

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Local art teacher's mural commemorates dedicated Burke lineman.  
*Photo by Jacob Boyko*

## Rural Murals

Small Communities Showcase History and Culture Through Mural Art

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## Blizzard Bags

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# DON'T DROP THE KNIFE

Photo Credit: iStock.com/mayo5

## A Lesson on the Value of Your Cooperative



**Ken Schlimgen**  
General Manager

Recently, I watched a short video featuring an electric cooperative board member telling a story about when he was given a pocket knife that had been handed down from generations before him. He was in a fishing boat as a child when his father handed him the pocket knife with the words, “Don’t drop the knife.”

While he didn’t mention this, I would think the knife had scratches and dents that told a story of years gone by. The blade was likely sharp because each

generation took care to maintain it, and its reliability was likely unquestionable.

That knife represented more than just a tool; it was a symbol of heritage, responsibility and community. Each generation had benefited from it and, in turn, took care of it so that the next would enjoy the same.

Much like that pocket knife, the electric cooperative you are part of is a tool handed down to you, built with care and foresight by generations before. When electricity first arrived in rural areas, it came because ordinary people, our ancestors, came together to form cooperatives – organizations not driven by profit but by a mission to improve our quality of life.

Electric cooperatives weren’t easy to establish. Many families came together, pooling very limited resources to create a system that would provide something that was once thought unattainable: affordable and reliable electricity. Just like maintaining the old pocket knife, they made sacrifices and hard choices, knowing that future generations would be the ones to truly benefit.

We are those future generations. And just like the boy in the story, we now hold the responsibility of protecting and

maintaining what has been handed down to us. The cooperative system is still as vital and reliable as that pocket knife. It powers our homes, our businesses, our farms and our schools. But it requires care and attention. If we take it for granted, fail to invest in it, or allow it to fall into disrepair, it could easily lose the reliability that generations before us worked so hard to preserve.

The cooperative belongs to us, and it’s ours to maintain and protect. We may not need to oil it or sharpen it like a knife, but we do need to support it, engage with it and ensure that its benefits continue to flow to everyone in the community. By attending annual meetings, participating in decisions and staying informed, we help keep our cooperative sharp. By ensuring that our cooperative adapts to challenges, we are sharpening the blade for future generations.

If you have attended our member meetings or are keeping up with cooperative issues by reading this newsletter, you know we are replacing our aging system and investing in generation assets to meet our future electric needs. These investments and national issues beyond our control are creating rate pressures that we have not seen for many years.

“Don’t drop the knife” is a meaningful lesson for us. The electric cooperative system, like the old pocket knife, is valuable not just for what it provides today but for what it can continue to provide if we take care of it. Let’s ensure that we hand it down – strong and reliable – to the next generation, just as those before us did.

The legacy of the cooperative is in our hands. Let’s not drop it. Until next month, stay safe.



**CENTRAL ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE  
CONNECTIONS**

(USPS 018-963)

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CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is the monthly publication for the members of Central Electric Cooperative, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301. Families subscribe to Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. Central Electric Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to cooperative members on matters pertaining to their cooperative and living better with electricity. Also available at [www.centralecc.coop](http://www.centralecc.coop).

Subscription information: Central Electric Cooperative members devote 50 cents of each monthly electric payments for a subscription. Non-member subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. Periodicals Postage Paid at Central Electric Cooperative, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301, and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to Central Electric Cooperative, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301. Address all other correspondence to: Cooperative Connections, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301 Telephone: (605)996-7516; Fax: (605) 996-0869; e-mail: [cec@centralecc.coop](mailto:cec@centralecc.coop); website: [www.centralecc.coop](http://www.centralecc.coop).

**Contact Us**

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
 Phone: 1-800-477-2892 or 1-605-996-7516

**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 on Aug. 19, 2024, at Central Electric Cooperative's headquarters for the regular board meeting. They reviewed reports by management including details on operations, member services, communications, service department and financials.

**BOARD REPORT**

General Manager Schlimgen updated the board of directors on the East River Electric Managers Advisory Committee, Basin Electric activities, Rural Electric Economic Development fund activities, service territory discrepancies, regulatory topics and other management priorities.

Operations Manager Bultje has been in discussions with officials from the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe and they recently rescinded a resolution prohibiting commercial utility development.

General Manager Schlimgen shared updates regarding the Howard service center building project.

The board reviewed the summary of strategic planning goals developed as a result of the employee and board strategic planning sessions in July.

Director Gustafson, Director VanWalleghen and Director Banks reported on the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives annual meeting. Attorney Don Petersen was recognized for being inducted into the South Dakota Cooperative Hall of Fame.

Director Bechen, Director Loudner, Director Reindl, Director Banks, and Director Hofer reported on the Basin Electric annual meeting.

