

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



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# BOARD REPORT



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 May 17, 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 candidate Kelly Melius.

Motion by Paula Petersen, seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to approve administrative business.

Changes to the agenda: moved capital credits and market rate capital credits to #3 on agenda.

Changes/Additions to Minutes from April 20, 2021 meeting: none

Next Meeting Date: After a review of calendars, directors agreed that the next regular meeting of the board would be on Monday, June 14, 2021, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at FEM Electric Board Room in Ipswich, South Dakota.

2021 Capital Credit Retirement and Market Rate Load Review: Motion by Eric Odenbach, seconded by Paula Petersen

and carried to approve paying out 1/18<sup>th</sup> of the current FEM Electric capital credit balance, along with East River and Basin Electric's 2021 capital credit retirement. The capital credit retirement will be done in June and reflected on active member's June energy statement and inactive members will receive a paper capital credits

check.

The board reviewed the 2021 market rate statement of operations and plant payback.

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

The April East River Cyber Security Report was acknowledged.

Resolutions, Nominations, and Contracts: Motion by Larry Bowar, seconded by Paula Petersen and carried to approve review of policies 506-Service Equipment Installations, 507-Meter Testing Requested by Member, 509-Variable Frequency Drives, 510-Retirement of Capital Credits to

Deceased Patrons' Estates.

Board acknowledged Notice of NCSC Annual meeting and CFC Annual meeting.

Larry Bowar nominated Gary Bachman as NCSC and CFC Voting Delegate; motion seconded by Eric Odenbach. Motion for nominations to cease and unanimous ballot was cast for Gary Bachman as NCSC and CFC Voting Delegate.

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

New Memberships, Member Cancellations and Contracts –

Disconnects: Glen Bode, Faulkton, Active Farm; Lawrence Linderman, Ipswich, Vacant Farm; Jeff & Jane Aman, Hosmer, Vacant Farm; Sandquist Family LLC, Aberdeen, Vacant Farm;

Reconnects: Bode Brothers LLC, Orient, Active Farm; Linderman Farm LLC, Ipswich, Vacant Farm; Aaron & Jennifer Roth,

<b>FEM Electric (balance of 2008 and partial 2009)</b>	<b>\$255,973.96</b>
<b>Basin (balance of 2003 and partial 2004)</b>	<b>\$ 50,477.76</b>
<b>East River (balance of 2000 and partial 2001)</b>	<b>\$ 47,568.46</b>
<b>Less Value added loans</b>	<b><u>\$ (2,141.87)</u></b>
<b>Total Retirement</b>	<b>\$351,878.31</b>

Roscoe, Vacant Farm; Plainview Colony, Leola, Vacant Farm;

Contracts: Bode Brothers, Orient, 3 phase Grain Bin; Jennifer Brown, Dillard, OR, Garage; WEB Water, Aberdeen, Pumping Station; East River, Madison, Motor Operated Switch; Sam & Samantha Braun, Warner, 3 phase Grain Bin; Tim Heilman, Warner, 3 phase Grain Bin;

Retired Locations: none

### Capital Credits-

**Estates: May 2021** – Five estates = \$4,255.51

**73 & Older: January-May 2021** – Nine estates = \$31,139.94

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

*Board report continued on page 14*

**COOPERATIVE  
CONNECTIONS**

**FEM ELECTRIC  
ASSOCIATION**

(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**  
**info@femelectric.coop**

**Management Staff**

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

**Editor's e-mail:**  
**schaffner@femelectric.coop**

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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**coop**  
**Design assistance by SDREA**

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



**Scott Moore**

As with many subjects, communicating is and has been on a fast track with technology. Back twenty years ago FEM employees would print labels and place them on individual four to six page, locally printed, black and white newsletters, then sort by zip code and bundle before taking to the post office. The last issue was March 2000 and in May of 2000 FEM Electric members started to receive the Cooperative Connection magazine that merged information from our statewide association (SDREA) and our power provider East River Electric out of Madison, along with FEM Electric news and notices.

As a member owned cooperative, it is essential to our success that we keep our members informed on current issues, along with the business and financials of the cooperative they own. Over the years, we have seen many changes in how we communicate, and we believe we need to give communication options to all members and leave it to the members to determine what time and source they pick to review the news for their local cooperatives and events across the state.

In addition to the monthly Cooperative Connection newsletter, FEM has a web page, Facebook, and Twitter account and, you can still call into the office and speak to any FEM Electric employee, who, if they do not have the answer has the resources to get you a proper answer to your electrical or cooperative questions.

