

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS®



Jessie Ruml pursues a labor of love growing an assortment of fresh-cut flowers at Pixie Acres Flower Farm near Castlewood  
*Photo by Rachel Clelland Photography*

## In Bloom

**Cut flowers spread summer cheer**  
Pages 8-9

**Addressing power supply and demand**  
Pages 12-13

# We are ready for summer. Are you?



**Ken Schlimgen**  
General Manager

Now that summer is in full swing, like many of you, I welcome more opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy the warmer weather. Summer brings many of my favorite activities like cooking out with family and friends, afternoons on the golf course and simply slowing down a bit to enjoy life.

You may have seen one of an increasing number of news stories predicting power supply issues this summer. The electric cooperatives in South Dakota, along with many other utilities, are part of the Southwest Power Pool (SPP). SPP is the organization that oversees the bulk electric grid serving a large multi-state geographic area stretching from Oklahoma to North Dakota.

On pages 12 and 13 of this newsletter you will see information about SPP and similar organizations and their predictions on power supply this summer. It is important that you know that SPP expects to have enough generating capacity to meet our regions demand for electricity through the summer season.

Summer months also make conditions right for dangerous storms. Your cooperative has already experienced two wind storm events this past May. Our employees responded quickly to make the necessary repairs and then went to help our neighbors with their repairs.

When major storms knock out power, our line crews take the necessary precautions before working on any downed lines. I would encourage you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during major storms and outages.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends the items below as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness, but you can visit [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) for additional resources.

- Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food.
- Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies.
- Ensure your First Aid kit is stocked and your prescriptions are current.
- Set aside basic household items including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener and a battery-powered radio or TV.
- Organize emergency supplies so they are easily accessible.
- Turn off major appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics.
- Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information.

After the storm, avoid downed power lines and walking through flooded areas where power lines could be submerged. Allow ample room for utility crews to safely perform their jobs, including on your property.

I hope we don't experience more severe storms this summer, but we can never predict Mother Nature's plans. I would recommend that you act today because there is power in planning. From our co-op family to yours, have a safe and wonderful summer.

Until next month, stay safe!

To contact your cooperative with questions, you may call 1-800-477-2892 or email [cec@centralecc.coop](mailto:cec@centralecc.coop).

**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.centraleccoop.com](http://www.centraleccoop.com).

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@centraleccoop.com](mailto:cec@centraleccoop.com); website: [www.centraleccoop.com](http://www.centraleccoop.com).

**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.centraleccoop.com](http://www.centraleccoop.com)

**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, audiotape, 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](http://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](mailto: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 April 18, 2022, at Central Electric Cooperative's Betts Road headquarters for the regular board meeting. They reviewed monthly 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 following:

- Upcoming Central Electric District Meetings
- East River manager meeting
- Rural Electric Economic Development activities
- Basin Electric Power Cooperative activities

The Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) inspection results which were highly satisfactory with no major concerns.

Director Mark Hofer reported on items covered at the NRECA Directors Conference.

East River Director Wolbrink reviewed highlights from the previous East River board meeting.

The board reviewed the financial audit report.

**BOARD ACTION**

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to approve the 2021 audit report as presented. Motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to authorize the board president and secretary to sign the wheeling agreement between Central Electric and Crow Creek Sioux Tribe as when the Tribe is successful in receiving the WAPA seasonal allocation. Director Loudner abstained from voting. Motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to donate five percent of capital credit retirements received from NRUCFC to the CFC Integrity Fund. Motion carried.

There being no further business, President Wolbrink adjourned the meeting. The next board meeting was scheduled for May 18. Members may call the cooperative office if they have questions about the board meeting.

FINANCIAL REPORT	YEAR TO DATE APRIL 2022	YEAR TO DATE APRIL 2021
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales	125,322,960 kWh	125,840,383 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$ 12,138,746	\$ 12,096,080
Total Cost of Service	\$ 11,430,176	\$ 12,009,522
Operating Margins	\$ 708,570	\$ 86,558

# Reduce your risk of shock in the home

Contact with electricity can result in something as innocuous (but still painful) as a mild shock to severe injuries like nerve damage and burns. In some cases, it can even cause cardiac arrest and death. Here's a list of some of the most common shock risks inside a home.

**1. Appliances.** Most shocks from household appliances occur during repairs. It's not enough to turn off an appliance before working on it - you need to unplug it to reduce risk. Large appliances are responsible for 18 percent of household electrical accidents; small appliances account for 12 percent.

There's also danger if your appliance comes into contact with water. Many of these hazards can be avoided by using a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). A GFCI is a protective device installed on electrical outlets, primarily used where water is present. When the device detects an imbalance in the electric current, it turns off the power to minimize the potential for an electric shock.

