

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## Little cars, big smiles

**Smile makers build  
Toys for God's Kids**  
Pages 8-9

**Treatment center  
changes young lives**  
Pages 12-13

Asher Smith plays with a few  
of the thousands of small  
wooden cars built each year  
by Toys for God's Kids

# Giving back and looking ahead as 2022 comes to a close



**Ken Schlimgen**  
General Manager

The holiday season is finally here. Some call it the most wonderful season of all. For many of us, it means traditions of gathering with family, friends and loved ones. It's a time of spreading joy and giving.

Giving back reminds me of the many blessings we have right here and why it's essential that we spread the good wherever possible. Working together, we can make a meaningful impact.

You have likely heard me say that the cooperative principle "concern for community" is part of your cooperative's DNA. It defines who Central Electric is as an organization. When we first brought electricity to our communities, the quality of life improved. Over the years, as needs emerged, we knew we could do more, so we started Operation Round-Up.

Through the Operation Round-Up program, you voluntarily round up your monthly bill to the next dollar to donate to this fund. Your donations help meet an immediate and sometimes critical need while showing you care for your community. Members with multiple accounts automatically have the main account enrolled but not additional meters. Call our office if you want to contribute through all active accounts.

Funding categories include community service, economic development, education and youth, environment, emergency energy assistance and disaster relief. Organizations that have received past grants include non-profit groups, cemetery associations, youth organizations and fire departments.

The Operation Round-Up committee will meet on November 30 to review applications for another round of grant funds. Thanks go out to our members supporting this program. I encourage all members to participate in this small, easy way to improve our quality of life through one or all of your accounts.

Your cooperative is managing well so far in 2022.

We should complete our major projects, and revenues through the end of September are ahead of budget. Our expenses are also higher, but our margins through the end of September are better than budget and better than this time last year. The fall weather has been very mild and the harvest didn't require much electricity to move or condition. As a result, we don't know what we will have for revenues for the remainder of the year, but we expect to end the year in a good financial position.

We are presenting 2023 budget projections to the board this month. It is difficult to predict the weather, economy, revenues and expenses. We expect revenues to increase due to businesses that are expanding and starting up in 2023. We also know that the cost of almost everything we do is increasing. Some cost increases are small, while others are significant. Look to my column next month as I share our predictions for 2023.

**The cost of almost everything we do is increasing. Some cost increases are small, while others are significant. Look to my column next month as I share our projections for 2023.**

Our crews have been burying as much electrical wire as we can before the ground freezes. If you are planning a project requiring buried electrical lines, please contact us or your electrician immediately. We have a backlog of requests and will address them in the order they are received. Once there is significant frost in the ground, we will stop digging to avoid damaging our equipment.

The board, employees and I are all thankful for the opportunity to serve you each and every day. Have a blessed and joyful holiday season.

Until next month, stay safe!

CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

(USPS 018-963)

Board of Directors

- Duane Wolbrink - President
Todd VanWalleghen - Vice President
Mark Reindl - Treasurer
Mark Hofer - NRECA Director
Donita Loudner - SDREA Director
Merl Bechen - Director At Large
Roger Campbell - Director
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Robert Banks - Director



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 Sept. 19, 2022, at Central Electric Cooperative's headquarters for the regular board meeting. They reviewed reports by management including details on operations, member services, communications, service department and financials.

BOARD REPORT

General Manager Schlimgen updated the board of directors on the East River managers' meeting, Rural Electric Economic Development, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, maintenance contract extensions and surplus equipment.

NRUCFC Senior Vice President Darrin Lynch presented to the board of directors the 2021 Key Ratio Trend Analysis (KRTA). Discussion followed.

Director VanWalleghen reported on the SDAC annual meeting. Discussion followed.

Director Wolbrink reported on the East River Electric board meeting. Discussion followed.

Manager Soukup and Director Loudner reported on their recent tour of Southwest Power Pool (SPP) facilities. SPP is Central Electric's regional transmission organization.

Director Hofer reported on the NRECA board meeting. Discussion followed.

The board reviewed monthly director expenses.

The board recognized and thanked Miner County Director Bernetta Burghardt, as this is her last regular board meeting. She did not run for reelection after 18 years of service.

