

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Mitchell Technical College launches careers in a wide range of fields including training for linemen like Lacreek Electric's Matt Kruid.
Photo by Billy Gibson

Tech Training

Mitchell Technical College
Pages 8-9

Promoting tribal tourism
Pages 12-13

What is a brand? Touchstone Energy has been the Northern Electric brand for 25 years.



Ben Dunsmoor
Editor

What is a brand? Most people would probably say a company's brand is its logo, its colors, and the way that a business looks to the public. A brand in the cattle industry is similar. It is used to identify the owner of livestock through a unique marking. A brand is used to identify, unify, and separate someone - or something - from a larger group.

However, a brand goes beyond just a simple logo. A brand is also the public perception of a business, the quality of service provided by the company, and its reputation in the community. Northern Electric Cooperative joined the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives brand 25 years ago to separate our electric cooperative - and the way we do business - from other utilities across the country.

Northern Electric was one of the founding members of Touchstone Energy when the Board of Directors voted in December 1997 to join the national program.

Northern Electric was one of the founding members of Touchstone Energy when the Board of Directors voted in December 1997 to join the national program. The Touchstone Energy Cooperatives brand was officially born in April of 1998 when electric co-ops across the country joined together to identify under the familiar logo of three people holding hands to unify for a common cause.

The Touchstone Energy brand goes beyond the logo. A touchstone is a mineral used to test the quality or genuineness of gold or other minerals. Touchstone Energy was born in 1998 to set electric cooperatives apart from other larger electricity providers. There are hundreds of electric cooperatives in the United States that are owned by local members just like Northern Electric. Each electric co-op is local and unique; however, we are also very similar in the way we operate and the standard of service we offer.

All Touchstone Energy Cooperatives strive to operate under the four values of integrity, accountability, innovation, and community. We are not-for-profit member-led cooperatives that deliver affordable and reliable electricity. We are accountable to our members through board representation and annual membership meetings. We explore innovative technologies to deliver electricity to our members in the best possible way. And, we are involved in our communities because electric co-ops were formed by their communities to serve the local community.

As you drive across the country you will notice that most electric cooperatives have the red, blue, yellow, and green logo of Touchstone Energy as part of their logos. This means that those cooperatives meet the standard. The members of those cooperatives can expect the same quality of service and the same values at their cooperative and other neighboring co-ops. There are 700 Touchstone Energy member-owned electric cooperatives in 45 states. Northern Electric is one of those 700 co-ops and we have been since the day the brand was born 25 years ago. Touchstone Energy and its values is our brand. It is our identity.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

NORTHERN ELECTRIC

(USPS 396-040)

Board President: Nolan Wipf

Board of Directors

- Todd Hettich - Vice President
- Ron Kaaz - Secretary
- Josh Larson - Treasurer
- Fran Esser
- BJ, Hansen
- Kirk Schaunaman
- Scott Sperry
- Mike Traxinger

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

Chief Financial Officer: Lorisa Rudolph

Operations Manager: Jerry Weber

Manager of Member Services: Russel Ulmer

Manager of Information Technology: Derek Gorecki

Communications Director: Ben Dunsmoor
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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.

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Northern Electric Cooperative's regular board meeting was held December 22, 2022, via video conference with all directors present. As the first order of business, the board approved the December 2, 2022, minutes, and November expenditures. The board then reviewed and accepted monthly reports by management.

The next East River Board Meeting will be held January 5, 2023. The next SDREA board meeting will be January 12-13, 2023, during the SDREA Annual Meeting and Legislative Dinner.

Directors Todd Hettich and Ronald Kaaz reported on the 2022 Mid-West Electric Consumers Association Annual Meeting, held December 6-8, in Denver, CO. Director William (B.J.) Hansen reported on the 2022 NRECA Winter School for Directors, December 9-13, in Nashville, TN, where he attended director courses that are 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 12-13, 2023.
- Informed the board of the 2023 East River Energize Forum, February 1-2, Ramkota Hotel, Sioux Falls.

- Reported on the Rural Utilities Service Revenue Deferral Plan.
- Gave an update on Summit Carbon Solutions.
- Reported on the FEMA Mitigation Funding.
- Reported that the Basin Electric Members Only Meeting will be held via teams, January 26, 2023.

