

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



The success of the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally requires many megawatts of power provided by member-owned electric cooperatives, including lighting the main stage at the Buffalo Chip
Photo by Travel South Dakota

The Rally
Keeping the Sturgis Rally juiced up
Pages 8-9
High-flying fun at Catfish Bay
Pages 12-13

New ways to use electricity



Ken Schlimgen
General Manager

I don't know if you have noticed, but each year there seems to be more electric appliances and equipment options becoming popular among consumers. Advancements in technology and battery power coupled with decreasing costs are winning over consumers looking for comparable performance and versatility. A bonus is that electric equipment is quieter and better for the environment.

Inside the home, consumers and homebuilders are turning to electric appliances to increase energy efficiency and savings. A traditional electric stove or an induction stove top are both significantly more efficient than a gas oven. Electric induction stoves will reduce indoor air pollution and can bring water to a boil about twice as fast as a gas stove. Robotic vacuums are also popular and I have been very satisfied with how well they work.

More gas-powered equipment is being replaced with battery powered electric options. In the past few years, battery technology has advanced significantly. Battery powered tools can hold a charge longer and offer the user the same versatility and functionality as gas-powered or electric plug-in tools.

Keith Dennis, an energy industry expert and president of the Beneficial Electrification League notes that, "A few years back, the list of new electric product categories that were making their way to the market was limited."

Today, the number of electric products available is exploding. "There are electric bikes, electric cars, trucks and school buses, pressure washers, utility terrain vehicles, backhoes—even airplanes and boats," Dennis said. "With

the advancements in battery technology, we are seeing almost anything that burns gasoline or diesel as having an electric replacement available on the market."

A case in point is the increased use of battery-powered equipment, including lawn mowers, leaf blowers, string trimmers and snow blowers. The quality of this quieter, lower-emission equipment is improving. Homeowners can eliminate oil changes and gas cans, lowering maintenance costs.

Your cooperative is looking for opportunities to purchase an electric vehicle, and we have committed to purchasing an electric UTV. In both instances, we are at the mercy of the manufacturers and dealerships. We have a lot to learn and share with our membership regarding electric vehicles, how they charge and how they impact the electric system. We hear a lot of comments and questions about how the electric industry is going to provide enough electricity

to power this new and growing technology.

As the acceptance of these new technologies gains ground, the electric utility industry will add generation and transmission capabilities when and where it is needed. Central Electric will continue to adjust to new electrical loads just like we historically

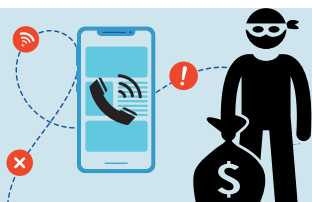
have done when electric motors, grain handling systems, irrigation equipment, electric heating equipment, and many other new electrical loads were introduced.

The electric industry is constantly changing. Like all industries, we do not do business like we did 10 years ago. We will continue to anticipate and adapt to this fast pace of change and consider how these changes impact our member owners.

Until next month, stay safe!

Central Electric will continue to adjust to new electrical loads, just like we historically have done when electric motors, grain handling systems, irrigation equipment, electric heating equipment, and many other new electrical loads were introduced.

BEWARE OF SCAMS



HANG UP! Never share personal information or bank account numbers with somebody claiming to work for the utility company. If you believe you were the target of a utility scam, contact Central Electric and local law enforcement.

CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

(USPS 018-963)

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CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is the monthly publication for the members of Central Electric Cooperative, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301. Families subscribe to Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. Central Electric Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to cooperative members on matters pertaining to their cooperative and living better with electricity.

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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 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.

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

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

The board of directors met May 16, 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 items:

- East River manager meeting
- Rural Electric Economic Development
- Basin Electric Power Cooperative
- Load management
- Operation Round-Up
- Strategic planning initiatives

Director Hofer and Manager Schlimgen shared insights from their attendance at the 2022 NRECA Legislative Conference. Discussion followed.

Director Wolbrink shared East River Electric board updates. Discussion followed.

The board reviewed monthly director expenses.

BOARD ACTION

The board considered or acted upon the following item:

- A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the April 13, 2022, safety meeting. Motion carried.

