

Cooperative Connections



**Deep freeze
challenges
power grid**

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**The latest on EVs
in SD**

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**Co-ops respond
as extreme winter
weather brings up
concerns over power
supply and demand**

BOARD ACCOUNTABILITY

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of FEM Electric was held in Ipswich, South Dakota at 8:30 a.m. on February 16, 2021, pursuant to due call and notice. It being determined that a quorum was present, President Gary Bachman called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Secretary Larry Bowar kept minutes of the meeting.

The following directors were declared present by roll call: Gary Bachman, Tom Thorpe, Paula Petersen, Larry Bowar, Eric Odenbach, General Manager/CEO Scott Moore, Line Superintendent Rob Vetch and Director of Finance and Benefits Rhonda Tuscherer. President Gary Bachman welcomed guest employee Crystal Thorson. Ryan Holiien and Jesse Brown were present during staff reports.

Motion by Larry Bowar, seconded by Tom Thorpe and carried to approve administrative business.

Changes to the agenda: add 10.a) Nominating committee.

Minutes from January 19, 2021 meeting: none.

Next Meeting Date: After a review of calendars, directors agreed that the next regular meeting of the board would be on Tuesday, March 16, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. to be held at FEM Electric Board Room in Ipswich, South Dakota.

Motion by Tom Thorpe, seconded by Larry Bowar and carried to acknowledge manager, staff and electrical department report including Work Order Inventory: WOI #563 for \$72,738.45.

Motion by Paula Petersen, seconded by Larry Bowar to authorize ordering \$130,000 of Verizon meters for delivery and payment after January 1, 2022. Motion carried.

Moore informed the board that management worked outside of policy during the recent “frost” outages in February 2021, utilizing a couple small contractors with limited liability insurance that does not meet FEM’s standard contractor liability requirement.

Resolutions, Nominations, and Contracts: Motion by Eric Odenbach, seconded by Paula Petersen and carried to approve changes and review of Policies #308 – Security and Roadside Sign Lighting, #311 – Mutual Aid, #313 – Special Electric Heat Rate, #316 – Budget Billing, #522 – Special Electric Heat Policy.

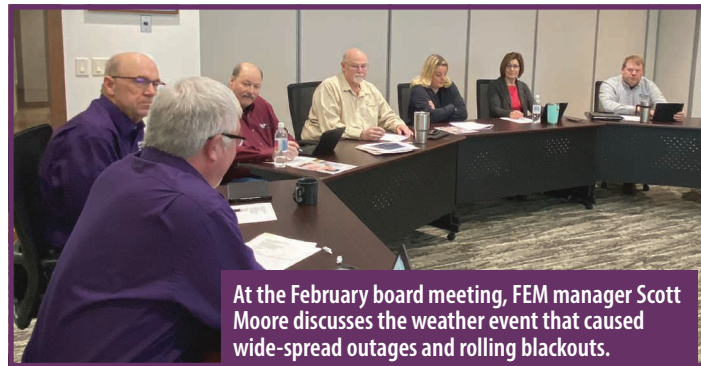
The board acknowledged receipt of NRECA Proposed Resolutions, Notice of NISC Annual Meeting, Notice of Federated Annual Meeting, and Notice of NCSC Board Candidate for District 3.

Membership Business: The board acknowledged the following membership business as presented:

New Memberships, Member Cancellations and Contracts –

Disconnects: James & Zeldia Fischer, Eureka, two Active Farms; Mark & Kim Hoffman, Leola, two Irrigations; Jesse Geditz, Ipswich, Active Farm and Grain Bin; Quinton & Arlene Wolff, Long Lake, Active Farm; Susan Melius, Sioux Falls, Active Farm; Arnold Becker, Leola, Active Farm; Justin Gelling, Fullerton, CA, Active Farm

Reconnects: Dalton & Jamie Ellefson, Eureka, two Active Farms; Samuel & Samantha Braun, Warner, two Irrigations; Wyatt Geditz, Ipswich, Active Farm and Grain Bin; Dennis & Robin Wolff, Long



At the February board meeting, FEM manager Scott Moore discusses the weather event that caused wide-spread outages and rolling blackouts.

Lake, Active Farm; Trish & Cole Cotton, Faulkton, Active Farm; Jeff Becker, Leola, Active Farm; Luke Yuen & Janice Atwell, Eureka, Active Farm

Contracts: none

Retired locations: Richland Church, Mina, two residential

Estates: February 2021 – four estates = \$1,164.84

73 & Older: February 2021 – none

Financial Business: The board acknowledged reviewing the following financial information:

Check register for the month of January 2021 contained information on checks #31250 through #31342, and all automatic payments/withdrawals for January 2021 totaling \$326,123.21.

The Basin and East River Allocations for 2020 were reviewed.

December 2020 “unaudited” financials and financial ratios were reviewed.

Director of Finance and Benefits Rhonda Tuscherer reviewed January financials, 2020 KWH Tax Report, and Federated Group Retention with the board and staff.

Motion by Paula Peterson, seconded by Tom Thorpe and carried to approve director fees.

Legal Update: Attorney Beck updated the board and staff on one estate capital credits settlement.

Motion by Tom Thorpe, seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to approve Glen Bode, Marvin Biedler, from District 5 and Justin Davis at large for FEM Electric Board of Directors Nominating Committee.

Meeting Report: East River board update was given by Gary Bachman. A discussion was held on East River Energize Forum.

The board acknowledged the receipt of the Safety Committee minutes, January 13th, 2021, Safety Meeting minutes from January 26th, 2021, along with near misses, accident reports and investigations and employee meeting minutes from January 26, 2021, along with ERP Scenario.

Adjourn: President Gary Bachman declared the meeting adjourned.

