

## Cooperative Connections



**Growing  
Big in Little  
Spaces**

Page 8

**Celebrating  
the Great  
Outdoors**

Page 12

## Committed to Keeping the Lights On

# The More Things Change...



**Ben Dunsmoor**

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**Northern Electric Cooperative continues to value the relationships we have with our members and we are committed to keeping the lights on.**

There have been a lot of changes over the past two months. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we shop, it has changed the way we live, and it has even changed the way we greet and interact with one another. The pandemic continues to evolve with new research, studies, and recommendations nearly every week. But – to use a famous cliché – the more things change; the more they stay the same.

So, what has stayed the same as coronavirus has spread across our country and state?

First, your co-op's commitment to keeping the lights on has not changed during this weird time. Truthfully, the co-op's commitment to its members is even more important now than ever. Reliable electricity is essential to our local businesses as they respond to the pandemic. Reliable electricity is essential to homeowners who are working, teaching, shopping, and doing virtually everything from home right now. Reliable electricity is also essential to our farmers who have been faced with several tough circumstances over the past few years but continue their commitment to getting a crop in the ground and feeding America. That commitment to providing safe and reliable electricity to our members at the end of the line is the reason Northern Electric Cooperative has made several changes to the way we do business over the past two months.

Relationships with our members have also not changed during this pandemic. The members are the reason Northern Electric exists. This co-op is owned by you and we value those relationships. As you will read on page 10, we, unfortunately, had to cancel our VIP Tour in June due to the coronavirus pandemic. This is one of our favorite events because we get to meet our members face to face and show them where their electricity comes from. We have also missed the opportunity to meet our members in person at our offices as we closed our lobbies to walk-in traffic over the past few months. Those face-to-face encounters may be put on hold right now but the value and importance of those relationships with co-op members have not changed.

Our world is going through a turbulent time right now, but this pandemic has given a lot of us time to reflect on the things that are important and the things we value the most. Please, know that Northern Electric Cooperative continues to value the relationships we have with our members and we are committed to keeping the lights on. Those are two things that will never change.



(USPS 396-040)

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NORTHERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is the monthly publication for the members of Northern Electric Cooperative, PO Box 457, Bath, SD 57427. Families subscribe to Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. The purpose of Northern Electric Cooperative Connections is to provide reliable, helpful information to electric cooperative members on electric cooperative matters and better rural living.

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Northern Electric Cooperative's regular board meeting was held April 23, 2020, via teleconference at the headquarters in Bath with all directors present. Eide Bailly partner Derrick Larson was a guest for the meeting via teleconference. As the first order of business, the Board approved the March 26, 2020, minutes, & March expenditures. The Board reviewed & accepted monthly reports by management.

East River Director Mark Sumption reported on actions taken by the East River Board at the April 2, 2020, meeting, held via WebEx. General Manager Char Hager reported on the March 31, 2020, East River MAC meeting, held via WebEx. South Dakota Rural Electric Association Director Nolan Wipf reported on the SDREA board meeting held March 26, 2020, via teleconference.

**Manager's Report**

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

- Update on development projects.
- Update on Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) revolving loan fund.
- Informed directors that 2020 District 4, 6 and 7 candidate petitions need to be submitted by July 24, 2020. Victor Fischbach - District 7 – has reached his term limit.
- Reported that \$1,500.00 was donated to the Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce 'Small Act - Big Impact' campaign.
- Reported that the 2020 Rural Electric

**APRIL BOARD REPORT**

Youth Tour scheduled for June 18-25, in Washington, DC was canceled.

**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, May 21, 2020.
2. Approved payment of legal fees for Harvey Oliver in the amount of \$1,222.09.
3. Approved Work Order Inventory #20-03 for \$142,267.30 to be submitted to the RUS for reimbursement from loan funds for electric plant construction already completed.
4. Received and approved the 2019 Audit Report presented by Derrick Larson of Eide Bailly, LLP.
5. Approved allocating \$2,073,573.93 of NEC's combined 2019 margins to member patronage capital credit accounts.
6. After repeated failed attempts by the cooperative to collect unpaid balances, the board approved a resolution to write off 26 uncollectable accounts in the amount of \$7,411.31. Any members remaining capital credit balances will be assigned against the outstanding amounts.
7. Approved a donation of \$1,500.00 for the 2020 'Shop Spink' campaign.

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

Financial Report	March 2020	March 2019
kWh Sales	28,027,999 kWh	28,807,739 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$2,416,850	\$2,478,449
Total Cost of Service	\$2,413,047	\$2,488,958
Operating Margins	\$3,803	(-\$10,509)
Year To Date Margins	\$241,170	\$510,349

**Residential Average Monthly Usage and Bill**

March 2020	2,868 kWh	\$258.84	.0903 per kWh
March 2019	2,915 kWh	\$257.82	.0884 per kWh

Wholesale power cost, taxes, interest, and depreciation accounted for 82.3% of NEC's total cost of service.

## Stay Safe at Home

Each year, electrical malfunctions account for thousands of home fires, injuries, death and property damage. The average American home was built in 1977, and many existing homes simply can't handle the demands of today's electrical appliances and devices. Keep safety in mind with these helpful tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International.

### Learn the warning signs of an overloaded electrical system:

- Frequent tripping of circuit breakers or blowing of fuses
- Dimming of lights when other devices are tuned on
- Buzzing sound from switches or outlets
- Discolored outlets
- Appliances that seem underpowered

### How to avoid overloading circuits:

- Label your circuit breakers to understand the different circuits in your home.
- Have your home inspected by a qualified electrician if older than 40 years or if you've had a major appliance installed.
- Have a qualified electrician install new circuits for high energy use devices.
- Reduce your electrical load by using energy efficient appliances and lighting.

### Working from home?

Follow these electrical safety tips to keep you and your home safe from electrical hazards.

- 1) Avoid overloading outlets.
- 2) Unplug appliances when not in use to save energy and minimize the risk of shock or fire.
- 3) Regularly inspect electrical cords and extension cords for damage. Extension cords should only be used on a temporary basis.
- 4) Never plug a space heater or fan into an extension cord or power strip.
- 5) Never run cords under rugs, carpets, doors or windows.
- 6) Make sure cords do not become tripping hazards.
- 7) Keep papers and other potential combustibles at least three feet away from heat sources.
- 8) Make sure you use proper wattage for lamps and lighting.
- 9) Make sure your home has smoke alarms. Test them monthly, change batteries annually and replace the unit every 10 years.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International

## The Secret Ingredient

Electric cooperative members know that the recipes published in their local electric cooperative magazine are time-tested by their neighbors. The recipes feature ingredients that are readily available in the region (there may be a few somewhat exotic components). For the most part, if you have a can of cream of something soup, a pound of ground beef, some flour, eggs and a little salt and pepper, you probably have the basis of many a recipe found here. We raise our mixing spoons to the hundreds of co-op members who have sent in their recipes over the years.

