

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Old Spink New Spink

**SD restaurants roll
with the changes**
Page 8

**Dealing with
drought**
Page 12

Joyce Schermer,
Karisma Tripp and Brad
and Lori Johannsen are
shown at Spink Family
Restaurant in Elk Point

The 74th Northern Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting will be fun and functional



Ben Dunsmoor
Editor

It will be great to get back to normal.

Last year, Northern Electric Cooperative's 73rd Annual Meeting was scaled back considerably due to the ongoing pandemic. However, this year's annual meeting is moving forward as scheduled with a meal, activities, and demonstrations on the evening of September 21st.

It is important to note, however, that there are going to be some changes this year so here is a quick rundown of the activities.

We hope the changes create a fun and welcoming atmosphere for our members as we carry out the business of the cooperative.

ANNUAL MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE BATH OFFICE

For the second year in a row, the annual meeting will be held at the headquarters office located on U.S. Highway 12 in Bath. Last year was the first time the event was held at the headquarters, and we decided to host the meeting at the office again this year. This will give members an opportunity to see their cooperative, meet the employees, and get an up-close look at everything it takes to deliver power to the end of the line. Tables, chairs, and tents will be set up to welcome members to the headquarters.

FOOD TRUCKS WILL SERVE THE MEAL

Food trucks continue to grow in popularity throughout our region, so a few local member-

owned food trucks will be serving the meal during the 2021 annual meeting. The Scotty's food truck owned by Big Fella's and the Shagan Pit food truck will both be set up at the office. Everyone who attends the event will receive a ticket for a free meal from one of the food trucks. We hope this provides a quick and convenient way for busy members to attend our event and have a free meal on us.

ACTIVITIES AND DEMONSTRATIONS

We will once again be providing bucket truck rides for kids during the event. Our linemen will be giving rides from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. while the meal is being served. There will also be electrical safety demonstrations with our new 'neon leon' display, and several information tables, and giveaways throughout the evening.

BUSINESS MEETING

The business meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m. It is important for members of the cooperative to attend this meeting to get updates on the operations and finances of the co-op. Three board members will also be seated during the annual meeting. The annual business meeting is an important aspect of the cooperative and we encourage our members to attend.

We are getting back to normal with the 74th annual meeting this year, but we are also making some changes. We hope the changes create a fun and welcoming atmosphere for our members as we carry out the business of the cooperative. More information about the annual meeting can be found on **pages 6-7** of this issue. The 2021 annual report is also inserted in the middle of the publication. We hope you and your family can join us for this fun and functional event on the evening of September 21st.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

NORTHERN ELECTRIC

(USPS 396-040)

Board President: Donna Sharp

Board of Directors

Nolan Wipf - Vice President
 Ron Kaaz - Secretary
 Josh Larson - Treasurer
 Fran Esser
 Todd Hettich
 Kirk Schaunaman
 Mark Sumption
 Jeff Vander Wal

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

Chief Financial Officer: Cathi Podoll

Operations Manager: Jerry Weber

Manager of Member Services: Russel Ulmer

Manager of Information Technology: Derek Gorecki

Communications Director: Ben Dunsmoor
 bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop

Executive Secretary: Kay Albrecht

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

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Northern Electric Cooperative's regular board meeting was held July 30, 2021, at the headquarters in Bath with all directors present. As the first order of business, the Board approved the June 21, 2021, minutes and June expenditures. The Board then reviewed and accepted monthly reports by management.

Directors viewed the East River Electric Power Cooperative video report. East River Director Mark Sumption reported on actions taken by the East River Board at the July 1, 2021, meeting. General Manager Char Hager reported on the East River MAC Meeting held June 29, 2021. Director Nolan Wipf reported on the South Dakota Rural Electric Association board meeting held June 24-25, 2021.

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.
- Legal and Legislative Report
- Discussion on staff preparation for the Northern Electric Annual Meeting, September 21, 2021, at the Bath office.
- Reminded directors of the 34th American Coalition for Ethanol Conference and Annual Meeting, August 18-20, 2021, in Minneapolis, MN.
- Reminded directors of the East River Annual Meeting in Sioux Falls on September 8, 2021.
- Reminded directors of the NRECA online director education course, 2610-Understanding the Electric Business, August 17-18, 2021.