Director Hofer reported on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association board meeting.

Director Wolbrink reported on East River Electric happenings.

**BOARD ACTION**

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to approve a member loan for heating and cooling equipment. Motion carried.

There being no further business, President Wolbrink adjourned the meeting. The next board meeting was scheduled for Sept. 20, 2024.

FINANCIAL REPORT	YEAR TO DATE AUG. 2024	YEAR TO DATE AUG. 2023
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales	230,586,949 kWh	230,712,032 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$ 24,824,888	\$ 23,677,617
Total Cost of Service	\$ 24,628,686	\$ 23,430,971
Operating Margins	\$ 196,202	\$ 246,646

# HOLIDAY FOOD SAFETY TIPS

**Rachel Dotson**

USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture

It's the time of year when many families will be gathering around the dining room table savoring the flavors of their favorite holiday meals. Check out how to keep your holiday meals safe this season with a few tips from Land-grant University Extension Services.

### Shopping Safely

Before shopping, check the ingredients you have at home and verify their expiration date. It is helpful to prepare a shopping list before going shopping. Make sure you have sufficient room in your refrigerator for all purchased food items. Cold foods that need refrigeration or freezing should be purchased last.

Oklahoma State University Extension advises while shopping, keep raw meat, poultry and seafood away from other foods in your grocery cart. Placing raw meat, poultry and seafood in plastic bags can be a good method to separate them from other foods. Ask a cashier to place your raw meat, poultry and seafood in a separate bag.

### Safe Food Handling Practices

- When it comes to preparing meats, washing poultry and meats at home is no longer necessary and is not recommended by the USDA. University of Connecticut Extension recommends thawing meat in a refrigerator or in a cold-water bath.
- Defrost meats in the refrigerator for approximately 24 hours, depending on size, or submerge meat in its original package in cold water and allow 30 minutes of thawing time for every pound.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables thoroughly under cool running water and use a produce brush to remove surface dirt. Even wash prepackaged greens to minimize bacterial contamination.
- While preparing food, use two cutting boards: one for preparing raw meat, poultry and fish, and the other for cutting fruits and vegetables, cooked food or preparing salads.
- Don't forget to also wash hands with soap and water before and after handling food.

### Storing Leftovers

Bacteria grows when the food is left out for more than

two hours at room temperature. Divide leftovers into smaller portions and store in shallow containers in the refrigerator. University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension advises reheating cooked leftovers to 165 degrees. Use a food thermometer to measure temperature accurately. Sauces, soups and gravies should be reheated by bringing them to a boil. When microwaving leftovers, make sure there are no cold spots in food where bacteria can survive.

### Multistate Approach for Food Safety

Food-borne illnesses affect 48 million Americans each year. Research and education have led to major advances in food safety; however, challenges remain. Many methods that use heat or chemicals to ensure food safety are not 100% effective and can damage food color, texture, flavor and nutrients.

Researchers at 32 Land-grant Universities are collaborating on innovative solutions for food safety and quality.

Their work is helping meet consumer demand for minimally processed, additive-free food items with longer shelf lives, higher nutrient content and less potential to cause food-borne illnesses.



### Farm Safety "Always Be Alert"

#### Clyde Manas, Age 8

Clyde Manas warns farmers and ranchers to be careful with their equipment around power lines. Thank you for your picture, Clyde! Clyde's parents are Terry and Lacey Manas, members of Bon Homme Yankton 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.

# Holiday DELIGHTS

## EASY CRANBERRY SALAD

### Ingredients:

12 oz. fresh cranberries  
 20 oz. crushed pineapple, drained (reserve juice)  
 1/2 cup pineapple juice (from reserved juice)  
 2 cups sugar  
 3 oz. pkg cranberry jello (may also use cherry jello)  
 1/4 cup maraschino cherries, finely chopped

### Method

Boil cranberries with pineapple juice and sugar. When berries pop, remove from heat. Add dry jello, pineapple and cherries. Refrigerate. Keeps for up to two weeks in the refrigerator.

Elaine Rieck  
 Harrisburg, S.D.

## CAKE BATTER DIP

### Ingredients:

8 oz. softened cream cheese  
 8 oz. thawed cool whip  
 1/3-2/3 cup milk  
 1 box Funfetti cake mix (unprepared)  
 Sprinkles

### Method

Add whipped topping and cream cheese to a large mixing bowl and beat with a hand mixer until smooth and creamy.

Add cake mix and 1/3 cup milk and stir with a wooden spoon until combined. Dip will be very thick, so add more milk, a little at a time, until you get to your desired consistency. I used about 2/3 cup for my dip.

Garnish with sprinkles and serve with whatever dippers you prefer (graham crackers, animal crackers, vanilla wafers, pretzels, fresh fruit, etc.)

