

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Crazy about Curling

Win or lose, there's
no bad curling
Pages 8-9

Saddle making
for the pros
Pages 12-13

Many curling enthusiasts
contend the world would
be a more peaceful place if
everyone "threw the stone."

Communicating cooperative progress for the past 75 years



Ben Dunsmoor
Editor

Every month, for the past 75 years, Northern Electric members have received a newsletter from their cooperative. Whether it has been this publication or the early issues of the 'Northern Lights' newsletter, there has always been a direct avenue of communication to the members of Northern Electric.

That first publication was titled 'Electric Progress,' and it was sent out to members in March of 1947 as a four-page newsletter printed on yellow paper. Northern Electric will hold its 75th Annual Meeting in 2022 and I stumbled across this first newsletter as I was doing some research for the upcoming year. The first paragraph of that first issue read, "This monthly publication is dedicated to the purpose implied in the name, 'Electric Progress.' It struck me how the purpose of that first issue is still the purpose of the publication we send out to you today. Every issue is sent out to every member of the cooperative every month to inform you about the progress and operation of your cooperative.

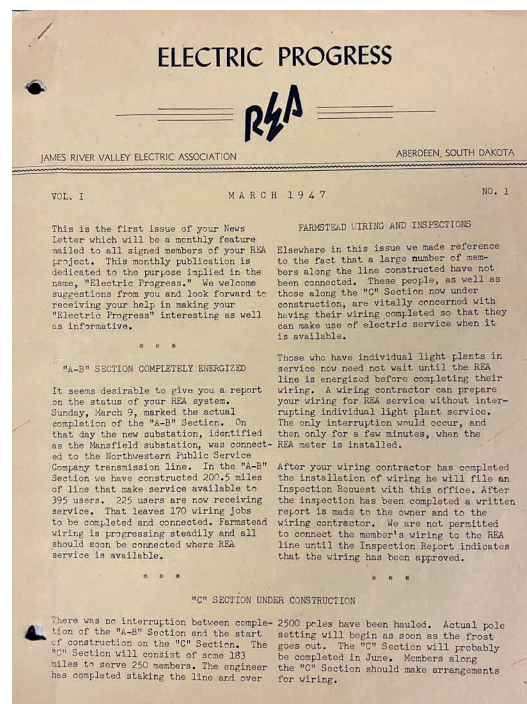
Member communication and education is one of the core principles of a cooperative.

There was a lot of progress to share with the members of the new James River Valley Electric Association in that first newsletter. The association's first power lines had just been energized on March 9, 1947, and the first 165 consumers had been billed an average of \$6.16 a month. The association - which became Northern Electric Cooperative in 1948 - used 'Electric Progress' to update its members on the investments they were making to build out an electrical system in rural Brown County.

As I read through the first issue of 'Electric Progress' the number of kilowatts sold and the monthly bills were much lower than today but the information that was published is very

similar to the information we send out now. We still print the amount of electricity sold every month and the average monthly usage and billing information for every member. We also print out a summary of the cooperative's board meetings so you – the member-owners at the end of the line – know how the cooperative is being managed. We also still print recipes! Yes, that first issue of 'Electric Progress' included a recipe for 'Refrigerator Gingerbread' so members could test out their new electric appliances. (If you want the recipe you can email me at: bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop)

Member communication and education is one of the core principles of a cooperative and that is the reason we have been sending out monthly newsletters to our members for the past 75 years. You – the members – own the co-op and it is crucial that you receive regular updates. Without this pipeline of information, it would be impossible for members to keep tabs on the operation of the cooperative. So, as we prepare for the 75th Annual Meeting this year we are also celebrating 75 years of communicating with our members. It is the cooperative way, and it is our pleasure to inform you about the programs and progress of your co-op.



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

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www.northernelectric.coop



Northern Electric Cooperative's regular board meeting was held December 23, 2021, at the headquarters in Bath with all directors present. As the first order of business, the board approved the November 29, 2021, minutes and November expenditures. The board then reviewed and accepted monthly reports by management.

Directors viewed the East River Electric Power Cooperative video report. East River Director Kirk Schaunaman reported on the East River Board meeting held December 2. The next SDREA board meeting will be January 12-14, 2022, during the SDREA Annual Meeting and Legislative Dinner. Director Todd Hettich reported on the Mid-West Electric Consumers Association Annual Meeting, held December 7-9, 2021, in Denver, CO. Director Josh Larson reported on the 2021 NRECA Winter School for Directors, December 10-14, in Nashville, TN, where he attended director courses to complete his education that is required to become a Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD).

MANAGER'S REPORT

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

- Update on development projects.
- Legal and Legislative Report.
- Reviewed plans for the SDREA Annual Meeting and Legislative Dinner in Pierre, January 13-14, 2021.
- Informed the board of the 2022 Director Conference, April 2-5, Austin, TX.

- Reported that the IRS mileage reimbursement will increase from 56 cents to 58.5 cents per mile starting January 1, 2022.