There being no further business, President Wolbrink adjourned the meeting. The next board meeting was scheduled for June 20, 2022.

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

Electrical safety basics for children

The back-to-school season is a time when parents and school children fall back into the familiar routine of getting up early, getting dressed, grabbing breakfast, preparing lunch and shuffling out the door each day.

It's a time when students return to a learning mindset, ready to take on new ideas, knowledge and information.

Parents should seize the opportunity to teach school-age children a valuable and potentially lifesaving lesson: Respect electricity.

Here are several electrical safety basics every child should know:

- Mixing water and electricity can be deadly. Teach children not to use electric toys or other devices near water or in the rain.
- Plugging multiple devices into a single outlet or power strip can create sparks and even cause a fire if that outlet can't handle the load. Teach kids to plug into surge-protected power strips or to use one device at a time and unplug the rest.

When they unplug those devices, they should grab them by the plug, not the cord. Yanking a cord out of an electrical outlet can damage the appliance, the outlet or the plug.

- Electrical cords can be strangling hazards and might cause electrical burns if they are misused. Make sure youngsters keep cords away from their mouths and necks. It's best to hide cords so they aren't a temptation.

- Electrical outlets are receptacles for electrical plugs only. Children should know from an early age that it's a no-no to put foreign objects or fingers into power plugs. Sticking any other items into an electrical socket can lead to electric shock or death. Use childproofing outlet covers.

- Flying kites and climbing trees are never safe activities near power lines. If a tree has a power line running through it - or if it's even within reach of the line - it's not a safe place to play. If a kite gets caught in a power line, the child should not tug on it to get it loose. The string could conduct electricity and seriously hurt the child.

- Electrical substations are fenced off to keep children and animals out of the area. If a toy or small pet gets inside the fence, the child should inform a parent or teacher, who can call a trained worker to come and retrieve it.

COOPERATIVES HELP OUR MEMBERS SOLVE PROBLEMS



Electric co-op member services personnel focus their attention on making sure co-op members get the power they need when they need it. They help homeowners and businesses solve problems and find solutions to operate more efficiently. A group of co-op representatives recently took a guided tour of the Riverview Dairy near Watertown to learn how the dairy functions and how the local co-op can provide better service to the facility.

You can find out more about the many ways our electric cooperatives serve our members by visiting Cooperative Connections Plus. Simply scan the QR code at right.



Swim safely

Alayna Smith

Alayna, age 10, alerts both the young and old alike to refrain from swimming when any thunderstorms are around. Alayna is the daughter of Myles and Amber Smith and they are members of H-D Electric Cooperative based in Clear Lake.

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.

TASTY SUMMER SALADS

SHELL MACARONI SALAD

Ingredients:

1 7-oz. box of shell macaroni, cooked, rinsed and cooled
2-3 fresh tomatoes, chopped
1/3 green pepper, chopped
3 celery ribs, sliced thinly
1/4 c. chopped onion
1 cucumber, seeded & chopped

Toss ingredients together; set aside.

Dressing

1/2 c. canola oil
3/4 c. sugar
1/2 c. vinegar
3/4 c. catsup
Dash of lemon juice

METHOD

Mix dressing ingredients well with wire whip and add to veggies and macaroni.

Joan Antonen, Arlington

TUNA AND EGG SALAD

Ingredients:

3 6-oz. cans tuna packed in water
3 eggs hard boiled, peeled and chopped
2 small dill pickles diced
1 large celery rib diced
1/4 cup red onion minced
1 tbsp. lemon juice or red wine vinegar
2 tsp. garlic powder, optional
1/4 tsp. salt, to taste
Ground black pepper to taste
1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt, 2%+ fat
2 tbsp. mayo

METHOD

Drain cans with tuna well by pressing hard on the lid while draining. Transfer to a large bowl and separate into flakes with a fork. Add chopped and peeled hard boiled eggs, pickles, celery, red onion, lemon juice, garlic powder (if using), salt, pepper, yogurt and mayo. Stir well with a fork and refrigerate. Serve cold in a sandwich or over salad greens.

ifoodreal.com

GARDEN VEGGIES 'N ROTINI

Ingredients:

3/4 c. oil
3/4 c. white vinegar
3/4 c. white sugar
1 tsp. garlic salt
2 tbsp. onion flakes
1 tbsp. mustard
Bring the above ingredients to a boil and remove from heat.
Cook 4 cups colored rotini noodles. Rinse and chill.
Cut up the following in chunky pieces:
1 tomato
1 cucumber
assorted peppers
1/2 red onion

METHOD

Stir veggies together with the rotini and dressing. Chill before serving.

