

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Clarence Kooistra of VFW Post 628 in Sioux Falls salutes military veterans interred at the South Dakota State Cemetery

## Honoring our Veterans

A new resting place for fallen soldiers  
Pages 8-9

First responders in rural South Dakota  
Page 12



# There is plenty of power. Load management program is in place to save members money.



**Ben Dunsmoor**  
Editor

Thousands of Northern Electric members work together every month to save each other money. It is called load management and your friends and neighbors have teamed up to voluntarily enroll their water heaters, grain bin fans, and irrigation systems in the program.

The co-op load management program has been around for more than 30 years and has saved co-op members in the region more than \$260 million in avoided wholesale power costs since it started in 1985. East River Electric Power Cooperative in Madison operates the load management system. East River is the wholesale power provider to 24 electric cooperatives – including Northern Electric – in eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota.

So, what is the co-op load management

**The co-op load management program has been around for more than 30 years and has saved co-op members more than \$260 million in avoided wholesale power costs.**

program? Load management is a way for local electric cooperatives to cycle large electric loads – like water heaters, grain bin fans, and irrigation systems – on and off during times of peak demand on the system. A signal is sent out to thousands of receivers throughout the region to turn off large electric equipment and appliances.

There is a common misconception that load management is implemented throughout the month because there is a ‘shortage’ of electricity. However, there is plenty of power

and that is not what load management is designed to do. It is designed to help co-op members avoid paying high wholesale costs for electricity when demand is at its peak. It is like postponing a road trip to Sioux Falls or the Twin Cities until the fall to avoid paying high gas prices during the summer. In that scenario, there is plenty of gasoline to purchase for your vehicle, but the prices are higher in the summer because there is more demand during the busy travel season.

Since East River delivers wholesale power to electric cooperatives throughout the region, East River also keeps a close watch on the demand for electricity so it can deliver the best value to its members. When demand for power is high it engages the load management system to keep electric use down and keep power prices steady. It is the simple principle of supply and demand and it is designed to save you – our members - money.

Northern Electric members are leaders in load management and you should feel proud that you are doing your fair share to contribute to the savings. Northern Electric has more than 5,500 control devices connected to load management which adds up to more than 70 megawatts of electric load that can be managed every month. That is about the same amount of electricity it takes to power 14 ethanol plants. Northern Electric is not the largest electric cooperative among the 24 East River co-ops but we do have the most electric load per member connected to the load management system.

So, the next time your water heater or grain bin fan cycles on and off, remember that you are playing a big part in keeping power costs down for yourself and for your friends and neighbors. One or two members can not do it by themselves, but collectively co-op members are saving millions of dollars by enrolling in a simple but effective program known as load management. It is a prime example of the cooperative way of doing business.

## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### NORTHERN ELECTRIC

(USPS 396-040)

**Board President:** Donna Sharp

**Board of Directors**

- Nolan Wipf - Vice President
- Ron Kaaz - Secretary
- Josh Larson - Treasurer
- Fran Esser
- Todd Hettich
- Kirk Schaunaman
- Mike Traxinger
- Jeff Vander Wal

**CEO/General Manager:** Char Hager  
info@northernelectric.coop

**Chief Financial Officer:** Cathi Podoll

**Operations Manager:** Jerry Weber

**Manager of Member Services:** Russel Ulmer

**Manager of Information Technology:** Derek Gorecki

**Communications Director:** Ben Dunsmoor  
bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop

**Executive Secretary:** Kay Albrecht

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

[www.northernelectric.coop](http://www.northernelectric.coop)



Northern Electric Cooperative's regular board meeting was held September 27, 2021, at the headquarters in Bath with all directors present. As the first order of business, the Board approved the August 26, 2021, minutes and August expenditures. East River Director Kirk Schaunaman reported on actions taken by the East River Board at the September annual & regular meetings held September 8-9, 2021. South Dakota Rural Electric Association Director Nolan Wipf reported on the SDREA board meeting held September 23-24, in Pierre. Directors Kirk Schaunaman and Jeff Vander Wal reported on the 2021 NRECA Regional Meetings, held September 15-17 in Minneapolis, MN.

### MANAGER'S REPORT

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

- Update on development projects.
- Update on Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) revolving loan fund.
- Legal and Legislative Report.
- Evaluation of the cooperative's 2021 Annual Meeting held September 21.
- Reminder that the Basin Electric Annual Meeting will be November 9-11.
- Reported that the 2021 Northeast Rural Utilities Legislative Issues Forum will be held November 16, in Aberdeen.
- Reviewed Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) inspection, performed August 3 & 4, 2021.