BOARD REPORT

The board considered and/or acted upon the following:

1. Approved the date and time of the next regular board meeting for 8:30 A.M. on Thursday, January 20, 2022.
2. Approved payment of legal fees for Harvey Oliver in the amount of \$1,176.83.
3. Approved Work Order Inventories #21-11 for \$259,748.80 and #21-11MC for \$40,221.88 to be submitted to RUS for reimbursement from loan funds for electric plant construction already completed.
4. Approved the fourth quarter estate requests for early capital credit retirements in the amount of \$25,974.27.
5. Authorized board attendance to the 2022 NRECA PowerXchange and TechAdvantage, March 4-9, Nashville, TN.
6. Authorized eliminating Policy P-37E, 2009 Rewards for Life Program.
7. Authorized attendance to the East River Energize Forum, February 2-3, 2022, Sioux Falls.
8. Held Executive Session.

Please direct questions to your co-op director, manager, or staff member.

FINANCIAL REPORT

	Nov-21	Nov-20
kWh Sales	28,837,123 kWh	27,253,710 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$2,419,837	\$2,445,292
Total Cost of Service	\$2,402,292	\$2,323,847
Operating Margins.....	\$17,545	\$121,445
Year to Date Margins	\$416,351	\$516,556

RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE MONTHLY USAGE AND BILL

NOV-2021.....	2,731 kWh.....	\$248.62.....	0.0910 per kWh
NOV-2020.....	2,450 kWh.....	\$232.32.....	0.0948 per kWh

Wholesale power cost, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for 83.9% of NEC's total cost of service.

Make a plan before heading out in wintry road conditions

Though they may make for a pretty seasonal backdrop, snow and ice can complicate even modest travel plans. It's unsafe to drive when visibility is vastly reduced or when you can't fully control your car. According to AAA, wintry weather and its byproduct - hazardous road conditions - are a factor in nearly a half-million crashes and more than 2,000 road deaths each year. With those figures in mind, here are some tips to minimize the risk to yourself and other motorists during winter weather.

Don't drive unless you must. It really isn't worth the risk to your safety and that of others to venture out onto potentially unsafe roads for any circumstance that isn't urgent. Pay attention to weather reports so you can run any time-sensitive errands and stock up on supplies before adverse conditions arrive. If you must drive to work, that's one thing. But don't tempt fate if you can help it.

If you have to drive, eliminate distractions. Keep your phone out of reach or set it to airplane mode - a good practice year-round but especially important when roads are dicey.

Keep a bundle of cold-weather gear in your car, including water, nonperishable food, warm clothing, a flashlight, glass scraper, blankets and medications.

Before you set out, alert others to your route, destination and estimated time of arrival.

Make sure your tires are properly inflated and have plenty of tread.

Keep your gas tank at least half full to prevent a frozen fuel line, which could leave you stranded.

Don't use cruise control when driving on any slippery surface.

Drive slowly. Lower your speed to counteract the reduced traction that accompanies snow and ice. Accelerate and decelerate slowly. Applying the gas slowly can help avoid skids. Since it takes longer to slow down on icy roads, take your time to slow down for a stop sign or light.

A final note for winter driving: Never warm up a vehicle in an enclosed area such as a garage. Exercise caution and good judgment to stay safe as you negotiate whatever conditions winter brings this year.

POWERLINE SAFETY QUIZ

TRUE OR FALSE?

Power lines are insulated for contact.

False. While power lines may have a covering to protect against weather, they are not insulated for contact. Birds can sit on power lines unhurt because they don't create a path to the ground. You and your ladder do.

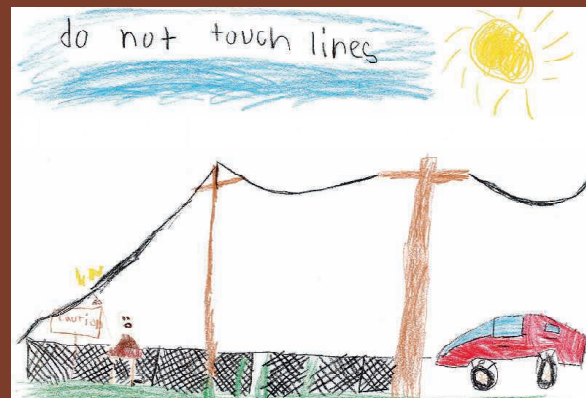


I should keep myself and any equipment I'm using at least 10 feet away from any power lines.

True. You don't need to contact a power line to be in danger; electricity can jump, or arc, from a power line to a person who gets too close. The best insulator is space. Keep yourself and your equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines.

I can be electrocuted by a power line even if I am wearing gloves and rubber boots.

True. Work gloves and rubber boots offer no protection against contact with a power line. Once again, space - and lots of it - is the best insulator.



Don't touch power lines

Luke Walden

Luke Walden reminds co-op members that it's important to never touch power lines under any conditions. Luke is from Brandon, where he and his parents Blake and Jennifer are all 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.



