

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

Old Spink New Spink

**SD restaurants roll
with the changes**
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**Dealing with
drought**
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Joyce Schermer,
Karisma Tripp and Brad
and Lori Johannsen are
shown at Spink Family
Restaurant in Elk Point



Annual Report Executive Summary



Duane Wolbrink
Board President

Join us on Tuesday, September 14, at the Mitchell Corn Palace for Central Electric Cooperative's 21st Annual Meeting. Your cooperative is planning a traditional meeting, complete with a buffet catered by Central Catering of Hawarden, Iowa. This issue of the Cooperative Connections serves as the official annual report.

Your cooperative operates on founding principles including democratic member control, involvement in our communities and furthering the education of our employees and members. This year's annual meeting will follow those principles.

At our meeting, you will elect a new director-at-large. Jim Headley is retiring after giving the cooperative 25 years of dedicated service. Earlier this year, Darwin Butch Morrison also announced his retirement as the Davison County director. We will miss both Jim and Butch for their leadership, knowledge and guidance.

Our employees have been getting a lot of questions on electric vehicles. As a result, we are inviting a guest speaker who has experience with electric vehicles and we will have a couple of electric vehicles on display inside the Corn Palace.

The annual meeting gives us the opportunity to report to our members on the activities from the previous year. When 2020 began, our plans were different than what unfolded. Our hearts go out to all our members who became ill, who were financially impacted, and especially to those who lost a loved one. The pandemic has and still is changing our world. We, like everyone, struggled to get masks, hand sanitizer and other supplies. We closed our offices to the public, asked employees to work remotely or in isolated groups, and utilized quarantines in an effort to keep everyone safe. Despite these challenges, your employees did a great job of meeting the needs of our membership.

Financially, 2020 was a good year for your cooperative, although revenues were below budget. Our employees and our power supplier, East River Electric, took extra steps to control expenses throughout the pandemic. Because of these efforts and lower costs for fuel, interest, etc., our operating expenses were also below budget. This allowed Central Electric to help our members by returning \$930,000 in the form of capital credit retirements

and issuing a power cost refund of \$650,000. A Grand total of \$1.58 million went back to our members and the cooperative ended the year with margins of over \$720,000. Central Electric's rates have not changed since January 2019.

Your cooperative adopted a long-range plan in 2018 to replace 2,000 miles of aging distribution lines. Today we have less than 1,700 miles yet to replace. The replacement of almost 60 miles annually has helped our crews make significant progress. This work improves reliability and prepares our system for the future.

We have a goal to finish the replacement of our metering system by the end of 2022. The new meters communicate using cellular technology and promise to increase efficiency, eliminate equipment installed on our system and provide more data.

In 2020, almost \$18,000 was awarded to local causes making an impact in our local communities through Operation Round-Up, and more than \$130,000 has been awarded since the program's initiation in 2015.

Your cooperative participates in the Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) Loan Fund, which provides low interest financing for economic development activities. Since inception, the REED Fund has made over \$6.4 million available to business and community ventures in Central Electric's service area.

The service department is available around the clock and on weekends to help with an emergency or a new project. They continue to assist members with their electrical, heating, air conditioning and appliance needs.

The safety of our employees, members and the general public has always been a priority. We continue to use advertising and social media to remind everyone how to work safely around electricity. We also enjoy visiting our schools to educate children about electricity and how to safely use it.

As we look ahead, our industry is seeing delays, cost increases and unavailability in some of the materials we need to provide service to you. We will continue to do our best to avoid delays to your projects. We encourage you to contact us early with projects that involve your cooperative and ask for your patience while we work through these industry issues.

Grab your neighbor and attend your Annual Meeting. We look forward to seeing all of you there!



Ken Schlimgen
General Manager

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

CENTRAL ELECTRIC

(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
- Darwin “Butch” Morrison – Director
- Jim Headley – Director-At-Large

Management Staff

- Ken Schlimgen – General Manager
- Brian Bultje – Manager of Operations
- Dean Uher – Manager of Finance & Administration
- Lincoln Feistner – Sales/Project Manager
- Patrick Soukup – Manager of Member Services & Marketing
- Tara Miller – Manager 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 electric cooperative members on matters pertaining to their cooperative and living better with electricity. Also available at www.centraleccoop.com.