### BOARD REPORT

The board considered and/or acted upon

the following:

1. As part of the annual Board reorganization, the Board elected officers: President Donna Sharp, Vice-President Nolan Wipf, Secretary Ronald Kaaz, and Treasurer Josh Larson. Annual signature and transaction authorization were also approved.
2. Approved the date and time of the next regular board meeting for 8:30 A.M. on Thursday, October 21, 2021.
3. Approved payment of legal fees for Harvey Oliver for \$1,285.46.
4. Approved third quarter requests for capital credit retirements of \$29,465.06.
5. Approved Work Order Inventory #21-08 for \$161,346.93 to be submitted to the Rural Utilities Service for reimbursement from loan funds for electric plant construction already completed.
6. Approved resolution to authorize execution of RUS Form 595 Financial Requirement and Expenditure.
7. Appointed Director Todd Hettich delegate and Director Francis Esser alternate for the Mid-West Electric Consumers Assoc. Annual Meeting, December 6-9, 2021, in Denver, CO.
8. Authorized board attendance to the 2021 Winter School for Directors, December 10-15, in Nashville, TN.
9. Ratified the previous execution of withdrawal documents to withdraw the doc-less interventions relating to the Basin Electric FERC filings.
10. Held Executive Session.

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

### FINANCIAL REPORT

	August-21	August-20
kWh Sales .....	23,845,702 kWh	23,898,546 kWh
Electric Revenues .....	\$2,373,912	\$2,316,810
Total Cost of Service .....	\$2,406,546	\$2,303,932
Operating Margins.....	(-\$32,634)	\$12,878
Year to Date Margins .....	\$329,596	\$560,309

### RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE MONTHLY USAGE AND BILL

AUGUST-2021.....	1,433 kWh.....	\$186.67.....	0.1303 per kWh
AUGUST-2020.....	1,594 kWh.....	\$195.44.....	0.1226 per kWh

Wholesale power cost, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for 80.4% of NEC's total cost of service.

# A house full of Thanksgiving safety

Nearly every household uses extra electricity during the holidays - for cooking, decorating and heating. Take extra care to use electricity safely and to ask family members and house-guests to do the same. Here are some tips:

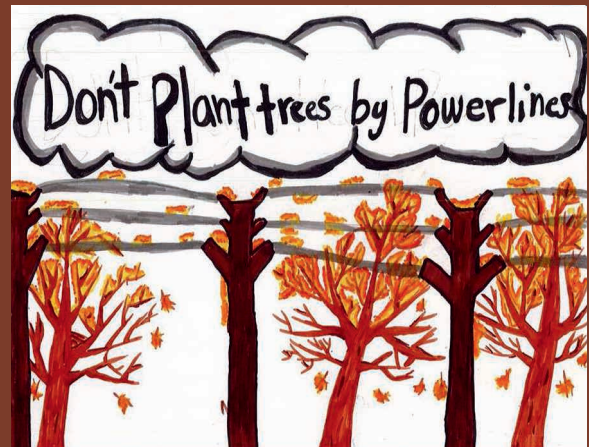
- Stay in the kitchen when broiling or doing any stovetop cooking.
- Keep children well away from cooking appliances while the appliances are in use.
- Keep towels, potholders and curtains away from hot surfaces in your kitchen.
- One of the riskiest holiday behaviors is overloading your electrical outlets. You will overload your wall outlets if you string strand after strand of holiday lights together and plug them into an extension cord that you plug into an outlet.
- Plugging multiple strands of cords into a power strip does not add any juice to the electrical circuit that powers the outlet you plug the strip into.
- Check decorative lights for damaged cords, plugs and sockets. Replace anything that's frayed, cracked or broken. Buy cords that are certified by UL; look for the UL symbol on the package.
- Don't run extension cords under rugs, carpets or baseboards, or anywhere they can be a tripping hazard.
- Only use decorations and cords outdoors that are properly rated for outdoor use.
- When you put up outdoor decorations, do not string lights in trees near power lines. Fasten outdoor lights carefully and securely with clips, never nails or tacks.
- Keep electric lights away from decorative metal trees.
- Keep all light strings and other decorations away from pets so they don't get tangled in them or chew the wires.
- Keep all decorations - and everything else - at least three feet away from heat sources such as fireplaces and space heaters.
- Always turn off your decorations when you leave home and when you're sleeping.
- Make sure smoke detectors are present and working properly.
- Use space heaters properly and safely. Keep them out of high-traffic areas and at least three feet from anything that can burn.
- Do not leave a space heater running unattended. Turn off space heaters and unplug them when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Never leave an open flame, including your fireplace or a candle, unattended.

