

Northern Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Cooperative Connections

JUNE 2017 VOL. 18 NO. 2



Making Cheese

The Artisanal Way at Valley Side Farm

Page 8-9

April 2017 Board Report

Northern Electric Cooperative's April board meeting was held May 1, 2017, at the headquarters in Bath with all directors present except Glen Larson and Victor Fischbach. Eide Bailly Audit Manager Luke Johnson was a guest for the meeting. As the first order of business, the Board approved the March 23, 2017, minutes and March expenditures. The Board then reviewed and accepted monthly reports by management including details on financial, operations, safety, member services and communications.

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 April meeting. South Dakota Rural Electric Association Director Mike McHugh reported on the SDREA board meeting held March 30-31, 2017. Directors Donna Sharp, Mike McHugh, Francis Esser and General Manager Char Hager reported on the 2017 NRECA Legislative Conference which was held April 23-25, in Washington, DC.

MANAGER'S REPORT

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

- Update and discussion on development projects and activities taking place in the community and our service area.
- Informed the board of the 2017 Director's Summer School East, Charleston, SC, June 9-14 and Summer School West, Colorado Springs, CO, July 14-19.
- Reviewed Rural Utilities Services Audit for period May 1, 2011, to January 31, 2017.
- Reminded the board of the 2017 CFC Forum, June 11-14 in San Antonio, TX, for those who will be attending.
- Informed directors that 2017 District 4, 6 and 7 candidate petitions need to be submitted by July 14, 2017. Mike McHugh - District 4 - is term-limited and will not be able to run again.
- Informed the board that applications have been received for the 2017 Basin VIP Tour, June 27-28, the deadline for applications is May 26, 2017.
- Calendar review of upcoming meetings and events.

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 18, 2017.
2. Received and approved the 2016 CPA Audit Report presented by Luke Johnson of Eide Bailly, LLP.

3. Approved allocating \$2,456,586.97 of NEC's combined 2016 margins to member patronage capital credit accounts.
4. 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 \$11,824.15. Any uncollected amounts have been filed in small claims court or filed with a collection agency, and any members remaining capital credit balances will be assigned against the outstanding amounts.
5. Approved payment of legal fees for Harvey Oliver in the amount of \$13,053.71.
6. Approved revisions to Policy P-38E, Donations and Contributions.
7. Approved revisions to Electric Tariff, Marketing Programs (sheets 34 & 35).
8. Appointed Director Nolan Wipf for the SDREA Board.
9. Approved resolution for the union contract.
10. Appointed Glen Larson as delegate and Mark Sumption as alternate to the 2017 NCSC Annual Meeting, June 13, in San Antonio, TX.
11. Authorized General Manager Char Hager to sign the purchase agreement between Northern Wireless Communications and Northern Valley Communications.

For questions on any of these matters, please ask your cooperative manager, staff or director.

Financial Report – March 2017

	March 2017	March 2016
kWh Sales	27,511,694 kWh	24,097,323 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$2,400,460	\$2,099,108
Total Cost of Service	\$2,466,999	\$2,187,939
Operating Margins	(-\$66,539)	(-\$88,769)
Year to Date Margins	(-\$33,208)	\$172,900

Residential Average Monthly Usage and Bill

March '17	2,535 kWh	\$224.54	.0886 per kWh
March '16	2,077 kWh	\$192.96	.0929 per kWh

Wholesale power cost, taxes, interest and depreciation accounted for 85.1% of NEC's Total Cost of Service.

Northern Electric Cooperative Connections

(USPS 396-040)

CEO/General Manager

Char Hager
info@northernelectric.coop

Board of Directors

Mike McHugh, **President**
Donna Sharp, **Vice President**
Randy Kienow, **Secretary**
Wayne Holt, **Treasurer**
Fran Esser
Victor Fischbach
Glen Larson
Mark Sumption
Nolan Wipf

Harvey Oliver,
NEC Attorney

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Mark Fischer, Manager of Wireless Services
Derek Gorecki, Manager of Information Technology
Mike Kelly, Operations Manager
Cathi Podoll, Chief Financial Officer
Kay Albrecht, Executive Secretary
Ben Dunsmoor, Communications Director

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Design assistance by SDREA and TDG Communications



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

Editor's Column

An Easy Way To Win With Energy

South Dakota electric cooperatives have hit a \$188 million jackpot. No, electric co-ops are not out buying lottery tickets and betting that their numbers will be drawn during the late local news. Electric co-ops have been betting on their members for more than 30 years. We've been betting that you will do your part to help drive down our wholesale power costs which in turn helps everyone save on their monthly electric bill.

It's a program we call load management. The program has been in place for members of East River Electric Power Cooperative since 1985. During the past three decades, it has saved electric co-op members across eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota more than \$188 million in avoided wholesale power costs.

