

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Crazy about Curling

Win or lose, there's
no bad curling
Pages 8-9

Saddle making
for the pros
Pages 12-13

Many curling enthusiasts contend the world would be a more peaceful place if everyone "threw the stone."

Members can depend on us for reliable, affordable power



Ken Schlimgen
General Manager

As I write this column, the outside temperature is -10 degrees with a wind chill factor of -27. It is not the coldest temperature we have ever experienced, but it is brutal. Fortunately, our electric system is performing well with no interruptions in electric service to our members.

You expect reliable and affordable electricity from your electric cooperative. You depend on electricity for so many things including lights, heat, water supply, entertainment and life safety for you and your livestock.

It is easy for you to gauge the reliability of your electric service, because you are the first to know when and how often it is interrupted. A recent survey of Central Electric's members showed that 93 percent of the respondents believe they receive reliable electric service.

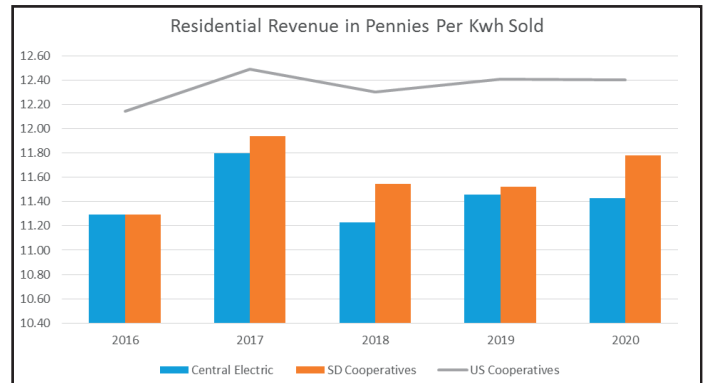
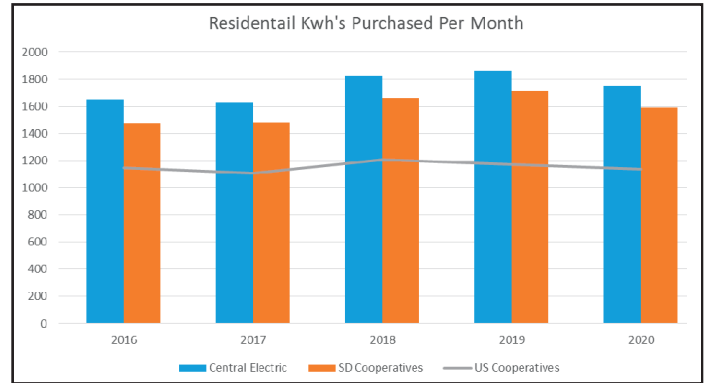
Your cooperative tracks reliability through the use of data, and we know that electric service was available to our membership 99.96 percent of the time in 2020. This means that, on average, our members were without power for about 3.5 hours. Sometimes these interruptions are planned as we make system improvements, and sometimes they are from weather events, public accidents or equipment failure.

I believe your cooperative does a very good job providing reliable electric service, and that is supported by the statistics we gather. In addition, I believe your cooperative does a very good job delivering affordable electric service. Bear with me as I explain why I feel that way.

We all desire to spend less money on the things we purchase, including our electricity. I think that is just human nature. The same survey I referenced above shows that 60 percent of our members believe their electric cooperative charges reasonable rates, leaving 40 percent who don't share the same sentiment.

Every electric cooperative across the U.S. is required to annually report information on performance, electricity sales, operations and maintenance practices. That data is shared and summarized to help cooperatives compare their operations to other cooperatives in their state and across the nation.

I have taken the information from these reports and created a couple graphs to summarize my point about affordable electric rates. As you can see in the graph, since 2016, the revenue that Central Electric receives per kilowatt hour from residential and farm accounts has been below the average revenue received by other cooperatives in South Dakota and across the U.S.



From 2016-2020, Central Electric's revenue received per kilowatt hour from residential and farm accounts was below the state and national average. This indicates we have competitive rates compared to other cooperatives.

Some credit for the lower than average numbers must go to East River Electric Cooperative and Basin Electric Cooperative for providing affordable wholesale power, but credit should also go to your local board and your employees.

I think it is also important to note that our members purchase more kilowatt hours of power each month as compared to other cooperatives. This does influence the average revenue per kilowatt hour, as your cooperative is able to spread costs across more sales.

I am not entirely sure why our members purchase more kilowatt hours of energy when compared to others. It could be because we are largely ag-based, or because we provide a discounted rate for electric heating or because our members trust their cooperative just a little bit more.

The survey also shows that 95 percent of our members believe their employees to be knowledgeable, friendly and courteous. I believe that to be the best measure of our success. I trust you feel the same.

