

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

Caring for Caregivers

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Caregiving Services
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THE GIFT OF CO-OP POWER

Local substations deliver power that is generated in North Dakota by our cooperative power supplier, Basin Electric.

Keeping Costs Low and Communities Strong



Ken Schlimgen
General Manager

The season of harvest is here, and the temperatures are turning cooler each day. This serves as a reminder that the holiday season is approaching. It is a time for gratitude, generosity and looking out for one another.

At a time when electric cooperative members and our country face an increase in electric rates, it's worth noting a quiet success story: electric cooperatives. Despite operating in rural areas and small communities

far from the spotlight, these member-owned utilities are proving to be one of the greatest gifts to our country.

The numbers speak for themselves. Basin Electric, our cooperative wholesale power supplier, serves 3 million member-owners across nine states. All nine states have electric rates lower than the national average. Across the country, states with strong electric cooperative networks consistently have lower electric rates.

Why? Cooperatives are not-for-profit, locally governed and focused on reliability. Some would say that electric cooperatives are a force for good. We are a grassroots organization that creates practical policies to get rational solutions. We are concerned for our communities, and we engage our members in multiple forums to discuss our challenges and to develop solutions.

Rather than distributing profits to investors, Central Electric reinvests its revenue in infrastructure, innovation and rate relief. We are also more accountable because our

customers are member-owners and decision makers. This local control has proven to be a winning formula, especially as our members and families across the country face increasing energy costs.

In a national conversation on increasing energy prices, electric cooperatives remind us that local solutions still work well because they are driven by the membership and for the membership. Cooperatives are a shining model of economic democracy, proving that community-owned institutions can deliver better results and lower costs.

So, the next time you flip a light switch, use an appliance or pay your electric bill, take a moment to appreciate the cooperative difference. For you and millions of Americans, electric cooperatives are more than a reliable provider of electricity. They are a gift.

Until next month, stay safe!

2024 Average Price of Electricity (States Served By Basin Electric)

STATE	AVERAGE PRICE OF ELECTRICITY	COMPARED TO U.S. AVERAGE (12.99 CENTS/KWH)
Colorado	12.22 cents/kwh	6% less expensive
Iowa	9.43 cents/kwh	27% less expensive
Minnesota	12.36 cents/kwh	5% less expensive
Montana	10.84 cents/kwh	17% less expensive
Nebraska	9.19 cents/kwh	29% less expensive
New Mexico	9.30 cents/kwh	28% less expensive
North Dakota	8.00 cents/kwh	38% less expensive
South Dakota	11.00 cents/kwh	15% less expensive
Wyoming	9.15 cents/kwh	30% less expensive

Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

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

Contact Us

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

Our Mission

Provide reliable energy and services with a commitment to safety and member satisfaction.

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Board Meeting Summary

The board of directors met Aug. 18, 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 a distributed energy meeting, construction of the new Howard Service Center, East River Electric Managers' Advisory Committee, Basin Electric Managers' Conference, the Basin Electric Annual Meeting and other management activities.

The minutes of the July safety meeting were reviewed.

The board of directors reviewed the USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS) loan approval information.

Service territory corrections between Central Electric and Northwestern Energy are being evaluated.

Directors Banks, Bechen, Hofer and Loudner reported on the Basin Electric annual meeting. The board discussed Basin Electric's 2026-2035 financial forecast and Central Electric's options for developing 2026 rates.

Directors Banks, Hofer and Van Walleghen reported on the S.D. Association of Cooperatives meeting.

Director Wolbrink reported on the East River Electric board meeting.

Board Action

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to authorize Director Wolbrink to sign the RUS loan commitment and acceptance. The motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to declare a 2003 skyjack scissor lift as surplus property. The motion carried.

There being no further business, President Wolbrink adjourned the meeting. The next board meeting was scheduled for Sept. 15, 2025.

FINANCIAL REPORT	YEAR TO DATE AUGUST 2025	YEAR TO DATE AUGUST 2024
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales	223,051,355 kWh	230,605,160 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$ 26,235,188	\$ 24,824,888
Total Cost of Service	\$ 25,594,103	\$ 24,628,686
Operating Margins	\$ 641,085	\$ 196,202

Stay Safe This Holiday Season:

Tips for a Merry and Accident-Free Celebration

The holidays bring families together with twinkling lights, festive meals and cozy traditions. But they also bring seasonal risks that can turn celebrations into emergencies if precautions aren't taken. Local safety officials are reminding residents to keep safety in mind when cooking, decorating, and entertaining this year.

