

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Preserving Our Past

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Stepping into the Role of General Manager



Ryan Mueller
General Manager

It was an absolute pleasure meeting so many of you at our district meetings throughout June. Visiting face to face, hearing your stories and listening to your priorities reminded me why the cooperative model is so special.

As I step into the role of General Manager at Central Electric Cooperative, I wanted to introduce myself and share why this work means so much to me.

I was born and raised in Crofton, Nebraska, near Gavins Point Dam and the Missouri River. I grew up in between my parents' family farms, with family nearby and more cousins than I could count.

Some of my earliest memories are tied to Nebraska winter blizzards. I can still picture sitting in our house while snow piled up outside, and the excitement when we saw cooperative trucks drive past the window. Even as a kid, I knew what that meant. Help was here. Somebody was out there doing the hard work, and soon the lights would be back on. That sticks with a person.

That connection to rural electricity runs deep in my family. My 96-year-old grandmother still lives on the family farm in the original early-1900s farmhouse. She tells stories about when electricity first came to the rural areas and how it changed everything. It changed how people worked and lived. It gave rural families opportunities they had never had before.

That history became even more real when I worked at Gavins Point Dam as a park ranger. Part of my job was giving tours of the power plant, and I could probably recite a good chunk of that tour from memory. I learned what it took to bring electricity to rural Nebraska and South Dakota and what can happen when neighbors link arms and decide to get something done.

That is rural America in a nutshell. Tell us "no" or "it cannot be done," and we will usually roll up our sleeves and figure out a way to do it anyway.

That same grit helped create the Rural Electrification Act, which celebrates its 90th anniversary this year. I doubt those early pioneers could have imagined how important this electric grid would become. But they knew rural communities deserved a fair shot. They knew farms, homes, schools and small towns mattered. That belief is still at the heart of what we do.

My wife, Kelli, and I moved to Mitchell in 2013, and over the last 13 years this community has become home. We have been blessed with four wonderful kids, so life at our house is usually loud, busy and moving in six directions at once. I also have two older brothers in the Mitchell community, with one living right next door.

When we are not chasing kids or running between youth sports, we stay involved in the community. You might find us boating, cheering on the DWU Tigers, volunteering at church or hosting DWU teams for a meal. I also enjoy woodworking in the shop and working around the yard. My wife says I have a serious problem sitting still, and she is probably right.

As I take on this role, my focus is simple: carry forward the strong legacy Central Electric has built and continue the tremendous work Ken Schlimgen is leaving behind as he enters retirement. Ken set a high bar, and I respect that deeply. Our members and employees deserve leadership that shows up, listens, works hard and does things the right way.

We have challenges ahead, no doubt about it. Regulations, rate structures and the grid are changing. But cooperatives were built for tough times, and when we work together, we can handle what comes next.

Over the coming months, I plan to get out in the field as much as possible and meet more of you firsthand. In the meantime, consider this a personal invitation: if you are near the office, stop in and say hello. My door is open.

Thank you for welcoming me so warmly. I am proud to serve this cooperative, proud of the employees who work hard to keep electricity flowing to our members and proud to work alongside members who keep our rural communities strong. Together, we will keep the lights on and keep building something worth passing on.



Meet the Muellers! Pictured from left to right is daughter Edith, Ryan, son Rex, son Maxx, wife Kelli and daughter Agnes.

CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

(USPS 018-963)

Board of Directors

Aurora County - Duane Wolbrink, President
Brule County - Bradee Pazour, Treasurer
Buffalo County - Donita Loudner
Davison County - Jeff Gustafson, Vice President
Hanson County - Mark Hofer, Secretary
Jerauld County - Mark Reindl
Miner County - Robert Banks
Sanborn County - Jeremy White
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.centralec.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 May 18, 2026, 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, the sale of the former Howard service center, NISC merger, Brule County strategic planning and other management initiatives.

The minutes of the May 2026 safety meeting were reviewed.

District meetings were discussed. The meetings will take place throughout the month of June. An open house event will be held at the new Howard service center on June 22 before the Miner County district meeting.

General Manager Schlimgen presented a resolution to the board of directors to declare .23 acres of land in Aurora County as surplus property. Discussion followed.

General Manager Schlimgen reviewed new rate Policy 873 – High Plains Processing. Discussion followed.

Director Bechen reported on the NRECA Legislative Conference. Discussion followed.