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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

Our Mission

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

Board meeting summary

The board of directors met on June 21, 2021, at Central Electric Cooperative’s Betts Road Service Center for the regular board meeting. The board approved the May 2021 meeting minutes. The board then reviewed monthly reports by management including details on operations, member services, communications, service department and financials.

BOARD REPORT

General Manager Ken Schlimgen updated the board on the following:

- District meetings
- East River Manager’s Advisory Committee
- Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) and Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program updates (REDLG)
- Current happenings involving Mitchell United Way and Mitchell Development Corporation
- East River electric vehicle committee updates
- Chamberlain Smokey Grove housing development
- Pending large commercial power agreement
- Progress report on strategic planning objectives

Director Wolbrink reported on East River Electric Power Cooperative happenings and board meeting. Discussion followed.

BOARD ACTION

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to authorize Manager Schlimgen to make an offer on land available in Howard for a future outpost. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- A motion was made and seconded to decline opting in to FERC Order 2222. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- A motion was made and seconded to declare equipment as surplus: unit 90: 2012 Dodge 5500 bucket truck 213,000 miles. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- A motion was made and seconded to adopt an amendment to the cooperative’s Flexible Spending Account and Dependent Care Assistance Program. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- A motion was made and seconded to re-appoint Director Wolbrink to the East River Electric Power Cooperative board of directors. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve a resolution supporting Horizon Health’s application for REED funding. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

The next board meeting was scheduled for July 19, 2021.

To contact your cooperative with questions, you may email cec@centraleccoop.com.

FINANCIAL REPORT	JUNE 2021	YEAR-TO-DATE 2021
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales	29,374,302 kWhs	180,682,217 kWhs
Electric Revenues	\$ 2,865,934	\$ 17,587,193
Total Cost of Service	\$ 2,743,841	\$ 17,311,009
Operating Margins	\$ 122,093	\$ 276,184

Be aware of overhead power lines on farms

Powerlines pose a major hazard for South Dakota farmers. Lines over roads and rural areas have a minimum clearance of 18 feet but just 12.5 feet over residential private property.

Before working in a field or around shops or grain bins, always take the time to note the location of your cooperative's power lines so that you can make sure to remain a safe distance from them and stay free from harm. To stay safe around overhead power lines, farm operators and workers must:

- Always use a spotter when operating large machinery near utility power lines.
- Use extra caution when raising augers or grain truck beds around co-op power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from power lines - at all times, and in all directions.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine the proper clearance.
- Always lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it to get added clearance.
- Call your electric cooperative immediately if a power line is sagging or is

hanging too low.

- If contact is made with a power line, remember that it is almost always safest to stay on the equipment. Make sure to warn others to stay away and call the cooperative immediately.

- The only reason to decide to make an exit is if the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, then remember to jump off the equipment with both of your feet together, avoiding touching the ground and vehicle at the same time.

Then, still keeping your feet together, "bunny hop" away from the vehicle until you reach a safe distance.

If you see someone else's equipment that has come in contact with a power line in your area, the best help you can give will be from a safe distance.

Make sure to yell out to, signal or call the equipment operator to make sure he or she remains in the vehicle, and notify your local cooperative immediately.

Please remember to follow these tips to avoid accidents during the harvest season.

TIPS FOR A SAFE HARVEST



The Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center offers this useful checklist for farm safety called Stop-Think-Act. Take these steps to minimize injury risks during harvest season.

Stop

- What could go wrong?
- How bad could it be?
- Has anything changed?

Think

- Do I clearly understand the task?
- Am I physically and mentally ready?

- Do I have the right equipment and tools for the job?

Act

- Make it safe.
- Use the right tools.
- Follow proper procedures.
- Reduce risks.
- Stop the task if it cannot be done safely.



You put the 'pow' in power!

Madilyn Gaikowski

Madilyn sends out a special note of appreciation for line workers across the state of South Dakota. She is the daughter of Gene and Loree Gaikowski. Gene serves as the Wessington Springs line foreman at Central Electric in Mitchell.

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.

