

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

## In pursuit of Walleye

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lifestyle**  
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# BOARD REPORT

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A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of FEM Electric was held in Ipswich, Edmunds County, South Dakota at 8:30 a.m. on June 14, 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, Journeyman Lineman Jesse Brown and Director of Finance and Benefits Rhonda Tuscherer.

President Gary Bachman welcomed member/board candidates Kelly Melius and Ryan Nelson. President Gary Bachman welcomed guest employees Perry Ptacek and Gregg Zwart.

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

**Changes to the agenda** – add East River Voting Delegate under 6 C.

**Changes/Additions to Minutes from May 17, 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, July 20, 2021 at 8:30 a.m. to be held at FEM Electric Board Room in Ipswich, South Dakota.

Motion by Paula Petersen, seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to acknowledge manager, staff and electrical department reports.

The May East River Cyber Security Report was acknowledged.

**Resolutions, Nominations, and Contracts:** Motion by Larry Bowar seconded by Tom Thorpe and carried to approve review of policies 511-Monies and Credits Due Consumers, 512-Settlement of Energy Accounts, 514-Interconnection of Distributed Resources, 515-Use of Electricity and Other Energy.

Motion by Tom Thorpe, seconded by Larry Bowar and carried to vote for Matt Hotzler H-D Electric Manager/CEO for RESCO Board of Director.

Larry Bowar nominated Tom Thorpe as East River Voting Delegate and Eric Odenbach as Alternate Voting Delegate; motion seconded by Paula Petersen. Unanimous ballot was cast.

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

**New Memberships, Member Cancellations and Contracts – Disconnects:** Enid Rogers, Seneca, Active Farm; Arlene Grosz, Eureka, Active Farm; Roger Bertsch, Ashley, ND, Active Farm, 3 Pasture Pumps; Eagle Lodge and Bunkhouse, Ipswich, Commercial Business, Roadside Sign

**Reconnects:** Dirk Rogers, Groton, Active Farm; Ester Grosz, Eureka, Active Farm; Dean & Susan Christianson, Ashley, ND, Active Farm, 3 Pasture Pumps; Mark Myran, Ipswich, Commercial Business, Roadside Sign

**Contracts:** PEC Solutions, Minneapolis, MN, Temp Service; Brian Beyers, Roscoe, Shop; Thomas Newman, Faulkton, House

**Retired locations:** None

**Capital Credits: Estates – June 2021** – two estates = \$3,533.79

**73 & Older – June 2021-** 1 early retirement = \$413.00

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

Check register for the month of May 2021 contained information on checks #31563 through #31644, and all automatic payments/withdrawals for May 2021 totaling \$303,309.31.

May 2021 financials were reviewed.

Director of Finance and Benefits Rhonda Tuscherer explained the electronic RUS Certificate of Authority Form 675 RUS requested and it was signed by the President and Secretary.

**Continued on page 7**



## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### FEM ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

(USPS 189-720)

#### Board of Directors

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

#### CEO/General Manager

Scott Moore  
info@femelectric.coop

#### Management Staff

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

#### Editor's e-mail:

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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

**FEM Electric is an equal  
opportunity provider and  
employer.**



**Scott Moore**

June 29, 2021, was FEM Electric's annual meeting. I would like to thank everyone who attended the meeting. Locally owned and locally controlled are not just words, but the true meaning of a cooperative. Once we lose either locally owned or locally controlled, we become just another utility business taking the profits most likely out of state and not reinvesting in the local economy and infrastructure. Our members' presence and participation are required for our success now and into the future.

Capital credits were dispersed and should reflect on your June statement and the \$40.00 energy credit for attending the annual meeting will appear on your July energy statement.

We continue to see good progress with East River Electric construction projects. Along the Wetonka road, this project should be complete, and crews will be moving north to build four new substations. Leola substation will be rebuilt; a new substation will be built in Elm Lake area and Frederick to serve Northern Electric members. All three of these distribution substations will be served by a new Western Area high voltage substation being built next to the new Frederick distribution substation. Crews have started to build the new transmission line from Frederick

substation to Leola substation picking up the Elm Lake substation along the way. MDU's construction crew is also making good progress building a new transmission line from Bowdle to Greenway; this section of line feeds the Hillsview and Newtown substations. All these projects are to increase capacity and provide reliable power. I would once again like to thank landowners for working with the transmission companies and signing easements. Affordable and reliable power is one key element for a successful and strong rural economy.

