

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



SOUTH DAKOTA STAR QUILTS

**Honoring Cooperative
Legacy With
Time-honored Tradition**

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Rescuing Animals

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Keeping You Informed, Locally



Kathy Haas
Editor

With the plethora of information streaming in, it's hard to stay connected locally. We can deep dive into historical events, peruse instantly translated articles from around the world, and scroll through families', friends', and even acquaintances' lives without having to move an inch. Which also means it's difficult to wade through the ocean of information to find the tidbits that mean the most to us.

Providing local information to locals has been the backbone of my career. It's what I'm passionate about!

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I started as an editor for the Aberdeen American News while I was pursuing my English degree at Northern State University. By the time I graduated, I was a reporter, and was bringing awareness to events, standout citizens, and potential hazards. I've since used those skills to promote the amazing programs and opportunities provided by the K.O. Lee Library and Aberdeen Police Department.

I am excited to untangle the intricacies of electric cooperatives for you, as well as highlight your stories!

I grew up on a family farm just south of Aberdeen that was powered by Northern

Electric Cooperative. Even then, the electricity industry was evolving, and changes were being made to services. For a couple of summers, I helped my grandparents meter read throughout the countryside for Northern Electric. We would pick up stacks of binders from the co-op's office, and travel house to house, recording monthly usage. I had the critical role of pencil keeper.

Soon after, the meters were automated. My pencil-minding skills were no longer needed, to the benefit of all members! Automation made for smoother, faster billing and a decrease in operating expenses.

Northern Electric will continue to make adjustments that benefit you. I look forward to making it easier for you to stay informed of any exciting changes, events, or member spotlights. If you have a story suggestion, please contact me at khaas@northernelectric.coop or 605-725-2053.

COOPERATIVES
PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

Check back in next month's edition for the announcement of prize winners from the 2025 Northern Electric Annual Meeting of the membership!

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

NORTHERN ELECTRIC

(USPS 396-040)

Board President: Nolan Wipf

Board of Directors

- Todd Hettich - Vice President
- Scott Sperry - Secretary
- Josh Larson - Treasurer
- Thomas Lambert
- B.J. Hansen
- Kirk Schaunaman
- Bruce Schumacher, Jr.
- Mike Traxinger

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info@northernelectric.coop

Chief Financial Officer: Lorisa Rudolph

Operations Manager: Jerry Weber

Manager of Member Services: Russel Ulmer

Manager of Information Technology:
Derek Gorecki

Communications Specialist: Kathy Haas

Northern Electric Cooperative Connections is the monthly publication for the members of Northern Electric Cooperative, PO Box 457, Bath, SD 57427. Families subscribe to Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. The purpose of Northern Electric Cooperative Connections is to provide reliable, helpful information to electric cooperative members on electric cooperative matters and better rural living.

Subscription information: Northern Electric Cooperative members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Non-member subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. Periodicals postage paid at Bath, SD 57427.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to Northern Electric Cooperative Connections, PO Box 457, Bath, SD 57427; telephone (605) 225-0310; fax (605) 225-1684

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MAY BOARD REPORT

Northern Electric Cooperative's regular board meeting was held May 22, 2025, at the headquarters in Bath with all directors present. As the first order of business, the board approved the April 25, 2025, minutes, & April expenditures. The board then reviewed & accepted monthly reports by management. East River Director Kirk Schaunaman reported on actions taken by the East River Board at the May 1, 2025, board meeting. No South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) report was given. The next SDREA Board Meeting will be held June 26-27, 2025. Director Todd Hettich, CEO Char Hager and CFO Lorisa Rudolph reported on the NRECA Legislative Conference they attended from April 27-30, 2025, in Washington, D.C. Hettich also gave an update on building committee activities.

MANAGER'S REPORT

General Manager Char Hager's report to the board included the following items:

- Update on Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) Board Meeting held on April 24, 2025.
- Report on the employee meeting held on May 8, 2025.

BOARD REPORT

The board considered and/or acted upon the following:

- Approved the date and time of the next regular board meeting for 8:30 A.M. on Monday, June 23, 2025.
- Approved Work Order Inventory #25-04 for \$69,105.74 to be submitted to the RUS for reimbursement from loan funds for electric plant construction already completed.
- Reviewed the East River 2025 Capital Credit Retirement.
- Approved a donation to the MTC Energy Training Expansion Campaign.
- Appointed Todd Hettich as delegate and Char Hager as alternate for the CFC and NCSC Annual Meeting, June 30-July 2, New York City, NY.
- Appointed Micheal E. Traxinger as Northern Electric's representative to serve on the 2025 East River Resolutions Committee. William (B.J.) Hansen is the alternate director.

Talk to your director or co-op manager if you have questions on these matters.