Kayla Beaner  
 Centerville, S.D.

## OPEN-FACED HOT TURKEY SANDWICHES

### Ingredients:

1 container (12 oz.) turkey gravy  
 8 slices cooked turkey  
 1 loaf baguette bread, (12 in. long)  
 1 cup fresh spinach leaves  
 1 cup prepared stuffing, warmed  
 1/2 cup cranberry sauce

### Method

Cook gravy and turkey slices in large skillet on medium-high heat until heated through.

Cut baguette in half lengthwise, then cut each piece in half. Place bread, cut-side up, onto four serving plates.

Top bread evenly with spinach, turkey, stuffing, any remaining gravy and cranberry sauce.

[McCormick.com](http://McCormick.com)

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2024. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

# Mathison, Phillips Achieve Journeyman Status

Congratulations to Davis Mathison of Howard and Chase Phillips of Mitchell on completing the apprenticeship lineman program and earning journeyman certification.

To earn journeyman status, they each completed more than 8,000 hours of on-the-job training and four years of coursework through the Northwest Lineman College.

This impressive milestone involves a great deal of dedication and persistence, and we applaud them both for completing the apprenticeship program and taking the next step in their careers.



Line Superintendent Dusty Roskens (left) presents Davis Mathison with his Journeyman Certificate from Northwest Lineman College.



Line Superintendent Dusty Roskens (left) presents Chase Phillips with his Journeyman Certificate from Northwest Lineman College.



Blair Murphy of Wessington Springs competes at the 2024 James River Youth Rodeo. Photo credit: Cherie Ramsdell, DakotaBones.com

## Co-ops Support Third Annual James River Youth Rodeo

More than 140 kids and their families traveled to Mitchell to participate in the Third Annual James River Youth Rodeo on Saturday, Sept. 14.

Participation has doubled since the event began in 2022. A variety of competitions provide entertainment for all ages. Kids 3 and under participate in stick-horse events, and kids ages 4-7, 8-11 and 12-18 show off their skills in pole bending, flag racing, barrel racing and goat tying.

Hosting the annual 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.

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.



Photo credit: Riley Baade



## Annual Meeting Highlights Accomplishments, Challenges

Central Electric Cooperative hosted its 24th Annual Meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 10, at the Corn Palace in Mitchell. A three-meat buffet of chicken, pork chops and roast beef was served to a crowd of 725 people, which included 337 registered members and guests.

Merl Bechen of Mitchell ran unopposed and, per the bylaws, was deemed reelected to a three-year term as the cooperative's director-at-large. Bechen has represented all eight counties in Central Electric's service area since first being elected in 2021.

Board President Duane Wolbrink and General Manager Schlimgen reviewed 2023 financial performance, operating results, completion of the meter upgrade project, progress on accelerated line replacement, High Plains Processing soybean plant construction and plans to construct a new shop in Howard. Schlimgen also provided a brief update on 2024 financial results through July, increased power costs and the need for future rate adjustments.

The youth area gave kids the opportunity to gear up like lineworkers and get their pictures taken. Youth prize drawings were held for an assortment of items, including a gift certificate to Ron's Bike Shop for the winning child to pick out their own bike and accessories. At the end of the meeting, drawings were held for energy bill credits of \$25, \$50 and a \$250 grand prize. Winners of the drawing are listed on the right.

Central Electric's board and staff would like to thank the members who took time out of their busy schedules to attend the 2024 annual meeting. Next year's Annual Meeting is tentatively scheduled to take place on the evening of Tuesday, Sept. 9, 2025.



The annual meeting gives members a chance to have discussions with cooperative employees and board members.



David Jorgenson was honored for representing Davison County on the Operation Round-Up board of trustees since 2016. He reached his term limit this year.

### Energy Bill Credit Drawing Winners

- \$250 Greg Kohlenberg
- \$50 Harold Eggert
- \$50 Ted Nelson, Jr.
- \$50 Judy Fredrichs
- \$50 D & L Moe Farms LLC
- \$50 Phyllis Jacobsen
- \$50 Wade Strand
- \$50 Leonard Scheich
- \$50 Darwin Kreth
- \$50 Michael Sibson
- \$25 Miskimins Ranch Inc.
- \$25 Jon Roeder
- \$25 Reuland Farm
- \$25 Leland James
- \$25 Richard Reimnitz
- \$25 Jimmy Miller
- \$25 Richard Johnson
- \$25 Rodney Muhs
- \$25 Carson Weber
- \$25 Barbara Kroupa



# RURAL MURALS

## Small Communities Showcase History and Culture Through Mural Art

Jacob Boyko

### Lemmon

Visitors from all over the map flock to Lemmon each year to explore the town's plethora of fascinating exhibits, from the Petrified Wood Park to the life-size steampunk-style sculptures by local artist John Lopez.