Members in the Burkmere and Onaka areas will be seeing FEM crews testing and changing poles in late summer and early fall. Our crews have had an exceptional year with completing maintenance and new construction. We continue to receive requests for new services and service upgrades; this is a good indicator that our region continues to move in a positive direction. We are still finding some electrical equipment with long delivery times both with the line department and electrical department. Please call early in the planning stage if adding any electrical load.

With the continued drought conditions and as we move towards fall, please remember to be safe.

## Statement Mailing Dates

July 28, 2021 for July's energy

August 26, 2021 for

August's energy

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

# Prepare to protect your devices from power surges

A power surge, or transient voltage, is a sudden and unwanted increase in voltage that can damage, degrade or destroy sensitive electronic equipment in your home or business.

The National Electrical Manufacturers Association estimates that 60–80 percent of power surges are created within a building, such as when large appliances, like air conditioners, turn on and off. Far less common are surges that originate from an electric utility during power grid switching. The most powerful surges can be caused by lightning.

A spike in voltage can be harmful to electrical devices in your home if the increase is above a device's intended operating voltage. This excess voltage can cause an arc of electrical current resulting in heat that damages electrical components. Repeated small-scale surges may slowly damage your electronic equipment and shorten its life span.

**Surge Protection Options** - Consider protecting your devices and appliances with surge protection. Several levels of protection are available to consumers.

Point-of-use surge protectors protect only the items that are directly plugged into the device. They do not suppress or arrest a surge but divert the

surge to ground. Use point-of-use surge protectors that have an indicator light or audible alarm that alerts you when the surge protector needs replacement.

Service entrance surge protection devices are mounted in or on your main electrical panel or at the base of the electric meter and provide protection for your entire electrical system. These devices cover components that cannot be connected to a point-of-use device, such as outlets and light switches.

Power strips do NOT provide surge protection. Be sure you are relying on the appropriate device for protection.

And remember, power strips and surge suppressors don't provide more power to a location, only more access to the same limited capacity of the circuit into which it is connected. Be careful not to overload the circuit.

Unfortunately, no surge protection device on the market can handle a direct lightning strike. The best way to gird against surges caused by storms is to unplug devices.

## SUMMER MEMORIES

Send us your favorite summer photos!



As we approach the end of summer, *Cooperative Connections* would love to see your favorite memories of the season captured in pixels.

We're holding a photo contest called "Summer Memories." Send us your top shot and you could be eligible to win a \$50 gift card!

Here are the rules:

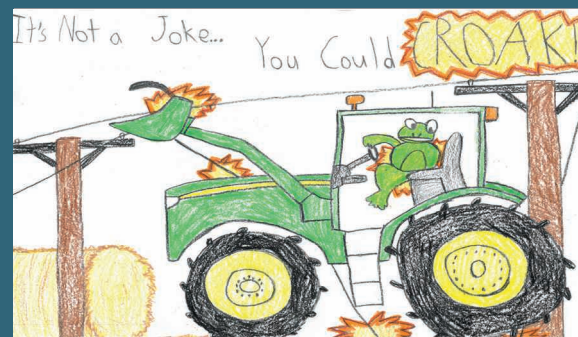
- One photo per entrant;
- The deadline for entry is Aug. 27;
- Finalist photos will appear in the October issue of *Cooperative Connections*;
- Send your entry to editor@sdrea.coop.

Good luck!

## Hope Haven fundraising event Sept. 11

Hope Haven will hold a fundraising event on Sept. 11 at Talsma's Trail Park in Avon. The organization offers services and support for children, adults and families, including physical, mental, intellectual, residential, vocational and spiritual needs. For more information, visit [www.hopehaven.org](http://www.hopehaven.org).

Hope Haven was misidentified in the July issue of *Cooperative Connections*.



## It's not a joke...you could croak!

### Creighton Werning, 4th Grade

Creighton is a fourth grade student at Parkston. He and his family live in Emery and are members of Southeastern 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.