FINANCIAL REPORT

	April -25	April-24
kWh Sales.....	\$20,637,437	\$22,422,549
Electric Revenues	\$2,211,654	\$2,252,928
Total Cost of Service	\$2,351,649	\$2,280,551
Operating Margins.....	(\$139,995)	(\$27,623)
Year to Date Margins.....	\$70,265	(\$86,633)
RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE MONTHLY USAGE AND BILL		
APRIL 2025	1,557 kwh.....\$199.99	\$0.1284
APRIL 2024	1,779 kwh.....\$198.34	\$0.1115

Playground Safety

Source: National Safety Council

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, each year, more than 200,000 children go to U.S. hospital emergency departments with injuries associated with playground equipment.

As the weather warms up and trips to the park become frequent, take a moment to familiarize yourself with the risks on playgrounds and how you can prevent injuries.

Check for Playground Hazards

Nearly 80% of playground injuries are caused by falls. Watch out for these potential hazards when taking kids to the playground, and report any hazards observed.

Improper ground surfaces: Surfaces around playground equipment should have at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel, or mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials. Playgrounds should be free of exposed concrete footings, rocks or tree stumps.

Overcrowded play areas: The area under and around play equipment should be a minimum of 6 feet in all directions while swing set areas should be twice the height of the suspending bar both in back and front of the swings. Structures more than 30 inches high should be at least 9 feet apart.

Unprotected elevated areas: Platforms higher than 30 inches should have guardrails or barriers.

Head entrapment spaces: Openings between rails, bars, rungs and even ropes of cargo nets should be less than 3 1/2 inches or more than 9 inches.

Sharp points and edges: Playground equipment should be free of protruding bolt ends, “S” hooks, and other sharp points and edges.

Visit the American Academy of Pediatrics webpage on playground safety to learn more.

Avoid Strangulation Hazards

The American Academy of Pediatrics cautions that children should not wear or play with anything that could get caught on equipment and become a strangulation hazard.

- Never attach or allow children to attach ropes, jump ropes, clotheslines or pet leashes to play equipment.
- Leave sweatshirts with drawstrings and necklaces at home.
- Remove bike helmets when playing on the playground.

Be Cautious of Too Much Sun Exposure

Playgrounds should have full or partial sun protection between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., peak exposure time.

- Limit playtime at peak sun exposure time and know the signs of heat illnesses.
- Avoid burns; if playground equipment is hot to the touch, it is too hot for your child’s bare skin.

Allow Only Age-Appropriate Activities

The Consumer Product Safety commission lists age-appropriate equipment in the Public Playground Safety Handbook. There is no substitute for parental supervision, especially for young children.



“Don’t go outside during lightning storms!”

Marah Kinnunen, Age 8

Marah warns readers about the dangers of going outside during a lightning storm. Thank you for your picture, Marah! Marah’s parents are Reuben and Sarine Kinnunen from Hayti, S.D.

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.

Delectable CHICKEN

CHICKEN MILANESE

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. McCormick® Chicken Parmesan One Sheet Pan Seasoning Mix
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 lb. thin-sliced boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 tbsp. oil

Method

Preheat oven to 400°F. Empty Seasoning Mix into shallow dish. Add Parmesan cheese. Brush chicken with oil. Coat evenly on both sides with Seasoning Mix. Discard any remaining Seasoning Mix.

Place chicken in single layer on foil-lined shallow baking pan sprayed with no stick cooking spray.

Bake 15 minutes or until cooked through, turn chicken halfway through cook time.

McCormick.com

SWEET AND SOUR CHICKEN

Ingredients:

- 3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 2 tbsps. fat or oil
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 tbsps. cornstarch
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 20 oz. can pineapple chunks (drained, reserving juice)
- 3 tbsps. soy sauce
- 3/4 cup green pepper strips
- 1/4 cup onion (thinly sliced)

Method

Cube chicken into one inch squares; brown in fat. Add water. Cook in water until tender. In another pan combine cornstarch, salt, brown sugar, vinegar, pineapple juice and soy sauce.

Cook until slightly thick, stirring constantly. Pour sauce over hot chicken. Let stand at least 10 minutes. Add green pepper, onion, and pineapple chunks. Cook two to seven minutes until warmed through. Serve over hot rice. *Makes 4 servings.

Jan Grage
Clay-Union Electric Member

CHICKEN POT PIE

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. prepared pie crust (top and bottom)
- 1/3 cup butter or margarine
- 1/3 cup chopped onion
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1 3/4 cup Progresso™ chicken broth (from 32 oz. carton)
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 1/2 cup chicken/turkey (shredded, cooked)
- 2 cups frozen mixed vegetables (thawed)

Method

Heat oven to 425°F. Prepare pie crusts as directed on box for two-crust pie using nine inch glass pie pan. In two quart saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion; cook two minutes, stirring frequently, until tender. Stir in flour, salt and pepper until well blended.