**2. Ladders.** Typically, ladders present a falling hazard, but 8 percent of household shocks are also related to ladders. Electrocutation typically happens when the ladder makes contact with electrical wires. Before you use a ladder, make sure you can clearly see all power lines in the area - including those that may be hidden by tree branches. Ensure that the ladder is 10 feet away and won't contact a power line if it falls in any direction.

**3. Power tools.** Power tools account for 9 percent of consumer product-related shocks. According to OSHA, when you use power tools that are not double-insulated, are damaged or have damaged cords, you increase your chances of being injured. The chance of danger also increases when you use incompatible cords, use power tools incorrectly or use them in wet conditions. This is another situation in which GFCIs can help.

**4. Electrical outlets and extension cords.** Inserting anything that doesn't belong - screwdrivers, knives, fingers or toy cars, to name a few - into an electrical outlet can result in a dangerous electrical contact.

Use cover plates that fit properly and safety covers on all outlets. By installing tamper-resistant receptacles, outlets will have permanent security against foreign objects being inserted into the slots.

Any broken, loose or worn-out plugs, switches and light fixtures should be replaced immediately.

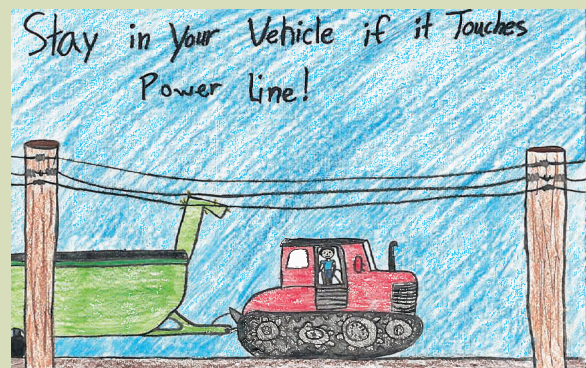
## COOPERATIVES RESPOND TO EMERGENCIES



When back-to-back spring snow storms struck Burke Divide Electric Cooperative (Columbus, ND), cooperatives from South Dakota and Minnesota traveled long distances to respond to the call for help.

When a deadly derecho swept through eastern South Dakota in early May, co-op crews worked long hours to restore power to thousands of electric cooperative members. It's what cooperative linemen do.

Find out more about how our line crews respond to emergencies by visiting Cooperative Connections Plus. Simply scan the QR code at right.



## Call 811 before you dig

### Esmae Beld

Esmae Beld, age 11, offers some sound advice to stay inside your vehicle and call for help if it comes in contact with energized power lines. Esmae is the child of Orlando and Shanna Beld. They are members of H-D Electric Cooperative.

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.

# DREAMY DESSERTS



## LEMON MERINGUE PIE

Ingredients:

### Pie

- 1 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup cornstarch
- 1-1/2 cups cold water
- 3 egg yolks, lightly beaten
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1/2 teaspoon McCormick® Pure Lemon Extract
- 1 baked pie crust (9-inch)

### Meringue Topping

- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon McCormick® Cream Of Tartar
- 3 egg whites
- 1/4 teaspoon McCormick® Pure Lemon Extract

### METHOD

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix sugar and cornstarch in medium saucepan. Gradually stir in water until smooth. Stir in egg yolks. Stirring constantly, bring to boil on medium heat; boil 1 minute. Remove from heat. Stir in lemon juice, butter and extract. Pour hot filling into baked pie crust. For the Meringue Topping, mix sugar and cream of tartar. Beat egg whites in medium bowl with electric mixer on high speed until foamy. Gradually add sugar mixture and extract, beating until stiff peaks form. Spread meringue evenly over hot filling, sealing to edges of crust. Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until meringue is golden. Cool completely on wire rack. Store in refrigerator.

**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 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

## CARAMEL STUFFED KRISPIE BARS

Ingredients:

### Caramel filling

- 4 oz. caramel Kraft bits, unwrapped
- 4 oz. sweetened condensed milk
- 8 tbsp. butter

### Rice Krispie layer

- 12 tbsp. butter, halved
- 10 cup Rice Krispies, halved
- 8 cup mini marshmallows, split in half
- 2 cup additional mini marshmallows for sprinkling

### METHOD

Line pan (9x13) with nonstick foil. Microwave caramel bits, butter and condensed milk until melted and smooth when stirred. Microwave 6 tablespoons butter and 4 cups marshmallows just a minute and stir. Stir in cereal and press into pan. Pour on the caramel. Sprinkle on the additional 2 cups marshmallows and place in freezer for 15 minutes. Use the remaining Krispie ingredients and repeat directions. Press this layer on top of the marshmallows and caramel layer and return to freezer. Switch to the refrigerator and let set for a few hours. Cut into big squares and enjoy.