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

Board Action

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to approve a resolution declaring .23 acres of land in Aurora County as surplus property. The motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve Policy 873 – High Plains Processing. The motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to change the date of the September board meeting from September 21 to September 28. The motion carried.

There being no further business, President Wolbrink adjourned the meeting. The next board meeting was scheduled for June 15, 2026.

FINANCIAL REPORT	YEAR TO DATE MAY 2026	YEAR TO DATE MAY 2025
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales	162,277,311 kWh	144,231,038 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$ 19,635,572	\$ 16,716,408
Total Cost of Service	\$ 18,770,099	\$ 16,278,129
Operating Margins	\$ 865,473	\$ 438,280



As unmanned aerial systems (UAS) increasingly populate recreational and professional skies, safety remains paramount – especially near critical infrastructure such as overhead power lines. Today we reaffirm that drones should be flown in open spaces away from electrical lines and substations to prevent power outages and dangerous debris that can threaten public safety.

A drone colliding with a power line can cause outages and, if lines are downed, create serious electrical hazards for anyone nearby. Touching downed lines or debris that has fallen on fences, trees or other objects can result in severe injury or death. If you encounter downed power lines, immediately call 911 and notify emergency personnel and the utility company.

To ensure safe and compliant drone operations, follow federal registration and business-approval requirements, and stay informed about local, state and community regulations. FAA safety guidelines remain essential: Inspect your drone for damage before each flight and repair any issues prior to use. Fly at or below 400 feet unless FAA authorization or an allowed exception applies. Maintain visual line of sight; do not fly beyond it. Avoid airports, manned aircraft, stadiums and crowds of people. Do not fly for unapproved commercial purposes without FAA authorization. Refrain from flying in bad weather, including low visibility or high winds. Never fly recklessly or endanger others; violations can result in fines and penalties.

It is encouraged that drone operators plan routes

that maximize safety and minimize proximity to power infrastructure. Responsible pilots, adherence to FAA guidelines and awareness of local rules can prevent outages, injuries and potentially tragic consequences. For more information on legal requirements and best practices, consult FAA resources and your local utility providers.

Together, we can enjoy the benefits of drone technology while safeguarding our communities and critical electrical infrastructure.

As drone use expands, operators should build safety into every mission from the outset. Calibration, pre-flight checklists, and robust maintenance programs help catch issues before takeoff. Operators are encouraged to use situational awareness tools, such as real-time weather updates and wind assessments, to adjust flight plans accordingly. Community education events and outreach can foster a responsible culture among hobbyists and professionals alike, reinforcing the shared responsibility to protect power networks and nearby residents. By prioritizing safety, we preserve access to this transformative technology for all.



"Call 811 before you dig – always."

Laina Nelson, age 10

Laina reminds members to always call 811 before digging. Thank you for sharing your picture, Laina! Laina's parents are Nathan and Kristen Nelson – members of H-D Electric.

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



Family FAVORITES

PARTY IN A PAN

Ingredients:

1 1/2 lbs. hamburger, browned
1 can cream of celery soup
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 box Stove Top Stuffing Mix
1 can corn, drained
3 cups mozzarella cheese, shredded

Method

Combine the hamburger, celery soup and chicken soup in a bowl and set aside. Prepare the Stove Top Stuffing as directed on the box. Layer half the hamburger mixture, half the corn, half the stuffing and half the cheese; repeat layers again. Bake 30-40 minutes at 350°F or until cheese is melted. Makes 9x13 inch pan.

Kathy Zomer
Douglas Electric

WALLEYE WITH HORSERADISH SAUCE

Ingredients:

2 lbs. walleye fillets
1 cup Lawry's Herb & Garlic marinade
1 tsp. Lawry's Season Salt
1 tsp. lemon pepper
1/4 cup butter
2 tbsp. horseradish
2 tsp. dill

Method

Marinate fish in herb & garlic marinade for 30 minutes. Drain. Sprinkle with season salt and lemon pepper. Bake fish until it flakes. Melt butter in saucepan. Remove from heat and add horseradish. Spoon onto fillet after cooked. Sprinkle on dill and serve.

