

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Anglers from across the region compete in the Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament each year to try their luck and test their skills

Hook, line and auger

Inside the Mobridge ice fishing tourney
Pages 8-9

Shake the blues with winter outdoor fun
Pages 12-13

Keeping the lights on during the cold and dark days of winter



Ben Dunsmoor
Editor

Winter is dark and cold in our part of the country.

The next few months will present us with the shortest daylight hours of the year and temperatures that are colder than you will find anywhere else in the world. During the dark and cold days of winter we rely on stable electricity to provide the light and warmth we need to make it through the season.

Co-ops believe an 'all of the above' approach to generation will ensure the lights come on when our members need it most.

You may have read some articles over the last few weeks that said the electricity we need to keep us warm is in short supply this winter. These reports are based off the 'Winter Reliability Assessment' that was released in November by the nonprofit North American Energy Reliability Corporation (NERC). The NERC report said that several areas of North America are at risk of insufficient electricity supplies if there is a long period of cold temperatures. I would like to highlight two key points from this report:

1. It is important to listen to this warning and be alert to the changes happening in the power industry.
2. Co-op members in South Dakota should be assured that forecasts are positive for our region to have enough electricity during the coldest days of winter.

The NERC report highlights the problems that are caused when we shut down coal-fired power plants before they have reached the end of their useful life. The NERC report points to the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Michigan and portions of North Dakota and South Dakota that fall into the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) electric grid. According to NERC, this region has lost 4.2 gigawatts of coal and nuclear generation since last winter due to early closures of power plants. The NERC report said those early shutdowns in those states are the main reason the region may not have enough electricity during an extreme weather event this winter.

My second point is that co-op members in South Dakota should be assured that the outlook is positive for our region this winter. Electric cooperatives in South Dakota mostly fall into the grid footprint of the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) and not MISO. The NERC report said that the Southwest Power Pool's 'reserves are adequate for the upcoming winter season.' The report highlights that the SPP footprint has added 3,700 megawatts of natural gas fired power plants since last winter and SPP does not anticipate any 'emerging reliability issues impacting the area for the 2022-2023 winter season.'

The NERC report shows us what will happen when coal and nuclear power plants are shut down early without a steady and stable replacement. Electric co-ops in our region are supportive of an 'all of the above' approach to provide the reliable electricity we need in the Great Plains. Electric cooperatives have been adding renewables to our generation portfolio over the past two decades, and we will continue to add more renewables, however, we also need stable sources of coal and natural gas generation to keep the lights on and the heaters running. Co-ops believe an 'all of the above' approach will ensure the lights come on when our members need it most; especially during those cold and dark days of winter.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

NORTHERN ELECTRIC

(USPS 396-040)

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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 November board meeting was held December 2, 2022, at the headquarters in Bath with all directors present. As the first order of business, the board approved the October 20, 2022, minutes, and October expenditures. The Board then reviewed and accepted monthly reports by management. East River Director Kirk Schaunaman reported on the East River Board meetings held November 3 and December 1. General Manager Char Hager reported on the East River MAC Meetings held November 1 and November 29. South Dakota Rural Electric Association Director Nolan Wipf reported on the SDREA Board Meeting held November 28-29. Director Ronald Kaaz reported on South Dakota Wind Energy Association current developments. Director Ronald Kaaz and Communications Director Ben Dunsmoor reported on the Basin Electric Annual Meeting and Regional Communications Advisory Group (RCAG) Meeting held November 8-9, 2022, in Bismarck, ND.

MANAGER'S REPORT

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

- Update on Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) revolving loan fund.
- Legal and Legislative Report.
- Reported on the November Ice Storm that occurred November 10-13, 2022.
- Reported on the East River 2023 Rate.
- Reported on the 2022 American Consumer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) survey of the Northern Electric members.

- Informed directors of the 2023 NRECA PowerXchange and TechAdvantage, March 3-8, Nashville, Tennessee.
- Informed directors of the 2023 director education courses 2610, 2630, and 2640 which can be taken online. These courses are required to become a Credentialed Cooperative Director.

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 22, 2022.
2. Approved Work Order Inventories #22-10 for \$385,571.92 and #22-10MC for \$283,860.92 to be submitted to the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) for reimbursement from loan funds for construction already completed.
3. 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, 2022.
4. Authorized Eide Bailly to perform audit of employee benefit plans.
5. Appointed Director Todd Hettich delegate and Director Kirk Schaunaman alternate for the SDREA's Annual Meeting and Legislative Dinner, January 12-13, 2023, in Pierre.
6. Approved the 2023 Capital Budget.
7. Held Executive Session.

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

FINANCIAL REPORT

	Oct-22	Oct-21
kWh Sales	22,666,561 kWh	24,729,367 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$2,201,204	\$2,344,502
Total Cost of Service	\$2,121,376	\$2,264,702
Operating Margins.....	\$79,828	\$79,800
Year to Date Margins	\$835,303	\$391,999

RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE MONTHLY USAGE AND BILL

OCT-2022.....	1,871 kWh.....	\$207.46.....	0.1109 per kWh
OCT-2021.....	1,774 kWh.....	\$202.19.....	0.1140 per kWh

Wholesale power cost, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for 82.5% of NEC's total cost of service.