Gradually stir in broth and milk, cooking and stirring until bubbly and thickened. Stir in chicken and mixed vegetables. Remove from heat. Spoon chicken mixture into crust-lined pan. Top with second crust; seal edge and flute. Cut slits in several places in top crust. Bake 30 to 40 minutes or until crust is golden brown. During last 15 to 20 minutes of baking, cover crust edge with strips of foil to prevent excessive browning. Let stand five minutes before serving.

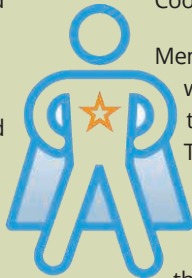
Cindy Foster
Codington-Clark Electric Member

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 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

WHO POWERS YOU?

Touchstone Energy Cooperative started the “Who Powers You” contest in 2020 in order to celebrate those who go above and beyond for their communities. Since then, in partnership with electric cooperatives throughout the region, the contest spotlights individuals and organizations across eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota who are making a difference.

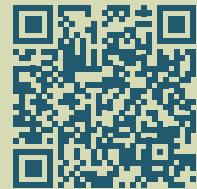
“No one succeeds alone, and that is especially true in rural areas, where friends and neighbors in tight-knit communities support, encourage, and inspire each other,”



said Chelsie Bakken, communications and marketing manager at East River Electric Power Cooperative.

Member-owners, employees, and residents who live or work within Touchstone’s service territory are eligible to be nominated. The final winners are selected by a panel of judges, based on the impact to the community. The finalists are announced and featured on Keloland Living, with the three winners being announced at the end.

For three of the four years, a Northern Electric finalist has placed in the top three!



Scan the QR code to watch the Keloland interviews or submit a nomination.

ADAM HAhLER NAMED AS CONTEST FINALIST

Brittany Holcomb

bholcomb@northernelectric.coop

The “Who Powers You” contest, hosted by the region’s Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, celebrates local figures who are making a difference in their communities. Adam Hahler, 2025 Northern Electric Cooperative nominee, certainly qualifies. He has a go-getter personality and enjoys helping out wherever he can.

Adam serves as a vital member of the Beadle and Spink Enterprise Community (BASEC) Board of Directors, the Northwestern Area School Board, Assistant Fire Chief of the Ashton Fire Deptment, an active member/EMT for the Spink County Ambulance and Wildcat Rescue services of Northern Spink County.

Living in a small community, Adam has seen everyone help pitch in when something goes wrong. This is his way of giving back to his community. With regards to being on a variety of boards, Adam tries to keep the public’s best interests in mind when making decisions for the greater good.

Adam finds the most enjoyment being an EMT. It is the most rewarding, and he likes being able to make a difference in someone’s life when they are at their worst



Adam Hahler receives a certificate of recognition from Northern Electric CEO Char Hager.

moment.

Adam’s story was featured on Keloland Living on April 1, 2025. A recap of the segment is also available on Touchstone Energy’s website, WhoPowersYouContest.com.



Area IV Senior Nutrition employees (from right) Chad Masters, Julie Zacher, and Marla Kiesz accept their first place certificate from Northern Electric CEO Char Hager. Area IV Senior Nutrition will receive a \$3,000 check as their prize.

AREA IV SENIOR NUTRITION NAMED FIRST PLACE WINNER

Touchstone Energy Cooperative announces recipients of 2025 'Who Powers You' prizes

Brittany Holcomb

bholcomb@northernelectric.coop

Area IV Senior Nutrition has been awarded the first place \$3,000 prize in the 2025 Touchstone Energy Cooperative “Who Powers You” contest. This is the fourth year the region’s electric cooperatives hosted the ‘Who Powers You’ contest to highlight local figures who are making a difference in their communities.

Area IV Senior Nutrition is an organization that serves individuals across a 16- county region in central and northeastern South Dakota. Their administration office is located in Aberdeen. They have been serving and supporting the health and wellness of seniors for 51 years. They receive 40% of their funding from grants and the other 60% is from local fundraising in

each community. The organizations mission is “to help maintain good health and wellbeing of our older citizens through well balanced, nourishing meals, nutrition education, and socialization.”

Area IV Senior Nutrition’s employees and volunteers work from the heart to make sure the seniors are well taken care of. “They foster compassion and culture in their work by connecting in as many ways as they possibly can with each other but also with the people that they serve and their families,” says Area IV Senior Nutrition Executive Director Marla Kiesz. Area IV provides a daily meal that consists of 1/3 of the daily meal requirements. These dietary guidelines are mandates and set by Dept of Human Services where Area IV gets their large grant that covers about 40% of their annual budget.