But of all the town's unique offerings, there's one stand-out exhibit that ties everything together: Boss Cowman Square.

Lopez's life-size metal sculpture of cowboy legend George Edward Lemmon is the focal point of the square. The Boss Cowman clutches the reins of his steampunk stallion, his eyes fixed on the horizon watching for stray cattle.

"Dad Lemmon," as the town's founder is so fondly known among locals, settled the town in 1906 between the Grand River and North Dakota border. It would soon be a stop along the incoming Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, which Dad Lemmon had been recruited to platte westward.

The sculpture is accompanied by a background mural depicting a scene far away from the bustling saloons and general stores of early Lemmon. In the scene, saddled-up cowboys under the careful

watch of the Boss Cowman sculpture guide a meandering herd hundreds of heads long across a river – no problem for Dad Lemmon, whose roundup skills and knowledge of the land were legendary across the West.

In 2015, as Lopez dreamt of what would one day be Boss Cowman Square, he recruited the help of two Nigerian artists, Dotun Popoola and Jonathan Imafidor, to help bring the vision to life.

"We studied a few materials and made sure all the elements were well captured, like the kinds of trees, the way the river looks and the butte in the background," Imafidor recalled about the 2016 project.

One obstacle that posed a challenge for the traveling artists – beside the shock of South Dakota's cold spring weather – was the slight differences between the cattle they knew in Nigeria and the cattle of the American West.

"We are representational artists and we've done a lot of drawings of cows, so we kind of had an idea of what the cattle should look like," Imafidor explained. "But in Lemmon, the kind of cattle that are found in the region are a little different than what we have in Nigeria. I remember when we started painting the cattle ... John Lopez told us, 'I don't think you can find those here.' Then he brought some material for

Cowboys keep a herd of longhorns moving at the bank of the Missouri River. Visitors will notice the sculpture of Dad Lemmon turned around to keep an eye on the progress. *Photo provided by John Lopez.*

us so we were able to see the difference and then we made the corrections."

After about a month of work, the mural was completed and the Boss Cowman Square was unveiled to the public in July 2016.

### Burke

In Burke, K-12 art teacher Kate Witt isn't shy about brightening up her community. The mom of four has designed and painted four murals around town, including one depicting the town's beloved utility worker, Rich Bailey.

Rich's wife, Margaret Ann Bailey, commissioned the mural after Rich's passing in 2023. The mural shows the lineman hanging onto a utility pole as he works on the power lines.

"When we came here in 1970, there wasn't a bucket truck or anything," recalled Margaret Ann. "So he climbed everything, whether it was blizzarding or lightning, and he made sure people had electricity."

The mural also features emergency vehicles, as Rich served for decades as a volunteer firefighter and an emergency medical technician. Parked beneath the lines, the rusted white pickup truck Rich drove around town that over the years became synonymous with himself.

"With this mural specifically, I felt I had



a big important job,” Witt said. “This is a man who the town really loves, and I had a big job to make something beautiful that [Margaret Ann] was going to be proud of.”

Witt incorporated her own signature styles into the mural; her white outlines make the lineman’s silhouette stand out against the more geometrically designed Missouri River bluffs and cloudy sunset in the background.

“That’s where I have a little fun, putting in the modern twist and bold colors,” Witt continued. “I put this white line around everything which made some elements almost look like they’re stickers on a wall.”

Since Witt completed the mural last August, it’s become a point of pride for Margaret Ann who says it’s a testament to her husband’s years of dedication to his community.

“There was an older gal here in town, and she called him at 2 o’clock in the morning and said ‘my air conditioner isn’t working and it’s darn hot in my house,’” Margaret Ann recalled.

She said her husband explained that his job was to fix power lines, not air conditioners. Still, he went to flip the breaker on the woman’s fuse box anyway before going back to sleep.

“That’s the kind of guy he was, and I’m proud,” Margaret Ann said.

## Tabor

Where in South Dakota can you find roses, ears of corn, a cardinal and Czech kolaches all in one mural?

Only in Tabor, probably.

Commissioned for the town’s 150th anniversary in 2022, the colorful mural on the sidewall of the local library meanders through the community’s history. From the heavy Czech influence of the earliest settlers represented by pastries and roses to the school’s original mascot, the cardinals, Robbie Jelsma worked very intentionally to portray the town in a way only a knowledgeable local artist could.

Growing up in nearby Springfield, Jelsma is no stranger to Tabor and its famous Czech Days, which draws thousands of people from across the country for the three-day celebration.

“I wanted to represent Czech Days and the Czech culture, so I did my own

research,” Jelsma said.