## GOVERNOR'S STUDENT ART COMPETITION



The Governor's Office and the South Dakota Arts Council invite students to participate in the Governor's Student Art Competition.

Students in K-12 will compete in four age divisions. Winning entries will be exhibited in the State Capitol from January through September 2022. Submission deadline is Nov. 12, 2021. All artwork is to be submitted electronically as a high-resolution jpeg image, along with the Artwork Submission Form and the Authorization Release Form. Competition guidelines, instructions and all necessary forms are accessible at [https://artscouncil.sd.gov/events/student\\_art\\_Main.aspx](https://artscouncil.sd.gov/events/student_art_Main.aspx). Contact Rebecca.cruse@state.sd.us or call 605-773-3301 for details.



### Don't plant trees by power lines

Jazzlyn Magera

Jazzlyn shares good advice to avoid planting trees near power lines. Jazzlyn attends Brandon Elementary School and is the daughter of Rachel Schettler. They are members of Sioux Valley Energy.

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.



# SLOW COOKING BRINGS OUT FLAVORS OF FALL

## BABY BACK RIBS

### Ingredients:

2-1/2 lbs. pork baby back ribs, cut into eight pieces  
5 cups water  
1 med. onion, sliced  
2 celery ribs, cut in half  
2 tsps. minced garlic, divided  
1 tsp. whole peppercorns  
1/2 cup barbecue sauce  
1/4 cup plum sauce (Asian section of grocery store)  
Dash of hot pepper sauce

### METHOD

Place ribs in a 5-qt. slow cooker. Add water, onion, celery, 1 tsp. garlic and peppercorns. Cover and cook on low for six hours or until meat is tender. In a small saucepan, combine the barbecue sauce, plum sauce, hot pepper sauce and remaining garlic. Cook and stir over medium heat for five minutes or until heated through. Remove ribs. Discard cooking juices and vegetables. Coat grill rack with nonstick cooking spray before starting grill. Brush ribs with sauce. Grill, uncovered, over medium low heat for 8-10 minutes or until browned, turning occasionally and brushing with remaining sauce. Can also be finished in the oven using the broil setting.

**Melissa Roerig, Sioux Falls**

## CHILI BEEF AND PASTA

### Ingredients:

2 lbs. lean ground beef  
2 packages McCormick® Chili Seasoning Mix  
1 can (14.5 oz.) diced tomatoes  
2 cans (8 oz. each) tomato sauce  
1 cup coarsely chopped bell pepper  
1 cup frozen or canned whole kernel corn  
1 cup elbow macaroni, cooked and drained (about 2.25 cups)  
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

### METHOD

Cook ground beef in large skillet on medium-high heat until no longer pink; drain. Place in slow cooker. Stir in Seasoning Mix, tomatoes, tomato sauce, bell pepper and corn until well blended. Cover. Cook six hours on low or three hours on high. Stir in cheese and cooked macaroni during the last 10 minutes of cooking.

**mccormick.com**

## WHITE PHEASANT CHILI

### Ingredients:

3 boneless pheasants cooked and shredded  
1 large onion chopped  
4 Tbsps. butter  
1/4 cup flour  
3/4 cup chicken broth  
2 cups half and half  
2 cans Navy beans  
1 tsp. Tabasco sauce  
1-1/2 tsp. chili powder  
1 tsp. cumin  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. pepper  
1-2 jalapeno peppers  
1-1/2 cups Monterrey jack cheese  
1/2 cup sour cream

### METHOD

Cook and shred pheasant. Set aside. Cook onion with 2 Tbsps. butter until soft, add flour and remaining butter, whisking constantly. Add broth and half and half while whisking. Bring to boil for 5 minutes, or until onions are tender. Put in crockpot and add remaining ingredients. Put on high heat for one hour then reduce to low heat for one to two hours.

**Alice DeHaai, Keystone**

**Please send your favorite holiday dessert 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.**



# TRAIL THERAPY

## Northern Electric crews help construct entrance to new sensory riding trail at SPURS Therapeutic Riding Center

**Ben Dunsmoor**

[bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop](mailto:bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop)

A project that has been in the works for more than two years is now a reality at SPURS Therapeutic Riding Center in Aberdeen. A sensory trail has been added to the property to engage riders in new ways as they maneuver their horses around different obstacles and across various terrains.