The health benefits extend far beyond a good meal. It provides the perfect excuse to get together. Seniors have a chance to socialize and connect with other seniors, as well as volunteers and staff.

For the seniors with mobility or visual impairments, volunteers and staff deliver lunches to their homes. In addition to the staff and volunteers simply enjoying the opportunity to visit with seniors daily, it is a large part of their mission. Many family members are grateful for the company’s policy that all folks receiving a meal will also have personal contact with a staff or volunteer, which serves as a welfare check. Kiesz says the strength of the program comes from the communities and the Midwest desire to see people taken care of.

Area IV Senior Nutrition was one of twenty finalists featured throughout the spring on Keloland Living. The contest winners were announced during the May 22 broadcast.

“As an electric cooperative, our services extend beyond delivering safe, affordable, and reliable power to our member-owners.” Northern Electric Cooperative CEO Char Hager said. “The ‘Who Powers you’ contest highlights the commitment to our co-op to the communities and member-owners that we serve. We are excited that the Area IV Senior Nutrition organization was selected as the grand prize winner in 2025.”

The second place, \$1,500 prize, was awarded to GROW South Dakota. The third place, \$500 prize, was awarded to Higgins-Jessen-Olson Post #88 American Legion of White and Toronto, located in Sioux Valley Energy Cooperative’s service area.



SOUTH DAKOTA STAR QUILTS

Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative directors present retiring manager Melissa Maher (left) with a star quilt.
Photo by JJ Martin

Honoring Cooperative Legacy With Time-honored Tradition

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sirea.coop

Across the prairie, few gifts carry as much meaning as a star quilt. For many, these quilts are more than just blankets – they are acts of honor. Rooted in Native American culture, particularly among Lakota, Dakota and other tribes of South Dakota, star quilts have long been used to mark some of life’s largest milestones, including graduations, marriages, memorials and moments of deep community respect.

Electric cooperative leaders Donovan Young Man, a former director of Lacreek Electric who was honored shortly before his passing earlier this year, and Melissa Maher, the former manager of Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative, recently accepted star quilts from their cooperatives in recognition of their many years of service to their member-owners.

So what makes the star quilt such an honor? According to International Quilt Museum Collections Manager Jamie Swartz, the quilts are special because they take an incredible amount of skill and experience to assemble.

Many star quilts are block quilts, constructed from dozens or even hundreds of small fabric pieces carefully cut and stitched together. At the heart of the design is an eight-pointed star, a

shape that demands near-perfect precision.

“There are so many small pieces that make up a star quilt,” Swartz said. “When you are combining so many small pieces together to make a large, over-all design, there is more room for error. A small mismeasurement can create bumps, ripples or puckers in the patchwork.”

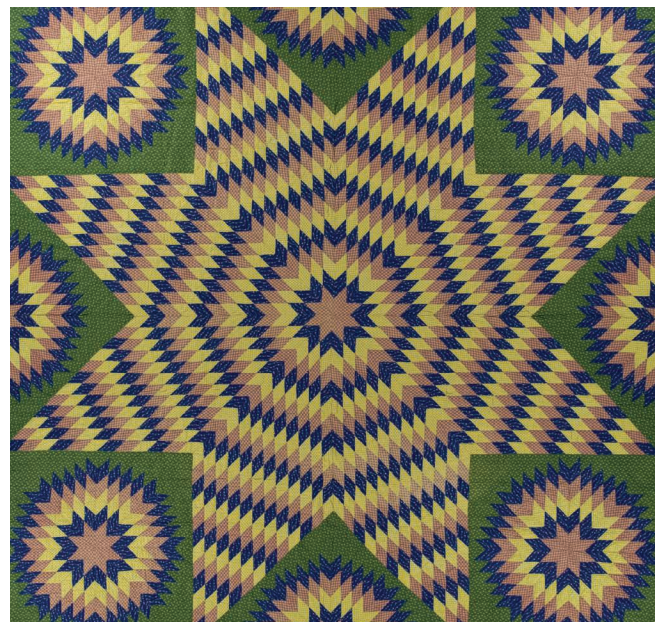


Photo Courtesy of the International Quilt Museum, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1997.007.0123

That level of precision, care and time-honored tradition a star quilt represents is a part of what makes it such a meaningful gift. In recent years, the practice of gifting star quilts has been embraced by some electric cooperatives as a way to express a deep appreciation for their employees who have dedicated a lifetime of work to their cooperatives and communities.

Remembering Donovan Young Man

Before his passing earlier this year, Donovan Young Man was honored by his cooperative at the Lacreek Electric annual meeting with a star quilt for his 31 years of service to Lacreek Electric, serving as a director for both his cooperative and the South Dakota Rural Electric Association. Specifically, the cooperative honored Donovan’s commitment to both his cooperative and community.