CROCKPOT CRAVINGS

CROCKPOT APPLE BUTTER

Ingredients:

- 4 cups of sugar (more or less depending on sweetness of apples)
- 4 tsp. cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. cloves
- ¼ tsp. salt

METHOD

Fill a 5 quart crockpot full of chopped apples (quartered or smaller), no need to peel, but do remove seeds. Tart apples are best. Top with the ingredients above. Lid won't fit at first but settles down as apples cook. Begin cooking on high and when bubbling, put heat on low and cook all night, or until thick and dark color. Stir occasionally. If need be, blend a few seconds to soften peels. Pour into jars and seal.

Cherie Leibel, Timber Lake

SLOW COOKER BEEF STEW

Ingredients:

- 3 cups water
- 1 package McCormick® Classic Beef Stew Seasoning Mix Packet
- 2 lbs beef stew meat, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 cups potato chunks
- 1 1/4 cups carrot chunks
- 1 medium onion, cut into thin wedges
- 1/2 cup sliced celery

METHOD

Mix vegetables, water and Beef Stew Seasoning Mix in slow cooker. Coat beef with flour. Stir into ingredients in slow cooker. Cover. Cook 8 hours on low or 5 hours on high until beef is tender.

mccormick.com

CROCKPOT BUTTERNUT SQUASH WITH APPLES

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ to 2 lbs. butternut squash, peeled and chopped (about 5 cups)
- 2 to 3 tart apples, chopped (about 2 cups)
- ¼ c. dried cherries or cranberries
- 1 ½ tsp. grated fresh ginger
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. nutmeg
- ½ c. apple cider
- ¼ tsp. salt

METHOD

Combine all ingredients in your slow cooker and stir together. Cover and cook on low 3-4 hours or until squash is tender, then turn to warm until serving. Can also be baked in conventional oven at 325 degrees until fork tender. Sweet potatoes can be used instead of butternut squash if desired.

Linda Sherry, Sioux Falls

Please send your favorite dairy 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 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Letter from our Generation & Transmission Cooperative

EAST RIVER 2020 REPORT



Tom Boyko

General Manager
East River Electric

For 70 years, East River has worked alongside our member systems in providing safe, affordable and reliable power to our member-owners in eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota. Our history is filled with examples of our cooperative family joining together to overcome challenges, explore innovations and embrace new opportunities. East River exists to enhance the value of our members and the resilience of our cooperative structure comes from our collective efforts.

By far, the biggest impact on our industry and our nation over the past year was the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic brought immense struggles—big and small—it also showcased the strength of the cooperative business model and the resilience of our cooperative family.

Member cooperatives stepped up to help each other through the crisis and leaned on each other for advice. The resilience of our cooperative structure also came to the forefront, with our member systems pulling together to share resources, overcome challenges, support each other and keep the power on for hundreds of thousands of people in our region, including hospitals, schools and many other essential businesses.

Outside of the pandemic, East River continued our critical work of fulfilling the objectives that are outlined within our strategic plan. Over the past year, we completed several key projects for our transmission system upgrade plan that will strengthen our system's backbone. East River is prioritizing Southwest Power Pool projects in the first years of the upgrade plan to

maximize third party revenue streams and limit the impact on member rates. Main focus areas of the plan include delivery point substation construction, moving the 115 kV deliveries further into the East River system and rebuilding or adding to our backbone transmission lines and system. These projects will improve the reliability of the system and provide for future load growth.

East River and our power supply partners are continuously looking to ensure we have a mix of power resources to serve our membership with reliable and affordable electricity. As a result, we employ an 'all of the above' generation strategy. Part of that strategy is using renewable energy. Currently, over one-third of our cooperative family's generation mix comes from renewable sources including hydropower and wind, with plans for steady and fiscally responsible growth. Two new solar projects that have been announced by Basin Electric Power Cooperative will also bring solar energy to our generation mix in the near future including what will be South Dakota's largest solar farm – the 128 megawatt Wild Springs Solar farm – beginning in 2022. Currently, about 20 percent of our energy mix comes from wind resources. Looking back about 10 years ago, just 8 percent of our power supply came from wind. Additionally, the percentage of coal in our power supply sales has dropped 15 percent in the past decade, now making up only about 43 percent. With nuclear and recovered energy, our total carbon free energy resources make up over 40 percent of our power supply delivered to you.