Valerie Marso
Oahe Electric

BBQ MEATBALLS

Ingredients:

Meatballs

3# ground beef
1 can (12 oz.) evaporated milk
1 cup oatmeal
1 cup cracker crumbs
2 eggs
1/2 cup finely chopped onion
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
2 tsp. chili powder

Sauce

2 cups ketchup
1 cup brown sugar
1/2 tsp. liquid smoke, or to taste
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1/4 cup finely chopped onion

Method

Mix all meatball ingredients together and shape into meatballs. Place meatballs in a baking dish.

Mix all sauce ingredients together and pour over meatballs. Cover and bake at 350°F for one hour. The meatballs can be made ahead of time and frozen for several weeks. This makes a large batch, so it can be divided into smaller batches and frozen.

Karen Soulek
Charles Mix 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 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.



DISTRICT MEETINGS HELD IN JUNE



AURORA COUNTY
DUANE WOLBRINK, DIRECTOR



BRULE COUNTY
BRADEE PAZOUR, DIRECTOR



BUFFALO COUNTY
DONITA LOUDNER, DIRECTOR
CROW CREEK



DAVISON COUNTY
JEFF GUSTAFSON, DIRECTOR



HANSON COUNTY
MARK HOFER, DIRECTOR



JERAULD COUNTY
MARK REINDL, DIRECTOR



MINER COUNTY
BOB BANKS, DIRECTOR



SANBORN COUNTY
JEREMY WHITE, DIRECTOR

We extend special thanks to all cooperative members who attended their local district meeting in June. Your attendance shows you are invested in the future of your cooperative. We also thank the 4-H groups and others who provided food at each meeting.

The meetings in Aurora County, Brule County and Buffalo County included director elections. Duane Wolbrink ran unopposed and will continue to represent Aurora County for three more years. Bradee Pazour ran unopposed and will continue to represent Brule County for three more years. Boston Knippling and Donita Loudner both ran for the Buffalo County seat, and Loudner was reelected to represent Buffalo County for three more years.

Mark your calendar for the Annual Meeting on Sept. 15. A postcard notice will be mailed to all members by Sept. 5. Your input is imperative to help ensure a bright future.

Local Students Attend Rural Electric Youth Tour

Thirty-three teens representing 19 South Dakota electric cooperatives traveled to the Washington, D.C., area in late June for the 2026 South Dakota Youth Tour.

Central Electric Cooperative's Youth Tour representatives were Howard High School student Ann Connor, daughter of Michal and Rebecca Connor; White Lake High School student Alexis Moore, daughter of Clint and Rebecca Moore; Kimball High School student Delilah Rasmussen, daughter of Tony and Rebecca Rasmussen; and Wessington Springs High School student Alexis Roesler, daughter of Aaron and Alicia Roesler.

The annual trip, coordinated by the South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), provides students with a deeper understanding of history, civic engagement and the role of electric cooperatives in their communities. Approximately 1,350 South Dakota students have participated in Youth

Tour since it began in 1963.

The group toured many of the nation's most treasured landmarks, including several presidential and war memorials. Students also visited the U.S. Capitol Building, U.S. Supreme Court, Arlington National Cemetery, National Archives and the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, where much of the nation's paper currency is produced.



While in Washington, students met with U.S. Senators John Thune and Mike Rounds. They also had the opportunity to connect with Youth Tour delegates from 44 other states. The group attended

Youth Day at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center, where keynote speaker Mike Schlappi, a four-time Paralympic medalist in U.S. men's wheelchair basketball, shared a message about perseverance and leadership.

High school juniors in Central Electric's footprint can apply for 2027 Youth Tour trip in November. For more information, visit centralec.coop and click on Member Programs.



Alexis Roesler, Ann Connor, Alexis Moore and Delilah Rasmussen represented Central Electric during the National Rural Electric Youth Tour.



Thirty-three South Dakota students attended the National Rural Electric Youth Tour. They visited the U.S. Capitol, among other sites.

Employee Years of Service



DuWayne
Kimball Area
Lineworker
19 years on July 5



Heather
Administrative
Assistant
7 years on July 16



Evan
Materials
Coordinator
7 years on July 23



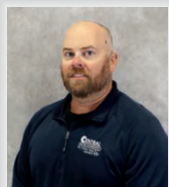
Tim
Mitchell Area
Lineworker
8 years on Aug. 6



Patrick
Manager of
Member Services
& Marketing
11 years on Aug. 17



Rylee
HVAC Fabricator
and Installer
2 years on Aug. 20



Craig
Wessington Springs
Area Lineworker
8 years on Aug. 27



**SOUTH DAKOTA
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

A PAST FIT FOR THE FUTURE

A new lobby welcomes visitors to the Cultural Heritage Center.