FEM Electric Association

Cooperative Connections



(USPS 189-720)



Board of Directors

Gary Bachman, President
 Tom Thorpe, Vice President
 Larry Bowar, Secretary
 Paula Petersen, Treasurer
 Eric Odenbach, Asst. Sec./Treasurer
 Vaughn Beck, Attorney

CEO/General Manager

Scott Moore
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Management Staff

Rob Vetch, Line Superintendent
 Rhonda Tuscherer, Director of
 Finance and Benefits

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FEM ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is the monthly publication for the members of FEM Electric Association, Inc., 800 5th Ave., Ipswich, SD 57451. FEM Electric Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to members on electric cooperative matters and better living.

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 Design assistance by SDREA

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In case of a power outage or line trouble,
 call the
 FEM Electric office 24/7 at
 426-6891 or 1-800-587-5880
 Office Hours:
 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



Scott Moore

General Manager

On February 16, 2021, FEM Electric lost power to the Cresbard and Burkmere substations, along with Northern Electric's three substations on the same transmission line with no notice. Southwest Power Pool (SPP) was in a stage 3 emergency; first time in 80 years of operation and had to drop electrical load to maintain the integrity of the electric grid. There has been and will be many electrical professionals from politicians, radicals and coffee table discussions that can solve this situation, with no accurate information. FEM Electric plans to wait to comment, as we know there will be investigations and inquiries to what really happened. February 16th power outage is and was a bad situation that needs corrected, but until we get good information of the causes there is no reason to jump to conclusions and misinform our membership.

Green grass is around the corner and baby calves are hitting the ground, the sign of a new year or beginning is here. At the end of February, we are seeing farm machinery moving from

the dealerships to the farms in anticipation of a productive year. With our headquarters along Hwy. 12, it would be hard not to notice the livestock trucks and grain trailers busy delivering last year's commodities to local value-added processing plants and elevators. The old saying was, "Plan for the worst, but hope for the best." I believe we should all plan for a great year while looking at ways to help keep our rural economy strong. Do not take anything for granted as it can change in an instant and many of these changes, we have no control over.

FEM is proud of the scholarships and Co-op to Classroom that are provided to area students. We are also proud to partner with East River Electric on the virtual "Bright Future Event" that was developed for high school, vocational, and college students that are interested in agriculture. This virtual event was held February 24, 2021, and invitations were sent to FFA chapters in area schools. If your student missed or did not get a chance to participate, they still can log in and watch the recordings at yourcooppower.com/future. When a person thinks of agriculture we think of land, livestock, and equipment, but there are multiple careers that pertain to agriculture with excellent opportunities allowing our young alumni to return to our smaller communities.

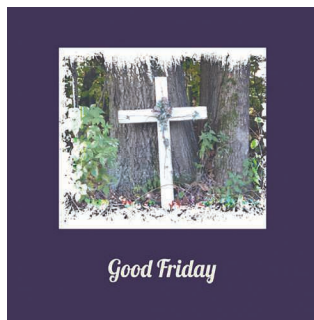
Leaving July 26, 2021, and returning July 29, South Dakota Rural Electric Association will host Connect Con, an event comparable to the North Dakota Youth Excursion, at Black Hills State University. Participants' parents or guardians must be active members of FEM Electric and in high school. If interested, please call the office and talk to Crystal Thorson.

Reminder that June 29, 2021, is FEM Electric's Annual meeting in Ipswich. District 5 board member Larry Bowar is not seeking reelection. Please mark your calendars and plan to attend your annual meeting. If you are interested in running for the FEM Electric Board, please contact Larry Bowar, Gary Bachman, or Scott Moore.

If you are planning on adding any electrical load, please call and talk to Rob Vetch. FEM Electric does have licensed electricians on staff to complete your farm and home wiring.

As we get busy this spring, please be safe, look up before unfolding sprayer booms, and call 811 South Dakota One Call before you dig.

**FEM offices will be closed on
 Friday, April 2nd, 2021 in obser-
 vance of Good Friday.**



Statement Mailing Dates

March 25, 2021 for March's energy.

April 23, 2021 for April's energy.

Regardless of the statement mail out date payments are due in the office by the 9th of the following month.

Home Improvements Don't Have to be Expensive

You don't have to replace your air conditioner with a high-efficiency system or make other major improvements to reduce energy consumption. There are low-cost efficiencies anyone can implement to help reduce energy bills.

- **Mind the thermostat.** You might be able to trim your energy bill by carefully managing the temperature in your home. Consider setting your thermostat to 78 degrees when you're running the air conditioner. If that's not cool enough, use fans to help circulate the air to help you feel cooler.
- **Go programmable.** If you don't always remember to adjust your thermostat manually, you could benefit from a programmable model. In the right situation and set correctly, programmable thermostats can save your household \$150 a year. Some models can be managed from your smartphone or other devices.
- **Stop air leaks.** Small gaps around windows, doors, wiring and plumbing penetrations can be major sources of energy loss. This problem can be alleviated with a little weatherstripping and caulk. A \$10 door draft stopper (also known as a "door snake") is a simple way to block gaps underneath exterior doors. Sealing air leaks around your home could shave up to one-fifth off your heating and cooling bills.
- **Manage your windows and window coverings.** Your windows may be letting heat out during the winter and letting heat in during the summer. Window coverings like medium or heavyweight curtains and thermal blinds can help. During the summer, keep window coverings closed to block the sun and keep it from heating conditioned indoor air. On cooler spring days, turn off your air conditioner, open the windows and enjoy the breeze - and lower electricity bills.
- **Look for energy wasters.** There are small steps you can take every day to reduce your energy use. Water heaters should be kept at the warm setting (120 degrees). Wash dishes and clothes on the most economical settings that will do the job, and always wash full loads. Use the microwave instead of the oven when possible. And unplug phone chargers, electronics and small appliances when not in use.