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 19, 2023.
2. Approved Work Order Inventory #22-11 for \$506,659.58 to be submitted to RUS for reimbursement from loan funds for electric plant construction already completed.
3. Approved the fourth quarter estate requests for early capital credit retirements in the amount of \$29,232.52.
4. Appointed Directors to be delegates and alternates to the 2023 NRECA PowerXchange and TechAdvantage, March 3-8, Nashville, TN.
5. Approved the 2023 Operating Budget.
6. Held Executive Session.

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

FINANCIAL REPORT

| | Nov-22 | Nov-21 |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| kWh Sales | 27,403,310 kWh | 28,837,123 kWh |
| Electric Revenues | \$2,395,282 | \$2,419,837 |
| Total Cost of Service | \$1,982,486 | \$2,402,292 |
| Operating Margins..... | \$412,796 | \$17,545 |
| Year to Date Margins | \$1,236,731 | \$416,351 |

RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE MONTHLY USAGE AND BILL

| | | | |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| NOV-2022..... | 2,736 kWh..... | \$244.57..... | 0.0894 per kWh |
| NOV-2021..... | 2,731 kWh..... | \$248.62..... | 0.0910 per kWh |

Wholesale power cost, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for 81.7% of NEC's total cost of service.

Check out this handy electrical fire check list

Electrical Fires do not have to happen. Use this checklist to help you find and fix electrical fire hazards in your home before they can start a fire.

Smoke Alarms – Smoke alarms save lives!

- ✓ Do you have enough smoke alarms?
- ✓ Are they working?
- ✓ Do you test them?

Switches and Outlets – Be on the look-out for signs of trouble.

- ✓ Are they working?
- ✓ Do they make crackling, buzzing, or sizzling sounds?
- ✓ Are they warm to the touch?
- ✓ Do plugs fit snugly?

Cords – Never use damaged cords.

- ✓ Is there fraying or cracking?
- ✓ Are they pinched or pierced?
- ✓ Do you use extension cords all the time?
- ✓ Are cords getting enough air?

Lamps and Appliances – Use them safely.

- ✓ Are you using the right bulbs?
- ✓ Do you use space heaters safely?
- ✓ Are appliance cords protected from damage?

Electrical Panel – Know the basics.

- ✓ Do you have AFCIs?
- ✓ Have you tested your AFCIs?
- ✓ Are all circuit breakers and fuses the proper size?



KEEPING UP WITH ELECTRIC METERING TECHNOLOGY



South Dakota's electric cooperatives recently held an electric meter school in Pierre where more than 45 co-op employees learned about the latest technology in residential and industrial kilowatt hour metering processes. Metering is a key component of providing reliable, safe and affordable power to cooperative members all across the state.

To view scenes from this important training program and learn more about how electric cooperatives work to improve our communities, visit Cooperative Connections Plus by scanning the QR code at right.



Take care when flying kites

Jaclyn Koistinen

Jaclyn Koistinen, 11, is already thinking ahead to spring when kite-flying is a popular activity. She warns kids and adults both to take care when putting that kite in the air. Jaclyn is the daughter of Patrick and Jenilee Koistinen, members of H-D Electric based in Clear Lake.

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 SWEET BRUNCH

CRAB QUICHE

Ingredients:
 1 (6 oz.) can crab meat (rinsed and drained)
 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese
 1/4 c. chopped green onion (or fresh chives)
 4 eggs.
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1 tsp. dry mustard
 1 c. milk (or half-n-half)

METHOD

Grease or spray pie pan. Combine crab, cheese and onion. Press into pie pan and up the sides. Whisk together the milk, eggs, salt and mustard. Pour mixture into pan. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake in 400 degree oven about 30 minutes or until set. Let set 5 minutes before cutting and serving.

