

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Rural Electrification

**West Central - The Last
Co-op to Incorporate**
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Rural Electrification served even
the most rural communities.



Central Electric board members and management recently attended the Basin Electric Power Cooperative annual meeting to learn about increasing power costs.

Power Costs Expected to Increase



Ken Schlimgen
General Manager

Thank you to all of the members who attended your cooperative's annual meeting on Sept. 9. The annual meeting, State Fair, schools starting and football games are a clear signal that fall is here.

Your cooperative has had a busy summer filled with many projects. The largest of those was building the infrastructure for the new High Plains Processing facility south of Mitchell. This was the largest single project your

cooperative has ever undertaken. With the leadership of Manager of Operations Brian Bultje, his team completed the project on time and under budget.

In addition, we've seen more new homes and projects starting in our service area than expected. This growth is a positive sign for our local economy and naturally increases the demand for electricity. We are not alone in this trend; similar growth is occurring across much of Basin Electric's service territory.

One year ago, I shared that Basin Electric was forecasting an \$8 billion investment in new generation and transmission infrastructure over the next decade. At that time, we anticipated modest wholesale cost increases in 2025 and 2026. Since then, demand has continued to rise, and Basin Electric now estimates more than \$10 billion will be required—and on a faster timeline than originally planned.

One major driver of this change is a rule adjustment by the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), our regional

transmission organization. The new rule requires Basin Electric to own additional generation assets to ensure enough reserve power is available during times of extreme demand.

Because wholesale power makes up about 70% of Central Electric's annual expenses, changes at this level have a direct and significant impact on our budget. It's not something we can absorb without eventually passing some of the cost to members.

So, what can we do together to help? The answer lies in how electricity is used. Peak demand—how much electricity is used at the same time—plays a major role in costs. You can help by spreading out your energy usage when possible and by participating in programs such as water heater load management. Small actions, when multiplied across thousands of members, make a meaningful difference.

As Basin Electric and East River Electric continue evaluating their plans, we are advocating on your behalf to ease the timing and impact of these increases. We know any rise in electric rates affects your families and businesses, and we are committed to managing those impacts responsibly.

This is not the first time we've faced challenges of this scale. In the 1980s, Basin made significant investments in new generation that led to rate increases. But those investments were followed by a decade of stability with very little change in wholesale rates. That history gives me confidence in the cooperative model's ability to adapt, and I remain optimistic about our future.

I will continue to share updates as we learn more. Once wholesale power costs for 2026 are finalized, we will prepare our budget and communicate what that means for members. Thank you for your trust and support as we work through these changes together.

Until next month, stay safe!

CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

(USPS 018-963)

Board of Directors

Aurora County - Duane Wolbrink
Brule County - Bradee Pazour
Buffalo County - Donita Loudner
Davison County - Jeff Gustafson
Hanson County - Mark Hofer
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.

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Board Meeting Summary

The board of directors met July 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 Schlimgen reported on the South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) legal seminar, East River Electric Managers' Advisory Committee, Basin Electric updates, Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) activities, Rural Utilities Service, FEMA mitigation grant program, Howard Service Center construction, 2026 wholesale power cost projections and other management activities.

The minutes of the June safety meeting were reviewed.

Director Van Walleghen reported on the S.D. Association of Cooperatives board meeting and activities.

Ben Bratrud with Power Systems Engineering (PSE) presented the initial electric cost-of-service study results. PSE will update the study with 2026 power cost projections and provide a completed study at a future board meeting.

Director Gustafson reported on the SDREA board meeting.

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

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

Board Action

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to approve second quarter 2025 invoices for legal services. The motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to accept second quarter 2025 general manager and director expenses. The motion carried.

There being no further business, President Wolbrink adjourned the meeting. The next board meeting was scheduled for Aug. 18, 2025.

FINANCIAL REPORT	YEAR TO DATE JULY 2025	YEAR TO DATE JULY 2024
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales	196,329,452 kWh	201,673,690 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$ 23,032,098	\$ 21,565,568
Total Cost of Service	\$ 22,466,278	\$ 21,552,044
Operating Margins	\$ 565,820	\$ 13,524

Go Above and Beyond for a Safe Harvest

Anne Prince

NRECA

Modern farming often relies on data and equipment with GPS and auto-guidance systems. However, even with these modern conveniences, farm workers must remain vigilant. That's because farming is considered one of the most dangerous jobs.

Massive machinery is indispensable to farming, but the same impressive size, height and extensions make them particularly vulnerable to contacting power lines. That's why staying alert, focused and knowledgeable about potential hazards and safety procedures is crucial.