# PERFECT PASTA

## PAPPARDELLE

### Ingredients:

Salted water  
 3 tbsp olive oil  
 3 tbsp shallots, minced  
 2 cloves garlic, minced  
 1/4 tsp chili flakes  
 1 cup white wine  
 2 cups pappardelle noodles  
 3/4 cup vegetable stock  
 3 tbsp capers (optional)  
 2 vine-ripened tomatoes, sliced in wedges  
 1 handful baby kale  
 1 fresh lemon, juice only  
 2 tbsp butter (optional)  
 sea salt, to taste  
 fresh ground black pepper, to taste  
 1 handful fresh basil, torn

### METHOD

Bring large pot of salted water to boil. In fry pan on medium-high heat, add olive oil and onions; saute 2 minutes. Lower heat slightly and add garlic and chili flakes. Saute on medium heat 2-3 minutes. Add white wine and deglaze pan. Cook 3 minutes. Remove from heat, keep warm until ready to add freshly cooked pasta. In pot of boiling water, add pappardelle. Cook according to instructions then drain. Place fry pan back on medium heat. Add drained pasta; vegetable stock; capers, if desired; tomatoes; baby kale; and lemon juice. Add butter, if desired, toss well. Cook 2-3 minutes, tossing occasionally, and season with salt and pepper, to taste, and basil. Toss again, remove from heat and serve.

**Rouxbe.com**

## SUMMER GARDEN PASTA SALAD

1 # thin spaghetti, broken into 1" pieces  
 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved  
 2 zucchini, peeled & diced  
 2 cucumbers, diced  
 1 green pepper, diced  
 1 red pepper, diced  
 1 (16 oz.) can sliced black olives, drained

### Dressing:

1 (16 oz.) bottle Italian dressing  
 1/4 c parmesan cheese  
 1 T sesame seeds  
 1 tsp paprika  
 1/2 tsp celery seed  
 1/2 tsp garlic salt

### METHOD

Cook pasta and drain. Drizzle with small amount of olive oil to prevent sticking and stir to combine. Combine pasta with veggies and black olives. Whisk dressing ingredients together. Pour over salad ingredients and toss until coated. Cover and refrigerate 3 hours or overnight.  
**Jane Ham, Rapid City**

## PIZZA NOODLE HOT DISH

### Ingredients:

1 lb. ground beef, browned and drained  
 1/2 c. chopped onion  
 1 jar pizza sauce  
 Salt and pepper to taste  
 3 c. noodles, cooked and drained  
 1 jar spaghetti sauce  
 1 pkg. pepperoni slices  
 Mozzarella cheese for top

### METHOD

Mix ingredients together and put in a greased 9 x 13 pan. Bake at 350\* for 20 minutes. Sprinkle 8 oz. of mozzarella cheese on top and place back in oven to melt.

**JOAN ANTONEN, ARLINGTON**

## SPAGHETTI PIZZA

### Ingredients:

1/2 lb spaghetti  
 4 eggs  
 1 c. milk  
 Salt & pepper  
 7 oz. pepperoni  
 1/2 lb hamburger  
 1/2 lb pork sausage  
 1 onion  
 1 lg jar spaghetti sauce  
 2 c. mozzarella cheese

### METHOD

Cook spaghetti, drain, and put in the bottom of a 9x13 casserole dish. Mix eggs, milk, salt, and pepper to taste and pour over noodles. Spread pepperoni over the above. Brown hamburger, sausage, and onion and put over pepperoni. Pour spaghetti sauce over all. Sprinkle mozzarella on top. Bake at 350° for 45 min.

**Ruth Morman, Volin**

Please send your favorite dairy recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.



# Understanding Power Surges and Blinks

Have you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you have likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could have resulted from a power surge or blink. While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what is happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

### What is a power surge?

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances of a power waveform that can damage, degrade, or destroy electronic equipment within your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage; however, power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts—this can be extremely damaging to your electronic equipment.

Surges can be caused by internal sources, like HVAC systems with variable frequency drives, or external sources, like lightning and damage to power lines and transformers.

FEM Electric encourages all members to install surge protective devices (such as surge protector power strips) to safeguard your sensitive electronics. If you are experiencing frequent surges in your home or business and you believe the cause is internal, contact a qualified electrician to inspect your electrical system.

### What is a power blink?

Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they are typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a variety of instances, like squirrels, birds or other small animals contacting an energized power line; tree branches touching a power line; or lightning and other similar events.

Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief

interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breakers are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are actually good because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

Regardless of the cause, FEM Electric crews will be on their way to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs after a power outage. And you can help too! Any time you experience repeated disruptions to your electric service, please let us know by calling 605-426-6891 or visiting [femelectric.coop](http://femelectric.coop).

## WHY IS MY POWER OUT?

A storm or a squirrel may be to blame

[Safe Electricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org)



When the power goes out, we work hard to resume service as quickly and safely as possible.

**Here are some common reasons the power goes out:**

- STORMS:** Mother Nature can interfere with power delivery.
- TREES AND VEGETATION:** This is why we work so hard to keep power lines clear.
- ANIMALS:** Curious animals can cause damage, especially squirrels.
- ACCIDENTS:** Run-ins with a utility pole or other equipment can cause an outage.
- PUBLIC DAMAGE:** Unsafe digging, equipment or line damage, vandalism or theft can all interfere.
- OVERLOAD:** This happens when demand spikes, like on a hot summer day.
- EQUIPMENT ISSUES:** We maintain and inspect equipment regularly, but sometimes malfunctions occur.

Thank you for your patience during outages.

**BOARD REPORT CONTINUED:**

The Special Construction bank transfer was signed by the President and Treasurer for the 05/25/2021 \$500,000 RUS FFB loan funds.

Rhonda Tuscherer also reviewed CFC Annual Benefits of Ownership statement with the board.

Motion by Eric Odenbach, seconded by Larry Bowar and carried to approve director and attorney fees.

**Legal Update:** none

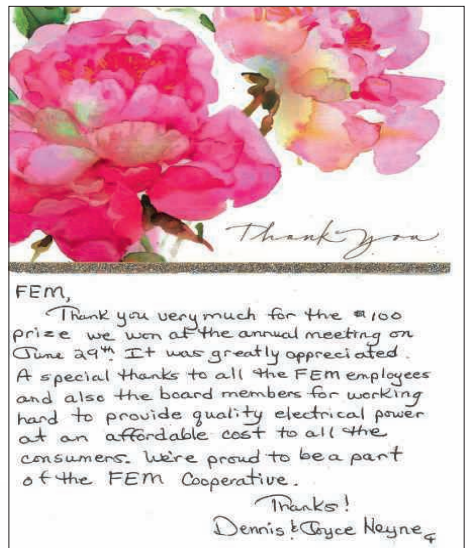
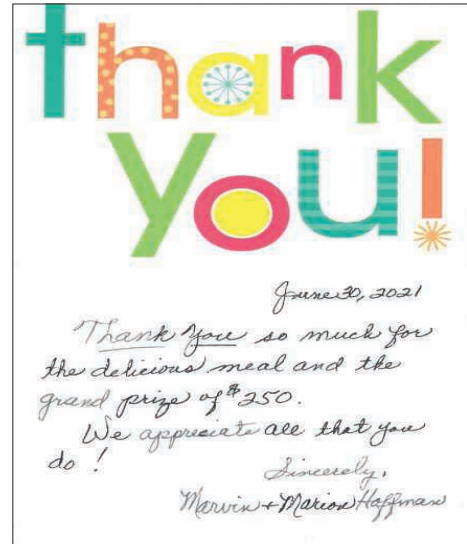
**Meeting Report:** East River board update was given by Gary Bachman. SDREA Director Tom Thorpe discussed the hiring of a new SDREA CEO.

The board acknowledged the receipt of the Safety Meeting Minutes from May 25th, 2021.

**Adjourn:** President Gary Bachman declared the meeting adjourned.

**Be sure to attend the farm safety event for kids at the Brown County Fair on Thursday, August 19!**

**Murphy**





# In hot pursuit of Walleye



Aydan Johnson landed this Walleye on his 12th birthday at Cow Creek north of Pierre. Photos by Billy Gibson

## SD anglers pursue walleye for fun and charity

Billy Gibson

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

Walleye fishing isn't always all about fishing for walleye.

That was the case at the annual SDREC Employee and Vendor Walleye Fishing Tournament held earlier this summer at the Cow Creek Recreation Area north of Pierre. For most of the more than 100 walleye whisperers who participated, the event was mostly about hanging out together, swapping fish tales - some of them true - and catching up with one another.

The tournament also raised \$500 for the state's rural electric cooperative Line Patrol charity.