A Note of Appreciation for the Service Co-ops Provide

By Mark Peacock, Dupree

Most of us wake up each day with an agenda and a schedule that ensures we do things in pretty much the same way from the moment we open our eyes to the moment we arrive at wherever it is we spend our day working.

But on those rare occasions when I walk through our warm home and turn on the bathroom light, which in our home has an overhead radiant heat lamp, and start the shower, which releases hot water from the water heater nestled in the basement, I sometimes take a brief pause in my routine.

I pause to feel the heat of the water wash over me...if only for a minute or so, to enjoy and appreciate what a wonderful experience having a hot shower in a well-warmed, well-lit bathroom in a very comfortable home represents. It means I live in a country and in a state and in a county that has invested in the infrastructure and made a commitment to allowing normal, everyday Americans the opportunity to enjoy such a treat in the middle of a South Dakota winter.

And I smile, because we may not get all we want in life, but we may, for a brief moment, feel all the warmth it takes to start off the day in a positive way. Thank you and your energy partners for making my day and the days of thousands of others begin just a little better, a little bit warmer, a little bit brighter, and a whole lot more optimistic.

KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



Stay Indoors During a Storm

Celeste Meyer, 6 years old

Celeste is the daughter of Brice and Sarah Meyer. She is a resident of Trent and a member of Sioux Valley Electric.

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.



Slushes, Punches, Lattes

Fruit Slush

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 6-oz. can orange juice concentrate | 1/3 cup halved maraschino cherries with juice |
| 1 6-oz. can lemonade concentrate | 2 firm bananas, sliced |
| 3 or 4 juice cans water | 2 10-oz. boxes frozen strawberries, thawed |
| 2 20-oz. cans crushed pineapple with juice | |

Stir all ingredients together and freeze in 9 x 13 inch pan or ice cream bucket. Remove from freezer a few minutes before serving. To serve, put scoop of slush in glass and fill glass with 7-Up or Squirt.

Mary Jessen, Holabird

Banana Slush Punch

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 7-8 bananas | concentrate |
| 2 12-oz. cans of orange juice concentrate | 1 46-oz. can of pineapple juice |
| 1 12-oz. can of lemonade | |

Blend bananas with all ingredients above. Bring to boil 6 cups water and 3 cups sugar. Cool. Combine banana mixture with sugar water. Freeze. At the time of serving, mixture should be slushy. Add two 2-liter bottles of Sprite or Fresca to the banana/water mixture and serve.

Julie Hummel, Hawarden, IA

Seasonal Punch

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 12-oz. can frozen orange juice | 4 quarts water |
| 12-oz. can Frozen Lemonade | 3-3/4 cups sugar |
| 4 pkgs. Koolade, any flavor | 2 Liters 7-Up (or Diet 7-Up) |

Mix orange juice, lemonade, Koolade, water and sugar, store in fridge to keep cold. Also refrigerate the 2 liters of 7-Up. Prior to serving - pour in the 2 liter of 7-Up and gently stir to mix. You can use any color Koolade, maybe green for Easter, red for 4th of July, Labor Day and Christmas, and orange for Halloween. Refreshing punch goes well with meals or anytime of day.

Pam Conn, Sioux Falls

Spiced Cocoa Mix

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1/4 cup cocoa | 1/2 cup nondairy powdered creamer |
| 1 cup powdered sugar | 3/4 tsp. cinnamon |
| 2 cups nonfat dry milk powder | 1/2 tsp. nutmeg |

Sift powdered sugar and cocoa together. Add remaining ingredients. Mix well. For each serving, use 1/3 cup mix and 3/4 cup boiling water. Stir. May add a teaspoon of coffee crystals, a dollop of whipped cream, or a teaspoon of liquid flavored coffee creamer.

Elaine Rowett, Sturgis

Creamy Hot Chocolate

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1/2 cup dry baking cocoa | 7-1/2 cups water |
| 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk | 1-1/2 tsp vanilla |
| 1/8 tsp salt | |

Mix cocoa, milk, salt into a crock pot. Add water gradually, stirring into smooth. Cover and cook on high 2 hours, or low 4 hours. Stir in vanilla before serving.

Melissa Roerig, Sioux Falls

Chocolate Latte

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1/2 cup hot brewed coffee or 2 shots espresso | 2 teaspoons cocoa nibs |
| 1 Premier Protein 30g High Protein Chocolate Shake | |

In large 14-16-oz. mug, prepare espresso or coffee. Pour chocolate shake on top to combine. Top with cocoa nibs.

www.premierprotein.com

Please send your favorite casserole 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, telephone number and cooperative name.

LINEWORKERS BRING THE LIGHT.

Lineworker Appreciation Day

On April 12, remember to
#ThankALineworker.

Move Over . . . It's the Law!!

As we get closer to the summer construction season, keep an eye out for our utility workers on the roadway. Our linemen are trained to put up their “utility at work signs,” along with cones to prewarn a motorist that they are working ahead, and the motorist needs to be aware and slow down in the construction zone. The linemen’s jobs are dangerous enough. When they are out restoring power, day or night, the last thing they need to worry about is you running into their utility truck. Move over; please slow down for the crews at work. **IT’S THE LAW.** South Dakota, along with many other states, has the move over law that protects the men and women working in the rights-of-way.

We have distracted drivers everywhere and utility workers are focused on the work they are doing, including those working for our cooperative; they are not paying attention to the traffic. If you are driving on South Dakota roadways, what should you do if you approach a utility vehicle stopped on the shoulder with its light activated? According to South Dakota move over law, the motorist must slow down and move over, or you could be fined with a class 2 misdemeanor and have a minimum fine of \$275.

Please keep an eye out for construction workers on the roadways this year and be courteous to slow down and move over.