**Eric Neville, Milesville**

## DUMP BARS

Ingredients:

- 2 cups white sugar
- 1 3/4 cups flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 cup vegetable oil
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1/2 cup cocoa
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup chocolate chips

### METHOD

“Dump” all ingredients except chocolate chips together in bowl. Mix with spoon. Spread in greased 9x13 pan. Sprinkle chocolate chips on top. Do not stir. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

**Deanna Poppen, Sioux Falls**



Director Mark Hofer of Spencer speaks during the Hanson County District Meeting. This was one of eight meetings held in May and June.

We extend special thanks to cooperative members who attended their local district meetings in May and June. The meetings in Miner, Sanborn and Jerauld Counties included director elections. Bob Banks of Fedora was elected to serve Miner County after Bernetta Burghardt announced she was not seeking reelection. Todd VanWalleghen was unopposed and will continue to represent Sanborn County. Mark Reindl was unopposed and will continue to represent Jerauld County.

The meetings included a catered meal and good conversation with neighbors and cooperative management. Topics discussed included the sources of our power supply, the distribution line replacement plan,

community grants, cybersecurity, future rate structure, capital credits, economic development, industry supply challenges, electric vehicles and new technologies. We appreciate our members asking questions and sharing their perspectives.

Central Electric Cooperative's mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to its member-owners – that's you! When members of the community come together for a common purpose, we create an opportunity to improve the quality of life for everyone in our service territory. Your input is imperative to help ensure a bright future. Thank you!



Board Vice President Todd VanWalleghen addresses the crowd in Sanborn County.



President Duane Wolbrink (left) and General Manager Ken Schlimgen (right) recognize retired Director Jim Headley for 25 years of service.



Director Jeff Gustafson addresses the crowd in Davison County.



District Meetings are a good time for the whole family! Kids enjoyed art activities.



Director Roger Campbell speaks to members at the Brule County District Meeting in Pukwana.



These potential future lineworkers from Plankinton assembled their own bucket trucks.



We have trivia prizes for kids and adults. **Olivia M.**, age 7 of Letcher, was recently selected as a winner. She won a light-up art projector and a "Say Watt" electrical education book. Her mom, Leah, sent us this picture. Thanks for playing!

# SAVE THE DATE!

**CENTRAL ELECTRIC'S ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE HELD THE EVENING OF MONDAY, SEPT. 26 AT THE CORN PALACE IN MITCHELL. JOIN US FOR A FREE MEAL AND A CHANCE TO WIN DOOR PRIZES.**

# CO-OP TRIVIA

## Congratulations to last month's winners!

- Kid Prize Drawing Winner: Bryce W., Stickney  
 - Adult Prize Drawing Winner: Henry L., Woonsocket  
 Limited to one winner per household every 2 months. Answers do not need to be correct for entry in the prize drawing.

## Complete this month's trivia to enter the next drawing.

- What unit is used to measure usage on an electric meter?
  - Watts per day
  - Amperage
  - Kilowatts per hour
  - Direct current
- Do I need to call in when I see a red light on my meter?
  - Yes, call anytime the light is red.
  - No, the light may be red at times due to a weak Verizon signal, but there is no need to call.
- Why does my bill show a different submeter rate?
  - Because I am being double-billed.
  - Because I used too much electricity.
  - Because it costs more.
  - Because it is less expensive. All the electricity goes through the main meter and the discounted submeter usage is subtracted from the main meter usage.
- What qualifies for a discounted submeter rate?
  - Permanently installed electric heating equipment
  - A heat pump system
  - Electric water heater
  - All of these may potentially qualify for the discounted rate
- Approximately how many electric services does Central Electric have?
  - 7250
  - 6140
  - 5850
  - 4210



\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Name of Cooperative Member, Spouse or Dependent/Child)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Mailing Address with City)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (Phone)

(Age) To determine adult/child prize. All ages are eligible, as long as the individual is a member, immediate family or dependent living in the same household as a member.

**Submit entries by July 6.**  
**Online trivia can be accessed here: [tinyurl.com/centraltrivia](https://tinyurl.com/centraltrivia)**

**Email to [cec@centraleccoop.com](mailto:cec@centraleccoop.com) or mail to:**  
 Central Electric Cooperative  
 Attn: Trivia  
 PO Box 850  
 Mitchell, SD 57301

### Correct answers from June issue:

- When is National HVAC Technician Day? C.) June 22, 2022
- Who invented air conditioning? A.) Willis Carrier
- How often should you change your air conditioner filter? B.) Every 3 months
- Who was the first U.S. president to have air conditioning installed in the White House? C.) Herbert Hoover
- Who should you call to repair or maintain your HVAC system? D.) The HVAC professionals at Central Electric Cooperative



# IN BLOOM

Philip and Jessie Ruml raise an assortment of fresh-cut flower varieties on their micro-farm near Castlewood. *Photo by Rachel Clelland Photography*

## Specialty micro-farmers raise fresh-cut flowers for weddings, parties and other red-letter events

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

The last time you saw a summer bride carrying a brightly colored floral bouquet down the aisle, it's likely those flowers came from some faraway field in some other part of the planet.