Photo by Jacob Boyko

Cultural Center & State Museum Reopens After Extensive Renovation

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

After more than two years spent closed for renovation, South Dakota's state museum and cultural center is back up and running to share the story of South Dakota and its people with visitors from across the state and beyond.

The iconic museum built into the Pierre hillside held its grand reopening July 1 in time for the nation's 250th birthday, showing off new exhibits, a gift shop and an expansion that includes a larger meeting room and more space for its archives.

For Museum Director David Grabitske, the reopening marks a new chapter for the South Dakota State Historical Society, which oversees both the museum and state archives housed there. But it also honors the first laws set forth by the Dakota Territory's first territorial legislature, outlining specific steps and functions for historical preservation for untold future generations of its citizens.

According to Grabitske, many of the

first Dakotan settlers were determined to preserve the history they were making day by day as settlers on the vast American frontier.

"The first three acts [by the territorial legislature] were all about transferring property at the end of life – it's all about inheritance," Grabitske explained. "The fourth act of the territory created the historical society. In my mind, the fourth act goes along with those first three acts; it's about how we give things to the future."

Establishing a historical society demonstrated confidence that there would be a future for the Dakota Territory – complete with a permanent population that would live, grow and prosper there.

"We have a mantra around here," Grabitske said. "We collect today for tomorrow's history."

What that sentiment has amounted to is a sprawling collection of more than 17,000 cubic feet of paper, 50 terabytes of data on its servers, and more than 35,000 individual objects.

"The very first collections that arrived were in 1863, and we still have those in our library," Grabitske said. "They were

library books – 514 of them in 11 boxes."

In the process of collecting and disseminating information, historical societies at the time would collect and make copies of books to trade with other historical societies to expand their collections and diffuse knowledge across a wider area and reduce the risk of losing records to fire.

You'll find those 160 years' worth of books, deeds, contracts and reports



On the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Little Bighorn, Curator of Collections Katy L. Schmidt holds a can found on the battlefield.

Photo by Jacob Boyko

throughout the high-ceilinged, climate-controlled archive wing of the building – but you'll also find objects that aren't necessarily old or inherently valuable.

"The reason we add something into our collection is because it's historic, and what we mean by historic is it has significance and integrity," Grabitske explained. "Something being 'old' just fixes it in time. What makes something historic is that it is significant – it tells the story of people in South Dakota, and it has integrity, which means a certain completeness to tell that story."

To illustrate the point, Grabitske described a recent addition to the museum's collection – a painted tire with the words "no hunting."

"You see these things going down the road [in South Dakota], and we realized we were missing [one for the museum]," he explained. "We found one near Timber Lake which had a story. The lady who gave it to us (family of Dorothy Dopp, courtesy of the Timber Lake & Area Museum) had put it up in 1967 and she had faithfully painted it over the years and knew the dates she had painted it. We don't need 400 of these tires – we need one to represent the whole state."

Visitors to the museum this summer can experience the first three rooms of the updated exhibits. These sections house a welcome area, 'What is History?' exhibit and a gallery. The remaining sections are slated for completion in December 2026 and will feature exhibits on South Dakota's environment, people, politics, conflicts and more.

For more information on the Cultural Heritage Center and the South Dakota State Historical Society, visit history.sd.gov.



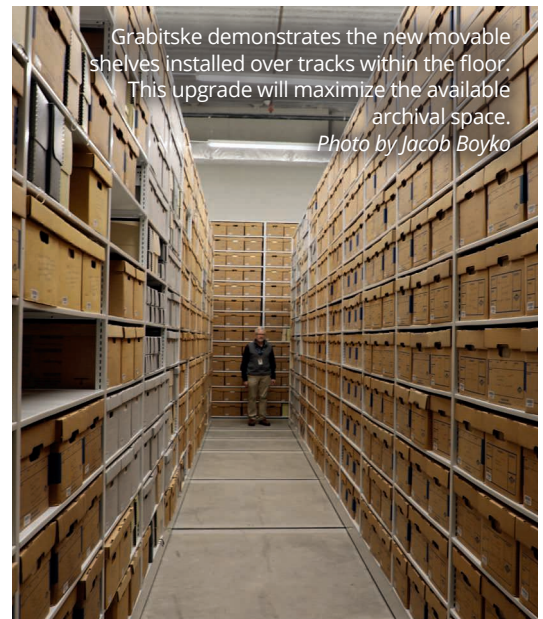
An exhibit showcasing the famous people of South Dakota.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