During a busy harvest season, the familiar sights around the farm can easily fade into the background, and farm workers can overlook the power lines overhead. However, failing to notice them can lead to deadly accidents.

360 Awareness

Awareness of your surroundings, around, above and below, and planning safe equipment routes can significantly reduce the risk of accidents. Even with GPS and auto-steering, it's imperative that farm workers keep a close eye on the equipment's location and are ready to take action if necessary.

Exposed underground powerlines, defective wiring in farm buildings and extension cords are also hazards. Grain bins can pose a potential danger as well. The National Electrical Safety Code requires power lines to be at least 18 feet above the highest point on any grain bin with which portable augers or other portable filling equipment are used.

Smart Harvest Safety Tips

To ensure a safer harvest season, SafeElectricity.org recommends the following tips to avoid electrical accidents on the farm:

- Exercise caution near power lines. Be careful when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Use spotters when operating large machinery near power lines. Ensure the spotters do not touch the machinery while it is moving near power lines.

- Lower equipment extensions, portable augers or elevators before moving or transporting equipment. Do not raise equipment, such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember that non-metallic materials like lumber, tree limbs, ropes and hay can conduct electricity, especially when damp, dusty or dirty.
- Never attempt to raise or move power lines to clear a path. Doing so could result in electric shock or death.
- Avoid using metal poles inside bins. Don't use metal poles to break up bridged grain inside or around bins.
- Hire qualified electricians. Ensure that qualified electricians handle work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

While rare, the only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire. However, if it happens, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the machinery and the ground at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.



"Don't play with outlets!"

Kinzlee Klomp, Age 12

Kinzlee warns readers not to play with power outlets. Great advice, Kinzlee! Kinzlee's parents are Kaitlin and Austin Klomp from Box Elder, 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.

Fresh BREADS

ZUCCHINI BREAD

Ingredients:

3 eggs
2 cups sugar
1 cup oil
2 tsps. vanilla
3 cups flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
3 cups zucchini (shredded)

Method

Cream together eggs, sugar and oil. Then add the vanilla. Mix together the flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon and add to the egg mixture. Stir in zucchini. Pour into two loaf pans. Bake at 325°F for approximately one hour.

Kimberly Grimm
Southeastern Electric

GLUTEN FREE OATMEAL PANCAKES

Ingredients:

2 1/2 cups oats
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. salt
2 eggs
1/2 cup milk
3/4 cup applesauce
3 tsps. maple syrup
2 tsps. apple cider vinegar
2 tsps. vanilla

Method

Grind 2 1/2 cups oats in blender until turned into flour. In large bowl, whisk together oats, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon and salt. Form a bowl in center, add eggs and whisk them. Then, add milk, applesauce, maple syrup, apple cider vinegar and vanilla. Stir to combine. Wait five minutes to thicken batter. Cook in oiled pan.

Jean Beauchamp
Southeastern Electric

KUNSI' FRY BREAD

Ingredients:

1 tbsp. yeast (quick rise)
2 tsps. sugar
1 qt. warm water
1 tbsp. oil/melted butter
1/2 tsp. salt
6 cups all-purpose flour
2 tsps. powdered dry milk
4 cups oil for frying

Method

Mix yeast, sugar, salt, warm water, oil/melted butter and let proof for 15 minutes. Mix flour and powdered dry milk. Make a well in the flour mixture and add yeast mixture. Gradually add warm water until dough comes together and is no longer sticky. Cover and let rise until doubled in size. Heat oil to fry dough. Separate dough into 10 to 12 baseball-size dough balls (or smaller if you want smaller pieces). Stretch dough balls and shape into oval discs or round discs approximately 1/4 inch thick. Test the oil to see if it's hot enough by dropping a small pea size piece of the dough in the oil. If it floats it's ready. Flatten the disc between your hands and stretch it again. Fry the bread until both sides are golden brown. Transfer to paper towel lined plate to drain. Continue until all the dough is fried. Enjoy with soup or a Spam and egg sandwich or taco toppings.

Sheila Ironheart
Whetstone Valley 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.

POWERED BY PURPOSE

"Co-ops in the Classroom" is one way Central Electric supports local communities. Pictured above, Kimball Lineworker Norton Truman teaches students about electrical safety.

Celebrating National Co-op Month in October



Tara Miller
Manager of
Communications

Electric cooperatives across the United States celebrate National Co-op Month in October, reflecting on the unique advantages of being part of a cooperative. It's also a great time to thank our members who make it all possible. For us, it's not just a celebration. It's a chance to reaffirm the values that guide everything we do.

