

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Cross country skiing is a way to keep moving and maintain physical and mental health during the winter months.

Skiing for fun and health

Nordic skiers find paradise on the snow
Pages 8-9

Car dealers adapt to EV market
Pages 12-13

Electric cooperatives provide a power-supply system that you can count on all winter long



Ben Dunsmoor
Editor

We have had a pretty mild start to the winter so far, but we all know that sub-zero days, ground blizzards, and treacherous winter weather will descend upon our little portion of the plains in the near future. We also know that you depend on electricity to keep the lights on, heat your homes, and power your lives through those cold and snowy days. And, because you are a member of Northern Electric Cooperative, you are part of a dependable co-op system you can count on when the mild days turn into winter days.

You are a member of a cooperative system that has been supplying dependable and reliable power for the past seven decades

If you are on Northern Electric's special electric heat rate this winter, you can take comfort knowing that your heat will be stable and affordable. Gas and propane home heating costs are expected to be 30-50 percent higher this winter according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), but Northern Electric's heat rate will remain at 4.7 cents per kilowatt-hour throughout the winter months. Members must have a separate meter – or a submeter – installed on their heating system to receive this rate. If you would like more information, you can call the cooperative office at 605-225-0310 and ask for a member services representative.

The cooperative's 'all-of-the-above' approach to our power supply is also something that you can count on this winter. Northern Electric Cooperative receives its electricity from East River Electric Power Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative in Bismarck, North Dakota. Basin Electric owns coal plants, natural gas plants, and wind farms. Northern Electric delivers that generation - along with hydropower from the Missouri River dams - to you, our members, at the end of the line. Because the electric generation we receive from our cooperative system is diversified we can meet the demands of our members with different sources. If natural gas prices are high during subzero winter days, we can lean on coal and hydro resources to keep the power on. On windy winter days, wind generation could provide most of the power that you use. Electric cooperatives across the region own a diversified fleet of power plants and resources and do not rely on market purchases to provide your electricity. That cooperative network ensures the lights stay on and the heaters keep running during the coldest days of the year.

You are a member of a cooperative system that has been supplying dependable and reliable power for the past seven decades. That system continues to provide power to thousands of homes throughout the Great Plains despite the conditions that Mother Nature throws at us every winter. It is a system that works and it is a system that you can count on.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

NORTHERN ELECTRIC

(USPS 396-040)

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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.

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Northern Electric Cooperative's regular board meeting was held November 29, 2021, at the headquarters in Bath with all directors present except for Nolan Wipf. As the first order of business, the board approved the October 21, 2021, minutes and October expenditures.

Directors viewed the East River Electric Power Cooperative video report. East River Director Kirk Schaunaman reported on the East River Board meeting held November 4. General Manager Char Hager reported on the East River MAC Meeting which was held November 2. The next South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) meeting will be held November 30-December 1, 2021. Directors Ronald Kaaz, Kirk Schaunaman, Donna Sharp, General Manager Char Hager and Communications Director Ben Dunsmoor reported on the Basin Electric Annual Meeting and Members-Only Meeting, held November 9-11, 2021. Director Ronald Kaaz reported on South Dakota Wind Energy Association current developments.

MANAGER'S REPORT

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

- Update on development projects
- Legal and Legislative Report
- Reported on the Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline public meeting.
- Reported on the East River margin stabilization return
- Appointed four directors, Ronald Kaaz, Michael E. Traxinger, Kirk Schaunaman and Josh Larson to a committee to review the bylaws.

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, December 23, 2021.
 2. Approved payment of legal fees for Harvey Oliver for \$1,639.33.
 3. Approved Work Order Inventory #21-10 for \$831,700.19 to be submitted to the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) for reimbursement from loan funds for construction already completed.
 4. Authorized acceptance and execution of arrangement letter offered by Eide Bailly LLP to perform audit for the Cooperative and its subsidiary for the year ending December 31, 2021.
 5. Approved POET Rate Tariff.
 6. Authorized management to accept purchase offer from Northern Valley Communications for Bald Mountain and Faulkton towers.
 7. Authorized long range plan and four-year construction work plan by Power System Engineering (PSE).
 8. Approved South Dakota Association of Cooperatives (SDAC) membership dues for one year.
 9. Authorized attendance to the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives (SDAC) Leadership Education Program, January 6-7, 2021, Mitchell.
 10. Authorized attendance to the SDREA's Annual Meeting and Legislative Dinner, January 13-14, 2022, in Pierre.
 11. Approved the 2022 Capital Budget.
- Please direct questions to a co-op director, manager, or staff member.