Elaine Rowett, Sturgis

PRALINE PECAN CRUNCH

Ingredients:
 1 (21 oz.) box Quaker Oat Squares cereal (about 8 c.)
 2 c. pecans
 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
 1 tsp. vanilla
 1/2 c. light corn syrup
 1/4 c. margarine
 1/2 tsp. baking soda

METHOD

Heat oven to 250 degrees. Mix cereal and pecans in 9x13 inch pan. Set aside. Mix corn syrup, brown sugar and margarine in glass bowl. Microwave on high 1-1/2 minutes. Stir. Microwave 1 to 1-1/2 minutes more or until boiling. Stir in vanilla and baking soda and pour over cereal mixture. Stir to coat evenly. Bake 1 hour, stirring every 20 minutes. Spread on baking sheet to cool. Break into pieces and store in airtight container.

Nancy Stenson, Fort Pierre

CINNAMON APPLE BRUNCH BAKE

Ingredients:
 1 can (21 oz.) apple pie filling
 1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
 3 tbsp. butter, melted
 2 tsp. McCormick® Ground Cinnamon
 1 1/2 tbsp. McCormick® All Natural Pure Vanilla Extract
 1 can (12 oz.) refrigerated biscuits
 1/2 cup chopped nuts

METHOD

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix apple pie filling, brown sugar, butter, cinnamon and vanilla in medium bowl. Spread 1/2 of the apple mixture in 2-quart shallow baking dish. Cut each biscuit into quarters. Arrange biscuit pieces, points up, over apple mixture. Spread remaining apple mixture over biscuits. Sprinkle with nuts. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until golden brown. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

mccormick.com

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2023. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.



Brad Becker retired from Northern Electric Cooperative on December 31, 2022, following a 42-year career with the co-op. Becker served as Northern Electric's purchasing agent.

BECKER RETIRES

For 42 years Brad Becker ensured co-op crews had materials to get the job done

Ben Dunsmoor
bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop

Northern Electric Purchasing Agent Brad Becker has been the man behind the materials at the cooperative for more than four decades. From the poles that went into the ground, to the wires that were strung on top of those poles, Becker has made sure all the supplies that were needed for construction and maintenance projects arrived on time and on budget.

"I will miss it, there is no doubt about it," Becker said about his career at Northern Electric Cooperative.

Becker retired as the co-op's purchasing agent on December 31, 2022, following a career that spanned 42 years. He walked into the doors of Northern Electric in April of 1980 with no prior experience in the electric utility industry. But Becker soon learned about every nut, bolt, screw, and insulator that was needed to build and repair power lines.

"I really enjoyed it," Becker said. "If you enjoyed your job, you never worked a day in your life, and I really enjoyed it."

Making sure the cooperative received the best price for its products and ensuring the shelves were stocked with supplies for regular maintenance work or outages was Becker's top priority every day. A lot has changed within the last few years with higher prices for products and longer lead times for orders. But, Becker said the relationships he built with fellow co-op employees and vendors are what led to his longevity with Northern Electric.

"It is always a good group of employees that you work with at the co-op," Becker said. "It has been a good job. I cannot complain at all."

Becker plans to spend more time with family in retirement as well as helping his son with his business and the car he races during the racing season.

Northern Electric Journeyman Lineman Lance Dennert will transition into Becker's role in January and make sure the warehouse is stocked for co-op crews. Dennert has been working in the field as a lineman for the past ten years.



Lance Dennert
Journeyman Lineman
Lance Dennert will fill Becker's role in January 2023.

STAY SAFE THIS WINTER

This time of year can be downright dangerous. If you're in a car accident involving a power line, stay in your vehicle and call 911. Wait until electric utility personnel de-energize the line. Report any downed lines or damaged equipment to your local Touchstone Energy Cooperative.



RE-ENERGIZING SAFETY

Your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative wants you to be safe. For more safety tips, visit [YourCoopPower.com](https://www.yourcooppower.com).





Mitchell Tech facilities were used for the annual electric cooperative rubber gloving school last summer. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Mitchell Tech prepares linemen to deliver the 'right stuff' for members

Billy Gibson

editor@sdrea.coop

It's rare that you find a cooperative lineman in the state of South Dakota who hasn't been through the training program at Mitchell Technical College.

Mike Puetz doesn't remember all the names and faces, but his mentorship has played a key role in turning loads of wannabe linemen into highly skilled craftsmen over the past 25 years.

