Through the years, Maher remained with the cooperative, serving as the member service director and later Moreau-Grand Electric's manager, the first woman to hold this title.

"I've always loved star quilts, what they stand for – the celebration and honoring of someone with an heirloom that they can enjoy for hopefully generations to come," she said.

Maher first experienced the star quilt tradition through her



Lacreek Electric employees gift director Donovan Young Man a star quilt to celebrate his 31 years of service to the electric cooperative.

Photos by Mandy Scherer



mother, who taught kindergarten at Cheyenne-Eagle Butte School. As a teacher in the Eagle Butte community, her mother received star quilts from several of her students' families.

Seeing the joy it brought her mother, Maher continued the star quilt tradition into her years at the cooperative, gifting quilts to retirees of the cooperative, gifting dozens of star quilts made by quilt maker Bonnie LeBeaux to employees of the co-op, honoring retirements, directors, and even key members of the construction crew that helped build the new Moreau-Grand Electric office.

"It's hard to guess how many star quilts I have gifted over the years," Maher said. "Probably dozens if I had to guess."

The tradition came full circle at her retirement party when Moreau-Grand Electric presented Mellisa a star quilt of her own.

"We wanted to honor her 40 years of service and highlight abilities as a manager," said Paul Lawrence, a director of Moreau-Grand Electric. "It's a way of conveying that she led with honor and integrity, and she did exactly that."



Frequently Asked Questions

What is Operation Round-Up?

It is a voluntary program run by the members for the members. Participating member accounts are rounded up to the next dollar, and the extra cents flow into a separate fund to assist local causes. Grants are not funded through electric rates.

How do I apply for a grant?

Nonprofits and community groups can visit www.centraleccoop.org and click on Member Programs, or call the office at 800-477-2892 for an application. Application deadlines are May 1 and November 1 each year, or the prior business day if the deadline lands on a weekend.

How are applications judged?

Applications are judged based upon 1) potential benefit to the residents and community; 2) level of community support for the project or organization; 3) capability of the applicant to deliver a quality service or program; and 4) final results that can be envisioned and evaluated.

Who awards the funds?

A volunteer board of trustees consists of one member from each county and a cooperative director. The group reviews applications and awards grants twice each year following the May 1 and November 1 deadlines.

Board of Trustees:

- Merl Bechen, Director-At-Large
- Julie Dykstra, Aurora County
- Clarissa Glaus, Brule County
- Yvette Isburg, Buffalo County
- Steven Weisz, Davison County
- LeAnn Moe, Hanson County
- Amber Kolousek, Jerauld County
- Tami Moore, Miner County
- Dawna Van Overschelde, Sanborn County

Grants Awarded to Area Projects

Small change continues to make a big difference in local communities. Central Electric Cooperative's Operation Round-Up® board of trustees recently approved \$12,800 in grants for community projects.

Operation Round-Up is powered by cooperative members who voluntarily round up their monthly electric bill to the next dollar. The extra cents are deposited into a separate fund and used to support community-focused projects in the area.

Upon reviewing applications at the end of May, the board of trustees approved the following grant awards.

Operation Round-Up Grant Awards:

- Carthage Museum and Historical Society – \$1,200 for building improvements
- City of Kimball – \$1,000 for ballpark improvements
- Hanson County Child Protection Team – \$500 for Open Closet clothing program
- Hope Cemetery (Wessington Springs) – \$1,500 for cemetery improvements
- Howard School District – \$1,000 for Farm to School lunch program
- James Valley Drug and DUI Court (Mitchell) – \$1,000 for participant assistance
- Little Huskies Daycare (Emery) – \$1,000 for building improvements
- Plankinton Service Club – \$500 for outdoor recreation
- Sunset Memorial Park Cemetery (Mitchell) – \$800 for cemetery improvements
- Town N Kountry Blue Group 4-H (Sanborn County) – \$1,200 for aluminum can bank
- Wessington Springs Summer Recreation Program – \$1,100 for ballpark improvements
- White Lake Ambulance – \$1,000 for appliances
- Woonsocket Backpack Program – \$1,000 for supplies

“Great things are happening in and around our communities, and the board of trustees is proud to support these efforts,” said Tara Miller, Manager of Communications at Central Electric.