This plaster doll (left) was gifted to South Dakota by Japan in 1927 to commemorate the United States' 150th birthday. Fifty years later, for the nation's 200th birthday, Japan gifted South Dakota another doll (right).
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Museum Director and South Dakota State Historical Society Assistant Director David Grabitske walks through the extensive art archive, revealing a painting of an electrical lineman working through a winter storm.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Grabitske demonstrates the new movable shelves installed over tracks within the floor. This upgrade will maximize the available archival space.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

Solutions for Post Office Delays

No Stamp Required for These Billing & Payment Options



Lindsey
Customer Service
Representative

The United States Postal Service continues to experience delays in mail delivery, greatly impacting rural areas. This is negatively affecting our members and could cause future disruptions.

To help with the situation, we have many available options for managing and paying your electric bill. Central Electric Cooperative offers a variety of convenient billing and payment options to fit your lifestyle.

Billing Notification Emails

When your bill has been processed, receive an email notifying you of the amount due and due date before your printed statement arrives. No registration is required, simply add an email address to your account.

Prepaid Billing with Pay-As-You-Go

Looking for flexibility? The Pay-As-You-Go plan lets you purchase electricity in advance, much like filling up

your gas tank. No monthly bills, no late fees. Just pay when it's convenient for you.

Pay by Phone

Prefer to make payments by phone? Call our secure, automated payment line at 855-939-3738 and follow the prompts. This method meets all security standards to protect your information.

One-Time Online Payment

For a quick and easy way to pay, visit our website and enter your billing account number and last name or business name to process your payment.

Bank Draft or Recurring Payments

Take the hassle out of bill payments. Set up automatic deductions from your bank account or credit card. Payments are processed on the 15th of each month or the next business day if it falls on a holiday or weekend. You will still receive a bill marked "Do Not Pay – Paid by Bank Draft/Credit Card." To enroll, call 855-939-3738 and choose option 3, or sign up through SmartHub. Please note that declined or returned payments may be assessed a fee.

Drop Box and Payment Kiosk

For your convenience, payments can be made at the following locations.

Betts Road Service Center Drop Box:

25487 403rd Ave., (I-90 Exit 325) Mitchell.

Lode Star Casino Motel Payment Kiosk:

1003 SD Highway 34, Fort Thompson.

SmartHub Options

Access your account any time, day or night. With the SmartHub app, you can:

- View and update account information
- Check energy usage and charges
- Make one-time or recurring payments
- Update payment details
- View and print statements
- Sign up for billing notifications

Sign up for SmartHub today using your email address and electric account number.

For more details or assistance, call 605-996-7516 or 800-477-2892. We're here to help make managing your electric bill simple and stress-free.

SAVE THE DATE!

2026 Annual Meeting

Tuesday, Sept. 15

Corn Palace, Mitchell

Watch for your postcard by Sept. 5



A Legacy of
SERVICE

Basin Electric plans to upgrade its wind turbines near White Lake, South Dakota.
Photos provided by Basin Electric

REPOWERING CROW LAKE

Members in the White Lake area may soon notice activity taking place across the local landscape. Basin Electric Power Cooperative, a power supplier of Central Electric, is working to repower its wind turbines in North Dakota and South Dakota by the end of 2027 in support of its all-of-the-above energy strategy.

The 108-turbine Crow Lake Wind project near White Lake will undergo major improvements as part of this initiative. With the existing blades starting to reach the end of their useful life in 2030, it was determined that repowering is the best option.

“Repowering wind turbines includes installation of new larger blades, a new hub gearbox, main shaft, a generator refurbishment as well as some upgrades to the electrical controls,” said Doug Bradford, senior mechanical engineer at Basin Electric.

Upgrading the turbines with new technology and equipment will improve performance, allowing them to produce more electricity at a lower wind speed. The foundation and towers will remain in place. The removed blades will be shredded and used for concrete fill.

Repowering the turbines will keep them running for another 20 years and produce low-cost electricity for Basin Electric’s membership.