BRUNCH TIME!

CHEESY SAUSAGE AND POTATO SKILLET CASSEROLE

Ingredients:
 8 ounces bulk breakfast sausage, crumbled
 1 medium onion, chopped
 1 medium green bell pepper, chopped
 6 eggs
 1 cup milk
 1 tablespoon McCormick® Oregano Leaves
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1/4 teaspoon McCormick® Coarse Ground Black Pepper
 1 1/2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
 2 plum tomatoes, seeded and chopped
 1 tablespoon oil
 1 package (20 oz) refrigerated shredded hash browns
 3 tbsp fresh dill, parsley or green onion finely chopped

METHOD

Cook and stir sausage in large skillet on medium heat 5 minutes or until lightly browned. Add onion and bell pepper; cook and stir 5 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Set aside. Beat eggs in large bowl with wire whisk. Add milk, oregano, salt and pepper; mix well. Add sausage mixture, cheeses and tomatoes; mix well. Set aside. Pour oil into same skillet, swirling to coat the pan. Spread hash browns in bottom and up sides of pan. Pour egg mixture over potatoes. Cover. Cook on medium heat 10 to 15 minutes or until eggs are set.

mccormick.com

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

BRUNCH EGG BAKE

Ingredients:
 12 slices, bread, crusts removed
 2 cups diced ham or bacon, crisp and chopped
 1 - 4 oz. can mushrooms, drained
 1 green pepper, chopped
 1 onion, chopped
 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
 5 eggs
 2-1/2 cups milk
 salt and pepper
 paprika

METHOD

Butter six slices of bread and put face down in 9 x 13 inch pan, lightly sprayed with cooking spray. Cover the bread with the ham, mushrooms, green pepper, onion and cheese. Dice the remaining bread and spread over the top. Beat eggs, milk, salt and pepper and pour over the top. Sprinkle with paprika. Cover the pan with foil and refrigerate overnight. In the morning, bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Serves 12.

Mary Jessen, Holabird

COLD OATMEAL MUESLI

Ingredients:
 1 cup quick oats
 1 cup old fashioned oats
 1/2 cup raisins
 1/3 cup brown sugar
 1 tsp cinnamon
 2 cup milk

METHOD

Mix all ingredients together and let sit overnight in the refrigerator. Serve cold. May add walnuts and apples or other fresh berries when serving, if desired.

Elaine Rieck, Harrisburg

More off-peak hours will bring flexibility to members in 2022

Northern Electric members who are on a demand rate can now take advantage of nearly 500 hours of additional off-peak time that has been added to the demand-waiver schedule for 2022.

Demand-waiver periods are off-peak times of the day when demand for power is low. Northern Electric Cooperative's power supplier, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, sets up these demand waiver periods to give members flexibility and certainty on the most beneficial times of day to run grain bin fans, irrigation pivots, water heaters, and air conditioners. Northern Electric members who are on a demand rate can take advantage of these time periods by running bin fans, irrigation pivots, and other electrical loads without the risk of a high demand charge.

The demand-waiver periods also affect the

average residential homeowner. The load management system is not used to control water heaters or air conditioners during the off-peak times of the day that are established in the demand-waiver schedule.

One hour will be added at the end and beginning of each afternoon demand waiver period for the 'winter months' in 2022. These are the months of January through May and October through December (see graph below). During these months, the new off-peak demand-waiver period will begin at 11 a.m. in the morning and last until 5 p.m. at night. The evening demand waiver period will be in effect from 10 p.m. at night until 6 a.m. the next morning.

Basin Electric continuously reviews these off-peak periods and makes periodical adjustments to give members at the end of the line certainty on the best times of day to power up electrical equipment. The demand-waiver periods are also set up to reduce interruption from the load control system.

Adjustments were not made to the demand-waiver periods for the summer months of June through September.

Demand-Waiver Period

An off-peak period of time when demand for electricity is low and demand charges will not be billed.

2022 Demand Waiver Periods

Demand Waiver Hour	Hour 24 12 am	Hour 1 1 am	Hour 2 2 am	Hour 3 3 am	Hour 4 4 am	Hour 5 5 am	Hour 6 6 am	Hour 7 7 am	Hour 8 8 am	Hour 9 9 am	Hour 10 10 am	Hour 11 11 am	Hour 12 12 pm	Hour 13 1 pm	Hour 14 2 pm	Hour 15 3 pm	Hour 16 4 pm	Hour 17 5 pm	Hour 18 6 pm	Hour 19 7 pm	Hour 20 8 pm	Hour 21 9 pm	Hour 22 10 pm	Hour 23 11 pm
January	No Demand Will Be Billed During The Shaded Time Periods											No Demand Time Period					No Demand Time Period							
February	No Demand Will Be Billed During The Shaded Time Periods											No Demand Time Period					No Demand Time Period							
March	No Demand Will Be Billed During The Shaded Time Periods											No Demand Time Period					No Demand Time Period							
April	No Demand Will Be Billed During The Shaded Time Periods											No Demand Time Period					No Demand Time Period							
May	No Demand Will Be Billed During The Shaded Time Periods											No Demand Time Period					No Demand Time Period							
June	No Demand Will Be Billed During The Shaded Time Periods											No Demand Time Period					No Demand Time Period							
July	No Demand Will Be Billed During The Shaded Time Periods											No Demand Time Period					No Demand Time Period							
August	No Demand Will Be Billed During The Shaded Time Periods											No Demand Time Period					No Demand Time Period							
September	No Demand Will Be Billed During The Shaded Time Periods											No Demand Time Period					No Demand Time Period							
October	No Demand Will Be Billed During The Shaded Time Periods											No Demand Time Period					No Demand Time Period							
November	No Demand Will Be Billed During The Shaded Time Periods											No Demand Time Period					No Demand Time Period							
December	No Demand Will Be Billed During The Shaded Time Periods											No Demand Time Period					No Demand Time Period							