East River's board-driven farm safety campaign continued in 2020. This marked the award-winning campaign's fourth year and it reminds farmers to be aware of electrical equipment when working on the farm. It also educates them on the steps to take if their equipment contacts a power line. We've heard many positive stories of how the campaign's message has led to farmers taking the proper actions after accidents involving their equipment and power lines. We're pleased to see that the campaign is achieving its goal of keeping our farming community safe while they do their important work.

Since 1996, the Rural Electric Economic Development, or REED, Fund has provided millions

of dollars in economic investments to aid in our region's development. Governed by 26 cooperatives in South Dakota and Minnesota, including your co-op, REED highlights the strength of our membership's commitment to our communities. A new REED Fund housing development initiative aims to help overcome housing shortages that are hampering growth in towns of all sizes across South Dakota by providing innovative financing options for workforce housing.

The initiative began with an initial \$4 million dollars in loan funds that REED dedicated specifically to housing development, with a goal of raising an additional \$6 million dollars in outside investments. Several outside investments have already been made from Avera Health, SDN Communications as well as First Bank and Trust. It's great to have these outside

investors and hopefully others in the near future. We're all in this together. All of these organizations share similar footprints, and we all have the same common goal of trying to work on this problem.

We work in close step with our member systems to live out the cooperative principle of commitment to community through our youth outreach programs, donations to various non-profit organizations including Feeding South Dakota, Special Olympics, United Way and much more.

East River exists to enhance the value of our member systems and open communication with each local co-op is essential for ensuring that East River's efforts are in sync with the needs of the membership. By staying connected and working together, our cooperative family will remain energized for the future.

Minutes of Central Electric Cooperative's 2020 Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Members of Central Electric Cooperative Association ("Central Electric") was held Tuesday, September 29, 2020, at the Central Electric Headquarters building located on Betts Road, Mitchell, Davison County, South Dakota, pursuant to a Notice of Annual Meeting sent to Central Electric Members in accordance with Central Electric Bylaws.

As a result of the Covid-19 virus pandemic, the Central Electric Board of Directors (the "Board") determined, for the safety of its Members, to conduct the Annual Meeting as a "drive-thru" meeting with Members in attendance staying in their vehicles.

The Annual Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Board President Duane Wolbrink. Each Member attending was provided with a packet of information containing the following:

- A written President's Report outlining the Central Electric activities for the past year
- A written financial report setting forth the financial condition of Central Electric
- A packet of proposed Bylaw Amendments to the Bylaws of Central Electric proposed by the Board and previously discussed at the eight District Meetings held by Central Electric and published in the April 2020 Cooperative Connections Newsletter

- A ballot which contained the following:
 - A vote to approve or disapprove the waiving of reading of the Notice of Annual Meeting and Certificate of Meeting
 - A vote to approve or disapprove the waiving of reading of the 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes
 - A vote to approve or disapprove the proposed Amendments and revisions to the Bylaws of Central Electric as a whole or disapprove as a whole
 - A pencil to mark the ballot

A quorum was announced of 496 members attending the meeting.

Ballots were collected, and the tellers appointed by the Board and Cooperative Attorney Don Petersen counted the ballots.

The members present and voting approved the waiving of the reading of the Notice of Meeting and the waiving of the reading of the 2019 Annual Meeting Minutes.

The members present also approved the proposed bylaw amendments by a vote of 441 members voting for the amendments, 41 members voting against the Amendments, and 1 spoiled ballot. The votes were certified by the tellers.

The results of the voting were announced, and the meeting was adjourned.



RISING FROM THE ASHES

Rhonda Otten, along with her husband and three sons, has worked to keep Spink Family Restaurant open for business.
 Photos by Billy Gibson

Spink restaurant emerges strong from hardships brought by fire and pandemic

Billy Gibson
 billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Old Spink. New Spink.
 That’s how Rhonda Otten variously refers to her restaurant, depending on whether she’s alluding to the Spink Café that burned down in 2019 or the Spink Family restaurant that was throttled by the pandemic but is thriving today.

For more than 20 years, the Spink Café was a big draw in the township located in Union County. The eatery was known for its Friday night fish fries during Lent, Sunday dinners and its famous Spinkburger. The 80-year-old structure had recently been re-decorated with a 50s theme, featuring old LPs, vinyl album covers on the wall and pictures of Elvis Presley.