Lacreek Electric CEO Josh Fanning said Young Man was known for both his calm and steady presence, and his exceptional ability to bridge tribal relations, fostering understanding and unity within the community.

In his community, Donovan was known for his profound impact on his community’s youth. For 41 years, he devoted himself to the Oglala Lakota County School District, leaving a lasting legacy of dedication, education, and empowerment for the youth. Beyond education, Donovan served his community in many other ways, including as a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council.

“Donovan had a lasting impact on our cooperative,” Fanning said. “His wisdom, leadership, and steady guidance helped shape its direction and strengthen its foundation. His contributions will be remembered and felt for years to come.”

“We chose a star quilt because gifting one is a deeply meaningful gesture in our area – an expression of profound respect, honor and the warmth of community,” Fanning continued. “In many Indigenous cultures, the star quilt represents the highest form of recognition, symbolizing heartfelt gratitude for the recipient’s enduring contributions. It also serves as a guiding light, reflecting the inspiration and direction they provide for future generations.”

Honoring Melissa Maher

Moreau-Grand Electric honored Melissa Maher with a star quilt at the co-ops annual meeting in October for her 40 years of service at the cooperative. In addition to Maher, the cooperative also presented Larry Hieb with a quilt for his 55 combined years of service as both an employee and director.

Maher joined the cooperative in 1984 as manager’s secretary. Through the years, Maher remained with the cooperative, serving as the member service director and later Moreau-Grand Electric’s manager, the first woman to hold this title.

“I’ve always loved star quilts, what they stand for – the celebration and honoring of someone with an heirloom that they can enjoy for hopefully generations to come,” she said.

Maher first experienced the star quilt tradition through her



Lacreek Electric employees gift director Donovan Young Man a star quilt to celebrate his 31 years of service to the electric cooperative.

Photos by Mandy Scherer



mother, who taught kindergarten at Cheyenne-Eagle Butte School. As a teacher in the Eagle Butte community, her mother received star quilts from several of her students’ families.

Seeing the joy it brought her mother, Maher continued the star quilt tradition into her years at the cooperative, gifting quilts to retirees of the cooperative, gifting dozens of star quilts made by quilt maker Bonnie LeBeaux to employees of the co-op, honoring retirements, directors, and even key members of the construction crew that helped build the new Moreau-Grand Electric office.

“It’s hard to guess how many star quilts I have gifted over the years,” Maher said. “Probably dozens if I had to guess.”

The tradition came full circle at her retirement party when Moreau-Grand Electric presented Mellisa a star quilt of her own.

“We wanted to honor her 40 years of service and highlight abilities as a manager,” said Paul Lawrence, a director of Moreau-Grand Electric. “It’s a way of conveying that she led with honor and integrity, and she did exactly that.”

Member Appreciation

PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Free and open
to the public



*During the
Spink County
Achievement Days*



**Northern
Electric**
Cooperative

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

**THURSDAY, JULY 31
7 A.M. - 9:30 A.M.**

Spink County Fairgrounds, Redfield, SD



A Diverse Fuel Mix is Essential for Reliable Power

Michael Leitman

Providing members with safe, reliable and affordable power is the mantra for electric cooperatives across the nation. Co-op members can see the work necessary to maintain reliable electricity at the local level, such as co-op lineworkers maintaining utility poles and wires and repairing them after major storms. At the regional and national levels, a diverse mix of power generation resources, transmission lines and pipeline infrastructure are essential cornerstones of maintaining reliable electricity.

The U.S. electric grid has undergone major changes over the last decade. The share of electricity generated from coal plants has declined significantly, while the share from natural gas and intermittent wind and solar generation has grown. Fuel diversity means that your electricity is supplied by a variety of generation technologies, each with their own characteristics and performance capabilities over different weather and seasonal conditions.

Dispatchable technologies can be turned on and off as needed. Large steam generation plants (most commonly using coal or nuclear fuels) are generally considered “baseload,” meaning that they are designed to run efficiently 24/7 to serve as the base of the electricity mix. However, steam plants are less capable of ramping output up or down to meet the various peaks and dips as grid conditions change.

Natural gas is the most versatile fuel, powering large combined-cycle plants that can operate as baseload but are also more flexible

ramping up and down. These capabilities are essential for meeting demand on the hottest and coldest days, and for balancing intermittent renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind.

Most hydroelectric power comes from generators inside large dams, like the Snake River Dams in the Pacific Northwest, which can be dispatched when needed – as long as there is enough water available.