Here is how it works. East River Electric asks its wholesale members – like Northern Electric – to participate in the program. The local co-ops install load management devices at farms and homes on key electric appliances and equipment like water heaters, air conditioners, grain bin fans, and irrigation pivots. Once these load management devices are installed East River can cycle connected appliances and equipment across the entire system on and off during times of peak use.

Load management is essentially a fancy electric co-op term for

the basic principle of supply and demand. When a lot of electricity is being used at one time, and demand is high, that is usually when electricity is most expensive. By cycling large appliances and agriculture equipment on and off during those peak demand times East River and its member cooperatives can avoid paying premium power prices.

Currently, more than 75,000 load management devices are installed throughout eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota. That's a lot of electric load that can be controlled to save you, the end consumer of the cooperative, money. Northern Electric passes those savings along by

offering special rates, rebates, and credits to members who have load management devices installed on water heaters, irrigation units, or grain bins. To learn more about the load management program, or to make sure your appliances are connected to the system, call a Northern Electric Member Services representative at **605-225-0310**.

Load management is an easy way for you and your electric cooperative to cut costs, conserve electricity, and win with energy. When everyone does their part, the savings pile up. And now, a few decades and a few million dollars later, it feels like we've all hit the jackpot.



Ben Dunsmoor
Communications Director

Know How You Can Stay Safe and Get Through Until Power Gets Restored to You

Severe storms are devastating to homes, properties and lives. These storms can also take down power lines – creating a dangerous situation for all of us, including the linemen and linewomen working hard to get your power turned back on.

How long it takes to get your power restored depends on the extent of the storm's destruction, the number of outages and when it becomes safe for utility personnel to get to the damaged areas. There are many steps in the assessment and restoration process – clearing downed power lines; ensuring public health and safety facilities are operational; checking power stations and transformers; repairing transmission lines, substations, and distribution lines; and getting power restored to customers within the various damaged areas.

Be sure to contact your electric utility immediately to report the outage.

Safe Electricity recommends taking the following safety precautions:

- Just because power lines are damaged does not mean they are dead. Every downed power line is potentially energized and dangerous until utility crews arrive on the scene to ensure

power has been cut off. Downed power lines, stray wires and debris in contact with them all have the potential to deliver a fatal shock. Stay far away and keep others away from downed power lines.

- Never enter a flooded basement if electrical outlets are submerged. The water could be energized.
- Do not turn power off if you must stand in water to do so. Call your electric utility and have them turn off power at the meter.
- Before entering storm-damaged buildings, make sure electricity and gas are turned off.
- Do not use water-damaged electronics before properly restoring them. Electric motors in appliances should be cleaned and reconditioned before use. It may be necessary to replace some of your appliances and electronics. Have your water-damaged items inspected and approved by a professional before using them.
- If you clean-up outdoors after a storm, do not use electronic equipment in wet conditions.
- If you are driving and come along a downed power line, stay away and keep others away. Contact emergency personnel or your utility company to address the downed power line.
- If you do come in contact with a downed power line, do not leave the car. Wait for utility and emergency professionals to make sure the power line is de-energized before exiting the car.

During an outage, Safe Electricity recommends turning off electrical appliances and unplugging major electronics, including computers and televisions. Power sometimes comes back in surges, which can damage electronics. Your circuits could overload when power returns if all your electronics are still plugged in and on. Leave one light on to indicate that power has been restored. Wait a few minutes and then turn on other appliances and equipment – one at a time.

If you use a standby generator, it is critical that proper safety precautions be taken. Always read and follow all manufacturer operating instructions. There should be nothing plugged into the generator when you turn it on. This prevents a surge from damaging your generator and appliances. Operate generators in well-ventilated, outdoor, dry areas. Never attach a temporary generator to a circuit breaker, fuse or outlet. Permanent generators should be wired into a house by a qualified electrician using a transfer switch in order to prevent feeding electricity back into overhead lines, which can be deadly for linemen.

To help you get through, have a storm kit prepared. Keep the kit in a cool, dry place, and make sure all members of the family know where it is.

For information on when to save and when to throw out refrigerated food after a power outage, go to FoodSafety.gov.

Source: safeelectricity.org

Kids' Corner Safety Poster

"Call first or you might hit underground cable."



Seth Lippert, 9 years old

Seth is the son of Dean Lippert, Blomkest, Minn. He is a member of Renville-Sibley Co-op Power, Danube, Minn.

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



Blues Buster Smoothie

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 (6-oz.) container low-fat
blueberry-flavored yogurt | 2/3 cup fresh or frozen
blueberries |
| 1/2 cup apple juice | 3 to 4 ice cubes |

Combine all ingredients in a blender; blend until smooth and creamy.