Extension Cords

With more lights and electronics plugged in during the holidays, extension cords are often stretched to their limits. Experts urge homeowners not to overload outlets and to replace any cords that are frayed or damaged. Only outdoor-rated cords should be used outside, especially in snowy or wet conditions.

Families should avoid running cords under rugs or across doorways where they can overheat or become tripping hazards.

Turkey Fryers

Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners have grown to include deep-fried turkeys, but safety must come first. Fryers should only be used outdoors, on a flat surface and far away from buildings, garages or wooden decks. Fire officials caution that a partially frozen or wet turkey can cause oil to boil over and ignite, leading to severe burns or home fires.

A fire extinguisher rated for grease fires should always be kept nearby, and fryers should never be left unattended while in use. One distracted moment can cause a disaster.

Ladders

From hanging lights to topping off the tree, ladders are part of the holiday routine. Falls are among the most common seasonal injuries, so ladders should be set on level ground and never leaned against unstable surfaces. Having another person hold the ladder is strongly advised.

Candles and Fireplaces

Candles and fireplaces are popular during the holiday season, but they also raise the risk of home fires, especially when combined with the extra decorations and greenery that fill many homes in December. According to the National Fire Protection Association, candles cause an average of

46% of fires in December each year. Never leaving a flame unattended and incorporating a few safety rules can prevent a devastating fire.

Lights and Decorations

Before hanging holiday lights, inspect strands for cracked socket, frayed wires or loose connections, and replace any damaged sets. Outdoor lights should always be weather-rated, and lights should be turned off before bedtime or when leaving the house. Timers and smart plugs can help make this easier.

Decorations should be securely fastened to prevent them from tipping or falling, especially in homes with children or pets. Heavy ornaments should be placed higher on the tree, out of reach of small hands and wagging tails. Fire officials also recommend choosing flame-resistant or non-combustible decor whenever possible and keeping all decorations away from heaters, fireplaces or open flames.



"Don't fly kites near power lines!"

Kristen Vanden Berg, Age 11

Kristen cautions readers on the dangers of flying kites near power lines. Great picture, Kristen! Kristen's parents are Andy and Geraldine Vanden Berg from Corsica, 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.

Holiday SIDE DISHES

CORN CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

2 15 oz. cans whole kernel corn, drained
15 oz. can cream corn
1/2 cup butter, melted
1 box Jiffy cornbread mix
1/2 pt. whipped cream

Method

Combine whole kernel corn, cream corn, butter, Jiffy cornbread mix and whipping cream. Mix thoroughly. Pour into greased 8.5"x11" pan and bake at 350° F for 40-45 minutes.

Sharon Houchin
Central Electric

BETTER THAN STUFFING

Ingredients:

1 box chicken/turkey stuffing mix
Chicken broth
Celery
Carrots
Onions
1 stick herbed butter (or make your own)
2 cups chicken/turkey gravy

Method

Prepare stuffing according to directions but substitute water with broth. Dice and sauté celery, carrots (total of two cups) and onions in herbed butter. Fold into stuffing. Put into baking pan and top with gravy. Poke gravy into stuffing – just a little bit. Don't completely mix. Bake at 350° F for 20 minutes and broil briefly at the end.

Valerie Marso
Oahe Electric

RAW VEGETABLE SALSA

Ingredients:

2-4 medium cucumbers, cubed
2-4 medium tomatoes, cubed
1 small onion or 1/2 of a white or yellow onion sliced
1 tsp. salt
1 tbsp. sugar
2 tbsps. apple cider vinegar
Additions: black pepper to taste, chopped basil, or chopped green bell pepper.

Method

Place cubed tomatoes and peeled cucumbers into a bowl. Add sliced onion.

Mix in remaining ingredients and stir. Marinate for several hours or overnight.

This salad keeps for 3-4 days refrigerated.

Raw Vegetable salads full of electrolytes, vitamin C and fiber.