FEM Electric has and will continue to

**MANAGER'S REPORT**

look at options to reach each member to keep members informed on local, state, and national issues that can affect the dollars you spend on your monthly utility bills.

July 4<sup>th</sup> will be here and gone before we know it, so as a reminder, please be safe and keep your kids safe while enjoying summer activities. It sounds like most of 2020 cancelled events have or will resume in 2021 giving residents some options to relax and spend time with family and friends.

You may have noticed there is a large amount of overhead transmission electric lines being built or upgraded in FEM Electric service territory. I know many landowners and agriculture producers do not care for the power poles, but these updates are needed to serve reliable power to current and future members and consumers in several towns.

Once again, we are seeing requests for new services and upgraded electrical service, so if planning on adding some new electrical load, please call the office and talk to Rob Vetch or Ryan Holien. The supply chains have been disrupted and some material is difficult to find or purchase.

**Statement  
Mailing Dates**

June 25, 2021 for June's energy  
 July 28, 2021 for July's energy  
 Regardless of the statement mail out date, payments are due in the office by the 9th of the following month.

# Handling food safely when grilling outdoors

One of America's favorite summer pastimes is grilling, and safe grilling starts with proper food handling. Here are a few simple guidelines for grilling food safely:

- Wash away harmful bacteria. Avoid providing a hotbed for bacteria. Unwashed hands are a prime cause of foodborne illness, also known as food poisoning, as are unwashed perishable foods such as meat, seafood, and peeled or cut fruits and vegetables.

- Keep perishable foods cold. If you'll be meeting up with friends away from your backyard grill, it's best to transport all perishables in an insulated cooler kept cold with ice or frozen gel packs.

- Throw away any perishable leftovers that have been out of a refrigerator or cooler for more than two hours—one hour if the temperature is above 90 degrees.

- Keep coolers out of direct sunlight and avoid opening them frequently, to keep the cold air inside.

- Marinate safely. Marinated meats should be stored immediately in a refrigerator or cooler, not on the kitchen counter or outside next to the grill. As long as a marinade is stored in a cool environment, it can remain there safely for several hours or days.

- Do not use marinade from a raw meat/marinade mixture as a sauce on cooked meat, unless you first cook the

sauce to a boil for at least three minutes to kill harmful bacteria.

- Use grilling shortcuts.

Pre-cooking food partially indoors before putting it on a preheated grill will give you quick results when your friends are hungry or your grill is slow or small. Conversely, flame-grill meat for a smoky, charbroiled flavor, then bake in an oven until it's cooked properly.

- Cook thoroughly and use a meat thermometer. It's best to cook food to the safe minimum internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. On the grill, meat and poultry will brown quickly, but the inside might only be cooked partially. To be sure the food has reached a safe internal temperature, use a meat thermometer.

Here are some safe minimum internal temperatures:

- Chicken: 165 degrees
- Beef hamburgers: 160 degrees
- Beef, veal and lamb (steaks, roasts and chops): medium-rare 145 degrees, medium 160 degrees
- Pork: 165 degrees

With proper refrigeration and thorough cooking, your backyard barbecue will be a tasty success.

**AVOID UTILITY SCAMS**

Scammers will threaten you with everything from shutting off power to your home to legal action. Don't fall victim to these types of scams.

- Our employees will never show up at your door to demand payment.
- Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Our representatives have access

- to the details they need to service your account.
- Demands for immediate payment by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, gift cards or cash reload cards should immediately raise red flags.



## Don't fly kites near trees and power lines

**Annette Tschetter, 7 years old**

Annette is the daughter of Elaine and Ryan Tschetter of Revillo. They are members of Whetstone Valley Electric based in Milbank.

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.

# SUMMERTIME DESSERTS

## WHOOPIE PIES

Ingredients:

- 1 box spice cake mix
- 1 1/2 cups apple butter
- 1/2 cup canola oil
- 2 eggs
- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 3 cups powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

### METHOD

Heat oven to 350 F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. In large bowl, whisk spice cake mix, apple butter, oil and eggs. With ice cream scoop or large tablespoon, spoon batter into rounded heaps, about 2-3 inches in diameter, onto parchment paper. Space spooned batter 2 inches apart. Bake 14 minutes. Let cool. In large bowl, beat cream cheese, butter and powdered sugar until smooth. Add milk and vanilla; beat until blended. Frost flat sides of pie halves and place halves together. Refrigerate and store in sealed container.