At Central Electric, we see purpose in action all the time. Unlike investor-owned utilities,

our co-op doesn't exist to make profits for shareholders. We exist to serve our members, our neighbors and our communities. That purpose is what sets us apart. It's why we were founded, and it's what continues to drive every decision we make.

Being a cooperative means we are member-owned and locally controlled. That's our business model. Members have a voice in how the co-op operates. You elect board members who live right here in our service area and understand the unique challenges and opportunities our communities face. Decisions aren't made in corporate offices hundreds of miles away; they're made at home by people who care about the same things you do.

This local accountability means we can stay focused on what matters most: delivering safe, reliable electricity and providing real value to the people we serve.

We do that by investing in essential infrastructure upgrades and technologies that strengthen our ability to provide electric service. We work hard to manage costs and keep rates fair, because we know how much rising prices affect our members. And when storms hit or outages occur, Central Electric's crews are here and ready to respond quickly, because we live here too.

But our commitment extends well beyond delivering electricity, as you may know. Our Service Department offers heating and cooling services, electrical wiring and appliances, because co-ops were built to help meet community needs. Central Electric also supports communities through Operation Round-Up® grants and educational outreach programs.

Your electric co-op is also planning for the future. As demand for electricity grows due to new technologies, farming advancements and economic development, co-ops are working to ensure we continue to meet those needs with a balanced, reliable energy mix.

That's the power of the cooperative difference. That's what it means to be powered by purpose.

During National Co-op Month, we encourage you to take pride in your cooperative membership. You're not just a customer, you're an owner, a stakeholder and a vital part of a larger effort to keep our community strong, connected and energized.

NATIONAL IT PROFESSIONALS DAY



Ryan Mueller
IT Systems Manager



Kelly Kidwiler
IT Systems Coordinator

SEPT. 16, 2025

Recognizing IT Professionals, Electricians

From computers and iPads to hard hats and pliers, it takes all kinds of equipment and expertise to power the cooperative. In September, we celebrate two groups of professionals who play very different roles, yet share the same dedication to keeping the cooperative running smoothly: our information technology (IT) professionals and our electricians.

Sept. 16 is IT Professionals Day, a time to recognize the individuals who keep our computer systems secure, reliable and efficient. From safeguarding member data to supporting the technology that powers our daily operations, our IT professionals work diligently behind the scenes to help ensure internal systems function as intended. Their efforts often go unnoticed until a computer program or system has an issue, and then we are quickly reminded of how vital their expertise truly is.

Sept. 19 is National Tradesmen Day. For this occasion, we recognize the electricians in our service department and employees who previously worked as electricians for their contributions as tradesmen. They work hard in the field, wiring houses, shops and grain bins and burying overhead lines. These projects often demand long hours and a deep knowledge of electricity. Thanks to their skill and dedication, our customers can count on safe, reliable power when it matters most.

Both groups embody the cooperative spirit of service, problem-solving and teamwork. While one keeps the digital lights on and the other keeps the yard light glowing, together they make our cooperative stronger. This month, we proudly salute our IT professionals and electricians for the important roles they play in powering Central Electric forward.