Tips to use your electric blanket wisely

Heating pads and electric blankets cause around 500 fires throughout the U.S. each year. Almost all of these fires involve electric blankets more than 10 years old.

Learn how to stay safe and injury-free.

- Heating appliances should never be left unattended or used while sleeping.
- Do not plug electric blankets into an extension cord or power strip, as they could overheat and cause a fire.
- Look for dark, charred, or frayed spots or electrical cords that are cracked or frayed. Replace any worn or old heating pads or electric blankets.
- Never fold electric blankets when in use. Folded or tucked-in electric blankets could overheat and cause a fire.
- When purchasing electronics, including electric blankets, be sure to only purchase from reputable retailers. Purchase devices that have been approved by a nationally recognized testing laboratory.
- Do not allow anything to rest on top of a heating pad or electric blanket when it is in use. It may cause the device to overheat.
- There are two types of personal heating appliances: electric blankets and heating pads that are placed directly on the mattress. They are not meant to be used interchangeably or at the same time.

Gums wins Connections annual recipe contest

Lily Gums of Clear Lake has been selected winner of the annual *Cooperative Connections* member recipe contest.

Gums submitted a beverage recipe she calls "Swamp Water" that was published in the April 2022 issue of the magazine. She received a \$25 gift card for her submission. Congratulations, Lily!

She is a member of H-D Electric Cooperative based in Clear Lake.

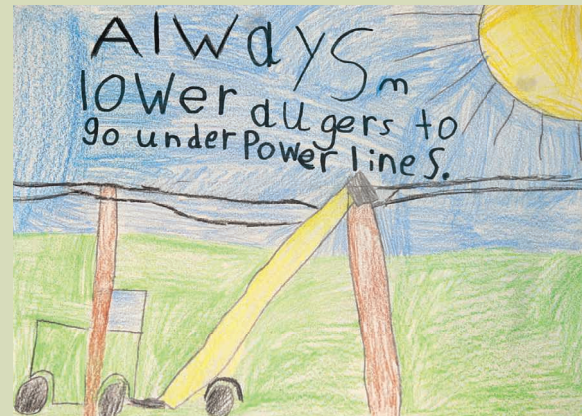


CO-OP LEADERS SERVE THEIR MEMBERS AND CONSTITUENTS



Ryan Maher is both a state senator and a board member at Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative in Timber Lake. He is one of three cooperative leaders who play unique roles in serving their co-op consumers while also serving their constituents as state lawmakers during the legislative session in Pierre.

To view the comments and insights of these lawmakers and learn more about how electric cooperatives work to improve our communities, visit Cooperative Connections Plus by scanning the QR code at right.