Courtney Reedy, Tea

Easy Creamy Chicken Enchiladas

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 small chicken breasts or 2 large
chicken breasts | 1 (7 oz.) can chopped green
chilies |
| 2 (10.5 oz.) cans cream of chicken
soup | 1 small can sliced olives |
| 3/4 cup sour cream | 2 cups shredded or grated
Cheddar cheese |
| 1/3 cup milk | 1 pkg. flour tortillas |

Cook chicken breasts in crockpot until tender. Shred. Mix together cream of chicken soup, sour cream and milk; set aside. Prepare 9x13-inch pan. To the chicken, add chopped green chilies, olives and half of the soup mixture. Roll up chicken mixture in tortillas; 8 to 10 usually fit in a 9x13-inch pan. Spread remainder of soup mixture over all and top with Cheddar cheese. Bake at 350°F. for 35 to 40 minutes. If prepared in advance and refrigerated, bake for 50 to 55 minutes. Serve with sour cream and salsa, if desired.

Jane Ham, Rapid City

Coconut Cream Cheesecake Bars

- | | |
|---|--|
| 84 Nilla wafers, divided | 2 T. sugar |
| 6 T. butter, melted | 2 (3.4 oz) pkg. vanilla instant
pudding |
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese,
softened | 2-1/2 cups cold milk |
| 1 (8 oz.) container Cool Whip,
thawed, divided | 1-1/2 cups coconut, toasted,
divided |

Reserve 24 wafers. Crush remaining wafers and then mix with butter. Press onto bottom of 9x13-inch pan. Refrigerate while preparing filling. Beat cream cheese and sugar with mixer until well blended. Whisk in 1 cup Cool Whip. Carefully spread over crust. Stand reserved wafers around edges. Beat pudding mix and milk with whisk in medium bowl for 2 minutes. Stir in 1 cup Cool Whip and 3/4 cup coconut; spread over cream cheese layer. Top with remaining Cool Whip and coconut. Refrigerate 5 hours.

Gail Lee, Brookings

No Bake Cookie Dough Ice Cream Sandwich

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1/2 cup creamy peanut butter | 1-1/4 cups vanilla wafer crumbs
(about 35 vanilla wafers) |
| 1/3 cup butter, softened | 1 cup miniature chocolate chips |
| 2/3 cup confectioners' sugar | 4 cups vanilla ice cream, softened |
| 1/3 cup firmly packed brown sugar | |
| 2 tsp. McCormick® Pure Vanilla Extract | |

Mix peanut butter and butter in large bowl until well blended. Add sugars and vanilla; stir until blended and smooth. Stir in vanilla wafer crumbs and chocolate chips. Line a 8-inch square pan with foil, with ends of foil extending over sides of pan. Press 1/2 of the dough into an even layer. Pat remaining dough on parchment or wax paper into 8-inch square. Gently spread ice cream over layer in pan. Flip 8-inch square layer onto top of ice cream. Peel back parchment paper. Cover with foil. Freeze 3 hours or until firm. Let stand at room temperature 2 to 3 minutes to allow ice cream to soften slightly. Cut into 16 bars. Wrap each in plastic wrap. Store in freezer.

Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 305, Total Fat 17g, Sodium 118mg, Cholesterol 21mg, Carbohydrates 33g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Protein 5g

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Spam Hotdish

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| 2 cups macaroni, cooked | 1 can cream of mushroom soup |
| 2-1/2 cups milk | 1/2 green pepper, diced |
| 1/4 cup butter, melted | 1 medium onion, diced |
| 1/2 cup bread crumbs | 1/4 lb. Velveeta, cubed |
| 4 eggs, well beaten | 1 can Spam, cubed |

Combine macaroni, milk, butter, bread crumbs, eggs and cream of mushroom soup. Add green pepper, onion, cheese and Spam. Pour into casserole dish. Bake at 350°F. for about 1 hour or until bubbly. If time is of the essence, casserole can be heated thoroughly in microwave before putting in the oven and then cut baking time in half.

Leann Fredrickson, Aberdeen

Crab Dip

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 (16 oz.) container sour cream | 1 bunch green onions, chopped |
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese,
softened | 1 pkg. slivered almonds |
| 1 pkg. ranch dressing mix | 1 pkg. imitation crab, chopped |
| | 2 cups shredded cheese |

Mix together sour cream, cream cheese and ranch dressing mix. Add remaining ingredients. Chill. Serve with assorted chips or crackers.

Pam Hofer, Carpenter

Please send your favorite dessert, salad 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 2017. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.



LEFT: A pole lies on the ground south of Ferney after a disc operator working a farm field hit it and broke it off in April.

Steer Clear of Danger

Operators Warned To Watch Out For Power Lines

by Ben Dunsmoor

Two accidents in the Northern Electric Cooperative service territory are demonstrating the importance of being safe around power poles.

A disc operator working a field south of Ferney caused an outage on April 13 when the machinery he was driving hit a pole and snapped it off. Northern Electric Cooperative crews responded

“The damage caused by these accidents can be dangerous to the operators and others in the area.”

to the scene and safely replaced the pole and restored electricity to the area.