BOARD REPORT

The board considered and/or acted upon the following:

1. Approved date and time of the next regular board meeting for 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, August 26, 2021.
 2. Approved payment of legal fees for Harvey Oliver in the amount of \$2,199.76.
 3. Approved Work Order Inventory #21-06 for \$316,916.34 to be submitted to the Rural Utilities Service for reimbursement from loan funds for electric plant construction already completed.
 4. Appointed Director Nolan Wipf as voting delegate to vote on NRECA director from South Dakota.
 5. Nominated Director Kirk Schaunaman for the East River Board.
 6. Appointed Director Mark Sumption voting delegate for the Basin Electric District 1 Nominating Caucus.
 7. Authorized board attendance to the NRECA CCD Courses 2600-Director Duties and Liabilities, 2620-Board Operations and Process, 2630-Strategic Planning, August 24-26, 2021, in Pierre.
 8. Approved annual special and general capital credit retirements for members age 70 and over. Estimated retirements will total \$348,755.23.
 9. Approved the Electric Tariff Rate BR11N Electric Heating/Electric Heat with Non-Controlled Air Conditioning to be effective August 1, 2021.
 10. Held Executive Session.
- Talk to your director or co-op manager if you have any questions on any of these matters.

FINANCIAL REPORT

	June-21	June-20
kWh Sales	25,462,730 kWh	21,887,682 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$2,497,181	\$2,339,657
Total Cost of Service	\$2,432,699	\$2,136,882
Operating Margins.....	\$64,482	\$202,776
Year to Date Margins	\$229,602	\$450,571

RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE MONTHLY USAGE AND BILL

JUNE-2021.....	1,473 kWh.....	\$191.05.....	0.1297 per kWh
JUNE-2020.....	1,712 kWh.....	\$200.99.....	0.1174 per kWh

Wholesale power cost, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for 85.1% of NEC's total cost of service.

Be aware of overhead power lines on farms

Powerlines pose a major hazard for South Dakota farmers. Lines over roads and rural areas have a minimum clearance of 18 feet but just 12.5 feet over residential private property.

Before working in a field or around shops or grain bins, always take the time to note the location of your cooperative's power lines so that you can make sure to remain a safe distance from them and stay free from harm. To stay safe around overhead power lines, farm operators and workers must:

- Always use a spotter when operating large machinery near utility power lines.
- Use extra caution when raising augers or grain truck beds around co-op power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from power lines - at all times, and in all directions.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine the proper clearance.
- Always lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it to get added clearance.
- Call your electric cooperative immediately if a power line is sagging or is

hanging too low.

- If contact is made with a power line, remember that it is almost always safest to stay on the equipment. Make sure to warn others to stay away and call the cooperative immediately.

- The only reason to decide to make an exit is if the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, then remember to jump off the equipment with both of your feet together, avoiding touching the ground and vehicle at the same time.

Then, still keeping your feet together, "bunny hop" away from the vehicle until you reach a safe distance.

If you see someone else's equipment that has come in contact with a power line in your area, the best help you can give will be from a safe distance.

Make sure to yell out to, signal or call the equipment operator to make sure he or she remains in the vehicle, and notify your local cooperative immediately.

Please remember to follow these tips to avoid accidents during the harvest season.

TIPS FOR A SAFE HARVEST



The Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center offers this useful checklist for farm safety called Stop-Think-Act. Take these steps to minimize injury risks during harvest season.

Stop

- What could go wrong?
- How bad could it be?
- Has anything changed?

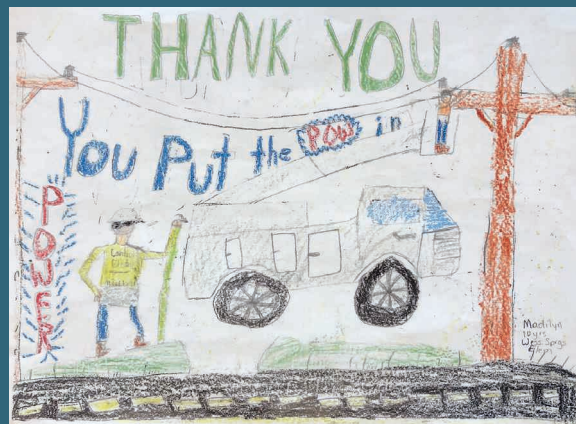
Think

- Do I clearly understand the task?
- Am I physically and mentally ready?

- Do I have the right equipment and tools for the job?

Act

- Make it safe.
- Use the right tools.
- Follow proper procedures.
- Reduce risks.
- Stop the task if it cannot be done safely.