Miller said, “Thanks to the continued generosity of participating members, each giving about \$6 per year, Operation Round-Up has invested roughly \$238,000 into 170 local projects since 2016.”

The Operation Round-Up board of trustees is made up of member volunteers representing the cooperative's service area: Merl Bechen of Mitchell, Julie Dykstra of Stickney, Clarissa Glaus of Chamberlain, Yvette Isburg of Fort Thompson, Steve Weisz of Mitchell, LeAnn Moe of Alexandria, Amber Kolousek of Wessington Springs, Tami Moore of Howard and Dawna Van Overschelde of Letcher.

Operation Round-Up grants are awarded twice each year. The deadlines are May 1 and November 1 or the prior business day if the deadline lands on a weekend. To learn more, call Central Electric at 800-477-2892 or visit www.centraleccoop.org and click on Member Programs.



Annual Banquet Honors Outstanding Senior Scholars

Area seniors Lauren Hofer of Mitchell High School and Carson Ferry of Hanson High School attended the Scholar of the Year Banquet at Lake Area Technical College (LATC) in Watertown on May 3. Keynote speaker Tiffany Sanderson, President of LATC, shared some educational inspiration with students and their families.

Ferry is the son of Glen and Val Ferry of Fulton. Hofer is the daughter of Jared and Stacey Hofer of Mitchell. Both students were featured on Dakota News Now as the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week during the 2024-2025

school year and received a \$250 scholarship for this honor. During the banquet, Hofer was selected to receive an additional \$500 scholarship.

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives partner with Dakota News Now to recognize the achievements of high school seniors through the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week program. Recipients are highly motivated students who excel in the classroom and community.

For more information, visit www.centralec.coop and click on Member Programs. Nominations are accepted from faculty each fall.



Lauren Hofer and Carson Ferry attended the Scholar of the Year banquet in Watertown.

Board President Duane Wolbrink presents Director Bradee Pazour with a certificate for completing the Credentialed Cooperative Director program.



Pazour Earns Board Credentials

Central Electric's Brule County Director, Bradee Pazour, recently earned the Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

An evolving business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors, requiring increased knowledge of utility governance and the cooperative business model.

NRECA's Credentialed Cooperative Director program

requires directors to demonstrate an understanding of competencies in five core courses: Director Duties and Liabilities, Understanding the Electric Business, Board Operations and Process, Strategic Planning and Financial Decision Making.

Central Electric commends Pazour for her achievements. All board members undergo ongoing industry training to ensure that strong governance principles are practiced at your cooperative.



Cam Wal Electric member Tami Schanzenbach with her dogs Mac, Cash and Blu. *Submitted Photo.*

RESCUING ANIMALS

Co-op Members Foster and Support Pets In Need

Jacob Boyko

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Tami Schanzenbach has always wanted to help animals.

From her earliest days in Aberdeen where she worked as a veterinary technician and helped start the Aberdeen Area Humane Society, to her later Pets N Stuff store in Mobridge, Tami's focus has always been on humans' furry companions and getting them into loving homes.

And even after a long career and a so-called retirement, she still finds ways to help. Through the Wamakaskan Onisca Humane Society, she opens her home to animals in need.

"I'm a foster failure," Tami laughed, admitting three of her own beloved pet dogs were originally supposed to be adopted out.

Served by Cam Wal Electric, Tami's home near Selby is the halfway point for countless animals on their journey from neglect, abuse and homelessness to their forever homes.

"If I have a person that calls me, if someone has found a dog, I ask initially

if they're able to help me with taking care of that dog for a little bit until we can determine whether it belongs to somebody," she explained.

The pets will go to a foster home for the time being — Tami credits volunteers like her friend Annie Walker, a member of Moreau-Grand Electric from the McIntosh area, for stepping up and opening her home to foster animals.