He incorporated roses, which are the national flower of the Czech Republic, as well as the fluffy pastries with fruit in the middle called kolaches.

He also incorporated local history—Tabor’s school mascot was the cardinal before merging with Springfield and Tyndall to form Bon Homme School District.

When he’s not painting murals, Jelsma is a highly sought-after tattoo artist specializing in more realistic styles. For him, the highlights of the Tabor mural is the level of depth and realism he achieved in his roses and clouds.

The hardest part of painting the mural is working with the elements, as there’s a laundry list of work that needs to be done on the surface before any real painting can begin: washing; smoothing; primer.

On top of that, unpredictable Midwestern weather requires a careful eye on the weather radar for any outdoor painting projects, Jelsma said.

“We started about early October so the fall was just getting started, and you never know in South Dakota if the weather is going to hold out or if you’ll get an early snow or strong wind,” he recalled about his three and a half weeks working on the project.

For Jelsma, the finished mural is as big of a point of pride for him, having been selected and commissioned for the work, as it is for the people of Tabor who get to show it off every summer during Czech Days.

“It’s cool I was thought of for the project,” Jelsma said. “It’s an art project that I think just lights everybody up a little bit when you drive down main street and you see something like that in a small town.”



Artist Robbie Jelsma puts the finishing touches on his mural ahead of the 2022 unveiling. Photo provided by Robbie Jelsma.



**THE COUNTRY COOKIN'**  
cookbook

**RECIPES NEEDED**  
Help us create another great cookbook by submitting your favorite recipes.

Your recipe could be featured in the 41st volume of East River Electric's Country Cookin' cookbook!

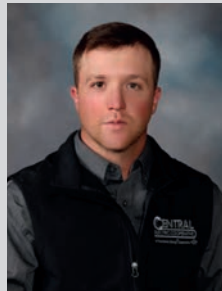


Submit to be entered into a drawing for 1 of 2 \$100 Visa gift cards

Submit recipes to [graphics@eastriver.coop](mailto:graphics@eastriver.coop) or contact your local co-op for more information.



**Employee Years of Service**



**Chase Phillips**  
Journeyman Lineworker  
Mitchell Crew  
4 years on Nov. 2



**Dean Uher**  
Manager of Finance & Administration  
6 years on Nov. 5



**Tim Neises**  
Howard Area Foreman  
45 years on Nov. 19



**Electric Vehicle Update**

Central Electric is tracking the cost to operate its 2022 Ford F-150 Lightning electric pickup. The table below documents the miles driven each month and compares the cost to charge the electric pickup versus the amount it would cost to fuel a gas-powered Ford F-150. According to the window sticker, a new gas-powered Ford F-150 averages about 20 miles per gallon.

As your energy experts, the cooperative will continue to study electric vehicle technology and home charging systems to determine the potential impact of demand on our distribution system. Contact Patrick Soukup, Manager of Member Services and Marketing, with any questions on electric vehicles or home charging.

\*Gas price entered at \$3.05.  
Higher gas prices would result in additional savings.

2022 Ford F-150 Lightning EV Charging Expense							
Month	Miles Driven	Energy Used (KWH)	EV Charging Cost	EV Cost Per Mile	Gas Cost @ 20 mpg*	Gas Cost Per Mile*	EV Cost Savings*
Apr-24	519	519	\$ 62.28	\$ 0.120	\$ 79.15	\$ 0.153	\$ 16.87
May-24	652	521	\$ 62.52	\$ 0.096	\$ 99.43	\$ 0.153	\$ 36.91
Jun-24	1211	577	\$ 69.24	\$ 0.057	\$ 184.68	\$ 0.153	\$ 115.44
Jul-24	801	492	\$ 82.58	\$ 0.103	\$ 122.15	\$ 0.153	\$ 39.57
Aug-24	681	482	\$ 57.84	\$ 0.085	\$ 103.85	\$ 0.153	\$ 46.01
Sep-24	1065	664	\$ 84.02	\$ 0.079	\$ 162.41	\$ 0.153	\$ 78.39

# Operation Round-Up Grant Deadline Nov. 1



Ethan Rural Fire Protection District received a \$2000 grant to help purchase safety gear.

Do you know of a local organization that could use \$250 to \$3,000? Applications for Central Electric Cooperative's Operation Round-Up® grant program are due Nov. 1, 2024. Through Operation Round-Up, local groups and non-profit organizations can request funding twice per year for projects that benefit cooperative members and their communities.

Operation Round-Up is a voluntary program in which cooperative members round up their electric bill to the next whole dollar, and the extra cents accumulate to support local projects. Several electric cooperatives across the United States have similar programs. Cooperative employees and board members also contribute to the fund.