FINANCIAL REPORT

	Oct-21	Oct-20
kWh Sales	24,729,367 kWh	24,529,980 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$2,344,502	\$2,200,021
Total Cost of Service	\$2,264,702	\$2,424,898
Operating Margins.....	\$79,800	(\$224,877)
Year to Date Margins	\$391,999	\$389,252

RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE MONTHLY USAGE AND BILL

OCT-2021	1,774 kWh.....	\$202.19.....	0.1140 per kWh
OCT-2020	1,994 kWh.....	\$207.63.....	0.1041 per kWh

Wholesale power cost, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for 81.9% of NEC's total cost of service.

Crunch the numbers on New Year's savings in your home

If your New Year's resolution to spend less and save more always fizzles out by March, don't fret. With a few simple adjustments in your house, you can save money on your energy bill each month. Here's how:

- Save up to 20 percent on heating by installing a programmable thermostat and setting it to automatically lower the heat when you leave the house for more than five hours and when the family goes to bed for the night.
- Save 1–3 percent on heating costs for each degree you turn the thermostat down. For optimal savings, set the thermostat at 68 degrees while at home and 65 degrees at night and before you leave the house for an extended period.
- Save up to 20 percent on heating and cooling bills by sealing air leaks around doors and windows with caulk and weatherstripping. This inexpensive energy saver will pay for itself within a year.
- Save at least 25 percent on air conditioning when you replace your old, inefficient central AC with one that has a seasonal energy-efficiency ratio of 14 or higher.
- Save up to 40 percent on what you spend to run your refrigerator by replacing an old unit with a new Energy Star-certified model.
- Save more than 50 percent on energy for cooking when you use a microwave oven instead of a conventional oven to heat meals.
- Save more than 10 percent on your water heating bill by lowering the water heater temperature from 140 degrees to 120.
- Save 75 percent or more on energy for lighting by replacing incandescent bulbs with LED bulbs. They also last about 25 times longer. Switching out CFLs for LEDs will reduce lighting costs as much as 50 percent.
- Consistently turning off lights when not in use or when natural light is sufficient can reduce lighting expenses 10–40 percent.
- Enable the power management function on computers and sleep setting on appliances.

CO-OPS IN ACTION



South Dakota's electric cooperatives deliver affordable, reliable power to our members in every corner of the state. But we do so much more!

Visit our Co-op Connections Plus YouTube channel and you'll see co-ops in action at local community events, youth leadership programs and charitable fundraising events like the annual Line Patrol Charity Ride. We've got South Dakota covered!

Simply scan the QR code to the right and be sure to subscribe!



Keep out of power boxes

Trinity Kurtenbach

Trinity knows that those green "power boxes" that are often seen near homes or along roadways contain electrical equipment that can pose a hazard. Trinity is the child of Cory Kurtenbach and Tonya Buchholz-Froehlich of Nunda and attends Sioux Valley Elementary in Volga. 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.

SOUPS FOR THE SOUL

SMASHED POTATO SOUP

Ingredients:
 1/2 cup coarsely chopped carrot
 1/2 cup coarsely chopped celery
 1 pkg 14 oz refrigerated mashed potatoes
 1 14.5 oz can chicken broth
 1/2 cup milk
 1 garlic clove pressed
 1/4 tsp salt
 1/8 tsp pepper
 1/2 cup sour cream
 2 Tbsp fresh parsley

METHOD

Place mashed potatoes in medium saucepan. Gradually add broth and milk, whisking until mixture is smooth. Stir in carrot, celery, garlic and salt and pepper. Bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, 10 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in sour cream and parsley. Top with desired toppings. 4 servings; 5 cups. Optional toppings: sliced green onion, shredded cheddar cheese, cooked, crumbled bacon.