But that's quickly changing as a growing group of intrepid micro-farmers throughout the Upper Midwest are finding their way into the specialty fresh-cut flower business.

Emphasis on the word intrepid: it's not easy raising red roses in a climate more associated with icicles than irises.

Jessie Ruml isn't the least bit intimidated. She's in her fourth year of growing a variety of decorative flowers and reports that the bulbs are blooming and business is booming at Pixie Acres Flower Farm near Castlewood.

After 10 years as a dental hygienist waging a protracted war against plaque, Ruml decided to turn in her stainless steel sickle scaler and look for another occupation that would keep her on the

family farm and close to home with her four spirited daughters.

One afternoon while the children were out playing in the yard, she was swiping through her social media accounts and up popped a picture of a brilliant display of dahlias lying in the bed of an old pickup truck. The scene stopped her dead in her scrolling tracks.

"The colors were so vivid, I immediately felt the hair stand up on the back of my neck. I knew in an instant that's what I needed to do with my life," said Ruml, a self-described farm girl originally from Elk Point and a current member of H-D Electric Cooperative.

It didn't take long for Ruml to realize why South Dakota is not exactly known as the fresh-cut flower capital of the world - at least not yet. She compares growing flowers in eastern South Dakota to 24-hour babysitting. It's a painstaking task to bring flower seeds to full bloom in such a capricious and often harsh climate.

She and her husband Philip, who works full time in the ag industry,

don't even consider taking an extended vacation between the months of March and October when the Rums hold a "fall finale" on the farm to sell off the remainder of their crop or donate it to local charities. Flower plants are high maintenance, sensitive to the elements and require tons of TLC with watering, weeding and fertilizing, she explained: "We can't leave them untended for more than a few hours at a time."

But Jessie keeps a positive perspective when her back and her body start aching from all the hard work.

"You have to get on your hands and knees because there's not a lot of mechanical equipment like in larger scale farming," she said. "But all the effort only makes it that much more special to bring somebody joy, to see the happiness on their faces when you give them a bouquet of fresh flowers. It's hard on your body, but I'm grateful for each day I get to put my hands in the dirt."

She breaks up the monotony and the grind of flower farming by conducting floral design workshops, which she describes as a "girls' night out" where there's lots of laughs and perhaps some light spirits flowing in the



## ZONE 4 FLOWER VARIETIES

Here are the top five flower varieties most suitable for USDA Hardiness Zone 4 planting:

1. Petunias
2. Daisies
3. Dahlia
4. Zinnia
5. Tulips



Christy Heckathorn, owner of Fleurish Flower Farm and Design near Elk Point, shows Union County Electric General Manager Matt Klein how she uses soil blocking to grow hardier seedlings and increase production. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

studio. Participants learn how to make arrangements and fill vases and tour the fields to see how the operation works.

She also looks for opportunities to support the community, like donating a portion of her sales to assist families whose homes were destroyed by a tornado that severely damaged much of Castlewood on May 11.

Over the past few years, more growers are taking on the challenge of Zone 4 flower farming and have entered the market in places like Belle Fourche, Vermillion, Lake Preston, Sioux Falls, Mitchell, Wolsey, Artesian and others. Many are members of the South Dakota

Specialty Growers Association based in Yankton. The group held a virtual “member meet-up” on June 14 to collaborate, educate and exchange ideas.

One floral designer who jumped into the fresh-cut flower business two years ago is Christy Heckathorn, owner of Fleurish Flower Farm and Design in Ruml’s native Elk Point. In point of fact, it was Heckathorn - a family friend - who designed the floral arrangement for Ruml’s bridal bouquet 15 years ago.

Heckathorn got involved in the industry when she went to work at Pioneer Drugs, a local pharmacy that also had a flower shop and a soda fountain

inside. She spent five years there serving customers and also working on the side to help brides select arrangements for their big day.

While Heckathorn has gathered an wealth of training and experience over the years, she said she delights in using flowers to elicit smiles and positive reactions in her clients and other people she meets – especially those who could use a laugh when battling through personal challenges.

“A lady once came with her family and I could tell she had a lot on her mind,” she recalled. “I talked with her and found out she was going through cancer treatment and they had come here just to get away for awhile, enjoy the flowers and forget about things. My mother just went through cancer treatment. So I told them to come back any time and they would always be welcomed.

“One of the reasons I love flowers is because they bring joy to other people. If you can grow flowers and put a smile on someone’s face as a result of your labor, that’s a good life recipe.”



Jessie Ruml uses a pair of high tunnel greenhouses on her farm near Castlewood to shelter her flower plants from often unpredictable South Dakota weather patterns. *Photo by Rachel Clelland Photography*

# CREWS ASSIST SIOUX VALLEY AFTER MAY 12 STORM



Daniel K. Tim N. Al S. Cody R. Davis M. Kevin J. Tim O.