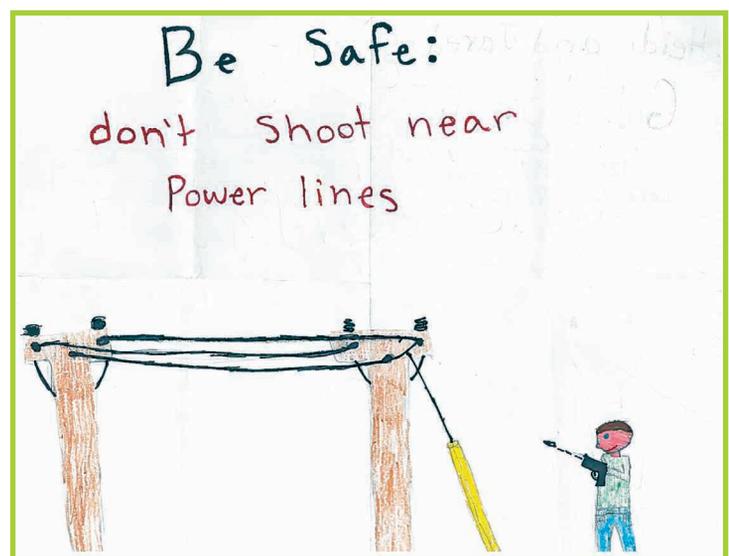


Dawn Trapp

And, we applaud the work of Dawn Trapp who has reviewed the recipes, compiled them for print and made sure our South Dakota, Minnesota and Nebraska cooks shine for their neighbors. Trapp is retiring after a 30-plus year career with South Dakota's electric cooperatives. Since 2000, she has compiled the recipes featured in this magazine. She previously compiled recipes for the *South Dakota High Liner Magazine* and edited *Home Cooking: 50th anniversary commemorative cookbook of the South Dakota High Liner Magazine* in 1998.

For a .PDF compilation of the first 20 years of recipes found in your local *Cooperative Connections* publication, contact your local electric cooperative.

## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"Be safe: Don't shoot near power lines."**

**Gwen Smith, 10 years old**

Gwen is the daughter of Jared and Heidi Smith, Lake Norden, S.D. They are members of H-D Electric Cooperative, Clear Lake, 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.

# Dairy Delicious



## Chicken Lasagna

- |                              |                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 can cream of chicken soup  | 1 cup Parmesan cheese          |
| 1 can cream of mushroom soup | 3 cups diced chicken           |
| 1/2 cup milk                 | 3 cups shredded Cheddar cheese |
| 1 cup sour cream             | Lasagna noodles, cooked        |

Mix together soups and milk. In a separate bowl, combine sour cream, Parmesan cheese, diced chicken and cheese. Spread a thin layer of the soup mixture in the bottom of a 9x13-inch glass baking dish. Make a layer of cooked lasagna noodles. Spread an even layer of the chicken mixture. Top with another layer of soup. Repeat layers until gone. Bake at 325°F. for 1 hour.

Mary Hunt, Gary, S.D.

## Pineapple-Pretzel Salad

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 2 cups crushed pretzels       | 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened     |
| 1 stick butter, melted        |   |
| 1 cup sugar, divided          | 1 (20 oz.) can crushed pineapple, drained |
| 1 (8 oz.) container Cool Whip |   |

Combine pretzels, butter and 1/2 cup sugar. Spread on a 9x13-inch pan. Bake at 400°F. for 7 minutes; cool. Break into pieces; set aside. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese and remaining sugar. Add Cool Whip and pineapple. Mix well; refrigerate overnight. Just before serving, add pretzel pieces.

Linda Rauscher, Aberdeen, S.D.

## Cheesy Garlic Bread

- |                              |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 cup Miracle Whip           | 1/4 tsp. garlic salt |
| 1/2 cup sour cream           | 1 cup chopped onion  |
| 1 cup shredded yellow cheese | 1 loaf French bread  |

Combine salad dressing, sour cream, shredded cheese, garlic salt and onion. Cut the French bread length-wise. Cover both sides, cut-side up, with mixture. Sprinkle with parsley and paprika, if desired. Bake at 400°F. for 8 to 10 minutes. Cut diagonally for a pretty presentation.

Jane Ham, Rapid City, S.D.

## S'mores Pie

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Graham Cracker Crust:</b>        | 2 tsp. ground cinnamon                             |
| 1-1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs    | 1 T. plus 1 tsp. vanilla extract, divided          |
| 7 T. butter, melted                 | 1 (7 oz.) jar marshmallow creme                    |
| 1/3 cup sugar                       | 1 (4 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened              |
| <b>Filling:</b>                     | 1 (8 oz.) container frozen whipped topping, thawed |
| 3/4 cup heavy cream                 |  |
| 6 oz. semi-sweet chocolate, chopped |  |

For the crust, mix all ingredients in medium bowl. Press into bottom and up sides of 9-inch pie plate. Set aside. For the filling, bring cream just to boil in small saucepan. Pour over chocolate in medium heatproof bowl. Let stand 1 minute then stir until smooth. Stir in cinnamon and 1 tsp. of the vanilla. Pour into prepared crust. Refrigerate 30 minutes or until chocolate is firm. (Freeze 15 minutes for faster chilling.) Beat marshmallow creme, cream cheese and remaining 1 T. vanilla in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended. Gently stir in whipped topping until well blended. Spread evenly over chocolate layer in crust. Refrigerate at least 2 hours or until ready to serve. Garnish with chocolate curls or toasted marshmallows, if desired. Makes 8 servings

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 600, Total Fat 36g, Cholesterol 75mg, Sodium 267mg, Carbohydrates 65g, Fiber 2g, Protein 4g*

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

## Taco Cheese Dip

- |                                       |                                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened | 1 (8 oz.) container sour cream |
| 1 pkg. taco seasoning                 | Shredded Cheddar cheese        |

Blend cream cheese, taco seasoning and sour cream well in serving dish. Spread shredded Cheddar cheese on top. Serve with chips.