“This has been a bit of a pipe dream for everybody at SPURS for quite a while,” SPURS Executive

Director Becky Fischbach said. “There are all sorts of stations to entice all of their senses.”

SPURS is a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to improving the lives of people with disabilities through therapeutic horseback riding. SPURS has indoor and outdoor horse arenas, but the addition of the new James H. Thompson Sensory Trail will offer fun and unique challenges for SPURS riders.

The trail includes 15 different sensory stations and obstacles. There is a station that has several hanging

Northern Electric linemen Marty Newman, Brian Hansen, and Sean Schwartz help construct a sign for the new sensory trail at SPURS.

*Photo courtesy: SPURS Therapeutic Riding Center*

pool noodles that the riders can pass through similar to a car wash. Several stations are set up to take the horses over varying terrains including concrete, rubber, wood chips, and chopped-up pieces of tires. There is even a roping station where riders can toss a lasso around the horns and head of a plastic steer. The stations are designed to provide riders with different sensations and engage all their senses as they ride on the trail.

“It is such a unique asset that brings a new set of challenges for our riders,” Fischbach said.

Fischbach got the idea to add the sensory trail back in 2019 when she visited the Naples Therapeutic Center in Florida. Fischbach said most therapeutic horseback riding centers in the United States have





The sensory trail includes 15 different stations with obstacles and varying terrains.

sensory trails and when she got back from Florida, she got to work with her staff designing a trail for the SPURS property. Funding for the project was donated by the Jack Thompson family to memorialize his younger brother. The Thompsons have been longtime supporters of SPURS and its mission.

SPURS worked with Quest Construction and Jacobs Construction to develop the plan for the sensory trail. The plan included a grand entrance made from large logs and a metal sign to recognize the Thompson family for their contributions. Fischbach, however, was not sure where they would get the poles until she mentioned the project to Northern Electric CEO/ General Manager Char Hager earlier this summer.

“Becky was showing us the plans for the new sensory trail, and she wasn’t sure where they were going to get the poles for the entrance and I said, ‘we’ve (Northern Electric) got poles,’” Hager said.

Northern Electric donated four large used utility poles to construct the sign. Northern Electric linemen delivered the poles in September

## THE SENSORY TRAIL INCLUDES 15 STATIONS AND OBSTACLES THAT ARE DESIGNED TO ENGAGE THE SENSES OF THE RIDERS

and helped construct the sign at no charge.

“It is nice to give back to the community and our guys like to do something like that every now and then,” Northern Electric Cooperative Operations Manager Jerry Weber said.

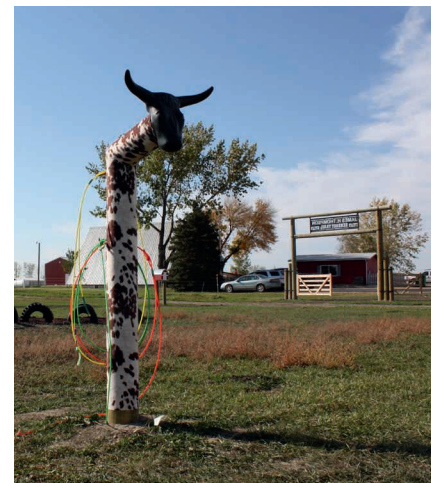
“It was just so impressive how everyone came together to work together and get it done,” Fischbach said.

The new eye-catching entrance draws riders’ attention to the sensory trail the moment they arrive on the property. It gets them excited to use the trail that will become part of the regular programming for SPURS riders and staff.

“It will become a part of our program. It is just a huge asset as we venture outside the arena and over to the sensory trail,” Fischbach said.

An asset that has been years in the making and will continue to benefit SPURS riders for years to come. □

*SPURS relies on volunteers to run its weekly classes and programming. For more information about volunteer opportunities email [spurs@nrctv.com](mailto:spurs@nrctv.com) or call Kortnee at 605-277-6767*



One of the stations on the new sensory trail allows riders to toss a lasso over the horns and head of a plastic steer.





The South Dakota Veterans Cemetery located northeast of Sioux Falls provides a new resting place for U.S. military veterans and their families. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

## State Veterans Cemetery in Sioux Falls opens new options for military families

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

A dozen distraught family members surrounded the casket conspicuously draped with a bright, crisp American flag. The brilliant hues of red, white and blue stood in stark contrast to the slate gray sky hanging overhead and the slight chill that filled the air.

As the gathered mourners paid their last respects and turned back toward the administration building at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery, the clouds suddenly burst open and a heavy rain began to fall.