In recent years, grants have been awarded for senior programs, nutrition programs, emergency services, park improvements, building improvements and educational initiatives. Grant recipients have included non-profit groups, senior citizen organizations, youth clubs, community groups, fire departments, schools and municipalities. Since 2015, more than \$200,000 has been awarded.

Applicants are not required to be Central Electric members, but eligible projects should positively impact the cooperative's service area, which includes Aurora, Brule, Buffalo, Davison, Hanson, Jerauld, Miner and Sanborn Counties. Funding guidelines and a fillable application are available online at [www.centralec.coop/operation-round-up](http://www.centralec.coop/operation-round-up) or by contacting Central Electric.



American Legion Post 41 of Alexandria received a \$1000 grant to help purchase military grave markers.



Town & Country Fire Department of Woonsocket received a \$1000 grant for training room equipment.



White Lake Cemetery Association received a \$500 grant for tree trimming and removal.

## Heating assistance available

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) helps eligible South Dakotans pay for home heating costs. Energy assistance may not pay for all your home heating costs, but it could help ease the strain of the heating season. Energy assistance is available from October 1 to May 15.

The program may also help if your heating costs are included in the cost of your rent or if you pay heating costs directly to your landlord in addition to your rent.

Eligibility is based on:

- Number of people in household
- Gross income of everyone in the household
- Your home's main heat source type
- County you live in

How to apply:

- E-mail [DSSHeat@state.sd.us](mailto:DSSHeat@state.sd.us) to request an application or e-mail a completed application.
- Call toll-free at 1-800-233-8503 to request an application be mailed
- Complete an application online at [dss.sd.gov/economicassistance/energy\\_weatherization\\_assistance.aspx](http://dss.sd.gov/economicassistance/energy_weatherization_assistance.aspx)
- Visit your local Department of Social Services office to obtain an application.

### 2024-2025 HEATING SEASON INCOME LIMITS

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	MAXIMUM 3-MONTH INCOME
1 Person	\$7,530
2 Person	\$10,220
3 Person	\$12,910
4 Person	\$15,858
5 Person	\$18,396
6 Person	\$20,933
7 Person	\$21,409
8 Person	\$21,884
9 Person	\$22,360
10 Person	\$23,805



# PREPARING FOR WINTER WEATHER

**Jacob Boyko**

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

As we near the frigid winter months of South Dakota, it's important for you and loved ones to stay ready for an emergency.

Even though power outages are rare, a loss of electricity can affect modern lives in critical ways; In an instant, you may no longer be able to heat your home, prepare food or access critical information.

It's crucial to prepare for power outages and other general emergencies by keeping supplies in both your home and vehicles as well as making sure you and your loved ones have a plan in place.

Brad Reiners, director of communications for the state Department of Public Safety, encourages South Dakotans to stock

up on essentials like food, water and batteries prior to the winter months.

"Make sure you have enough food and water for at least three days, and each person in the household should have one gallon of water per day," Reiners said.

State DPS recommends keeping non-perishable food items like pasta, canned goods and nutritious snacks that don't require refrigeration and don't need to be heated or cooked before consumption.

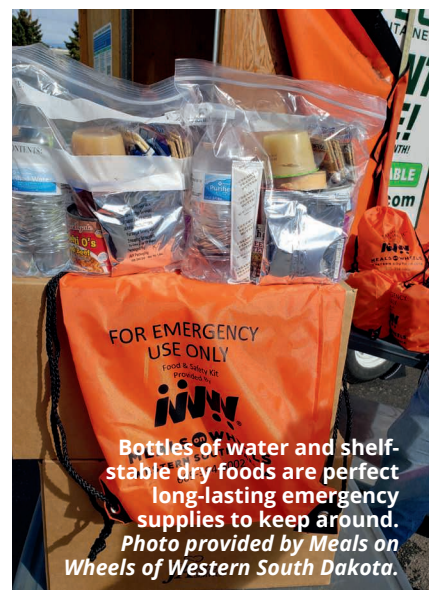
"Never use gas powered generators, grills or portable stoves indoors, as they can produce dangerous levels of carbon monoxide," Reiner added.

As you prepare, remember to be proactive about your health. Have your medical prescriptions refilled in advance of a severe storm and keep a battery bank charged so you can power your cell phone in case you need to

access telehealth services, emergency services or access critical information.

In your car, keep warm blankets, winter clothes, snacks, a shovel, flashlight and a set of jumper cables in case you get stranded.

"It's also advisable to check your tires for proper inflation and tread, and make sure your windshield wipers are in good condition with freeze-resistant washer fluid," Reiners added.



**Bottles of water and shelf-stable dry foods are perfect long-lasting emergency supplies to keep around.**  
*Photo provided by Meals on Wheels of Western South Dakota.*

If you plan to rely on a generator or wood burning stove for heat if the power goes out, check beforehand that your equipment is in safe working order, and you have enough fuel to last several days.

