

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Pristine Prairie

**Tellus & Lori Waddell Grow,
Harvest Native Plants**

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Drive Out to a Drive-In!

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Lessons from the first year at NEC



Kathy Haas
Communications
Specialist

Somewhere in the chaos of summer, my one-year anniversary at Northern Electric flew by. As I've been preparing for events that I helped with last year, I still felt a little green. A saying kept popping into my head: "Two rodeos still isn't very many rodeos," often accompanied by the image of a sad raccoon in a cowboy hat. A tongue-in-cheek counterpoint to "this isn't my first rodeo." So, if you're still feeling a little new to the cooperative or you just want a newbie's perspective, here are a couple lessons that really stuck out for me.

INTERCONNECTED

Cooperatives really are, well, cooperative! It seems obvious, in hindsight. Electric cooperatives from across the state and nation work together for better leverage to secure reliable and affordable services for their members. Northern is part of the 24 cooperatives that make up East River Electric Cooperative and the 138 cooperatives that helped form Basin Electric Power Cooperative. From helping each other get the power back on after a storm and providing safety training to freely sharing articles, your South Dakota electric cooperatives are genuinely working together for you!

CO-OP SHORTHAND

Electric cooperatives use a lot of acronyms and initialism. My first day, I was given an extensive list of the commonly condensed nouns and names. Here is a very brief list of terms and abbreviations you should know, too.

Capital Credits: Money that is given back to the members after all the co-op's bills have been paid. See page 10!

Demand: How many kilowatts you need at the same moment in time. If you are running three appliances at the same time, that has a higher demand than running them one at a time, even though you use the same amount of electricity.

G&T: Generation and Transmission. Cooperatives that provide power to local cooperatives either by producing it or providing the infrastructure. Northern's G&Ts are East River Electric (transmission) and Basin Power Electric (transmission and generation).

SPP: Southwest Power Pool. A regional transmission organization (TSO) that manages the electric grid and wholesale power market for much of the central United States.

WAPA: Western Area Power Administration. A federal agency that markets and delivers hydro-electric power and transmission services for municipalities, public power cooperatives and state and federal agencies, among others.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

I was pleasantly surprised to learn that Electric Cooperatives are more involved in their communities than I had expected. It's one of the core tenants of being a cooperative. From educational events to supporting local nonprofits, Northern Electric takes its responsibility to the community very seriously. In just a year, I've been able to talk to most of the fifth-grade students in our territory about electrical safety, help raise up selfless individuals with the Who Powers You contest, and send two high school students to Washington D.C. to learn more about democracy and electric cooperatives.

I'm excited to learn more in my second year. See you at the next rodeo!

NEC LAND FOR SALE

Northern Electric Cooperative is hereby soliciting Expressions of Interest (EOI) or Request for Proposals (RFP) regarding its desire to sell approximately 9.5 acres of real estate owned by the Cooperative located north of the Northern Electric office building located at 17140 N US HWY 281, Redfield, SD. The property is presently zoned Highway commercial.

Interested parties should contact Char Hager or Jerry Weber at 605-225-0310. Inquiries must be received by Sept. 30, 2026.

THIS IS A REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS ONLY. SUBMISSION OF A PROPOSAL CONSTITUTES AN OFFER BY THE SUBMITTING PARTY AND DOES NOT CREATE ANY LEGAL OBLIGATION ON THE PART OF THE SELLER. THE SELLER IS NOT BOUND TO ACCEPT THE HIGHEST OFFER, ANY OFFER, OR ANY PROPOSAL SUBMITTED.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

NORTHERN ELECTRIC

(USPS 396-040)

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info@northernelectric.coop

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Manager of Information Technology:
Derek Gorecki

Communications Specialist: Kathy Haas

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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Postmaster: Please send address changes to Northern Electric Cooperative Connections, PO Box 457, Bath, SD 57427; telephone (605) 225-0310; fax (605) 225-1684

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JULY BOARD REPORT

Northern Electric Cooperative's regular board meeting was held July 31, 2026, at the Agtegra Cooperative headquarters with all directors present. As the first order of business, the board approved the June 22, 2026, minutes and June expenditures. East River Director Kirk Schaunaman reported on actions taken by the East River Board at the July 2, 2026, meeting. South Dakota Rural Electric Association Director Nolan Wipf reported on the SDREA Board Meeting held on June 25-26, 2026. JDH Construction gave a progress report on the headquarters building project.