NATIONAL TRADESMEN DAY



Brandon Auch
Appliance
Repair Tech.,
Electrician



Ryan Bigge
Electrician



Kyle Boehmer
Electrician



Dave Henkel
Metering & Load
Management,
Electrician



Kevin Johnson
Electrician



Tim Olinger
Lineworker,
Electrician



Ken Schlimgen
General Manager,
Electrician



Patrick Soukup
Manager of
Member Services,
Electrician



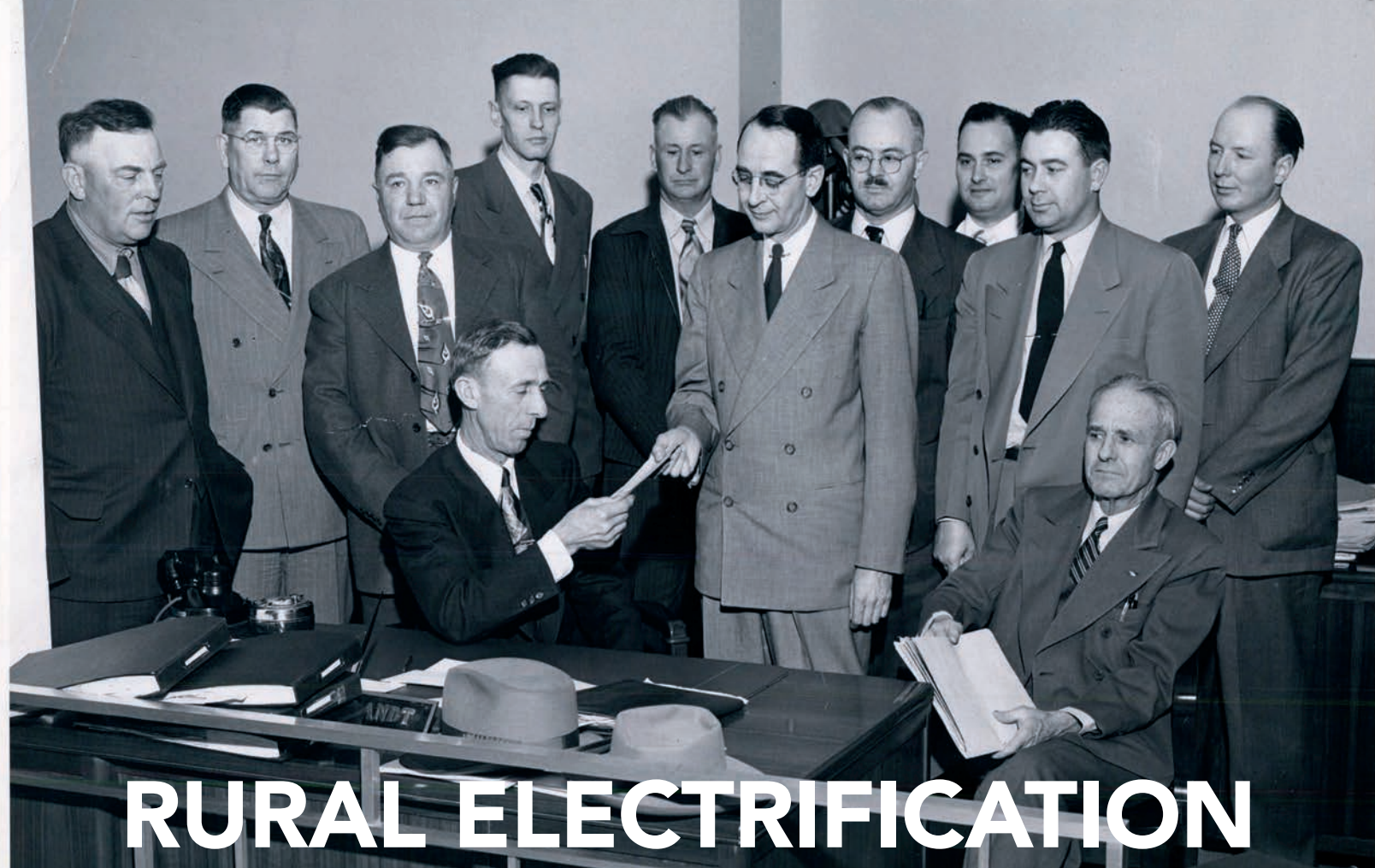
Rodney Weber
Electrician

SEPT. 19, 2025



**HAPPY
NATIVE
AMERICAN
DAY ON
OCTOBER 13**

CENTRAL
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
Your Traditional Energy Cooperative



RURAL ELECTRIFICATION

WEST CENTRAL

Last to Incorporate, Lasting in Impact

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Before rural electrification, South Dakota's farmsteads ended the day in silence. There was no music from the radio playing in the living room or hum of an electric refrigerator in the kitchen. Over decades of work, power lines would stretch across the prairie through President Franklin Roosevelt's vision of rural electrification, carrying not only electricity but also a new way of life.

In 1935, President Roosevelt created the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) as part of his New Deal policies to revive a nation struggling through the Great Depression and bring electricity to

America's rural communities, something that private and investor-owned utilities refused to do.

Clay-Union Electric was the first rural community in South Dakota to adopt the cooperative model in 1937, and West Central was the last in 1949. But as former West Central Electric CEO Steve Reed can attest, being the last to adopt the cooperative way didn't hinder their success. Once the path to forming a cooperative was established, the members of West Central benefitted from electricity's transformation from a luxury into a necessity with the rest of rural South Dakota.

"We couldn't rely on the power

West Central Electric board directors present a check to a representative of Central Electric and Gas in 1951, finalizing the cooperative's purchase of the private utility system. *Photo submitted by West Central Electric.*

companies to come out to serve rural South Dakota," said Reed, a 42-year cooperative veteran who joined West Central Electric as a lineman and worked his way up to CEO. "They were never going to do it at price that was affordable, so rural electric has been great for not only the members of West Central but the entire country."

So why was West Central the last to form a cooperative? According to Reed, the rural communities that organized West Central Electric in 1949 had several hurdles to clear. The first was overcoming the sheer remoteness of the territory, which then had a system that averaged 1.5 members per mile of line constructed, even including towns and

cities. Because members were few and far between, the REA needed the towns in the proposed West Central territory to become members: from Philip to Hayes and Murdo to Kennebec, where West Central Electric was incorporated.