Ginny Jensen, Volga

NANCY'S MACARONI SALAD

Ingredients:

Dice:

1 onion
1 green pepper
1-2 carrots
1 cup celery
2 cups Velveeta Cheese

Add:

1 can peas
1 - 16 oz. pkg. macaroni cooked and drained

Dressing:

1 cup sugar
1 pint mayo
1 cup white vinegar
1 - 14 oz. can evaporated milk

METHOD

Mix together gently and refrigerate, best overnight. Add any type of meat, boiled eggs etc., as desired.

Nancy Nelson, Mission Hill

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.

WIN PRIZES! PLAY CO-OP TRIVIA

We have made it easier to submit answers electronically. Mail form or enter online at: tinyurl.com/coop-trivia
Past prizes have included kids' games and power strips. Limited to one winner per household every two months.

- When is Central Electric Cooperative's 2022 Annual Meeting?
A.) August 18
B.) September 26
C.) October 1
- What should you do if you receive a phone call demanding payment on your electric account?
A.) Give your credit card information so the power isn't shut off.
B.) Give your social security number to prove your bill was paid.
C.) Hang up! This is probably a utility scam. Central Electric does not demand payments by phone for past due accounts. If you believe you are being scammed, HANG UP, then contact Central Electric and your local sheriff's department to report it.
- What is the Touchstone Energy booth number at Dakotafest?
A.) 216
B.) 222
C.) 274

(Name of Coop 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 August 4.

Enter online at tinyurl.com/coop-trivia or mail to:
Central Electric Cooperative
Attn: Trivia
PO Box 850
Mitchell, SD 57301

CONGRATULATIONS to last month's winners

Kid Prize Drawing Winner:
Alex Greenway, Mitchell
Adult Prize Drawing Winner:
Theresa Glissendorf, White Lake

Correct answers from July issue:

- What unit is used to measure usage on an electric meter? C.) Kilowatts per hour
- Do I need to call in when I see a red light on my meter? B.) No. The light may be red at times due to a weak Verizon signal.
- Why does my bill show a different submeter rate? D.) Because it is less expensive. All electricity goes through the main meter and the discounted submeter usage is subtracted from main meter usage.
- What qualifies for a discounted submeter rate? D.) All of the options may potentially qualify for the discounted rate.
- Approximately how many electric services does Central Electric have? A.) 7,250

Employee Anniversaries



DuWayne

15 years on July 5



Heather

3 years on July 16



Evan

3 years on July 23



Tim

4 years on Aug. 6



Patrick

7 years on Aug. 17



Doug

37 years on Aug. 26



Craig

4 years on Aug. 27

Times are changing. Cyber threats are a growing concern, with electric utilities and the power grid being major targets. For a period of time, employees' last names were removed from the newsletter to defend against cyber attacks and phishing schemes. Some members inquired about this change and asked that last names be included. To balance our cybersecurity needs with member satisfaction, last names will appear in the printed newsletter and will be removed before the newsletter is posted online. Thank you for understanding and for supporting our efforts to protect the cooperative.



Visit us at Dakotafest August 16-18

Each year, your cooperative participates in public outreach events to share information with members. This gives you an opportunity to have in-depth conversations and ask questions about energy use at your residence or farm.

The air-conditioned Touchstone Energy building is booth number 216 on 2nd Street across from the SDSU Extension. The exhibitor map can be accessed online: www.ideagroup.com/dakotafest/exhibitor-floor-plan.

returns to Plankinton outpost

Following the recent promotion of Jonathan [redacted] to Plankinton foreman, a full-time position became available at the outpost. Gary [redacted] was hired to fill the position. He is a 1993 Mitchell Technical College graduate and lives in Plankinton with his family. He previously worked for Central Electric, Sioux Valley Energy and served as an instructor at Mitchell Technical College. Please help us welcome Gary to the team!



CHA-CHING!