Laurie Wernke
Southeastern 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.

ANNUAL MEETING DRAWS LARGE CROWD

Roughly 1,000 people, including 508 registered members and guests, attended Central Electric's 25th annual meeting on Sept. 9, at the Corn Palace.

The annual meeting is more than just an event, it's a key part of how cooperatives operate. Because Central Electric is member-owned, the meeting gives you a chance to hear directly from your board and management about the health of your cooperative and stay informed about what's ahead. It's one of the ways we ensure transparency and accountability to you, the people we serve.

Board President Duane Wolbrink and General Manager Ken Schlimgen shared updates on cooperative finances and discussed expected rate changes in 2026. Attendees were also informed that Schlimgen will retire next summer after 41 years of service to the cooperative.

Director Todd Van Walleghen decided not to run for reelection this year, and Jeremy White now represents Sanborn County on the board of directors.

Thank you to all of our members who took time out of their day to join us. Your participation is what keeps our cooperative strong, resilient and member-focused.



Merl Bechen, Director-At-Large, greets members entering the Corn Palace.



Duane Wolbrink delivers the President's Report during the annual meeting.



Todd Van Walleghen wrapped up his time as a director after 15 years of service.



It was a packed house with approximately 1,000 visitors attending the annual meeting.



To kick off the meeting, drawings were held for youth prizes, including a new bike.



Kids and families enjoyed the "bucket truck" photo booth before the meeting.

Plankinton Senior Named Scholar of the Week

Central Electric Cooperative and Plankinton High School are pleased to recognize Layce Bruns, daughter of Rustin and Kama Bruns, as the Touchstone Energy® Scholar of the Week for Sept. 28-Oct. 4, 2025.

The Scholar of the Week program is a partnership between Dakota News Now Television, Central Electric Cooperative and other local Touchstone Energy Cooperatives that honors accomplished seniors.

Bruns is involved with many activities at her school. She is the senior class president and a member of the student council. She participates in FCCLA, qualifying for the national FCCLA competition this year. She also competes in basketball, volleyball and 4-H rodeo. After high school, Bruns plans to study accounting at Mitchell Technical College.

Principal Beth Victor said, "Layce has maintained over a 4.0 GPA in high school and works hard to find a



Plankinton H.S. senior Layce Bruns accepts the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week award from Tara Miller of Central Electric (left) and Plankinton Principal Beth Victor (right).

strong balance between work on the ranch, sports and academics."

Bruns received a \$250 scholarship from Central Electric Cooperative and is eligible for additional scholarships at the Scholar of the Year banquet in May. She was featured on Dakota News Now on Sept. 29. You can view the story online at dakotaneWSnow.com by searching scholar of the week.

Board News

Jeremy White of Letcher had his first official Central Electric board meeting in September after being elected to represent Sanborn County at the district meeting in May.

White served full-time in the U.S. Air Force from 2001-2021, eventually earning the title of Airborne System Engineer, among other roles. He currently works as a realtor, auctioneer and property manager. He also works part-time as a farm hand.

White has served on the executive committee for the Disabled



American Veterans (DAV) organization, he volunteers for the Letcher Fire Department and his local church, he is active with the Letcher

American Legion and he is the Senior Vice Commander for VFW Post 2750 in Mitchell.

White holds a master's degree in business administration from Dakota Wesleyan University, a bachelor's degree in business from Bellevue University and a degree in information technology from Community College of the Air Force. He and his wife, Jessica, have three children.

Just like all directors, White was elected by local members to serve on the board for a three-year term. He will begin extensive training through the South Dakota Rural Electric Association and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association to learn about the cooperative business model and board member responsibilities. We thank Jeremy White for stepping up to run for the board of directors and embracing this opportunity to serve the members.

KMIT Harvest Lunch

Every fall, KMIT Radio in Mitchell delivers meals to area farmers during the Harvest Lunch promotion. Central Electric's Harvest Lunch winner was Jay Smith of rural Mitchell.

The goal of participating in the Harvest Lunch is to raise awareness of electrical safety on the farm. Harvest is a good time to remind farmers and hired help about the importance of knowing your surroundings and avoiding contact with power lines and electrical equipment.

Thanks to everybody who entered the drawing, and thanks to Jay Smith for allowing us to visit his farm and spread the word about power line safety.