That led to the next problem: the towns and cities in the proposed West Central Electric's service territory were already being served by Central Electric and Gas, a private company based out of Philadelphia. This obstacle didn't stop the people who had a vision of what rural electrification could accomplish. Following lengthy discussion in 1951, West Central Electric purchased systems from Central Electric and Gas for \$850,000 using low-interest REA federal funds.

Former West Central Electric Attorney John Larson outlined the discussions in his 50th Annual Meeting Speech: "There was no choice but to buy out the private supplier, Central Electric and Gas, and that was accomplished... (Former South Dakota Governor M. Q. Sharpe, who served as West Central Electric's attorney), showed up for the meeting that morning unshaven and unkempt, with a threadbare shirt and suit. For the entire morning, he listened with his head down and eyes shut to the Philadelphia lawyer types who represented the power company. After the dinner break, however, he showed up in a new suit, shaved, and took over the meeting by dictating exactly what West Central would do and what we would pay. During an afternoon break, one of the Philadelphia types was heard to mutter, 'You want to watch that old guy. When he's got his head down and eyes shut, he's not sleeping!'"

West Central Electric's 1951 purchase included all the electrical infrastructure within the town boundaries, as well as the diesel generation system extending west from Chamberlain. Shortly after, the evolution of West Central Electric progressed with the construction of distribution systems to farms and reconstructing the systems of various

towns, including the installation of street lights.

Since that iconic moment, West Central has continued to grow with its membership, meeting more demand for electrical energy than had been previously thought possible, a reflection of just how integral electricity has

become in day-to-day living for business owners, ag producers, and rural folk alike.

"That moment modernized us," said Reed. "It just did so much for everything – and without it, where would we be?"



(Top) A West Central Electric Annual Meeting.
(Bottom) A West Central Electric Board Meeting with the REA.
Photos submitted by West Central Electric

Reliable Power Starts with System Maintenance



Brian Bultje

Manager of Operations

Each year, your cooperative takes a close look at one of the most important parts of our electric system: the poles that carry power to homes, farms and businesses.

Wooden poles may look simple, but they carry heavy wires and equipment every day through wind, rain, ice and storms.

Over time, poles can weaken or decay. That's why regular testing is so important. It helps us find problems before they cause power outages.

This summer, SBS Power Pole Inspections completed our annual inspection program in Brule, Buffalo and Jerauld Counties. Crews went out and checked poles, grounds and safety devices.

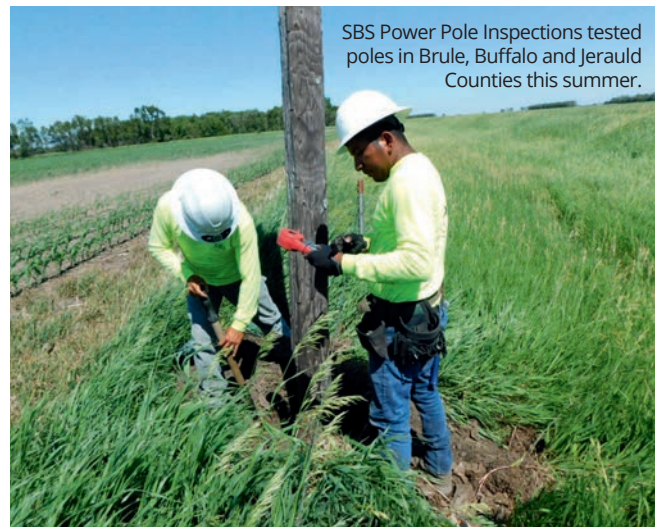
Compared to last year, the overall number of rejected poles went down by 1.2%, which shows our system is staying strong. However, the number of grounds needing repair was 1.8% higher, reminding us that weather and farm equipment take a toll, so regular maintenance is a must.

Why Does it Matter to Members?

Every pole that's tested and every repair that's made adds up to a stronger, more reliable electrical system. By finding damaged or decayed poles and testing grounds, we can perform maintenance before issues occur. That means fewer unplanned outages, safer equipment and lower operating costs over time. Pole inspections are a critical part of what keeps your lights on day after day.

Pole Testing Results

- **4,912 Poles Tested** – 2.9% failed inspection and will need to be replaced.
- **1,547 Grounds Tested** – 20% of grounds tested were repaired or replaced. Grounds ensure electricity flows into the ground if there's a fault or lightning strike, so keeping them in good condition is critical for safety.
- **68 New Anchor Guy Guard Markers Installed** – These bright covers make guy wires easier to see and help prevent accidents with equipment or vehicles.
- **115 Animal Guard Pole Wraps Installed** – These wraps help prevent outages by keeping squirrels, raccoons and other critters from climbing up and making contact with electrical equipment on top of the pole.