Hit Movie Nomadland Captures the Beauty and Character of South Dakota

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Any day now, I-90 is due for yet another Wall Drug billboard to add to the legendary collection.

The popular tourist attraction was one of several spots in the state of South Dakota featured in the hit film *Nomadland*. And for Wall Drug owner Rick Husted, that's more than enough to warrant another interstate billboard celebrating the restaurant's role in the award-winning Hollywood hit.

During the three-day stretch in 2018 that the film crew worked in Wall, no one knew the project would gain such high critical acclaim. But since its premier at the Venice Film Festival last September, *Nomadland* has collected numerous awards and loads of recognition from many quarters, beginning with the Golden Lion Award at Venice. In January, the North Dakota Film Society Awards handed *Nomadland* nods for best picture, best director, best actress, best cinematography and best editing.

Husted was just happy that Wall Drug was picked to be part of the film, and his wife Pat was even happier to meet one of her Hollywood heroes, Frances McDormand. Pat got to spend time getting to know McDormand during the shooting and even accepted a pair of potholders that the Tinseltown star hand-crafted herself.

"There was just a lot of excitement during that time," Husted remembers. "We tried to do everything we could to accommodate them, everything but shut the store down. They filmed while there were customers in the restaurant and that made it very realistic. But the director, the actors, the crew, they all could not have been more pleasant to work with."

Husted said that after he was initially approached by producers, he had to keep the project secret so that the restaurant wouldn't be overrun by curious onlookers. The actors integrated into the environment easily by donning Wall Drug uniforms and



Actress Frances McDormand shoots a scene inside Wall Drug for the critically-acclaimed movie *Nomadland*.

paper hats while waiting on customers who often didn't know they were interacting with Hollywood stars.

In the movie, McDormand plays a middle-age woman who faces a drastic change in her life and adopts a nomadic culture, joining the ranks of those who travel from place to place to make a living while meeting lots of interesting people



Filming took place at various sites including Wall, the Badlands, Custer State Park and the Pine Ridge Reservation.

and forging close relationships in the process. As the movie shows, the "nomads" also learn a lot about themselves along the way.

Husted said the movie's plot also fits in well with reality as he sometimes hires itinerant workers during certain seasons, workers who go on to harvest sugar beets in the fall or sign on with Amazon during the Christmas buying season.

Some of the local citizens even made an

appearance in the film. Carol Ann Hodge and Sue Michaels are two who got past the editing cut and are part of a scene in which McDormand's character encounters the two women in a local park.

Husted was particularly impressed with director Chloe Zhao. The up-and-coming young director had completed two other movies, *The Rider* and *Songs My Brother Taught Me*, that caught the attention of the Hollywood establishment. Parts of those films were also shot in South Dakota. Zhao lived with the Lakota Sioux on the Pine Ridge Reservation to prepare for *The Rider*, while *Songs My Brother Taught Me* was filmed partially on a South Dakota reservation.

"It was unbelievable for us to have a famous young director here and several known movie stars," Husted said. "They're very competent, organized, focused and know exactly what they're doing. But at the same time, they were very down to earth and warm and friendly."

Husted always encourages his staff to play it cool when celebrities occasionally wander off the interstate and into the store. He recalls that Ernest Hemingway once stayed in one of the Wall Drug cabins and invited his parents to join him for dinner.

"We've had famous people come through over the years but we want them to experience Wall Drug like everyone else," he said. "We want to be professional. We want them to have a good time and we give them their space."



A peek inside the Southwest Power Pool control room shows system operators working to make sure power supply always matches demand across 14 states on the grid. Photo provided by SPP.

AN ENERGY EMERGENCY

Why Did February Outages Happen and Could They Happen Again?

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The national power grid has been hailed as one of the greatest and most complex engineering feats ever achieved. Every second of every day it works to keep electricity flowing freely to homes, schools, farms, hospitals and businesses in every region of the country.

But while it stands as one of mankind's most marvelous inventions, sometimes it's simply no match for Mother Nature.

This electric superhighway was put to the test in mid-February when a bone-chilling air mass swept through large swaths of the country and caused a spike in the demand for power. As the temperatures dropped, millions of Americans attempted to stave off the frigid air by reaching for electric blankets, plugging in space heaters and nudging their thermostats up a few notches. With so many people clamoring to stay warm, the sudden spike in demand for power caused the gatekeepers of the grid to reach their option of last resort: ordering temporary disruptions in service to maintain the delicate balance between demand and supply that's required to keep the network from completely melting down.

The result was several waves of controlled and coordinated rolling blackouts often spanning one hour and isolated incidents of up to three hours for some consumers. The service interruptions impacted nearly one-third of the nation. Industry officials explain that this response to skyrocketing demand was necessary to keep the grid from sustaining extensive damage and causing a repeat of the historic event that occurred in the summer of 2003. The Northeast Blackout extended across the eastern seaboard, through parts of the Midwest and into southern Canada and left approximately 50 million in the dark.

"Controlled outages are necessary to prevent widespread damage to the grid, which could cause a cascade of outages that could potentially be far more devastating," explained Barbara Sugg, CEO of the Southwest Power Pool (SPP). "There's no doubt this would have been a much more significant event if our individual customers and businesses and industries had not all pulled together to reduce the load."

Air Traffic Controllers for the Grid

Sugg describes her organization as an "air traffic controller" for the grid. In fact, the SPP is what's known in the electric utility industry as a Regional Transmission Organization (RTO). It's one of the four quasi-government entities responsible for maintaining the critical balance between supply and demand along the nation's power grid. While RTOs don't create or generate power, they are charged under the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) with the task of making sure the power produced by other utilities flows smoothly across the grid and gets to the places where consumers need it, when they need it.