Mary Ellen Luikens, Scotland, S.D.

Please send your favorite dessert, vegetarian or garden produce 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 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.



# Business & Development BULLETIN

Have an idea for a business or development story?

Submit your ideas to editor Ben Dunsmoor at [bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop](mailto:bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop) or call 605-225-0310.

## Radiothons Bring Boost To Local Businesses During Pandemic

More than \$350,000 in gift cards sold during Aberdeen & Spink County radiothons.

### Ben Dunsmoor

[bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop](mailto:bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop)

An idea to inject much-needed cash into local businesses during the coronavirus pandemic spread across northeastern South Dakota nearly as fast as the virus itself.

Brian Lundquist, who is part of a group that owns radio stations throughout the region, said they sold nearly \$1 million worth of gift cards by hosting local radiothons during the month of April in communities across the area including Aberdeen, Watertown, and Redfield.

“I think we hit a home run,” Lundquist said. “I hope we never have to do this again but one of the investors said if we need to do this again, let’s do it again.”

Big Stone Radio in Ortonville, Minnesota, was the first to hold a radiothon to sell gift cards for local shops. The idea was that gift card purchases would generate cash flow for the businesses that had to close due to the pandemic. More than \$100,000 in gift cards were sold during the first radiothon in Ortonville.



Hub City Radio general manager/owner Brian Lundquist (left) poses with Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce President Gail Ochs (right) and a check representing the amount of gift cards sold during the April 8 ‘Small Act - Big Impact’ radiothon. (submitted photo)

“We’re like okay, if we can take the same kind of concept and roll it into Aberdeen what could we do?” Lundquist said.

Big Stone Radio in Ortonville and Hub City Radio in Aberdeen are under the same ownership, so Lundquist and his team partnered with the Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce and had big ideas for a campaign they called ‘Small Act - Big Impact.’ However, those ideas exceeded their wildest dreams thanks to a phone call less than 48 hours before they were about to go on the air.

“We had some community angel business-people call us,” Lundquist said.

Those ‘angel businesspeople’ proposed the idea of gathering \$50,000 in funds to match gift card purchases during the April 8 radiothon. The intent of the matching money was to help out local businesses by doubling the gift card purchases and



(OPPOSITE PAGE): Hub City Radio, a Northern Electric Cooperative member, held radiothons for Aberdeen and Spink County during the month of April to sell gift cards and generate revenue for local businesses.

also help local consumers by making their money stretch farther during a difficult time.

“It is pretty amazing that you can send out one email and say this is what we need to do,” Hub City Radio Sales Manager Kristan Morris said about the generosity of the community and incorporating the matching funds into the campaign.

By the time the radiothon was on the air in Aberdeen more than \$90,000 in matching funds had been raised, including a donation to the fund from Northern Electric Cooperative.

“We were all amazed by the Aberdeen community’s support for this campaign goal,” Aberdeen Chamber of Commerce Director of Member Services and Events Bea Smith said. “The match dollars from the community-minded individuals and businesses was a game changer for the radiothon,”

The matching funds for the Aberdeen radiothon were exhausted after the first three hours and the event sold more than \$200,000 worth of gift cards. The entire ‘Small Act - Big Impact’ campaign sold \$274,000 worth of gift cards by the time it wrapped up in mid-April.

“We heard about the gift card program that Aberdeen had put on and thought it was a wonderful idea,” Grow Spink Executive Director Gianna Lantero said.

The success of the radiothons spread throughout the region and the Spink County economic development organi-

zation - Grow Spink – organized its own ‘Shop Spink’ event less than three weeks later.

“Our businesses were so excited to hear about this project. They were extremely grateful that we put something like this together,” Lantero said.

**“The community rallied around itself to help out their friends and neighbors. We wanted it to be Christmas in April.”**

Grow Spink raised more than \$30,000 in matching funds which also included a donation from Northern Electric Cooperative. The ‘Shop Spink’ event ran out of the matching money within the first two-and-a-half hours of the radiothon. Lantero said gift cards were purchased for all 55 participating businesses across the county. The entire ‘Shop Spink’ campaign accounted for \$94,250 in gift card sales.

“A lot of callers expressed that these business owners are family and friends to them. These businesses are places that they all love to visit, and they wanted to help them during this difficult time,” Lantero said.

The money raised by the Aberdeen ‘Small Act - Big Impact’ campaign has already been distributed to business owners to help them make ends meet during the pandemic.

“The best part was being able to take those checks to the clients and businesses and see their reaction,” Lundquist said. “We walked into these businesses with a check and said here’s how many gift cards we need.”

One Aberdeen business owner told Bea Smith of the Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce that the money generated by the campaign helped pay their rent, utilities, and employees.

“Business owners were very appreciative of the gift cards purchased. Some got emotional when being told the amount of money raised for their business,” Smith said.

Similar radiothons were also held in Webster and Milbank.

Lundquist knows the money is likely only a temporary reprieve for the local owners that had to close their doors during the pandemic. However, he is grateful the radiothons have been able to provide a boost to the local communities they serve.

“The community rallied around itself to help out their friends and neighbors,” he said. “We wanted it to be Christmas in April.”



# BIG (Little) GARDENS

## Growing Vegetables in Limited Spaces

L.A. Jackson

Contributing Writer and Photographer

Spring has arrived! So, if thoughts of producing oodles of fresh, homegrown edibles have you ready to dig in the dirt, it's time to roll up those sleeves and start a vegetable garden!

While the physics of time and space dictate that big harvests naturally come from big gardens, for backyard growers who prefer to pass on the challenges of tending mega-plots through the long, hot summer or who simply don't have an abundance of planting areas, there are alternative ways to raise impressive passels of veggies – it is simply a matter of making make less do more.

### Go to bed

First, for maximum production from limited growing areas, go with beds, not rows – in other words, place young plants or seeds according to their recommended spacing per plant and forget about distances between rows. Rows of plants looking like tidy lines of soldiers are better for large gardens in order to have paths to walk around, but this isn't necessary in small beds. Accessibility is, of course, still important, so, while you can stretch 'em as long as Texas, try not make beds over 4 feet wide – this shortens your reach into the plants and greatly minimizes embarrassing face-flops in the dirt.