Until next month, stay warm and be safe!

CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

(USPS 018-963)

Board of Directors

Duane Wolbrink - President
 Todd VanWalleghen - Vice President
 Bernetta Burghardt - Secretary
 Mark Reindl - Treasurer
 Mark Hofer - NRECA Director
 Roger Campbell - Director
 Donita Loudner - SDREA Director
 Jeff Gustafson - Director
 Merl Bechen - Director At Large

Management Staff

Ken Schlimgen - General Manager
 Brian Bultje - Mgr. of Operations
 Dean Uher - Mgr. of Finance & Administration
 Lincoln Feistner - Sales/Project Mgr.
 Patrick Soukup - Mgr. of Member Svc. & Marketing
 Tara Miller - Editor, Mgr. of Communications

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.centralec.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@centralec.coop; website: www.centralec.coop.

Contact Us

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

Our Mission

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

Non-Discrimination Statement:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. Central Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

Board meeting summary

The board of directors met Nov. 15, 2021, at Central Electric Cooperative's Betts Road Service Center. The board approved the October 2021 meeting minutes and the November work plan and budget meeting minutes. They then reviewed monthly reports by management including details on operations, member services, communications, service department and financials.

- A motion was made and seconded to authorize management to enter into a 10-year prepay option for Verizon meters. Motion carried by majority vote.
- A motion was made and seconded to adopt revised Policy 805 regarding the facility charge for irrigators. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- A motion was made and seconded to update Policy 301 Line and Service Extension rates. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- A motion was made and seconded to revise Policy 112 adjusting daily per diem for director meetings. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve the 2022 annual work plan and budget as presented. Motion carried by unanimous vote
- A unanimous ballot was cast to name Director Loudner as the cooperative's SDREA director.

The next board meeting was scheduled for Dec. 20, 2021.

Please contact the cooperative office with any questions.

BOARD REPORT

General Manager Ken Schlimgen updated the board on the following:

- East River manager meeting
- Basin Electric Power Cooperative
- Rural Electric Economic Development committee
- POET Loomis steam turbine project
- Legislative activities
- Electric submeter rates
- Annual work plan and budget

Director Reindl provided a report on the Basin Electric annual meeting.

Director Wolbrink reported on the East River Electric board meeting.

BOARD ACTION

The board considered or acted upon the following:

FINANCIAL REPORT	YEAR TO DATE NOV. 2020	YEAR TO DATE NOV. 2021
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales	270,135,060 kWh	298,469,853 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$ 27,107,491	\$ 29,238,607
Total Cost of Service	\$ 25,553,867	\$ 28,537,859
Operating Margins	\$ 1,553,624	\$ 700,748

Make a plan before heading out in wintry road conditions

Though they may make for a pretty seasonal backdrop, snow and ice can complicate even modest travel plans. It's unsafe to drive when visibility is vastly reduced or when you can't fully control your car. According to AAA, wintry weather and its byproduct - hazardous road conditions - are a factor in nearly a half-million crashes and more than 2,000 road deaths each year. With those figures in mind, here are some tips to minimize the risk to yourself and other motorists during winter weather.

Don't drive unless you must. It really isn't worth the risk to your safety and that of others to venture out onto potentially unsafe roads for any circumstance that isn't urgent. Pay attention to weather reports so you can run any time-sensitive errands and stock up on supplies before adverse conditions arrive. If you must drive to work, that's one thing. But don't tempt fate if you can help it.

If you have to drive, eliminate distractions. Keep your phone out of reach or set it to airplane mode - a good practice year-round but especially important when roads are dicey.

Keep a bundle of cold-weather gear in your car, including water, nonperishable food, warm clothing, a flashlight, glass scraper, blankets and medications.

Before you set out, alert others to your route, destination and estimated time of arrival.

Make sure your tires are properly inflated and have plenty of tread.

Keep your gas tank at least half full to prevent a frozen fuel line, which could leave you stranded.

Don't use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface.

Drive slowly. Lower your speed to counteract the reduced traction that accompanies snow and ice. Accelerate and decelerate slowly. Applying the gas slowly can help avoid skids. Since it takes longer to slow down on icy roads, take your time to slow down for a stop sign or light.

A final note for winter driving: Never warm up a vehicle in an enclosed area such as a garage. Exercise caution and good judgment to stay safe as you negotiate whatever conditions winter brings this year.

POWERLINE SAFETY QUIZ

TRUE OR FALSE?

Power lines are insulated for contact.

False. While power lines may have a covering to protect against weather, they are not insulated for contact. Birds can sit on power lines unhurt because they don't create a path to the ground. You and your ladder do.