CARING FOR CAREGIVERS

Exploring Structured Family Caregiving Services for South Dakota's Caregivers

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

November is recognized nationally as Family Caregivers Month, a time to honor the essential role of caregivers and highlight the resources available to them and the loved ones they support.

Yet, families face a growing challenge: how to care for aging loved ones when services are often far from home. Nursing homes or assisted living centers may be located hours away, and even when they are nearby, the cost or availability of space can present real barriers.

One answer has been the Structured Family Caregiving program, launched by the South Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS) in 2019.

According to Heather Krzmarzick, Director of the Division of Long-Term Services and Supports within DHS, the program is one of many resources at DHS that are

Several resources are available for caregivers in South Dakota through the Department of Human Services.

Photos by Homecare Services.

available to help older adults and their caregivers. It provides training, coaching, ongoing support and even a modest stipend to those offering significant care for an older adult in the home.

“Structured Family Caregiving serves caregivers who live with their family member and provide substantial care for them, including personal care, supervision, medication management and other things, such as managing finances and transportation for necessary appointments and community activities,” Krzmarzick said.

In many ways, the program echoes the electric cooperative story. Just as co-ops once brought electricity to rural areas that were otherwise overlooked, the program helps families meet a need that might otherwise go unserved. In places where nursing homes or assisted living centers are many miles away, the program gives families a practical way to continue care at home, often the place where people feel most comfortable.

“Structured Family Caregiving is important because it

supports the vital work of family caregivers, strengthens families and improves outcomes, especially in underserved or isolated regions,” she said. “The program honors South Dakota’s values of strong families, independence and community.”

In addition to expanding community-based care options to rural areas, the program allows families to potentially prevent or delay the move to a nursing home and reduce the economic burden that often comes with that transition. Krzmarzick said DHS also offers other programs for those that may need a little extra assistance to remain safely in their homes but don’t require the intensive services of a nursing facility.

“Each caregiver has unique needs and preferences,” she said. “As such, the services and supports are designed to meet the varying needs of each caregiver and help care for a person at home as long as possible.”

To be eligible for the program, the care recipient must be 65 or older or

18 or older with a qualifying disability and meet both functional and financial criteria to qualify for the program.

Since its creation, the program has grown steadily, giving more families the tools to succeed. Krzmarzick said it has allowed many older adults and adults with disabilities to remain in their homes while supporting family caregivers with knowledge, training and a small amount of financial assistance.

Agency Director Steven Novotny with Homecare Services of South Dakota, Inc., one of many in-home care providers in the state, said that few other programs reach and serve those who need care quite like the program.

“Structured Family Caregiving has the unique ability to serve consumers in every community across our state, large or small. Under this program, individuals can receive care from a trusted family member or friend, which allows them to remain independent and living in their community,” he said. “Our caring staff at Homecare Services of South Dakota have seen

firsthand the positive impact on families when we are able to provide support and training to the caregivers that are stepping into what is often a challenging role caring for a loved one.”

Krzmarzick said the Structured Family Caregiving program is just one of many support options that DHS offers individuals and their caregivers in South Dakota. Resources are available online at dhs.sd.gov or through Dakota at Home, South Dakota’s Aging and Disability Resource Center, at 1-833-663-9673.

“All caregivers, not just those utilizing the Structured Family Caregiving Program, may access free training and resources to help improve confidence in their caregiving abilities, reduce stress and prevent burnout,” Krzmarzick said. “Caregivers may also be eligible for other programs that offer respite options. Our Dakota at Home specialists are dedicated to helping you find services and supports to meet your specific needs or the needs of a family member.”



Co-op Employees Are Part of Your Community

Central Electric employees are part of the communities we serve. Your cooperative provides power in eight counties and across multiple school districts. When time allows, our employees often participate in local events such as homecoming parades.

We thank our dedicated employees for being the face of Central Electric in their local communities. The extra work they put in at local events helps spread co-op pride and community pride across our service area.