You put the 'pow' in power!

Madilyn Gaikowski

Madilyn sends out a special note of appreciation for line workers across the state of South Dakota. She is the daughter of Gene and Loree Gaikowski. Gene serves as the Wessington Springs line foreman at Central Electric in Mitchell.

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.

CROCKPOT CRAVINGS

CROCKPOT APPLE BUTTER

Ingredients:

4 cups of sugar (more or less depending on sweetness of apples)
 4 tsp. cinnamon
 ¼ tsp. cloves
 ¼ tsp. salt

METHOD

Fill a 5 quart crockpot full of chopped apples (quartered or smaller), no need to peel, but do remove seeds. Tart apples are best. Top with the ingredients above. Lid won't fit at first but settles down as apples cook. Begin cooking on high and when bubbling, put heat on low and cook all night, or until thick and dark color. Stir occasionally. If need be, blend a few seconds to soften peels. Pour into jars and seal.

Cherie Leibel, Timber Lake

SLOW COOKER BEEF STEW

Ingredients:

3 cups water
 1 package McCormick® Classic Beef Stew Seasoning Mix Packet
 2 lbs beef stew meat, cut into 1-inch pieces
 1/4 cup flour
 2 cups potato chunks
 1 1/4 cups carrot chunks
 1 medium onion, cut into thin wedges
 1/2 cup sliced celery

METHOD

Mix vegetables, water and Beef Stew Seasoning Mix in slow cooker. Coat beef with flour. Stir into ingredients in slow cooker. Cover. Cook 8 hours on low or 5 hours on high until beef is tender.

mccormick.com

CROCKPOT BUTTERNUT SQUASH WITH APPLES

Ingredients:

1 ½ to 2 lbs. butternut squash, peeled and chopped (about 5 cups)
 2 to 3 tart apples, chopped (about 2 cups)
 ¼ c. dried cherries or cranberries
 1 ½ tsp. grated fresh ginger
 ½ tsp. salt
 1/8 tsp. pepper
 ½ tsp. cinnamon
 ¼ tsp. nutmeg
 ½ c. apple cider
 ¼ tsp. salt

METHOD

Combine all ingredients in your slow cooker and stir together. Cover and cook on low 3-4 hours or until squash is tender, then turn to warm until serving. Can also be baked in conventional oven at 325 degrees until fork tender. Sweet potatoes can be used instead of butternut squash if desired.

Linda Sherry, Sioux Falls

Please send your favorite dairy 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 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.



2021 ANNUAL MEETING

Meeting will feature food trucks and fun for families at cooperative office in Bath

Northern Electric Cooperative's 74th Annual Meeting will look different this year. The meeting will be held at the cooperative headquarters in Bath and the meal will be catered by two local member-owned food trucks for a fun and unique experience.

"Food trucks have grown in popularity, and we thought our annual meeting would be a great time to support a few of the businesses that are owned by our co-op members," Northern Electric CEO/General Manager Char Hager said.

The meeting will kick off at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday night, September 21. Everyone who attends the meeting will receive a ticket for a free food truck meal. Attendees will be able to choose between the Scotty's food truck which is owned by Big Fella's, and the Shagan Pit food truck. Both trucks will be

parked at the co-op's headquarters building in Bath. Members and their families are welcome to enjoy their free meal any time between 5:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. when the trucks will be serving food.

Kids will be able to get bucket truck rides from co-op linemen while the meal is being served. An energy expo will also be held from 5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. and feature a 'neon leon' electrical safety demonstration and information about products and services offered by Northern Electric Cooperative.

A brief business meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. to update members on the co-op's operations, finances, and highlights from the past year. Three board members will be seated at the end of the business meeting. Several prize drawings will be held at the end of the business meeting for members who are present.

ENERGIZED FOR THE FUTURE 2021 ANNUAL MEETING TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 FREE FOOD TRUCK MEAL

Every attendee will receive a free meal from one of two food trucks that will be parked at the Northern Electric Cooperative headquarters office in Bath from 5 p.m. - 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 21

FEATURED FOOD TRUCKS



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

5 PM - 6:30 PM

- Meal featuring food trucks from **Scotty's** and **Shagan Pit**
- **Bucket Truck Rides** For Kids
- **Energy Expo** featuring electrical demonstrations and giveaways

6:30 PM

- Brief Business Meeting

7:00 PM

- Prize giveaways at conclusion of business meeting

TRAXINGER FILES PETITION

Mike Traxinger of Claremont has filed a petition to fill the open District 1 seat



Mike Traxinger of Claremont has filed the only valid petition to fill the vacant board seat in District 1. Mark Sumption is currently the board member representing District 1, but he has reached his term limit of serving three consecutive three-year terms. Traxinger filed his petition on July 22 to replace Sumption on the board.