SBS Power Pole Inspections tested poles in Brule, Buffalo and Jerauld Counties this summer.

Operation Round-Up® Grants Available for Community Projects



Grant applications for Central Electric Cooperative's Operation Round-Up® program are due Oct. 31, 2025. Through Operation Round-Up, funds are awarded twice each year to organizations that benefit area communities.

Applicants do not need to be members of Central Electric Cooperative, but eligible projects should have a positive impact

in Central Electric's service area, which includes Aurora, Brule, Buffalo, Davison, Hanson, Jerauld, Miner and Sanborn Counties.

Operation Round-Up is a voluntary program in which members round their electric bill up to the next whole dollar each month, and the extra cents are used to fund grants. A number of cooperative employees

and board members also contribute to the fund. Since 2015, Central Electric members, employees and board members have invested more than \$230,000 to support projects.

Complete funding guidelines and a fillable grant application can be found online at www.centralelec.coop under member programs.

Don't Be Left in the Cold this Fall



Lincoln Feistner

Sales & Project
Manager

It's that time of year when folks are firing up their furnace for the season, and the last thing you want is to be stuck with no heat. Did you know the primary cause of furnace breakdowns is cracked heat exchanger? This costly problem usually results in replacing your entire furnace.

So, how can you avoid it? The number one cause of cracks is restricted airflow. Without enough air moving over it, the heat exchanger overheats and expands until it breaks, just like a frying pan left on high heat with nothing in it.

Airflow issues may be caused by:

- Dirty filters – A clogged filter blocks air from moving through your system.
- Closed vents – Shutting vents increases pressure, slowing your blower and reducing airflow.
- Blocked vents – Furniture or curtains over vents create the same problem.

The solution is regular maintenance. Avoiding these airflow mistakes helps, but nothing beats a professional tune-up. ENERGY STAR® recommends annual fall maintenance before the busy heating season.

Our team of heating and cooling professionals is prompt, friendly and knowledgeable. Schedule your furnace tune-up with Central Electric for just \$110 or sign up for a preventative maintenance plan to extend the life of your system.

READY FOR HUNTERS?

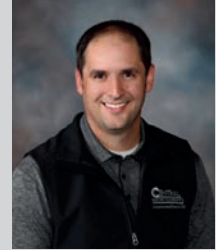
Call 605-996-7516
before hunters arrive
for a check-up on
heating equipment and
appliances.



Employee Years of Service



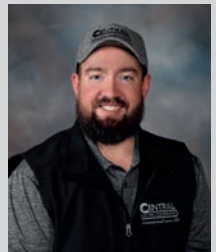
Jonathan Reichert
Plankinton Area
Foreman
15 years on Sept. 1



Ryan Mueller
IT Systems Manager
10 years on Sept. 1



Dave Henkel
Metering & Load
Management
7 years on Sept. 10



Andrew Baier
Materials & Plant
Supervisor
9 years on Sept. 12



Lincoln Feistner
Sales & Project
Manager
24 years on Sept. 17



Heather Wiczorek
Customer Service
Representative
9 years on Oct. 11



Jesse Baker
Kimball Area
Foreman
23 years on Oct. 21

Thanks
for your
dedication!



Photo submitted by JT and Luann Weber.

GENERATIONAL FARMERS

Four Generations of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Members Ranch on Lake Benton-Area Land

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Nestled amongst the rolling green pastures of western Minnesota, there's a generations-old farm worked by one family for over three quarters of a century.

From their Lincoln County property, the Weber family watched rural electrification improve the prairie, connect neighbors and bring reliability to farmsteads. Now they watch precision agriculture guide planting, bovine genetics strengthen herds, and social media and the internet connect their business to the wider world.

It all started in 1947, when John and Marie Weber moved into the old three-bedroom farmhouse from nearby

Elkton, S.D. Luckily, the move came six years after Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative energized lines in the area, so the Weber home enjoyed many of the modern amenities brought on by rural electrification, including electric lights, kitchen appliances and a washing machine.

"I know I had the best mom and dad in the world," said JT, one of John and Marie's eight children, who today helps run the ranch with his wife, Luann, their three sons and their families. "Dad was very community-oriented. He was on the school board, the elevator board and the rural water board. In fact, he was instrumental in starting rural water. He went from place to place, talking people

into getting rural water."