Wessington Springs Homecoming Parade



Ethan Homecoming Parade



Stickney Homecoming Parade



Plankinton Homecoming Parade

EMPLOYEE YEARS OF SERVICE



Chase
Mitchell Area
Lineworker
5 years on Nov. 2



Dean
Manager of Finance &
Administration
7 years on Nov. 5



Landon
Howard Area Foreman
1 year on Nov. 21



DeEtte
Accounting & Cust.
Service Supervisor
28 years on Dec. 1



Davis
Howard Area
Lineworker
5 years on Dec. 1



Ryan
Journeyman Electrician
2 years on Dec. 11



Tara
Manager of
Communications
5 years on Dec. 16



Chandler
Mitchell Area
Lineworker
4 years on Dec. 16

Payment Options To Fit Your Life



DeEtte Bohr
Accounting & Customer
Service Supervisor

Electricity is a necessity, and for many households, it can be a significant monthly expense. Understanding your billing and payment options helps you stay on top of your budget

and choose the method that works best for you. Central Electric offers a variety of convenient ways to pay. Find the one that fits your lifestyle.

Budget Billing

Take the guesswork out of your monthly bill. With budget billing, you pay the same amount each month, based on your average yearly usage. This helps smooth out seasonal fluctuations. To stay on the plan, accounts must remain in good standing. You may cancel anytime, but the full account balance will then be due.

Prepaid Billing

Pay for electricity before you use it—just like fueling your car. With prepaid, or “pay-as-you-go,” billing, you choose when and how much to purchase. Add funds when it’s convenient for you. There are no late fees, and you’ll never receive a monthly bill.

Online Quick Pay

Want to pay without setting up an account? Use the Pay Now option on our website. Just enter your billing account number and last name or business name to make a secure payment.

SmartHub

Manage your account from your phone or computer. With the SmartHub app or website, you can:

- View energy usage and monthly bills.
- Pay with debit, credit or e-check.
- Access account information anytime.

Pay by Phone

Call 855-939-3738 and follow the prompts to pay securely over the phone. Be sure to have your account number handy. Our payment system is safe, secure, and fully compliant with credit card standards.

Pay by Mail

Mail your payment using the envelope included with your bill. Please allow enough time for delivery to ensure it arrives before the due date. Payments are credited when received, not by postmark date.

Drop Box Payments

For extra convenience, drop off your payment at:

- The outside drop box at the Betts Road Service Center west of Mitchell
- The payment kiosk inside the Lode Star Casino in Fort Thompson

Automatic Payments

Set it and forget it. Sign up to have your payment automatically withdrawn from your bank account or credit card each month. Payments are processed on the 15th (or the next business day if the 15th is a weekend or holiday). To enroll, call 855-939-3738 (option 3) or sign up through SmartHub.

If you have questions about these options, call us at 800-477-2892 and speak with a billing representative.

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 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
- Visit your local Department of Social Services office to obtain an application.

2025-2026 HEATING SEASON INCOME LIMITS

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	MAXIMUM 3-MONTH INCOME
1 Person	\$7,825
2 Person	\$10,575
3 Person	\$13,325
4 Person	\$16,075
5 Person	\$18,825
6 Person	\$21,575
7 Person	\$22,514
8 Person	\$23,014
9 Person	\$22,514
10 Person	\$24,431



LINEMENS' TRAINING READYED CREW FOR CHAINSAW ACCIDENT

(From left) When Brandon Schmiege cut his forearm, fellow linemen Tristan Hall, Luke Koval and Brian Davis knew exactly how to respond.
Photo submitted by Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative.

When a Routine Day of Trimming Trees Turned Critical, Cooperative Employees Were Prepared to Help

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Perched within the manlift on a bucket truck, Brandon Schmiege methodically sawed away large tree branches near overhead power lines, dropping them to the ground more than 50 feet below.

It's nothing out of the ordinary, explained the 19-year veteran lineman from Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative in Milbank, South Dakota. After a while, you become accustomed to the work – and its hazards.

From the bucket he was standing in, Brandon reached with

his chainsaw for one of the last few cuts he'd need to make. But as he began the cut, the chainsaw kicked up and he lost control. Steadying himself and throwing the brake on the saw, Brandon looked down at his left arm. He'd been badly cut.

"I saw quite a bit of blood right away," Brandon said. "My first thought was that I needed to get down fast."