“This accident is a reminder that farmers need to watch out for poles and wires while they are out working in their fields this spring,” Northern Electric Operations Manager Mike Kelly said.

Another accident happened at the end of March when a commercial truck making its rounds near Mina Lake hit a guy wire that was supporting a Northern Electric Cooperative pole and caused the structure to break. The accident also knocked out power and damaged an electrical meter and transformer.

“Equipment operators simply need to be aware of power equipment when they are working,” Kelly said. “The damage caused by these accidents can be dangerous to the operators and others in the area.”

Powering Your Safety

Accidents like the ones in the Northern Electric service territory are the reason the co-op is partnering with the 25 member co-ops of East River Electric Power Cooperative to launch the ‘Powering Your Safety’ campaign. The campaign includes television commercials, radio



ABOVE: A pole, meter, and transformer broke near Mina Lake in March after a commercial truck hit the guy wire supporting the pole.



LEFT: The pole that broke near Ferney in April caused an outage in the area.

advertising, and a website to get safety messages to farmers and machinery operators.

Farm machinery today is bigger than ever. Large equipment improves productivity, but leaves less margin for error when working around overhead power lines. Contact with a live power line can be deadly and knowing what to do if it happens can mean the difference between life and death.

Machinery operators always need to be aware of what is overhead and underground while working at a job site.


- **Do not exit.** If equipment contacts a power line, the safest thing to do is stay inside the cab.
- **Call 911** and the local electric cooperative for help and then warn anyone nearby not to approach the equipment.
- **Only exit the machinery after you are told by the authorities that it is safe to do so.** Exiting equipment that has made contact with energized powerlines can cause electrocution. The downed power lines could be charging the equipment with electricity and, if you step out, you will become the electricity's path to the ground and

could be killed by electric shock.


- **If you must get out of your equipment because of a fire or other danger, tuck your arms across your body and jump with your feet together as far as possible from the equipment** so no part of your body touches the equipment and the ground at the same time.
- **Move away from the equipment with your feet together, either by hopping or shuffling, until you are at least 40 feet away.** Electricity spreads through the ground in ripples. Keeping your feet together prevents one foot from stepping into a higher voltage zone than the other foot, which could cause electrocution.
- **When you are clear of the area, call for help and keep others away.** Don't approach the equipment again until the authorities tell you it is safe.

For more tips and information visit www.northernelectric.coop or the new www.poweringyoursafety.com and help spread the message about safely operating large farm equipment around power lines.


**Do not exit.
If equipment
contacts a
power line, the
safest thing
to do is stay
inside the cab.**



**Be aware of what's overhead and
know what to do if you hit a power line.**



PoweringYourSafety.com



Valley Side Farm Makes Cheese an Artform

Jocelyn Romey

FRESH, NATURAL, ARTISAN CHEESE – IT CAN ONLY get better by being locally made. And, it is. Kris Swanson and her husband, Scott, own and operate Valley Side Farm Cheese, LLC in Crooks, S.D., a rural town north of Sioux Falls. The business began in 2012 on the Swanson's eighth-generation family farm, where an old barn built in 1899 serves as the identifying logo for the cheese.

Kris Swanson studied how to make artisan cheese in Vermont at the Vermont Institute for Artisan Cheese (VIAC). From there, she took her knowledge and experience to start her own business. She notes she is the only artisan cheese maker in South Dakota. However, making this cheese by hand can be hard work and a time-consuming endeavor.

"It's more labor intensive than I bargained for," Swanson said. "I give a lot of credit to people who

make artisan cheese."

She carefully described the lengthy process of pasteurizing, culturing, cooking, cutting, weighing and pressing the cheese that was displayed in a refrigerated storage room. In all, the process of preparing the cheese took two to three days before it could be placed on the shelf.

Swanson said, "My favorite part in this process is seeing the finished product – the smell, the taste. When you cut into a wheel of cheese, it's so pretty. The satisfaction you get from making a product like that is so cool."

Swanson provides her local customers with a variety of Cheddar cheeses, mozzarella and even string cheese. Some of her current flavors include garlic, bacon, dill, red wine and beer.

Unlike other store-bought cheeses, Swanson's





University in Brookings where they conduct antibiotic testing on the milk before delivering it. While explaining this process, Swanson smiled and said, “Did you know, it takes 10 pounds of milk to make one pound of cheese.”

Inspired by her love of cheese, Swanson said, “I like trying new things.”

She wanted to try something new and something she loved doing. Now, she has steady business and returning customers who are mostly local. Swanson has also been providing tours of her shop

cheese is made with natural and fresh ingredients. Swanson does not use additives such as color or preservatives like many other providers.

“Most cheese is yellow because dye is put into it,” Swanson said. “People always say my cheese tastes so clean. That’s because no preservatives are in it.”

Swanson buys ingredients locally, including the milk, which she buys from South Dakota State

to interested groups such as the Red Hat Society, homeschoolers, FFA chapters, culinary classes and more.