But life for Otten and her husband Sam changed in November of 2019 when the area’s most

popular attraction was totally consumed by fire.

The way the Ottens saw it, there was no option but to rebuild. But the planned resurrection of the business wouldn’t occur in the confines of Spink. The new iteration, renamed Spink Family Restaurant, would be located in the old American Legion hall in downtown Elk Point.

By all accounts, the “new Spink” wasn’t so easy to bring forth from the ashes. Two weeks after working hard to get the new facility ready for business in Elk Point, the pandemic hit and threatened to dash the Ottens’ hopes for good.

“The fire was in November, we made the decision to keep going in December, and we re-opened in March. We were open for two weeks when the pandemic hit, Rhonda said. “Those two weeks were very, very busy. It was a madhouse in

here. We had a lot more space and we were finally getting in the groove.”

Facing the same problems as just about every restaurant owner in the state and nation, the Ottens were forced to hit the pause button and try to figure out the next step to take. They closed for a month, regrouped, and then returned to offer carry-out service only.

Members of the community rallied to support the restaurant, including employees at Union County Electric located just two blocks away.

According to Union County Electric General Manager Matt Klein, the cooperative always strives to support other local businesses that help the community thrive.

“At lunchtime you’re likely to see some of our guys eating there,” Klein said. “When they had carry-out, we ordered food for meetings and just did what we could to help – just like we do with other members of the community. We help whenever and wherever we can.”



Server Karisma Tripp tends to another satisfied customer at Spink Family Restaurant in Elk Point.

Rhonda said it was inspiring to see the town pull together to face the impact of the pandemic, and also to help the business survive after the back-to-back calamities.



Cody Olson, center, enjoys lunch with his co-workers from Valley Ag Supply.

“The community really supported us and we’re very grateful for that,” she said. “But we’ve seen this many times before; people watching out for each other and helping when there’s a need. That’s what really pushed us through.”

One regular patron who is happy to see the new Spink succeeding is Joyce Schermer. She occupied a table in the restaurant one recent lunch hour along with her son Brad Johannsen and his wife Lori. The Johannsens are regular visitors to the

area from Sedona, Ariz., and always make a point to stop at Spink, preferring the hot beef sandwich and the prime rib sandwich.

“It’s always good every time you come,” said Schermer, a resident of Akron who opted for her go-to French Dip. “You’re never disappointed in the food or the service. It’s wonderful.”

Also enjoying a lunchtime meal were several employees of Valley Ag Supply. The company is located a half mile from the old Spink building that was destroyed by fire.

“We used to go there all the time and we were disappointed when it burned down. You could see our fertilizer plant from there,” said Cody Olson while noshing on the French Dip. “Now there’s no place to go. So, we just drive into town because it’s so good. It’s great that they came back and are still operating.”

As for “old Spink,” the Ottens are still trying to figure out what to do with the heap left in the wake of the conflagration. The building had an upstairs apartment where several members of the family lived at



various times through the years.

“It’s going to have to be torn down eventually, but we just don’t want to let it go,” Rhonda said. “There are so many memories attached to that place; both of our parents were such a big part of it.”

She emphasized that while the restaurant is in a new location, the food is the same as before. The Ottens, who have always used family recipes, depend on all three of their sons – ages 17 through 23 – to handle the cooking to maintain consistency on a daily basis.

“The secret to our success is that the five of us do all the cooking here. We use time-proven family recipes that have been popular for decades,” Rhonda said.