BOARD ACTION

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the September 1, 2022, safety meeting. Motion carried.
A motion was made and seconded to adopt Policy 746 Safety Program as revised. Motion carried.
A motion was made and seconded to approve a budget amendment for additional tree trimming and utility pole inspections. Motion carried.
A motion was made and seconded to approve a resolution declaring vehicles #9915 & #9968 as surplus. Motion carried.

There being no further business, President Wolbrink adjourned the meeting. The next board meeting was scheduled for Oct. 17, 2022.

Table with 3 columns: FINANCIAL REPORT, PRIOR YEAR TO DATE SEPT. 2021, YEAR TO DATE SEPT. 2022. Rows include Kilowatt Hour (kWh) sales, Electric Revenues, Total Cost of Service, and Operating Margins.

# Deck your halls with home safety in mind

It's time to deck those halls - safely. More than 800 home fires are caused by holiday decorations each year, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

An additional 170 home fires are caused by Christmas trees each year. Keep these tips in mind for a safe holiday season:

- Carefully inspect all electrical decorations before you use them. Cracked or damaged sockets and loose or exposed wires can cause serious shock or start a fire.
- Make sure all extension cords and electrical decorations are being used properly - indoor-rated cords indoors, outdoor-rated cords for outside decorations.
- Inspect extension cords for damage and discard (not repair) any that are not completely intact.
- Never mount or support light strings in a way that might damage the cord's insulation.
- Outdoor electrical lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters.
- Exercise caution when decorating near power lines. Keep yourself and your ladder at least 10 feet from power lines.
- Turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations before leaving home or going to sleep.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many decorations or electrical devices. They can overheat and cause a fire.
- Never connect more than three strings of incandescent lights together.
- Water your Christmas tree daily.
- Keep all decorations at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- Avoid using candles. The flames are just too dangerous with all the flammable decorations around.
- Purchase electrical decorations from reputable retailers and that are approved by a nationally recognized testing lab such as UL, Intertek or CSA.

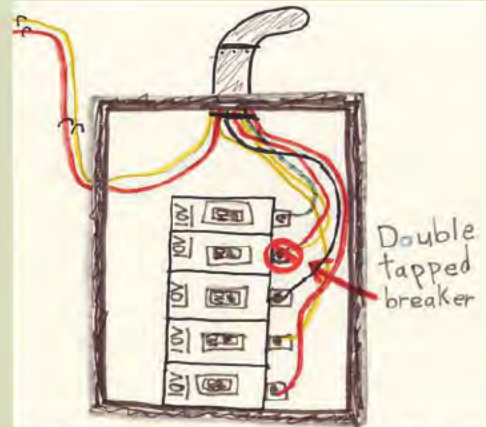


## A NEW TEACHING TOOL FOR SOLAR POWER EDUCATION



Rushmore Electric and Touchstone Energy have joined together to construct a demo trailer designed to teach co-op members across the state more about how solar power functions. The trailer is equipped with fold-out collection panels and also battery storage capability. Co-op energy experts use the trailer to frame discussions about net metering, interconnection agreements and more.

To see a video of the trailer and learn more about how electric cooperatives serve our members, visit Cooperative Connections Plus by scanning the QR code at right.



## Don't play on transformer boxes

### Olaf Sahlstrom

Olaf Sahlstrom, 9, shares a tip he learned from his parents, Ben and Naomi Sahlstrom: Double-tapped breakers are unsafe and can lead to overheating, arcing, and electrical fires. The Sahlstroms reside in Tracy, MN and are members of Lyon-Lincoln 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.

# CHRISTMAS DESSERTS

## PEANUT BUTTER PIE

**Ingredients:**

1 heaping c. peanut butter  
 1 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese  
 (softened)  
 1 8 oz. tub cool whip (thawed)  
 1/2 c. milk  
 2 c. powdered sugar graham  
 cracker pie crust (prepared)  
 Crushed Butterfingers or Reeses  
 for garnish

**METHOD**

Thoroughly mix peanut butter and cream cheese. Add 1/2 cup milk and slowly add 2 cups powdered sugar. Mix well. Fold in cool whip. Put in a prepared graham cracker crust. Makes two 9" pies or one 10" pie with a little extra. Top with crushed candy. Place in freezer until frozen. Remove from freezer 10 minutes before serving.