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

Get your card or become a participating business by contacting our office. [redacted]

A list of local discounts can be viewed on our website by visiting [redacted] and selecting "Member Programs" on the homepage menu.

BUSINESS	TOWN	DISCOUNT
Ken's Service	Gann Valley	10% off tire repair services
M & H	Mitchell	5 cents off gallon of gas
Merchandise Outlet	Mitchell	10% off pair of boots; some exclusions apply, not valid with other discounts
Miedema Sanitation	Mitchell	10% off rolloff construction boxes
Mitchell Econolodge Motel	Mitchell	10% discount
Mitchell KOA	Mitchell	10% discount May 1-Oct. 30 excluding holiday weekends

CO-OPS KEEP THE RALLY ROLLING



Electric co-ops are committed to keeping The Rally energized

Billy Gibson

The frenetic atmosphere that has come to be associated with the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally can be loud, chaotic and - well let's just say - very colorful.

But behind those vivid scenes are electric cooperative employees working hard to make sure the Rally has the juice required to keep the lights glaring, the amps blaring, the air conditioners humming and the blenders blending.

The three local co-ops that serve the Black Hills and surrounding area are Butte Electric, West River Electric and Black Hills Electric. In conjunction with wholesale supplier Rushmore Electric in Rapid City and power generator Basin Electric based in Bismarck, N.D., the co-ops deliver much of the electricity used by campgrounds, restaurants, shops, concert stages, biker bars and other entertainment venues.

The power providers are diligent about keeping pace with the increasing growth of The Rally, which is rebounding from a temporary drop in attendance brought on by the coronavirus pandemic over the past two years.

Corey Trapp, chief engineering officer at Rushmore Electric, said power demand can increase significantly during The Rally. For instance, he indicated the area north of Sturgis served by Butte Electric that includes Full Throttle and other sites can jump from 1-2 MW to 8-9 MW during the event.

At the Buffalo Chip, West River Electric has nearly 40 meters located across the 600-acre spread serving scores of bars, campgrounds and cabins, as well as the main stage. Power use skyrockets from about 30 KW to more than 4.2 MW.

This year marks the 82nd installment of The Rally. Ten years ago, organizers were concerned about the potential future of the event if younger riders didn't start joining in on the fun. According to data gathered by local government agencies, Mount Rushmore National Park and other sources, attendance is back on the upswing.

An estimated 555,000 riders participated in the Rally last August, up nearly 14 percent from 2020 and an increase of 9.5 percent over the five-year average from 2016 to 2020.

Statistics show that nearly 30 percent of attendees were first-timers in 2021, which is welcomed news for promoters who work year-around to keep The Rally rolling, including



RALLY FACTS

- 🏍️ 555,000 – No. of 2021 participants
- 🏍️ 54 – avg. age in 2019
- 🏍️ 46.5 – avg. age in 2021
- 🏍️ 52% - campground attendees
- 🏍️ 18% - hotel attendees
- 🏍️ \$81,005 - avg. household income
- 🏍️ \$382 - spent per day
- 🏍️ 85% - motorcycle owners
- 🏍️ 81% - Harley owners
- 🏍️ \$1,090,398 - raised for charity

the city of Sturgis, the South Dakota Department of Tourism, the Black Hills and Badlands Tourism Association and scores of business owners who depend on the seasonal revenue to sustain their operations.

The increased buzz of activity keeps the V-twin economic engines purring throughout the Black Hills area, but delivering the power has its own set of challenges that may not be apparent to partiers. Electric cooperative officials report that global shortages in materials and supplies make it difficult to meet the increase in power demand, but they're committed to doing everything possible to meet that demand.

"We're seeing delays in equipment necessary for infrastructure upgrades, but we know how important electricity is for The Rally to run successfully," said Brett Fosheim, director of operations at Butte Electric based in Newell. "A lot of visitors and business owners are

An estimated 555,000 visitors enjoyed the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally last year. As attendance climbs, electric cooperatives are committed to delivering the power needed to keep the party going. *Photos by South Dakota Travel*

depending on us, so we're prepared every year to step up to the plate with power that's affordable, reliable and there when everybody needs it."