“Well, your daddy was a rancher,” the grieving widow said to her son as they made their way down the hillside. “A good rain is exactly what he would have wanted. This would have made him smile.”

Erin Brown is director of the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery (SDVC) located northeast of Sioux Falls and she often hears stories that family members share about their loved ones who arrive at their final resting

place there. A military veteran herself, Brown said those stories bring added meaning and significance to her work.

“The veterans – and their families – are very important to us,” she said. “When I hear those kinds of stories and hear them describe a lifetime of memories and all the good times they had together, it reinforces the idea that there’s real value in what we’re doing here at the cemetery.”

The SDVC is the first federally funded, state-owned and operated veterans cemetery in the state, although there is no residency requirement for military veterans to be interred there. The Black Hills National Cemetery is located a few miles east of Sturgis.

The facility is located on 60 acres donated by the City of Sioux Falls and ultimately will have enough space for over 28,000 casket grave sites, cremation grave sites, a columbarium for cremated remains and a scattering garden. More than 600 in-ground crypts have already been installed. The facility was made possible by more

than \$7 million in federal money, state funds and private donations.

Since the ribbon-cutting ceremony last Memorial Day, the cemetery has seen a steady stream of burials. There were four on a recent Friday.

SDVC staff works with the families to arrange details of the burial services which typically include a final pre-service consultation with the families, a processional to the committal shelter, a 15-20 minute service, folding and presentation of the flag, and a rifle salute and Taps presented by local military-related volunteer organizations.







Members of the grounds crew are all veterans and can relate to military families in their time of grief.

Clarence Kooistra is one of those volunteers who donates his time to make sure veterans receive a proper burial and their families receive the proper respect. He's a member of the VFW Post 628 Honor Guard based in Sioux Falls.

"I just feel it's very important that these men and women are treated with the respect they deserve for the sacrifices they've made to preserve our freedoms and democracy in our country," Kooistra said. "It's a privilege for me to come out here and do this for the families."

While construction commenced on the cemetery two years ago, it took several years to bring the project to fruition. At the time the first federal grant application was submitted in 2017, Brown was serving as a veterans program manager in the State Department of Veteran's Affairs helping veterans navigate through the federal bureaucracy to receive their rightful benefits. She often found, however, that some of the former soldiers would balk at the benefits "so that someone they felt needed it more than them could get it."

When the cemetery director position opened up, she jumped at the chance to find another way to help veterans.

In performing her job, Brown

calls on her own military experience, which includes joining the Minnesota National Guard in high school and receiving advanced individual training at Fort Lee in Virginia. She returned and attended college for three years before getting deployed to Iraq for nearly two years.

She worked in supply management at a Marine base between Ramadi and Fallujah and eventually left the service as an E-5.

When she and her staff are interacting with veterans and their families, they have little difficulty relating to them on a personal basis.

"The military is the kind of experience that you don't know you want or need until you have it," she said. "All of those experiences have put me into one of the most rewarding jobs I've been able to do. Without it, I wouldn't be able to relate to the families and get the help they need and have earned. Once they realize I'm also a veteran, things change and they see me differently."

Brown and her staff - all of whom are veterans themselves - have

developed personal relationships with the families whose loved ones are interred at the facility. During their visits to the cemetery, family members often express their gratitude to the staff for their work in keeping the facility well maintained and give updates on how the family is faring and if they have any further needs.

Brown said she is looking toward the future with optimism for the



The Committal Shelter is the site of many outdoor funeral services for veterans.

cemetery and its mission, especially after the South Dakota Veterans Council last summer announced a \$2.1 million donation from philanthropist T. Denny Sanford, PREMIER Bankcard CEO Miles Beacom and his wife Lisa.

For more information, visit <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteranscemetery/>.



# Hundreds Attend Annual Meeting

## More than 300 members attended the 74th Northern Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting on September 21

**Ben Dunsmoor**

[bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop](mailto:bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop)

Northern Electric Cooperative held its 74th Annual Meeting at the headquarters office in Bath for the second year in a row. The meeting was conducted as a drive-in event with members listening to the meeting through the radios in their vehicles. The September 21st event was held as a drive-in meeting to protect

the health and safety of members and employees due to the ongoing concerns surrounding COVID-19.

There were 187 Northern Electric members who officially registered at the meeting, and more than 300 attended the event including registered members, family members, and guests.

The evening began with a free drive-through meal for all in attendance. The meal was catered

by the Scotty's food truck which is owned by Northern Electric member business Big Fella's. The Shagan Pit food truck is also a Northern Electric member business and also provided catering for the meal. The meal was served in to-go containers in a drive-through fashion to accommodate COVID-19 concerns.