### Small wonders

Size isn't everything in gardening, especially when it comes to growing backyard edibles. There are many vegetable selections – often tagged with such labels as “Bush,” “Dwarf” or “Patio,” – that are modest in height and girth, but still quite capable of producing impressive crops.

The most common big veggie that can be found in smaller sizes is the tomato. There are a ton of cultivars available, but, for starters, give “Tiny Tim,” “Bush Beefsteak” or “Early Wonder” a look. Keep in mind, however, that a majority of these slight-in-stature tomato selections are determinate, meaning they produce all the 'maters they are going to yield in a matter of weeks. Standard vine tomatoes, if kept healthy, typically crank out fruit continually over the long growing season.

Want a wider range of veggies in your small garden? Squash, watermelons, pumpkins, cucumbers, cantaloupes and green beans – all champs at chewing up space in a planting bed – can also be found in compact forms, either as young plants or seeds, at local garden shops in the spring.

### Grow up

Don't think you have to stick to Munchkin-sized plants. Typical strong growers such as tomatoes, green beans, cucumbers and squash can't be allowed to crawl across small growing spaces, but they can be trellised, staked or caged to grow up rather than out.

Even the long, rangy vines of watermelons, pumpkins and cantaloupes can be trained upwards on vertical supports, but to avoid the dreaded drop-and-splat factor, it's not a bad idea to cradle the developing fruits in supporting burlap, nylon or cloth slings.

Small watermelons such as “Sugar Baby” can be trained to grow up, not outwards, in a garden.  
COVER: A (literal) bed of cabbage taking center stage in a flower garden.  
OPPOSITE PAGE: Harvest eggplants when their skins are shiny, not dull.  
Photos By L.A. Jackson

Suspension weight and size problems with standard pumpkins are obvious, but there are many cultivars, including “Spookie,” “Jack O’ Lantern” and “Sugar Pie,” that yield smaller, more manageable 6- to 7-pound fruits. Ditto for big ol’ watermelons, but with so-called “icebox” varieties like the popular “Sugar Baby” and its 8- to 10-pound melons available, it is possible to hang ‘em high, too.

Growing vine crops on erect supports has other advantages besides saving space, starting with making harvesting easier. Also, vertical gardening improves fruit shape and, since beneficial air circulates through the foliage easier, can promote healthier plants.

## Beyond the veggie patch

Looking for even more growing ground? Limited-space gardening with edibles doesn’t need to be confined to small vegetable plots – in other words, anywhere you have dirt in your yard is a potential planting site. And many veggies can be easily inter-planted in the landscape as complements, rather than complications, to existing ornamentals.

One popular vegetable that bears the double standard of being both productive and pretty is the pepper. While blocky bell peppers might look a bit clunky in flower beds, there is a wide range of hot peppers that show off long-lasting fruits in many sizes, shapes and sizzling colors on relatively compact plants.

Like bell peppers, common pudgy eggplants probably won’t qualify as eye candy in an ornamental garden, but there are vibrantly colored fruits of cultivars such as “Fairy Tale,” “Prosperosa” and “Neon” that can also add extra visual sass to sunny flower borders.

And okra, which is closely related to the lovely hibiscus, stays true to its family ties with fancy foliage and delicate, hibiscus-like flowers. One particular standout beauty is “Red Burgundy,” an heirloom selection that has been a veggie garden favorite for many years because its gorgeous (and tasty) scarlet pods never fail to turn heads.

Other decorative edibles with strong, distinctive profiles such as curly spinach, cabbage, loose-leaf lettuce (especially red-tinted varieties like “Red Sails” and “Lolla Rossa”), kale and Swiss chard (look for “Ruby Red” or “Bright Lights”) are low-growing and, for vegetable plants, actually rather good looking. Any of these can be successfully incorporated as accent plants for perennial beds or flower gardens. In addition, root vegetables such as carrots, onions and radishes hide their crops below ground but freely flaunt flowing foliage that can be used to fill in the fronts of border plantings.

Many herbs are also great “double-duty” plants. Need examples? Rosemary’s spiky leaves and delightful (as well as edible) bluish-purple flowers make it an appealing addition to any landscape setting. Bronze fennel’s smoky look is a nice touch for container planters, while the rich, dark foliage of purple basil is a horticultural fashion statement waiting to happen. And curly parsley, with its deep emerald leaves, is an ideal alt-ornamental to line the front of a flower bed.

One word of caution about interplanting vegetables or herbs with other plants: If you spray any pesticides on neighboring ornamentals, make sure the chemicals are cleared for safe use on edible plants as well.

*L.A. Jackson is the former editor of Carolina Gardener magazine.*

# Harvest Time Tips

## When are veggies table-ready?

With proper care, spring vegetable plantings will grow up big, strong and productive to add plenty of homegrown edibles to the dinner table. But, while waiting for these crops to mature, now is not too soon to start mentally registering harvest tips to be ready when the bountiful times arrive. Such pointers can also be helpful to folks who don’t have gardens but go to pick-your-own farms. In addition, frequenters to farmers’ markets will probably find a few of these tips useful to help select produce at their freshest and tastiest.

**Bell peppers.** The typical bell pepper can be picked when it is either green or red. A red bell pepper is just riper than a green one and tastes slightly sweeter. If you prefer to use a size-o-meter, harvest these peppers when they are about 3 inches in diameter.

**Carrots.** Carrots are normally ready when their orange crowns poke out above the soil line. For better storage, cut off all but about 2 inches of the fern tops after you pull carrots from the ground.

**Cucumbers.** Although they come in all sizes, standard cukes will, of course, be a deep green when mature. However, if a cucumber starts to show a yellow tint, it is past ripe.

**Eggplant.** Common varieties, such as “Black Beauty” and “Classic,” should have a shiny, dark purple color and be about 4 inches in diameter. Any eggplant that has been on the plant too long will lose its shine – this also applies to the newer, fancy-colored varieties such as “Neon” and “Ping Tung.”



**Okra.** The better tasting (and least slimy) okra pods are snipped off at about 3 inches long. *Chef’s Tip: For little or no slime, when boiling okra, leave the pods whole.*

**Green Beans.** These beans are at their best when they are about 3 to 6 inches long. At these sizes, the seeds haven’t started to swell yet, and the pods are tender enough to snap easily.