Over the last decade, the share of electricity generated from wind and solar plants has increased dramatically. These beneficial, “no-fuel-required” plants can deliver low-cost electricity – but they only generate electricity when the wind blows and the sun shines. The production patterns of solar and wind technologies are complimentary to one another. Solar generates during the day and wind tends to generate more at night. Across seasons, wind output is typically higher during the colder months when there is less sunshine. Deployed together, wind and solar technologies can balance each other.

While battery energy storage technology is growing rapidly to allow some control of when renewable energy sources can be dispatched, natural gas plants remain the primary method for “firming” renewable generation resources.

Ultimately, our electric grid is most reliable when a wide range of technologies is available. When conditions lead to lower generation from one type of source, others can help compensate. When there is an imbalance, such as a major winter storm when electricity use skyrockets, grid operators are forced to rely on purposefully reducing demand and occasionally plan rolling blackouts to keep the grid operating.

While there is variation across regions in what types of power plants can be built based on weather and infrastructure, America's electric cooperatives work diligently to ensure a diverse and reliable power supply for the communities they serve.



Cam Wal Electric member Tami Schanzenbach with her dogs Mac, Cash and Blu. *Submitted Photo.*

RESCUING ANIMALS

Co-op Members Foster and Support Pets In Need

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Tami Schanzenbach has always wanted to help animals.

From her earliest days in Aberdeen where she worked as a veterinary technician and helped start the Aberdeen Area Humane Society, to her later Pets N Stuff store in Mobridge, Tami's focus has always been on humans' furry companions and getting them into loving homes.

And even after a long career and a so-called retirement, she still finds ways to help. Through the Wamakaskan Onisca Humane Society, she opens her home to animals in need.

"I'm a foster failure," Tami laughed, admitting three of her own beloved pet dogs were originally supposed to be adopted out.

Served by Cam Wal Electric, Tami's home near Selby is the halfway point for countless animals on their journey from neglect, abuse and homelessness to their forever homes.

"If I have a person that calls me, if someone has found a dog, I ask initially

if they're able to help me with taking care of that dog for a little bit until we can determine whether it belongs to somebody," she explained.

The pets will go to a foster home for the time being – Tami credits volunteers like her friend Annie Walker, a member of Moreau-Grand Electric from the McIntosh area, for stepping up and opening her home to foster animals.

"One day, Tami had a picture of a litter of puppies that needed to be bottle fed," Walker said about her first fostering experience.



Annie Walker with rescue, Layla. *Submitted Photo.*

"I figured it would be something myself and my children would be up to, and ever since then, I keep taking some animals from time to time."

If the dog isn't claimed, the rehoming process begins, starting with veterinary care.

"We go through and we vaccinate and treat the animal and do what's needed to be able to make that puppy or dog available for adoption," Tami continued.

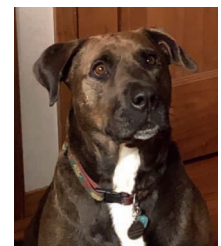
Sadly, the circumstances in which she receives them usually aren't pleasant.

The pets come from around Selby, many from the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations, where they're often found abandoned. Tami recalls coming upon shocking discoveries, like "bait dogs" used to train fighting dogs in the Bismarck area.

"People will steal puppies and kitties and train their pitbulls for fights, and they have a dog that's called a bait dog," she explained. "And that you see in our area as well ... days where [multiple] people are missing their dogs. People are coming in and stealing them and using them as bait dogs."

That's what Tami suspects happened to Cash, a 7-year-old pitbull/lab cross found "in the middle of nowhere" covered in pellet shots and bite marks.

"It took a long time for him to trust and know he's going to be okay here," Tami said. "And I don't



Cash, who was used as a "bait dog," was adopted by Tami. *Submitted Photo*

blame him, because he's never been taken care of.

Tami has made it her mission to end the cycle of animal neglect and abuse where she's able by sterilizing the pets coming into her care before they're adopted out. She also sponsors sterilizations for other peoples' pets.

"We just had about 12 dogs that we sponsored to be spayed at the local vet," she said. "We had a lady that helped me with a donation and wanted it geared toward people that couldn't afford to have their animals spayed and neutered ... We have so many people that always have two litters per year."

Stopping the cycle also means barriers to adoption – if someone isn't a good fit, there's a chance that animal will be surrendered back to the rescue and the process will start from the beginning.

Tami conducts interviews with potential pet owners with hopes of finding a perfect match.

She added that she sometimes steers people with busy and demanding schedules away from getting dogs. A cat – famously independent – is often a better fit, she said.

Tami also employs sustainable adoption practices she says make for better-behaved dogs – eight weeks is generally the earliest age when she'll allow adoptions to occur.

"We have puppy socialization that occurs" when the puppies are little, she explained. "They wrestle and play with their siblings, and they create a lot of socialization that way. And there's a lot of research that has proven that if you keep them with their siblings during that period of time, they make a heck of a lot better dog going forth, because they've been through that socialization."