Puetz serves as head of the lineman training department at MTC and is giving some thought to hanging up his hooks in the next year or so. When he reflects on his teaching career, he swells with pride at how the program has improved exponentially over time.

There have been many milestones in the emergence of the lineman education program rising to become one of the best of its kind in the country.

Back in 2018, for instance, the power line construction and maintenance school was named winner of the inaugural Siemens-Aspen Community College

STEM award. The honor is given by the Aspen Institute to eight colleges nationwide that provide "outstanding preparation" for students in high-demand jobs and provides selected schools with \$50,000 to apply toward scholarships and other forms of financial assistance.

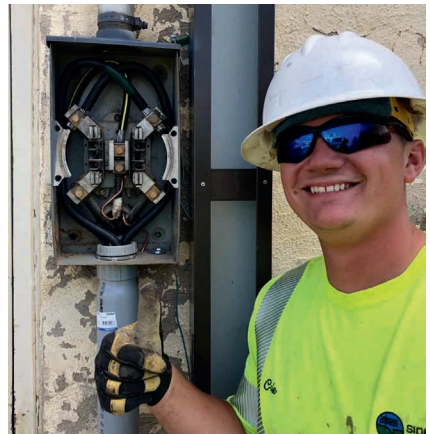
"That was definitely a shock," Puetz said. "There's a lot of good programs out there, and for us to be chosen for that prestigious award was unbelievable. We work hard to be able to say we have a very strong program, and that just gave us some validation that we're moving in the right direction. It's icing on the cake."

Mark Patterson, manager of loss control services at the South Dakota Rural Electric Association based in Pierre, has worked with Puetz for 15 years. He's hard-pressed to find many co-op linemen who haven't trained under Puetz.

"Mike has been around so long, and I'd estimate about 80 percent of the electric co-op linemen out there today have been trained by him," Patterson said. "They do a fantastic job of teaching the fundamentals, whether a student ends

up at a municipal, an investor-owned or a co-op. And our superintendents do an exceptional job of working with the graduates to help them gain the field experience they need to serve our members with a mindset of safety and efficiency."

Over the years, Puetz said, MTC has not only distinguished itself among similar programs but has also greatly expanded its array of academic and technical career tracks. There are tracks for construction and manufacturing, business and service industries, health sciences, engineering technologies and agriculture and transportation.



Sioux Valley Energy's Cole Anderson learned his trade at MTC.



At left, Mike Puetz has trained hundreds of future linemen. Above, Mitchell Technical College is well equipped to give electric linemen the real-world skills they need to succeed. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Cole Anderson is a lineman at Sioux Valley Energy based in Madison. He graduated from the training program four years ago and recalls why he selected MTC to learn the ropes of line work.

“I had an uncle who was a lineman in another state and I knew that’s what I always wanted to do,” said Anderson, a graduate of Chester Area High School. “I started looking at schools and noticed they had limited positions open and they were always taken very quickly. That told me how good their reputation was.”

Anderson received his certification in May of 2018, joined the cooperative as a 1,000 hour lineman, and eventually worked his way into a journeyman position.

Oddly enough, he met Puetz a year before he enrolled at MTC. While still in high school, Anderson was on a tour of the facility when he happened to encounter Puetz in the hallway. The two shook hands and after a brief conversation, Puetz said: “If I don’t see you here next year, I’m coming to track you down.”

Anderson said he finds himself frequently relying on his lineman education and remembering the things Puetz taught him, including those lessons that don’t necessarily have to do with line work.

“I think he’s awesome. He’s big on work ethic and he always told us that no matter what we did in life, a good work ethic will allow you to accomplish your goals and stand out from the rest,” Anderson said. “He also had a thing about belts. You had to wear a belt. If he saw you and you didn’t have one on, he’d take his off and give it to you.”

Anderson and his wife, Sarah, recently built a new home outside of Madison and are expecting a baby boy in March. He said he’s grateful for the outstanding

instruction he received during his education phase and is also thankful to have a position at an outstanding organization within the electric cooperative system.