The repowering project will also ensure Crow Lake Wind continues to

generate tax revenues for the citizens of South Dakota. Basin Electric pays taxes based on Crow Lake Wind’s nameplate capacity and its electrical production. Each year, the Crow Lake Wind project contributes more than \$700,000 to the tax base, and those dollars flow to the state, school districts, counties and townships.

Basin Electric expects to start roadwork for the project in 2027. Construction will begin in June 2027, and the repowering project is expected to be complete by the end of 2027.

Central Electric members may be contacted by Basin Electric representatives as the repowering project moves forward. We sincerely value your ongoing partnership. By working together, we can continue to support Basin Electric’s all-of-the-above energy strategy.

Project Overview

- Basin Electric is undertaking a repowering project for Crow Lake Wind to increase generation and extend the facility’s life.
- Crow Lake Wind’s 108 turbines began operating in 2011. The facility is an important part of the cooperative’s generation portfolio, with current capacity of about 170 megawatts (MW).
- Each 1.6MW GE Turbine will receive new 45-meter long blades (increasing overall blade diameter by 20 meters), complete hub, main shaft, main bearing assembly, gearbox and generator refurbishment.
- The existing foundation and tower will remain in place. The removed blades will be shredded and used for concrete fill.

DID YOU KNOW?

Crow Lake Wind contributes more than \$700,000 to the tax base each year. Those dollars flow to the state, school districts, counties and townships.

Crow Lake Wind has a capacity of 170 megawatts. That’s enough electricity to power 150,000 homes.

CO-OP SUMMER OUTREACH

Join Us at S.D. State Fair, Dakotafest, Minn. Farmfest

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Attention all co-op members! If you're heading to the South Dakota State Fair, Dakotafest or Farmfest this summer, stop by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives booths for some great family fun and a chance to win a prize!

Make sure you fill out your coupon on the back of this magazine and bring it with you to the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives booth at the South Dakota State Fair or Dakotafest for your chance to win one of two electric grills sponsored by Karl's TV & Appliance.

South Dakota State Fair – Sept. 3, 2026

South Dakota's electric cooperatives will host the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives booth at the South Dakota State Fair in Huron, Thursday, Sept. 3, 2026.

This one-day event will feature a slew of energy-themed activities, from bucket truck rides lifting you more than 50 feet above the state fairgrounds to an interactive pole climbing demonstration complete with real spiked boots and climbing gear that linemen use every day on the job. We've also partnered up with South Dakota One Call to remind you to always call 811 before you start digging – but your kids are welcome to use our mini excavator in our sandbox to uncover buried treasure!

While you're here, check out our on-site displays for select highly efficient, all-electric heat pumps and mini-splits, water heaters, yard tools and more!

Find our booth near the Horticulture Building.

Dakotafest – Aug. 18-20, 2026

You'll want to stop by the South Dakota Touchstone Energy Cooperatives building at Dakotafest in Mitchell, Aug. 18-20!

Join us for fresh-off-the-grill brats, oven-baked cookies and freezie pops as you learn about the latest in home energy savings and efficiency. We'll have other cool stuff for you to check out, including an automatic lawn mower, a solar panel display and an EGO Power+ Portable Power Station.

Minnesota Farmfest – Aug. 4-6, 2026

Minnesota members, come visit your electric cooperative at Minnesota Farmfest near Redwood Falls, Aug. 4-6, 2026. Members may enter a raffle drawing for one of five battery-operated yard tools. We'll even have the high-voltage trailer on site for a live demonstration to remind visitors to be safe around overhead and buried power lines.



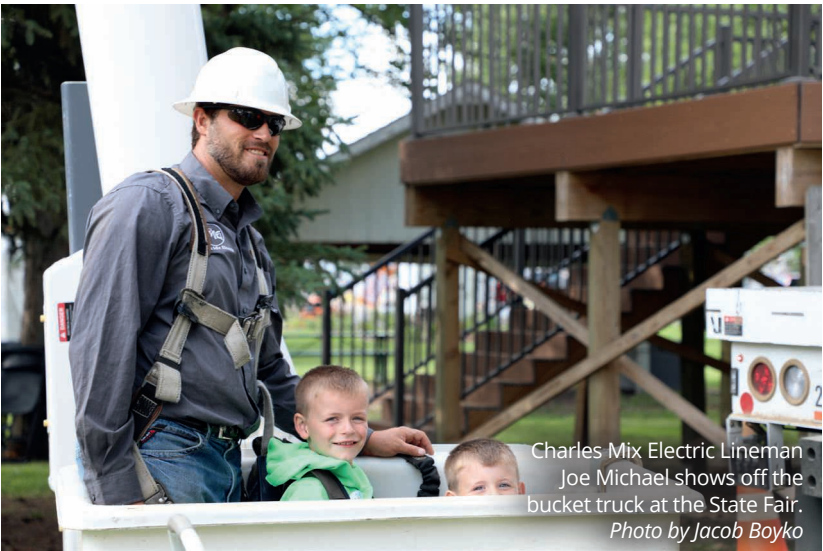
Kids perfected their utility pole climbing skills at the South Dakota State Fair.