ELECTRIC SAVINGS

Water heaters are the second highest source of energy usage in the home - and the second most expensive monthly energy cost. Electric water heaters can help you cut costs from installation to reduced monthly energy bills. They are also more efficient and safer than gas water heaters.

Plus, when you own an electric water heater, you can enroll in your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative's load management program. This program is both financially friendly as it reduces wholesale power costs and environmentally friendly by reducing energy usage.



RE-ENERGIZING EFFICIENCY

To learn more about the benefits of going electric or to enroll in the load management program, contact your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative or visit yourcoopower.com today.





Members of the Aberdeen Curling Club hold a public instructional session to teach both the young and old the finer points of their sport.

Curling clubs seek to educate the public and spread the word about the joy of throwing stones

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Looking for a sure-fire way to achieve permanent world peace and lasting harmony?

Make curling mandatory.

At least Bryan Rau thinks that's just the ticket to putting an end to international animosity. Rau serves on the board of the Aberdeen Curling Club and describes being hooked the moment he threw his first stone in competition eight years ago.

"When I touched that first stone it was like 10,000 volts going through me. I kicked out the hack and threw that stone down the ice and it was just incredible," he said. "I think if everybody curled, the whole world would be different. Everybody would get along. There's no bad curling. No matter where you play, whether you win or lose, it's all good curling. It's a game that's played with honor and pride. You don't have to be a jock or a talented athlete. It's a sport that's

made for everyone. I've seen people play from 8 to 85."

Bryan and his fellow board member, Steve Gascoigne, spent a recent afternoon in Gascoigne's garage taking in a documentary called "Sticks and Stones: Battle for the Soul of Curling." When they're not playing the game, they enjoy talking about it.

As for his role as the club's ice master, Gascoigne can wax eloquently about how to prepare the perfect sheet of competition ice. He describes the tedious and exacting process that involves various measures of zammung, scraping, mopping, pebbling (twice), watering and nipping.

And if you can't control your stone after Gascoigne and his crew have spent 45 minutes working their magic, more practice may be in order.

The job of a stone hitting its target largely falls on the shoulders of the skip. A typical four-member team includes the lead, second, vice skip and skip. Each player throws two 44-pound stones and the vice skip



Aberdeen Curling Club members Danny Wolfgram, John Hilton, Alex Wolfgram and John Peterson recently completed an "eight ender," which is often compared to a perfect game in baseball.

Curling club contacts

Sioux Falls Curling Club
605-271-7539
www.scheelsiceplex.com

Aberdeen Curling Club
605-228-1717
www.curlaberdeen.com

Rushmore Curling Club
605-484-4477
www.rushmorecurling.org

Yankton Curling Club
(605) 665-0229
www.yanktonice.org

MN Curling Association
www.mncurling.org



Many curling clubs have two common goals: dedicated ice and a desire to teach others the rules and techniques of their sport.

stands in when it's the skip's turn to throw. The direction of the stone's path can be altered by sweepers who brush the surface in a way that can make the stone lose speed, gain speed or curl left or right.

The last stone is called the hammer and can be used to earn points with a favorable position near "the button" or knock the opponent's stone out of the target area.

But beyond the technical aspects of the sport or tallying wins or losses, each of the four most active clubs across the state share the same goal of educating the public about the sport and getting younger folks hooked on curling.

Rau, for instance, is a long-time Scout master and is working with his local troop to get the kids involved. He and Gascoigne and other members of the club visit the Boys and Girls club, school groups and others to

teach youngsters how to play the sport, share their positive experiences and answer their questions.

The same spirit of advocacy is also found at the Yankton Curling Club, which was started last winter by Mike and Julianna Ford along with a small group of other enthusiasts.

Julianna serves as president of the group and fell in love with the sport when she was a high school student in her native Alberta. She describes failing to make the roster of the volleyball and basketball teams but eventually finding a home with the curling squad.

"Our gym class went to the local ice rink and I loved it," she recalled. "It was a lot more strategic than physical and it was something I could compete in."