“I just feel fortunate. It’s been a great experience all the way through,” he said. “I think it’s a privilege to be able to do a job I enjoy and to work with professionals who know their craft, and an organization that is focused on delivering the highest quality service to its members.”

For more information about MTC, visit www.mitchelltech.edu.



MTC is a prime training ground for future co-op linemen. *Photo by Billy Gibson*



Northern Electric CEO/General Manager Char Hager (middle) presents \$1,500 to Boys and Girls Club of Aberdeen Area Board President Mike Williams (left of Hager), and Boys and Girls Club Executive Director Michael Herman (right of Hager). Several Boys and Girls Club members also participated in the presentation.

CO-OPS MAKE YEAR END DONATIONS

Donations will assist expanding programs that will benefit youth organizations

Ben Dunsmoor

bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop

Northern Electric Cooperative has partnered with East River Electric Power Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative to make three different donations to community organizations in the area. Donations were made to the Boys and Girls Club of Aberdeen Area, the Aberdeen Family YMCA Youth Development Center (YDC) expansion, and to the Columbia Community Foundation at the end of 2022.

The donation to the Boys and Girls Club of Aberdeen Area will fund the organization's growing teen center and its STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) program. The program is designed to spark interest in the fields of engineering, computers, drones, and technology. Northern Electric Cooperative donated \$1,500 to the club in December with the help of matching funds from East River Electric and Basin Electric.

Northern Electric also donated \$1,500 to the YDC expansion project for the Aberdeen Family

YMCA. The YDC offers childcare for infants, toddlers, and preschool-aged children in the area. The YDC currently has a nine-month waiting list and needs to expand to accommodate the growth. Northern Electric also used matching funds from East River Electric and Basin Electric to make the donation to the YDC.

A \$2,500 donation was made to the Columbia Community Foundation in December. The foundation was created in May 2022 to provide funds for community projects and programs that will improve the community of Columbia. The foundation is currently working on a new youth baseball field and park complex that will include walking trails, a disc golf course, a basketball court, and a pickleball court. Basin Electric and East River Electric also matched a donation made by Northern Electric to deliver a combined \$2,500 donation to the Columbia Community Foundation.



Northern Electric CEO/General Manager Char Hager (left) presents \$2,500 to Josh Larson (right) representing the Columbia Community Foundation.



APPLY FOR 2023 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 2023 - 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 2023 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 2022, Dillon Browning of Mansfield was awarded the \$1,000 Basin Electric scholarship and Matthew Mitzel of Mina was the

recipient of the \$500 Northern Electric scholarship. Browning enrolled at Harvard University and Mitzel is enrolled at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology in Rapid City.

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 10, 2023** 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 2023.

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 10, 2023 TO:

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

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



NATIVE TOURISM

Native Tourism Alliance shines spotlight on tribal nation culture

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Sure, many of the 15 million travelers who visit South Dakota each year may have marveled at the Mount Rushmore Memorial, snapped a selfie at Wall Drug or beheld the fast-moving waters in Falls Park.

But how many of them have witnessed the whirling splendor of a wacipi, the traditional Native American celebration of life? How many have paused to watch a Native artist crafting a colorful piece of beaded jewelry?

Several years ago, a blind spot was noticed in the Department of Tourism's efforts to attract visitors – not much attention was being focused on the state's nine federally-recognized tribal nations.

In an effort to address that oversight, the department teamed up with the George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies

and the tribes to develop a sustainable indigenous tourism industry by letting visitors know there are many points of interest available for exploration far beyond the beaten paths.

The five-year plan has been described as a “groundbreaking endeavor” and is one of the first initiatives of its kind under the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act and was unveiled in August of 2021. More than 60 state, local and federal organizations collaborated to formulate the strategy as a catalyst for economic growth.