Fosheim said just as organizers work all year long to plan and promote the 10-day event, electric cooperatives also anticipate the rise in electricity demand and coordinate with their common power generator, Basin Electric, to fill the need and handle peak loads. Butte Electric serves Full Throttle, Days Inn Campground and the Sons of Silence Campground, among other venues.

Because electric cooperatives are created by their members to serve their members, they've been delivering electricity since the early days of The Rally. The annual event traces its roots back to 1938 when a group of Indian Motorcycle enthusiasts led by local franchise owner Clarence "Pappy" Hoel got together to race one another, pull off some riding stunts and party together around a common interest in the brand.

What started as a quaint occasion called the Black Hills Classic with just

nine racers and a sparse crowd has become an international attraction.

Except for the World War II years between 1939 and 1941, The Rally has been a much-anticipated mainstay attracting visitors from across the planet. During the war, organizers suspended the event due to gas restrictions in support of the war effort.



While the current supply shortages mentioned by Fosheim have kept power providers on their toes and doubly prepared for The Rally, he said cooperatives are committed to delivering quality service not only during the event but long after the riders have peeled out of town.

FREQUENTLY ASKED EV QUESTIONS

Home EV charging could affect the cooperative's energy demand in the future. General Manager Ken Schlimgen (left) inspects an electric Ford F-150 Lightning pickup after a test drive to broaden his understanding of EV technology.



Patrick
Manager of Member Services & Marketing

At the recent District Meetings held throughout our service area, there was a great deal of discussion about cooperative happenings. Members asked questions about power line replacement, underground construction, solar energy, water heaters, metering upgrades and more. The topic that surfaced more than any other was that of electric vehicles (EVs). We compiled a list of frequently asked EV questions to increase awareness and understanding of the topic.

How much does it cost to own and operate an EV compared to a gas-powered vehicle?

Currently, the purchase price of EVs tends to be higher than a gasoline vehicle. Prices will likely equalize as production volumes increase and battery technology matures. Federal tax incentives up to \$7,500 are available, dependent upon various factors.

According to Fueleconomy.gov, if somebody drives 15,000 miles per year in a vehicle that gets 25 miles per gallon, that person would save \$2,312 per year in fuel costs by switching to a 2020 Nissan Leaf EV. The cost to operate a Nissan Leaf is equivalent to getting 108 miles per gallon in favorable weather conditions, but expect that figure to drop in cold weather. Operation and maintenance costs, in general, are less for EVs.

Can the grid handle EV charging in South Dakota?

Yes, if charging is done at the proper time. Since the start of rural electrification, energy consumption has evolved immensely. What began with a desire to have light in the house gradually progressed. Since 1948, when the first rural mile of line was energized in our service area, your cooperative has managed to handle the changing demand of residential, agricultural and commercial energy use.

EVs will not be adopted overnight, which means we have ample time to plan for future development that will enable us to handle EV charging. As of today, if 25 percent of our members purchased EVs and charged them off-peak, 9:00 pm or later, we would be able to handle the added energy demand with no changes to the system.

Can I make it to the Black Hills and other destinations?

Yes. If you're planning a trip to the Black Hills and don't have the range capability, superchargers are available along the I-90 route in Oacoma, Murdo and Wall. According to PlugShare.com, a site that offers EV trip planning, there are 120 individual charging stations in the Rapid City area, 94 in the Sioux Falls area, 50 in the Yankton area, 24 in the Pierre area, 20 in the Mitchell area, 11 in the Watertown area, 10 in the Vermillion area and 9 in the Aberdeen area, just to highlight a few options.

The vast majority of charging is done at home, so the need for charging on the road is typically only a concern when taking trips over 300 miles, or over 150 miles in the winter. If you frequently take long trips, you could consider a plug-in hybrid model that uses both battery power and gasoline, or purchase an EV when more public charging options are available.

How many miles can I go on a full charge?

Battery technology is advancing at a rapid pace. Most new EVs have a range of 200-300 miles, and 400 miles for some Tesla models, in favorable weather conditions. The average person drives 40 miles every day to commute to work and run errands, so most EVs will meet the needs of the average daily driver. EVs can easily be recharged overnight at home so they are ready for the commute the following day.

Is my home ready for an EV?