**Elaine Rieck, Harrisburg**

## HOLIDAY HOT CHOCOLATE

**Ingredients:**

8 qt. box powdered milk  
 1 lb. can Nestles Cocoa Mix  
 7-8 oz. jar powdered creamer  
 3 c. powdered sugar  
 1/3 c. cocoa

**METHOD**

Mix in order given in large bowl. Put in air tight container. Use 1/4 cup mix per cup of hot water. Makes about 16-cup mix.

**Phyllis Niemann, Clear Lake**

## MOM'S CHRISTMAS DESSERT

**Ingredients:**

2-1/2 c. Rice Krispies  
 1/2 c. light brown sugar  
 1 c. slivered almonds or toasted  
 nut meats  
 1/2 c. butter, melted  
 1/2 gal. vanilla ice cream  
 1 can pie cherries  
 1/2 tsp. almond flavoring

**METHOD**

Mix first four ingredients together. Spread half mixture in a 9x13 pan evenly. Cut and press vanilla ice cream on top and spread remaining mixture on top. Freeze. When ready to serve, stir pie filling and almond flavoring together and heat on stove top or microwave and use for topping individual pieces.

**Patty Sinning, Lennox**

## GINGERBREAD KISSED THUMBPRINT COOKIES

**Ingredients:**

3 c. flour  
 2 tsps. ground ginger  
 1 tsp. ground cinnamon  
 1 tsp. baking soda  
 1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg  
 1/4 tsp. salt  
 3/4 c. (1-1/2 sticks) butter,  
 softened  
 3/4 c. firmly packed brown sugar  
 1/2 c. molasses  
 1 egg  
 1 tsp. pure vanilla extract  
 1/4 c. granulated sugar  
 60 milk chocolate kisses

**METHOD**

Mix flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, nutmeg and salt in large bowl. Set aside. Beat butter and brown sugar in large bowl with electric mixer on medium until light and fluffy. Add molasses, egg and vanilla; mix well. Gradually beat in flour mixture on low speed until well mixed. Press dough into a thick flat disk. Wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate 4 hours or overnight. Preheat oven to 350°F. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Roll in granulated sugar to coat. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake 8-10 minutes or until edges of cookies begin to brown. Immediately press a chocolate candy into center of each cookie. Remove to wire racks; cool completely. Store cookies in airtight container up to 5 days.

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

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

# Area rodeo athletes honored with Touchstone Energy Short Go Shirts

**Tara Miller**

Manager of Communications

For 20 years, Central Electric Cooperative and other Touchstone Energy Cooperatives have supported high school rodeo athletes through the popular Short Go Shirt program.

Athletes earn the shirts by qualifying in their respective events at the State High School Rodeo Finals in Fort Pierre.

Ann Sundermann has served as executive secretary for the High School Rodeo Association for the past 17 years. She recently described the level of enthusiasm surrounding the Touchstone Energy Short Go program.

“Winning one of these shirts is the thing the kids anticipate the most,” Sundermann said. “We’ll have 40 kids

coming into the office asking where do they sign up for their Short Go Shirts. Then once they’ve been ordered, they want to know when is their Short Go Shirt coming in. All the kids know about Touchstone because they’ve seen these shirts for the past 20 years.”

Here are Central Electric Cooperative’s Short Go Shirt recipients:

- Raylee Fagerhaug, daughter of Kari Fagerhaug of Wessington Springs
- Samantha Ford, daughter of Darin and Tonya Ford of Mitchell
- Mason Moody, son of Perry and Tracy Moody of Letcher
- Trey Moody, son of Toby and Robin Moody of Letcher
- Payton Tobin, son of Cody and Dr. Kelli Tobin of Wessington Springs

Congratulations to these athletes on their impressive accomplishments!



Raylee Fagerhaug, daughter of Kari Fagerhaug of Wessington Springs, qualified in barrel racing.



Samantha Ford, daughter of Darin and Tonya Ford of Mitchell, qualified in barrel racing.