MANAGER'S REPORT

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

- Reported on the East River MAC Meeting held on June 30, 2026.
- Reported on Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) Board Meeting held July 2, 2026.
- Reported on the employee meeting held on July 20, 2026.
- Reported on the Basin Electric Summer Manager's Conference held on July 22-24, 2026.
- Provided department updates.

BOARD REPORT

The board considered and/or acted upon the following:

- Approved the date and time of the next regular board meeting

for 8:30 a.m. on Friday, August 26, 2026.

- Approved Work Order Inventory #26-06 for \$111,937.75 to be submitted to the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) for reimbursement from loan funds for electric plant construction already completed.
- Approved the Single Audit (A-133) report provided by Eide Bailly.
- Appointed Director Todd Hettich authorized representative for the 2026 NRECA Regional Meetings 5 & 6, September 21-23, Minneapolis, M.N.
- Appointed Director Todd Hettich as authorized representative for the Basin Electric Annual Meeting, August 11-13, Bismarck, N.D.
- Authorized Director Scott Sperry as authorized representative for the 2026 RESCO Director-Director Election.
- Held Executive Session.

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

NEC offices will be closed **Sept. 7** for
LABOR DAY



For assistance or to report an outage, please call 605-225-0310

FINANCIAL REPORT

	JUNE 2026	JUNE 2025
kWh Sales.....	21,297,855	19,418,875
Electric Revenues	\$2,904,374	\$2,435,289
Total Cost of Service	\$2,742,609	\$2,490,243
Operating Margins.....	\$161,766	(\$54,954)
Year to Date Margins.....	\$675,963	\$140,147
RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE MONTHLY USAGE AND BILL		
JUNE 2026	1,342 kWh.....	\$247.77
JUNE 2025	1,234 kWh.....	\$194.31

Wholesale power costs, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for 84.8% of total cost of service.

STAYING PREPARED IN RURAL S.D.

As most South Dakotans know, weather on the Great Plains can be frightfully unpredictable. In fact, South Dakota holds the record for the fastest temperature rise ever recorded. On Jan. 22, 1943, the temperature in Spearfish climbed from 4 degrees below zero to 45 degrees above zero in only two minutes.

Winter storms also offer reminders of how quickly severe weather can reshape daily life. The Blizzard of 1966 brought wind gusts of 70 mph and snowdrifts reaching more than 30 feet. Roads remained blocked for days, and massive livestock losses made it one of the most severe blizzards in state history.

Winter Storm Atlas, another devastating blizzard in October 2013, dropped several feet of snow over the Black Hills. Heavy snow and strong winds toppled trees and power lines, and devastated livestock operations, leaving some residents without electricity for a week or longer.

Although not every storm will make the record books, severe weather can still disrupt a household. A little preparation on an ordinary day can make a difficult day much easier.

Make A Plan

Emergency preparedness begins with a plan. FEMA recommends that households develop a plan for alerts, appropriate shelter, evacuation and communication if family members become separated.

Start by identifying the types of emergencies most likely to affect your area. For rural South Dakotans, that may include anything from blizzards and tornadoes to severe thunderstorms and wildfires. A good safety plan starts by choosing a safe place inside the home for high winds and tornadoes, generally a basement or small interior room, away from windows.

Next, consider who in your household may need extra help during an emergency, including infants, older adults and pets. Make sure everyone knows where to go and what to do, then walk through the plan together.

Build A Practical Supply Kit

Once the plan is in place, start collecting and organizing supplies your household could rely on if the power goes out or travel becomes difficult. FEMA recommends keeping enough food and water for at least several days, with one gallon of water per person for each day. For example, a

family of four preparing for three days would need at least 12 gallons of water.

Choose nonperishable foods your household already eats and that can be prepared without electricity. Then add the basics needed to get through an outage, including flashlights, extra batteries, a first-aid kit and a way to recharge cellphones. A NOAA Weather Radio can also provide important updates even when cellphone service is unavailable.

Next, tailor the kit to your household. Set aside medications and other essentials.

There is no need to build the entire supply kit at once. Start with what is already in the house, then add supplies during regular shopping trips. Check the kit a few times each year to replace expired food, medications or batteries.

Preparedness cannot stop a storm, reopen a highway or restore electricity, but it can provide time and options when conditions begin to change.

For more information, visit Ready.gov for additional tips on making an emergency plan, building a supply kit and staying prepared.



"Don't plant trees near power lines."

Owen Williams, age 7

Owen reminds members to not plant trees near power lines. That is great advice, Owen! Thank you!

Owen's parents are Bruce and Jing Williams from Wakonda S.D.