"One day, Tami had a picture of a litter of puppies that needed to be bottle fed," Walker said about her first fostering experience.



Annie Walker with rescue, Layla. *Submitted Photo.*

I keep taking some animals from time to time."

If the dog isn't claimed, the rehoming process begins, starting with veterinary care.

"We go through and we vaccinate and treat the animal and do what's needed to be able to make that puppy or dog available for adoption," Tami continued.

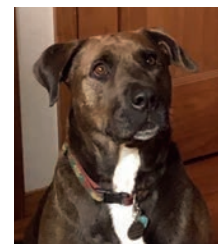
Sadly, the circumstances in which she receives them usually aren't pleasant.

The pets come from around Selby, many from the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations, where they're often found abandoned. Tami recalls coming upon shocking discoveries, like "bait dogs" used to train fighting dogs in the Bismarck area.

"People will steal puppies and kitties and train their pitbulls for fights, and they have a dog that's called a bait dog," she explained. "And that you see in our area as well ... days where [multiple] people are missing their dogs. People are coming in and stealing them and using them as bait dogs."

That's what Tami suspects happened to Cash, a 7-year-old pitbull/lab cross found "in the middle of nowhere" covered in pellet shots and bite marks.

"It took a long time for him to trust and know he's going to be okay here," Tami said. "And I don't



Cash, who was used as a "bait dog," was adopted by Tami. *Submitted Photo*

blame him, because he's never been taken care of.

Tami has made it her mission to end the cycle of animal neglect and abuse where she's able by sterilizing the pets coming into her care before they're adopted out. She also sponsors sterilizations for other peoples' pets.

"We just had about 12 dogs that we sponsored to be spayed at the local vet," she said. "We had a lady that helped me with a donation and wanted it geared toward people that couldn't afford to have their animals spayed and neutered ... We have so many people that always have two litters per year."

Stopping the cycle also means barriers to adoption – if someone isn't a good fit, there's a chance that animal will be surrendered back to the rescue and the process will start from the beginning.

Tami conducts interviews with potential pet owners with hopes of finding a perfect match.

She added that she sometimes steers people with busy and demanding schedules away from getting dogs. A cat – famously independent – is often a better fit, she said.

Tami also employs sustainable adoption practices she says make for better-behaved dogs – eight weeks is generally the earliest age when she'll allow adoptions to occur.

"We have puppy socialization that occurs" when the puppies are little, she explained. "They wrestle and play with their siblings, and they create a lot of socialization that way. And there's a lot of research that has proven that if you keep them with their siblings during that period of time, they make a heck of a lot better dog going forth, because they've been through that socialization."

Jen Uecker, Board President of the Pierre/Fort Pierre Area Humane Society, also known as Paws Animal Rescue, says without volunteers like Tami and Annie, shelters like hers would be overrun and rescuing animals from abandonment wouldn't be possible.

"We rely heavily on volunteers to help ease the burden of our limited staff and resources," Uecker said. "The foster volunteers open their home to these animals not really knowing a whole lot

about them, their demeanor, where they came from, or anything, and they open their homes to help them feel comfortable and confident until they're ready for their new forever family."

Tami encourages people to volunteer, support their local rescues, adopt if they're able and above all, love their pets.

"There are a lot of dogs and cats and it's just not their fault – they get the bad end of things," Walker said. "Tami is super dedicated ... She's always willing to step in and help these animals find a better life."

For Tami, it all comes down to giving that love back.

"They provide unconditional love to humans, and sometimes we forget that," she said. "We work all day ... When you come home, you need to spend some time with your pets."