Payton Tobin, son of Cody and Dr. Kelli Tobin of Wessington Springs, qualified in bareback.




Trey Moody, son of Toby and Robin Moody of Letcher, qualified in team roping.



Mason Moody, son of Perry and Tracy Moody of Letcher, qualified in bull riding.




**RECIPES  
NEEDED FOR**



**The  
Country  
Cookin'**

cookbook

Your recipe could be featured in the 39<sup>th</sup> volume of East River Electric's Country Cookin' cookbook!




Help us create another great cookbook by submitting your favorite recipes as well as recipes for the cookbook's "Wild Game" section.

**Submit recipes via email to**

**[ajohannsen@eastriver.coop](mailto:ajohannsen@eastriver.coop)**

**or contact your local cooperative for more information.**



# Holiday Open House

Please visit our Mitchell office along Betts Road for baked goodies, cider and coffee during our Holiday Open House.

December 19-22, 2022  
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



# Holiday Closings

Our office will be closed on the following days in observance of the holiday season.

Thanksgiving: Closed November 24 & 25  
Christmas: Closed December 23 & 26  
New Year's: Closed January 2

**CENTRAL**  
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LeRoy Iedema, Richard Ringling and Duane Strand crank out nearly 60,000 toy cars each year from their 12x10-foot workshop in Platte. Photo by Billy Gibson

## Duane Strand gets lots of 'smileage' out of making toy cars for children

**Billy Gibson**

editor@sdrea.coop

Frustrated moms across the ages have been searching for a surefire method for getting an unruly child to simmer down.

Duane Strand is pretty sure he's found a failsafe solution: toy cars.

Several years ago, Strand began building tiny wooden cars in his nondescript backyard shed in Platte. He recalls visiting Pierre one evening and having dinner at a local restaurant when a young boy suddenly started pitching a fit and hollering at the top of his lungs.

Strand just happened to have one of the cars in his pocket. He reached out and handed it to the child and was rather amazed at the result. Not only did the whining stop forthwith, but that boy's frown turned upside down as the

kid started beaming from ear to ear.

"He quit yelling right then and there. His whole attitude changed," Strand recalls. "These cars really have a soothing effect on the kids."

That's the impact Strand is shooting for as he and his three-man team of retirees crank out nearly 60,000 toy cars each year. They're looking to squeeze all the "smileage" they can get out of the toy cars they build.

The main construction crew includes retired farmer Richard Ringling and retired mechanic LeRoy Iedema. Ringling usually works the drill press to create holes in the wood where the axles will go. Then Iedema follows up by pressing the wheels onto the axles. He came up with a way to make sure the wheels roll straight and stay in place and dares anyone to try and pull off a wheel.

There are others who join in the

process: Justin Kok cuts the wood into manageable blocks; Brett Wynia performs repairs on the drill presses, band saws, sanders, routers and other pieces of equipment when they break down; and Curtis Versteeg helps to sand down the rough surfaces on the cars.



Toy cars are distributed by military personnel serving overseas.

And just down the road from the shop is the Platte Lumber Yard, where many of the material supplies are stored until needed for production. Strand said it was the folks down at the lumber yard who initiated the vital connection with





Dustin Knutson of Boyds Hardwood Gunstock supplies the toy makers with the laminated wood used to create the tiny cars (inset) for worldwide distribution. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Boys Hardwood Gunstock that keeps the operation humming along.

“Without Boyds we wouldn’t be able to do any of this,” Strand said.

Dustin Knutson, a member of Central Electric Cooperative and part owner of the company that bills itself as the largest after-market gun stock maker in the world, is a Shriner with a heart for community service and said he was all-in when Strand approached him about supporting the program by supplying excess wood.

“They’re really easy to work with,” he said, noting that he keeps one of the cars on his desk. “They take whatever they can get and they show up consistently. We started saving off-cut blocks of wood specifically for the cars. The laminated wood works well because it’s colorful and looks good and the kids can pick out their favorite one.”

Strand’s distribution system is a bit scatter shot but he still manages to send them all over the globe. Anyone he knows who is planning a trip gets a supply of cars. Knutson, for instance, takes them with him when he travels for business or pleasure, whether vacationing in Mexico or hunting in Africa.