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.

FALL DESSERTS

GOLDEN GRAHAM/ SMORES BARS

Ingredients:

7 cups Golden Graham cereal
16 oz. mini marshmallows
1/2 cup butter
6 full size Hershey bars

Method

Unwrap Hershey bars and break apart on lines and then each piece again in half. Set aside. Melt the butter and 6 cups of the marshmallows. Stir in the Golden Grahams cereal. Cool for one minute. Stir in remaining marshmallows and Hershey pieces. Press lightly into a greased 9x13 pan with slightly wet hands. Cool and serve.

Valerie Marso
Oahe Electric

THE BEST APPLE CRISP

Ingredients:

6 cups sliced apples
1 1/2 cups white sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon
6 tbsp. flour

Topping

(makes enough for two pans)

2 cups flour
2 cups soft butter
1 tsp. baking powder

Method

Mix ingredients in a bowl and place in a 9x12 glass baking dish. Mix topping ingredients together until crumbly and sprinkle over apple mixture. Don't pack. Bake at 350 F for 1 hour or until apples are done.

Ginny Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy

VERY GOOD PEACH DESSERT

Ingredients:

First layer:

1 cup flour
1/2 cup nuts
1 stick margarine
Mix together and press in 9x13 pan. Bake at 350 F for 10 minutes.

Second layer:

1 (8 oz.) package cream cheese
1 cup powdered sugar
Cream together and add 1 cup Cool Whip. Spread on top of cooled crust.

Third layer:

1 cup sugar
2 tbsp. white corn syrup
3 tbsp. cornstarch
1 cup water
Combine ingredients, cook until thickened, then remove from heat. Add 3 tbsp. of peach-flavored gelatin and 1/4 tsp. almond flavoring. Cool. Peel and slice fresh peaches, then combine with the cooled mixture. Spread on top of cheese filling. Top with a layer of whipped topping and chill.

Ginny Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy

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 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.



A group of members from Northern Electric, FEM, and Lake Region pause to see the fireball on tour the upper floors of Antelope Valley Station.

MEMBERS TOUR SOURCES OF NEC ELECTRICITY

Kathy Haas

khaas@northernelectric.coop

Twelve members got an up-close look at where their energy is produced on Northern Electric's VIP Tour. The two-day trip is a way to educate members on our cooperative tiers and how the electricity they use every day is actually produced. Northern Electric partnered with FEM Electric in Ipswich and Lake Region Electric in Webster to share a bus and reduce costs. All three cooperatives are fed by the same transmission cooperative, East River Electric, and generation cooperative, Basin Electric Power.

"We saw a lot in two days," NEC member Vicki Eimers said, "It's a trip well worth taking. It's very informational."

On the first day, members were picked up early in the morning in order to reach Basin Electric's headquarters in

Bismarck, ND for a quick lunch. The tour kicked off with a walk-through of headquarters and the various departments that have the most impact on members, such as the call center, asset management, and marketing teams.

NEC member Gary Nielsen enjoyed the tour of Basin headquarters because it gave him a better understanding of the generation operations. Basin is owned by 138 member cooperatives and serves three million member-owners across nine states. The majority of Northern's energy is produced by Basin.

"I was surprised by the number of subsidiaries Basin controls or owns. They are a lot larger than I thought they were," Gary said.

The second day of the tour included an in-depth look at the three intertwined facilities, on the same campus, owned by Basin Electric: Antelope Valley Station (AVS),

Dakota Gasification Company (DGC), and Freedom Coal Mine. Both AVS and DGC use coal from the lignite mine. AVS burns the coal to produce electricity. DGC synthesizes the coal into natural gas, which is then sold along with the many byproducts from the process, such as urea, anhydrous ammonia, liquid nitrogen, and xenon gas.

For Vicki, the highlight was the Dakota Gasification Plant. She was amazed by the quantity of byproducts and range of uses. Farming, construction and other power generation processes, including fracking, are just a few of the ways the byproducts are used.

Most members were surprised by the scale. Not only the actual size of the plants and equipment, but also at the energy output. Antelope Valley has two units, each rated at 450 megawatts, for a total of 900-megawatt baseload. DGC can produce 170 million cubic feet of gas per day.

At Antelope Valley Station members had the option to see the fireball from the 17th floor. Since it is literally a multi-story furnace, the upper floors are always around 120 degrees Fahrenheit. On the tour day, it was closer to 130 degrees. Those who wanted to endure the heat spent around 20 minutes on the upper floors, including the top floor, where the whole campus was visible.