2020 FINANCIALS

BALANCE SHEET

	2019	2020
ASSETS		
Lines, Office Building and Operational Equipment	83,384,880	89,802,103
Less Depreciation	25,103,503	25,903,427
Total Electric Plant Less Depreciation	\$58,281,377	\$63,898,676
Cash and Investments:		
General Fund	1,936,411	3,832,027
Investment:(Associated Organizations)	22,270,254	20,810,131
Total Cash Investments	\$24,206,665	\$24,642,158
Accounts Receivable	3,219,698	2,683,846
Materials and Supplies	2,427,051	2,200,104
Prepaid Insurance	28,381	140,397
Other Current and Accrued Assets	10,820	6,600
Deferred Debits	874,490	493,995
TOTAL ASSETS	\$89,048,482	\$94,065,776
LIABILITIES		
Total Amount Owed to RUS & CFC	43,262,401	46,702,802
Consumer Deposits	136,828	129,063
Other Current and Accrued Liabilities	1,243,848	1,256,629
Deferred Credits & Regulatory Liabilities	79,828	513,663
Accounts Payable	2,383,465	2,264,140
TOTAL WE OWE	\$47,136,370	\$50,866,297
EQUITY		
Patronage Capital and Other Equities	41,912,112	43,199,479
TOTAL EQUITIES	\$41,912,112	\$43,199,479
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$89,048,482	\$94,065,776

OPERATING STATEMENT

	2019	2020
REVENUES		
Revenue from the Sales of Electricity, Wheeling and Fees	34,116,582	31,960,255
TOTAL REVENUE	\$34,116,582	\$31,960,255
<p>2020 Revenue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Residential ● Commercial - Large ● Commercial - Small ● Seasonal ● Irrigation ● Other 		
EXPENSES		
Cost of Purchased Power	23,454,315	22,119,520
Distribution-Operations Expense	1,492,727	1,193,161
Distribution-Maintenance Expense	1,655,052	1,543,731
Consumer Accounting and Collecting Expense	230,242	233,688
Consumer Service and Information Expense	429,290	472,106
Sales Expense	125,939	135,973
Administrative and General Expense	1,523,766	1,478,497
Depreciation Expense	2,035,505	2,154,324
Tax Expense	560,803	535,129
Interest Expense	1,360,941	1,355,708
Other Deductions	25,276	15,325
TOTAL EXPENSE	\$32,893,856	\$31,237,162
<p>2020 Expenses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Purchased Power ● Operations & Maintenance ● Customer & Administration ● Depreciation ● Tax ● Interest 		
Patronage Capital and Operating Margins	1,222,726	723,093
Non-Operating Margins	239,020	154,427
Generation and Transmission and Other Capital Credits	1,163,750	1,306,800
PATRONAGE CAPITAL OR MARGINS	\$2,625,496	\$2,184,320

LEARNING FROM ADVERSITY

The Dakota Lakes Research Farm produces information helpful to farmers and ranchers dealing with drought. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

SDSU agriculture researcher Dwayne Beck looks for better ways to gain higher yields through crop rotations and other techniques

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The drought conditions that gripped the state through the summer months caused difficulty for farmers and ranchers. The drought in 2012 also made it difficult to grow and harvest a productive crop.

But it's the drought that occurred in 1988 that Dwayne Beck remembers most. Beck, 70, is a researcher with SDSU who runs the Dakota Lakes research farm near Canning.

According to the National Integrated Drought Information System, as of June 23 more than 97 percent of South Dakota and all of Minnesota were categorized as "abnormally dry."

As someone who considers himself a seasoned investigator and problem solver, Beck looks at the current drought conditions as an

opportunity to learn.

So, what exactly did the farming and ranching community learn in 1988 when adverse weather conditions caused an estimated \$60 billion in agricultural damage across the U.S.?

"We learned not to do tillage," Beck responds without hesitation. "This drought is about the worse I've seen since 1988, and we learned then that in this part of the country if you till, you're screwed. No-till gives you a chance to have a decent crop and run a viable farming operation."

And the key to succeeding without tilling is proper crop rotation. That's what keeps Beck and other researchers busy.

On a recent afternoon, Melanie Caffe and her assistant Nick Paul were operating a small combine to gather their test crops laid out in strips measuring five feet wide by 20

feet long. Caffe, a native of France, is an ag professor at SDSU, while Paul is a local farmer and research technician.

The two-member team moved from section to section, cleaning out the collection bin as they went to keep the samples from being contaminated and corrupting the research data. The samples were



Dwayne Beck runs the Dakota Farms research facility near Canning.



Melanie Caffe and Nick Paul collect samples from a field at the Dakota Farms Research Station near Canning.

bagged and taken into the lab where Caffe and Paul planned to perform fertility experiments with the goal of developing varieties with higher yield, higher quality and stronger drought resistance.