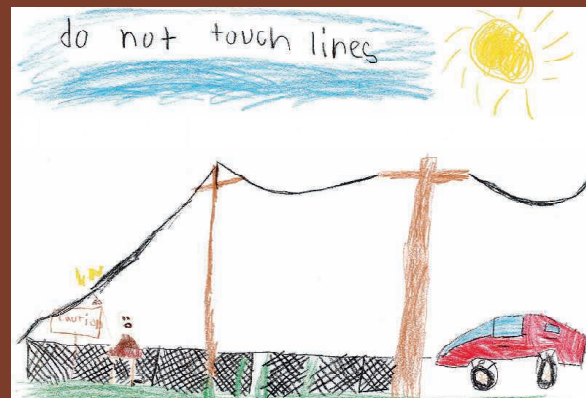


I should keep myself and any equipment I'm using at least 10 feet away from any power lines.

True. You don't need to contact a power line to be in danger; electricity can jump, or arc, from a power line to a person who gets too close. The best insulator is space. Keep yourself and your equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines.

I can be electrocuted by a power line even if I am wearing gloves and rubber boots.

True. Work gloves and rubber boots offer no protection against contact with a power line. Once again, space - and lots of it - is the best insulator.



Don't touch power lines

Luke Walden

Luke Walden reminds co-op members that it's important to never touch power lines under any conditions. Luke is from Brandon, where he and his parents Blake and Jennifer are all members of Sioux Valley Energy.

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.



BRUNCH TIME!

CHEESY SAUSAGE AND POTATO SKILLET CASSEROLE

Ingredients:
 8 ounces bulk breakfast sausage, crumbled
 1 medium onion, chopped
 1 medium green bell pepper, chopped
 6 eggs
 1 cup milk
 1 tablespoon McCormick® Oregano Leaves
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1/4 teaspoon McCormick® Coarse Ground Black Pepper
 1 1/2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
 2 plum tomatoes, seeded and chopped
 1 tablespoon oil
 1 package (20 oz) refrigerated shredded hash browns
 3 tbsp fresh dill, parsley or green onion finely chopped

METHOD

Cook and stir sausage in large skillet on medium heat 5 minutes or until lightly browned. Add onion and bell pepper; cook and stir 5 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Set aside. Beat eggs in large bowl with wire whisk. Add milk, oregano, salt and pepper; mix well. Add sausage mixture, cheeses and tomatoes; mix well. Set aside. Pour oil into same skillet, swirling to coat the pan. Spread hash browns in bottom and up sides of pan. Pour egg mixture over potatoes. Cover. Cook on medium heat 10 to 15 minutes or until eggs are set.

mccormick.com

Please send your favorite seafood 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 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

BRUNCH EGG BAKE

Ingredients:
 12 slices, bread, crusts removed
 2 cups diced ham or bacon, crisp and chopped
 1 - 4 oz. can mushrooms, drained
 1 green pepper, chopped
 1 onion, chopped
 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
 5 eggs
 2-1/2 cups milk
 salt and pepper
 paprika

METHOD

Butter six slices of bread and put face down in 9 x 13 inch pan, lightly sprayed with cooking spray. Cover the bread with the ham, mushrooms, green pepper, onion and cheese. Dice the remaining bread and spread over the top. Beat eggs, milk, salt and pepper and pour over the top. Sprinkle with paprika. Cover the pan with foil and refrigerate overnight. In the morning, bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Serves 12.

Mary Jessen, Holabird

COLD OATMEAL MUESLI

Ingredients:
 1 cup quick oats
 1 cup old fashioned oats
 1/2 cup raisins
 1/3 cup brown sugar
 1 tsp cinnamon
 2 cup milk


METHOD

Mix all ingredients together and let sit overnight in the refrigerator. Serve cold. May add walnuts and apples or other fresh berries when serving, if desired.


Elaine Rieck, Harrisburg

CO-OP HAPPENINGS

YEARS OF SERVICE



Brandon Auch
Appliance Repair Technician
3 years on Feb. 4



Cody Riggs
Journeyman Lineworker
7 years on Feb. 9

Bakley and Poppens join Central Electric Cooperative

Two apprentice lineworkers recently started reporting to the Mitchell location for Central Electric Cooperative. Chandler Bakley, originally from Martin, joined the crew full-time in December after completing a 1,000-hour position with the cooperative. Joey Poppens, originally from Madison, started on the job in early January.

Bakley graduated from Bennett County High School in 2016 and earned a bachelor's degree in agriculture from Dakota Wesleyan University in 2020. He then enrolled at Mitchell Technical College (MTC) and graduated from the Power Line Construction and Maintenance program in 2021. Prior to joining Central Electric, Bakley worked as summer help for LaCreek Electric in Martin, S.D., and he worked on the family farm. Off the clock, he enjoys golfing, hunting and fishing.