Becki Hausser, Tripp

CREAMY CHICKEN GNOCCHI SOUP

Ingredients:
 6 Tbsp butter
 2 Tbsp olive oil
 2 cups onion
 1 cup diced celery
 4 garlic cloves (minced)
 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
 4 cups half and half
 1 (32 oz) container chicken broth (add more for a thinner soup)
 1 Tbsp thyme
 2 cups carrots
 2 cups spinach or kale
 3 cups diced, cooked chicken
 2 (16 oz) packages potato gnocchi
 Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

Add butter and olive oil to large pot over medium heat. Sauté onions, celery, and garlic until tender. Add flour to create a roux and stir for one minute. Slowly add the half and half and chicken broth. Stir until it thickens. Add the thyme, carrots, spinach, chicken and gnocchi. Cook for 5-10 minutes until gnocchi is cooked and soup thickened. If soup gets too thick just add more chicken broth. Salt and pepper to taste.

Tracey Burkett, Olivet

CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP

Ingredients:
 1-1.5 lbs chicken thighs bone in or boneless (skinless)
 3 bay leaves
 5 peppercorns, whole
 1 small whole onion peeled, hairy end intact
 3 large garlic cloves
 12 cups chicken stock low sodium
 2 large carrots diced
 2 cups potatoes diced
 1 1/2 cups egg noodles or any short pasta
 1 1/2 tsp salt
 1 tsp olive oil
 3 tsp fresh dill, parsley or green onion finely chopped

METHOD

In a large Dutch oven or pot, add chicken thighs, bay leaves, peppercorns, onion, 2 garlic cloves and stock. On high heat, bring soup to a boil covered then move lid to the side a bit to keep soup clear. Cook for 20 minutes, removing foam as it rises to the top with a mesh strainer. Dice potatoes and carrots. Chop dill and grate garlic. Add potatoes and carrots, stir and reduce heat to medium. Cook with half lid open for 5 minutes. Add pasta, stir and cook for another 5 minutes. Discard onion, bay leaves and peppercorns with mesh strainer. Add salt, olive oil, grated garlic clove, dill and ground black pepper to taste. You can also shred chicken right in the pot. Let sit covered for 5 minutes.

ifoodreal.com

Please send your favorite soup 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.

Do energy-saving measures in my home make a big difference?



Miranda Boutelle
Efficiency Services
Group

For the average household, it depends on your home's efficiency and your habits. Your energy use is based on your home's equipment and how you use it. You might already have an efficient home and good energy use habits, or you might have room for improvement.

Energy keeps us comfortable in our homes, and our monthly bill is the associated cost for this energy use. To make energy-saving measures work in your home, it comes down to preventing energy waste while maintaining personal comfort in your home.

Let's take it back to the basics and see if we can find opportunities to save energy in your home. Filters, LEDs and thermostat settings are great places to start.

REPLACE FILTERS

If your home has a forced-air system, you have a filter. The filter needs to be checked regularly and replaced when it's dirty. A dirty filter can cause heating and air-conditioning systems to use 15 percent more energy, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

Since heating and air conditioning make up almost half of your energy use, replacing your filter when it looks dirty is a habit that can reduce energy waste.

UPGRADE TO LEDS

Upgrading your lighting to LEDs is a simple, low-cost way to cut energy use. Depending on your budget, you can do it all at once or change bulbs out over time. If you are going to replace a few at a time, prioritize the lights you use the most.

There are many LED options available. One major variation is the color temperature, which is listed on the packaging in Kelvin.

I recommend 2700K because it is similar to incandescent lighting. I also suggest ENERGY STAR®-rated products because they meet strict quality and efficiency standards, use up to 90 percent less energy and last 15 times longer than standard bulbs.



ADJUST YOUR THERMOSTAT

It's amazing how much difference a few degrees can make. By adjusting your thermostat to your home habits, you can save year-round on heating and cooling costs.

For winter months, the DOE recommends setting your thermostat to 68 degrees when you are home and dialing it back 8 to 10 degrees when you leave the house or go to sleep. For summer, the recommendation is 78 degrees when you are home and 8 to 10 degrees warmer when you are away. Using a programmable or smart thermostat will allow you to set it according to your schedule.

Making these small changes in your routine will help improve your energy efficiency while maintaining comfort in your home.



Alex Cruz, Cheryl and Richard Skorupski, and Biana Garcia are shown at the El Corral restaurant in Clark.