"Awful hot. The view was fantastic," Gary said. "If you get the opportunity, you should definitely go."

Two of the members had been to Antelope Valley Station before, although it has been several decades. Donn Kuhfeld worked on the electrical system when Antelope Valley Station was being built, and Gary had been on a similar tour. Gary said AVS was hot back then, too!

"I went there twenty years ago. They primarily had the coal mine, a smaller version of it," Gary said. "It was familiar, but it's expanded so much from what it was."



ABOVE: Members on the tour pose for a group photo in front of Antelope Valley Station, where coal is turned into electricity.

BELOW: At Dakota Gasification Company, members gather around a scale model of the plant that fills a whole auditorium.



A photograph of a man and a woman, Tellus and Lori Waddell, sitting in the back of a tractor. They are both smiling at the camera. The background shows a lush green field with wildflowers.

WONDROUS WILDFLOWERS & PRAIRIE PRESERVATION

Tellus and Lori Waddell.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

Waddell Native Seeds Turns Rural Acreage into Prairie Paradise

Jacob Boyko

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Journeying east on U.S. Hwy. 12 toward Milbank, as you make a steep descent into Whetstone Valley, you'll pass the usual South Dakota crops – corn, soybeans, some wheat here and there.

But for Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative members Tellus and Lori Waddell of Marvin, the most fascinating – and lucrative – harvest is one most of us would overlook, growing tall in roadside ditches and uncut fields.

For more than 30 years, the Waddells have allowed their Grant County acreage to run wild as they grow, harvest and sell the seeds of dozens of native wildflowers and grasses.

"We started noticing wildflowers up in the pasture, and at that time [the internet was] coming out so we could do some research on what they were," Lori recalled. "Tellus started calling nurseries asking them if they wanted this or that ... and that's how we built into this – and there are not a lot of people that do this."

When Lori says "this," she's referring to more than just collecting seeds. She means getting up early before the weather

is too hot, rolling up her sleeves and driving around the property in a side-by-side scanning the ground for patches of whichever wildflower type is ready to be harvested – by hand – for seeds.

"It's very, very labor-intensive," Tellus added. "It's not like picking flowers – because we don't pick a flower. You have to let [the seeds] develop. Right now, we're picking things that blossomed about six weeks ago."

With dozens of plants and just as many harvest schedules, the Waddells have a steady amount of work to do from mid-spring all the way into fall.

Traversing the lightly traveled trails over their expansive, glacially carved property, (this reporter was joined by two labs in the back seat of the side-by-side) Tellus and Lori are quick to point out distant patches of coneflowers, blazing star, wild turnips, vervain and their personal favorite flora they cultivate, milkweed.

"It's for the butterflies," Tellus explained as he pulled the vehicle up to the family's newest experiment: milkweed planted as a row crop.

"It's the first time we've ever done that," Tellus said, proudly explaining his youngest son, Levi Waddell, is heading up the initiative.

Tellus added, "As every generation takes over, you'll get different things."

Most outbuildings on the Waddells' land double as drying rooms for at least one harvest during the season.

That includes their three-stall garage – a more accurate description may be the seed processing facility – where the Waddells dry the seeds, separate them from the chaff and package them for shipment to area greenhouses and other customers.

Demand has grown to the point where the Waddells have hired about a dozen part-time summer workers to help harvest seeds.

Their harvesting efforts don't stop at the

The Waddells are row cropping milkweed for the first time. Monarch butterflies lay their eggs on milkweed, making it an important resource for conservation efforts.

Photo by Jacob Boyko





Lori Waddell enjoys photographing native flowers on the acreage.
 Top row: prairie lily, pasque flower (S.D. state flower), wild turnip.
 Bottom row: blazing star, scarlet gaura, coneflower.
Photos by Lori Waddell

fence line – Tellus is known to park his car, knock on the doors and ask to collect seeds if a patch of prairie catches his eye.

"We have picking rights [agreements with property owners] from here to Pierre down to Grand Island, Nebraska," Tellus said, recounting an especially vibrant purple field of vervain near Forestburg.

This led Tellus to a more solemn conversation. Piece by piece, he and Lori have bought surrounding acreage in an effort to isolate their native plants from the effects of drifting pesticides. Tellus said that when mixed into a slight breeze, the chemicals are potent enough to wipe out their native broadleaf plants for years at a time – even if the spraying takes place miles away.

Tellus and Lori's observation is that biodiversity is shrinking throughout the region for this same reason – diverse fields of native flowers and grasses are becoming more difficult to find, and the wildlife that relies on native plants for food are becoming increasingly scarce.