“I’ve always had a passion for the

cooperative system,” Traxinger said. “Cooperatives are vital to the success of rural America and farming and ranching. After talking with some Northern Electric directors and members, I decided that I wanted to run for the board to serve Northern Electric’s members.”

Traxinger is a fifth-generation farmer and currently serves as the General Counsel and Director of Governmental Affairs for Agtegra Cooperative. He also maintains a small herd of cattle and grows row crops on the family farm operation; Traxinger Simmentals.

Traxinger is the current vice president of the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives and serves as the past president of the American Agricultural Law

Association (AALA). He is also the co-chair of the Agricultural Law Committee of the State Bar of South Dakota. He is a member of the South Dakota Farm Bureau, Farmers Union, and South Dakota Simmental Association. The Houghton native is also a Class VII alumnus of the South Dakota Agricultural Rural Leadership (SDARL) program.

“I have a strong understanding of the role of a cooperative director, South Dakota cooperative law, and how to support the goals and missions of the cooperative,” Traxinger said. “I hope to use this skillset to be a strong voice for our members and a valued contributor to the Northern Electric Board of Directors.”

Traxinger will officially be seated as the new director for District 1 during the Northern Electric Annual Meeting on September 21.

OFFICIAL NOTICE

MEMBERS OF NORTHERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

The Annual Meeting of the members of Northern Electric Cooperative, Inc. will be held at the headquarters building in rural Bath, State of South Dakota, on the 21st day of September 2021, at 6:30 p.m. to take action on the following matters:

1. APPROVAL OF 2020 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES
2. APPROVAL OF TREASURER’S REPORT
3. ELECTION AND SEATING OF DIRECTORS

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that although Directors for District 1, 3, and 8 will be elected by the membership at the meeting, paper ballots will not be needed. Incumbent directors Ronald A. Kaaz (District 3) and Francis J. Esser (District 8) and member Michael E. Traxinger (District 1) are the only eligible candidates for their Districts. Each of the eligible candidates is running unopposed. Since no other nominations can be submitted, the candidates will be automatically elected at the annual meeting.

2021 NORTHERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE BOARD OF DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

DISTRICT 1

Michael E. Traxinger
Claremont, SD

DISTRICT 3

Ronald A. Kaaz
Aberdeen, SD

DISTRICT 8

Francis J. Esser
Redfield, SD

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Secretary has posted such nominations in the principal office of the Cooperative.

Ronald Kaaz
Secretary

July 30, 2021



RISING FROM THE ASHES

Rhonda Otten, along with her husband and three sons, has worked to keep Spink Family Restaurant open for business.
 Photos by Billy Gibson

Spink restaurant emerges strong from hardships brought by fire and pandemic

Billy Gibson
 billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Old Spink. New Spink.
 That's how Rhonda Otten variously refers to her restaurant, depending on whether she's alluding to the Spink Café that burned down in 2019 or the Spink Family restaurant that was throttled by the pandemic but is thriving today.

For more than 20 years, the Spink Café was a big draw in the township located in Union County. The eatery was known for its Friday night fish fries during Lent, Sunday dinners and its famous Spinkburger. The 80-year-old structure had recently been re-decorated with a 50s theme, featuring old LPs, vinyl album covers on the wall and pictures of Elvis Presley.

But life for Otten and her husband Sam changed in November of 2019 when the area's most

popular attraction was totally consumed by fire.

The way the Ottens saw it, there was no option but to rebuild. But the planned resurrection of the business wouldn't occur in the confines of Spink. The new iteration, renamed Spink Family Restaurant, would be located in the old American Legion hall in downtown Elk Point.

By all accounts, the "new Spink" wasn't so easy to bring forth from the ashes. Two weeks after working hard to get the new facility ready for business in Elk Point, the pandemic hit and threatened to dash the Ottens' hopes for good.

"The fire was in November, we made the decision to keep going in December, and we re-opened in March. We were open for two weeks when the pandemic hit, Rhonda said. "Those two weeks were very, very busy. It was a madhouse in

here. We had a lot more space and we were finally getting in the groove."