Flyover County: Rick Skorupski spins tales of life in small town America

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

A place where folks wave with all five fingers.

A community where people actually listen to your response after asking how you're doing.

A home no closer than 10 miles to the nearest stop light.

Those were the requirements Rick Skorupski established when he decided he'd had enough of his native New Jersey and went looking for a more tranquil place to spend his retirement years. After conducting some extensive research, he and his wife Cheryl landed south of Frankfort nearly 20 years ago and have enjoyed the slower pace of life on their hobby farm in rural South Dakota.

While the Skorupskis have developed a wide social network and even recruited other family members to settle in Spink County, the acculturation process didn't go very smoothly at first. Turns out some folks in the community were convinced the Skorupskis were operating in a shroud of secrecy.

"They thought we were in the witness protection program," Rick recalls with a hearty chuckle. "Some of the neighbors offered to help us move our furniture in, and we declined, just trying not to be a bother. And then we'd make trips

back to New Jersey, so people started wondering what we were hiding."

But the suspicions didn't last long and the Skorupskis have been heavily involved in the local scene, participating in charitable projects, supporting civic events and contributing to the community in positive ways.

The Skorupskis' fondness for the people and culture of South Dakota is on full display in the six novels the two have published together with Rick as the writer and Cheryl the cover artist.

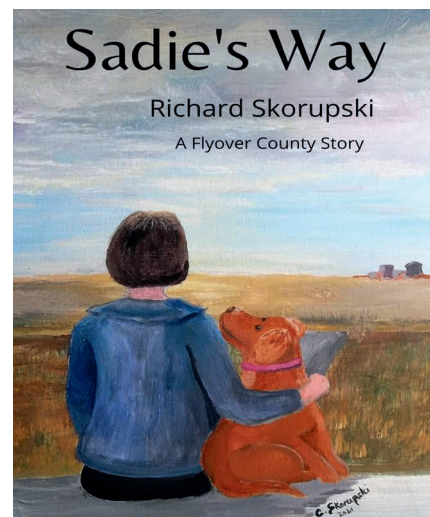
Rick, a member of Northern Electric and a U.S. Navy retiree, describes his self-published work as "nice stories about nice people." He got frustrated at all the anger, violence, sensationalism and negativity reflected in the media, so he decided to accentuate the positive aspects of life through his writing.

Inspired by those he befriended in his adopted home state, Skorupski produced a series of novels centered around an imaginary South Dakotan community called Helen (pop. 350 souls) located in fictitious Flyover County.

The plot lines involve local citizens, their shared hard-scrabble history as pioneers, settlers and sodbusters, and their interactions that take place in the tiny hamlet's schools, churches, diners, taverns and shops.

"I love my imaginary town and I feel I

know all the characters," Rick said. "I get up every morning and write what they tell me about their lives. Any time I have writer's block, it's because my imaginary friends stopped talking to me. But in the end, I hope my readers enjoy these stories as much as I enjoy writing them."



Skorupski was invited to participate in an exhibit at last year's South Dakota State Fair as part of the "Arts of the State Fair" program. During the event, he conversed with readers, discussed his characters, signed copies of his books and offered advice about his experience in self-publishing.

His books are sold through Amazon, and more information can be found by visiting www.flyovercounty.com.



FUN AND FITNESS ON THE SNOW

An estimated 5.2 million Americans participate in cross country skiing while reaping the rewards of being active during the winter months.

Nordic Ski Club promotes the benefits of cross country skiing on mind, body and soul

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Many winter sports enthusiasts are firm in their belief that snow skis are meant to travel in one direction only – downhill.

But members of the Black Hills Nordic Ski Club use their skinny skis to take them wherever the trail may lead.

The club's winter playground is located at Big Hills XC Trails seven miles southwest of Spearfish where its

members have frolicked in the snow since the 1970s. Early prospectors named the area after they encountered steep grades in their pursuit of gold and fortune, but these days people flock to Big Hill for fitness and fun.

With more than 1,200 Facebook followers, the group invites not only cross country skiers to enjoy the 13.6 miles of trails but also skate skiers, fat bikers, snow shoers and even snow man makers.

Immediate past president Josh Wangeman explains there are an

estimated 5.2 million Nordic skiing enthusiasts throughout the country who seek both physical and mental health restoration along the trails.