A wiring inspection at your home or farm would be required to determine proper sizing of the electrical service. If you are considering an EV, call your energy provider to ensure you have the appropriate transformer and metering equipment.

Can an EV serve as a backup power source for my home?

Some EVs have the option to be used as a backup source of short-term energy. Additional equipment would need to be installed for this to work, but the technology exists.

Why is Central Electric studying EVs and electric UTVs?

By studying EVs, the cooperative strives to learn about the technology and options for home charging, which could affect how we do business. It is our duty to prepare for the future and plan accordingly so EV charging doesn't affect our ability to provide reliable energy around the clock.



Grants awarded for community projects

Through Operation Round-Up, participating cooperative members round up their monthly electric bill to the next dollar. Several Central Electric employees also contribute to the cause through payroll. Member and employee contributions are pooled together to support local causes through the grant program. The Operation Round-Up Board of Trustees reviews grant applications two times each year. The next deadline is November 1.



The Children's Ark daycare in Chamberlain used a \$2,100 Operation Round-Up grant to help fund kitchen upgrades. Central Electric Manager of Communications Tara Miller (far left), Board Member Roger Campbell (next) and General Manager Ken Schlimgen (far right) visited the facility on June 9.



Plankinton pool Improvement Committee Vice President Carter Davis (right) accepts a \$2,500 Operation Round-Up grant from General Manager Ken Schlimgen. The funds were used toward the construction of a new bathhouse.



The Davison County 4-H Horse Committee received \$1,000 for horse arena upgrades. The group accepted the grant before a recent 4-H Horse Show.



FAMILY FUN AT CATFISH BAY

Summer fun for the entire family awaits at Catfish Bay Water Ski Park in Sioux Falls. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

Pigs fly and family fun abounds at Catfish Bay Water Ski Park

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

If you stop by Catfish Bay, you probably won't see a single catfish during your stay. But you will definitely see a pig flying, a chicken hurtling through the air and water skis sprouting up from a pocketful of magic seeds.

Catfish Bay Water Ski Park, located just off I-90 in Sioux Falls, is a family entertainment venue where a squad of highly skilled skiers leap and spin and build four-tier human pyramids as they skim across the water's surface.

Billed as "The Greatest Show on H₂O," the event attracts spectators from miles around who show up each Friday evening during the summer months to see the high-flying theatrics reminiscent of Florida's famed Cypress Gardens. The show features ski jumpers dressed as chickens, Hee Haw-inspired corn pone humor and a daredevil in a pig costume elevating 30 feet into the air astride a water-propelled fly board.

The show is the brainchild of Jim

Bruns, an idea that spawned from his mind as "a God thing." While he was a college student in the early '90s, Bruns joined the Sioux Falls Water Ski Club and honed his skills enough to turn pro.

It was during college that he hatched a plan to establish a show similar to those being staged at SeaWorld and other similar sites. First thing he needed was a lake. He found the perfect spot when a contractor dug out a 25-acre borrow pit adjacent to the interstate. He bought the pit and – voila! – one man-made lake...just add water.

Second thing he needed was a performing cast. Bruns gathered some of his fellow skiers of all ages and sizes, pulled together a program and then plowed forward for a few years determined to make the show a success. Just when he began wondering if he was going to be able to keep the labor-intensive venture alive, he experienced another epiphany. He needed to rededicate the program to building youth, strengthening families and developing leaders. He formed a

mission statement: "MV2 – Mission, Vision and Values."

"It was a simple plan from the start," Bruns said just before the start of the season-opening show on Memorial Day. "But in 2007 I hit a wall. I sat down and prayed about it and came up with MV2. Now I have so many stories of kids who have come out here and learned a skill and learned about teamwork and goal-setting. They learn how to overcome obstacles."

One of those youngsters is Beth Bruggeman, who serves as assistant show director. A recent college graduate, she has been involved in the program for 10 years. She was a 13-year-old gymnast and cheerleader when she decided to try out for the ski team and now she's a star in the show with boundless energy, a beaming smile and a scar on her eyebrow as her personal badge of courage and grit.

"One of the things I like about it is there are people who participate of all skill levels who are anywhere from 6 to 60 years old. You don't find groups with that kind of diversity. You get to form different kinds of connections and friendships," she said.