Chandler Bakley

Poppens graduated from Madison High School in 2018 and completed MTC's Power Line Construction and Maintenance program in 2019. Prior to joining Central Electric, Poppens worked on a farm, then he worked for a utility construction contractor and Sioux Valley Energy near Colman, S.D. When he's not working, Poppens said he enjoys hunting, fishing and spending time with family and friends.



Joey Poppens

Bakley and Poppens both live in Mitchell and are excited about the road ahead as they work toward earning journeyman status. We are happy to welcome them to the team.



Basin Electric Bus Tour July 13-15, 2022

Central Electric's annual Basin Electric Bus Tour is scheduled July 13-15, 2022. For more information, call 1-800-477-2892 and talk to Patrick Soukup, or visit www.centralelec.coop/basin-electric-bus-tour. We hope you will join us for the trip.



Enjoy retirement!

John Vetch officially retired on Friday, Jan. 7. He has been a lineworker at the cooperative since 1988. Prior to that, he worked for East River Electric Power Cooperative. Employees gathered to eat cake and wish John well at the Betts Road office during his last week on the job.

John and his wife Ronda both retired from their careers on the same day. We wish them a happy, healthy and enjoyable retirement!

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE FEBRUARY 1



Each year, Basin Electric Power Cooperative awards one \$1,000 scholarship to a dependent of a member-owner of Central Electric Cooperative.

To be eligible for the Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship, a student must be:

- 1) a dependent of a member-owner whose primary residence receives electric service from Central Electric Cooperative;
- 2) enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited post-secondary institution; and
- 3) a U.S. citizen.

Two agriculture-related scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 will be awarded in honor of the late Jay Headley of White Lake.

To be eligible for the Jay Headley Memorial Scholarship, a student must be:

- 1) a dependent of a member-owner whose primary residence receives electric service from Central Electric Cooperative;
- 2) pursuing a bachelor's of science degree in an agricultural-related field; and
- 3) a U.S. citizen.

Applications are available at www.centralec.coop/scholarships or by contacting our office.

Scholarship applications can be emailed to cec@centralec.coop or mailed to: Central Electric Cooperative, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301

The deadline for students to submit scholarship applications is Feb. 1, 2022.



Monitor energy use online

As temperatures drop, members often notice a difference in their monthly energy use. Technology is accessible online or through a phone app that enables you to monitor and manage your winter energy use.

SmartHub gives you the ability to:

- View your bill
- View billing & payment history
- Schedule & make payments
- Monitor & compare past usage
- Manage notifications
- Sign up for autopay or paperless billing

Learn more online at centralec.coop/smarthub-help.



Washington, D.C. Rural Electric Youth Tour Dates Announced

The National Rural Electric Youth Tour is scheduled June 19-24, 2022. High school juniors will have the opportunity to learn first-hand what it's like to be involved in politics, community development and today's social issues. Past participants have described this as a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Details will be shared with area schools once applications become available. For more information, contact Tara Miller, Central Electric's Manager of Communications, by calling 1-800-477-2892.



STICKS AND STONES

Members of the Aberdeen Curling Club hold a public instructional session to teach both the young and old the finer points of their sport.

Curling clubs seek to educate the public and spread the word about the joy of throwing stones

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Looking for a sure-fire way to achieve permanent world peace and lasting harmony?

Make curling mandatory.

At least Bryan Rau thinks that's just the ticket to putting an end to international animosity. Rau serves on the board of the Aberdeen Curling Club and describes being hooked the moment he threw his first stone in competition eight years ago.

"When I touched that first stone it was like 10,000 volts going through me. I kicked out the hack and threw that stone down the ice and it was just incredible," he said. "I think if everybody curled, the whole world would be different. Everybody would get along. There's no bad curling. No matter where you play, whether you win or lose, it's all good curling. It's a game that's played with honor and pride. You don't have to be a jock or a talented athlete. It's a sport that's

made for everyone. I've seen people play from 8 to 85."

Bryan and his fellow board member, Steve Gascoigne, spent a recent afternoon in Gascoigne's garage taking in a documentary called "Sticks and Stones: Battle for the Soul of Curling." When they're not playing the game, they enjoy talking about it.

As for his role as the club's ice master, Gascoigne can wax eloquently about how to prepare the perfect sheet of competition ice. He describes the tedious and exacting process that involves various measures of zammung, scraping, mopping, pebbling (twice), watering and nipping.

And if you can't control your stone after Gascoigne and his crew have spent 45 minutes working their magic, more practice may be in order.

The job of a stone hitting its target largely falls on the shoulders of the skip. A typical four-member team includes the lead, second, vice skip and skip. Each player throws two 44-pound stones and the vice skip



Aberdeen Curling Club members Danny Wolfgram, John Hilton, Alex Wolfgram and John Peterson recently completed an "eight ender," which is often compared to a perfect game in baseball.