**Leaf Lettuce.** Wait until the plants are about 5 inches tall and starting to fully fill out with foliage. Then, begin your picking. Use scissors and only take outer leaves so the plants will continue growing strongly in order to extend the harvest season. This method works well for romaine lettuce and spinach, too.

**Summer Squash.** Tasty crook, straight-neck and zucchini squash will be had when they are picked at about 6 inches long. Round patty pan varieties are in their prime around 4 to 5 inches in diameter.

**Tomatoes.** Come on – everybody knows what a ripe tomato looks like! Sometimes, however, ‘maters are picked with a bit of green still showing. To turn the green to red (and make fruits fully ripe) simply place them in a cozy area indoors. A sunny windowsill won’t do because the sun’s direct rays could redden the skin but not ripen the inside of the tomato. Moderate warmth, not strong light, is the key to properly maturing a tomato.

# The Journey of Electricity

Electricity travels through a complex grid to arrive at your home.

**Ben Dunsmoor**

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Every June, Northern Electric Cooperative takes members on a tour of the generation resources that provide you with power every day. Due to the ongoing concerns surrounding COVID-19 that tour has unfortunately been canceled for 2020.

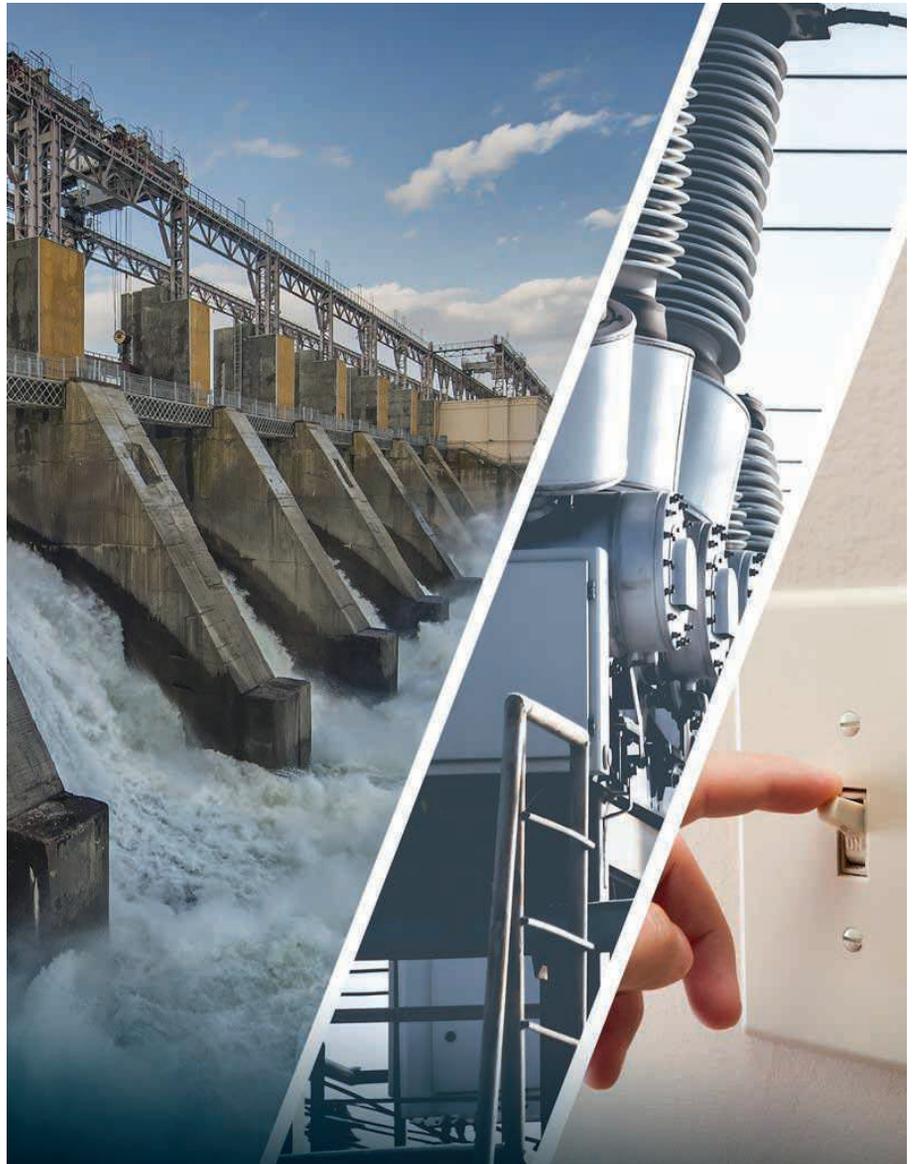
The trip to North Dakota, known as the VIP Tour, gives co-op members an up-close look at the power plants and resources that are used to generate electricity. As a cooperative, Northern Electric members own these resources simply because you pay your electric bill every month. That is the reason Northern Electric Cooperative organizes the VIP Tour every year.

Since members will not get to take this tour in 2020, the next few pages are dedicated to explaining the cooperative power supply network.

## Three-Tiered Co-op Power Supply

Electricity takes a long journey from the time you flip on the switch to the time the light turns on in your bedroom. Electricity travels hundreds of miles – at the speed of light – every time you plug in your smartphone or turn on the TV.

So, where does the electricity used by Northern Electric Cooperative members come from? A three-tier system is used to get electricity from the power plant to your home in an instant.



## Northern Electric Cooperative (Distribution Cooperative)

Northern Electric Cooperative is at the end of the line, operating like a retail store, selling directly to members at the end of the line. Northern Electric Cooperative is known as a distribution cooperative and does not generate the electricity that is used in the local service territory. Northern Electric is responsible for building and maintaining distribution power lines and connecting them to homes, farms, and businesses. **(Steps 5 & 6**

**in the infographic on the right)**

Northern Electric receives electricity from its wholesale power provider East River Electric Power Cooperative in Madison, South Dakota.