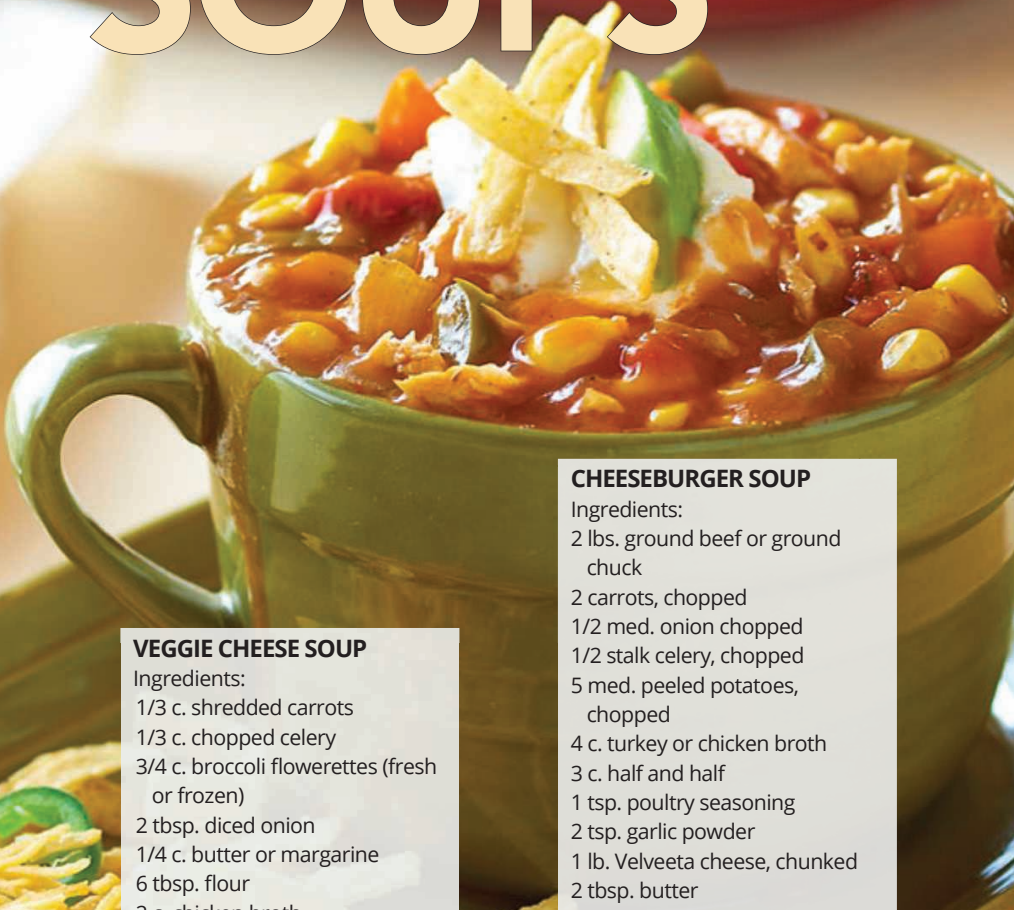
Be safe around power lines

Weston Kling

Weston Kling, age 7, urges equipment operators to always lower augers to accommodate for overhead power lines. Weston is the son of Tyler and Alexis Kling of Rapid City. They are members of West River Electric based in Wall.

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.

SUPER SOUPS



VEGGIE CHEESE SOUP

Ingredients:
 1/3 c. shredded carrots
 1/3 c. chopped celery
 3/4 c. broccoli flowerettes (fresh or frozen)
 2 tbsp. diced onion
 1/4 c. butter or margarine
 6 tbsp. flour
 2 c. chicken broth
 2 c. milk
 2 c. Velveeta cheese, cubed

METHOD

Cook carrots, celery and broccoli in 1 cup water until tender crisp. Saute onions in butter. Add flour to blend. Add milk and stir to make white sauce then add cheese and stir until melted. Add chicken broth and vegetables in remaining water. Blend until smooth.

Nancy Stenson, Fort Pierre

CHEESEBURGER SOUP

Ingredients:
 2 lbs. ground beef or ground chuck
 2 carrots, chopped
 1/2 med. onion chopped
 1/2 stalk celery, chopped
 5 med. peeled potatoes, chopped
 4 c. turkey or chicken broth
 3 c. half and half
 1 tsp. poultry seasoning
 2 tsp. garlic powder
 1 lb. Velveeta cheese, chunked
 2 tbsp. butter
 salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

Brown ground meat in large pot. Drain and return to pot. Add butter, onion, carrots, celery and potatoes. Cook for 5 minutes. Add broth, poultry seasoning, garlic powder and continue cooking until vegetables are tender. Add half and half and Velveeta cheese and continue heating until cheese has melted. Salt and pepper to taste.

Kathleen Meier, Firesteel

CHICKEN FAJITA SOUP

Ingredients:
 1 tbsp. oil
 1 med. green bell pepper, cut into 1/2-inch chunks
 1 med. red bell pepper, cut into 1/2-inch chunks
 1 sm. onion, finely chopped
 3 tbsp. tomato paste
 1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
 1 pkg. McCormick® Organics Fajita Seasoning Mix
 3 c. chicken stock
 1 can (14.5 ounces) petite diced tomatoes, drained
 1 c. frozen corn
 1 c. tortilla strips

METHOD

Heat oil in large saucepan or Dutch oven on medium-high heat. Add peppers and onion; cook and stir 2 minutes. Add tomato paste; cook and stir 2 minutes. Stir in chicken, Seasoning Mix, stock, tomatoes and corn. Bring to boil. Reduce heat; simmer 20 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. Ladle soup into bowls. Sprinkle with tortilla strips. Serve with desired toppings.

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.

Q: Are smart home technologies energy efficient? Will making these technology upgrades save me money?



Miranda Boutelle
Efficiency Services
Group

A: You've probably heard the term "smart home" a lot in recent years. If you're curious about what makes a home smart, how it can boost energy efficiency and help you save money, you have come to the right place.

"Smart" was originally an acronym for self-monitoring analysis and reporting technology. This refers to technology that can be programmed for automation or controlled remotely using Bluetooth or Wi-Fi from a smart phone app or online. A smart home is one with automated control of appliances and systems, such as lighting fixtures and heating and cooling systems.

There are multiple reasons people choose to automate their homes, including convenience, energy efficiency and security. Just because a product is smart, don't assume it's energy efficient. Added connectivity, lights and touchscreens can actually increase your energy use. Always look for the ENERGY STAR® logo, which certifies the products meet standards for energy efficiency.

Energy savings typically come from automating the systems, devices and appliances in your home to use less energy or use energy when it costs less. Here are a few ways you can start implementing smart technology at home.

SMART UPGRADES FOR THE ENTIRE HOME

Because heating and cooling account for the most energy use in a home, these systems are the best place to look for energy savings.

Smart thermostats offer features and functionality that can help you save energy and money without thinking about it, including learning preferences and automatically setting temperatures. Geofencing is a feature that uses your phone's location to gauge your distance from home and adjusts the temperature accordingly.

Smart thermostats also let you control the thermostat from anywhere with an internet

connection, and automatic software updates use new algorithms to maximize energy savings. Features vary by product, so be sure to choose the one that's right for you.

Smart window coverings are increasing in popularity. They can help save energy both in the winter and summer by operating based on the temperature of the room or a preset schedule.