Curling club contacts

Sioux Falls Curling Club
605-271-7539
www.scheelsiceplex.com

Aberdeen Curling Club
605-228-1717
www.curlaberdeen.com

Rushmore Curling Club
605-484-4477
www.rushmorecurling.org

Yankton Curling Club
(605) 665-0229
www.yanktonice.org

MN Curling Association
www.mncurling.org



Many curling clubs have two common goals: dedicated ice and a desire to teach others the rules and techniques of their sport.

stands in when it's the skip's turn to throw. The direction of the stone's path can be altered by sweepers who brush the surface in a way that can make the stone lose speed, gain speed or curl left or right.

The last stone is called the hammer and can be used to earn points with a favorable position near "the button" or knock the opponent's stone out of the target area.

But beyond the technical aspects of the sport or tallying wins or losses, each of the four most active clubs across the state share the same goal of educating the public about the sport and getting younger folks hooked on curling.

Rau, for instance, is a long-time Scout master and is working with his local troop to get the kids involved. He and Gascoigne and other members of the club visit the Boys and Girls club, school groups and others to

teach youngsters how to play the sport, share their positive experiences and answer their questions.

The same spirit of advocacy is also found at the Yankton Curling Club, which was started last winter by Mike and Julianna Ford along with a small group of other enthusiasts.

Julianna serves as president of the group and fell in love with the sport when she was a high school student in her native Alberta. She describes failing to make the roster of the volleyball and basketball teams but eventually finding a home with the curling squad.

"Our gym class went to the local ice rink and I loved it," she recalled. "It was a lot more strategic than physical and it was something I could compete in."

She later moved to Sioux Falls, married Mike, and the two helped create the existing club in that city.

Several years later they moved to Yankton for Mike's work and soon started another club. The Yankton group lists about 45 members and is also heavily involved in growing the sport in their community.

"We're reaching out to schools, clubs and nursing homes," Julianna said. "There are handicapped leagues and elderly people can play by using a stick to throw the stone. It's a sport that's literally for everyone."

The Fords don't often find themselves on different sides of the ice, but when they do they try to keep the competitive fires closer to an ember than a raging flame.

So, bottom line...who's better?

"No comment," Julianna said, before commenting with a chuckle, "but I'm the one who went to Arena Nationals."

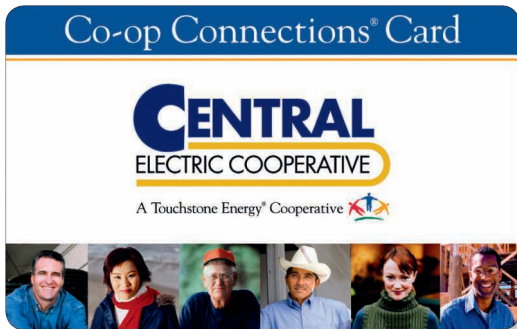
TELL US WHO POWERS YOU!

We know our co-op community is filled with people making a difference. Let's celebrate them! Nominate a member or employee of your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative who goes above and beyond.

They could win up to \$3,000!

Nominate your local hero at

WHOPOWERSYOUCONTEST.COM



**\$SHOP LOCAL
AND \$SAVE**

Cash in on the Savings with the Co-op Connections Card or App

Your cooperative membership earns you discounts at local participating businesses. Simply show your Co-op Connections Card or phone app and save.

Download the Co-op Connections app from the app store or obtain a card by contacting our office. For more information, call 1-800-477-2892 or email cec@centralec.coop.

A list of local discounts can be viewed on our website by visiting www.centralec.coop and selecting Member Programs on the main menu.

BUSINESS	TOWN	DISCOUNT
AAA South Dakota	Mitchell	Save \$15 on new membership
Aero Dyna Kleen Services	Mitchell	\$20 off furnace and duct cleaning; 10% off carpet cleaning
AmericInn Lodge & Suites	Chamberlain	10% off rack rate, not valid with any other offer
America's Mattress	Mitchell	Free sheets with qualifying purchase of \$500 or more
Blessings Repeated, Inc.	Plankinton	20% off purchase of \$10 or more
Buckshots	Letcher	\$1 off all Buckshot Burgers
Double D Body Shop	Woonsocket	\$5 off windshield chip repair

This program is FREE for participating businesses. To get your company on the list, contact Tara Miller at 1-800-477-2892 or visit www.centralec.coop and click on Member Programs. We look forward to helping you attract new customers in 2022.



STILL IN THE SADDLE

At age 77, Dave Dahl of Fort Pierre is nearing the completion of his 2,000th saddle and has no plans to slow down anytime soon. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

Saddle-maker Dave Dahl of Fort Pierre delights in helping bronc riders bring home championship buckles and purses

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Dave Dahl will probably never win a hand model contest. Dahl's digits are gnarled, bent and puffy after nearly a half-century of hard labor producing bronc saddles for dozens of rodeo champions.