“People in America may think these are just simple toys, but I’ve been in parts of the world where a toy for a kid is a stick and a rock,” Knutson said. “But these little cars give kids something to smile about. Duane and his guys are just beautiful people doing good things for the good of humanity and we’re happy to help them any way we can.”

The toys also ride along in ambulances, military satchels and police vehicles in the event a child needs to be calmed. They show up in doctor’s offices, churches and other venues.

The operation is affiliated with a group called Toys for God’s Kids, a non-denominational organization based in Denver. Strand is the only affiliated “smile maker” in South Dakota.

While the three-man crew claims they’re working harder than they used to before retiring, Iedema assigns a greater value to his toil beyond the opportunity to put a smile on a kid’s face. He said his heart doctor has informed him that he’s in better shape than before he started woodworking three years ago. He’s slimmer, more active and feels a lot better.

Strand chips in, “...yeah, and he’s



more ornery than ever, too!”

Collectively, the guys crank out about 250 cars a day scrunched inside the 12 x 10-foot shed. Each unit has to be dipped in linseed oil to protect children from any potential toxicity. The toys are boxed and shipped to their destination at the recipient’s expense.

Strand doesn’t know how much longer he’s going to be able to keep cranking out cars. He’ll reach the age of 90 in a few months and his friend Ringling has a plan: “I told him when he turns 90 we’re going to take him up by the interstate and take a picture underneath the sign that says I-90. Get it?”

# Committed to providing reliable power



**Brian Bultje**  
Manager of Operations

Reliable delivery of power starts with a proactive line maintenance program. In 2021, your cooperative achieved a service reliability rating of 99.97 percent. As part of our commitment to line maintenance in 2022, additional tree trimming and pole testing is being performed through the end of the year.

Erickson Tree Service is trimming trees in Hanson County. Tree trimming helps members avoid outages by

clearing trees at risk of landing on a power line.

SBS Inspections is testing an additional 3,000 poles in southwestern Aurora and southeastern Brule Counties for a total of 8,000 poles tested through the end of 2022. Crews will start changing out rejected poles in 2023. Pole testing ensures our poles are in good condition throughout the system.

Overhead and underground contractors also are hired to assist our crews with installing new single-phase and three-phase main lines throughout the system. This year, approximately 60 miles of new line was installed.

In addition to new line installations, Operations crews remain busy with electrical service upgrades, new services, pole change-outs, tree trimming and other line maintenance items.

The Staking Department continues to plan for proposed new services and upcoming construction projects in 2023. If you have any electrical projects scheduled at your home, farm or business, please contact the cooperative now to help ensure we have transformers and materials on hand when they are needed.

**Supply chain issues will continue to affect the availability of materials in 2023. Please call us at 1-800-477-2892 far in advance of any construction project at your home, farm or business to help ensure we have the needed materials before construction begins.**



Linemen Tim [redacted] and Chandler [redacted] work on underground installation southwest of Epiphany. The new underground line will help improve reliability in the area.



Pole inspections will continue through the end of the year in Aurora and Brule Counties.

# Kids learn electrical safety



**Tara Miller**  
Manager of Communications

Manager of Member Services and Marketing Patrick Soukup, pictured above, tells kids never to touch a tractor and the ground at the same time if the tractor comes in contact with electrical equipment.

Soukup recently traveled to safety events in Plankinton and Howard

to spread the word about electrical safety. His presentation teaches kids about farm safety and general safety around electrical equipment such as power lines and green boxes.

Plankinton senior Cally Faulhaber organized a local Safety Day event for her senior project. Approximately 90 third and fourth graders from Plankinton, Corsica-Stickney and White Lake schools attended the

event. Besides electrical safety, other stations taught kids about firearm safety, ATV safety, grain bin safety and proper hand washing.

We thank area schools and event organizers for involving cooperative lessons in your curriculum and allowing us to share crucial electrical safety messages. The more kids we can reach, the better chance we have of saving a life.

## Seasonal utility worker hours completed

Thursday, Nov. 10, was the final day on the job for seasonal 1,000-hour utility worker Chase ██████.



Since May, Chase assisted operations crews to fulfill his 1,000 working hours required after completing powerline school at Mitchell Technical College.