SPP is the power transmission overseer for 14 states - including South Dakota - and more than 17 million people in the midsection of the U.S. from North Dakota to the Texas Panhandle. Electric co-ops in South Dakota are also part of the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), a federal agency that markets power produced from hydroelectric dams in the Upper Midwest. It operates the larger bulk transmission facilities in 15 central and western states in its geographical footprint.

Most of the time the high-voltage transmission process operates without a hitch, and electric generation can be moved across the grid when there is high demand in one area and excess generation in another. But when foul weather comes into the picture grid operators focus on activating their emergency response plans. Those plans typically include communicating with generators to coordinate arrangements for assuring that an ample supply of power will be available to meet projected demand when the inclement weather strikes.

Lanny Nickell, operations manager for SPP, points out that while arrangements were in place to face the February cold snap, the winter blast turned out to be an unprecedented event for the organization. As the temperatures dropped, SPP initiated the process of contacting power generators and transmitters to warn that the looming storm may cause the system to be severely strained. Six days later, SPP officials went

through a series of three Energy Emergency Alert levels and eventually declared a Level 3 emergency, which required “controlled interruptions of service,” or rolling blackouts. It was the first time in the SPP’s 80 years that a Level 3 emergency was declared.

“Despite our plans, the severe weather coupled with a limited fuel supply hampered our ability to balance our supply with the demand from end-use consumers,” Nickell said. “So, first we had to go out and ask for a voluntary reduction in energy use. Then, we held off as long as we could to make the call to interrupt service in a controlled fashion, but it was necessary to prevent overloading the system and causing an even bigger problem and much longer outages.”

Nickell explained that without an affordable and viable means of storing high-voltage electricity for future use, power is created in one location and consumed in another location in real time. The balance must be maintained even though both supply and consumption change on a second-by-second basis.

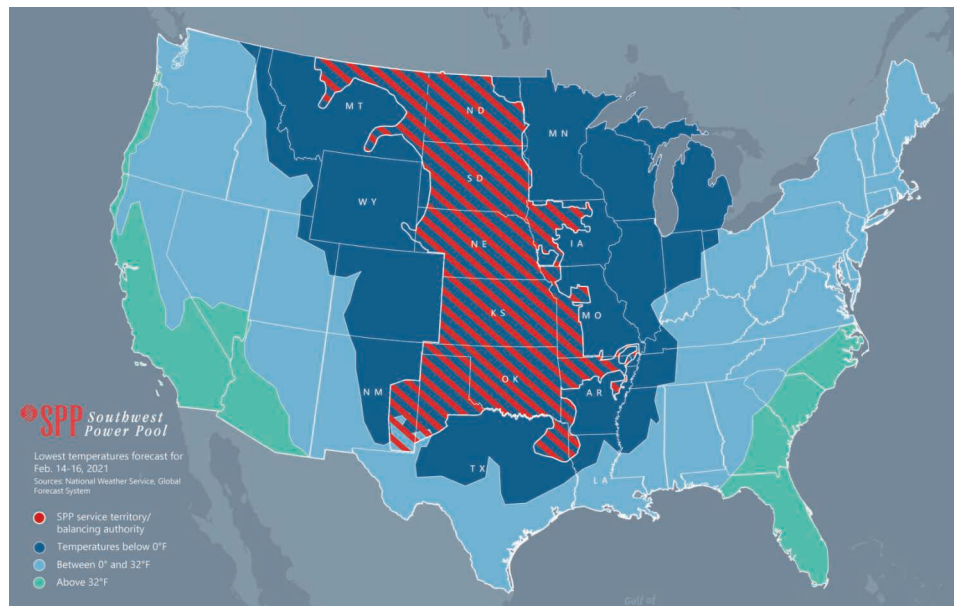
“Once we observe an imbalance, we have to react within seconds to reduce the demand,” Nickell said. “This is why it’s very difficult for us to announce well beforehand when these things will happen because they happen at the speed of light.”

A Smorgasbord of Fuel Sources

Interruptions in service are more than minor inconveniences for many co-op members, especially when severe weather conditions are in play. The February storm and the ensuing service outages triggered wide-ranging discussions about the push toward renewable resources to generate electricity.

Supporters of fossil fuels point out that decades-long efforts to curb coal and natural gas played a part in restricting the kinds of available resources that could have prevented widespread outages. Coal has long been a reliable source of “baseload power” requirements, or the amount of power necessary to provide an adequate supply to meet basic needs without interruption. It’s utilized largely because it can be more easily controlled compared to intermittent sources. Advocates emphasize that wind turbines were frozen in place and solar panels were buried in snow and limited by scarce sunlight during this event.

Renewable fuel source proponents echoed SPP officials in noting that the February storm was an historic occurrence. They contend that renewable power promotes a cleaner environment, decreases energy reliance on other countries, adds jobs to the economy and that innovations in the emerging industry



could be effective in responding to any future storms. Presently, roughly 25 percent of South Dakota’s overall energy supply comes from wind turbines. For electric co-ops, that figure is closer to 20 percent. Proponents of wind also point to issues with natural gas delivery and the inability of some fossil fuel plants to produce electricity through the storm. A combination of high demand, lower-than-normal wind resources and natural gas delivery problems all met at the same time to contribute to the energy emergency.

As for those members of RTOs who receive the call to actually implement controlled outages - particularly transmission and distribution cooperatives - there are very few options available when demand begins to significantly outpace supply on the grid.

Chris Studer is chief member and public relations officer for East River Electric, a co-op that provides transmission and substation services for distribution entities in South Dakota and Minnesota. He said the cooperative’s hands are essentially tied when SPP reaches the point of calling for rolling outages.

“The utilities involved in the SPP are required to carry a surplus of generation resources throughout the year over and above their historic peak demand so they are prepared for extreme circumstances. However, when wind resources and other generation are constrained, there is a limited amount of other generation available to serve the region’s recent record demand for electricity,” he said.