JT was born on the farm in 1957 during a blizzard that left his parents unable to reach the hospital in town. As a boy, he remembers collecting rainwater in a cistern and using it for cooking, cleaning and baths. Even as rural electrification began to transform the countryside, life on the farm remained far different – and often harder – than life in town.

"When I grew up, back in the 60s and 70s, if you milked 40 cows that was quite a few," JT said. "We were milking about 100 cows – we were kind of ahead of our time. But we had a big family, and us boys, we got right in there."

He continued, "We were hauling silage, hauling manure, milking cows and doing chores. But Dad never told us to do anything. He always asked us if we wanted to, and there's a difference. You wanted to work for him. He made you want to work for him, and it was never a burden."

That was a quality JT kept in mind with his own seven children on that same

ranch where he grew up. Today, JT and Luann's sons Jake, Garret, and Matt all stay involved in the ranch, now Weber Bros. Cattle.

"Growing up, I kind of always had that bug to get in the tractor, chase cows, put up fence, and do what needs to be done," explained Jake, the oldest son.

Today, they specialize in raising purebred Angus bulls and Simmental-Angus crosses, while also producing corn silage and alfalfa to help sustain the operation. While the operation may be old, it's not at all low-tech.

"Our main thing is our bull program," Jake said. "We sell about 50 registered Angus and Simmental bulls by private treaty every spring, and we also develop 50 replacement and bred heifers, and market a portion of them. We do a lot of artificial insemination and embryo transfer. Some of the more elite donor cows we can get our hands on by buying females and buying embryos. We're just trying to make good cows."

Jake, like his dad, graduated from South Dakota State University with an animal science degree, and was excited to return to the ranch to incorporate some of his new skills into the operation.

"When I got back from school, we really amped up our embryo transfer program with different ideas and stuff I learned about genetics from contacts and producers we've met over the years," Jake continued. "We went from selling 10 bulls per year to selling close to 50 bulls."

Jake's younger brother and fellow SDSU animal science graduate, Garret, keeps involved on the family's ranch as well. Though he works full time as swine genetic company Hypor's US Sales Manager, he helps out with the operation and finds the time to run Weber Bros. Cattle's social media pages, which he says has successfully expanded their presence in the market.

"Whether it's Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat or our company website, we're able to hit such a broad spectrum of people, and it's a great way to tell the story of our operation, what we're doing year-in and year-out and advertise the



genetics of the cattle that we're showing and selling," Garret explained. "We're able to have a much greater touch point of individuals that we can reach out to and market our livestock."

JT, Jake and Garret all credit their spouses and families for supporting them as they work to grow the operation.

"It took a long time and a lot of support for us to get established and get to where we are today," JT said.

Looking toward the future – and the next generation, their goals are to make an already successful operation even better.

"We'll keep working with the cow herd, continue to make improvements and make better genetics every year," Jake said. "I want this opportunity to be available to my kids, so that if they want to be able to do this, they'll have the same chance we did."

Garret added, "It's something that I hope my sons can do someday if we're able to continue to grow the operation. I hope it's something they're going to be able to share and cherish with their own kids, because those are the memories that stick with you forever."

JT and Luann Weber with their adult children, Jake, Garret, Matt and Sara Weber, Liz Mergen, and Maria Opheim, and families.

Back, from left: Garret Weber, Levi Weber, Kailey Weber, Jake Weber, Amanda Weber, Sara Weber, Cade Opheim, Maria Opheim, Tawnee Opheim, JT Weber, Luann Weber, Brent Mergen, Liz Mergen, Davie Fiedler, Matt Weber, Racheal Krog.
Front, from left: Adam Weber, Chisum Weber, Abeline Weber, Vidalia Fiedler.
Not pictured: Talon Weber



Photo submitted by JT and Luanne Weber.



A purebred Angus Heifer.
Photo by Garret Weber

BASIN ELECTRIC BUS TOUR & YOUTH EXCURSION



Patrick Soukup

Manager of Member
Services and Marketing

The Basin Electric Bus Tour is an educational experience that teaches members how their cooperative power is generated. In July, the group pictured above traveled to North Dakota to learn the story behind the switch.

The annual bus tour brought members to the Great Plains Synfuels Plant, Freedom Coal Mine and Antelope Valley Station power generation plant.

Central Electric also sent two students on the Basin Electric Youth Excursion in July. Carson Nicholson of Hanson High School and Matthew Greenway of Mitchell High School joined 14 other South Dakota students on the youth trip to Bismarck.

If you want to see your power in action, mark your calendars for the next Basin Electric Bus Tour taking place July 15-17, 2026. The Youth Excursion date has not been set. Members and students who are interested in attending either trip can contact the Central Electric office by calling 605-996-7516.