Facing the same problems as just about every restaurant owner in the state and nation, the Ottens were forced to hit the pause button and try to figure out the next step to take. They closed for a month, regrouped, and then returned to offer carry-out service only.

Members of the community rallied to support the restaurant, including employees at Union County Electric located just two blocks away.

According to Union County Electric General Manager Matt Klein, the cooperative always strives to support other local businesses that help the community thrive.

"At lunchtime you're likely to see some of our guys eating there," Klein said. "When they had carry-out, we ordered food for meetings and just did what we could to help — just like we do with other members of the community. We help whenever and wherever we can."



Server Karisma Tripp tends to another satisfied customer at Spink Family Restaurant in Elk Point.

Rhonda said it was inspiring to see the town pull together to face the impact of the pandemic, and also to help the business survive after the back-to-back calamities.



Cody Olson, center, enjoys lunch with his co-workers from Valley Ag Supply.

“The community really supported us and we’re very grateful for that,” she said. “But we’ve seen this many times before; people watching out for each other and helping when there’s a need. That’s what really pushed us through.”

One regular patron who is happy to see the new Spink succeeding is Joyce Schermer. She occupied a table in the restaurant one recent lunch hour along with her son Brad Johannsen and his wife Lori. The Johannsens are regular visitors to the

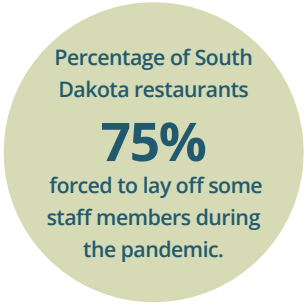
area from Sedona, Ariz., and always make a point to stop at Spink, preferring the hot beef sandwich and the prime rib sandwich.

“It’s always good every time you come,” said Schermer, a resident of Akron who opted for her go-to French Dip. “You’re never disappointed in the food or the service. It’s wonderful.”

Also enjoying a lunchtime meal were several employees of Valley Ag Supply. The company is located a half mile from the old Spink building that was destroyed by fire.

“We used to go there all the time and we were disappointed when it burned down. You could see our fertilizer plant from there,” said Cody Olson while noshing on the French Dip. “Now there’s no place to go. So, we just drive into town because it’s so good. It’s great that they came back and are still operating.”

As for “old Spink,” the Ottens are still trying to figure out what to do with the heap left in the wake of the conflagration. The building had an upstairs apartment where several members of the family lived at



various times through the years.

“It’s going to have to be torn down eventually, but we just don’t want to let it go,” Rhonda said. “There are so many memories attached to that place; both of our parents were such a big part of it.”

She emphasized that while the restaurant is in a new location, the food is the same as before. The Ottens, who have always used family recipes, depend on all three of their sons – ages 17 through 23 – to handle the cooking to maintain consistency on a daily basis.

“The secret to our success is that the five of us do all the cooking here. We use time-proven family recipes that have been popular for decades,” Rhonda said.



(TOP) Colleen Wipf of Frankfort (left) laughs during a Connect Con presentation at Black Hills State University. (RIGHT) Students listen to South Dakota Congressman Dusty Johnson via video conference during Connect Con. **Photos Courtesy: SDREA**

2021 CONNECT CON

Colleen Wipf of Frankfort represented Northern Electric during youth event

Ben Dunsmoor

bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop

Colleen Wipf of Frankfort was one of 26 high school students from across the state to participate in Connect Con: A Youth Leadership Experience on July 26-29.

The event was sponsored by Northern Electric Cooperative and South Dakota's electric cooperatives as part of the ongoing commitment to youth education and development.

The conference was held at Black

Hills State University and focused on co-ops, the energy industry, and youth leadership. The agenda was packed with hands-on activities, social interactions, informational presentations, and motivational speakers.

"I did not know what to anticipate going into the trip but from the moment I stepped onto the bus I knew it was going to be exciting," Wipf said.

Students toured Black Hills State University, the Spearfish hydroelectric plant, and Butte Electric Cooperative's office during

the four-day trip. The teens learned about safety at Butte Electric and had the opportunity to be lifted nearly 50 feet in the air by a bucket truck.

South Dakota Congressman Dusty Johnson also spoke to the group via video conference. Johnson encouraged the teens to chart their own path in life and not get distracted by division and negativity.

"I am so happy I received this opportunity to meet new people from around the state and also talk with Representative Dusty Johnson," Wipf said. "I really enjoyed the experience and would recommend it to everyone."