She later moved to Sioux Falls, married Mike, and the two helped create the existing club in that city.

Several years later they moved to Yankton for Mike's work and soon started another club. The Yankton group lists about 45 members and is also heavily involved in growing the sport in their community.

"We're reaching out to schools, clubs and nursing homes," Julianna said. "There are handicapped leagues and elderly people can play by using a stick to throw the stone. It's a sport that's literally for everyone."

The Fords don't often find themselves on different sides of the ice, but when they do they try to keep the competitive fires closer to an ember than a raging flame.

So, bottom line...who's better?

"No comment," Julianna said, before commenting with a chuckle, "but I'm the one who went to Arena Nationals."



It is important to think about electrical safety when operating a snowplow, snowblower, or tractor this winter.

SNOW SAFETY

Winter weather can create a dangerous situation around electrical equipment

Ben Dunsmoor

bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop

Deep snow can create hidden hazards during the winter.

As the snow piles up throughout the season it is important to think about electrical safety when operating a snowplow, snowblower, or tractor. Making contact with hidden electrical equipment can create a dangerous situation which is the reason it is crucial to use caution when clearing snow from sidewalks, parking lots and driveways.

Here are some simple tips to follow to stay safe throughout the winter.

- Be aware of the location of electrical cabinets, power poles and wires around your property before the snow gets too deep.
- It is a good idea to mark the location of electrical cabinets and green pad mount transformers (green boxes). Marking this equipment with a tall stake or brightly colored pole will help machine

operators avoid hitting this equipment while they are clearing snow. Hitting this equipment can expose high-voltage electrical lines and create a significant safety hazard.

- Shovel by hand around electrical cabinets and pad mount transformers. It is also a good idea to shovel by hand around meter poles and yard light poles. Shoveling by hand will decrease the chances of heavy machinery contacting this equipment while operators are plowing snow.
- If there is an accident it is important to stay away from any exposed lines and call Northern Electric Cooperative. Never try to close the doors of an electrical cabinet or move a pad mount transformer that is knocked off its base. The connections inside may be loose and high-voltage lines may be exposed. Stay 40 feet away from any damaged equipment and never touch a downed power line. Never attempt to move a downed power line or an object that is in direct contact with a high-voltage line. Call Northern Electric Cooperative immediately at **605-225-0310** and co-op crews will fix the damage.

Following these simple tips can help you avoid a dangerous situation and keep you safe all winter long.



APPLY FOR 2022 SCHOLARSHIPS

Students Can Apply Now For \$1,000 and \$500 Co-op Scholarships

Students of Northern Electric Cooperative members who are currently enrolled in a post-secondary school - or plan to enroll in the fall of 2022 - can now apply for two co-op-sponsored scholarships.

Bismarck-based Basin Electric Power Cooperative, which generates electricity for Northern Electric Cooperative, is awarding a \$1,000 scholarship to a student within the Northern Electric service territory. Northern Electric is also awarding a \$500 scholarship to a student of a co-op consumer. Students can apply for both scholarships by filling out one Basin Electric 2022 scholarship application which can be found on the Northern Electric website at northernelectric.coop/scholarships. Applications can also be picked up at a Northern Electric office.

In 2021, Cullen McNeil of Redfield was awarded the \$1,000 Basin Electric scholarship and Tessa Erdmann of Groton was the

recipient of the \$500 Northern Electric scholarship. McNeil enrolled at Black Hills State University and Erdmann is enrolled at South Dakota State University.

The scholarship application includes information about the student's academic record, work experience, an applicant appraisal from an advisor or supervisor, and a one-page essay on the topic: *'What challenges face rural electric cooperatives in the coming years and how do you think challenges should be addressed?'*

The entire application must be completed and turned into one of the Northern Electric Cooperative offices in Bath or Redfield by the **February 11, 2022** deadline.

A committee of cooperative employees will critically evaluate the applications and award both the \$1,000 and \$500 scholarships from the pool of applicants. Scholarships will be directly paid to the institution where the recipient is enrolled in the fall of 2022.

How to Apply

- **SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY**

Applicants must be U.S. citizens under the age of 25, and natural or adopted children of Northern Electric Cooperative consumers/members. Any applicant must be a student who is enrolled, or planning to enroll, in a full-time graduate or undergraduate course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university, or vocational/technical school.

- **THE SELECTION PROCESS**

All applications are critically evaluated by a committee of cooperative employees using a combination of several criteria including: a written essay, participation in school and community activities, grade-point average, SAT/ACT scores, a statement by the student explaining his/her educational and career goals, financial need, and a written recommendation from a third party. The winning \$1,000 entry will be sent to Basin Electric for scholarship distribution. The committee will also select the winning entry for the \$500 Northern Electric scholarship.

- **APPLICATION**

Applications are available from local high school guidance counselors, on the Northern Electric Cooperative website at northernelectric.coop/scholarships or directly from the Northern Electric offices in Bath or Redfield.