"You talk to people in their 80s, and they'll talk about walking through a field of lilies," Tellus said. "And then they just sit there for a bit and try to think of the last time they've seen that. Sometimes 40 or 50 years ago."

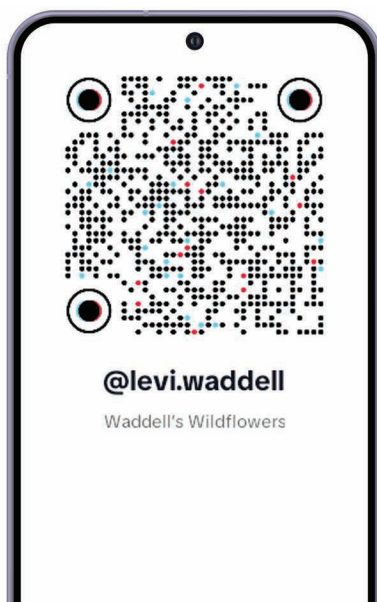
He continued, "that's when people realize the prairie is pretty much gone."

Levi Waddell uses social media to spread awareness about native plants, conservation and his family's operation.

His TikTok page, Waddell's Wildflowers, has more than 1,000 followers and 19,000 likes and chronologizes the day-by-day life of a native plant harvester.

The Waddells hope to share their story to educate others on the importance of conservation and inspire them to preserve the native prairie for generations to come.

"God gave us this beautiful earth and we're ruining it," Lori said. "If we can at least preserve and protect our little corner, I feel like we've done our job."



PROCESSING NATIVE SEEDS



The harvested seeds are spread indoors to dry for several weeks.



The dried seed heads are broken apart to loosen the seeds from the surrounding plant material.



The seeds are fed into a hammer mill to break apart remaining plant material from the seeds.



The cleaned seeds are sifted one final time to remove any extra material. The separated chaff is spread where the seeds were harvested so any unseparated seeds can germinate.

NEC RETURNS PROFITS WITH CAPITAL CREDITS

Northern Electric Cooperative is a non-profit, which means we operate at cost. We give profits back to our members, rather than outside investors or shareholders, through a process called capital credits. Applicable members received a message on their July bill, notifying them about their share of the co-op's profits. On your July bill, it was called your allocation.

Here's how capital credits work:

Northern members use the electricity we provide and pay their monthly bills. We track your business with the co-op, to ensure each member's capital credits are proportional to their payments. The profits from each year are set aside, earmarked to be returned to the members. Those funds are not paid back to the members in the same year. Northern Electric uses the money to meet the financial needs of the co-op. When financial conditions permit, the co-op's board of directors votes to pay capital credits back to the members.

This year, Northern Electric will retire capital credits from 1995-1999. In addition, Northern passes on the credits we get from our Generation and Transmission cooperatives, East River Electric and Basin Electric Power, to our members. Our G&Ts are retiring over 90% of capital credits from 2004.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What are capital credits and how do they work?

A: Capital credits represent a member's portion of the revenues for the cooperative. Consumers are members of an electric cooperative simply by using the services of the co-op. Capital credits consist of any revenues in excess of actual operating costs of the cooperative.

Members are notified every year about their portion – or allocation – of capital credits from the previous year. Over time, a percentage of a member's allocation is paid back – or retired – in the form of a bill credit as the financial condition of the cooperative allows.

Q: When are capital credits returned to members?

A: Capital credits are paid back – or retired – at the direction of the Northern Electric Cooperative Board of Directors. The Board of Directors votes every year to decide if a percentage of the capital credit allocations can be paid back to members. If capital credits are paid back it will appear as a credit on September bills. Former members who have moved off Northern's lines will receive a check.

HOW CAPITAL CREDITS WORK



1

We track your business with us (energy use and paid bills) each month.



2

We pay operating expenses throughout the year & set aside any leftover revenue.



3

When financial conditions allow, the board votes to retire (pay) capital credits to members.



4

We send your allocation (share) of capital credits as a bill credit or check.

Q: What should a member do if they move out of the Northern Electric service territory?

A: If a member discontinues service with Northern Electric it is important to notify the co-op of any address changes so capital credit payments can continue to be made to that member in the future. Members will not receive a lump-sum refund check when they discontinue service with Northern Electric but will continue to receive a check based on the annual decisions of the Board of Directors.

Q: What happens to the capital credits of a deceased member?