Smart lighting can help you remotely control lights in your home, based on occupancy or a preset schedule. Lighting also can be paired with home security systems.

You can use smart outlets and power strips to control devices from outside the home or manage use based on load. For example, you can plug your devices into a load-sensing power strip that turns off peripheral devices, such as monitors and printers, when your computer is not in use.

SMART STREAMING FOR THE LIVING ROOM

Many people use Wi-Fi to stream TV shows and movies. Smart TVs with built-in streaming functionality offer the most efficient way to stream content. If your TV cannot connect to the internet for streaming, opt for a streaming media player, such as Roku or Apple TV. They use 15 times less energy than a gaming console to stream the same shows and movies.

SAVE ON SUDS IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM

Smart washing machines can be scheduled for off-peak energy times (when people in your community use less energy), which is helpful if your electric rate is based on the time of day energy is used. Smart clothes dryers can shut off automatically when your clothes are dry.

SMART SAVINGS IN THE KITCHEN

There are many options for smart appliances in the heart of the home. Smart refrigerators offer energy-saving features, such as notifications when the door is left open. Digital screens show the contents to keep you from opening the door.

Smart ovens let you preheat when you are on your way home or check if you forgot to turn off the oven when you are away. Toasters, range hoods, microwaves and countertop ice makers are among the growing list of additional smart kitchen gadgets available.



FEM Electric General Manager Scott Moore enters his first term in the state Legislature. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Co-op GM hopes to take the 'D.C.' out of state politics

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Some people seem to enjoy playing in the political sandbox, and then some people have to be persuaded to seek public office.

Scott Moore, the general manager at FEM Electric based in Ipswich, falls into the second category. Last November, Moore was elected to serve as the state representative for District 23, but it took a lot of cajoling and arm-twisting to get him to seek the seat.

Moore joined the cooperative as an apprentice lineman in 1993 and worked his way up to the top of the figurative power pole to become general manager in 2006. Along the way, he'd been approached about running for elected positions on the city council, school board and other public service organizations but always balked at the idea.

"I just never had any interest," he said while gearing up for his first

legislative session in Pierre. "But people kept asking me about running for the Legislature, so I thought I'd give it a try."

He talked it over with the FEM Board of Directors to seek their approval and recruited his wife, Beth, to serve as his de facto campaign advisor. She had been elected to two terms on the Ipswich City Council, so she knew the ropes.

Last spring, Moore hit the campaign trail with optimism and zeal, zipping from one end of the seven-county district to the other and engaging with the public through a series of forums and cracker barrel events. When the ballots were tallied, Moore led the pack with more than 3,100 votes.

Approaching his first session, Moore anticipates it might be like "drinking from a fire hose." It's an analogy that he also applies when thinking back to his days running a family-owned gas station and restaurant when he was 20 years old and back when he first took over as FEM's general manager. He notes that it didn't take him long to find his footing

with those other adventures.

Bearing down on the age of 60, Moore said he recognizes there will be a learning curve, but he feels no trepidation about taking on the responsibility of playing a role in crafting the laws that all citizens of the state are bound to follow.

"There are a lot of people to talk to and resources available if I have questions or need help," he said. "I'm pretty upfront and people usually know where I stand, but I don't come into this with any kind of political agenda."

Even though he'll be a legislative neophyte, that doesn't mean he has no opinions or points of view when it comes to the state political scene.

"We seem to be playing a lot of D.C. politics, and I would like to get rid of that," he said. "If you're not trying to find a way to compromise and work with people across the hallway, that's not real politics. That's just saying, 'It's my way or the highway.' That's not going to work. You can compromise without abandoning your principles. It didn't start happening overnight, so it's not going to be fixed overnight. But you have to start someplace."



The annual Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament attracts more than 1,000 avid cold-weather anglers. *Photo by Mobridge Outdoors*

Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament offers fun and friendly competition

Billy Gibson

editor@sdrea.coop

Last fall, the world of competitive walleye fishing was shaken with a startling saga of deception and skulduggery worthy of a Tom Clancy novel.

Social media lit up showing the dramatic moment a tournament director in Ohio shouted at the top of his lungs with horror and disgust: “We got weights in fish! We got weights in fish!”

Suspicion had long surrounded a pair of locals who ultimately got nabbed stuffing lead weights down the gullets of their walleye. After the two sparked skepticism with a catch of nearly 36 lbs. - one-third heavier than the runners-up - the director gutted the fish right in front of the entire field of wary competitors and held aloft several shiny orbs the size of steel ping-pong balls.

The viral video received more than 10 million views as cameras captured the chaotic scene with one of the accused hanging his head in shame (his partner had slithered away to his truck) while fellow competitors cursed and threatened to inflict bodily harm upon the sly anglers who were later indicted on four felony counts.

Vinson Dargatz is pretty sure nothing close to that degree of high drama will be replicated at the 22nd Annual Mobridge Walleye Ice Fishing Tournament set for Jan. 14. Based on his experience participating in the event over the past 12 years, this competition is more fisherman-friendly and the atmosphere is much more focused on fun.

Dargatz, an apprentice electrician at Lake Region Electric based in Webster, has continued to make the four-hour trip from his home to Mobridge mostly

because of the fellowship and the relaxed, laid-back vibe of the festivities.