Dahl is quick to point out, however, that looks can be very deceiving: his mitts are as strong and dependable and productive as they've ever been, seasoned with decades of experience. At the age of 77, Dahl is still going strong creating saddles out of his shop in downtown Fort Pierre. Incredibly, he's still keeping his customary pace of hand-crafting nearly 60 high-

performance saddles a year.

"Somebody once said if your hands aren't moving, you ain't making money," Dahl chuckled.

During the last week of December, Dahl was busy dashing out his 56th saddle of 2021. That saddle, commissioned by a Canadian bronc riding champion, was No. 1,924 of Dahl's career. Yes, Dahl does keep count, stamping every saddle that leaves the shop. He's already anticipating reaching the 2,000 mark.

He's considering loaning that milestone saddle to Fort Pierre's Casey Tibbs Museum so that visitors can see the brand that's catapulted dozens of rodeo competitors to the top.

"There's actually two that are marked 1,000," Dahl said. Turns out that Glen

O'Neill ended up with the first one, but then Dahl's daughter Darcy Harper also received a commemorative version for roping events. Incidentally, No. 1,800 is displayed in the North Dakota Rodeo Hall of Fame where Dahl was inducted in 2017 for both his riding and his other contributions to the sport.

The list of riders who have won titles from the swells of a Dahl saddle is endless and includes champions from Alberta to Aberdeen to Australia: CoBurn Bradshaw, Cody DeMoss, Clay Elliott, Chuck Schmidt, Jake Watson, Tom Reeves, Jeff Willert, Taos Muncy, Zeke Thurston, Cort Scheer, Wade Sundell, Kyle Whitaker and so many more that Dahl can hardly keep up. Eight Dahl saddles were at the 2021 PRCA Nationals in Las Vegas.

Pro riders enjoy collecting purses and Dahl delights in helping them reach their goals. He knows how hard it is not only to stay on a spirited bucking bronc

for a few seconds but also how difficult it is to make a dollar at it.

Dahl recalls his own limited days as a card-carrying professional when he won several buckles on the PRCA circuit before taking his saddle-making business full-time in the summer of 1974.

Bronc riding set a fire in Dahl's soul at an early age, growing up on the family farm in Keene, N.D., as one of 11 children. He competed for New Town High School and later went on to claim a national collegiate title as team captain for Black Hills State in 1967. A year after graduating with a bachelor's degree, Dahl also won the South Dakota Rodeo Association's saddle bronc title.

While he taught school for three years, Dahl eventually decided to make saddle-crafting his life's work. Dahl's friend and fellow rider Dick Jones got him interested in the craft and the two set up shop in an old abandoned drug store building next to the bank in Fort Pierre. In 1986, the bank decided to open a drive-through lane so the business moved across the street to its present location where Dahl runs Diamond D Saddle Shop and also manages a western clothing store adjacent to the shop.

Dahl plans on keeping his hands hard at work with no end in sight. He stays



Dahl's phone number is on the speed-dial list of collegiate rodeo coaches in several states across the country. At left, Dahl applies his trademark stamp to one of his saddles.

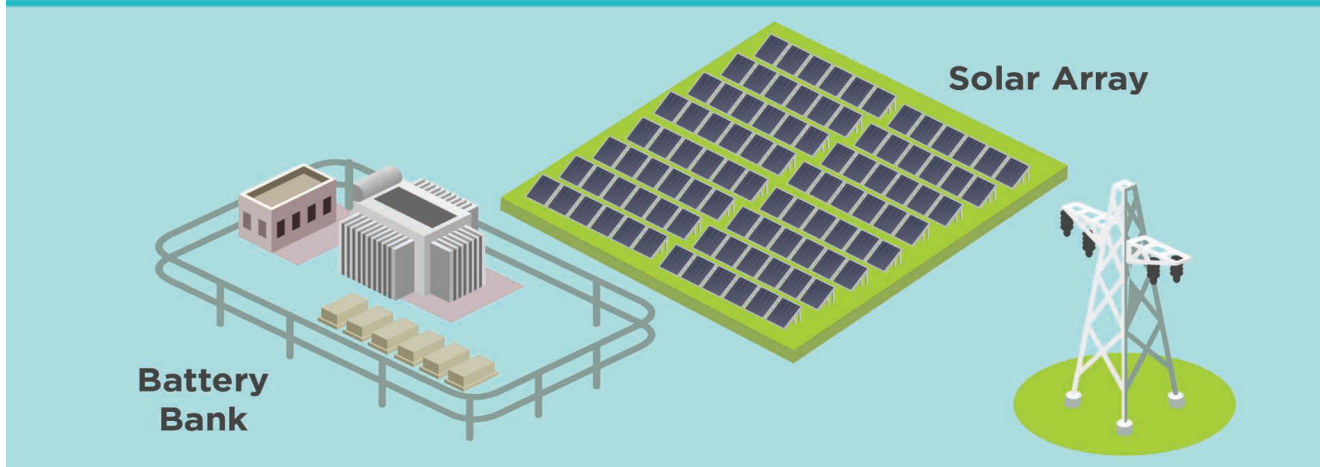
as busy as ever while participation in rodeo continues on an upward growth trajectory. College rodeo coaches in Missouri, Texas, Oklahoma, California and other states have Dahl on their speed-dial lists. He said he recently received a call from someone wanting him to fit a saddle for her 11-year-old child.