A rare and dangerous storm system known as a derecho swept through eastern South Dakota on the afternoon of Thursday, May 12. High winds with gusts up to 107 miles per hour carried debris that damaged power lines and transmission infrastructure.

There was also extensive damage to trees, employees' homes, members' homes and agricultural structures. Central Electric outages were mostly restored by Friday afternoon, with the exception of a few services in the Howard area.

Once the damage was surveyed and outages were restored, Central Electric crews answered the call to assist our neighbors at Sioux Valley Energy with system repairs. This is one of the benefits of being part of the larger cooperative family.

## Grants awarded to support local projects

Central Electric Cooperative is awarding \$12,850 in Operation Round-Up grants to support area projects.

Through Operation Round-Up, participating cooperative members round their monthly electric bill to the next whole dollar.

The average member contribution of 50 cents per month rolls into a charitable fund to support local causes. Grants are awarded from the fund twice each year.

After reviewing more than 30 grant applications, the Operation Round-Up board of trustees recently approved a number of grant awards from organizations across Central Electric's service territory. The list of recipients can be viewed on the right side of the page.

The Operation Round-Up board of trustees includes Julie Dykstra of Stickney, Jill Ekstrum of Kimball, Ellen Speck of Gann Valley, David



Jorgenson of Mitchell, LeAnn Moe of Alexandria, Scott Kolousek of Wessington Springs, Connie Hattervig of Carthage, Carla Amick of Letcher and Merl Bechen of Mitchell. The cooperative's eight-county service area includes Aurora, Brule, Buffalo, Davison, Hanson, Jerauld, Miner and Sanborn Counties.

Since 2015, cooperative members have invested nearly \$160,000 back into their local communities through Operation Round-Up. The funds are awarded to organizations that make a direct impact in the communities of Central Electric members.

The next grant application deadline is November 1. For more information, please call 1-800-477-2892, visit [www.centralec.coop/operation-round-up](http://www.centralec.coop/operation-round-up) or speak with your local county's trustee.

### Operation Round-Up grant awards:

\$2,000 – Grass truck equipment for the Fedora Volunteer Fire Dept.

\$2,000 – Fire safety gear for the Kimball Volunteer Fire Dept.

\$1,800 – Appliances for the Wiconi Wawokiya domestic abuse shelter in Fort Thompson

\$1,500 – Appliances for Little Learners Preschool & Daycare in Emery

\$1,200 – Safety equipment for J&B Shooting Sports in Wessington Springs

\$1,000 – Fire safety gear for Buffalo County Rural Fire District in Gann Valley

\$1,000 – Grass fire rig for Rosedale Fire Dept. near Alexandria

\$800 – FFA jackets and scholarships for the South Dakota FFA Foundation

\$800 – Raised garden supplies for Ethan FFA

\$750 – Assistance to prevent homelessness for James Valley Drug & DUI Court in Mitchell

## YEARS OF SERVICE



**Brian B.**  
Manager of Operations  
36 years on June 9



**Al S.**  
Journeyman Lineworker  
Howard Area  
35 years on June 15



**Gene G.**  
Area Foreman  
Wessington Springs  
5 years on June 12



**Daniel K.**  
Apprentice Lineworker  
Kimball Area  
3 years on June 10

## Temporary 1,000-hour utility workers hired

Each year, Central Electric hires temporary utility workers to assist crews during the busy construction season. We are excited to have these new faces on the team this summer to help get the work done.

Gary T., a 1993 MTC graduate, is a temporary 1000-hour utility worker. He lives in Plankinton with his family. He has worked for Sioux Valley Energy, Central Electric and served as an instructor at Mitchell Technical College (MTC).

Chase S., a 2021 MTC graduate, also joins the crew as a temporary 1000-hour utility worker. He lives in Mitchell and previously worked at Northern Electric. Welcome to the team!



**Gary T.**



**Chase S.**

## Reasons to Celebrate

National Forklift Safety Day is recognized on June 14. One specific team member, **Evan D.**, has remarkable forklift operating skills. The cooperative wouldn't get much done without him. We are thankful Evan shares his talents with us for the benefit of our members.

National Electricity Day is June 15. It takes place on the anniversary of the date in 1752 when it's reported Benjamin Franklin flew a kite in a thunderstorm with the intent of proving lightning was caused by a discharge of electricity. His experiment led to further understanding of positive and negative charge and the invention of the lightning rod. On this day, we thank **Doug S., Dusty R. and Dustin W.** Doug works every day to make sure the electricity our members use gets recorded through the metering system. Dusty and Dustin perform staking duties, among other critical tasks, to ensure lines are all in the right place and installed safely so members have electricity.

National HVAC Technician Day is celebrated on June 22. This is a time to show respect and appreciation for our HVAC team members. **Donn K., Wade B., Aaron P. and Lincoln F.** do a remarkable job keeping folks comfortable every day of the year.