He typically gets together with his two brothers and three cousins for the tournament that he describes as a “yearly ritual.”



Vinson Dargatz is shown with one of his prize catches.

“We always have a lot of fun” he said. “We used to just bring a portable shack out on the ice and sit on some buckets while we fished. But now that we’ve gotten older, softer and a little smarter, we have an Ice Castle and we fish and hang out and grill some burgers.”

Number of two-person fishing teams competing

551

in last year's Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament

Dargatz confesses that the purchase of the 8 x 16-foot Ice Castle was actually his wife's idea. When it's time for an outdoor fishing excursion, the entire family with two boys and a girl always likes to come along. And mom insists on having adequate accommodations.

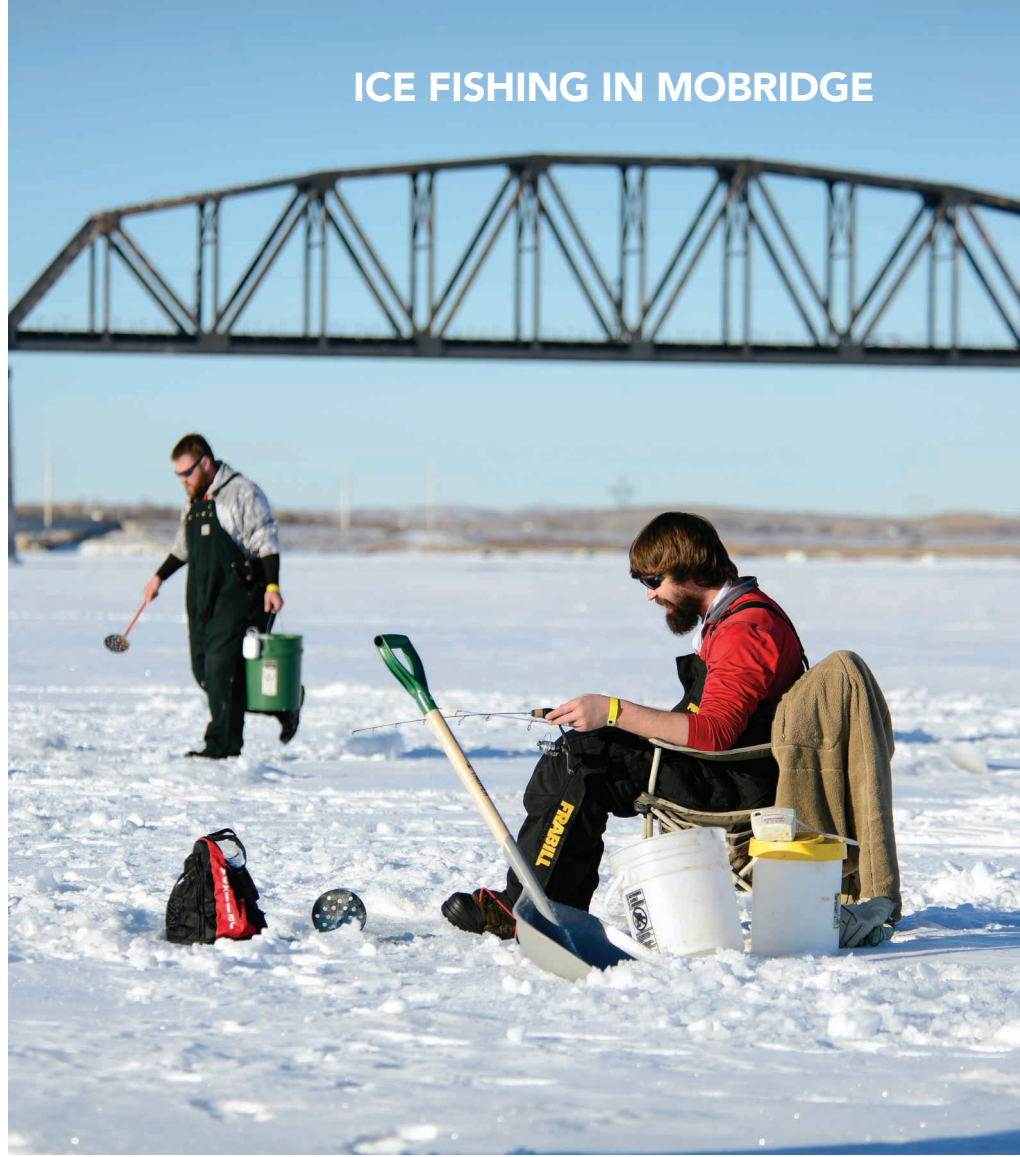
But Dargatz said when it comes to the annual winter escapes to Mobridge with the fellas, the family has to find something else to do. Besides, the town already doubles in size during tournament weekend and if every angler brought hangers-on in tow, Mobridge might expand to the size of Sioux Falls.

FILLED TO CAPACITY

Lately, the walleye population is standing less of a chance for survival against the increasing number of competitors testing their luck and skill in the annual tournament. The field has ballooned to the point of being capped at 551 two-person teams with fishermen swarming in from 16 different states.