A: Northern Electric also needs to be notified by a relative or legal representative when a member of the co-op passes away so that the account can be closed or transferred to another name. Northern Electric will refund the deceased member's capital credits to their estate in a lump-sum payment if the account was listed solely in that member's name and is closed. For an estate to receive a refund, a relative or representative must provide the co-op with documentation which designates them as a legal representative of the estate.

For further questions on capital credits please call the Northern Electric office at 605-225-0310.



A construction worker smooths the final pour as other workers put up the steel beams for the walls.

CONSTRUCTION FOCUSED ON INTERIOR



Todd Hettich
Board President,
Building
Committee Chair

Construction on your Northern Electric headquarters building continues on schedule and within budget. Work is focused on the interior. The final indoor concrete pours finished in early August and the framing for the walls has started. Next, crews will focus on putting up drywall and continuing to install electrical and plumbing. The building is expected to be completed by late November 2026.

As of June 30, we've expended 38% of the project budget. As reported at the 2026 Annual Meeting, the total project budget of \$7.1 million includes contractor, architect, testing, furnishings, and other miscellaneous costs. We will continue to provide highlights as work progresses. For more information about your new headquarters, please talk to your director or co-op manager.



The framing for the interior walls are being installed.

HEADQUARTERS CONSTRUCTION BUDGET

Expended: 38%

Remaining: 62%

Total Project Budget: 7.1M



DRIVE OUT TO A DRIVE-IN

Outdoor Movie Theaters Offer Old-Time Fun

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

It's one of the defining cultural behemoths of the 20th century. Load the family into the station wagon – or someone you fancy in a borrowed hot rod – and head over to the drive-in theater. You pick up popcorn and soda pop, tune your car stereo to the transmitter, and settle in for an unforgettable experience.

It all started in 1933, when Richard Hollingshead of Camden, New Jersey, began developing an accessible and comfortable way to bypass the confining indoor theater seats and allow moviegoers a way to enjoy a show from the comfort of their own vehicle.

The Smithsonian Magazine reports a peak of more than 4,000 American drive-in theaters in 1958. But with cities continuously expanding and the price of property increasing, most of them have closed in the time since. Today, it's estimated that fewer than 300 drive-in theaters remain.

But don't fret! If you're reading this magazine, there are still some nearby drive-in movie theater options for you and your family (or your date) to enjoy!

Midway Drive In – Miller, S.D.

In Miller, mid-May through Labor Day weekend is drive-in movie season. Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights are illuminated by the distant glow of the local drive-in movie theater.

Sarah Resel is one of the owners of the Midway Drive-In. Growing up in Miller, the drive-in was her weekend hangout and the site of so many cherished memories. Years later, that's still the case – just under slightly different circumstances.

A show is about to start at the Midway Drive In near Miller.
Photo submitted by Midway Drive In

"We pretty much don't have weekends during the summer," Resel said. "We're committed to being here with the theater. We all have full-time jobs; we always call this our community service."

Despite the hefty commitment, Resel says seeing people turnout from all over the country for an authentic drive-in experience makes it worthwhile.

"I think with us in our Miller community, we take it for granted that it's just here," Resel said. "It's crazy the support we get from other towns coming to our community."

Pheasant Drive-In – Mobridge, S.D.

Cam Wal Electric Cooperative members Jon and Jill Olson of Mobridge have experience with both indoor and outdoor theaters.

"The day-to-day prep is a little bit different," Jill said, explaining



The Pheasant Drive-In sits on the Missouri River hills near Mobridge.
Photo submitted by Pheasant Drive-In

the maintenance needed for the property and screen, along with weather surprises.

"I think weather is probably the number one issue," she continued. "We had a windstorm that came through Sunday [July 19] and caused some damage for us."

Even with the unexpected challenges, Jill said owning the drive-in theater is a positive experience, and on summer nights as people from near and far gather for a showing, she's reminded why she does it.

"It's a completely different vibe than sitting inside a dark theater," Jill said. "Parents do such a good job making it a fun experience, like bringing a pickup, backing it in and letting the kids sit in the back end. The other weekend, we had a family bring a bunch of blow-up air mattresses. The kids can talk and run back and forth – it just isn't your typical thing."

Hilltop Drive Inn Theater – Gregory, S.D.

"It's awesome," Rosebud Electric Cooperative member Dawn Boyer said when asked about running a drive-in movie theater.

"It's like owning a piece of the past while being in the present – and hopefully the future."

When Dawn was a kid, her mom worked at the ticket counter, sometimes taking Dawn along too. When she learned in 2018 the theater was looking for a new owner, it just seemed right.