Brun's own children, James and Amara, are two other stars of the show. Amara, 13, professes to be the more gushingly dramatic. A student at O'Gorman Junior High, Amara has been part of the act since she was 2, riding on her dad's shoulders. Today she barefoots, swivels, climbs the pyramid and charms the crowd with her effervescent smile.

"I like entertaining people and making them feel like they've come to a special place," she said.

Beside Brun's, Jeremiah Newman is another example of the motto: the family that skis together stays together. He and his children, 14-year-old Marissa and 12-year-old Tyler, are involved in all aspects of the show. He's a member of the military and a former international professional skier who still competes around the region and specializes in performing flips and twists on an air chair hydrofoil.

"This is such a family-friendly environment. It's priceless. It keeps me active and it keeps our family close. Instead of sitting on the sidelines watching my kids, I get to be out there with them," he said. "We talk about the importance of making a life-long commitment to fitness and good nutrition and things that will serve them well along the way."

While the skiers are preparing for their next set, attention turns toward the stage area and a charming recurring character named Norman, who always comes up with some crackpot scheme that never fails to fail. Brun's explains that the Norman character stands as a metaphor for anyone who has had a dream and felt the frustration of failure.

"The thing about Norman that makes him different is that he never loses his enthusiasm and keeps on trying," Brun's said. "His motto is to dream big and never give up."

Brun's is living out the dream he had as a younger man. To this point, Norman has never revealed his last name. But it could very well be Brun's.

Below, Catfish Bay performers pull off a "four-stack" configuration. At right, the character known as "Norman" rides a flying pig.





TOUCHSTONE SUPPORTS H.S. RODEO

The Touchstone Energy flag has flown proudly at the last 20 State High School Rodeo Finals. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

Electric co-ops support high school rodeo through popular Short Go Shirt program

Billy Gibson

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Folks who attended the State High School Rodeo Finals in Fort Pierre this summer could see Tobi Hintz coming from halfway across the arena.

Hintz is a student at Timber Lake High School and serves as the association's 2022 Rodeo Queen. She cut a dashing figure at the event with her decorative sash, bright red lipstick, fringed shoulder bag, buckle-shaped sterling silver earrings and baby blue cowgirl hat with a sparkling tiara wrapped above the brim.

Oh, and she can also ride pretty well, too. Over the past two years, she's earned Touchstone Energy Short Go Shirts at the state finals in recognition of her rodeo skills in barrel racing and pole bending.

This year marked the 20th celebration of the Touchstone Energy Short Go

Shirt program. Since 2002, Touchstone Energy cooperatives have donated more than \$140,000 towards the program that honors contestants who make it to the Short Go round of the state finals competition in their respective events.

This year in Fort Pierre, 145 student-athletes visited the Touchstone Energy booth to sign up for their shirts, which will be embroidered with the TSE logo and delivered to contestants this fall.

While Hintz has a bubbly personality and a flair for fashion, she takes pride in wearing her two Short Go Shirts that identify her as an accomplished competitor.

"It's so cool and it's such an honor to win a Short Go Shirt," she said. "It's so unique for us competitors because I don't know how many states actually get the opportunity to receive something like this. Every contestant appreciates it. The more shirts the merrier!"

Tobi, a national finalist in the rodeo

queen competition two years ago, has been involved in rodeo from a young age and said she likes the friendships that are forged with her peers.

"You meet so many people and make so many friends. Sometimes you wonder why you're doing it, but then you learn that there's a rhyme and reason for all the chaos and madness," she said.

Ann Sundermann has served as executive secretary for the High School Rodeo Association for the past 17 years. She describes the level of enthusiasm surrounding the TSE Short Go program that she's experienced over the years.

"Winning one of these shirts is the thing the kids anticipate the most," Sundermann said during a brief pause in the rodeo action. "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."



Over the past 20 years, electric cooperatives have distributed more than 3,200 Short Go Shirts.

Sundermann said she's seen a lot of value from the program that demonstrates the electric cooperative system's ongoing involvement in youth development, education, sports activities and overall community support.

"It's been a privilege to work with the local electric cooperatives. They take pictures of the kids with their shirts and run them in their magazines and the kids send the pictures to us. They give the kids a lot of recognition for all their hard work and all they've achieved. With the commitment cooperatives have to their communities and their support for this outstanding program, I think it's a great long-term partnership and we look forward to continuing for many years to come," she said.