For Evan Buckmiller, general manager at Kingsbury Electric Cooperative in DeSmet, the tournament presented a prime opportunity to spend time with family and interact with his cooperative colleagues. While his team failed to place, he enjoyed being out on the water with his wife and dad.

"It was a little hot, but we had beautiful weather and caught a lot of fish...just not as many as we wanted," said Buckmiller. "I'd never been a part of this event, so it was fun seeing all the boats taking off at the same time. It was also good to see people you don't normally get to see, or you haven't seen since you worked a storm together years ago. You get to connect with your friends and linemen you went to school with. That's the fun part about events like this."

Roger Crom, former manager of loss control services at the South Dakota Rural Electric Association in Pierre, served as a volunteer to help coordinate the event. Crom said while he likes to fish, he takes satisfaction with staying on dry land and meeting the competitors as they come in to weigh their catch and tell of their exploits on the lake.





The dawning of a new summer day brings the promise of fun and a full string of walleye by the afternoon.

“I just enjoy being a part of it every year,” Crom said. “It’s a lot of fun getting together with old friends and meeting new friends and getting to know the young linemen that are now part of the program. It’s not just one or two co-ops, it’s like a big family that comes out year after year. There’s a lot of camaraderie. Everybody works together and we also have a lot of fun together.”

For the record, the winning team of Roger Squires, Ryan Squires and Ron Koosman took top honors, despite temperatures soaring into the 90s and water levels that were unusually low. The crew representing H-D Electric and Dueco prevailed over a field of more than 30 teams with a total weight of 18.03 lbs. Their largest walleye weighed in at 3.05 lbs.

The East River Electric team of Tim Dockendorf, Doug Engbrecht



Crew members of the Captain Crawdaddy prepare to launch at Cow Creek.

and Robert Hanson landed the largest walleye at 4.04 lbs. (Search YouTube for Cooperative Connections Plus to see a video of the event.)

It’s no secret that the Missouri River system boasts some of the best walleye fishing in North America and is one of the top walleye habitats on the continent.

While there are many other walleye fishing tournaments held throughout the state in the spring and fall, one that stands out is the Tom and Matt Hill Memorial Tournament.

The fifth annual event, set for July 31 at the West Whitlock Recreation Area near Gettysburg, is held each year in honor of the Hill brothers who died in a boating accident on Brush Lake in December of 2016.

Born and reared in Volga, the siblings were avid hunters and fishermen. They were finishing up a day of duck hunting and were heading back to the landing to meet their father when their boat suddenly capsized.

The tournament is held to raise funds to support local youth outdoor programs in honor of the brothers. Proceeds have gone toward purchasing safety hunting vests for youngsters, hunting gear and safety training.

Sheila Gross, Energy Services Specialist at Sioux Valley Energy in

It’s no secret that the Missouri River system boasts some of the best walleye fishing in North America.

Colman, lost her brother and great-nephew in a fishing accident in January. As word spread, friends and family of the Hill Memorial Tournament and Fishing 4 Miracles jumped into action with an outpouring of support to the Berwald family. To express their gratitude, several of Gross’ family members plan to participate in the tournament to help contribute to the safe enjoyment of fishing and hunting.

“The Hill Brothers Committee is an amazing group of people and they do so much to support the community and those who have been impacted by tragedy. They have blessed my family in our time of loss and have brought great comfort,” she said.

A rules meeting will take place on Friday, July 30, at the Whitlock Bay Supper Club. An open house will be held from 1-5 p.m. with a meal from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m.



### Electric cooperatives teaming up with Agtegra Cooperative to host farm safety event for kids at the Brown County Fair on Thursday, August 19

Large equipment, big grain bins, and high-voltage electricity can be found on the typical family farm in South Dakota. All those things play a key role in increasing efficiency and productivity, but farm machinery also needs to be treated with respect and operated in a safe manner. It is the reason Agtegra Cooperative and three local Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are

teaming up to host a Farm Safety Party for kids and families at the 2021 Brown County Fair.

Northern Electric Cooperative, along with FEM Electric Association and Lake Region Electric Association, are partnering with Agtegra Cooperative to bring an electrical safety component to the four-hour farm safety event on August 19.

“Electricity powers many aspects of farm life, but it is also a major

hazard on the farm,” Northern Electric Communications Director Ben Dunsmoor said. “We hope to teach kids about the importance of staying safe around power lines through several fun and interactive demonstrations.”