After spending his day teaching science to his eighth graders at Spearfish Middle School, Wangeman likes to unwind in the woods.

"I've found that it's a good way to escape the crowds and participate in the wonders of nature," he said. "It's a great sport if you're looking to find some solace, enjoy the outdoors and get a good workout at the same time."

Wangeman, who also enjoys swimming and cross country running, fell into the sport after joining the National Guard six years ago. He began training for the biathlon, a competition where skiers travel from check point to check point with a .22 caliber rifle and shoot at targets. He has represented the Guard at competitions in Minnesota, Wyoming, Vermont and Utah.

Like many outdoor activities, cross country skiing has seen a significant surge in interest in the past year. One of the top attractions of the sport is that the cost of entry is relatively small. For instance, a quality mountain bike can cost thousands of dollars and other pastimes require a substantial financial investment for equipment, gear, fees and more.

"You can find some used gear and get everything you need for around \$100, or \$300 for new equipment," he said. "Trail access is free and you'll be outdoors getting some great exercise. As far as learning the technique, it's a straightforward process that's almost as simple as walking."

Wangeman said skiing across the snowy terrain can be a cinch compared to the work that's required to keep the trails maintained. Members of the Nordic Ski Club join forces with the Grooming Alliance of



Cross country skiers receive both the mental and physical health benefits of a sport that's economical to pursue.

Spearfish and log hundreds of hours of labor and donate hundreds of dollars each season to keep the pathways well-groomed for all to share. Some trails are designated for snow shoeing and fat biking only. Volunteers have also built a warming shelter in a meadow that's situated among the five loop trails where skiers can take a break from the wind and cold.

Aside from the Big Hills XC Trails, the Black Hills National Forest area has other sites suitable for cross country skiing. The Eagle Cliff Network is located 15 miles southwest of Lead and offers 20 miles of trails that cross open meadows and meander through Ponderosa pine forests. Half the trails are rated "difficult."

Bear Mountain is situated 10 miles

southwest of Hill City and features rocky ridges, abundant wildlife and scenic overlooks along its 16-mile trail system.

Additional pathways in the area can be found at Beaver Creek, Bear Butte State Park, Custer State Park and portions of the Centennial and Mickelson Trails.

Here are a few helpful tips for those who are thinking about taking to the wintry trails:

1. Start your day right with a hot beverage.
2. Pack well, and don't forget gloves, hat and extra socks. Layer, layer, layer.
3. Choose the right place to ski with good grooming and a reasonable and amount of flat terrain.
4. Consider taking lessons to

Cross country skiing sites

These state parks offer trails for cross-country skiers to enjoy:

- Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve
- Beaver Creek Nature Area
- Big Sioux Recreation Area
- George S. Mickelson Trail
- Hartford Beach State Park
- LaFramboise Island Nature Area
- Lake Herman State Park
- Lake Poinsett Recreation Area
- Newton Hills State Park
- Oakwood Lakes State Park
- Pelican Lake Recreation Area
- Richmond Lake Recreation Area
- Sica Hollow State Park
- Walker's Point Recreation Area



Volunteers keep the trails groomed for cross country skiing at Big Hill and also constructed a warming shelter, a popular site on cold and windy winter days.

improve your form.

5. Be prepared to fall. Acquiring balance takes time.

6. Keep your energy up with a ready snack such as a granola bar or an apple.

7. Have fun. Explore a bit and lose yourself in the rhythm of the sport.

8. Don't forget to look around you, and keep an eye out for wildlife or scenic vistas.

9. Reward yourself! You worked hard and did something adventurous.



Northern Electric Line Foreman Terry Lundberg has always enjoyed coming to work and helping out the members of the cooperative.

LUNDBERG RETIRES

Northern Electric Line Foreman Terry Lundberg Retires After 40 Year Career

Ben Dunsmoor

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Terry Lundberg has always enjoyed coming to work and has always enjoyed working for the members of Northern Electric Cooperative. Those are two of the main factors that drove Lundberg during his 40-year career as a lineman at the cooperative.

“I would not trade it for anything,” Lundberg said. “I have really enjoyed what I do.”

Lundberg is retiring as a line

foreman in early January after he was hired as an apprentice in 1981.