Distribution co-ops find they have even less control when RTOs and power marketing agencies restrict the flow of power, but they still find ways to mitigate the situation. Officials at West River Electric based in Wall, implemented

“Once we observe an imbalance, we have to react within seconds to reduce the demand. This is why it’s very difficult for us to announce well beforehand when these things will happen because they happen at the speed of light.”

- Lanny Nickell, SPP

the co-op’s load management program after receiving the request for reduced demand hoping it would be enough. But it was not, and some of the co-op’s members were subject to a 50-minute unplanned blackout. CEO Dick Johnson said he had never experienced a similar event in his 27 years in the industry. He added that he hopes the emergency situation prompts discussions centered around policy proposals that will prevent future emergencies.

“I think we should have a national conversation that includes large new baseload generation, whether that be hydroelectric, nuclear or carbon capture on coal plants. We must also have a conversation about building necessary electric and gas transmission infrastructure to allow us to get electricity and gas to the places where it is needed when times like this happen. If not, I am afraid it will happen again in the future, only more frequently.”

FEM MEMBERS BRAVE COLD TEMPS FOR PANCAKE BREAKFAST



Around 200 people showed up on a chilly Friday morning February 5th, at FEM Electric for the annual pancake breakfast. Members were greeted with the usual breakfast fare of all you can eat pancakes, sausage, beverages, and the chance to visit with each other and the FEM Electric employees.

Board member Eric Odenbach of District 1 crafted a pancake to resemble the FEM logo, while his daughter, Georgia, created Mickey Mouse pancakes for all the youngsters attending.



FEM Director District 5

Up For Election



Larry Bowar,
District 5

FEM Electric Director in District 5 will be up for election at the 2021 annual meeting on June 29, 2021.

Larry Bowar will not seek re-election for District 5.

To be an eligible nominee, one must be an active member (with an FEM Electric energy account in their name) who resides in the Director's District in which the nominee seeks to run. FEM Electric Director Districts are as follows:

District No.1: McPherson County Townships of Bauer, Bergdorf, Cleveland, Detmold, Glucksthal, Hillsview, Jackson, Kassel, Odessa, Petersburg, Rosenthal, Spring Creek and Stickel, and Edmunds county Townships of Hosmer, Modena and Sangamon;

District No. 2: McPherson County Townships of Arena, Blaine, Carl, Dewey, Harrison, Highland, Hoffman, Howard, Koto, Leola, Lincoln, Long Lake, Moscow, Spring, Wachter, Wacker, Washington, Weber and Willow;

District No. 3: Edmunds County Townships of Bowdle, Bryant, Cloyd Valley, Cottonwood, Glen, Glover, Hillside, Hudson, Madison, Montpelier, North Bryant, Odessa and Vermont, and Faulk County Townships of Clark, Enterprise and Sherman;

District No. 4: Edmunds County Townships of Adrian, Belle, Clear Lake, Cleveland, Cortlandt, Fountain, Harmony, Huntley, Ipswich, Kent, Liberty, Pembrook, Powell, Richland, Rosette and Union;

District No. 5: Faulk County Townships of Arcade, Bryant, Centerville, DeVoe, Elroy, Ellisville, Emerson, Fairfield, Freedom, Hillsdale, Irving, Lafoon, Latham, Myron, O'Neil, Orient, Pulaski, Saratoga, Seneca, Tamworth, Thirteen, Union and Wesley.

There are two processes (committee and petition) by which an eligible member's name may be nominated for the board of directors election for FEM Electric Association, Inc. No nominations may come from the floor during your co-op's annual meeting.

Any Member of FEM Electric requiring additional information may refer to the bylaws of the association or may contact the FEM Electric office at 1-800-587-5880.

Nomination by Committee: The board of directors shall appoint a Nominating Committee which shall consist of three to seven members from the Director District(s) which are up for election and shall include one at-large position. This group shall be appointed no more than 180 days and no less than 60 days prior to the annual meeting. The committee shall post the nominations at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting of the members of FEM Electric Association, Inc. set for June 29, 2021.

Nomination By Petition: Any 15 or more members of the cooperative may make additional nominations by listing their nominee and the appropriate Directorate District and signing such Petition for Nomination. The petition must be submitted to the board of directors at least 25 days prior to the annual meeting. Any such petition so submitted will be posted along with the list of nominations made by the Nominating Committee.

The shaded area shows the district up for election in 2021.

District 5 Director, Larry Bowar of Miranda, will not be seeking re-election.

District 1 is represented by Eric Odenbach of Eureka, District 2 is represented by Tom Thorpe of Forbes, ND, District 3 is represented by Gary Bachman of Bowdle and District 4 is represented by Paula Petersen of Ipswich.

FEM Electric Director Districts

	Spring Creek	Detmold	Petersburg	Bergdorf	Harrison	Wacker	Weber	Wachter
McPherson County	Glucksthal	Rosenthal	Odessa	Long Lake	Highland	Hoffman	Koto	Carl
	Bauer	Stickel	Kassel	Moscow	Arena	Spring	Leola	Willow
	Jackson	Hillsview	Cleveland	Blaine	Dewey	Howard	Washington	Lincoln
Edmunds County	Modena	Hosmer	Sangamon	North Bryant	Adrian	Rosette	Belle	Pembrook
	Bowdle	Cottonwood	Glen	Bryant	Huntley	Ipswich	Fountain	Cortlandt
	Odessa	Cloyd Valley	Glover	Montpelier	Cleveland	Harmony	Union	Richland
	Hudson	Madison	Hillside	Vermont	Liberty	Powell	Kent	Clear Lake
Faulk County	Sherman	Clark	Enterprise	Freedom	Emerson	Fairview	Union	
	Elroy	O'Neil	Saratoga	Pulaski	Myron	Devoe	Wesley	
	Seneca	Latham	Bryant	Tamworth	Lafoon	Centerville		
	Ellisville	Thirteen	Irving	Orient	Arcade	Hillsdale		



This electric vehicle owned by Sioux Valley Energy is used as a fleet vehicle for the cooperative but also serves to educate members about EV technology and performance.