"It's just really a booming sport," he

said. "The training is better, there are better horses, there's better TV coverage of the sport and there's more money out there to be made. There are still a lot of ranch kids who grew up on horses and know how to ride. And they like to compete to see who's the best. There's so much work and I still enjoy it, so I don't plan on jumping out of the saddle anytime soon."

THE FUTURE OF ENERGY STORAGE

A new form of battery storage technology, known as the iron-air battery, could potentially provide long-duration energy storage for hundred of hours. Long-duration energy storage will be crucial for adding more solar and wind energy to the electric grid since renewable energy is dependent on the weather and may not always be available when needed.



New Tech Alert: Iron-Air batteries hold the promise of providing long-term energy storage capability

Maria Kanevsky

As the electric grid continues to evolve, new technologies are being developed to help advance the grid of the future. One of these technologies is a new form of battery storage technology called the iron-air battery, which could potentially provide long-duration energy storage for hundreds of hours.

Current battery technologies can only offer storage for tens of hours, meaning the innovative iron-air battery could provide energy for roughly 10 times longer than existing grid-scale batteries. This new technology could help ensure grid reliability even with extreme weather, such as hurricanes or powerful thunderstorms. Long-duration energy storage will also be crucial for adding more solar and wind energy to the grid since renewable energy is dependent on the weather and may not always be

available when we need it. New iron-air batteries could provide the missing link by storing excess energy to be used when the sun isn't shining or the wind isn't blowing.

The battery technology itself is made up of thousands of small iron pellets that develop rust when exposed to oxygen. This process discharges the battery. When the oxygen is removed, the pellets revert back to iron, which then charges the battery. According to Form Energy, the startup company developing this new technology, this process is known as the principle of "reversible rusting." Since the battery technology mainly uses the abundant and cheap resources of water, air and iron, the technology is relatively low-cost. These resources also make the technology relatively safe since there are no heavy metals, and also make the batteries simpler to recycle.

A key feature of these batteries is their

low cost, with Form Energy promising a price of less than \$20 per kWh. That price is about one-tenth the cost of lithium-ion battery technology, which is currently the cheapest battery technology on the market.

Individual iron-air batteries are about the size of a washing machine, making it easy to group many batteries together into a larger, scalable system. The size of the battery module group can vary, depending on the storage needed at a specific site. This means the batteries can be placed in a variety of areas, from rural to urban, to meet energy needs.

While this technology may be a solution for long-duration energy storage, the battery is not yet ready at the commercial level - although it is close. Form Energy estimates the battery should be ready by 2025.

Given the importance of long-duration energy storage for future of the grid, other start-ups are also looking to develop long-duration battery storage technology.

In the meantime, electric utilities can start to understand where this technology may potentially fit within their own systems to make the grid more resilient.

Electric co-ops hold discussions with lawmakers and community leaders

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

In preparing for the 2022 Legislative Session, electric cooperative leaders from across the state held several local forums to engage in wide-ranging discussions with elected officials.

Representatives from Basin Electric, East River, Rushmore Electric, the South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) and many distribution cooperatives invited lawmakers and community leaders to engage in a dialogue focusing on the latest developments in the electric utility industry.

Electric cooperatives will continue to participate in meetings and forums throughout the Legislative Session, which is scheduled to conclude on March 10.

Ken Schlimgen, general manager of Central Electric in Mitchell, served as host of the last of the pre-session forums. Schlimgen welcomed the local lawmakers in attendance and went over some of the programs the co-op is pursuing to provide better service to its members.

Schlimgen showed a slide of the cooperative's small solar array constructed outside the headquarters office. He said the array allows the cooperative to offer members a first-hand look at how solar energy works. Members are also shown statistical data on how much electricity the array is producing at any given time.

This kind of real-time information



Ken Schlimgen, general manager of Central Electric based in Mitchell, describes how the cooperative is investing in an electric all-terrain vehicle to educate members about how EVs work and their potential for curbing greenhouse gas emissions. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

is important for members to understand how renewable resources such as solar and wind produce clean power, Schlimgen said. It's also important for members to understand the limitations of these sources.