COMPLETED APPLICATIONS MUST BE RETURNED BY FEBRUARY 11, 2022 TO:

Northern Electric Cooperative
Attention: Kay Albrecht
PO Box 457
Bath, SD 57427

For more information contact Kay Albrecht at: **605-225-0310**



STILL IN THE SADDLE

At age 77, Dave Dahl of Fort Pierre is nearing the completion of his 2,000th saddle and has no plans to slow down anytime soon. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

Saddle-maker Dave Dahl of Fort Pierre delights in helping bronc riders bring home championship buckles and purses

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Dave Dahl will probably never win a hand model contest. Dahl's digits are gnarled, bent and puffy after nearly a half-century of hard labor producing bronc saddles for dozens of rodeo champions.

Dahl is quick to point out, however, that looks can be very deceiving: his mitts are as strong and dependable and productive as they've ever been, seasoned with decades of experience. At the age of 77, Dahl is still going strong creating saddles out of his shop in downtown Fort Pierre. Incredibly, he's still keeping his customary pace of hand-crafting nearly 60 high-

performance saddles a year.

"Somebody once said if your hands aren't moving, you ain't making money," Dahl chuckled.

During the last week of December, Dahl was busy dashing out his 56th saddle of 2021. That saddle, commissioned by a Canadian bronc riding champion, was No. 1,924 of Dahl's career. Yes, Dahl does keep count, stamping every saddle that leaves the shop. He's already anticipating reaching the 2,000 mark.

He's considering loaning that milestone saddle to Fort Pierre's Casey Tibbs Museum so that visitors can see the brand that's catapulted dozens of rodeo competitors to the top.

"There's actually two that are marked 1,000," Dahl said. Turns out that Glen

O'Neill ended up with the first one, but then Dahl's daughter Darcy Harper also received a commemorative version for roping events. Incidentally, No. 1,800 is displayed in the North Dakota Rodeo Hall of Fame where Dahl was inducted in 2017 for both his riding and his other contributions to the sport.

The list of riders who have won titles from the swells of a Dahl saddle is endless and includes champions from Alberta to Aberdeen to Australia: CoBurn Bradshaw, Cody DeMoss, Clay Elliott, Chuck Schmidt, Jake Watson, Tom Reeves, Jeff Willert, Taos Muncy, Zeke Thurston, Cort Scheer, Wade Sundell, Kyle Whitaker and so many more that Dahl can hardly keep up. Eight Dahl saddles were at the 2021 PRCA Nationals in Las Vegas.

Pro riders enjoy collecting purses and Dahl delights in helping them reach their goals. He knows how hard it is not only to stay on a spirited bucking bronc

for a few seconds but also how difficult it is to make a dollar at it.

Dahl recalls his own limited days as a card-carrying professional when he won several buckles on the PRCA circuit before taking his saddle-making business full-time in the summer of 1974.

Bronc riding set a fire in Dahl's soul at an early age, growing up on the family farm in Keene, N.D., as one of 11 children. He competed for New Town High School and later went on to claim a national collegiate title as team captain for Black Hills State in 1967. A year after graduating with a bachelor's degree, Dahl also won the South Dakota Rodeo Association's saddle bronc title.

While he taught school for three years, Dahl eventually decided to make saddle-crafting his life's work. Dahl's friend and fellow rider Dick Jones got him interested in the craft and the two set up shop in an old abandoned drug store building next to the bank in Fort Pierre. In 1986, the bank decided to open a drive-through lane so the business moved across the street to its present location where Dahl runs Diamond D Saddle Shop and also manages a western clothing store adjacent to the shop.

Dahl plans on keeping his hands hard at work with no end in sight. He stays



Dahl's phone number is on the speed-dial list of collegiate rodeo coaches in several states across the country. At left, Dahl applies his trademark stamp to one of his saddles.

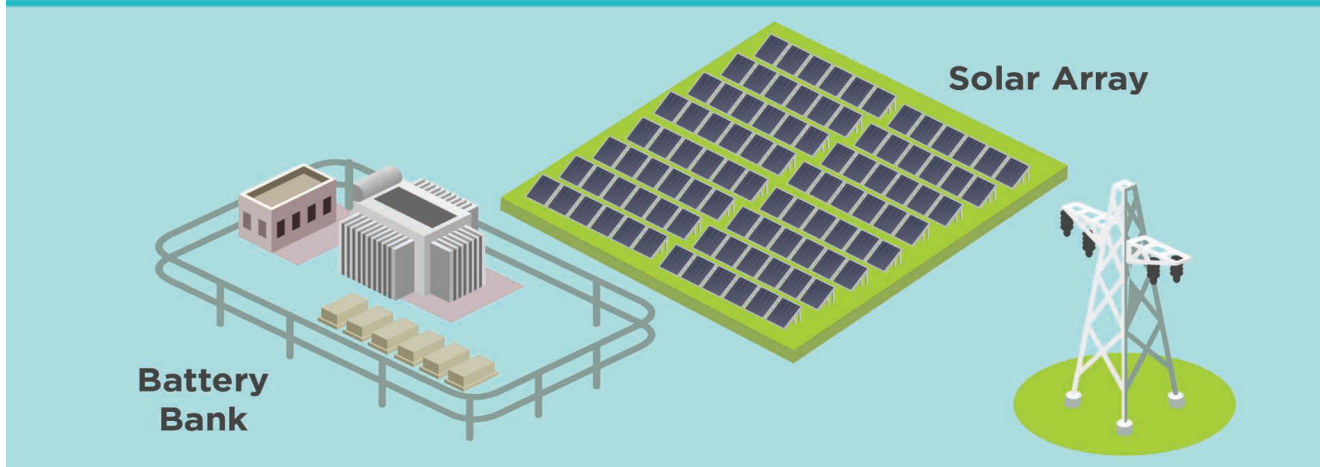
as busy as ever while participation in rodeo continues on an upward growth trajectory. College rodeo coaches in Missouri, Texas, Oklahoma, California and other states have Dahl on their speed-dial lists. He said he recently received a call from someone wanting him to fit a saddle for her 11-year-old child.