Keeping warm clothes, blankets and sleeping bags at the ready can be lifesaving if you're unable to heat your home.

**Meals on Wheels here to help with Blizzard Bags**

For senior citizens, some of this advice is easier said than done. Meals on Wheels of Western South Dakota understands that better than anyone, and they have come up with a solution.

“Blizzard Bags” have been a part of the organization’s lineup for over 20 years now and include some of the essentials seniors need when hunkering down for severe weather.

“We deliver shelf-stable meals for seniors who, especially in rural areas, may not have access to food for a while if their electricity goes out,” said Jennifer Paschke, regional manager for Meals on Wheels of Western South Dakota. “We provide five meals in those bags they can use during a loss of power or being stranded in their homes due to weather.”

The food supplied is generally items that don’t require a heat source, like packages of tuna salad and crackers, protein bars or cans with a pop-top seal so no can opener is required, Paschke said.

The bags also include water and other donated supplies like batteries and flashlights from local businesses, including some rural electric cooperatives.

“The biggest success story I know in

my area is a couple of years ago when they had tornados in Philip,” Paschke remembered. “The water we provided [in the blizzard bags] were some of the only sources of water some of those people had. Just having that food and water can be a godsend for some people.”

Blizzard Bags are available to seniors age 60 and up who are a part of the Meals on Wheels program. The bags cost roughly \$20 to put together, according to Pascke, and are funded in part by community donors. The organization provides home deliveries for seniors living in both cities and rural areas.

Anyone interested in getting service or helping with the cause can contact Meals on Wheels of Western South Dakota at (605) 394-6002.



Meals On Wheels of Western South Dakota provides blizzard bags to seniors in case weather conditions affect normal delivery. Photo provided by Meals on Wheels of Western South Dakota.

**U.S. POSTAL SERVICE PERIODICALS  
STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP**

(FORM 3526 REQUIRED BY 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1. Publication Title: Central Electric Cooperative Connections
2. Publication No.: 018963
3. Filing Date: September 26, 2024
4. Issue Frequency: Monthly
5. No. of Issues Published Annually: 12
6. Annual Subscription Price: \$6 for members; \$12 non-members
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: 25487 403rd Ave, Mitchell, SD 57301
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: 25487 403rd Ave, Mitchell, SD 57301
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor & Managing Editor: Publisher: Central Electric Cooperative, 25487 403rd Ave, Mitchell, SD 57301 Editor: Tara L. Miller, Central Electric Cooperative, 25487 403rd Ave, Mitchell, SD 57301. Managing Editor: Tara L. Miller, Central Electric Cooperative, 25487 403rd Ave, Mitchell, SD 57301
10. Owner: Central Electric Cooperative, 25487 403rd Ave, Mitchell, SD 57301
11. Known bondholders/mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: US Dept of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Service, 1400 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20250. Cooperative Finance Corp., Woodland Park, 2201 Cooperative Way, Herndon, VA, 22071
12. Tax Status: Purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
13. Publication Title: Central Electric Cooperative Connections
14. Issue Date of Circulation Data: 9-17-2024

Extent and nature of circulation	Avg. copies prior year	9-17-2024 issue
A. Total number of copies (net press run)	4,905	4,910
B. Paid circulation (mail/outside mail)	4,678	4,681
C. Total paid distribution	4,678	4,681
D. Free or nominal rate distribution (mail/outside mail)	207	209
E. Total free or nominal rate distribution	207	209
F. Total distribution	4,885	4,890
G. Copies not distributed	20	20
H. Total	4,905	4,910
I. Percent paid	95.76%	95.73%

# 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 exclusive discounts. Local businesses are encouraged to participate.

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 <i>(NEW!)</i>	Kimball	5% off motorsports repair work only up to \$150 max per year.
Overweg Repair <i>(NEW!)</i>	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 <i>(NEW!)</i>	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](mailto:cec@centralec.coop) or call 605-996-7516.

Special thanks to all participating business partners!

# H.S. Juniors Could Win Trip to Washington, D.C.

Central Electric is sending up to four high school juniors on a trip to Washington, D.C. The educational journey, hosted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), takes place June 15-21, 2025.

Students will learn about government, cooperative philosophy and rural electrification in our nation's capital. Tour highlights include the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument, U.S. Capitol, Arlington National Cemetery, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Iwo Jima Statue, National Archives and the Vietnam Memorial. Students will also participate in a briefing with South Dakota's Congressional Delegation and a river boat cruise across the Potomac River.

Applicants must be high school juniors during the 2024-2025 school year who permanently reside in Aurora, Brule, Buffalo, Davison, Hanson, Jerauld, Miner or Sanborn County of South Dakota. They do not need to be cooperative members to apply. Children and legal dependents of cooperative directors and employees are not eligible to participate. The application can be found below.