Culinary.net

## ROCKY ROAD ICE CREAM

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup cocoa powder
- 1 -14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup half & half
- 1 TBS vanilla
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup miniature marshmallows

### METHOD

In a small saucepan put in cocoa and whisk in sweetened condensed milk until smooth. Cook over low heat, whisking constantly until slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Transfer to a bowl and stir in both creams and vanilla. Pour mixture into ice cream maker and freeze. Stir in pecans and marshmallows halfway through freezing process. Transfer to airtight container and put in freezer to harden, about an hour. Makes 2 quarts.

Joan Antonen, Arlington, SD

## PRALINE PECAN CRUNCH

Ingredients:

- 1 21 oz. box Quaker Oat Squares cereal (about 8 cups)
- 2 cups pecans
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1/2 cup light corn syrup
- 1/4 cup margarine
- 1/2 tsps baking soda

### METHOD

Heat oven to 250 degrees. Mix cereal and pecans in 9"x13" pan. Set aside. Mix corn syrup, brown sugar and margarine in glass bowl. Microwave on high 1-1/2 minutes. Stir, microwave 1 to 1-1/2 minutes more or until boiling. Stir in vanilla and baking soda and pour over cereal mixture. Stir to coat evenly. Bake 1 hour, stirring every 20 minutes. Spread on baking sheet to cool. Break into pieces and store in air tight container.

NANCY STENSON, FORT PIERRE

## MAMA'S CARAMEL PUDDING

Ingredients:

- 1 cup sugar - melt in skillet until golden brown
- 2 cups milk - stir until sugar is dissolved
- 4 tsps. corn starch stirred into a little milk

### METHOD

Cook until thickened. Serve with whipped cream.

Elaine Rowett, Sturgis, SD

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.

## FEM reports taxes paid to schools

FEM Electric is an electric cooperative based in Ipswich, SD that serves the rural communities of Faulk, Edmunds and McPherson counties, including the Town of Long Lake. As a non-profit corporation, it sometimes gives people the false impression that FEM does not pay taxes. However, under state law, rural electric cooperatives are required to pay a generation tax based on kilowatt hour sales to local school districts in their service area. FEM is also required to pay a 2% gross receipts tax to cities in our territory if a service falls within the city limits.

School districts located within the FEM Electric Cooperative service area will receive \$533,697 in generation tax as a result of electric sales to the members.

Of this total, \$275,386 will be paid by FEM Electric and \$258,311 will be paid by East River Electric Power Cooperative of Madison, SD and Basin Electric Cooperative of Bismarck, ND.

COUNTY	FEM	ER/BASIN	TOTAL
Faulk	35,583	33,377	68,960
Edmunds	201,708	189,201	390,909
McPherson	37,712	35,373	73,085
Potter	264	247	511
Spink	119	112	231
Walworth	<1	<1	<1
Totals	\$ 275,386	\$ 258,311	\$533,697

The gross revenue tax is allocated to the different school districts through the County Treasurer offices. The following table shows the gross revenue that will be paid to each school district by County.

## Scholar of the Year Winners Announced



On Monday night, Dakota News Now announced the 2020-2021 Scholar of the Year winners!

The winners were:

- \$1000 – Zariah Zevenbergen, Elk Point-Jefferson High School, Union County Electric
- \$500 – **Matthew Hettich**, Ipswich High School, FEM Electric

- \$500 – Carson Schmidt, Summit High School, Whetstone Valley Electric

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this years banquet was cancelled, and instead the news team at Dakota News Now, along with Chris Studer, Chief Member and Public Relations Officer at East River Electric Power Cooperative, drew for the three scholarship recipients on live television during the 6 p.m. broadcast on May 17.

Congratulations Matthew!

School District	Total
Hoven 53-2	2,086
Northwestern Area 56-7	10,837
Faulkton Area 24-3	55,803
Edmunds Central 22-5	33,508
Ipswich Area 22-6	331,771
Bowdle 22-1	31,475
Warner 6-5	74
Eureka 44-1	16,899
Leola 44-2	51,244
Total	\$ 533,697

“In addition to providing electric service to our members, FEM financially contributes directly to our schools through the Cooperative’s generation tax – we also contribute to our schools by providing donations of bottled water for fundraising, offer scholarships, provide electrical safety programs, education programs, and provide youth tours to students in our area schools,” stated Scott Moore, General Manager/CEO, FEM Electric Association, Inc.