Jen Uecker, Board President of the Pierre/Fort Pierre Area Humane Society, also known as Paws Animal Rescue, says without volunteers like Tami and Annie, shelters like hers would be overrun and rescuing animals from abandonment wouldn't be possible.

"We rely heavily on volunteers to help ease the burden of our limited staff and resources," Uecker said. "The foster volunteers open their home to these animals not really knowing a whole lot

about them, their demeanor, where they came from, or anything, and they open their homes to help them feel comfortable and confident until they're ready for their new forever family."

Tami encourages people to volunteer, support their local rescues, adopt if they're able and above all, love their pets.

"There are a lot of dogs and cats and it's just not their fault – they get the bad end of things," Walker said. "Tami is super dedicated ... She's always willing to step in and help these animals find a better life."

For Tami, it all comes down to giving that love back.

"They provide unconditional love to humans, and sometimes we forget that," she said. "We work all day ... When you come home, you need to spend some time with your pets."

HUMANE SOCIETY & SANCTUARY DIRECTORY

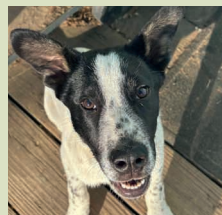
Wamakaskan Onsica (Mobridge).....	(605) 850-8430
Paws Animal Rescue (Pierre).....	(605) 223-2287
Sioux Falls Area Humane Society.....	(605) 338-4441
Humane Society of the Black Hills (Rapid City)....	(605) 394-4170
Battle Mountain Humane Society (Hot Springs)....	(605) 745-7283
Beadle County Humane Society (Huron).....	(605) 352-8955
Aberdeen Area Humane Society.....	(605) 226-1200
Glacial Lakes Humane Society (Watertown).....	(605) 882-2247
Brookings Regional Humane Society.....	(605) 697-7387
Western Hills Humane Society (Spearfish).....	(605) 642-1576
Heartland Humane Society (Yankton).....	(605) 664-4244
Siouxland Humane Society (Sioux City).....	(712) 252-2614
Mitchell Animal Rescue.....	(605) 770-2170
Oglala Pet Project (Kyle).....	(605) 455-1518
Wakpá Wašté Animal Shelter (Eagle Butte).....	(605) 964-7387
Fur and Purr Cat Shelter (Milbank).....	(605) 432-4505
Lake Traverse Animal Rescue (Sisseton).....	(605) 742-0219

Tami says her most rewarding rescue was Fez, an 8-week-old shepherd/collie cross found with mange, a skin disease caused by mites. She said she refused to give on Fez, who is now a healthy dog with a full coat of hair.
Submitted Photo.

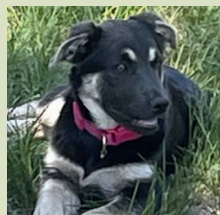


Looking for a new home...

(plus many more)



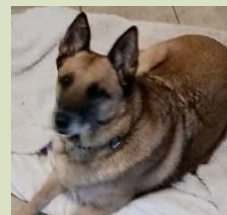
Buddy



Margot



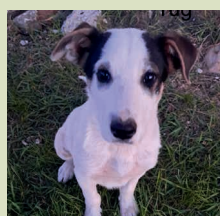
Chopper



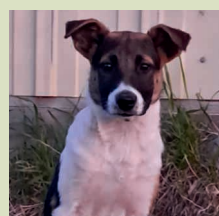
Eliza



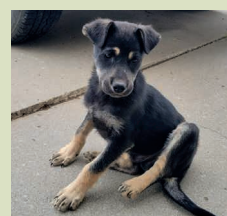
Agnes



Tug



Scooter



Leo



Central Electric Cooperative's distribution lines power members' farms and ranches throughout much of Central South Dakota.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

REMEMBERING WHEN THE LIGHTS CAME ON

Central South Dakota Rancher Looks Back to Days Before Power

Jacob Boyko
jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Near Big Bend Dam in central South Dakota, farmer and rancher Clayton Knippling works the same land his father and grandfather had decades before.

The work he and his wife, Evelyn, and two sons do on the sprawling acre family ranch looks very different than it did back then, though. That's because today the ranch has electricity.

Back in the 1940s and early 1950s,

having electricity was a luxury enjoyed almost exclusively by people in towns and cities, or rural folks who happened to live along major highways. With their homestead several miles northeast of Fort Thompson, the Knippings understood their odds of getting connected to a utility were slim for the time being. Their lives were powered by an old diesel generator out in the barn – enough to keep the kitchen refrigerator humming and a couple of light bulbs lit.