Only so many humans can be stuffed into the town's expo center where the group events are held.

All of these developments have bewildered Jeff Jackson, one of the tournament's founders and owner of the Wrangler Inn in Mobridge. He recalls more than two decades ago sitting around the table with a group of town leaders who were trying to figure out a way to attract visitors to the area and capitalize on all the outdoor adventure the Missouri



The Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament draws eager competitors from 16 different states.

Photo by Travel South Dakota

River and Lake Oahe have to offer.

In the first year, 50 eager contenders were lured to the event by the opportunity to claim the super grand prize of a Mr. Heater. These days, the prize list represents more than \$225,000 in assorted items such as Ice Castles, four-wheelers, a Polaris Ranger, clam shacks, \$8,000 worth of outdoor gear from Scheel's and Runnings, and more.

Anglers can keep their spot in the field if they register early in mid-July, otherwise their spot will be thrown into a lottery. Three guaranteed positions are drawn each year for those who participate in the town's summer fishing tournament, the Annual Denny Palmer Memorial Walleye Classic. Three spots are auctioned off on Ebay, which typically fetch up to \$4,000 apiece, while a

final spot is raffled off.

Last year's winners were Travis Bergstrom and Tate Merchant, who registered four fish weighing a total of 15.8 lbs. including one lunker that tipped the scales at 9.33 lbs. Jason Converse and Josh Spilde finished second with five fish weighing in at 13.4 lbs.

Dargatz already has the July 2023 registration date on his calendar and reminder notifications set to make sure he doesn't miss out. He's anticipating another adventurous outing in this year's tourney.

"I think it's great for the town to have so many people visiting and spending money. It's pretty wild that a small town can pull something like that together. They run it like a well-oiled machine and make sure everyone has a good time."



Northern Electric Cooperative employees donated more than 200 items to the Salvation Army in Aberdeen for the organization's annual Christmas food distribution. Senior Billing Specialist Brittany Holcomb (left) and Accounting Clerk Karli Stubbe (right) pose with the donated items.



Chief Financial Officer Lorisa Rudolph (left) and Accountant Ben Krueger (right) show off the dozens of toys donated by Northern Electric employees to the 'Toys for Tots' program.

HOLIDAY DONATIONS

Northern Electric Cooperative employees donate food and toys for families in need

Ben Dunsmoor

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Northern Electric Cooperative employees displayed their generosity during the holiday season by donating hundreds of items to local charities.

Employees collected nearly 300 canned goods and non-perishable food items for the Salvation Army in Aberdeen and the Tri-County Good Samaritan Center in Redfield.

More than 150 cans of vegetables, soups, pasta sauce, and pie fillings were collected along with dozens of boxes of cereal, pasta, mashed potatoes, and rice for the Salvation Army's Christmas food distribution program. The food will be given to families in need in the Aberdeen area during the week of Christmas so they have groceries for meals over the holidays.

Northern Electric employees in Redfield also collected dozens of canned goods, toys, and hats and

mittens for the Tri-County Good Samaritan Center in Redfield. The center helps individuals and families in Spink, Faulk, and Hand counties.

Dozens of toys were also donated by employees at the Bath headquarters office for the annual 'Toys for Tots' drive. The local 'Toys for Tots' program distributes more than 4,000 toys to children throughout northeastern South Dakota including the communities of Aberdeen, Redfield, and Mobridge. The toys are distributed through local agencies such as the Salvation Army, Safe Harbor, New Beginnings, Child Protective Services and many local church and youth programs.



Four legislators attended the Northeast Rural Utilities Legislative Issues Forum. (Pictured left to right) Sen. Al Novstrup, District 3, Rep. Scott Moore, District 23, Rep. Brandei Schaeffbauer, District 3, Northern Electric GM/CEO Char Hager, Rep. Carl Perry, District 3, and East River Electric Business Development Director Mike Jaspers. **Photo: Billy Gibson**

LEGISLATIVE FORUM

Electric cooperatives meet with local legislators ahead of 2023 session

Representatives from four northeastern South Dakota electric cooperatives met with local legislators on December 2 to discuss issues for the upcoming 2023 legislative session. Board members and staff members from Lake Region Electric Association, Northern Electric Cooperative, FEM Electric Association, and Cam-Wal Electric Cooperative were in attendance at the 2022 Northeast Rural Utilities Legislative Issues Forum at Moccasin Creek Country Club.

“This annual event allows us to highlight the issues that are important to electric cooperatives, our members and our rural communities,” Northern Electric Cooperative General Manager/CEO Char Hager said.

East River Electric Power Cooperative Business Development

Director Mike Jaspers presented the issues that co-ops will be following during the 2023 session. The issues include rural housing initiatives recently passed the legislature, the impact of the infrastructure bills passed by Congress, power-supply availability and pricing, and the increasing costs of materials.

Senator Al Novstrup of Aberdeen, Representative Carl Perry of Aberdeen, Representative Brandei Schaeffbauer of Aberdeen, and Representative Scott Moore of Ipswich attended the event.