Even though it’s a new business, maybe Swanson always had it in her to make cheese. While talking about her business, she smirked and said, “I was a dairy princess in high school.”

So, the former dairy princess from Cottonwood County in Minnesota is now South Dakota’s artisan cheese maker.

For more information on Valley Side Farm Cheese, visit their Facebook page @ValleySideFarm-Cheese. Swanson’s cheese can be found in select stores and restaurants in the Sioux Falls area.



Left: Rows of cheese wheels with varying flavors sit on shelves at the Valley Side Farm Cheese Shop, ready for customers.

Above: The iconic 1899 barn serves as the identifying logo for the Valley Side Farm Cheese brand of Crooks, S.D.

Top: Valley Side Farm Cheese owner Kris Swanson stands with her 300-gallon cheese vat that she ordered from the Netherlands.

Cover: Multiple cheese samples are produced and displayed at Valley Side Farm Cheese.
COVER PHOTO COURTESY OF KRIS SWANSON/VALLEY SIDE FARM CHEESE

Northern Electric Lineman **Lance Dennert** Completes Apprenticeship Program



ABOVE: Operations Manager Mike Kelly presents Journeyman Lineman Lance Dennert with a certificate after Dennert completed the Lineworker Certification Program.

Northern Electric lineman Lance Dennert is no longer an apprentice, he is now a journeyman lineman.

Dennert completed the Lineworker Certification Program through the Northwest Lineman College on March 16. He started working as a temporary 1,000-hour lineman for Northern Electric in 2012. Once he was hired full time he started working toward achieving journeyman lineman status by logging 8,000 hours in the field and completing several exams.

Dennert calls his certification an ‘awesome’ accomplishment and he looks forward to learning more in the field as he serves the members of Northern Electric Cooperative.

Alan Masat Named **Scholar Of The Week**



Alan Masat

Touchstone Energy
Scholar of the Week!

Redfield High School senior Alan Masat received the honor of being named the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week on April 24.

Masat is the son of Northern Electric Cooperative members Don and Rita Masat and has a 4.0-grade point average. Masat was the captain of the football team during his senior season. He also plays basketball, baseball, and is involved in 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA).

“I am very honored to be named the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week. I would like to give credit to my parents and all of the great teachers who have guided me along the way,” Masat said.

Masat says his key to success both inside and outside the classroom is staying organized.

“With so many things going on, it is often easy for me to forget things I need to get done. I leave reminders for myself often, and have my calendar readily accessible,”

Masat said.

When he graduates from Redfield High School in May, Masat plans to attend South Dakota State University and major in Ag Systems Technology. Following college, Masat would like to return to the family farm in Spink County.

Masat believes juggling activities like school, sports, 4-H and FFA activities will help him later in life. He also recommends that other students get involved in as many activities as they can so they can grow and succeed.

“Being involved in many different things will teach you time management skills and help you succeed in high school and in life afterward,” Masat said.

For being named the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week, Masat was featured on KSFY Television on Monday, April 24. The Redfield High School senior also received a \$100 check from Northern Electric for his accomplishment.



2017 VIP TOUR

WHO: All Northern Electric Cooperative consumers can apply for the VIP Tour; even if they have gone on the tour before.

WHAT: Tour Basin Electric Power Cooperative headquarters, the Garrison Dam, a coal mine, the Antelope Valley Station power plant, and the Dakota Gasification plant in Beulah, North Dakota.

WHERE: Bismarck and Beulah, North Dakota

DATES: June 27-28, 2017

COST: FREE (bus, meals, and lodging are covered by the cooperative. Members must bring their own shopping/spending money)

APPLY: Mail in the completed form below or apply online at www.northernelectric.coop by **May 26, 2017**.

NORTHERN ELECTRIC VIP TOUR:

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES IS MAY 26, 2017

Return form to: Northern Electric

Attn: Kay Albrecht

PO Box 457

Bath, SD 57427



Who Will Answer The Call?

Approximately 1 percent of all South Dakotans volunteer on their local fire departments.

Brenda Kleinjan

WHEN THE SIRENS BLARE IN SMALL TOWNS AND rural areas across South Dakota and western Minnesota, those responding to the emergencies are often volunteers.

“Volunteer fire departments serve a vital role to us here in South Dakota. Often times they are the only ones available to meet public safety needs in rural areas of the state,” said South Dakota Fire Marshal Paul Merriman.

In South Dakota, a majority of the state’s 8,500 firefighters are volunteers. According to statistics avail-

able from Merriman’s office, only five of the state’s 337 fire departments are career paid departments, employing 443 firefighters. The remaining 332 departments are staffed by volunteers (seven departments have a combination of paid and volunteer firefighters).

But, when an emergency arises, it doesn’t distinguish whether the people responding are volunteers or paid professionals.