"It's just really a booming sport," he

said. "The training is better, there are better horses, there's better TV coverage of the sport and there's more money out there to be made. There are still a lot of ranch kids who grew up on horses and know how to ride. And they like to compete to see who's the best. There's so much work and I still enjoy it, so I don't plan on jumping out of the saddle anytime soon."

THE FUTURE OF ENERGY STORAGE

A new form of battery storage technology, known as the iron-air battery, could potentially provide long-duration energy storage for hundred of hours. Long-duration energy storage will be crucial for adding more solar and wind energy to the electric grid since renewable energy is dependent on the weather and may not always be available when needed.



New Tech Alert: Iron-Air batteries hold the promise of providing long-term energy storage capability

Maria Kanevsky

As the electric grid continues to evolve, new technologies are being developed to help advance the grid of the future. One of these technologies is a new form of battery storage technology called the iron-air battery, which could potentially provide long-duration energy storage for hundreds of hours.

Current battery technologies can only offer storage for tens of hours, meaning the innovative iron-air battery could provide energy for roughly 10 times longer than existing grid-scale batteries. This new technology could help ensure grid reliability even with extreme weather, such as hurricanes or powerful thunderstorms. Long-duration energy storage will also be crucial for adding more solar and wind energy to the grid since renewable energy is dependent on the weather and may not always be

available when we need it. New iron-air batteries could provide the missing link by storing excess energy to be used when the sun isn't shining or the wind isn't blowing.

The battery technology itself is made up of thousands of small iron pellets that develop rust when exposed to oxygen. This process discharges the battery. When the oxygen is removed, the pellets revert back to iron, which then charges the battery. According to Form Energy, the startup company developing this new technology, this process is known as the principle of "reversible rusting." Since the battery technology mainly uses the abundant and cheap resources of water, air and iron, the technology is relatively low-cost. These resources also make the technology relatively safe since there are no heavy metals, and also make the batteries simpler to recycle.

A key feature of these batteries is their

low cost, with Form Energy promising a price of less than \$20 per kWh. That price is about one-tenth the cost of lithium-ion battery technology, which is currently the cheapest battery technology on the market.

Individual iron-air batteries are about the size of a washing machine, making it easy to group many batteries together into a larger, scalable system. The size of the battery module group can vary, depending on the storage needed at a specific site. This means the batteries can be placed in a variety of areas, from rural to urban, to meet energy needs.

While this technology may be a solution for long-duration energy storage, the battery is not yet ready at the commercial level - although it is close. Form Energy estimates the battery should be ready by 2025.

Given the importance of long-duration energy storage for future of the grid, other start-ups are also looking to develop long-duration battery storage technology.

In the meantime, electric utilities can start to understand where this technology may potentially fit within their own systems to make the grid more resilient.

Electric co-ops hold discussions with lawmakers and community leaders

Billy Gibson

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In preparing for the 2022 Legislative Session, electric cooperative leaders from across the state held several local forums to engage in wide-ranging discussions with elected officials.

Representatives from Basin Electric, East River, Rushmore Electric, the South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) and many distribution cooperatives invited lawmakers and community leaders to engage in a dialogue focusing on the latest developments in the electric utility industry.

Electric cooperatives will continue to participate in meetings and forums throughout the Legislative Session, which is scheduled to conclude on March 10.

Ken Schlimgen, general manager of Central Electric in Mitchell, served as host of the last of the pre-session forums. Schlimgen welcomed the local lawmakers in attendance and went over some of the programs the co-op is pursuing to provide better service to its members.

Schlimgen showed a slide of the cooperative's small solar array constructed outside the headquarters office. He said the array allows the cooperative to offer members a first-hand look at how solar energy works. Members are also shown statistical data on how much electricity the array is producing at any given time.