## East River Electric Power Cooperative (Generation & Transmission Cooperative)

East River Electric was formed in 1949 to build high-voltage transmission lines and deliver electricity from power-generation sources to distribution coopera-

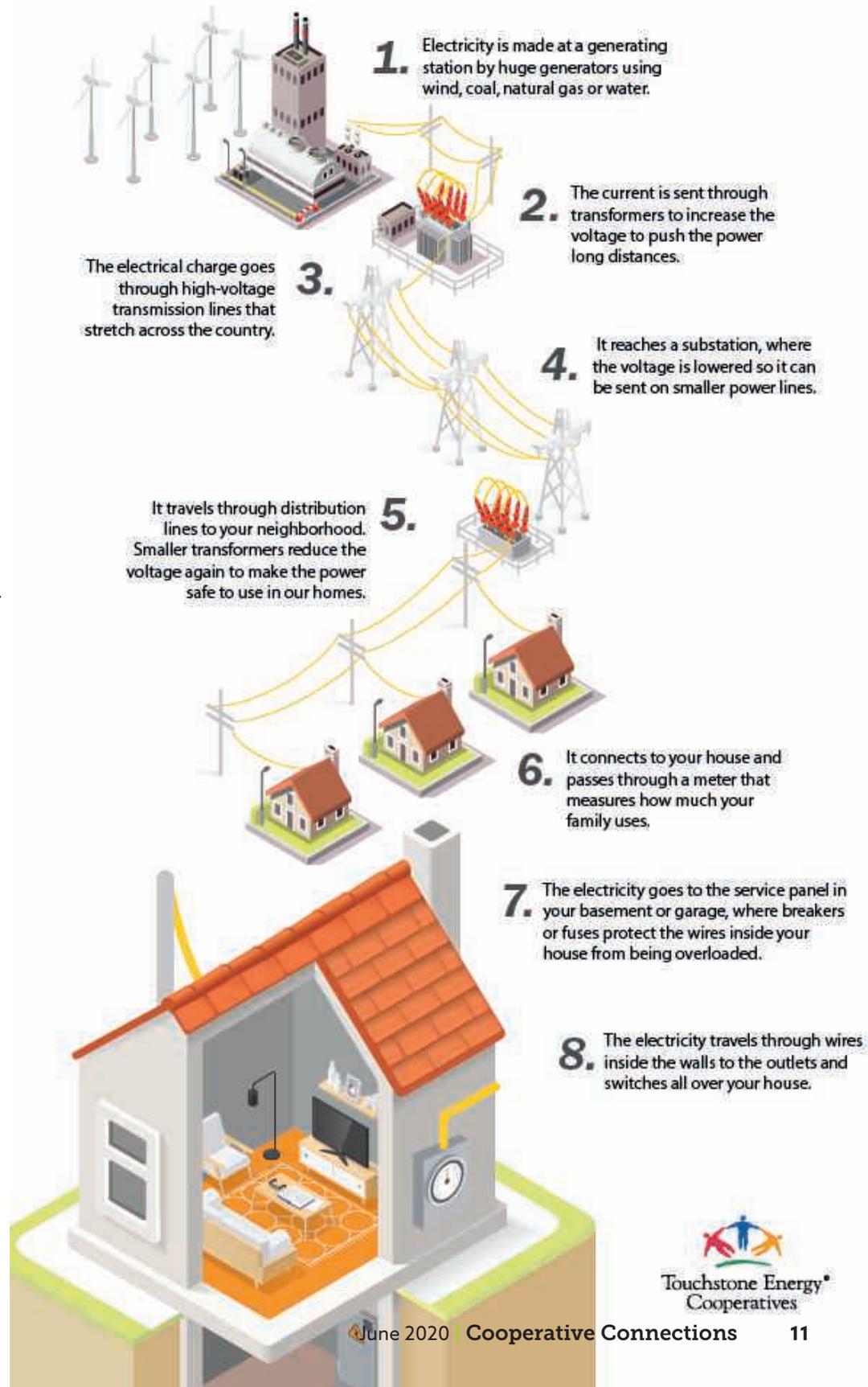
# WHERE DOES ELECTRICITY COME FROM?

tives like Northern Electric. (Steps 3 & 4 in the infographic on the right) East River serves as the wholesale power provider to 25 member systems through its network of more than 200 substations located throughout eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota. Distribution substations are like the delivery point for electricity and Northern Electric builds its lines from local substations to farms, homes, and businesses. There are 17 East River substations in the Northern Electric service territory.

East River gets its electricity from two different sources; Basin Electric Power Cooperative in North Dakota and the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA). WAPA administers the electricity generated by federal hydroelectric dams, including the dams on the Missouri River. Hydropower was one of the original sources of electricity allocated to rural electric cooperatives by the federal government in the 1950's.

## Basin Electric Power Cooperative (Generation & Transmission Cooperative)

The demand for electricity in rural areas outgrew the production of the federal hydropower dams quickly so generation and transmission – or G&T – cooperatives were formed. Basin Electric Power Cooperative is a G&T that was formed in North Dakota in 1960 when East River and ten other power supply systems created Basin Electric to build power plants that would supply electricity to the Great Plains. Basin Electric is like a factory in that it operates natural gas and coal-fired power plants and wind farms to generate the electricity that is used by its member co-ops. (Steps 1 & 2 in the infographic on the right) Today, Basin Electric generates power for 141 member systems in nine states that serve more than three million electric co-op members.



# Outdoor Fever

## Celebrating South Dakota's Outdoor Spaces

Brenda Kleinjan

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**People are really rediscovering the outdoors again.**

South Dakota's state parks and wide-open spaces can be a beacon to those who have spent the winter and spring months cooped up at home.

"Parks are very good places to go outdoors and get out of the house," said Al Nedved, deputy director of parks for the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

Nedved said that in April 2020, the parks had seen an increase in use over 2019, due in part to better weather than the previous year and also to the COVID-19 restrictions.

"People are really rediscovering the outdoors again," said Nedved. "Our parks are open. We are strongly advising people to follow social distancing guidelines set by CDC (Center for Disease Control) and the state department of health."

In addition to the social distancing, the parks are encouraging people to be as self-sufficient as possible by using their own facilities. State park visitors are also asked to plan ahead and use the reservation website to purchase licenses and make reservations ahead of time to limit interaction at the parks as much as possible.

And as Americans head outdoors celebrating June as both National Camping Month and Nation Great Outdoors Month, thousands of South Dakotans will



Biking in South Dakota campgrounds is a popular family activity. Photo Credit: South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks

be discovering and rediscovering the Rushmore state's park system.

The state's parks, established in 1919 with the creation of Custer State Park in western South Dakota, saw considerable growth in the post World War II era. The newest park, Good Earth State Park, was established in 2013 southeast of Sioux Falls.

"It's a very unique archaeological and historical site," said Nedved, noting the area was a vast trading center for Native Americans going back several hundred years.