“We don’t know what we don’t know,” Rep. Carl Perry said about attending the forum. “This gives us dialog with a sector of our constituents.”

The forum is an annual event hosted by local electric cooperatives across the state and the South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA).

**RECIPES
NEEDED FOR**

**The
Country
Cookin’**
cookbook

Your recipe could be featured in the 39th volume of East River Electric’s Country Cookin’ cookbook!

Help us create another great cookbook by submitting your favorite recipes as well as recipes for the cookbook’s “Wild Game” section.

Submit recipes via email to

ajohannsen@eastriver.coop

or contact your local cooperative for more information.



WINTER OUTDOOR FUN

The chill of winter doesn't keep outdoors enthusiasts from finding adventure at Farm Island Recreation Area. *Photos by Travel South Dakota*

Winter adventure-seekers find wonder in the chilly outdoors

Billy Gibson

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Mental health counselors have discovered that seasonal affective disorder can be much more than just a harmless case of the blahs - it's a real condition that afflicts millions of people when the daylight diminishes and the temps turn colder.

They also agree that one way to defend against the winter doldrums is to get out of the house, embrace the crisp invigorating air and enjoy all the season has to offer.

It doesn't take much time or effort to create a list of fun things to do to get the blood pumping and the spirit soaring. Stepping away from a stuffy den and going outside to build a snowman, hike a nature trail, roast marshmallows over a bonfire and engage in other activities with family and friends can help bring back some

mental and emotional balance.

Nick Harrington of South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks said his department is eager to accommodate anyone looking to extract some fun from the chill of winter.

Harrington notes that many of the state's 50-plus public camping and recreation areas are open for attendance during the long winter months, although some facilities are closed in an effort to protect delicate nesting habitats

for eagles and other species of wildlife.

Some comfort stations may close down during winter but the state has modern lodges available with amenities such as heaters and running water, including cabins, suites and group lodges for cold-weather outdoor vacationing.

Harrington said that while many vacationers from far and wide flock to South Dakota in the summertime, the state boasts more than 1,500 miles of nature trails for cold-weather adventurers to discover and is one



Fat-tire biking in Spearfish Canyon

8 WINTER WONDERLANDS FOR OUTDOOR ADVENTURE

- * Wind Cave National Park, Hot Springs
- * Snake Creek Recreation Area, Platte
- * Palisades State Park, Garretson
- * Custer State Park Spur, Custer
- * Randall Creek SRA, Pickstown
- * Pelican Lake, Pelican Township
- * Farm Island SRA, Pierre
- * Oakwood Lakes State Park, Bruce



Time spent outdoors during the winter can be beneficial to mental and physical well-being.

of the nation's top attractions for snowmobiling, snowshoeing, hiking, fat-tire biking and many other off-season outdoor adventures.

"Some people just enjoy getting out in the cold weather. They like the changing of the seasons we get in our region and they're always looking for new opportunities to explore what we have to offer without a lot of crowds," Harrington said. "It's already a beautiful state, but winter really changes the look of the landscape and is a big draw for many people looking for outdoor fun."

World-renowned summertime attractions such as the iconic Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse destinations take on an entirely different appeal during the snowy season. The Badlands geological formations, Ponderosa pine forests, open prairies, secluded lakes and

scenic waterways become even more alluring for landscape photographers, bird-watchers, hikers and wildlife enthusiasts when set against a charming and aesthetically pleasing wintry backdrop.

One of the most highly-attended state park destinations during both the summer and winter is Custer State Park with its 71,000 acres of trails, spectacular vistas and pristine lakes. The site is open year-round and during winter offers a wide array of things to see and do.

But there is still lots to explore across the state, including the more centrally situated Farm Island Recreation Area located four miles east of Pierre. Considered one of the park system's best-kept secrets, Farm Island sits nestled along the banks of Lake Sharpe

and the Missouri River and welcomes many winter guests who enjoy majestic glowing sunsets, ice fishing, eight miles of hiking trails, cross-country skiing and exploring the perfect natural habitat for birdwatching. There's also RV, primitive and cabin camping opportunities available.

For more ideas on how to plan trip and shake off the winter blues, check out this handy guide: www.travelsouthdakota.com/winter.

And after deciding on your winter vacation plans, don't forget to pack the following along with the rest of your cold-weather gear:

- Wool base layer
- Fleece mid-layer
- Windproof outer layer
- Waterproof boots
- Warm hat, scarf, gloves and socks.



Aberdeen Central High School Senior Abiah George (left) receives \$250 from Northern Electric Cooperative board member Scott Sperry (right) for being named the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week.

SCHOLAR OF THE WEEK

Abiah George Named Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week on December 5

Ben Dunsmoor

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Aberdeen Central High School senior Abiah George literally hit the ground running when she moved to Aberdeen with her family four years ago. George’s plane touched down at the Aberdeen airport at 11 p.m. and less than ten hours later she walked through the doors of Aberdeen Central High School for the first day of her freshman year.

“I think the reason I joined all these things (school activities) is to meet friends,” George said.