The Farm Safety Party will feature a ‘power town’ display. The display depicts a rural farm scene and uses small figurines and toy tractors to demonstrate the dangers of contacting power lines.

“The ‘power town’ display is a good way to show kids and families the importance of keeping a safe distance from overhead lines,”



LEFT PAGE: Brett Kwasniewski of Lake Region Electric Association (right) shows a family the importance of staying safe around electricity with the 'power town' display at the 2019 Farm Safety Party. RIGHT: A Farm Safety Party participant tries on safety gear. BELOW: Families enjoy the Farm Safety Party at the 2019 Brown County Fair.

**Courtesy: Agtegra Cooperative**



Dunsmoor said.

The free Farm Safety Party includes several other activities to teach families about safety and the various hazards they can encounter on the farm. The Farm Safety Party will feature an ATV safety simulator, a safety gear dress-up booth, and a grain sensory station.

“Throughout our territory, children are surrounded by farms, equipment and livestock. By throwing a Farm Safety Party, we created a fun environment to educate hundreds of children on the basics of farm safety,” Brittney Bulson with Agtegra Cooperative said.

The Farm Safety Party will be held in the ‘Kid’s Zone’ at the Brown County Fair which is on the southwest side of the Holum Expo Building. There will also be face painting and several safety-themed giveaways available for kids and adults. The party gets started at 10 a.m. on Thursday, August 19, and it will continue until 2 p.m. in the afternoon. The event is free and is open to anyone who is attending the Brown County Fair.



**FARM SAFETY PARTY**  
@ THE BROWN COUNTY FAIR



**AUGUST 19**

**Kid’s Zone @ Brown County Fair**

**10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

- **Electrical Safety**
- **ATV Safety**
- **Safety Gear Dress Up**

presented by:



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives



# RV TRIPPING



RV campers make new friends and enjoy new experiences on the open road. *Photo by South Dakota Travel*

## Vic and Barb Simmons adopt the RV lifestyle when visiting new places and creating lasting memories on the road

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Decisions, decisions...

When Vic Simmons starts to sense the allure of the open road, he has some decisions to make. He can crank up his Jeep Cherokee and join all the brand loyalists out there who rally around the phrase, "It's a Jeep thing: You wouldn't understand."

Or he could go grab his gloves and his riding gear, fire up his orange 2017 Harley-Davidson Street Glide and experience the wind rush and beauty of the natural landscape on two wheels. Or he can climb into the command-and-control center of his massive 40-foot Meridian "diesel pusher" motor coach.

But who wants to be burdened by making tough decisions when the highway is calling? Most of the time he makes it a little easier by attaching the bike or the Jeep and

heading out into the great wide open.

Simmons, who just turned 65, serves as general manager of Rushmore Electric in Rapid City. But he has plans of retiring early next year and that means lots of travel time in the future with his wife Barb and whoever else wants to join the adventure.

The passenger list usually includes a host of grandchildren as it has from the beginning of Simmons' foray into the world of recreational vehicles and RV life.

He and Barb invested in their first RV about 12 years ago by purchasing a pre-owned 32-foot Class C model Jamboree, the kind that's built on a truck chassis and resembles a van with a large camper shell and a sleeping chamber over the roof.

"When our three girls were little, Barb's parents used to take them

camping, and to this day they always talk about how much they enjoyed those trips," Simmons said. "So, when it came time for us to have grandkids, we wanted to have a way to create those same kinds of memories for our own grandchildren."

Inevitably, as the family grew the smaller that 32-foot camper became. Besides, the vehicle was a bit top-heavy and caused some white-knuckle driving in high winds, and according to Vic, "Barb's idea of roughing it is staying at a hotel without a swimming pool." So, after three summers an upgrade with more space and more amenities was in order, and Simmons graduated to a 37-foot motor coach.

After a few years, he sold that RV to Lacreek General Manager Josh Fanning, who used it for family vacations and to take his daughter to weightlifting and track competitions in far-flung places.

Soon afterwards, Vic and Barb acquired their "forever RV," a 40-foot Meridian they purchased





Vic Simmons of Rushmore Electric enjoys climbing behind the wheel and piloting his 40-foot recreational vehicle.

a few years ago when Vic began planning out his retirement.