But Lundberg almost missed his opportunity to work for Northern Electric. He initially turned down a job at the co-op after he graduated from Mitchell Tech to work for a contractor that traveled throughout the Midwest installing cable television lines. The cable TV job offered him more money, but after spending a month on the job Lundberg realized he had made a mistake. He went back to Northern Electric and asked if they still had any job openings. Fortunately, the cooperative had an open position on the line crew and Lundberg has

never looked back.

“It was never work to me. You come here and every day is different,” Lundberg said.

Lundberg contributes his longevity at the cooperative to that realization early in his career to pursue a job you enjoy. One of the things he has liked most about being a lineman at Northern Electric is helping the members and restoring their power.

“One of the biggest joys is when a storm comes through and you go out and you see the lights come back on,” Lundberg said. “I have always said I do not work for Northern. I work for the members and when they say thank you, I say thank you, because they own the co-op.”

That small-town community atmosphere of an electric cooperative is what has made Lundberg’s career special. He said the cooperative has always had good board members, managers, and employees that made it a pleasure to come to work.

“It is one job you can not do by yourself,” Lundberg said. “It is a total team effort.”

And because Lundberg worked at a cooperative and in a career field that he loved, he said it does not seem like he has worked at Northern Electric for four decades.

“It is one year after another and you turn around and before you know it you have been here 40 years,” Lundberg said. “I knew it was a good place to provide for my family.”

Lundberg plans to spend more time with family during retirement. He and his wife, Bonnie, plan to travel and spend more time with their grandchildren. He also said he is starting to play golf and hopes to get back into fishing.

Ben Peterson promoted to line foreman; Whitley hired as new apprentice



Ben Peterson
New Line Foreman

Northern Electric Cooperative has promoted lineman Ben Peterson to line foreman at the Bath headquarters. Peterson is one of two foremen at the Bath office. Marty Newman is the other foreman.

Peterson will replace Terry Lundberg as foreman. Lundberg is retiring after working for Northern Electric Cooperative for the past 40 years.

Peterson was hired by Northern Electric in June 2006 as an apprentice lineman. He worked as the line superintendent for the City of Groton for eight years before he was hired at the cooperative. Peterson and his wife, Kristi, live in Groton and have three children.



Riley Whitley
New Apprentice
Lineman

WHITLEY HIRED AS APPRENTICE LINEMAN

Northern Electric has hired Riley Whitley as a full-time apprentice lineman. Whitley has been working for the cooperative as a temporary lineman since he graduated from the Power Line Construction and Maintenance program at Mitchell Tech in May. Whitley is from Frankfort and graduated from Redfield High School in 2020. He is excited to begin his full-time position with Northern Electric.



You'll rave about all the benefits you get by switching to electric appliances, power tools and even vehicles. Electric appliances, especially stoves, are generally safer than their gas counterparts as they eliminate both open flames and the potential for a gas leak. They're less expensive throughout total ownership, easier on your pocketbook and better for the planet. Electricity powers all types of energy usages, while gas is limited in its scope of power.

RE-ENERGIZING COST SAVINGS

Have questions about going electric? Contact your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative or visit yourcooppower.com today.



RECIPES NEEDED FOR

the Country Cookin'

cookbook

Your recipe could be featured in the 38th volume of East River Electric's Country Cookin' cookbook!

Help us create another great cookbook by submitting your favorite recipes.

Submit recipes via email to ajohannsen@eastriver.coop, fax to 605-256-8057, or contact your local cooperative for more information.





CAR DEALERS ADAPT TO EV MARKET

Jesse Johnson of Jan Busse Ford in Highmore keeps customers informed of the latest industry news. *Photo by Billy Gibson.*

Car dealers adapt to emerging EV industry by making new investments and keeping their customers informed

Billy Gibson

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Keeping up with the emergence of the electric vehicle market is like listening to the hushed intonations of the announcer at the end of a 1960s-style soap opera.

Will a reliable charging network be constructed?

Will EVs become more affordable?

Will drivers ever overcome their range anxiety?

Will the political winds change direction?

Tune in tomorrow. Same time. Same channel.

Scott Shepherd is no fan of soap operas, but he's happy to give you his take on the topic. Shepherd is a career educator who has taken the EV leap and last June invested in Ford's debut model: the Mustang Mach-E. Shepherd recently delivered a presentation

describing his experience and insights to a group of electric cooperative representatives.