Electric Vehicles in SD

Electric Co-ops Working to Build Fast Charging Stations

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

General Motors turned a lot of heads earlier this year when the auto industry titan announced its intention to phase out all gas and diesel engines by 2035. GM made sure its message was loud and clear by running ads during the Super Bowl.

Not to be outdone, Ford CEO Jim Farley soon followed suit by announcing the company's plans to invest \$29 billion in the development of autonomous vehicles (AVs) and electric vehicles (EVs) by 2025. And against a backdrop of companies like Tesla and Workhorse seeing triple-digit stock gains, President Joe Biden rolled out plans to turn the entire 650,000-vehicle federal government fleet to all electric.

With a solid upward trend in support of E-mobility and electric vehicles sweeping the globe, electric cooperatives throughout the region are doing their part to provide the power those vehicles will need to carry their passengers from Point A to Point B.

According to Ben Pierson, manager of beneficial electrification at Sioux Valley

Energy, the state's electric cooperatives are facing a chicken-and-egg proposition in deciding whether - and how much - to invest in an industry that's still in its early stages. Pierson has been involved in rallying support for the formation of a DC fast charging network that will make it easy for EV drivers to navigate across and throughout the state. The stations will be placed 75-100 miles apart but will have to be constructed before the demand is fully materialized. He has received interest from groups representing tourism, economic development, transportation and state government.

Pierson has been working with municipal and investor-owned utilities to build out the infrastructure, with an emphasis on making sure there are enough charging stations along I-90 to get travelers from one side of the state to the other with confidence. Stations will also be installed along the I-29 corridor in Brookings and Watertown in Phase 1, with plans to include a station in Vermillion as part of Phase 2. Pierson points out that "range anxiety" is a major obstacle for consumers and early adopters who are considering the purchase of an EV. Presently, EVs

make up less than 1 percent of the total U.S. vehicle fleet while 10 percent of the vehicles sold in Europe last December were pure electric.

A recent study by the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago indicated that EVs are driven about half the distance - an average of 5,300 miles a year - compared to conventional internal combustion engine vehicles. One conclusion taken from the study is that EV owners see those vehicles as complements to their transportation needs instead of a replacement for their conventional cars.

"When industry giants like Ford and GM are making a commitment to electric vehicles, that's a huge indicator that EVs are more than just a passing fad and are something we should invest in," Pierson said. "But like any industry transformation, it can be a frightening proposition for people to experience a paradigm shift like this. With our members in mind, we're committed to staying out ahead of the wave and doing what we can to make sure the power delivery infrastructure is in place when the other pieces and parts of the total picture emerge."

DC Fast Charging Infrastructure Plan



Utilities are in the process of conducting siting plans and ordering equipment needed to install the network of charging stations. In the state Legislature, lawmakers favored a \$50 annual fee on electric vehicles which don't contribute the gas tax revenue that goes toward construction and maintenance of road and highway infrastructure. Presently, there are roughly 400 EVs on South Dakota roadways.

"We're just tremendously excited to be a part of this project," Pierson said. "Our goal is to help our members in any way we can and we want to be there on the ground floor as the industry continues to expand."

Collaborating with Pierson is Robert Raker, manager of public relations at West River Electric. They are working with utilities throughout South Dakota

and Minnesota to build out the DC fast charging infrastructure. The plan is to initially focus on major highways and interstates and then branch out from there.

The way Raker sees it, getting involved in constructing a charging station network is a sound investment in the economic growth and development of cooperative communities. He said cooperatives are leading the way by purchasing EVs of their own as demonstration models for their members and also as part of the cooperative's fleet. West River Electric's Nissan Leaf is used for business purposes throughout the day and is quite the attraction at community events on the weekends. He noted that co-ops have a long history of innovation and progress.

"Many co-ops are formulating plans to

migrate their light-duty service vehicles to EV," Raker said. "Co-ops have always been at the tip of the innovation spear. We were the first to bring power to rural South Dakota and we made sure people had access to power in order to run their farms, homes and appliances...things that would make their lives easier while allowing their communities to prosper."

Part of West River's overall EV strategy, Raker said, is to address the issue of whether the escalating number of EVs will increase stress on the electric power grid.

"EVs make the perfect load for co-ops," he said. "They can be charged during off-peak hours so they are not detrimental to the grid. Like it or not, EVs are coming. We can't change the wind so we'll have to adjust our sails."

Visit Co-op Connections Plus

Take a moment to visit our new online companion to *Cooperative Connections*. Co-op Connections Plus is a YouTube channel that features a more in-depth treatment of stories appearing in this publication as well as other subjects of interest to rural South Dakotans.

Search for "Co-op Connections Plus" and you'll find videos on human trafficking, support programs for veterans, grain bin safety, the Co-ops Vote campaign and more. Be sure to "like" and "subscribe."





Join Us

Connect Con
★ A Youth Leadership
Experience
Spearfish, S.D.

July 26-29
2021



Summer Fun

Attention high school students! If your parent or guardian is an active member-owner of FEM Electric, you have a chance to take an all-expenses-paid trip to the beautiful Black Hills this summer for a youth leadership event. If chosen, you will travel with other students from electric cooperatives throughout the state and take part in South Dakota's Connect Con: A Youth Leadership Experience. Parti-

cipants will stay on campus at Black Hills State University in Spearfish, S.D., on July 26-29, and have the opportunity to sightsee, meet new friends and gain valuable leadership skills while taking part in our youth leadership activities. They will also be able to tour a local electric co-op and learn about "The Story Behind the Switch" and see how electricity is directed into their homes.