"We discovered the first year we had this array that it performed at about 20 percent below the projections that were given by the manufacturer," he said.

Schlimgen also shared photos of the cooperative's Polaris Electric Ranger XP Kinetic UTV. He said the vehicle is rated at 110 horsepower and has a towing capacity of 2,500 lbs.: "This is something we can use on a practical level and also show members when they request more information about electric-powered vehicles."

House Majority Leader Kent Peterson was in attendance and noted lawmakers have considered presenting a bill regarding the licensing of electric UTVs.

"Given the rapid growth of the EV industry, this is something we'll have to consider at some point. It's great to have an opportunity like this to talk with the co-ops directly and get the useful information we need to make the right decisions," Peterson said.

Trevor Jones, general manager of SDREA, previewed some of the legislative issues that could be addressed during the 2022 session, including

issues surrounding the expansion of a network of electric vehicle charging stations and tax exemptions for data centers that consume large amounts of electrical power.

Chris Studer of East River Electric provided an overview of the cooperative's Renewable Energy Credit program. Participating consumers can sign up to receive credits or Green Tags for using renewable energy that comes from several wind farms that supply energy to the cooperative. Studer said the cost of participating in the program can vary among distribution co-ops.

Sen. Josh Klumb of Dist. 20 expressed his thanks to the co-op for organizing and hosting the forum.

"The application of these new technologies is something that will have a direct impact on our citizens for generations to come. In terms of doing our jobs as legislators, there's simply no substitute for this kind of interaction."



Chris Studer of East River Electric details the cooperative's REC Program.



Valentine's Day
February 14

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.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

JANUARY 22
Reba McEntire
Denny Sanford Premier Center,
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

JANUARY 28
12th Annual Shoot 4 A Cure
Benefiting the Aurora Co.
Cancer Fund
Plankinton Gymnasium,
Plankinton, SD, 605-942-7743

JANUARY 28-29
27th Annual Dinner Theater
Reliance Legion Hall, Reliance,
SD, call 605-730-0553 for
more info and tickets

JANUARY 28-31
Lead Winterfest
Various Locations, Lead, SD,
call 605-584-1100

**JANUARY 28-
FEBRUARY 6**
BH Stock Show & Rodeo
Central States Fairgrounds &
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center,
Rapid City, SD, 605-355-3861

JANUARY 29-30
DTGCA Gun Show
National Field Archery Building,
Yankton, SD, 605-731-9154

FEBRUARY 4-6
Fiddler on the Roof
Washington Pavilion, Sioux
Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

FEBRUARY 5
James River Gobblers Wild
Turkey Banquet
Highland Conference Center,
Mitchell, SD, Doors open at 5
p.m., 605-999-3208

FEBRUARY 9-12
Watertown Winter Farm
Show
Codington County Extension
Complex, Watertown, SD,
605-886-5814

FEBRUARY 11
Calamity's Shindig
Homestake Adams Research
& Cultural Center, Deadwood,
SD, 605-722-4800

FEBRUARY 11-12
Bulls & Broncs
Expo Center at the W.H. Lyon
Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD,
605-367-7178

FEBRUARY 11-13
Black Hills Sports Show &
Outdoor Expo
Monument Arena, Rapid City,
SD, visit bhsportsshow.com
for more information

FEBRUARY 12
Lakota Games on Ice
3200 Indian Village Road,
Mitchell, SD, 605-996-5473

FEBRUARY 12-13
DTGCA Sioux Falls Trophy
Show (The Big One)
Sioux Falls Convention Center,
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-280-2438

FEBRUARY 18-28
Black Hills Film Festival
Various Locations in Rapid
City, Hot Springs, Hill City and
Spearfish, SD, visit www.blackhillsfilmfestival.org for more
information

FEBRUARY 19
Sioux Empire on Tap
Denny Sanford Premier
Center, Sioux Falls, SD, visit
siouxempireontap.com for
more info and tickets

FEBRUARY 25
Women in Blue Jeans
Conference
Highland Conference Center,
Mitchell, SD, visit www.womeninbluejeans.org for
more info

**FEBRUARY 25-27,
MARCH 3-5**
Making God Laugh
Grand Opera House, Pierre,
SD, 605-224-7826

MARCH 3-5
The 39 Steps
Orpheum Theater Center,
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

MARCH 10-13
Annual Sioux Empire
Sportsmen's Show
Sioux Falls Arena &
Convention Center, Sioux
Falls, SD, visit www.siouxfallssportsshow.com for more
info and tickets

MARCH 12
28 Below Fatbike Race,
Ride and Tour
Spearfish Canyon Lodge, Lead,
SD, visit www.28below.com
for more info and to register

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