The students attending Connect Con also listened to leadership speaker Malcom Chapman, motivational speaker Scyller Borglum, Dr. Sid Suryanarayanan from the South Dakota State University Electrical Engineering department, and Chinelle Christensen from Sioux Valley Energy who spoke about the power of cooperatives.

This was the first year for the Connect Con event which was held in place of the Youth Excursion trip to North Dakota and the Youth Tour trip to Washington D.C. Both trips were canceled due to restrictions surrounding the pandemic.

ELECTRIC SAVINGS

Water heaters are the second highest source of energy usage in the home - and the second most expensive monthly energy cost. Electric water heaters can help you cut costs from installation to reduced monthly energy bills. They are also more efficient and safer than gas water heaters.

Plus, when you own an electric water heater, you can enroll in your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative's load management program. This program is both financially friendly as it reduces wholesale power costs and environmentally friendly by reducing energy usage.



RE-ENERGIZING EFFICIENCY

To learn more about the benefits of going electric or to enroll in the load management program, contact your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative or visit yourcoopower.com today.



LEARNING FROM ADVERSITY



The Dakota Lakes Research Farm produces information helpful to farmers and ranchers dealing with drought. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

SDSU agriculture researcher Dwayne Beck looks for better ways to gain higher yields through crop rotations and other techniques

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The drought conditions that gripped the state through the summer months caused difficulty for farmers and ranchers. The drought in 2012 also made it difficult to grow and harvest a productive crop.

But it's the drought that occurred in 1988 that Dwayne Beck remembers most. Beck, 70, is a researcher with SDSU who runs the Dakota Lakes research farm near Canning.

According to the National Integrated Drought Information System, as of June 23 more than 97 percent of South Dakota and all of Minnesota were categorized as "abnormally dry."

As someone who considers himself a seasoned investigator and problem solver, Beck looks at the current drought conditions as an

opportunity to learn.

So, what exactly did the farming and ranching community learn in 1988 when adverse weather conditions caused an estimated \$60 billion in agricultural damage across the U.S.?

"We learned not to do tillage," Beck responds without hesitation. "This drought is about the worse I've seen since 1988, and we learned then that in this part of the country if you till, you're screwed. No-till gives you a chance to have a decent crop and run a viable farming operation."

And the key to succeeding without tilling is proper crop rotation. That's what keeps Beck and other researchers busy.

On a recent afternoon, Melanie Caffe and her assistant Nick Paul were operating a small combine to gather their test crops laid out in strips measuring five feet wide by 20

feet long. Caffe, a native of France, is an ag professor at SDSU, while Paul is a local farmer and research technician.

The two-member team moved from section to section, cleaning out the collection bin as they went to keep the samples from being contaminated and corrupting the research data. The samples were



Dwayne Beck runs the Dakota Farms research facility near Canning.



Melanie Caffe and Nick Paul collect samples from a field at the Dakota Farms Research Station near Canning.

bagged and taken into the lab where Caffe and Paul planned to perform fertility experiments with the goal of developing varieties with higher yield, higher quality and stronger drought resistance.

Much of the research centers around maximizing yields through effective crop rotations. Beck has spent much of his career considering the ways farming was conducted 100 or more years ago and how it can be improved.

“The Natives grew crops before the Spaniards came and brought horses. They were all no-tillers because they didn’t have cows and horses to pull the plows. They grew 13 different kinds of corn, beans, squash and sunflowers. They were very successful. The settlers never asked anyone how to grow crops here, they just got out their plow and started turning over the soil.”

Beck has seen the wonders of crop rotation in his research. Some of his fields are rotated five ways.

“Good rotations can produce a lack of disturbance in places where you don’t have a lot of water. Our research shows 99 percent of resistance issues could be solved with better crop rotations. There are fields where we haven’t used insecticides for 18 years.”

Beck said his methods aren’t always adopted by industry but he continues to gather data and push out the information obtained through research.

“The nice about being a research guy is you always have more things to learn,” he said. “The more you research, the more you don’t know, but we’re always looking for answers.”

HOPS GROWERS NAVIGATING THEIR WAY THROUGH CHANGING INDUSTRY

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

In many ways, Ryan Heine is like the average South Dakota farmer. He frets about the weather, plans for the future, worries about finances, watches the markets and is constantly trying to find a buyer for the crop he hopes will make.