Much of the research centers around maximizing yields through effective crop rotations. Beck has spent much of his career considering the ways farming was conducted 100 or more years ago and how it can be improved.

“The Natives grew crops before the Spaniards came and brought horses. They were all no-tillers because they didn’t have cows and horses to pull the plows. They grew 13 different kinds of corn, beans, squash and sunflowers. They were very successful. The settlers never asked anyone how to grow crops here, they just got out their plow and started turning over the soil.”

Beck has seen the wonders of crop rotation in his research. Some of his fields are rotated five ways.

“Good rotations can produce a lack of disturbance in places where you don’t have a lot of water. Our research shows 99 percent of resistance issues could be solved with better crop rotations. There are fields where we haven’t used insecticides for 18 years.”

Beck said his methods aren’t always adopted by industry but he continues to gather data and push out the information obtained through research.

“The nice about being a research guy is you always have more things to learn,” he said. “The more you research, the more you don’t know, but we’re always looking for answers.”

HOPS GROWERS NAVIGATING THEIR WAY THROUGH CHANGING INDUSTRY

Billy Gibson

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In many ways, Ryan Heine is like the average South Dakota farmer. He frets about the weather, plans for the future, worries about finances, watches the markets and is constantly trying to find a buyer for the crop he hopes will make.

But his crop is unlike most of the others that emerge from the South Dakota soil. Heine is owner of 6th Meridian Hop Farm near Yankton. His is one of six such farms left in the state growing hops for brewers to transform into craft beer.

Heine also sees his work as different compared to most farmers – he relies on his nose a lot.

“There’s a lot of experimenting with different aromas.

There are so many flavor profiles and varieties of hops that are used in creating craft beer,” he said. “There’s a vast palette of different aromas, and the market will dictate what consumers prefer.”

Ryan and his wife Michelle launched their hop operation in 2014, leaving Omaha and returning to the small family farm near Yankton in pursuit of a more grounded lifestyle for their five children.

“We wanted to get out of the city and back to our farming roots,” said Ryan, who works remotely as an electrical engineer for a company out of Minneapolis.

Ryan’s interest in growing the essential elements of craft beer began when he was a student at Parks College in St. Louis, Mo. He went out with his friends and found most of what was offered at bars, pubs and restaurants was bland and uninspiring. He knew he liked the flavor of beer and he knew he liked the simplicity of the farming lifestyle.

“So I started doing some home brewing and found that it was a fun hobby to pursue. Now we have one of the biggest operations in the state,” he said.

Heine’s time on the farm is spent fussing over flavor and aroma profiles, acid levels, yeast growth, oil content, insect invasions, disease infections and more. He and Michelle do all the growing, harvesting, processing, drying, pulverizing, preserving, pressing and packaging.

He finds markets by visiting with brewers, forging relationships across the region and even keeping in touch with his college buddies.

“There are some college roommates I’ve kept in touch with who are brewers and we’re always talking about how to improve our products,” he said. “Hops growers are down to just a handful in the state, but for those who have survived, I think the outlook is good.”



2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Local members elected by you lead Central Electric Cooperative through the board of directors. Each board member invests a tremendous amount of time in the co-op. They meet monthly to review operations of the co-op, and they often attend outside meetings to stay informed and capable of making sound decisions. It is their duty to ensure governing decisions are in the best interest of the cooperative and member-owners. We thank the board of directors for the time they invest to ensure your lives are powered reliably and affordably.



Duane Wolbrink
President
Stickney
Elected 1995



Todd VanWalleghen
Vice President
Letcher
Elected 2010



Bernetta Burghardt
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Elected 2004



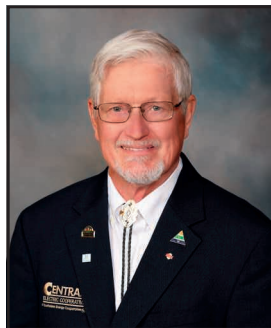
Mark Reindl
Treasurer
Wessington Springs
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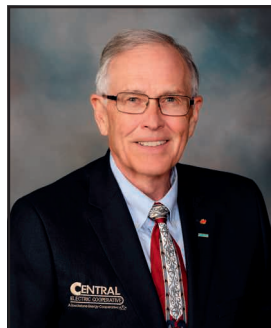
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NRECA
Spencer
Elected 1990



Donita Loudner
SDREA
Fort Thompson
Elected 2002-07, 2017



Darwin "Butch" Morrison
Mitchell
Elected 2003
Retiring 2021



Roger Campbell
Pukwana
Elected 2014



James "Jim" Headley
Director-at-large
White Lake
Elected 1996
Retiring 2021

ENERGIZED FOR THE FUTURE

CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S 21ST ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday, September 14
Corn Palace, Mitchell, SD

6:30 P.M.