National Logistics Day is recognized on June 28. Our resident warehouse logistics expert, **Andrew B.**, ensures inventory is here when our teams need it. Andrew's skills, knowledge and dedication are sincerely appreciated.



# SUMMER POWER

## Local co-ops are prepared to meet peak demand for electricity this summer

You may have seen articles recently about the potential for rolling power outages across the West and Midwest that could be triggered by a combination of insufficient generation, increased demand for power and warmer than normal temperatures expected this summer across the region. While no one can predict what extreme weather could be coming our way, or unexpected issues with power plants and renewable resources, electric co-ops in South Dakota and western Minnesota are confident that we will have enough generation to meet our electric needs.

The following questions and answers aim to provide background on Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs), the role RTOs play in serving consumers, potential power supply impacts to this region throughout the summer,

and some lessons learned from the February 2021 energy emergency.

### WHERE DOES MY ELECTRICITY COME FROM?

Decades ago, when electric cooperatives were created to bring power to rural America, there were few electric generation options available. In our region, electric cooperatives worked together to access hydropower from the dams on the Missouri River and later created East River Electric Power Cooperative, Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative to fulfill their power needs.

These generation and transmission cooperatives provide transmission services and construct regional power plants and transmission infrastructure. In the past, when co-ops needed

more electric generation because of economic growth, we built it.

Co-ops still own and build generation units today, but the operation of the grid that serves our region changed significantly about seven years ago. In 2015, East River Electric, Rushmore Electric, Basin Electric and the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), which sells hydropower from the dams, all entered the Southwest Power Pool (SPP). SPP is an RTO that operates throughout the central portion of the United States and allows utilities to work together to provide the most efficient and cost-effective generation and transmission services to control costs.

### DOES THE SOUTHWEST POWER POOL (SPP) EXPECT TO HAVE ENOUGH GENERATION TO MEET DEMAND THIS SUMMER?

SPP operates like the “air-traffic controller” of the bulk electric grid from Canada to Texas. It oversees the grid and the wholesale power markets serving most of the electric cooperative consumers in South Dakota. According to a May 12 press release from SPP, the organization said it “expects to have enough generating capacity

to meet the regional demand for electricity through the summer season.” SPP anticipates that demand for electricity will peak at 51.1 gigawatts during the summer season, which runs June to September 2022. According to SPP, a diverse fleet of generation units, including cooperative-owned power plants and renewable resources, will be prepared to serve at least 55.5 gigawatts of demand.

### **WHAT IS THE MIDCONTINENT INDEPENDENT SYSTEM OPERATOR (MISO) AND WHY DOES IT EXPECT TO HAVE AN ENERGY SHORTFALL THIS SUMMER?**

The Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) is similar to SPP – it is an RTO responsible for matching generation resources with power demand from consumers throughout the Midwest in states like Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Michigan and Illinois. Each RTO serves different areas of the country and has a different mix of generation resources. Some consumers in South Dakota are served from the MISO system, but most cooperative consumers are served through SPP. MISO raised alarms in April when the organization said it projects “insufficient firm resources” to supply the summer demand for electricity.

In 2005, MISO’s total generation mix was 76 percent coal, 13 percent nuclear, 7 percent natural gas and the rest came from a mix of other resources. By 2020, the amount of coal-based generation fell to 33 percent while natural gas grew to 34 percent, nuclear reached 17 percent and wind and solar accounted for 13 percent. It has been a drastic change in a short amount of time. With a higher amount of variable generation resources, less

## **SPP “EXPECTS TO HAVE ENOUGH GENERATING CAPACITY TO MEET THE REGIONAL DEMAND FOR ELECTRICITY THROUGH THE SUMMER SEASON.”**

firm generation available and the anticipation of increased electric usage because of higher than average temperatures, it sets up the potential for rolling power outages across the MISO footprint this summer.

### **HOW DO THE ENERGY MARKETS WORK?**

Basin Electric owns generation and sells it into the SPP and MISO markets. Basin Electric buys all the power they need from those same markets to serve their membership, including your local electric co-op. It helps control costs throughout our co-ops by allowing us to sell generation into the markets when it is economically advantageous, or to access cheaper generation from the market when we need it. It was a critical strategic step taken by electric cooperatives to save their members money. But it also means that we can be subject to SPP directed rolling outages if demand exceeds generation across the entire SPP footprint like we saw in February 2021. Although electric cooperatives in the Dakotas are required to have enough generation to serve our own consumers, because co-ops are integrated in the grid we must share in any potential outages due to an energy emergency.