Gathering his strength and trying his best to stay calm, Brandon maneuvered his bucket down through the tree limbs back to the ground where linemen Brian Davis, Luke Koval and Tristan Hall noticed something wasn't right.

"I think we all sensed something happened," Brian explained. "The way he was coming down like that, and he'd just fueled up the saw, so we were wondering what had happened."

Luke ran to go shut off the woodchipper, which was drowning out Brandon's yelling. As the engine died, they finally heard Brandon yell, "Call for help!"

Brian raced to the truck to radio back to the office in Milbank, calling in a “Mayday” along with the crew’s location.

With a first-aid and tourniquet kit in hand, Brian sprinted toward Brandon, where Tristan and Luke had removed Brandon’s safety harness and wrapped a towel over the wound on Brandon’s forearm and applied pressure to slow the bleeding.

As the team secured a tourniquet tightly around Brandon’s upper arm, the crew kept in touch with the office by cell phone. The office staff, having called 911 as soon as they heard ‘Mayday,’ worked together to relay the street address and details of the injury to emergency dispatchers.

Seeing the urgency of the situation, the team placed Brandon in the service pickup and Tristan began driving him to the hospital. As the linemen were driving back into town, the ambulance met them and took Brandon to the hospital in Milbank where they stabilized him and discovered he’d severed two arteries in his forearm. He was then transferred to

Sioux Falls and underwent surgery.

Luckily, Whetstone Valley Electric and the South Dakota Rural Electric Association had conducted first-aid training for linemen just several weeks before. The instruction included CPR, AEDs, tourniquets and wound care.

“Regular first-aid training and keeping first-aid supplies on hand is so important because our linemen are often out somewhere rural,” explained Joe Denison, SDREA’s loss control professional and certified paramedic for the Arlington and Lake Norden ambulances. “If we have to wait 30 minutes for an ambulance, that can be too late.”

Whetstone Valley Electric General Manager Dave Page says despite the incident, he finds it encouraging that the employees followed procedure — maintaining clear communication with each other and with 911, administering first aid on site, and knowing exactly what to do each step of the way.

“It wasn’t only the training that was provided, but it was the attention that

these guys gave to that training - where it stuck, and their response was automatic,” Dave said. “In addition, the Mayday training that we do here at Whetstone went a long way to help us all stick to the plan and see a successful outcome.”

Now back on the job, Brandon credits his safe outcome to the co-op’s focus on regular safety training and having first aid supplies in the vehicles.

“I don’t think the makeshift towel tourniquet would have stopped the bleeding,” Brandon said, looking down at the scar on his forearm.

Brian added, “I don’t want to think about the outcome if we didn’t have a plan in place.”

To help prevent those worst case scenarios, electric cooperatives continually scrutinize safety training and workplace incidents. Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative is sharing this story with its members-owners and fellow cooperatives to promote preparedness for unexpected incidents like this one, and overall encourage a culture of safety awareness.

3 Ways to Help Limit Tree Trimming

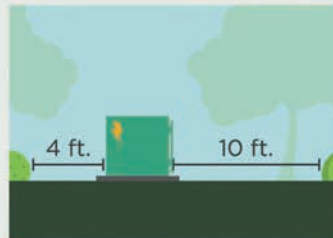
Did you know electric utilities are required to trim trees and other types of vegetation that grow too close to overhead power lines? We know you love your trees, and we will do everything we can to avoid trimming them.

Here’s how you can help:

1. Plant trees in the right place. Trees that will be <40 ft. should be planted at least 25 ft. away from power lines (>40ft. should be at least 50 ft. away).



2. Don’t block pad-mounted transformers. Plant shrubs at least 10 ft. away from transformer doors and 4 ft. from transformer sides.



3. Report dangerous branches. If you spot a tree or branch that is dangerously close to power lines, please let us know.



Trimming improves safety for all.

Let’s work together to enjoy the beauty of trees and reliable electricity.

**U.S. POSTAL SERVICE PERIODICALS
STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP**
(FORM 3526 REQUIRED BY 39 U.S.C. 3685)

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A. Total number of copies (net press run)	5,016	5,089
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D. Free or nominal rate distribution (mail/outside mail)	192	190
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F. Total distribution	4,996	5,069
G. Copies not distributed	20	20
H. Total	5,016	5,089
I. Percent paid	96.16%	96.25%

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	Kimball	5% off motorsports repair work only up to \$150 max per year.
Overweg Repair	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	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@centraleccoop.org or call 605-996-7516.