Juniors selected as Youth Tour delegates must obtain signed parental consent from both parents unless one parent is deceased. The final paperwork includes forms that must be signed by both parents or legal guardians in front of a notary public.

Visit [www.centralec.coop/youth-tour](http://www.centralec.coop/youth-tour) or call 1-800-477-2892 to learn more. Applications will be accepted until Dec. 10, 2024.



## 2025 Youth Tour Application

Students should submit this application by Dec. 10, 2024, to be considered for the Washington, D.C. Youth Tour. Applicants must be high school juniors during the 2024-2025 school year who permanently reside in Aurora, Brule, Buffalo, Davison, Hanson, Jerauld, Miner or Sanborn County of South Dakota. Children of cooperative directors or employees are not eligible. The trip takes place June 15-21, 2025. Central Electric will notify students if they are selected to attend by Dec. 31, 2024.

Are you currently a high school junior?  Yes (continue)  No (not eligible)

School: \_\_\_\_\_ County of Residence: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Cell Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address (Street, City, State, ZIP): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Legal Guardian Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Legal Guardian Cell Phone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Essay: Explain a pivotal moment in American history that you wish you had been a part of and how you would have contributed.** Attach your original essay, 4 to 6 paragraphs in length, with citations if needed. Essays should not be generated using any form of artificial intelligence and should be the student's original writing. Send the essay with this application to [cec@centralec.coop](mailto:cec@centralec.coop) or mail to Central Electric Cooperative, Attn: Youth Tour, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301. If you have questions or would like to confirm your application was received, call 1-800-477-2892.



**NOV. 22-JAN.5**  
**Winter Wonderland**  
 Nightly - 5 p.m.-12 a.m.  
 Falls Park  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-275-6060

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.

**OCT. 19**  
**Buffalo County Fall Ball**  
 Live Music and Food  
 6 p.m.  
 Fire Hall  
 Gann Valley, SD

**OCT. 25-27**  
**Forest of Fears Haunted Trail**  
 7 p.m.-10 p.m.  
 Reclamation-Ranch  
 40787 259th St.  
 Mitchell, SD

**NOV. 2**  
**Wall Community Craft Show**  
 10 a.m.-3 p.m.  
 Wall, SD  
 605-279-2665

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

**NOV. 2**  
**Reliance Christmas Carousel**  
 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
 Legion Hall  
 Reliance, SD  
 605-730-0553

**NOV. 8-9**  
**Sioux Empire Arts & Crafts Show**  
 Friday, 12 p.m.-8 p.m.  
 Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**NOV. 8**  
**Plankinton Dueling Pianos Fundraiser**  
 Ag Building  
 Plankinton, SD  
[Facebook.com/PlankintonServiceClub](https://www.facebook.com/PlankintonServiceClub)

**NOV. 10**  
**29th Annual Lutefisk, Meatball & Lefse Supper**  
 4 p.m.-7 p.m.  
 Trinity Lutheran Church  
 Chamberlain, SD  
 605-730-0553

**NOV. 16**  
**Festival of Trees**  
 6 p.m.  
 Lead, SD  
 605-584-2067

**NOV. 22-23**  
**Holiday Arts Christmas Craft Show**  
 Davison County Fairgrounds  
 Mitchell, SD  
 605-359-2049

**NOV. 23-24**  
**Winterfest: A Winter Arts Festival**  
 Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.  
 Sunday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
 Aberdeen, SD

**NOV. 29-DEC. 29**  
**Trees & Trains Exhibit at SD State Railroad Museum**  
 Hill City, SD  
 605-665-3636

**DEC. 1**  
**A Christmas Carol**  
 2 p.m.  
 Gayville Music Hall  
 Gayville, SD  
 605-624-2859

**DEC. 3**  
**Parade of Lights**  
 7 p.m.  
 Christmas Movie Theme  
 Main Street  
 Mitchell, SD

**DEC. 6**  
**Plankinton Hometown Christmas**  
 Evening Festivities  
 Plankinton, SD

**DEC. 6-8, 13-15**  
**A Sherlock Carol**  
 Dec. 6-7, 13-14, 7:30 p.m.  
 Dec. 8, 15, 2:30 p.m.  
 Corson, SD  
[mightycorson.com](http://mightycorson.com)

**DEC. 7**  
**KJAM Parade of Lights**  
 5:30 p.m.  
 Madison, SD  
 605-256-4514

**DEC. 14-15**  
**Alexandria Winterfest**  
 Downtown Auditorium  
 Alexandria, SD

**DEC. 16-20**  
**Central Electric Holiday Open House**  
 Hot Cider & Snacks  
 Betts Road Office

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