HUMANE SOCIETY & SANCTUARY DIRECTORY

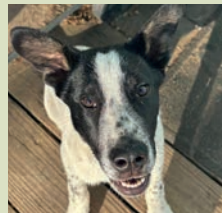
Wamakaskan Onsica (Mobridge).....	(605) 850-8430
Paws Animal Rescue (Pierre).....	(605) 223-2287
Sioux Falls Area Humane Society.....	(605) 338-4441
Humane Society of the Black Hills (Rapid City)....	(605) 394-4170
Battle Mountain Humane Society (Hot Springs)....	(605) 745-7283
Beadle County Humane Society (Huron).....	(605) 352-8955
Aberdeen Area Humane Society.....	(605) 226-1200
Glacial Lakes Humane Society (Watertown).....	(605) 882-2247
Brookings Regional Humane Society.....	(605) 697-7387
Western Hills Humane Society (Spearfish).....	(605) 642-1576
Heartland Humane Society (Yankton).....	(605) 664-4244
Siouxland Humane Society (Sioux City).....	(712) 252-2614
Mitchell Animal Rescue.....	(605) 770-2170
Oglala Pet Project (Kyle).....	(605) 455-1518
Wakpá Wašté Animal Shelter (Eagle Butte).....	(605) 964-7387
Fur and Purr Cat Shelter (Milbank).....	(605) 432-4505
Lake Traverse Animal Rescue (Sisseton).....	(605) 742-0219

Tami says her most rewarding rescue was Fez, an 8-week-old shepherd/collie cross found with mange, a skin disease caused by mites. She said she refused to give on Fez, who is now a healthy dog with a full coat of hair.
Submitted Photo.



Looking for a new home...

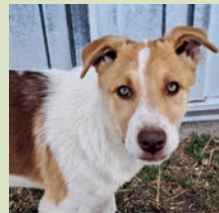
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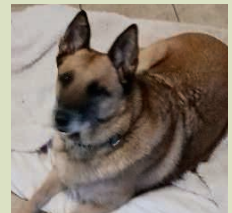
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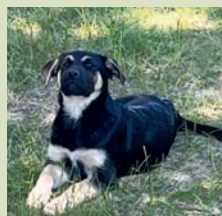
Margot



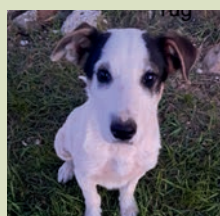
Chopper



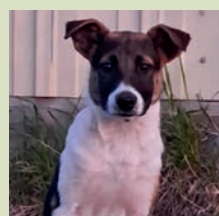
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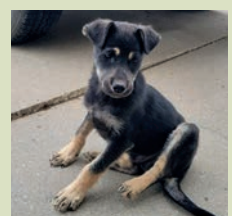
Agnes



Tug



Scooter



Leo



Central Electric Cooperative's distribution lines power members' farms and ranches throughout much of Central South Dakota.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

REMEMBERING WHEN THE LIGHTS CAME ON

Central South Dakota Rancher Looks Back to Days Before Power

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Near Big Bend Dam in central South Dakota, farmer and rancher Clayton Knippling works the same land his father and grandfather had decades before.

The work he and his wife, Evelyn, and two sons do on the sprawling acre family ranch looks very different than it did back then, though. That's because today the ranch has electricity.

Back in the 1940s and early 1950s,

having electricity was a luxury enjoyed almost exclusively by people in towns and cities, or rural folks who happened to live along major highways. With their homestead several miles northeast of Fort Thompson, the Knippings understood their odds of getting connected to a utility were slim for the time being. Their lives were powered by an old diesel generator out in the barn – enough to keep the kitchen refrigerator humming and a couple of light bulbs lit.

“I remember being told, ‘Shut that

refrigerator door! You're wasting cold air!’” Knippling laughed, thinking back to that overworked generator.

But as soon as the electric cooperative crews visited the ranch, that generator was permanently retired and would never run again.

Knippling thought back to that day in the early 1950s when he was about six years old. He remembers watching the trench-diggers from Tri-County Electric – merged into Central Electric in 2000 – trench their way to each outbuilding. Hours later, he would see those buildings shining bright in the darkness for the first time ever.

Having electricity didn't change the work out in the fields. Knippling said a lot of the work is the same in 2025 as it was in 1955. But back at the homestead, Tri-County Electric brought the Knippling ranch into the

20th century.

“We even had a welder after that,” Knippling recalled. “That took 220 volts, and I don’t think our old generator was putting off that. We could then fix our own iron.”