“To become a certified volunteer firefighter in the state, a recruit has to undergo approximately 150 hours of instruction and hands-on training. Training



requirements have greatly increased over time out of necessity. Volunteer fire departments serve the community by responding to a wide variety of situations, from emergencies that immediately threaten life or property, to routine citizen requests for information and assistance,” Merriman said.

“Fire department staffing and firefighter recruitment and retention issues continue to present big challenges to volunteer fire departments. Time demands, increasing call volume, changes in the ‘nature of the business’ of firefighting, aging communities and other factors have contributed to reductions in the number of men and women joining and remaining in the volunteer fire service. The demand or need for volunteers continues to increase as the list of their duties continues to grow,” Merriman said.

In early June, firefighters from across the state will gather at Mitchell Technical Institute in Mitchell, S.D., for the State Fire School. While there, they will train in nearly 30 different areas.

There will be courses one expects: live fire training, firefighter survival, structure live burn and structural firefighting essentials. And there will be courses related to department operations such as junior firefighter programs, honor guards, grant writing, small engine maintenance and fire investigation.

And then there are the courses that cover the gamut of emergencies a fire department might encounter: mass triage, responding to an active shooter event, auto extrication, bus extrication, trench rescue, water rescue, grain bin rescue, hazardous materials awareness and the list goes on.

But, a firefighter’s training doesn’t stop at the conclusion of the State Fire School.

“Training requirements over and above the certified firefighter endorsement are established locally and vary from department to department, depending upon the type of incidents they typically respond to,” Merriman said.

In addition to training, fire department funding and fire department staffing (recruitment and retention) are some of the biggest challenges faced by volunteer fire departments across the state and the U.S., Merriman said.

“Becoming a volunteer firefighter takes a tremendous amount of time, and is a very demanding and sometimes dangerous job. The personal satisfaction that comes from helping others is the No. 1 reason people give why they choose to serve in the fire service. Being a volunteer is a rewarding experience and one of the best ways you can make a difference in your community. The skills and experience gained as a volunteer firefighter are invaluable and can have a positive and lasting effect on your life and the lives of those around you,” Merriman said.

“We take firefighters and local fire departments for granted. Until we need them, we don’t realize how important they are. No matter how big your community department is, support them. Show them that they matter.”

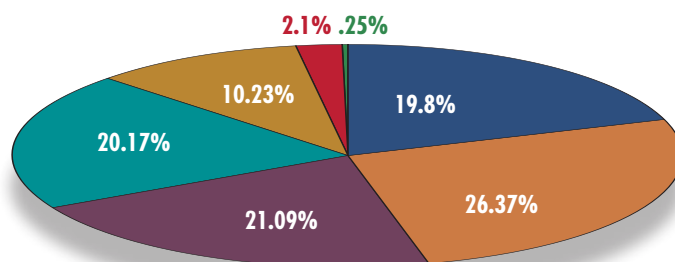
For information on becoming a volunteer firefighter, contact your local fire department.

Grand Electric Cooperative in Bison, S.D., assisted the Lemmon, S.D., Volunteer Fire Department with a training scenario involving a car and a power pole. Throughout South Dakota, more than 8,000 people serve on one of the state’s 332 volunteer fire departments.

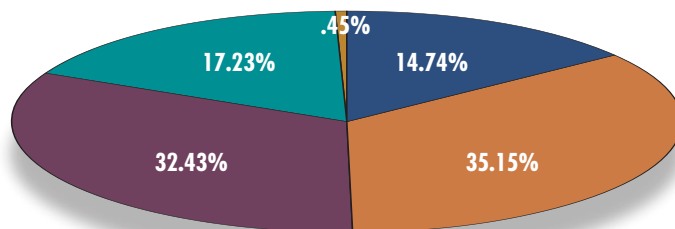
PHOTO COURTESY GRAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

S.D. FIREFIGHTER AGE DEMOGRAPHICS

S.D. Volunteer Fire Departments



Paid Fire Departments



■ Under 29 ■ 30-39 ■ 40-49 ■ 50-59 ■ 60-69 ■ 70-79 ■ 80-plus

Statistics as of July 1, 2016. Information on age demographics as reported by fire departments to the South Dakota Fire Marshal’s office. The average age of a South Dakota volunteer firefighter is 42.48 years old compared to 39.73 for a paid firefighter.

Source: https://dps.sd.gov/emergency_services/state_fire_marshall/images/age_of_firefighters_2016.pdf

DID YOU KNOW?