Snedeker proved to be great help to the line crew this year, and we wish him the best as he moves forward in his career.

**YEARS OF SERVICE**

<b>DeEtte</b> ██████ 25 years on Dec. 1	<b>Tara</b> ██████ 2 years on Dec. 16



# CHANGING YOUNG LIVES

The Great Plains Youth Regional Treatment Center near Mobridge is a place where at-risk youth can go to address their challenges with drug and alcohol abuse. *Photo by Roger Lawien*

## Treatment center helps young people get back on the right path

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

It was a small compliment, but it meant everything to the young lady who wasn't quite accustomed to receiving positive reinforcement. A simple affirmation spoken softly and sincerely into her ear: "You're gorgeous, and you're worthy." And the tears began to flow.

The Indian Health Service Great Plains Youth Regional Treatment Center near Mobridge is a place where at-risk youth can go to address their challenges with drug and alcohol abuse and find the support they need to deal with difficult situations.

Acting Clinical Director Charita Dowdell remembers that encounter with the young woman.

"I tell all of our residents how gorgeous they are and that I see the beauty in them and who they are deep down inside," Dowdell said. "I told her she was worthy and that she had value,

and she just broke down. She told me that nobody had ever said that to her."

That's just one of the stories about how the treatment center's staff strive to change the lives of teens who enter the program. There are many others.

Program Director Lavon Booth has been involved with the residential program for 20 years, initially as an administrative officer when she started in 2002. She previously served at the Cheyenne River Service Unit in her hometown of Eagle Butte before starting at the YRTC.

She sees the transformation of residents captured in plain view during graduation ceremonies that take place when the 12-week session concludes.

"We're very fortunate to see the change that happens in our residents from the time they arrive until the time they graduate," she said. "We see them moving in a positive direction and at graduation we get to hear them speak intimately about what they've learned and you see how it all comes together.

They come in very shy and reserved, and they leave here carrying a more positive spirit and more confidence. It's really touching for us and very rewarding."

The treatment center is housed in the old Chief Gall Inn hotel on land leased from the Standing Rock tribe. Youth between the ages of 13 and 17 are referred through tribal alcohol programs, local schools, community service organizations and other agencies.

According to the center's mission statement, the program "is dedicated to promoting a healthy lifestyle restoring balance and harmony in mind, body and spirit to our American Indian youth and their families."

Dowdell said playing a role in watching that mission statement come true to life in the form of changed behaviors and more positive attitudes makes her know she's definitely making a profound difference.

One effective modality is a mentoring program where residents taking part in the rehabilitation process shepherd those who are just entering the facility. Not only do the incumbent residents show the newbies around the physical



The youth treatment center is located in the former Chief Gall Inn hotel near Mobridge. *Photo by Roger Lawien*

space, but they also listen to their concerns, answer questions and try to allay their fears that stem from living in a new environment with certain rules, guidelines and expectations.

“When they start feeling homesick or afraid or stressed and they just need someone near their age to talk to, it helps them make the adjustment so they can settle down and focus on what they need to do to make changes. That bond is something that actually helps both of them get through and graduate successfully,” she said.

Dowdell noted there is a concern among staff about residents returning to a challenging environment. So, upon graduation, the youth receive support through a tracking system where staffers make regular check-in calls after three days, three months, six months and a year. A tele-health network is also

available to the graduates.

Role-playing also helps re-integration, Dowdell said. She added that the residents are taught to anticipate the same kind of challenges they faced before and how to handle them with a different approach.

“They return as a changed person, but everybody else around them will be doing the same things,” she said. “We tell them to stay connected to their support system and manage their emotions; how to be true to yourself while being respectful to others. We prepare them for what life is going to look like when they leave.”

She mentioned one particular youngster who entered the program with a defiant attitude and dealing with depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress. She knuckled down academically and caught up to her class grade. After

graduation, she returned to juvenile detention for seven months. But in the end, she straightened out her life by applying the things she learned at the center.

“She struggled with treatment, but she sent us a letter thanking us for what the program did for her,” Dowdell said. “She said she was grateful for giving her the skills to manage the difficult predicament she was going through. She changed her mentality and grew and matured and became a new person.”