"Two weeks later, I was running a theater I knew nothing about," Dawn laughed.

The drive-in is an 80-year-old landmark in Gregory County, and the oldest operating drive-in theater in the state. The age is catching up with it, Boyer said, explaining the heavy maintenance schedules necessary to keep the theater running.

Though the theater is becoming harder to operate, Boyer says the smiles on visitors' faces make it all worth it.

"The people who come through that have never seen a drive-in before – that's who we do it for," Boyer continued. "The expression on somebody's face when that big screen lights up at night is awesome."

Pheasant City Drive-In Theatre – Redfield, S.D.

Redfield's drive-in theater has been open continuously since 1953, and thanks to Dave and Stacey Marlow, it will continue for many years.

"We bought it at the time the industry was changing over to digital projectors," Stacey said, recalling the 2014 sale. "And [the previous owner] wasn't going to do it, so we went to him and asked if he'd like to sell it."

Since taking over, they've upgraded the display system again, installing a brighter, higher-contrast laser projector that allows shows to begin earlier and helps future-proof the theater.

While modern, the theater retains its original elements: the speaker poles are functional (Dave spends hours wiring each spring) and the propane popcorn maker satisfies hungry moviegoers.

"People tell us all the time, 'We are so glad you took this and have kept it going,'" Stacey said. "This is a part of our town we didn't want to lose, so we decided we were the ones to step up and save it."

Winner Drive In Theater – Winner, S.D.

In 2022, Rosebud Electric Cooperative members Austin and Jill Moser were looking for more space for their family. They finally found the perfect house on a nice chunk of land – with a catch.

"The movie theater was included," Jill said. "We thought, 'Why not?'"

The Mosers say running the drive-in theater with their three kids has been a good experience for the family and has given the kids an opportunity to work concessions.

During the Mosers' second season in operation, a windstorm damaged the screen, necessitating a lengthy rebuild. Luckily, the theater was able to reopen for the 2025 season.

"It's really great to see how many people still support drive-in movie theaters," Jill said. "There's not that many left in the country. We meet people from all over – we've had people from France come to the theater."

Verne Drive In – Luverne, Minn.

Half an hour east of Sioux Falls, the Verne Drive In welcomes hundreds of I-90 travelers Wednesday through Sunday each summer.

Owner and operator Doug Rozeboom said his goal is to provide an experience that is affordable, fun and unique for both locals and travelers.

"I don't want to say drive-in theaters are a thing of the past, but they're becoming it," Rozeboom said. "It's a unique experience because you can't just go anywhere to watch a movie outdoors on a big screen."

He continued, "Kids are able to run around and throw a football, so they can blow off some steam."

Rozeboom described the enthusiasm of moviegoers, recounting creative truck-bed setups, typically with lawn chairs, sofas or mattresses.

"For the Toy Story 5 premiere, someone had a tree-trimming truck, so they had the boom arm out," he laughed. "I was like, 'Huh, that's interesting.'"

Making the perfect setup is part of the drive-in movie theater experience!
Photo submitted by Verne Drive In