Special thanks to all participating business partners!

H.S. Juniors Could Earn 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 14-20, 2026.

Students will learn about government, cooperative philosophy and rural electrification in our nation's capital. Tour highlights include the Iwo Jima Marine Corps Memorial, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Arlington National Cemetery, Vietnam Memorial and the U.S. Capitol. 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 2025-2026 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 below should be submitted with an essay and a teacher letter of recommendation.

Juniors selected as Youth Tour delegates must obtain signed parental consent from both parents or legal guardians. Pre-trip forms must be signed by both parents or legal guardians in front of a notary public unless one parent or legal guardian is deceased.

Visit www.centralec.coop/youth-tour or call 1-800-477-2892 to learn more. Applications will be accepted until Dec. 10, 2025.



2026 Youth Tour Application

Submit this application with a teacher letter of recommendation and essay by Dec. 10, 2025, to be considered for the Youth Tour. Applicants must be high school juniors during the 2025-2026 school year who permanently reside in Aurora, Brule, Buffalo, Davison, Hanson, Jerauld, Miner or Sanborn County of South Dakota. Dependents of cooperative directors and employees are not eligible. Central Electric will notify students if they are selected to attend by Dec. 31, 2025. The trip takes place June 14-20, 2026.

Students may also apply online at www.centralec.coop/youth-tour.

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: Electric cooperatives thrive when members work together toward a shared goal. Describe how you have worked with others to improve your school or community. Attach your original essay, 4-6 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 your essay and a teacher letter of recommendation with this application to cec@centralec.coop or mail to Central Electric Cooperative, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301.



NOV 22, 26, 28-29

Christmas Tree Sales

Nov. 22: 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Nov. 26: 5-8 p.m.

Nov. 28-29: 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

6B Seed And Supplies

Alpena, SD

www.6Bseedandsupplies.com

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. 31-NOV. 2

Haunted Trail at Reclamation Ranch

7-10 p.m.

Reclamation Ranch

Mitchell, SD

NOV. 1

Reliance Christmas Carousel

9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Reliance, SD

605-730-1462

NOV. 1

Fall Fling Craft/Vendor Show

10 a.m.-2 p.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. 1-2

The Black Market/Formerly Benson's Flea Market

Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m..

Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Bldg.

Sioux Falls, SD

NOV. 1-2

Mitchell Tour of Homes

12-4 p.m.

Benefitting Mitchell Tennis Assoc.

mitchelltourofhomes.com

NOV. 3

American Legion Pancake Breakfast

8:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

1600 W. Russell St.

Sioux Falls, SD

605-336-3470

NOV. 8

TNT's Gifts & Goodies Galore

10 a.m.-2 p.m.

510 S. Main St..

Dimock, SD

NOV. 9

Lutefisk, Meatball & Lefse Supper

4-7 p.m.

Trinity Lutheran Church

Chamberlain, SD

605-730-0553

NOV. 14-15

Junkin' Market Days

Fri. 4-7 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Ramkota Exhibit Hall

Sioux Falls, SD

NOV. 16

Good Samaritan Society Fall Vendor Fair

2-6 p.m.

411 Calumet Ave. NW

De Smet, SD

NOV. 16

An Old-Fashioned Thanksgiving

2 p.m.

Gayville Music Hall

Gayville, SD

605-760-5799

NOV. 21-22

Holiday Arts

Christmas Craft Show

Davison Cty. Fairgrounds

Mitchell, SD

605-770-8136

NOV. 28

Parade of Lights

7 p.m.

Main Street

Chamberlain, SD

NOV. 28

Snacks With Santa

2-4 p.m.

Hill City Center

Hill City, SD

NOV. 29

Gregory Mid-Winter Fair

9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Gregory Memorial Auditorium

Gregory, SD

605-295-4345

DEC. 5

Hometown Christmas

Downtown

Plankinton, SD

DEC. 13

Alexandria Winterfest

Downtown

Alexandria, SD

DEC. 14

Canova Firemen's Pancake Feed

Legion Hall

Canova, 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.