“I think the Alliance is a potential revenue source for our tribes, and it’s a way for us to generate income, alleviate poverty and help conserve our natural resources and culture,” said Dew Bad Warrior-Ganje, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

The plan identified five guiding principles:

Native Tourism Alliance

CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX TRIBE
PO Box 590, Eagle Butte, SD 57625
605-964-4155

CROW CREEK SIOUX TRIBE
PO Box 50, Fort Thompson, SD 57339
605-245-2221

FLANDREAU SANTEE SIOUX TRIBE
PO Box 283, Flandreau, SD 57028-0283
605-997-3891

LOWER BRULE SIOUX TRIBE
PO Box 187, Lower Brule, SD 57548
605-473-5561

OGLALA SIOUX TRIBE
PO Box 2070, Pine Ridge, SD 57770
605-867-5821

ROSEBUD SIOUX TRIBE
PO Box 430, Rosebud, SD 57570
605-747-2381

SISSETON WAHPETON OYATE
PO Box 509, Agency Village, SD 57262
605-698-3911

STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE
PO Box D, Fort Yates, ND 58538
701-854-8500

YANKTON SIOUX TRIBE
PO Box 1153, Wagner, SD 57380
605-384-3641

-
- Unity - Reunification of the Očhéthi Šakówi Oyate through shared history, commonalities, and collaboration on developing regional tourism.
 - Preservation - Promotion of art and culture in order to enhance self-identity and pride as well as preserve the culture, including language and traditional knowledge.
 - Woksape - Recognition of Elders as the driving force of traditional knowledge and wisdom in the development of regional tourism and educating the youth to be stewards of the language and culture.
 - Education - Creation of cross-cultural bridges and educating the World about Native American communities.
 - Self-sufficiency - Development of opportunities for Tribal Nations to become self-sufficient and create pathways to enhance livelihood.

Organizers gathered together and developed detailed goals and methods to achieve those goals. Planners were forced to start from the ground floor as not much data existed to determine the present status of Indigenous tourism.

They initially identified a “rich mix” of 145 existing natural, cultural and heritage attractions and special events to promote, in addition to potential agritourism initiatives.

Nearing the halfway point in the plan’s prescribed timetable, stakeholders report substantial progress and greater interest from visitors seeking an authentic cultural experience.

Calvin Bloemendaal, who has represented the South Dakota Department of Tourism in the Alliance from its inception, pointed out several specific measures of success.

Chief among them is the creation of a nine-day motorcoach tour of tribal territory that starts in Rapid City and terminates in Bismarck. The tour, coordinated with assistance by the tourism department, will begin this summer and will be operated through Destination America and Trafalgar Tours.

“It’s one of the first tours of its kind,” Bloemendaal said. “Destination America caters to an upscale clientele of individuals who like to travel a lot and have been to a lot of places. They’re looking for something unique and interesting they haven’t seen before.”

He also mentioned the progress that has been made in building a network of support for tribal tourism and the development of themed destination experiences.

There’s also a marketing guide that is part of the department’s general ongoing promotional efforts. More than 30,000 of the helpful guides were printed and are being distributed at visitor centers, trade shows and other industry events.

“I was at a trade show in Denver and people were extremely interested in this idea and gravitating toward it. The guide is an effective tool that inspires people to visit,” he said. “We’re making a lot of headway as far as putting together pitches and itineraries to attract more tour operators to the state.”





CULTURE ON DISPLAY

The Mead Cultural Center has a variety of exhibits and programs to appeal to every interest. *Photos by Mead Museum*

Mead Cultural Education Center has something for every interest

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The action seems to never cease at the Mead Cultural Education Center in Yankton.

Between three very popular permanent exhibits, community-based special events and temporary displays that come and go, the constant swirl of activity keeps Rob Marlow on his toes.

Marlow is program director at the museum, which is known affectionately to local supporters and frequenters as “The Mead.” He was finally catching his breath after the Christmastime crush when he and his team had to quickly turn their attention to installing a new traveling exhibit called “Crossroads: Changes in Rural America,” the product of a collaboration between the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street program and the South Dakota Humanities Council.

Previously, the touring exhibit spent several months on display at the South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum

on the SDSU campus in Brookings and will show at The Mead through the first week of March.