Logan Storley of Roslyn, SD, lands a kick against opponent Yaroslav Amosov at Bellator MMA 252 last November. It was Storley's first Bellator loss against 11 wins. *Photo courtesy of BELLATOR MMA/Lucas Noonan*

# LOGAN STORLEY

## Former state champion wrestler seeks to make his mark in mixed martial arts

**Billy Gibson**

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

There are many who know what it's like to experience difficult emotional blows in life: broken relationships, medical afflictions, financial hardships and other misfortune. There are fewer who know what it's like to get physically punched in the face, choked, kicked in the jaw and thrown to the ground with violent force.

And still fewer who have experienced both. That's Logan Storley.

Folks around Webster know Storley as a six-time state high school wrestling champion and four-time all-American at the University of Minnesota. The 28-year-old is currently carving out a

career in mixed martial arts, fashioning a record of 11-1 as a competitor in the Bellator MMA program.

And while he's used to punching and being punched, Storley said he recruits the same mental and emotional fortitude to deal with any test of adversity whether it comes in the cage of combat or in the cage of life.

Storley suffered his first loss last November when he dropped a split decision to Yaroslav Amosov, a defeat that was difficult for him to bear. The post-fight video segment shows Storley ripping his hand away from the referee after the verdict was announced.

But the blows to the forehead and kicks to the ribs that rocked his body that evening paled in comparison to

the pain of watching his beloved uncle battle ALS for 10 years before finally succumbing to the dreaded disease in 2019.

"It really hurts to see someone you've love and cared about all your life being sick like that and withering away," Storley said. "But he did a great job keeping his spirits up. He never groaned about how unlucky he was or how unfair it was. He lived a great life, he had a lot of good people around him and I was fortunate to know him. Now he's in a much better place."

Storley said that while hardships in life and contrived combat in the confines of a cage may be different types of challenges, they require the same determined mindset to overcome and move beyond.

"When there's a death in the family, or a heartbreak or financial problems, you have to keep showing up no matter what life throws at you. You have to take the time to deal with it, control what you can control and then continue to go on with life."

As far as what it's like to get physically punched in the head and body during the heat of competition, Storley said it's important to first understand, as in real life, there is going to be some adversity and pain.

"You go into the cage expecting that you're going to get cracked. You know you're going to be in a fight," he said. "It's a shock to your system when you feel that thud, but you know you have to respond and keep on fighting. You realize you can get past it and fight on."

Storley's loss in November hasn't deterred him in the least. He stays focused on completing a task left undone when he failed to win a national title in college. His goal is to become the "best fighter in the world."

"It's important to me. My whole life has been wrestling and competing," he said. "I want to win a title, defend it a couple of times and then move on."



# Summer fun awaits off the beaten path

Off-road enthusiasts from far and wide come to ride the Black Hills. Photos by Billy Gibson

## From the Black Hills to Avon, off-road ATV trails attract outdoor enthusiasts

**Billy Gibson**  
billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Generations ago, folks flocked to the tiny hamlet of Nemo to search for gold buried deep in the nooks and crannies of the Black Hills region.

Today they come in search of family outdoor fun and adventure along the hundreds of miles of nature trails that course throughout the craggy terrain.

During most months of the year, Nemo is a quiet outpost with a

smattering of permanent residents who spend their days in unhurried leisure. But the warm summer months bring thousands of visitors seeking to explore the undulating wooded landscape on foot or on horseback, but most of all nestled in the seat of a side-by-side.

The Black Hills area is widely regarded as the state's top draw for all-terrain adventurers, and Nemo stands smack dab at the center of the action.

One of the town's busiest denizens during the summer crush is Dane Hilger, who runs D&K ATV

Rentals in Nemo. Hilger does a brisk business pairing up riders with fully licensed and permitted machines that allow visitors to free-range along the trails and take in the breathtaking vistas. His fleet of more than a dozen two-seaters and four-seaters gets snapped up quickly as the town is completely transformed during the summer season, which typically kicks off with the annual Black Hills ATV/UTV Rally held in mid-June.

"There are so many people in town it seems like it's hard to get around sometimes, but it's very family-oriented and everybody gets along and has a good time getting out and enjoying the great outdoors."



Vacationers and even day-trippers have access to everything they need during a visit to Nemo with the Brandin’ Iron restaurant, camping sites, a general store and lodging.