### **DID UTILITIES LEARN ANYTHING FROM THE FEBRUARY 2021 ENERGY EMERGENCY?**

In February 2021, record-low temperatures and record-high electricity use across a region stretching from the Canadian border to Texas created what SPP called “the greatest operational challenge in its 80-year history.” Yet, even in

the extreme conditions, SPP had about four hours total of rolling outages across its 14-state region. That included South Dakota and cooperatives served by East River Electric and Rushmore Electric. East River was required to drop about 83 megawatts of demand over a short time on Feb. 16, 2021. Rushmore Electric was required to drop 22 megawatts on Feb. 16, 2021. After the emergency, SPP commissioned a comprehensive report and conducted an in-depth analysis of what happened. The report produced 22 actions, policy changes and assessments related to fuel assurance, resource planning and availability, emergency response and other areas.

Joining SPP was a strategic step that our cooperative network took several years ago to capture the benefits of being in an RTO. We have experienced immense financial and operational benefits over the past several years from our membership in SPP which have helped to keep electric rates stable. Looking ahead to this summer, most electric cooperatives in South Dakota are not within the MISO footprint and are not expecting an impact from any potential MISO rolling power outages. However, a few local co-ops in Minnesota and northern South Dakota may be called upon to take a rolling outage. Those co-ops will communicate with members if this becomes a possibility and will work to minimize the impact of these potential outages.



# FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

There are more than 25 fairs and festivals on the schedule in South Dakota and southwestern Minnesota. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

## Electric co-ops support the mission of fairs and festivals to educate and entertain

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

When Scott Wick was a boy growing up in western Sioux Falls, he set upon a clandestine quest to find a way of sneaking into the Sioux Empire Fair without having to spring for a ducat.

Like a well-trained but cash-starved recon platoon, he and his mischievous chums used to probe for breaches in the site's perimeter, lured by the music, lights and laughter emanating from the other side of the fence.

Things have come full circle. Today, Wick serves as president and CEO of the Sioux Empire Fair. Now he spends his time looking for ways to prevent people from weaseling their way inside the gates.

Wick gets a chuckle out of the irony of those memories and is careful to note that he quickly became a reformed juvenile trespasser. He went on to not

only participate in the fair as a volunteer worker but also became a contributing part of the entertainment.

From third grade through his freshman year in high school, Wick and his compatriots rode their bicycles down to the fair site and went through the front gates - legally - to help hired hands set up the carnival rides, tend to livestock and prepare amusements for thousands of giddy fair-goers.

He even parlayed his interest in the fair into a profitable enterprise. He shares an old dog-eared Argus Leader newspaper photo of his 11-year-old self selling rides to patrons on the back of a Brown Swiss steer for 50 cents a pop at the Old McDonald's Farm exhibit.

Aside from his present-day security detail, Wick stays busy not only preparing for the Sioux Empire Fair but also staging more than 130 events held annually at the W.H. Lyons Fairgrounds throughout the calendar year with a full

range of activities such as weddings, flea markets, arts and crafts shows, a Renaissance festival, livestock events and more.

"The Sioux Empire Fair and these other events have a long history and people always come up to me and talk about the old days, back in the 50s and 60s when they used to come here as a kid," Wick said. "The size of the steers and the heifers have changed drastically over the years, but people still come here for the same reason as always - to have some good family fun. For a lot of people, this serves as an annual family gathering or a kind of reunion."

The 83rd event will be held Aug. 5-13 and will feature nine nights of musical entertainment on the Billion Automotive Main Stage with headliners like .38 Special, Old Dominion, Sawyer Brown, Justin Moore and more.

The Sioux Empire Fair is considered to be the top event among fairs and festivals in terms of attendance from visitors across the region, but there are many county and local events that



Fairs and festivals offer opportunities for fun, education and games to test your skills. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

are annual attractions throughout the summer and fall.

The Heartland Association of Fairs, Festivals and Events lists 25 programs taking place across South Dakota.

Electric cooperative organizations serving members in South Dakota and Minnesota have a long tradition of supporting local fairs and festivals through employee engagement and both financial and in-kind contributions.

Sonje Oban, a representative of FEM Electric based in Ipswich, joined the cooperative after working for the Brown County Fair for several years. She sees a similarity in the local roles of electric cooperatives and the organizations responsible for making sure county fairs provide opportunities for education and entertainment for families.

“FEM is community-oriented and community-driven. We wouldn’t exist if it weren’t for the members that we serve and who own the cooperative,” she said. “Having worked with the fair and now with the co-op, I see that in many ways my priorities and goals are the same: to make a positive contribution to the community and to enhance the lives of both our members and the public at-large. There’s also a big similarity in the educational component. The fair

has lots of exhibits and demonstrations relating to the ag industry, while here at FEM one of our goals is to educate our members on how to use power wisely, safely and economically.”

Carrie Vugteveen is vice president of public relations at Sioux Valley Energy based in Colman. The co-op serves east-central South Dakota and southwestern Minnesota and is involved in many local events throughout the calendar year.

One of those events is the Rock County Fair held in Luverne, Minn., each July. SVE brings a high voltage trailer, a bucket truck and an electric vehicle to educate and inform fairgoers about how electric grid systems function, how they’re maintained and how renewable resources are changing the industry.