The South Dakota State Park system includes 13 state parks, 43 recreation areas, five nature areas, one historic prairie, 69 lakeside use areas and 10 marina/resorts. In addition, the Division of Parks and Recreation manages the



Hiking trails are offered in many South Dakota state parks. Photo Credit: South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks



Access to water-based activities, such as this one found at Farm Island in central South Dakota, is a draw for South Dakota state parks.  
Photo Credit: South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks

114-mile Mickelson Trail, South Dakota’s Snowmobile Trail Program, and maintains 240 public water access areas.

“I always tell people the best-kept secret is the place you have not been yet. You never know where there is a site that will become a favorite spot,” said Nedved. “Each park is unique; it’s great to experience them all. Each is rich with natural, historical and cultural resources.”

Custer State Park is the largest of the parks at 71,000 acres, while Fort Sisseton in northeastern South Dakota is one of the smallest.

Palisades State park has geological structures that are really unique,” Nedved said.

“The Missouri River Parks offer incomparable opportunities for fishing and water recreation,” said Nedved, noting that parks on the river extend from Pollock in the north-central part of the state to the Adams Nature Area and Preserve by North Sioux City which features a well-preserved farmstead and a trail system.

“They are a great place to make memories and be together,” Nedved said.

The parks offer a variety of activities: camping and fishing are popular as well as other water-based recreation. Hiking, biking and trail-related activities are a draw

as are leisure sport activities like disc golf, volleyball and horseshoes.

“The biggest one is the ability to come out and enjoy the outdoors and have a really good experience,” said Nedved. “I like to tell people to think of parks as a really great place for your emotional and physical health. There’s no greater place to go and exercise than the great outdoors.”

Those intending to camp should do a little research and have a basic knowledge of the outdoors. In addition to packing bug spray, appropriate clothing and sunscreen, campers in the 2020 season should also plan on bringing masks and hand sanitizer.

Also on the list should be a NOAA weather radio or other device to track severe weather.

“South Dakota weather can be unpredictable at times. You need to plan ahead and be prepared for wind, hail and lightning,” said Nedved.

“We encourage everyone to enjoy the outdoors this summer and do it responsibly,” Nedved said.

Before you go, be sure to check the GF&P website at [gpf.sd.gov/parks](http://gpf.sd.gov/parks) for updates and current information.

**They are a great place to make memories and be together.**

## By the Number

A look at South Dakota’s state park system

- 16 Welcome Centers
- 9 Regional Offices
- 3 Fish Hatcheries
- 2 Outdoor Campuses
- 83 Dams
- 4,417 Campsites
- 223 Camping Cabins
- 2 Modern Cabins
- 7 Lodges
- 153 Picnic Shelters
- 93 Playgrounds
- 121 Comfort Stations
- 49 Fishing Docks
- 50 Fish Cleaning Stations
- 347 Boat Ramps
- 50 Beaches
- 349 Miles of Trails
- 328 Miles of Roads
- 155-Mile Canoe/Kayak Trail
- 1,518 Miles of Snowmobile Trails

## Nominating Petitions Due By July 24

# Petitions Now Available For 2020 Board of Directors Seats

During Northern Electric Cooperative's 2020 Annual Meeting (Tuesday, September 22, 2020, at the Aberdeen Civic Arena) members will elect Directors for Districts 4, 6, and 7.

**The District 7 seat will be vacant because director Victor Fischbach of Mellette has reached his term limit.**

Incumbent directors Josh Larson, Columbia (Dist. 4) and Kirk Schaunaman, Aberdeen (Dist. 6) are eligible to run again and are up for re-election. The District 7 seat will be vacant because director Victor Fischbach of Mellette has reached his term limit.

Northern Electric Cooperative uses a petition process to nominate directors. The procedure requires all candidates to circulate a petition. Candidates must be cooperative members and reside in the district they wish to represent. Each petition must be signed by at least ten (10) cooperative member-consumers residing

in that candidate's specific district.

For a joint membership, either the husband or wife may sign a petition but NOT both.

Petitions are available at the Northern Electric offices in Bath and Redfield. Director petitions must be submitted at least sixty (60) days before the Annual Meeting to have names placed on the official ballot and the Notice of the Meeting. No petitions filed later than sixty (60) days prior to the meeting shall be considered valid.

Petitions must be filed at a Northern Electric Cooperative office by close of business (4:30 p.m.) **Friday, July 24, 2020.**

Nominations are not permitted from the floor during the meeting.

Members may only sign ONE nominating petition for a director candidate from their district of record.

**For a complete copy of the Northern Electric Cooperative Bylaws contact Northern Electric at 605-225-0310 or stop by one of the offices in Bath or Redfield. The bylaws are also available online at:**

**[www.northernelectric.coop/cooperative-bylaws](http://www.northernelectric.coop/cooperative-bylaws)**



## HATS OFF TO CO-OP MEMBERS

CELEBRATING OUR COOPERATIVES

*Thanks to the leadership of our members, we're guided by values of integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. Together, we're re-energizing rural and powering up the communities we serve.*

**RE-ENERGIZING RURAL**



2020 Annual Meeting Scheduled for Tuesday, September 22

# Director Nomination and Election Process

## Director Qualifications

Northern Electric Cooperative Bylaws Article IV Section 3

No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director who:

- 1) Is an employee of Northern Electric Cooperative.
- 2) Is not a member and bona fide resident of the service area served by the Cooperative located within the particular District up for election;
- 3) Is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or business selling electric energy or supplies to the Cooperative or a business primarily engaged in selling electrical or plumbing appliances, fixtures or supplies to the members of the Cooperative;
- 4) Has been previously removed as a Director of the Cooperative in accordance with the procedures provided for removal in these Bylaws;
- 5) Has failed to attend at least 2/3 of all regular board meetings during any consecutive twelve (12) month period.
- 6) Has been employed by the Cooperative in the past five years.
- 7) Has pled guilty or has been convicted of:
  - A felony,
  - Any crime involving dishonesty, or
  - Any crime involving moral turpitude