Photo by Jacob Boyko



Touchstone Energy Cooperatives host a booth at Dakotafest in 2025.

Submitted Photo



Charles Mix Electric Lineman Joe Michael shows off the bucket truck at the State Fair.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Fairgoers get a lineman's view of the State Fair! *Photo by Jacob Boyko*



A future lineman readies for his climb.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Show off your co-op spirit with temporary tattoos! *Photo by Jacob Boyko*



A line forms for bucket truck rides.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Booth visitors can win prizes by playing Plinko.
Submitted Photo

DISTRIBUTED ENERGY RESOURCES

Streamlining Interconnection through Collaboration



Patrick [redacted]
Manager of Member
Services and Marketing

As Distributed Energy Resources (DERs) continue to grow in popularity, electric utilities are seeing an increasing number of member-owned projects, including solar arrays, battery storage systems, standby generators, wind turbines and other customer-owned generation. While these technologies offer greater energy independence and resiliency, they also require careful coordination to ensure the safety and reliability of the electric distribution system.

Energy providers play a critical role in evaluating every DER installation before it is connected to the grid. Each project must be reviewed to determine its impact on system capacity, voltage regulation, protection coordination, and overall reliability. The interconnection process also ensures compliance with utility standards and applicable regulations while protecting cooperative personnel and the public.

Historically, interconnection agreements and supporting documentation have relied on paper forms, emails and manual communication between members, contractors and cooperative staff. As the number of DER projects increases, these methods can become time-consuming and difficult to manage.

To improve efficiency and the member experience, many cooperatives are adopting interconnection management platforms such as Nova Portal.

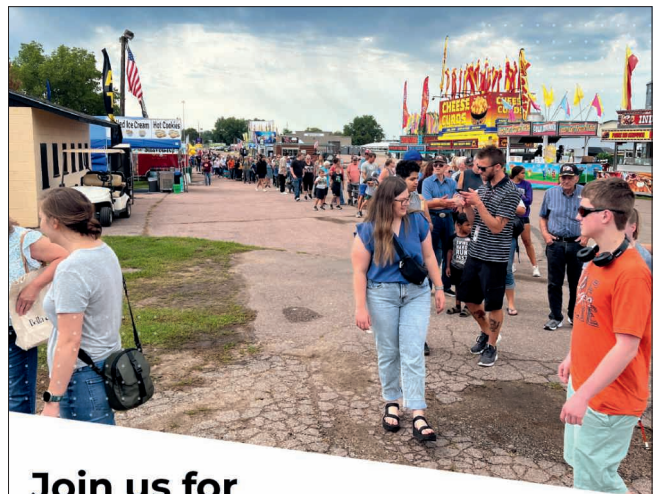
Nova Portal serves as a centralized online system where members, contractors, engineers and cooperative personnel can submit applications, upload required documents, monitor project status and communicate throughout the approval process.

Using a single platform provides greater transparency and accountability for everyone involved. Members can easily track the progress of their projects, while cooperative personnel benefit from standardized workflows, organized documentation and improved communication. This streamlined process reduces administrative workload, minimizes delays caused by incomplete applications and allows engineering staff to focus on technical evaluations rather than paperwork.

For energy providers, adopting a digital interconnection platform is more than an operational improvement, it is an investment in customer service. A consistent, transparent process builds trust with members while ensuring every project is reviewed thoroughly and connected safely.

As DER adoption continues to expand, efficient interconnection processes will become increasingly important. Platforms like Nova Portal help bridge the gap between members and their cooperative by simplifying paperwork, improving communication and supporting timely project approvals.

Please call me with any questions or stop by the office if you are considering a wind, solar or battery project. Central Electric strives to help our members successfully integrate new technologies while maintaining the reliable electric service our members depend on.