“I remember being told, ‘Shut that

refrigerator door! You're wasting cold air!’” Knippling laughed, thinking back to that overworked generator.

But as soon as the electric cooperative crews visited the ranch, that generator was permanently retired and would never run again.

Knippling thought back to that day in the early 1950s when he was about six years old. He remembers watching the trench-diggers from Tri-County Electric – merged into Central Electric in 2000 – trench their way to each outbuilding. Hours later, he would see those buildings shining bright in the darkness for the first time ever.

Having electricity didn't change the work out in the fields. Knippling said a lot of the work is the same in 2025 as it was in 1955. But back at the homestead, Tri-County Electric brought the Knippling ranch into the

20th century.

“We even had a welder after that,” Knippling recalled. “That took 220 volts, and I don’t think our old generator was putting off that. We could then fix our own iron.”

Electricity was a game-changer for the Knippings’ water needs. Seizing the opportunity, they dug a new, deeper well with an electric pump for better quality water and ran lines out to each building.

“[Before we had electricity] there was a stool and a nail where a tin cup sat, and there was a bucket of water and everybody that came through would drink out of that cup, so if somebody got a cold, we all got it,” Knippling laughed.

“Electricity allowed us to put in a pressure tank and then run the water lines to every house so we weren’t carrying a bucket anymore.”

The ranch also transitioned to all-electric pivot irrigation and pumps along the Missouri River. Today, Knippling Land and Cattle

irrigates 1,300 acres of farm land – an unimaginable figure before there was co-op power.

In the winter, the new electric block heaters for the diesel engines ensured there was always at least one tractor that would start up.

Life was just a little bit brighter, warmer and simpler with co-op power.

An advocate for rural life and progression, Clayton has also served the last 42 years on the board of directors for Midstate Communications, the local member-owned telecom cooperative, in an effort to equalize the disparities between urban and rural life.

“It changed the world back in the ‘50s when electricity came,” Clayton said. “A lot of kids left the farm because it was too rural. If you came from a farm, you didn’t want to come back. After electricity came, it became easier for younger people to stay on the farm.”



Clayton Knippling farms and raises cattle southeast of Fort Thompson on the same ranchland where he grew up, just 15 miles from his childhood home where Tri-County Electric first hooked up their power in the early 1950s.

Photo by Jacob Boyko



Pivot irrigation systems, like the one shown here along S.D. Highway 50 southeast of Fort Thompson, use electricity to rotate on a center pivot. Use of the systems can increase yields while reducing wasted water.

Photo by Jacob Boyko

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: _____

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JULY 16-20

Danish Days

Dancing, food, parade, etc.
Viborg, SD

Photo courtesy of Travel South Dakota

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.

SATURDAYS UNTIL SEPT. 13

Buggy Museum

Free Buggy Rides, Concerts, Chuckwagon Foods + More
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Stockholm, SD
605-938-4192

JUNE 20-22

Farley Fest

Milbank, SD
605-432-6656
www.farleyfest.com

JUNE 21

Fireman's Triathalon

8 a.m.-11 p.m.
Groton, SD

JUNE 25-28

Crystal Springs Rodeo

Clear Lake, SD
605-874-2996

JUNE 27-28

Buckhorn Rodeo

Britton, SD
605-880-5077

JUNE 27-29

Leola Rhubarb Festival

Leola, SD

JUNE 27-29

Bowdle Tower Days

Bowdle, SD

JULY 4

Firecracker Couples Tourney

Olive Grove Golf Course
Groton, SD

JULY 9

Legion Auxillary #39

Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar

11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Groton Legion
Groton, SD

JULY 9-12

Aberdeen Senior Games

605-626-7015

JULY 13

Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show

9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Groton City Park
Groton, SD

JULY 17-20

Danish Days

Daneville Heritage Museum
Viborg, SD

JULY 19

6th Annual Wakonda

American Legion Tractor Pull

3 p.m. Start
4 p.m. Kids Pedal Pull
Wakonda, SD

JULY 25-27

Winner Elk's 56th Annual Rodeo to Benefit LifeScape

Tripp Co. Fairgrounds
Winner, SD
605-842-5830

JULY 25-27

Clear Lake Days

Clear Lake, SD
ClearLakeDays.com

JULY 26

Planes, Trains, & Automobiles

Car Show, Train Rides, Flyovers
10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

JULY 26

South Dakota Chislic Festival

Freeman, SD
www.sdchislicfestival.com

JULY 26

Richmond Lake Association's

Annual Pontoon Poker Run

Richmond Lake
Aberdeen, SD
605-225-0609

JULY 31

SPURS Grand Classic Horse Show

9 a.m.-4 p.m.
SPURS Therapeutic Riding Center
1006 130th St.
Aberdeen, SD
605-226-1099

Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.