- As of July 1, 2016, there were 8,560 firefighters at South Dakota’s 337 fire departments.
 - When compared to the state’s size of 77,121 square miles, this equates to one firefighter per nine square miles. (On average, each fire department covers 228 square miles.)
 - Of South Dakota’s state population* of 865,454, less than 1 percent of all South Dakotans are a firefighter.
 - Minnesota has 20,921 firefighters at 757 active fire departments, the majority of which are volunteer or paid on-call departments.
 - When compared to the state’s size of 86,943 square miles, this equates to about one firefighter per four square miles. (On average, each department covers 115 square miles.)
 - Of Minnesota’s state population* of 5,519,952 people, less than 0.3 percent of all Minnesotans are a firefighter.
- (*Based on the U.S. Census Estimate for July 1, 2016)

Director Nominating Petitions Due By July 14, 2017

During Northern Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting (Wednesday, September 13, 2017, at the Aberdeen Civic Arena) members will elect Directors for Districts 4, 6, and 7.

Incumbent directors Randy Kienow, Warner (Dist. 6) and Victor Fischbach, Mellette (Dist. 7) are eligible to run again. The District 4 seat will be vacant because board president Mike McHugh of Aberdeen 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 district.

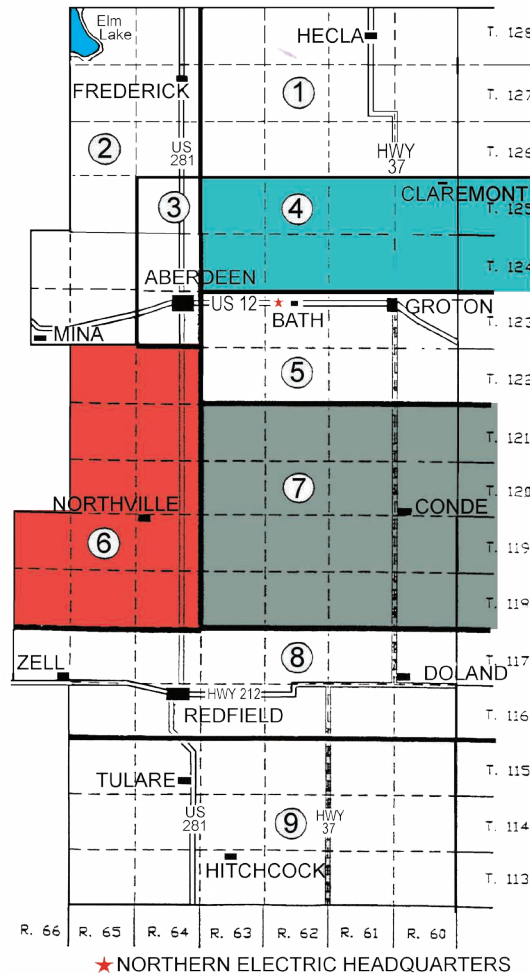
For a joint membership, either the husband or wife may sign a petition but NOT both.

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 petition 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 pm) Friday, July 14, 2017.

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.



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:
 - A felony,
 - Any crime involving dishonesty, or
 - Any crime involving moral turpitude

Director Nomination and Election Process

2017 Annual Meeting scheduled for September 13

At the 2017 Annual Meeting, Districts 4, 6, and 7 are up for election. Northern Electric Cooperative Bylaws set the criteria required to seek election as a Northern Electric Cooperative director:

Article IV, Board Members:

Section 1. General Powers The business and affairs of the cooperative shall be managed by the Board of Directors consisting of nine members elected by the membership at an annual meeting from districts as provided in this article, which Board shall exercise all of the powers of the Cooperative, except such as are by law, the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws conferred upon or referred to the members. It shall be the duty of each Director to participate in such activities as are deemed necessary to enhance the prestige of the Cooperative, broaden its operation and fulfill its public obligation as a member of the various communities in which it does business and in furtherance, thereof, to devote reasonable time and attendance at meetings of affiliate organizations and at training sessions to assist and improve Directors and Officers in carrying out their duties.

Section 2. Election and Tenure of Office

At each Annual Meeting of the members, Board Members shall be elected by secret ballot; provided, that when there is no contest for the representation of a particular district and there is no objection, balloting may be dispensed with in respect of that district and voting may be conducted in any other proper manner. Board Member shall, unless the Cooperative's members determine otherwise in advance of the initial balloting, be elected by a plurality vote of the members. Drawing by lot shall resolve, when necessary, any tie votes.

Except as hereinafter provided, no Directors shall be eligible for re-election who has served as a Director for nine (9) consecutive years and such Director shall be disqualified for a period of three (3) consecutive years.

Section 3. Voting Power Each of the Directors will be entitled to one (1) vote upon all issues which they are called upon to vote.

Upon establishment of the fact that any person being considered for, or already holding, a Directorship or other position of trust in the Cooperative lacks eligibility under this Section, it

shall be the duty of the Board to withhold such position from such person, or to cause the member to be removed therefrom as the case may be. Nothing in this Section shall contain or shall be construed to affect in any manner whatsoever the validity of any action taken at any meeting of the Board, unless such action is taken with respect to a matter which is affected by the provisions of this Section and in which one (1) or more of the Directors have an interest adverse to that of the Cooperative.