This kind of real-time information



Ken Schlimgen, general manager of Central Electric based in Mitchell, describes how the cooperative is investing in an electric all-terrain vehicle to educate members about how EVs work and their potential for curbing greenhouse gas emissions. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

is important for members to understand how renewable resources such as solar and wind produce clean power, Schlimgen said. It's also important for members to understand the limitations of these sources.

"We discovered the first year we had this array that it performed at about 20 percent below the projections that were given by the manufacturer," he said.

Schlimgen also shared photos of the cooperative's Polaris Electric Ranger XP Kinetic UTV. He said the vehicle is rated at 110 horsepower and has a towing capacity of 2,500 lbs.: "This is something we can use on a practical level and also show members when they request more information about electric-powered vehicles."

House Majority Leader Kent Peterson was in attendance and noted lawmakers have considered presenting a bill regarding the licensing of electric UTVs.

"Given the rapid growth of the EV industry, this is something we'll have to consider at some point. It's great to have an opportunity like this to talk with the co-ops directly and get the useful information we need to make the right decisions," Peterson said.

Trevor Jones, general manager of SDREA, previewed some of the legislative issues that could be addressed during the 2022 session, including

issues surrounding the expansion of a network of electric vehicle charging stations and tax exemptions for data centers that consume large amounts of electrical power.

Chris Studer of East River Electric provided an overview of the cooperative's Renewable Energy Credit program. Participating consumers can sign up to receive credits or Green Tags for using renewable energy that comes from several wind farms that supply energy to the cooperative. Studer said the cost of participating in the program can vary among distribution co-ops.

Sen. Josh Klumb of Dist. 20 expressed his thanks to the co-op for organizing and hosting the forum.

"The application of these new technologies is something that will have a direct impact on our citizens for generations to come. In terms of doing our jobs as legislators, there's simply no substitute for this kind of interaction."



Chris Studer of East River Electric details the cooperative's REC Program.



**Valentine's Day
February 14**

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.

JANUARY 22
Reba McEntire
Denny Sanford Premier Center,
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

JANUARY 28-29
Deadwood Pro Snocross Races
Days of '76 Rodeo Grounds,
Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

JANUARY 28-29
27th Annual Dinner Theater
Reliance Legion Hall, Reliance,
SD, call 605-730-0553 for
more info and tickets

JANUARY 28-31
Lead Winterfest
Various Locations, Lead, SD,
call 605-584-1100

**JANUARY 28-
FEBRUARY 6**
**Black Hills Stock Show &
Rodeo**
Central States Fairgrounds &
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center,
Rapid City, SD, 605-355-3861

JANUARY 29-30
DTGCA Gun Show
National Field Archery Building,
Yankton, SD, 605-731-9154

FEBRUARY 4-6
Fiddler on the Roof
Washington Pavilion, Sioux
Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

FEBRUARY 5
**Lake Hendricks
Improvement Association
Ice Fishing Derby**
Hendricks, MN, contact Tim at
507-828-2113 for registration
and more information

FEBRUARY 9-12
**Watertown Winter Farm
Show**
Codington County Extension
Complex, Watertown, SD,
605-886-5814

FEBRUARY 11
Calamity's Shindig
Homestake Adams Research
& Cultural Center, Deadwood,
SD, 605-722-4800

FEBRUARY 11-12
Bulls & Broncs
Expo Center at the W.H. Lyon
Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD,
605-367-7178

FEBRUARY 11-13
**Black Hills Sports Show &
Outdoor Expo**
Monument Arena, Rapid City,
SD, visit bhsportsshow.com
for more information

FEBRUARY 12
Lakota Games on Ice
3200 Indian Village Road,
Mitchell, SD, 605-996-5473

FEBRUARY 12-13
**DTGCA Sioux Falls Trophy
Show (The Big One)**
Sioux Falls Convention Center,
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-280-2438

FEBRUARY 18-28
Black Hills Film Festival
Various Locations in Rapid
City, Hot Springs, Hill City and
Spearfish, SD, visit www.blackhillsfilmfestival.org for more
information

FEBRUARY 19
Sioux Empire on Tap
Denny Sanford Premier
Center, Sioux Falls, SD, visit
siouxempireontap.com for
more info and tickets

FEBRUARY 25-26
Mardi Gras Weekend
Main Street, Deadwood, SD,
605-578-1876

**FEBRUARY 25-27,
MARCH 3-5**
Making God Laugh
Grand Opera House, Pierre,
SD, 605-224-7826

FEBRUARY 26
Bellator Titans Casino Night
Elks Lodge, Aberdeen, SD
605-228-4848

MARCH 3-5
The 39 Steps
Orpheum Theater Center,
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

MARCH 10-13
**Annual Sioux Empire
Sportsmen's Show**
Sioux Falls Arena &
Convention Center, Sioux
Falls, SD, visit www.siouxfallssportsshow.com for more
info and tickets

MARCH 12
**28 Below Fatbike Race,
Ride and Tour**
Spearfish Canyon Lodge, Lead,
SD, visit www.28below.com
for more info and to register

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