Winner's drive-in features a curved screen.
Photo by Kim Boyko



Electric co-ops at the State Fair

Family fun for all



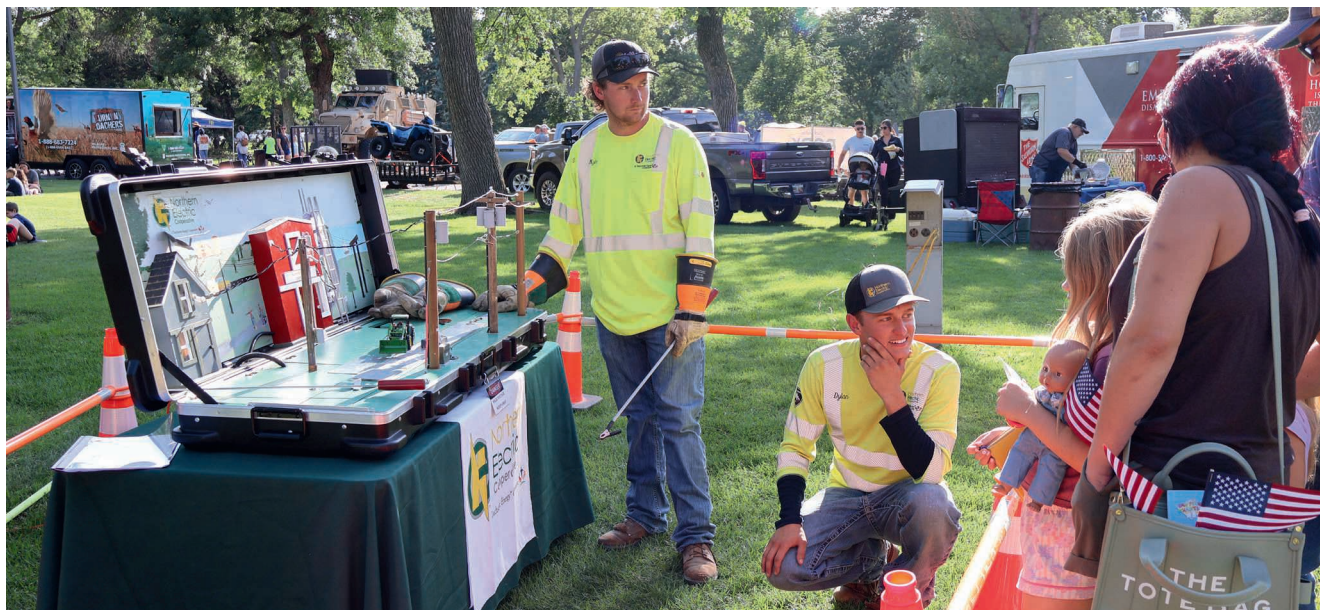
SERVING UP BREAKFAST

BELOW: Northern Electric Board Member Nolan Wipf serves up freshly-made pancakes at the annual member appreciation event. The pancakes are kept in a warmer after coming off the griddle, so they stay hot while waiting for hungry people to stop by.

RIGHT: Preston Cavalier, Northern's summer help, holds a massive pancake that was made at the annual Pancake Breakfast on July 30.



SAFETY DEMO A BALANCE OF FUN AND SERIOUS



Northern Electric Board Linemen Dylan Grimes, right, and Kyle Miller, left, kept the safety demonstration at National Night Out on the children's level. Dylan and Kyle balanced engaging the kids and providing age-appropriate safety information. Kids were warned of the dangers of playing around pad transformers and power lines.

REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Dakotafest or the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: _____ Dakotafest – Find us in the Touchstone Energy Building!
Your Email Address: _____ S.D. State Fair – Find us in the Horticulture Park!



SEPT. 3 (ONE DAY EVENT)
Touchstone Energy Cooperatives
at the South Dakota State Fair
Horticulture Park, State Fairgrounds
Huron, SD

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.

AUG. 27-30
Steam Threshing Jamboree
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

SEPT. 1-6
20th Annual Sturgis Mustang Rally
Sturgis, SD
SturgisMustangRally.com

SEPT. 6
Studebaker Car Show
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
South 6th St.
Custer, SD

SEPT. 10-12
DKG Used Book Sale
Wylie Park Pavilion
Aberdeen, SD
605-225-6713

SEPT. 11-13
James Valley Threshing & Tractor Club Show
Andover, SD
jamesvalleythreshers.com

SEPT. 12
Salute to Ellsworth
3-8:30 p.m.
Box Elder, SD
605-390-9341

SEPT. 12
Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale
8 a.m.-3 p.m.
Groton, SD

SEPT. 12
Harvest Bash
Webster, SD

SEPT. 12-13
Harvest & Kuchen Festival
Delmont, SD
605-505-0535

SEPT. 19
Your Race, Your Pace
9:30 a.m.
American Flag at Wylie Park
Aberdeen, SD
605-380-6762

SEPT. 19
SPURS Annual Barn Dance
Doors Open: 4 p.m.
Dinner: 5 p.m.
\$25 per person
Live & Silent Auction
Lizzy Hofer Band
605-226-1099
SPURSAberdeen.org

SEPT. 26
Harvest Pumpkin Fest
3-7 p.m.
Eureka City Park North Shelter
Eureka, SD
605-230-1777

OCT. 1
The Dreamboats
7 p.m.
50s & 60s Rock n' Roll Band
Aberdeen Civic Theater
Aberdeen, SD
aberdeencommunityconcerts.org

OCT. 2-3
Pumpkin Fest
Webster, SD

OCT. 3
Pumpkin Train/ SoDak Vendor Showcase
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

OCT. 3-4
The Black Market
Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.,
Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Bldg.
Sioux Falls, SD
605-332-6004

OCT. 4
St. Anthony's Fall Bazaar
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Swiss Steak 12-1:30 p.m.
Legion Hall
Hoven, SD

Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.