Marty Philips is public relations coordinator for the association. He noted that Short Go Shirts don't spend much time stashed away and gathering dust in the closet.

"The shirts get worn out because the kids wear them constantly. They're right at the front of their closets. It's such a great honor for them. They wear them to work, they wear them to school, they wear them to college and even when they're adults. I see them all over the state," Philips said. "They wear them

with pride because they know they earned it and they know they did the work to make it to the Short Go round. A lot of kids think it's better than a buckle. We appreciate what TSE has done for the kids because that's what this is all about, it's all about the kids. Everything we do is for the kids."

Todd Eliason, a recent retiree from Rushmore Electric in Rapid City who administered the program for Touchstone Energy since it began in 2002, said he looked forward to working with rodeo organizers and the student-athletes each year.

"These kids are our future, and to see how goal-oriented and determined they are and to see how hard they work, it really makes you feel positive about the future," he said.

Eliason cited Layni Stevens as a prime example. Not only did Layni earn a Short Go Shirt but she also punched her ticket to the national event in Gillette, W.Y., by finishing first in the girl's cutting competition.

"It's such an honor to receive a Short Go Shirt. The more shirts, the merrier!"

- Rodeo Queen Tobi Hintz

"I'm just grateful to be at the finals and it's an even greater blessing to get to wear a Short Go Shirt," Layni said. "It's one of your goals to get to the Short Go round. Sometimes it doesn't always go your way, but to know you get the reward of getting a shirt is just really cool. You can wear it all year long, to all kinds of events and to college."

To see a video of the event, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=iT-oZ1Oxn7o



REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Dakotafest or the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____

AUGUST 16-18
Dakotafest

Photo Credit: AFBF photo/Philip Gerlach



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.

JULY 25-30
Days of '76 Rodeo and Parades

18 Seventy Six Dr., Deadwood, SD, daysof76.com

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

JULY 28
Music in the Garden
Shakespeare Garden, Wessington Springs, SD, 605-539-1929

JULY 29-31
Paha Sapa Cowboys and Indians Art Festival
Outlaw Square, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

JULY 30
South Dakota Chislic Festival
Prairie Arboretum, Freeman, SD, sdchislicfestival.com

AUGUST 5-6
Arts in the Garden
Shakespeare Garden, Wessington Springs, SD, wessingtonsprings.com/currentevents

AUGUST 6
Rockin Ribfest
City Park, Wessington Springs, SD, wessingtonsprings.com/currentevents

AUGUST 5-13
Sioux Empire Fair
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD, siouxempirefair.com

AUGUST 5-14
Sturgis Motorcycle Rally
Main St., Sturgis, SD, sturgismotorcyclerrally.com

AUGUST 12-14
Fort Pierre Trader Days
Various Locations, Fort Pierre, SD, 605-412-8549

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

AUGUST 19-21
Black Hills Threshing Bee
13380 Alkali Road, Sturgis, SD, 605-490-2024

AUGUST 19-21
Yankton Riverboat Days
Citywide, Yankton, SD, riverboatdays.com

AUGUST 19-27
Central States Fair and Rodeo
800 San Francisco St., Rapid City, SD, centralstatesfair.com

AUGUST 24-28
Corn Palace Festival
604 N Main St., Mitchell, SD, 605-995-8430

AUGUST 25-28
Prairie Village Steam Threshing Jamboree
45205 SD Hwy. 34, Madison, SD, 605-256-3644

AUGUST 26-27
Hill City Wine, Brew and BBQ
Elm St., Hill City, SD, hillcitywinebrewandbbq.com

AUGUST 26-27
Sizzlin' Summer Nights
Main St., Aberdeen, SD, 605-226-3441

SEPTEMBER 1-5
South Dakota State Fair
890 3rd St. SW, Huron, SD, sdstatefair.com

SEPTEMBER 10
Heroes Helping with Horsepower Military Appreciation Event
Ethan, SD, 605-770-2867

SEPTEMBER 11
Annual Farmer Antique Car and Tractor Parade
Farmer, SD, 605-239-4498 or 605-215-8383

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