How to Qualify

- Students may apply if their parent or guardian is an active member-owner of FEM Electric.
- Students must be in high school.
- Students can apply for the trip by contacting Crystal Thorson at FEM Electric.

www.femelectric.coop | FEM Electric Association, Inc. | 605-426-6891



As you prepare for planting season, don't forget to plan for safety. There are many aspects to safety on the farm, but electrical safety is often overlooked. Keep these safety tips in mind as you prepare for planting:



TRAIN OTHERS

Train anyone working on your farm, including family members and seasonal workers, about electrical hazards.

SAFETY FIRST

Have daily meetings to review the day's work and discuss safety implications. Know and review where the power lines are, the clearance required, and the proper position of extensions as they are transported.



WAIT TO UNFOLD

Remind workers to fold or unfold extensions well into the field, not close to the field's edge where power lines are typically located.

USE A SPOTTER

When working in the vicinity of power lines, always have a spotter on the ground, who can direct you away from power lines or poles if you are getting too close.

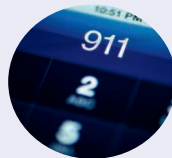


DO NOT EXIT YOUR CAB

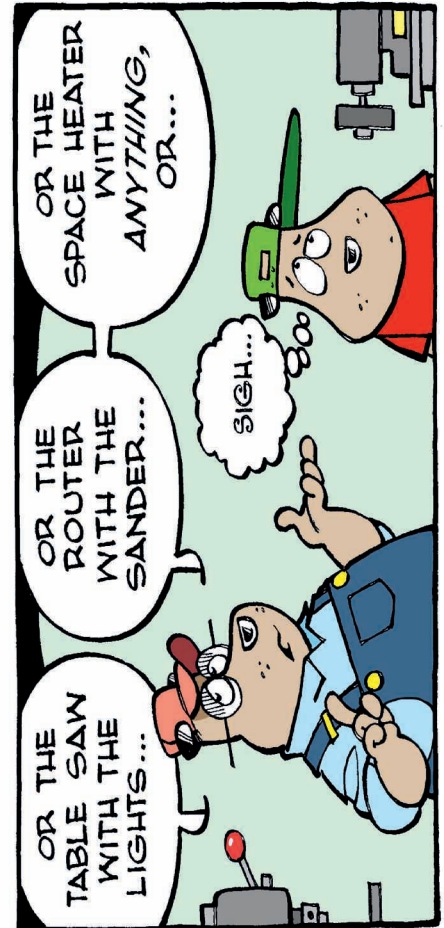
If your machine or truck makes contact with a power line, pole, or guy wire, you could become electricity's path to ground and become electrocuted if you step out of the cab.

CALL 9-1-1

Call 9-1-1 to have your electric utility dispatched to deenergize the power source. Only exit the cab if your equipment is on fire. If that happens, make a solid jump out and hop away with feet together as far as you can.



For more information:



Murphy

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

March 19-20

Sioux Empire Arts & Crafts Show, W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Building, Sioux Falls, SD 605-332-6000

March 23-24 CANCELED

Shen Yun, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Fine Arts Theatre, Rapid City, SD 605-394-4115

March 25

A Lakota View of the Dead Hills, Homestake Adams Research and Cultural Center, Deadwood, SD 605-722-4800

March 27

Hill City Community Easter Egg Hunt, Hill City Area Chamber of Commerce, Hill City, SD 605-574-2368

March 27

Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt, City Park, Groton, SD 605-846-7607

March 27

SD State High School All-State Band Concert, Mitchell Fine Arts Center, Mitchell, SD

April 1-3

ACL Regional #6 Cornhole Tournament, Corn Palace, Mitchell, SD 605-996-5567

April 3

Spring Fling Fun & Glow Egg Hunt, Rush Mountain Adventure Park, Keystone, SD 605-255-4384



Spring Fling Fun & Glow Egg Hunt, April 3, 2021

April 8

The Wildest Banquet Auction in the Midwest, Sioux Falls Arena/Virtual, Sioux Falls, SD 605-339-1203

April 9-10

Forks, Corks and Kegs Food, Wine and Beer Festival, Main Street, Deadwood, SD 605-578-1876

April 9-18

Four Weddings & An Elvis, Mitchell Area Community Theatre, Mitchell, SD 605-996-9137

April 17

Winefest Renaissance, Boys and Girls Club of Aberdeen Area, Aberdeen, SD 605-225-8714

April 20

All-State Chorus & Orchestra Concert, Denny Sanford PREMIER Center, Sioux Falls, SD

April 22-May 2

Beauty and the Beast, Sioux Empire Community Theatre, Sioux Falls, SD 605-367-6000

April 23-24

Junkin' Market Days, W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Building, Sioux Falls, SD 605-941-4958

April 30-May 2

Radium Girls, Pierre Players Community Theatre, Pierre, SD 605-224-7826

May 8

Davis Flea Market & Artisan Fair, Main Street, Davis, SD 605-940-0069

May 15

Red Dirt Music Festival featuring Casey Donahew, Ian Munsick and Randy Burghardt Deadwood Mountain Grand, Deadwood, SD 605-559-0386

May 21-23

Annual Sound of Silence Tesla Rally, Downtown, Custer, SD 605-673-2244

May 21-23

State Parks Open House and Free Fishing Weekend, All State Parks and Recreation Areas, SD 605-773-3391

May 22

Frühlingsfest & Spring Market, Main Street, Rapid City, SD 605-716-7979

June 5-6

18th Annual Wessington Springs Foothills Rodeo, Wessington Springs Rodeo Grounds, Wessington Springs, SD 605-770-5720

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.