Section 4. Director Districts. The territory served or to be served by the Cooperative shall be divided into nine (9) Director Districts, the boundaries of each being established by the geographical area within the township and ranges as set forth opposite of the District designation including adjacent areas on the outer perimeters of the Cooperative's territory. One (1) Director shall be elected from each of the nine (9) Director Districts.

District 1 shall consist of the following:

Townships 126, 127 & 128 in Ranges 60, 61, 62 & 63; Township 127 in Range 59; Township 129 in Range 63; and Township 129 in Range 60.

District 2 shall consist of the following:

Townships 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128 & 129 in Range 65; Township 123 in Range 66; and Township 126, 127 and 128 in Range 64.

District 3 shall consist of the following:

Townships 123, 124 & 125 in Range 64.

District 4 shall consist of the following:

Townships 124 & 125 in Ranges 60, 61, 62 & 63; and Township 124 in Range 59.

District 5 shall consist of the following:

Townships 122 & 123 in Ranges 60, 61, 62 & 63.

District 6 shall consist of the following:

Townships 118 & 119 in Range 67; Townships 118, 119, 120 & 122 in Range 66; Townships 118, 119, 120, 121 & 122 in Range 65; and Townships 118, 119, 120, 121 & 122 in Range 64.

District 7 shall consist of the following:

Townships 118, 119 & 120 in Ranges 60, 61, 62 & 63; Township 119 in Range 59; and Township 121 in Ranges 59, 60, 61, 62 & 63.

District 8 shall consist of the following:

Townships 116 & 117 in Ranges 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65 & 66; and Township 117 in Range 67.

District 9 shall consist of the following:

Townships 113, 114 & 115 in Ranges 61, 62, 63

& 64; Townships 114 & 115 in Ranges 65 & 66; Townships 114 & 115 in Range 60; and Township 115 in Range 59.

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.

Regional Dateline

May 19

Tesla Car Rally, Custer, SD
605-673-2244

May 19-20

Sioux Empire Film Festival
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

May 19-21

State Parks Open House and
Free Fishing Weekend
Pierre, SD, 605-773-3391

May 20

Turkey Days, Huron, SD
605-352-0000

May 20-21, 28-29

Pari-Mutuel Horse Racing,
Aberdeen, SD, 605-715-9580

May 26-27

State Track Meet
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-224-9261

May 26-28

South Dakota Kayak Challenge
Yankton, SD, 605-864-9011

May 27-28

Annual SDRA Foothills Rodeo
Wessington Springs, SD
605-770-4370

May 30

26th Annual Kids Art Fest
Yankton, SD, 605-665-9754

June 2-3

Rockin' Ribfest, Yankton, SD
605-665-2263

June 2-3

Senior Games, Sioux Falls, SD
Contact Scott Junke at
605-367-8222



PHOTO COURTESY OF NAJA SHRINE CIRCUS

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.

June 2-4

Fort Sisseton Historical Festival
Lake City, SD, 605-448-5474

June 2-4

Annual Black Hills Quilt Show
and Sale, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

June 2-4

Wheel Jam, Huron, SD
605-353-7340

June 2-4

Fish Days, Lake Andes, SD
pattironfeldt@hcinet.net

June 3

Dairy Fest, Brookings, SD
605-692-7539

June 9-10

Senior Games, Spearfish, SD
Contact Brett Rauterkus
at 605-722-1430

June 17-18

Coin and Stamp Show
Sturgis, SD, 605-381-4625

June 17-18

South Dakota Peach Festival
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds
Sioux Falls, SD

June 23

148th Annual Midsummer
Festival, Dalesburg Lutheran
Church, Vermillion, SD
605-253-2575

June 23-24

Senior Games, Mitchell, SD
Contact Howard Bich at
605-275-6891

June 30

Naja Shrine Circus
Bowman, ND, 605-342-3402

July 7-8

Senior Games, Madison, SD
Bernie Schuurmans at
605-270-3327

July 14-15

Senior Games, Aberdeen, SD
Contact Gene Morsching at
605-216-2822

Events of Special Note

July 1

Naja Shrine Circus
Deadwood, SD, 605-342-3402

July 1

Downtown Wine Walk
1 to 4 p.m., Redfield, SD
605-472-2621

July 29

Make-A-Wish 14th Annual
Poker Run, Aberdeen, SD
605-225-7262

July 19-22

Senior Games, Rapid City, SD
Contact Kristi Lintz at
605-394-4168

July 21-22

Senior Games, Brookings, SD
Contact Traci Saugstad at
605-692-4492

July 22

Holy Smoke Car Show
O'Gorman High School
Sioux Falls, SD
www.holysmokecarshow.org

August 11-12

Senior Games, Huron, SD
Contact LaRon Clock at
605-353-8533 or Howard Bich
at 605-275-6891

August 24-26

Senior Games, Watertown, SD
Contact Jeremy Herrboldt at
605-882-6260