Electricity was a game-changer for the Knipplings’ water needs. Seizing the opportunity, they dug a new, deeper well with an electric pump for better quality water and ran lines out to each building.

“[Before we had electricity] there was a stool and a nail where a tin cup sat, and there was a bucket of water and everybody that came through would drink out of that cup, so if somebody got a cold, we all got it,” Knippling laughed.

“Electricity allowed us to put in a pressure tank and then run the water lines to every house so we weren’t carrying a bucket anymore.”

The ranch also transitioned to all-electric pivot irrigation and pumps along the Missouri River. Today, Knippling Land and Cattle

irrigates 1,300 acres of farm land – an unimaginable figure before there was co-op power.

In the winter, the new electric block heaters for the diesel engines ensured there was always at least one tractor that would start up.

Life was just a little bit brighter, warmer and simpler with co-op power.

An advocate for rural life and progression, Clayton has also served the last 42 years on the board of directors for Midstate Communications, the local member-owned telecom cooperative, in an effort to equalize the disparities between urban and rural life.

“It changed the world back in the ‘50s when electricity came,” Clayton said. “A lot of kids left the farm because it was too rural. If you came from a farm, you didn’t want to come back. After electricity came, it became easier for younger people to stay on the farm.”



Clayton Knippling farms and raises cattle southeast of Fort Thompson on the same ranchland where he grew up, just 15 miles from his childhood home where Tri-County Electric first hooked up their power in the early 1950s.

Photo by Jacob Boyko



Pivot irrigation systems, like the one shown here along S.D. Highway 50 southeast of Fort Thompson, use electricity to rotate on a center pivot. Use of the systems can increase yields while reducing wasted water.

Photo by Jacob Boyko

REGISTER TO WIN!

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

Your Phone Number: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____



JULY 16-20

Danish Days

Dancing, food, parade, etc.
Viborg, SD

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.

JUNE 26-29

Donnie Days

Rodeo, Monster Trucks,
Bean Bags & More
Stickney, SD

JUNE 27

River City Friday Nights

6 p.m.
Fishing for a Cure Night &
Military/Public Service Appreciation
Chamberlain, SD

JULY 3

Pre-Independence Day Party

8 p.m.
Music by Randy Burghardt
Fireworks Show
Epiphany, SD

JULY 4

Rock the Bluffs Fireworks Show

Missouri River
Chamberlain, SD
chamberlainsd.com

JULY 4-5

22nd Annual Foothills Rodeo

Wessington Springs, SD

JULY 11

River City Friday Nights

6 p.m.
Music, Food & Fun
Chamberlain Alumni Night
Chamberlain, SD

JULY 12

Friendship Days Vendor Market

BBQ Cook Off, Prize Raffle
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
City Park
White Lake, SD

JULY 12

**Fedora Fire Department
Annual Appreciation Day**

5 p.m.
Meal, Pie Auction & Bingo
Fire Hall
Fedora, SD

JULY 17-20

Corn Palace Stampede Rodeo

Stampede Park
Mitchell, SD

JULY 19

John Zens Memorial Parade

1 p.m.
Tractors, Cars & Food
Epiphany, SD

JULY 26

Planes, Trains, & Automobiles

10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

AUG. 1-3

Straw Bale Days

Sports, Plays & Parade
Carthage, SD

AUG. 6

Ag Appreciation Day

Sioux Empire Fair
Sioux Falls, SD

AUG. 17

3rd Annual Walk to Remember

Granite Springs Lodge
Alexandria, SD

AUG. 19-21

Dakotafest

Mitchell, SD
www.ideagroup.com/dakotafest

AUG. 20-24

Corn Palace Festival

Carnival, Food & Concerts
Mitchell, SD
www.cornpalace.com

SEPT. 7

Farmer Tractor Parade

1 p.m.
Tractors, Cars & Food
Farmer, SD

SEPT. 9

Central Electric Annual Meeting

Meal: 5:30-6:45 p.m.
Meeting: 6:45-7:30 p.m.
World's Only Corn Palace
Mitchell, SD

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.