But his crop is unlike most of the others that emerge from the South Dakota soil. Heine is owner of 6th Meridian Hop Farm near Yankton. His is one of six such farms left in the state growing hops for brewers to transform into craft beer.

Heine also sees his work as different compared to most farmers – he relies on his nose a lot.

“There’s a lot of experimenting with different aromas.

There are so many flavor profiles and varieties of hops that are used in creating craft beer,” he said. “There’s a vast palette of different aromas, and the market will dictate what consumers prefer.”

Ryan and his wife Michelle launched their hop operation in 2014, leaving Omaha and returning to the small family farm near Yankton in pursuit of a more grounded lifestyle for their five children.

“We wanted to get out of the city and back to our farming roots,” said Ryan, who works remotely as an electrical engineer for a company out of Minneapolis.

Ryan’s interest in growing the essential elements of craft beer began when he was a student at Parks College in St. Louis, Mo. He went out with his friends and found most of what was offered at bars, pubs and restaurants was bland and uninspiring. He knew he liked the flavor of beer and he knew he liked the simplicity of the farming lifestyle.

“So I started doing some home brewing and found that it was a fun hobby to pursue. Now we have one of the biggest operations in the state,” he said.

Heine’s time on the farm is spent fussing over flavor and aroma profiles, acid levels, yeast growth, oil content, insect invasions, disease infections and more. He and Michelle do all the growing, harvesting, processing, drying, pulverizing, preserving, pressing and packaging.

He finds markets by visiting with brewers, forging relationships across the region and even keeping in touch with his college buddies.

“There are some college roommates I’ve kept in touch with who are brewers and we’re always talking about how to improve our products,” he said. “Hops growers are down to just a handful in the state, but for those who have survived, I think the outlook is good.”



Minutes of 73rd Northern Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting Held on September 22, 2020

Pursuant to the notice to all members, the 73rd Annual Meeting of the membership of Northern Electric Cooperative, Inc., was held at the Northern Electric Cooperative, Inc. headquarters rural Bath, SD, on the 22nd day of September 2020, at 6:30 p.m. Registration and voting from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

General Manager/CEO Char Hager welcomed the members to the 2020 annual meeting of Northern Electric Cooperative. The 2020 annual meeting was unique as your cooperative continues to navigate the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hager thanked the members for attending the meeting and for their dedication and commitment to the cooperative.

General Manager/CEO Char Hager thanked East River Electric Power Cooperative Video/AV Coordinator Bob Gale for providing the audio equipment and the transmitter that is allowing them to listen to the meeting on the radio from their vehicles.

Following the National Anthem, General Manager/CEO Char Hager called on Communications Director Ben Dunsmoor to deliver the invocation. Hager then recognized directors and officers of the board.

President Donna Sharp declared a quorum was present, with the official registration being 52.

Sharp gave a report on petitions for nominees. Sharp stated that petitions were received for the following Director candidates: District 4, Josh Larson, Columbia, District 6, Kirk Schaunaman, Aberdeen, and District 7, Jeff Vander Wal, Brentford and Danny Miles, Conde.

President Donna Sharp called for the Secretary's report. Upon motion, the reading of the minutes of the September 5, 2019, Annual Meeting was waived and the minutes,

as previously mailed to all the members prior to this meeting, were approved as printed and mailed.

President Donna Sharp called for the Treasurer's report. Sharp stated that the financial statements printed in the annual report represented an accurate reflection of the audited financial status of the Cooperative, as of December 31, 2019. The treasurer's report was approved as presented.

President Sharp called for any unfinished or old business. There was none.

President Donna Sharp thanked the Board of Directors and all the employees of Northern Electric Cooperative who have worked to overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and keep the lights on for our members. General Manager Char Hager and her team quickly put the co-op's pandemic response plan into action back in March to ensure co-op employees and line crews would remain healthy, safe, and available to serve the membership.

Donna Sharp said the board of directors has also been meeting virtually every month to ensure the cooperative continues to operate at a high level and serve the members, despite these challenging times.

Six Northern Electric employees celebrating milestone anniversaries with the co-op were recognized for their years of service. Brad Becker, Purchasing Agent, 40 years, Tyler Marken, Journeyman Lineman, 30 years, Shawn Evans, Journeyman Lineman, 20 years, Christy Nagel, Billing Clerk, 10 years, Chris Piehl, Journeyman Lineman, 10 years, and Rene Waldman, Dispatch/Engineering Aid, 10 years. Thank you for your years of service to Northern Electric Cooperative.