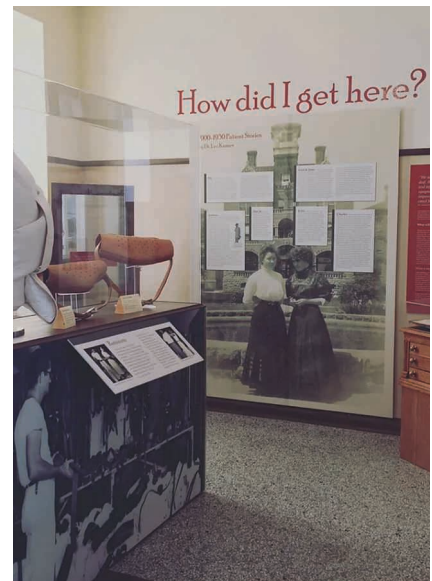
Other stops include the Sturgis Public Library from March 11 through April 30 and the Fort Sisseton Historic State Park from May 6 through June 25.

Marlow explained that the exhibit describes how the U.S. population has shifted away from rural and agrarian communities and moved toward more urban and suburban centers since 1900. It showcases the many ways agriculture-based towns and villages across the country have responded to those changes and in many cases have thrived.

As they’ve felt the impact of the long-term demographic trends, rural communities have been pro-active and intentional in finding new opportunities for growth, innovation and economic development.

“A lot of people who don’t live in rural towns have a perception that they’re barely hanging on by a thread, and that’s not always the situation. The reality is that while it hasn’t been easy,

farmers and ranchers and small town leaders have rolled up their sleeves and met these challenges head-on, to the point that we see many folks coming back to a lifestyle with a slower pace, more freedom, more comfort and more room to roam. It’s really a super success



A display focusing on the historic Yankton State Hospital is a popular attraction at the Mead Cultural Education Center in Yankton.



This display was created by the local Lego club and attracted a lot of interest during the Christmas season. *Photos by Mead Museum*

story, and this exhibit shows that. We're excited to have it here at The Mead," Marlow said.

Meanwhile, curious crowds continue to flock to the museum's three permanent exhibits, which include Yankton State Hospital: Minds, Methods and Medicine; Journey Forward: Connecting Cultures; and the Children's Transportation Museum.

Marlow said visitors and guests generally have a special fascination with the story of how the Mead Building in Yankton was once home to the state's largest mental health facility for women.

The permanent display designed by Jane Bobzin, Carol Ryan and Stan Hoffart opened in 2020 and tracks the history of the facility that dates back to 1879.

It highlights the accomplishments of hospital superintendent Dr. Leonard Mead and Dr. Leo Kanner, considered to be the "Father of American Child Psychiatry" for his innovative work in the field of autism.

"We get a lot of positive reviews and feedback about that display. People walk away learning a lot about the history of the facility and how the hospital provided treatment for those with mental disorders at the time," Marlow said.

Throughout the calendar year, the facility hosts a variety of seasonal events and activities such as the Hall of Trees held each year from Thanksgiving to Christmas.

This past Christmas, nearly 70 local businesses, social organizations and other sponsors decorated trees to reflect the spirit of the season. More than 1,300 visitors cast their vote for best-of-show by dropping a token in a box in front of their favorite tree. Registration fees paid by the competing tree decorators go toward providing free museum admission to those 17 and under.

The 2022 Hall of Trees exhibit also included a 1,400-piece Lego display built by the Yankton Community