Subtitled "The Good, the Kind of Bad, and the Ugly," the presentation was intended to be an unbiased, unvarnished and apolitical analysis of the investment he made last year. Though Shepherd admits to being somewhat of an EVangelist, audience members were eager to hear Shepherd's comments to help them convey useful, accurate information to their electric cooperative consumers back in their respective service areas.

On the positive side, Shepherd said the advanced technology and the instant torque of his Mach-E deliver an exciting driving experience, and he likes doing his part to reduce emissions. His dealer, Jesse Johnson at Jan Busse Ford (Pioneer Garage, Inc.) in Highmore, was knowledgeable and ready to answer all of his questions and concerns. He noted

that factoring in a federal tax credit of up to \$7,500, he was able to save nearly \$1,000 in his first 5,000 miles of travel in the Mach-E.

"There's no gas tank to fill at over \$3 per gallon and no oil to change," he said. "A trip to Sioux Falls cost me \$6 in electricity, compared to \$49 in gas for an ICE (internal combustion engine)."

250
Approximate number of EV charging stations throughout the Upper Midwest.

On the not-so-good side, Shepherd pointed to the high front-end purchase price, reduced range during the winter months, the lack of Level 2 chargers in homes and the fact that traditional vehicles sometimes block access to public charging stations. He said in the rush to build out a reliable system of charging stations throughout the region,

standardized practices have yet to be developed.

“There can be a lot of inconsistent pricing with public charging stations,” he said. “Some require a connection fee plus a per-minute fee as high as 50 cents per kilowatt hour. The networks and the number of phone apps that are out there can be confusing, and I’ve also run across some charging stations that were malfunctioning.”

He pointed out that electric cooperatives, municipal utilities and investor-owned utilities in South Dakota and Minnesota are working together to create a charging network for public use that will reduce range anxiety for EV drivers. Presently, there are nine Tesla supercharger stations and four non-Tesla chargers in South Dakota, as well as more than 250 throughout the region and dozens more for the use of guests at hotels, campgrounds and other private properties.

Electrify America Fast recently announced the company is planning to install a bank of supercharging stations in Wall sometime in January, and state officials are looking to continue to invest money into light-duty charging stations from the second round of the Volkswagen Electric Vehicle Charging Station Program.

Johnson, Shepherd’s sales agent, said these days he’s getting lots of questions from scores of potential buyers who are ponying up the \$100 refundable



Jesse Johnson is shown adjusting the drive mode in the Ford Mustang Mach-E.

Photo by Billy Gibson.

fee at www.ford.com to get placed on a waiting list for not only the Mach-E but also the new Ford F-150 Lightning, the company’s first electric-powered pick up. In fact, he has a personal spot on the Lightning list along with more than 160,000 others across the country. Tesla, GMC, Rivian and Chevrolet are also introducing their own pick ups.

“We’re getting calls from all kinds of people - retirees, commuting moms and dads, gear heads, collectors, technology buffs, environmentalists, farmers, you name it,” said Johnson, who has already sent two early adopting customers home with the Mustang Mach-E and has a third on his lot.

Johnson said car and truck dealers will have to redouble their efforts to provide service after the sale as the EV industry continues to emerge. He keeps his customers, including the many who are on the purchaser’s waiting list, apprised of any new developments

160,000
Number of reservations made for the new Ford Lightning F-150 at www.ford.com.

in the market. For example, when manufacturers began recommending that owners refrain from exceeding an 80 percent charge - unless going on an extended trip - to extend the car’s battery life, Johnson made sure his customers got the memo.

In preparing for the transportation future, car dealers are having to make significant investments in education for their sales force, training for technicians and new service and maintenance equipment to accommodate EVs.

“EVs are fun to drive with their immediate torque and safe-driving technology,” Johnson said. “These vehicles are an excellent option for those wanting to forget about the price of gas, reduce maintenance and emissions. We understand they may not fit everyone’s lifestyle, but we see a definite place for them in the future.”



Scott Shepherd is shown above talking with students at the Lake Area Technical College Automotive Technology Program about his experience as an EV owner.