George is involved in a lot of ‘things’ at Aberdeen Central and in the community. She has qualified twice for the National Speech and Debate Tournament and placed 19th in the country in the ‘Public Forum’ category this past summer. She placed 11th in the nation for her ‘Introduction to Business’ presentation at the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) Nationals last year. George

is also the president of the Aberdeen Central SADD chapter, the vice president of the school’s National Honor Society (NHS) chapter, and has volunteered at the Salvation Army, the Aberdeen YMCA, and helped with Halloween safety programs for elementary school students.

George added another award to her long list of accomplishments on December 5 when she was named the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week.

“I was not expecting it at all. It is very awesome and very sweet,” George said about being named the Scholar of the Week.

The Aberdeen Central High School senior has a 4.34-grade point average (GPA) and is preparing to pursue a legal career. George moved to the United States from India when she was ten years old. She moved to Aberdeen four years later when her mother accepted a job at Northern State University. She plans to attend Northern State University’s pre-law program next fall with the goal of becoming an immigration lawyer.

George’s advice for other students to achieve success is to not be afraid to try new things just like she did when she moved to Aberdeen four years ago.

“If you try it, you can do it,” George said. “I do so many things, but if you are conscious about your responsibilities and proactive, you can do it.”

George received \$250 from Northern Electric Cooperative for being named the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week. She was featured on Dakota News Now during the 6 p.m. broadcast on December 5.



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:

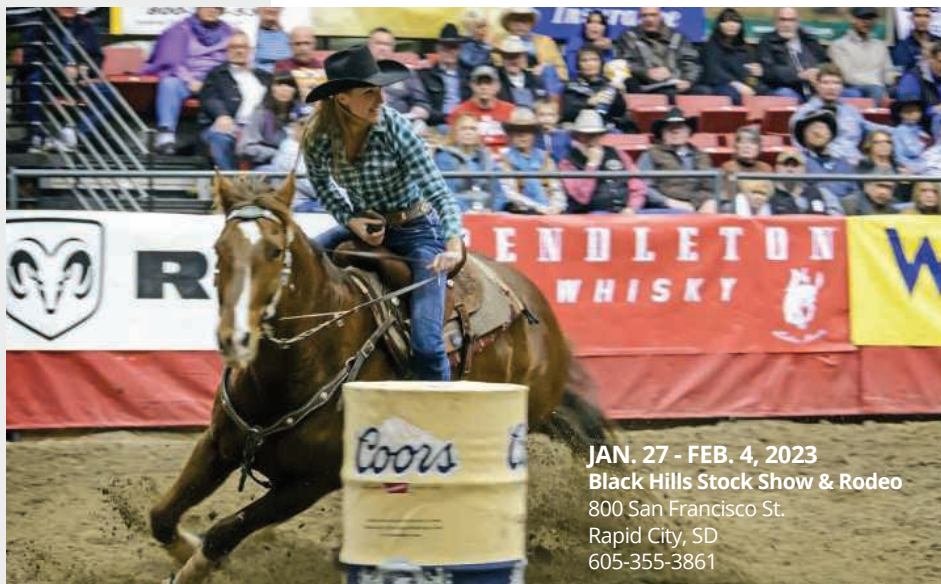
Northern Electric Cooperative
Attention: Kay Albrecht
PO Box 457
Bath, SD 57427

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

REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth in LaCroix Hall at the Black Hills Stock Show to win an electric snow blower!

Your Phone Number: _____
Your E-mail Address: _____



JAN. 27 - FEB. 4, 2023
Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo
800 San Francisco St.
Rapid City, SD
605-355-3861

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.

JAN. 1
American Legion Post 15
Pancake Breakfast
8:30 a.m.-12 p.m.
South Dakota Military Heritage
Alliance Building
1600 W. Russell St.
Sioux Falls, SD

JAN. 13-14
ON YOUR FEET! THE MUSICAL
Show Dates:
Jan. 13, 7:30 p.m.
Jan. 14, 2 p.m.
Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m.
Washington Pavilion
Sioux Falls, SD

JAN. 14
Coats for Kids Bowling
Tournament
Registration Starts at 1 p.m.
\$80 for a four-person team
Meadowood Lanes
Rapid City, SD
605-393-2081

JAN. 14
Chinook Days
Winter Carnival
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Big Hill
Spearfish, SD

JAN. 20
Rapid Valley UMC
Soup Supper
4:30 p.m.-7 p.m.
Rapid City, SD

JAN. 21
Lakota Games on Ice
1 p.m.-4 p.m.
Mitchell Prehistoric Indian Village
Mitchell, SD

JAN. 27-28
Annual Deadwood Pro
Snocross Races
Jan. 27, 12:50 p.m.
Jan. 28, 8:25 a.m.
Days of '76 Rodeo Grounds
Deadwood, SD

JAN. 27 - FEB. 4
Annual Black Hills Stock
Show & Rodeo
Central States Fairgrounds and
The Monument
Tickets may be purchased
online and at the gate
Rapid City, SD
605-355-3861

JAN. 28
K9 Keg Pull
On-site registration
10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Deadwood Street by
Outlaw Square
Deadwood, SD

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

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

MAR. 4
Annual Ag Day
9 a.m.-1 p.m.
Washington Pavilion
Sioux Falls, SD

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