Simmons, who prides himself on always buying pre-owned vehicles, purchased the RV sight-unseen... well almost.

"I found it at a dealership in Lincoln," he recalled. "It had 17,000 miles on it and looked like it was in good shape. My son-in-law was in Lincoln, so he went to the dealership and Facetimed me and walked through it and it looked nice. It was set up to pull the Jeep or the trailer for the motorcycle, so we got it. I don't usually do business like that, but..."

With Vic soon retiring and Barb already retired from her



Vic and Barb Simmons use their RV to visit new places and create lasting memories.

job as the pharmacy technician program director at Western Dakota Technical Institute, the two have lots of traveling plans in their future.

One hitch, however, is finding places to park. RV sales shot through the roof nationally last year as people sought to escape the confines of their homes under lock down conditions and explore the outdoors.

"You can hardly find any good camping spots," Simmons said. "Camping just became something that people felt safe doing, and it got them out of their homes. A neighbor of mine had a travel trailer for sale and it sold in just a few minutes after he posted it."

Simmons said his travel adventures have taken him from North Carolina on the eastern seaboard to Washington state on the Pacific, and also all the way down to El Paso.

His plan is to "go to places I haven't been," although when asked if there's one place he would like to re-visit he's quick with an answer.

"Door County in eastern Wisconsin. I just fell in love with the place," he said. "It's on the peninsula above Green Bay and is just gorgeous

## 'GREAT 8' UNIQUE RV CAMPGROUNDS IN SD

Here are the state's top eight unique campgrounds, according to the state Department of Tourism:

### **Wessington Springs City Park Campground**

Wessington Springs

### **Castlewood City Park Municipal Campground**

Castlewood

### **Lake Carthage Campground**

Carthage

### **Custer's Gulch RV Park**

Custer

### **Cedar Pass Campground**

Badlands National Park

### **Rafter J Bar Ranch**

Hill City

### **Fish 'N Fry Campground & RV Park**

Deadwood

### **Rocky Point Recreation Area**

Belle Fourche

with a beautiful campground and a friendly community and shops and restaurants on Sturgeon Bay. The sunrises and sunsets are awesome."

His plans for himself and Barb are the same he had for his grandchildren when he invested in his first RV: meet new people, explore new places and make lasting memories.

Oddly enough, many of those new people are encountered not at state parks, camp sites or in restaurants, but at the fuel pump.

"When you're driving a car and stop for gas, nobody will come up and talk to you," he said. "But if you're on a motorcycle or in an RV, it's amazing how many people want to come up and talk to you all the time about where you're going and where you've been. They also like to talk a lot about gas mileage."





# FEM

# ANNUAL MEETING

FEM Electric's 73rd Annual meeting was held Tuesday, June 29, 2021, at the Ipswich School. The weather cooperated and gave us a very nice evening with 140 members attended to enjoy a great "food truck" meal provided by Gypsy Nosh or Aunt Mimi's with dessert furnished by Anderson Baking Company a member of FEM.

Gary Bachman brought the meeting to order and welcomed special guests and retired directors. Paula Petersen presented the invocation and everyone enjoyed listening to our National Anthem sung by Ipswich's very own Junior Snow Queen, Karlie Gohl.

The board of directors gave their annual reports while the kids

who attended with their parents enjoyed the inflatables, crafts, and treats.

This annual meeting was special. Larry Bower announced that he would be retiring and this was his last annual meeting as a board member representing District 5. He served the cooperative for 28 years and thanked the members for allowing him to serve.

Attorney Vaughn Beck announced the election for a new director in District 5. The following candidates were nominated for election in District 5 – Stacey Hadrick, Kelly Melius, and Ryan Nelson. Stacey Hadrick withdrew her name from the nominations. No petitions for nominations were turned in.



Ashley Ptacek, of Ipswich was the winner of the Young Adults Light the Way \$500 Scholarship.





Scott Moore, Gen. Mgr., Vaughn Beck, Attorney, and the FEM Board are ready to start the Annual Meeting.

Ballots were cast by members, collected and counted by Attorney Beck and Nathan Davis. Kelly Melius was elected by the membership for the District 5 board of director.