Northern Electric Cooperative Communications Director Ben Dunsmoor (left) presents Warner High School Senior Dillon Browning with a \$250 check for being named the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week.

LOCAL SCHOLAR OF THE WEEK

Warner Senior Dillon Browning Named Scholar of the Week on December 13

Ben Dunsmoor

bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop

Warner High School Senior Dillon Browning likes to learn and make an impact. It is why he enjoys seeking out new opportunities and is interested in pursuing a career in public policy.

“I like learning about new things and new experiences,” Browning said. “It lets you know what you like

and what you don’t like.”

Browning knows he likes social studies and political science. The Warner High School senior has applied to be a legislative page during the upcoming 2022 South Dakota Legislative Session, and he currently serves as the student body president at Warner High School.

Last summer Browning had a unique opportunity when he was selected to participate in the University of Chicago’s Emerging

Rural Leaders Summer Scholarship program and take a course on ‘confronting a political economy in crisis.’

“It was a unique experience because I got to meet a lot of students from rural areas,” Browning said.

Browning has been able to maintain a 4.0 grade-point average while pursuing his interests and participating in other extracurricular activities at Warner High School such as cross country, track, band, choir, one-act play, and oral interp. Browning was named the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week on December 13 in recognition of his academic achievements and his involvement in his school and community.

“I am pretty excited,” Browning said. “It proves your hard work pays off.”

He said the key to success is getting your work done and not putting it off until the last minute.

“Time management is key. It is knowing what you need to do and doing it and not procrastinating,” Browning said.

The Warner High School senior has not decided which school he will attend after graduation, but he is leaning toward the University of Chicago. He hopes to continue studying political science and public policy.

“It is a very good way to make an impact,” Browning said. “That is one thing I like to do is to help people.”

Browning received a \$250 check from Northern Electric Cooperative for being named the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week. He will also be eligible for a \$500 scholarship and a \$1,000 scholarship during the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Year banquet which will be held in the spring.



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**

**61st Annual Black Hills Stock Show and Rodeo
January 28-February 5, 2022**



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.

**DECEMBER 21-25
Fort Sisseton Drive Thru
Christmas Light Display**
11907 434th Avenue, Lake
City, SD, 605-448-5474

**DECEMBER 23-24
1880 Train Holiday Express**
222 Railroad Avenue, Hill City,
SD, 605-574-2222

**DECEMBER 26-31
Christmas Nights of Lights**
Storybook Island, Rapid City,
SD, 1-605-342-6357

**DECEMBER 26-31
Garden Glow**
McCrary Gardens, Brookings,
SD, 605-688-6707

**DECEMBER 31
New Year's Eve With The
Davis Sisters**
Performing Arts Center of
Rapid City, Rapid City, SD,
605-348-4676

**JANUARY 1
Winter Wonderland Nature
Hike**
Big Sioux Recreation Area,
Brandon, SD, 605-594-3824

**JANUARY 4-6
Dakota Farm Show**
USD DakotaDome, Vermillion,
SD, more info available at
dakotafarmshow.com

**JANUARY 7
Neal McCoy**
The Dakota Event Center,
Aberdeen, SD, 605-725-2641

**JANUARY 8
Eric Church**
Denny Sanford Premier Center,
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

**JANUARY 14-15
Deadwood Red Dirt Festival**
Deadwood Mountain Grand
Event Center, Deadwood, SD,
605-559-0386

**JANUARY 15
Burning Beetle**
10th Street, Custer, SD, find
out more at www.facebook.com/barkbeetleblues

**JANUARY 15-16
Dakota Territory Gun
Collectors Association
Gun Show**
Swiftel Center, Brookings, SD,
605-793-2347

**JANUARY 16
Sioux Falls Izaak Walton
League January Trap Shoot**
5000 N Oakview Place, Sioux
Falls, SD, 605-332-9527

**JANUARY 16
WWE Supershow**
Denny Sanford Premier Center,
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

**JANUARY 21-23
That Golden Girls Show**
Orpheum Theater Center,
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

**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
Dakota Territory Gun
Collectors Association
Gun Show**
National Field Archery Building,
Yankton, SD, 605-731-9154

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

**FEBRUARY 5
Lakota Games on Ice**
3200 Indian Village Road,
Mitchell, SD, 605-996-5473

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