The meeting began at 6:30 p.m. as members approved the minutes from the 2020 meeting and the 2020 financial report by honking the horns of their vehicles. District 1 board member Mark Sumption of Frederick was recognized for his nine years of service and addressed the members in attendance.



Sumption can no longer serve on the board after reaching his term limit of three consecutive three-year terms.

Mike Traxinger of Claremont was the only member to file a petition to take over for Sumption in District 1 and was officially seated as Northern Electric's newest board member at the end of the business meeting. Traxinger is the general counsel and director of governmental affairs for Agtegra Cooperative. He believes his experience will be a benefit as he begins to serve on the Northern Electric board.

"Through my experiences at Agtegra, I have a strong understanding of the role of a cooperative director, South Dakota cooperative law and how to support the goals and mission of the cooperative," Traxinger said.

Traxinger attended his first regular monthly board meeting on September 27.

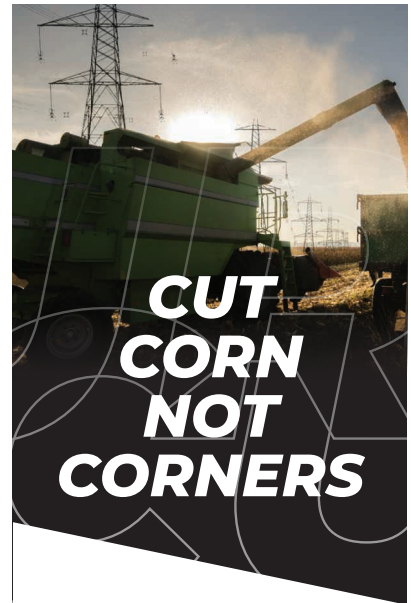
A date for the 2022 annual meeting will be set by the Northern Electric Board of Directors within the next few months.

**ANNUAL MEETING PRIZE WINNERS**

All registered members who attended the 2021 annual meeting were eligible to win six different prizes. Below is a list of the winners who were selected at random following the annual meeting.

- **\$200 BILL CREDIT**  
Jack Buckley
- **\$100 VISA GIFT CARD**  
Leo Green
- **\$100 VISA GIFT CARD**  
Paul Mammenga
- **\$100 AMERICAN EXPRESS GIFT CARD**  
Debra Mehlhoff
- **\$50 AMERICAN EXPRESS GIFT CARD**  
John Phillips
- **\$50 AMERICAN EXPRESS GIFT CARD**  
Robert Fahrni

Congratulations to all the winners.



Time is a precious commodity, especially during harvest. However, cutting safety corners while harvesting around power lines can be deadly. Taking a moment to be prepared can help prevent catastrophic accidents. Knowing what to do if an accident does occur can be the difference between life and death.

**RE-ENERGIZING SAFETY**



Contact your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative or visit **YourCoopPower.com** to find safety tips and make a plan.



The 2021 Northern Electric Annual Meeting was conducted as a drive-in format with members listening to the meeting through the radios in their vehicles. The drive-in format was used for the second year in a row due to concerns surrounding COVID-19.

# THE FIRST TO ACT



The state's emergency medical services workforce declined 30 percent last year, though some are still eager to serve.

## Though rural South Dakota is experiencing a shortage of first responders, some are still eager to bear the responsibility

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The early morning fog had already settled in heavy and thick as a damp blanket when Joey Denison pulled out of his driveway in Lake Norden. He was headed to Lake Preston for his job as an electric lineman and just happened to be fresh off earning his paramedic license in his spare time.

Within just a few minutes of driving along Hwy. 81, the blurry image of a wrecked semi came into view through the haze. The rig was overturned and rested across the roadway. At first blush, the scene appeared to be a one-vehicle accident, but Denison soon saw the small pickup that was crushed beneath the trailer.

When he got close enough to peer inside the vehicle, he saw a young woman who had clearly sustained severe damage to her skull. His four years of training through EMT and paramedic school kicked into high gear.

"There were cars still running into the semi from the other side so I positioned

my truck where no one could run into her car," Denison recalled. "Then I pulled her car out from underneath the trailer with my truck. I could see her head was shattered and someone had already called 911 to report that she was dead. Eventually, we were able to get her out with the Jaws of Life and transport her to the hospital in Madison."

The young lady made a full recovery and she and Denison still stay in contact three years later.

Denison doesn't characterize his actions as heroic; he sees his response as something that neighbors and citizens simply do for one another. Spurred on by his passion for helping others, Denison began his EMT training seven years ago and now volunteers his services in Lake Norden and the surrounding area.