President Gary Bachman gave the President's report and he assured the members that FEM is energized for the future and for the member owners. He encouraged the members with the facts that the FEM Board of Directors and Management continue to monitor the Dakota Gasification Company, a subsidiary of Basin Electric and FEM's power supplier. There is development of interest in a company possibly purchasing the assets, along with other coops studying options of leaving the co-op family in an effort to try to find cheaper power elsewhere. Gary ended by saying "facts are cheap, information is plentiful, and knowledge is precious".

General Manager/CEO Scott Moore gave an update on East River Electric transmission projects in the Wetonka and Bowdle areas which will help with reliability in the future. He thanked Kelly Melius and

## THE EMPLOYEES AT FEM ARE ALWAYS WILLING TO STEP OUTSIDE THEIR COMFORT ZONE AND TACKLE NEW DUTIES, STATED CEO SCOTT MOORE.

Ryan Nelson for taking time and interest to run for their co-op's board of directors. The board of FEM is a vital role in the co-op model.

Eric Odenbach, assisted by Tom Thorpe, presented certificates to those students who had received scholarships during the 2020/2021 school year.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Ashley Ptacek, daughter of Perry and Laura Ptacek of Ipswich was randomly drawn as the winner of the "Young Adults Light the Way" \$500 Scholarship. The lucky cash winners were Peter and Violet Helfenstein, \$50; Dennis and Joyce Heyne, \$100; Shelby and Emily Marcotte, \$100 and Marvin and Marion Hoffman, \$250.

As the members exited the meeting, they turned in their ticket to receive a \$40 energy credit and were offered an ice cream treat for their trip home.



Larry Bowar receives a Certificate to honor his 28 years of service as District 5 FEM Board member. Larry is retiring from the FEM Board.

## REGISTER TO WIN!

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

Your Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Your E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**August 26-29**  
**58th Annual Steam**  
**Threshing Jamboree**  
*Photo by Travel South Dakota*



**JULY 23-25**  
**Arlington Days**  
Various Locations, Arlington,  
SD, 605-983-5251

**JULY 27-31**  
**Days of '76 Rodeo & Parades**  
Various Locations, Deadwood,  
SD, 605-578-1876

**JULY 29-AUGUST 1**  
**Bruce Honey Days**  
City-wide, Bruce, SD,  
605-627-5671

**JULY 29, AUGUST 5, 19**  
**The 1880 Train Old West**  
**Shootout**  
222 Railroad Avenue,  
Hill City, SD, 605-574-2222

**JULY 31**  
**Chislic Festival**  
Freeman's Prairie Arboretum,  
Freeman, SD, 605-496-9946

**AUGUST 5-7**  
**90th Anniversary Union**  
**County Fair**  
The Fairgrounds, Alcester, SD,  
605-356-2321

**AUGUST 5-14**  
**Sioux Empire Fair**  
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds,  
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7178

**AUGUST 6-7**  
**Huron Senior Games**  
Various Locations, Huron, SD,  
605-491-0635 or 605-353-8533

**AUGUST 6-7**  
**Potato Days**  
Citywide, Clark, SD,  
605-360-7672

**AUGUST 6-8**  
**Annual Sioux River Folk**  
**Festival**  
Newton Hills State Park,  
Canton, SD, 605-261-7414

**AUGUST 6-15**  
**Sturgis Motorcycle Rally**  
Citywide, Sturgis, SD,  
605-720-0800

**AUGUST 11**  
**Willie Nelson & Family**  
824 32nd Avenue, Brookings,  
SD, 605-692-7539

**AUGUST 12-15**  
**Annual Custer County Fair**  
Custer County Fairgrounds,  
Hermosa, SD, 605-255-4145  
or 605-393-7055

**AUGUST 13-15**  
**Fort Pierre Trader Days &**  
**Backyard BBQ Competition**  
Various Locations, Fort Pierre,  
SD, 605-223-7603

**AUGUST 17-19**  
**Dakotafest**  
2300 E Spruce Street,  
Mitchell, SD, 877-611-8161

**AUGUST 20-22**  
**Yankton Riverboat Days**  
City-wide, Yankton, SD,  
605-665-1657

**AUGUST 20-29**  
**Central States Fair & Rodeo**  
800 San Francisco Street,  
Rapid City, SD, 605-355-3861

**AUGUST 21**  
**Dakota State Fair Speedway**  
**Stock Car Races**  
South Dakota State  
Fairgrounds, Huron, SD,  
605-352-4848

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

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

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

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

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.