Members toured Antelope Valley Station power generation plant.



It takes large equipment to operate the Freedom Coal Mine.



Students and chaperones attended the Basin Electric Youth Excursion.



Students from area schools learned what it takes to climb a pole at the State Fair.



Kids posed inside a lineworker bucket and learned about electrical safety at Dakotafest.

Member Outreach Events

Central Electric employees visited with hundreds of farmers and livestock producers at Dakotafest, the Sioux Empire Fair and the State Fair this summer. Representatives from Central Electric and several neighboring cooperatives were available to answer member questions at these agriculture-focused events.

Educational displays at Dakotafest and the State Fair included a solar

panel display, mini-split heat pump, electric vehicles and a safe digging exhibit.

A youth area with a lineworker photo booth provided entertainment for kids and their families.

If you didn't make it to these events, but you have questions about electrical safety and energy use on the farm or in your home, please contact Central Electric at 605-996-7516.



Patrick Soukup prepared German sausage from Rosedale Colony for Dakotafest visitors.



Heather Wiczorek and Tara Miller served a meal at the Sioux Empire Fair for Ag Appreciation Day.

Co-ops Support James River Youth Rodeo

More than 150 kids and their families traveled to Mitchell to participate in the Fourth Annual James River Youth Rodeo on Aug. 23.

A variety of competitions provided entertainment for all ages. Kids 3 and under participated in stick-horse events, and kids ages 4-7, 8-11 and 12-18 showed off their skills in pole bending, flag racing, barrel racing,

goat tying, breakaway roping and team roping.

We are proud to support the James River Youth Rodeo along with our neighbors at Dakota Energy, East River Electric Power Cooperative, Sioux Valley Energy and Southeastern Electric Cooperative. A guiding principle for electric cooperatives is “commitment

to community,” and supporting this rodeo event is just one way Central Electric demonstrates that commitment.

Hosting this event involves the hard work of many parents, athletes and volunteers. Thanks to all the dedicated parents and talented youth rodeo athletes for putting on an incredible show.



Photo credit: Kaitlin Marie Media



OCT. 10-12
Black Hills Powwow
 Rapid City, SD
 605-341-0925

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.

SEPT. 27

Trap Shoot Fundraiser for ALS
 9:15 a.m.-12 p.m.
 Mitchell Gun Club
 Mitchell, SD

OCT. 3

DSU Architecture Walking Tour
 3-4 p.m.
 Lake County Museum
 Madison, SD

OCT. 3-5

Black Hills Film Festival
 Journey Museum
 Rapid City, SD
 605-574-9454

OCT. 4

Pumpkin Train, Vendor Showcase
 Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

OCT. 4-5

Sioux Falls Quilt Guild
 Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Sun. 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Sioux Falls Convention Center
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-951-2034

OCT. 11

Howard Fall Festival
 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Miner County 4-H Grounds
 Howard, SD

OCT. 11

VFW Chili Cook-Off
 12 p.m.-4 p.m.
 315 N. Main St
 Mitchell, SD

OCT. 18

Buffalo County Fall Ball
Fire Dept. Fundraiser
 6 p.m.
 Food, Music, Raffles
 Fire Hall
 Gann Valley, SD

OCT. 18

Arts & Crafts Festival
 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Faulkton, SD

OCT. 18-19

Heartland Quilting Stars Show
 Highland Conference Center
 Mitchell, SD
 605-770-1551

OCT. 19

Helping With Horsepower
Year-End Horse Show
 10 a.m.
 Reclamation Ranch
 Mitchell, SD

OCT. 24

Humor for Heroes
Comedy Night Fundraiser
 Comedians, Silent Auction
 Tickets \$15, two for \$25
 1600 W. Russell St.
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-336-3470

OCT. 25

The Greats of Country
 7p.m.
 Gayville Music Hall
 Gayville, SD
 605-760-5799

OCT. 31-NOV. 2

Haunted Trail at
Reclamation Ranch
 7-10 p.m.
 Reclamation Ranch
 Mitchell, SD

NOV. 1

Reliance Christmas Carousel
 9 a.m.-3p.m.
 Reliance, SD
 605-730-1462

NOV. 1

Fall Fling Craft/Vendor Show
 10 a.m.-2p.m.
 Dakota Christian School
 Corsica, SD
 605-366-7940

NOV. 1

Black Hills Meat Fest
 2-4 p.m.
 Nerdy Nuts Expo Hall
 Rapid City, SD

NOV. 9

Lutefisk, Meatball
& Lefse Supper
 4-7 p.m.
 Trinity Lutheran Church
 Chamberlain, 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.