"I always kind of regretted not going into the military, so this is my way of being a community servant," he said.

These days he teaches classes in emergency training and notes a shortage of qualified volunteers to staff rural first responder operations.

According to the South Dakota Department of Health, over the past year the active EMS workforce has declined 30 percent.

Denison said assumptions sometimes depart from reality when it comes to EMS work, and he encourages those who have a penchant for serving others to consider first responder training.



Joey Denison says emergency response work is both challenging and rewarding.

"The physical act of rendering first aid is a lot of repetitive training and muscle memory, but people think it's too complex. If you can catch a baseball, you can put your hand over a cut. It's not that hard," he said. "We can't be afraid to help someone in need in an emergency situation. Someday it could be you who needs the help."



# A LIFETIME OF CO-OP SERVICE TO MEMBERS

*Co-op leaders recognized at SDAC Hall of Fame banquet*

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Harry Thomas still remembers turning on the “power switch” for the first time at his home when he was a youngster.

That was made possible by his local electric cooperative, and for Thomas it was a life lesson about the great things that can happen through co-op organizations. He went on to serve for nearly four decades on the board of Venture Communications and was one of four recent inductees into the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives Hall of Fame.

Thomas and Paul Symens were recognized as 2021 inductees at the ceremony held in Watertown Sept. 22, while Chuck Birkholt and Dan Lindblom were honored as 2020 inductees. Last year’s banquet was canceled due to the pandemic.

“I’ve been around cooperative systems all my life,” Thomas said. “I remember when the co-op brought power to the farm and when Sully Buttes built the first telephone line out there. Those things would not have happened if not for cooperatives. The Bell companies built in the towns, but they had no



Inducted into the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives Hall of Fame were Harry Thomas, Chuck Birkholt and Paul Symens. Not shown is Dan Lindblom, who was unable to attend the induction ceremony in Watertown.

interest in going into the country.”

Symens served on the board at Lake Region Electric in Webster before he was elected to the state Legislature in 1987 and again in 1996. He was a board member for Farmers Union Marketing and Processing for 36 years.

“I’ve put in a lot of time with cooperatives and I know how co-ops work. I was raised in co-ops and it has been a pleasure to be a part of that process. The magic of co-ops is people working together to help each other, and as long as board and management do their jobs, it’s going to be successful.”

Symens said his advice for the younger generation of co-op leaders would be to learn about the history of cooperatives, how they were founded and why they exist.

“Learning from history will teach you a lot and keep you from making mistakes,” he said.

Birkholt started his cooperative career

as a laborer at Cam Wal Electric in Selby. He went to work “digging holes and setting poles” for 85 cents an hour until he discovered he could make more money as a lineman.

He worked at the co-op for 45 years, the last eight as general manager. He went on to serve on the board at Venture Communications for the past 21 years.

“I told my wife I always wanted to see



Hall of Fame inductee Chuck Birkholt addresses the audience at the Watertown Event Center.

what it was like on the other side of the board table,” he said. “But I think she just wanted me out of the house.”

Lindblom, a long-time board member at Black Hills Electric in Custer, was unable to attend the banquet.

## Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation

(FORM 3526) (REQUIRED BY 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1. Publication Title: Northern Electric *Cooperative Connections*
2. Publication No: 396-040
3. Filing Date: September 28, 2021
4. Issue Frequency: Monthly
5. No. of Issues Published Annually: 12
6. Annual Subscription Price: \$6
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication:  
PO Box 457  
Bath, SD 57427-0457
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher:  
PO Box 457  
Bath, SD 57427-0457
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor & Managing Editor:  
Publisher: Northern Electric Cooperative Inc. PO Box 457, Bath, SD 57427-0457  
Editor: Ben Dunsmoor, PO Box 457, Bath, SD 57427-0457  
Managing Editor: Char Hager, PO Box 457, Bath, SD 57427-0457
10. Owner: Northern Electric Cooperative Inc, PO Box 457, Bath, SD 57427-0457
11. Known Bondholders/Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding One Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: Rural Utilities Service, National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation
12. Tax Status: The purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: Has not changed in the preceding 12 months
13. Publication Title: Northern Electric *Cooperative Connections*
14. Issue Date of Circulation Below: October 2021

15. Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
<b>a. Total Number of Copies</b>	4,852	4,891
<b>b. Paid Circulation</b>		
(1) Paid Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541	1,409	1,411
(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541	3,298	3,337
(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS	0	0
(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS	0	0
<b>c. Total Paid Distribution</b>	4,707	4,748
<b>d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution</b>		
(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541	77	76
(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies included on PS Form 3541	67	67
(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS	0	0
(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail	5	5
<b>e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution</b>	149	148
<b>f. Total Distribution</b>	4,857	4,896
<b>g. Copies not Distributed</b>	45	45
<b>h. Total</b>	4,902	4,941
<b>i. Percent Paid</b>	97%	97%
<b>16. Electronic Copy Circulation</b>		
a. Paid Electronic Copies	0	0
b. Total Paid Print Copies	4,707	4,748
c. Total Print Distribution	4,857	4,896
d. Percent Paid	97%	97%
17. Publication of Statement of Ownership will be printed in the November 2021 issue of this publication.		
<i>Ben Dunsmoor, Editor</i>	9/28/2021	





From cooking your meals to heating your home, there are many benefits to converting to electric appliances.

Contact your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative today to learn more about the benefits of going electric.

**Ask about available rebates and incentives!**



## NONDISCRIMINATION 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.

Person 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 [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) 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:

**MAIL:**

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of Asst. Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

**FAX:**

(202) 690-7442; or

**EMAIL:**

[program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



**Thanksgiving**  
November 25, 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.

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.

**OCTOBER 22-24, 28-30**

**A Little Piece of Heaven**  
Grand Opera House, Pierre, SD, call 605-224-7826 to purchase tickets

**OCTOBER 23**

**Aberdeen Oktoberfest**  
Aberdeen Civic Arena, Aberdeen, SD, 605-380-8448

**OCTOBER 23**

**Ladies Day at the Crossing Bar**  
Crossing Bar, Mina, SD, featuring vendors and door prizes, 605-390-2939

**OCTOBER 29**

**Downtown Trick or Treat**  
Downtown Area, Groton, SD, 605-846-7607

**OCTOBER 30**

**16th Holiday Shopping Extravaganza**  
Davison County Fairgrounds, Mitchell, SD, call Cindy at 605-999-8563 for more info

**OCTOBER 30**

**Scare in the Square**  
Main Street Square, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

**OCTOBER 30**

**Yankton's Harvest Halloween**  
Downtown, Yankton, SD, email [mandi@bostonsyankton.com](mailto:mandi@bostonsyankton.com) for more info

**OCTOBER 31**

**Halloween Bash Weekend at Mazing Acres Pumpkin Patch**  
30851 433rd Avenue, Yankton, SD, 605-760-2759

**NOVEMBER 4**

**Chris Young Famous Friends Tour**  
Summit Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

**NOVEMBER 6**

**Cyrus Steele Comedy Show**  
Homestake Opera House, Lead, SD, visit <https://www.homestakeoperahouse.org/> for more info and tickets

**NOVEMBER 5-7, 12-14, 19-21**

**Julius Caesar**  
Black Hills Playhouse, Rapid City, SD, visit <https://www.bhct.org/> for more info and tickets

**NOVEMBER 12-13**

**Sioux Empire Arts and Crafts Show**  
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-332-6000

**NOVEMBER 13**

**Christmas at the Homestead**  
Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve, North Sioux City, SD, 605-232-0873

**NOVEMBER 13**

**Little Black Dress Event**  
Turton Gym, Turton, SD, visit <https://www.facebook.com/littleblackdressteamturton> for more info

**NOVEMBER 13**

**Sisseton Area Merchants and Crafters Holiday Open House Extravaganza**  
Sisseton, SD, call Beverly at 605-698-7425 for more info

**NOVEMBER 19-20**

**Holiday Arts Christmas Show**  
Masonic Hall, Mitchell, SD, 605-359-2049

**NOVEMBER 25**

**Community Thanksgiving**  
Community Center, Groton, SD, 605-846-7607

**NOVEMBER 26**

**Parade of Lights**  
Dakota Avenue, Huron, SD, 605-352-0000

**NOVEMBER 27**

**Holiday Celebration and Winter Market/Festival of Lights Parade**  
Downtown, Rapid City, SD, 605-381-4204

**NOVEMBER 26-28**

**Beautiful - The Carole King Musical**  
Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, visit <https://www.washingtonpavilion.org/> for more info and tickets

**DECEMBER 2**

**Christmas on the Prairie**  
526 North Broadway Avenue Miller, SD, 605-853-3098

**DECEMBER 3**

**Handel's Messiah**  
First Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

**DECEMBER 11**

**Santa Claus Day**  
111 N Main Street, Groton, SD, 605-846-7607

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