Three new employees who joined the cooperative within the past year were also



Board President Donna Sharp addresses members from a make-shift stage during the 2020 annual meeting.

recognized. Collin Gades an apprentice lineman in Redfield, Nicholas Dean an apprentice lineman in Bath and Benjamin Krueger who was hired this summer to fill an open accountant position.

Northern Electric, its board, staff, and employees were also recognized by the Spink County 4-H Leaders Association for the co-op's contributions to their organization.

Jeff Vander Wal represented the 4-H group to present an award on behalf of their association.

Jeff and the Spink County 4-H Leaders Association were thanked for the recognition. Northern Electric is proud to support youth organizations throughout our service territory.

Victor Fischbach was recognized for his 12 years of service on the Northern Electric Cooperative Board of Directors by presenting him with a plaque for his dedication to the co-op.

After serving on the Northern Electric Board of Directors for the past 12 years Victor reached his term limit and officially finished his duties as a director at the 2020

THE 2020 NORTHERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ANNUAL MEETING WAS HELD AT THE HEADQUARTES IN BATH DUE TO THE PANDEMIC

annual meeting. Victor walked up onto the stage to receive his plaque and deliver a few remarks.

Sharp called for any new business. Hearing none, called to take action on the election of directors. Attorney Harvey Oliver explained the voting rules and procedures of the election of directors and explained that the candidates for District 4 and 6 being unopposed, the chair declared the nominees as elected by general consent. The committee tallied the votes for the election regarding District 7. Jeff Vander Wal received 9 votes; Danny Miles received 6 votes. Jeff Vander Wal was declared the winner.

Sharp called for any other business to come before the meeting, there being none, she declared the meeting adjourned at 6:54 p.m. and thanked all for attending. ■



Members registered for the 2020 annual meeting by driving through the co-op's shop. The annual meeting was held at the headquarters in Bath due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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South Dakota State Fair
September 2-6, 2021



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.

AUGUST 25-29
Corn Palace Festival
604 N Main Street, Mitchell, SD, 605-995-8430

AUGUST 26-29
58th Annual Steam Threshing Jamboree
Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 605-256-3644

AUGUST 27-28
Sizzlin' Summer Nights
Main Street, Aberdeen, SD, 605-226-3441

AUGUST 27-29
Fall River Hot Air Balloon Festival
Hot Springs Municipal Airport, Hot Springs, SD, 605-745-4140

AUGUST 28
McCrossan Boys Ranch Xtreme Event Rodeo
McCrossan Boys Ranch Campus, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-339-1203

SEPTEMBER 2-6
South Dakota State Fair
State Fairgrounds, Huron, SD, 605-353-7340

SEPTEMBER 9-12
SD State Senior Games
Watertown, SD, Contact Howard at 605-491-0635 for more information

SEPTEMBER 10-11
Ribs, Rods & Rock n' Roll
Main Street, Vermillion, SD, 605-624-2021

SEPTEMBER 11
Lions Club Fall Rummage Sales
City-wide, Groton, SD, 605-846-7607

SEPTEMBER 11-12
Fall Harvest Festival
Delmont, SD, 605-928-3792

SEPTEMBER 12
Annual Antique Car & Tractor Parade
Main Street, Farmer, SD, 605-239-4498

SEPTEMBER 17-18
Deadwood Jam
Main Street, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

SEPTEMBER 18
Health Connect Fair
Sanford Pentagon, Sioux Falls, SD, 888-761-5437

SEPTEMBER 18-19
Northeast South Dakota Celtic Faire and Games
37925 Youth Camp Road, Aberdeen, SD, 605-380-5828

SEPTEMBER 23-25
Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup & Arts Festival
13329 US Highway 16A, Custer, SD, 605-255-4515

SEPTEMBER 25
Great Downtown Pumpkin Festival
526 Main Street, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

SEPTEMBER 25-26
Menno Pioneer Power Show
Menno, SD, contact Daniel at mennopowershow@yahoo.com for more details

OCTOBER 1-3
SiouxperCon
1201 N West Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD, visit siouxpercon.com for more details and tickets

OCTOBER 8
Lake Region Marching Band Festival
Groton, SD, 605-846-7607

OCTOBER 8-10
2021 Black Hills Powwow
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-341-0925

OCTOBER 9
Pumpkin Festival
City Park, Groton, SD, 605-846-7607

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