Join us for Ag Appreciation Day

Wednesday, August 5, 2026
Lunch served 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



New Howard Service Center Offers Additional Space for Trucks, Equipment



Central Electric Cooperative hosted an open house on June 22, inviting members and the public to view the new Howard Service Center on the west edge of town.

The cooperative's previous location on Highway 34 had served employees since the early 1950s and was purchased by Kingbrook Rural Water. Although an addition was built onto the prior facility in 2008, continued growth in equipment size and operational needs made a new building necessary.

The cooperative partnered with Howard Industries to secure the land for the project, which was purchased as part of Central Electric's

long-term plan to modernize its facilities. The new building and pole yard provide additional space to accommodate today's larger trucks and equipment. The upgraded facility also offers improved work and storage space, allowing employees to respond to outages and complete day-to-day operations more safely and effectively.

The Howard location is staffed by Foreman Landon Laible and Journeyman Lineworker Davis Mathison. This investment reflects our ongoing commitment to providing reliable electric service while supporting the community. Thanks to all who attended!



Central Electric partnered with Howard Industries to secure the land for the new building. Left to right: retired General Manager Ken Schlimgen, John Mengenhausen and Lynn Borgers of Howard Industries, Central Electric Director Bob Banks and General Manager Ryan Mueller.



Tree Trimming Notice

Crews from Friest Tree Experts LLC are trimming trees across our service area in July and August, focusing on trouble areas identified in the field.

- Trucks will display Central Electric magnetic logos
- Crews will work Monday-Thursday (Fridays if weather delays occur)
- Door hangers are left if trimming is needed in a member's yard

This is one aspect of the maintenance required to continue delivering safe, reliable power. Thanks for your cooperation!

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: _____ Dakotafest – Find us in the Touchstone Energy Building!
Your Email Address: _____ S.D. State Fair – Find us in the Horticulture Park!

WIDER OWNED BY THOSE WE SERVE
WAYS AND COOL OFF IN OUR
LEARNING ABOUT ELECTRICITY



AUG. 18-20
Dakotafest
2300 E. Spruce St.
Mitchell, SD

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.

JULY 31-AUG. 2

Straw Bale Days

Theater, Parade, Food, Bean Bag Tournament, Mud Volleyball
Carthage, SD

AUG. 1-2

Family Camping Weekend

Prairie Village
Madison, SD

AUG. 5

Ag Appreciation Day

11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Sioux Empire Fair
Sioux Falls, SD

AUG. 7

Raise Em' Rank Bull Riding & Breakaway Roping

Geddes, SD
605-680-2763

AUG. 8

SpiritFest

Community Meal, Kids Fishing, Car Show & Vendor Fair
Plankinton, SD
Facebook: Plankinton School Dist.

AUG. 8-9

South Dakota Senior Games

Events for People Ages 50+
Huron, SD
Register by July 26
SouthDakotaSeniorGames.org
605-295-2039

AUG. 14-15

Crow Creek Waćipi

9 a.m.-6 p.m.
Fort Thompson, SD
605-245-2221

AUG. 15

Melon Festival

Car Show, Live Music, Bean Bag Tournament
Forestburg, SD
605-770-2132

AUG. 16

Walk to Remember

1-4 p.m.
Granite Springs Lodge
Alexandria, SD
HealingHopes.com

AUG. 22

McCrossan Boys Ranch Xtreme Event Challenge

McCrossan Boys Ranch
Sioux Falls, SD
605-339-1203

AUG. 27-30

Steam Threshing Jamboree

Prairie Village
Madison, SD

SEPT. 3

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives at the South Dakota State Fair

9 a.m.-5 p.m.
State Fairgrounds – Horticulture Park
Huron, SD
605-224-8823

SEPT. 12

9th Annual Pink Ladies Ribfest

Vendor Fair: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Bean Bag Tournament: 12 p.m.
Ribfest Cookoff: 4-7 p.m.
Emery, SD
605-261-9057

SEPT. 12

Artesian Fall Festival

Bingo, Inflatables, Food, Vendors
3-8 p.m.
Artesian Ball Park
Artesian, SD

SEPT. 13

Antique Car & Tractor Parade

Food by Hanson Co. Pink Ladies
Registration: 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m.
Parade 1 p.m.
Vendors & Inflatables
Farmer, SD
605-641-5498

SEPT. 15

Central Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting

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.