Registration

Three-meat buffet served including broasted chicken, roast beef, pork chop, salads, dinner roll and ice cream.

7:00 P.M.

Business Meeting

Director-At-Large Election

Electric Vehicle Presentation

Recognize Scholarship Recipients



Electric Vehicle Presentation

Vehicles will be on display and industry experts will share insights on the growing electric vehicle (EV) industry. This will be a great opportunity to get your questions answered about EV capabilities.

Door Prizes for Members

- \$25 Energy Certificates
 - Kids' Bike Drawing (children ages 16 and under)
- Must be present to win. Children must be the dependent of a Central Electric member to win.

Scholarship Recipients

Morgan Hinckley <i>Ethan H.S.</i> \$1000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship	Rylee Schultz <i>Bridgewater-Emery H.S.</i> \$1000 Jay Headley Memorial Scholarship	Abigail Connor <i>Howard H.S.</i> \$1000 Jay Headley Memorial Scholarship
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CENTRAL
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

2021

The Central Electric Cooperative Board of Directors and Staff Look Forward to Seeing You at the Annual Meeting!

REGISTER TO WIN!

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

Your Phone Number: _____

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South Dakota State Fair
September 2-6, 2021



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.

AUGUST 25-29
Corn Palace Festival
604 N Main Street, Mitchell, SD, 605-995-8430

AUGUST 26-29
58th Annual Steam Threshing Jamboree
Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 605-256-3644

AUGUST 27-28
Sizzlin' Summer Nights
Main Street, Aberdeen, SD, 605-226-3441

AUGUST 27-29
Fall River Hot Air Balloon Festival
Hot Springs Municipal Airport, Hot Springs, SD, 605-745-4140

AUGUST 28
McCrossan Boys Ranch Xtreme Event Rodeo
McCrossan Boys Ranch Campus, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-339-1203

SEPTEMBER 2-6
South Dakota State Fair
State Fairgrounds, Huron, SD, 605-353-7340

SEPTEMBER 9-12
SD State Senior Games
Watertown, SD, Contact Howard at 605-491-0635 for more information

SEPTEMBER 10
Mickelson Star Trail
Rochford Trailhead, Hill City, SD, register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mickelson-star-trail-night-tickets-140121383831>

SEPTEMBER 10-11
Ribs, Rods & Rock n' Roll
Main Street, Vermillion, SD, 605-624-2021

SEPTEMBER 11-12
Fall Harvest Festival
Delmont, SD, 605-928-3792

SEPTEMBER 12
Annual Antique Car & Tractor Parade
Main Street, Farmer, SD, 605-239-4498

SEPTEMBER 17-18
Deadwood Jam
Main Street, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

SEPTEMBER 18
Health Connect Fair
Sanford Pentagon, Sioux Falls, SD, 888-761-5437

SEPTEMBER 18-19
Northeast South Dakota Celtic Faire and Games
37925 Youth Camp Road, Aberdeen, SD, 605-380-5828

SEPTEMBER 24-25
Holiday Arts Fall Show
Masonic Hall, Mitchell, SD, 605-359-2049

SEPTEMBER 25
Great Downtown Pumpkin Festival
526 Main Street, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

SEPTEMBER 25-26
Menno Pioneer Power Show
Menno, SD, contact Daniel at mennopowershow@yahoo.com for more details

OCTOBER 1-3
SiouxperCon
1201 N West Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD, visit siouxpercon.com for more details and tickets

OCTOBER 8-10
2021 Black Hills Powwow
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-341-0925

OCTOBER 16-17
Heartland Quilter's Guild
Highland Conference Center, Mitchell, SD, contact Karen at 605-996-6726 for more details

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