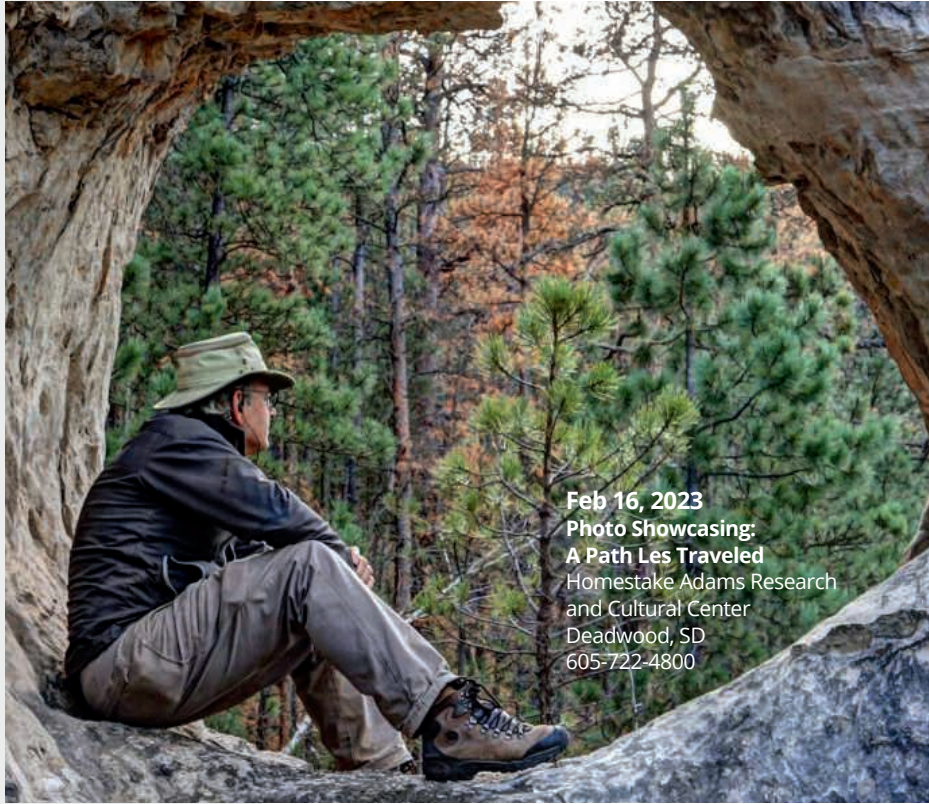
"There's a lot to see and explore at the Mead Building. We feel like the discovery process is something that never ends."

- Rob Marlow

Library Lego Club led by local brickmeister Tom Cihak. Last year's display featured an assortment of Tonka trucks.

Another popular seasonal event occurs during Halloween and is centered around "haunted history" tours of the Mead Building and an "overnight experience" where guests gather together with their sleeping bags and snacks, share ghost stories and listen for signs of any paranormal activity taking place in the crooks and crevices of the structure.

"There's a lot to see and explore at the Mead Building," Marlow said. "We feel like the discovery process is something that never ends."



Feb 16, 2023
Photo Showcasing:
A Path Les Traveled
 Homestake Adams Research
 and Cultural Center
 Deadwood, SD
 605-722-4800

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.

FEB. 3-4
TOOTSIE
 Show Dates:
 Feb. 3, 7:30 p.m.
 Feb. 4, 2 p.m.
 Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m.
 Washington Pavilion
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-6000

FEB. 4
Lake Hendricks Fishing Derby
 9 a.m. registration
 Hendricks City Public
 Lake Access
 Hendricks, MN
 507-828-2113

FEB. 4
**James River Gobblers
 Hunting Heritage Banquet**
 Highland Conference Center
 Mitchell, SD
 605-999-3208

FEB. 10-11
Mardi Gras Weekend
 Mardi Gras Events & Parade
 Sponsored by Deadwood
 Chamber of Commerce
 Main Street
 Deadwood, SD

FEB. 11
Songs of Romance
 7:30 p.m.
 Washington Pavilion
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-6000

FEB. 16
Photo Showcasing:
A Path Les Traveled
 12 p.m.-1 p.m.
 Homestake Adams Research
 and Cultural Center
 Deadwood, SD
 605-722-4800

FEB. 24
Calamity's Shindig
 6 p.m.-9 p.m.
 Homestake Adams Research
 and Cultural Center
 Deadwood, SD
 605-722-4800

FEB. 28
BIG Career & Internship Fair
 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Ramkota Hotel
 Sioux Falls, SD

MARCH 4
Annual Ag Day
 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
 Washington Pavilion
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-6000

MARCH 18
Shamrock Shuffle Fun Run
 12 p.m.
 Main Street
 Presho, SD

MARCH 25-26
**Greater Sioux Falls Model
 Train Show**
 Multi-Cultural Center
 Sioux Falls, SD

MARCH 30
**"The Wildest Banquet
 Auction in the Midwest"**
 5:30 p.m.
 South Dakota Military
 Heritage Alliance
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-339-1203

APRIL 1
Mozart Requiem
 7:30 p.m.
 Washington Pavilion
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-6000

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