### Northern Electric Cooperative Bylaws Article IV Section 5

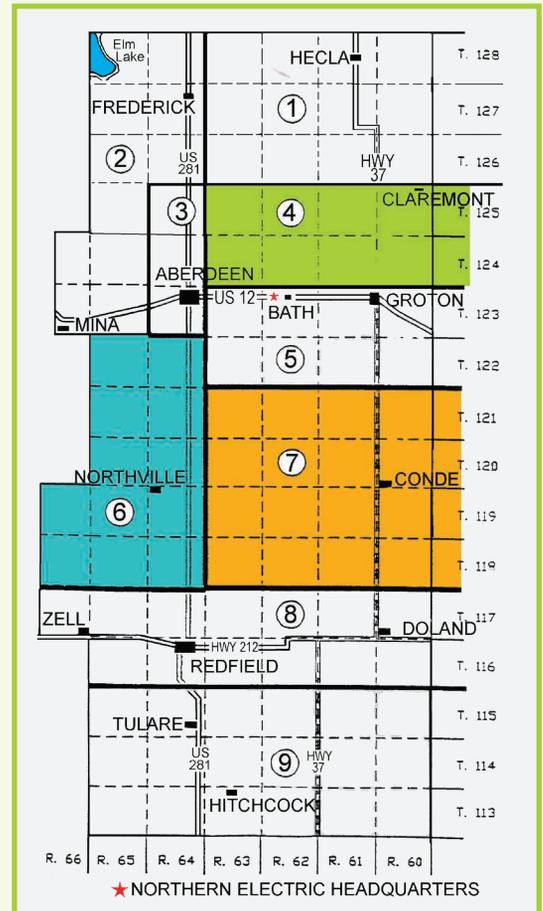
**Section 5. Nomination of Directors.** The nominating process shall be premised on a nine (9) District - nine (9) Director Cooperative. **Any ten (10) or more members residing in such District may file a nominating petition with the Secretary placing in nomination any qualified member from such District. Each signatory shall place the date of signing and his address on said petition. No member may sign a petition to nominate more than one candidate, and to do so shall invalidate the member's signature on the petition signed on the latest date.**

This procedure shall be followed in each Director District in which the Director terms shall expire. Upon receipt of such petition and having found the same to be in order, the Secretary shall post such nomination in the principal office of the Cooperative. Candidates so nominated shall be identified in the Notice of the Meeting and shall also be named on the official ballot.

No petition filed later than sixty (60) days prior to the annual meeting shall be considered valid. The order in which the nominees shall appear on the printed ballot shall be determined by lot under the supervision of the Secretary. If any nominee should refuse to become a candidate or is not qualified, in accordance with the requirements of the Bylaws, the Secretary of the Cooperative is authorized and directed to remove the name or names from the list of posted nominees and/or from the ballot.

The Secretary shall be responsible for mailing with the Notice of the

Meeting, or separately, but at least ten (10) days before the date of the meeting, a statement of the number of Board Members to be elected and the names and addresses of the candidates nominated. No nominations shall be permitted from the floor. **Each member of the Cooperative present at the meeting shall be entitled to vote for one candidate from their specific District from which a director is to be elected. Voting may occur two hours before or during the official meeting in accordance with the procedure established by the board of directors.** The candidate from each District receiving the highest number of votes at the meeting shall be considered elected as a Board member.



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

## June 5-7

Regional Qualifying High School Rodeos:

- Rodeo Grounds, Wall, SD, 605-529-5868
- Rodeo Grounds, Highmore, SD, 605-529-5868
- Tipperary Arena, Buffalo, SD, 605-529-5868
- Heartland Arena, Huron, SD, 605-529-5868

## June 7

Miss Prairie Village / Miss Prairie Princess Pageant, Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 800-693-3644, [www.prairievillage.org](http://www.prairievillage.org)

## June 12-14

Regional Qualifying High School Rodeos:

- Tripp County Fairgrounds, Winner, SD, 605-529-5868
- Rodeo Grounds, Sturgis, SD, 605-529-5868
- Rodeo Grounds, Dupree, SD, 605-529-5868
- Derby Downs Arena, Watertown, SD, 605-529-5868

## June 19, 26 and July 3, 10

River City Friday Nights, 6 to 10 p.m., Live music, beer garden, vendors, food trucks, games and activities for the entire family, Main Street, Chamberlain, SD, 605-683-9051

## June 20

Divas Gone Country concert, Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 800-693-3644

## June 20-21

Men's Club Fishing Tournament, Pollock, SD, Contact Brent Odde at 605-848-1967



## June 16-21:

South Dakota State High School Finals Rodeo, Stanley County Fairgrounds, Fort Pierre, SD, 605-529-5868

## June 24-27

Crystal Springs Rodeo, Extreme Bulls June 24, Rodeo June 25-27, Clear Lake, SD, 605-874-2996

## June 27

Railroad Day, Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 800-693-3644

## June 28

Variety Show, Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 800-693-3644

## July 11

6th Annual Auto Value Car Show, Hav-A-Rest, Campground, Redfield, SD, 605-450-0332

## July 18

Wessington Fun Day, Pancake Breakfast, Parade at 10 a.m., Car Show at noon, Dance, Wessington, SD, Contact Mary Spicer at 605-458-2359

## July 21-25

98th Annual Days of '76 PRCA Rodeo, Arena, Deadwood, SD, 1-888-838-BULL, [www.DAYSOF76.com](http://www.DAYSOF76.com)

## July 23-24

Jr. Miss Rodeo South Dakota Pageant, The Lodge and Days of '76 Rodeo, Deadwood, SD, 605-641-8604, [jrmissrsd@gmail.com](mailto:jrmissrsd@gmail.com)

## July 24-26

Catfish Derby Days, Franklin, MN, 507-557-2259

## July 25

17th Annual Make-A-Wish 'On the Road to Wishes' Poker Run, Registration 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., C&S Motorsports, Aberdeen, SD, 605-225-4533

## August 8-9

Threshing Show, Twin Brooks, SD, [www.threshingshow.com](http://www.threshingshow.com)

## August 8-10

Red Power Round Up, Fairgrounds, Huron, SD, 605-460-0197 [redpowerroundup2020.com](http://redpowerroundup2020.com)

## August 22

World of Outlaw Sprint Car Races plus Wissota MWM, Dakota State Fair Speedway, Huron, SD, 605-352-4848

## September 7

Hidewood Valley Steam Threshing Show, 1 p.m., 47326 183rd Ave., Clear Lake, SD, 605-881-8405

## September 12-13

Fall Harvest Festival, Delmont, SD, 605-928-3792, [www.twinriversoldiron.org](http://www.twinriversoldiron.org)

## October 7-8

Energize! Explore Innovative Rural Communities Conference, Milbank, SD, <https://extension.sdstate.edu>

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.