For the Sioux Empire Fair, SVE joins several other distribution cooperatives, along with transmission provider East River Electric, in

serving lunch for Ag Appreciation Day.

“County fairs are an important part of our communities, which is why the co-op is involved,” Vugteveen said. “A good example is our partnership with the Rock County Fair. A few years ago we worked with organizers to bring attendees safety demonstrations with a high-voltage trailer, examples of equipment we use to work on lines such as personal protective equipment and bucket trucks as well as our electric vehicle ‘EVie.’ To get everyone involved we had Sioux Valley Energy ‘passports’ that could be stamped if they visited our demonstrations. If fairgoers filled their passports, they would receive a prize.”



Electric cooperatives are involved in making sure local events are fun for everyone. *Photo by East River Electric*



**JULY 2-4**  
Fourth of July Holiday Weekend

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.

**JUNE 24-26**  
**Scavenger's Journey**  
Various Locations, SD,  
[scavengersjourney.com](http://scavengersjourney.com)

**JUNE 25**  
**Fire and Iron Station 49**  
**Poker Run**  
Jades Bar, Mitchell, SD,  
605-999-9824

**JUNE 25**  
**Leap to Lane**  
City Park, Lane, SD,  
605-539-1929

**JUNE 29-JULY 4**  
**Celebration of Freedom**  
East City Park, Parkston, SD,  
[parkstoncelebration.com](http://parkstoncelebration.com)

**JUNE 30-JULY 4**  
**Annual Black Hills Roundup**  
300 Roundup Street, Belle  
Fourche, SD, [blackhillsroundup.com](http://blackhillsroundup.com)

**JULY 2-4**  
**Sitting Bull Stampede Rodeo**  
Various Locations, Mobridge,  
SD, 605-845-2387

**JULY 3-4**  
**Custer's Old Time Country**  
**Fourth of July**  
Various Locations, Custer, SD,  
605-673-2244

**JULY 4**  
**4th of July Parade & Celebration**  
Kemp Avenue, Watertown, SD,  
605-886-5814

**JULY 7, 14, 21, 28**  
**Music in the Garden**  
Shakespeare Garden,  
Wessington Springs, SD,  
605-539-1929

**JULY 9**  
**Helping with Horsepower**  
**Down Syndrome Camp**  
40787 259th Street, Mitchell,  
SD, email [reclamationranch@gmail.com](mailto:reclamationranch@gmail.com) to register

**JULY 13-16**  
**Black Hills Corvette Classic**  
Various Locations, Spearfish, SD,  
[blackhillscorvetteclassic.com](http://blackhillscorvetteclassic.com)

**JULY 14-17**  
**Corn Palace Stampede Rodeo**  
Various Locations, Mitchell, SD,  
[cornpalacestampede.com](http://cornpalacestampede.com)

**JULY 14-17**  
**Danish Days**  
Various Locations, Viborg, SD,  
[danishdays.org](http://danishdays.org)

**JULY 15-17**  
**Gold Discovery Days**  
Various Locations, Custer, SD,  
605-673-2244

**JULY 15-17**  
**Rustic Designs & More Flea Market and Craft show**  
41450 264th Street, Ethan, SD,  
605-770-2411

**JULY 22-23**  
**Foothills Rodeo**  
Jerauld County 4H Grounds,  
Wessington Springs, SD,  
605-770-5720

**JULY 23**  
**Yankton Rock-N-Rumble Motorcycle Rally**  
3rd Street, Yankton, SD,  
605-299-9734

**JULY 25-30**  
**Days of '76 Rodeo and Parades**  
18 Seventy Six Drive,  
Deadwood, SD, [daysof76.com](http://daysof76.com)

**JULY 29-31**  
**Badlands Astronomy Festival**  
Ben Reifel Visitor Center,  
Interior, SD, 605-433-5243

**JULY 30**  
**South Dakota Chislic Festival**  
Prairie Arboretum, Freeman,  
SD, [sdchislicfestival.com](http://sdchislicfestival.com)

**AUGUST 5-6**  
**Arts in the Garden**  
Shakespeare Garden,  
Wessington Springs, SD,  
[wessingtonsprings.com/currentevents](http://wessingtonsprings.com/currentevents)

**AUGUST 5-14**  
**Sturgis Motorcycle Rally**  
Main Street, Sturgis, SD,  
[sturgismotorcyclerrally.com](http://sturgismotorcyclerrally.com)

**AUGUST 6**  
**Rockin Ribfest**  
City Park, Wessington Springs,  
SD, [wessingtonsprings.com/currentevents](http://wessingtonsprings.com/currentevents)

**AUGUST 13**  
**Hot Rods for the Hatchery Car Show**  
D.C. Booth Fish Hatchery,  
Spearfish, SD, 605-642-7730

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