Dowdell stressed that parents can play a key role in helping their children navigate through rehabilitation or prevent them from becoming a candidate in the first place.

“Listen to your children,” she emphasized. “They are saying something to you, but often they don’t feel like they’re being heard. Before you shut that door, listen to what they’re saying. You may have to shut the door anyway, but at least take the time to listen to what they have to say.”

Visit [www.ihs.gov/greatplains/healthcarefacilities/greatplainsyrct/](http://www.ihs.gov/greatplains/healthcarefacilities/greatplainsyrct/).

Lavon Booth, left, and Charita Dowdell, work to provide students the skills they need to change the direction of their lives.



# Happy Holidays from Central Electric Cooperative



Duane Wolbrink  
President



Todd VanWalleghen  
Vice President



Mark Hofer  
Secretary



Mark Reindl  
Treasurer



Donita Loudner  
SDREA



Roger Campbell



Jeff Gustafson



Robert Banks



Merl Bechen  
Director At Large



Ken Schlingen  
General Manager



Brandon



Andrew



Jesse



Chandler



DeEtte



Wade



Brian



Dusty



Evan



Lincoln



Gene



Heather



David



Kevin



Dwight



Paul



Donn



Daniel



Davis



Tara



DuWayne



Ryan



Tim



Tim



Chase



Jove



Aaron



Jon



Cody



Dusty



Tony



Doug



Craig



Patrick



Al



Gary



Norton



Dean



Rodney



Dustin



Heather



Lindsey

## OUR MISSION

*Provide Reliable Energy & Services  
with a Commitment to Safety and  
Member Satisfaction*

## REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth in LaCroix Hall at the Black Hills Stock Show to win an electric snow blower!

Your Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**December 15-18, 2022**  
**Christmas at the Cathedral**  
521 N Duluth Ave.  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-988-3765

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.

**NOV. 25**  
**Olde Tyme Christmas Kick-off and Parade**  
Hill City, SD

**NOV. 25**  
**"Light up the Night" Parade and Fireworks**  
Belle Fourche, SD

**NOV. 25-26**  
**Kris Kringle Kraft Fair**  
Hill City, SD

**NOV. 26**  
**Gregory Mid-Winter Fair**  
Gregory Auditorium  
Gregory, SD  
605-830-9778

**DEC. 2-3**  
**Christmas in the Hills**  
Mueller Center  
Hot Springs, SD  
605-745-4140

**DEC. 3**  
**Santa's Thrift Village**  
Minneluzahan Senior Center  
Rapid City, SD  
605-394-1887

**DEC. 3**  
**Tabor's Holiday Light Parade**  
Tabor, SD  
605-660-0274

**DEC. 3**  
**60th Annual Wreath and Centerpiece Sale**  
Central States Fair Grounds,  
Rapid City, SD  
605-343-0710

**DEC. 3**  
**Julefest 2022: Scandinavian Christmas Festival & Bazaar**  
8 a.m.-2p.m.  
Our Savior's Lutheran Church  
Spearfish, SD

**DEC. 4**  
**Sioux Falls Legion Post 15 Pancake Breakfast**  
8:30 a.m.-noon  
1600 W Russell St.  
Sioux Falls, SD

**DEC. 4**  
**Hartford Hometown Christmas**  
Hartford, SD  
[www.hartfordhtc.com](http://www.hartfordhtc.com)

**DEC. 4**  
**Walk Through Bethlehem**  
United Methodist Church  
Webster, SD  
605-345-3747

**DEC. 10**  
**Frontier Christmas**  
Fort Sisseton Historic State Park  
Lake City, SD  
605-448-5474

**DEC. 15-18**  
**Christmas at the Cathedral**  
521 N Duluth Ave.  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-988-3765

**DEC. 17**  
**Custer Christmas for Kids**  
Custer High School  
Custer, SD  
[custerchristmas4kids@gmail.com](mailto:custerchristmas4kids@gmail.com)

**JAN. 14**  
**Coats for Kids Bowling Tournament**  
Registration Starts at 1 p.m.  
\$80 for a four-person team  
Meadowood Lanes  
Rapid City, SD  
605-393-2081

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