Adam Rice, a native of Rapid City, owns and operates the Brandin’ Iron in addition to another restaurant in Arizona. Soon after high school, he headed to Arizona for culinary school and later opened his business there. But two years ago, Rice was lured back to South Dakota and decided to resettle in Nemo.

“The town just has an aura about it. It’s pristine and gorgeous. There’s no better way to see the Black Hills. You can get to a lot of cool places through the trail system that goes literally thousands of miles and you never have to get on the road. You can get to Deadwood, you can get to Mount Rushmore, you can get to Sturgis. I go out into the woods just about every day. There’s always something interesting to see.”

Larry Kaiser owns the Nemo Merchantile store where visitors will find fuel, snacks, beverages, clothing and an assortment of dry goods.

He laments that during the summer he is often too busy to ride the trails, but he enjoys supplying the provisions visitors need.

“It’s just a lot of fun. You meet the most interesting people and everybody’s having a good time.”

**“It’s just a lot of fun. You meet the most interesting people and everybody’s having a good time.”**



## TOP ATV TRAILS IN SD

- 1. Centennial Trail**  
West of Rapid City
- 2. Northern Black Hills**  
West of Rapid City
- 3. Southern Black Hills**  
Southwest of Rapid City
- 4. Buffalo Gap National Grassland**  
Southeast of Farmingdale
- 5. Bear Lodge Mountains**  
North of Sundance
- 6. Oahe Downstream OHV Area**  
North of Pierre
- 7. Talsmas ATV Trail Park**  
South of Avon
- 8. Reveheim Bay OHV Area**  
Southeast of Mobridge

They bring their kids, the grand parents and the dog and they just relax, unwind and have fun.”

While Nemo may be considered the mecca of ATV riders, there are several other prime spots in South Dakota open to the public.

In the southeastern region of the state near Avon, Jerry and Tina Talsma welcome ATV riders to their Trails End Ranch situated alongside the Missouri River.

The third-generation land owners opened Talsma’s Trail Park in 2005 with several hundred acres open to the public and trails that range from novice to extreme.

There are climbing hills, creek crossings, deep brush, open prairie land, river bottom terrain and expansive scenic bluffs overlooking the Missouri. There are also several play areas for riders to kick up some mud.

There are different fees to enter the park depending on the mode of transportation and special discounts for groups of 10 or more machines



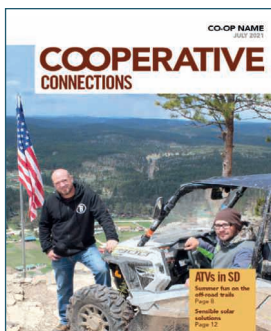
Many ATV trails across the state have access to fishing, scenic vistas and places to pull over for refreshments such as the Merchantile store in Nemo shown above.

as well as multi-day and seasonal passes. Camp sites are available at a rate of \$20 per night with electricity and \$10 without.

The Talsmas have big plans for the summer with a Customer Appreciation Day on Aug. 14, a fundraising event for Horse Haven on Sept. 11 and a Halloween Scare Ride on Oct. 9.

For more information on the private park, visit [talsmastrailpark.com](http://talsmastrailpark.com). For more information about riding in the Black Hills, visit [blackhillsatvally.com](http://blackhillsatvally.com) and [custersd.com](http://custersd.com) where you’ll find details about ATV activities in the Custer area.

# New *Cooperative Connections* features modern design and information about your cooperative



This issue of *Cooperative Connections* is different. It is different because the publication has been undergoing a behind-the-scenes makeover for the past several months and this is the first issue the new design is being unveiled to you - our readers. We hope the simple design brings a more modern look to the magazine and incorporates design elements that make the pictures pop and the articles effortless to read.

**COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS IS CURRENTLY ONE OF THE LARGEST PUBLICATIONS IN SOUTH DAKOTA WITH MORE THAN 120,000 COPIES MAILED EVERY MONTH.**

The entire goal of *Cooperative Connections* is to inform, educate, and entertain electric cooperative members across South Dakota. *Cooperative Connections* was first published in the year 2000 when the 31 electric cooperatives across the state joined together to print one unified publication which included statewide content from the South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) and local content from each individual co-op. Before that time, co-op members in South Dakota received a statewide publication and a separate local co-op publication in their mailboxes every month. Some members received even more reading material because wholesale generation and transmission cooperatives also sent out magazines. *Cooperative Connections* was developed more than 20 years ago to be a one-stop shop for electric cooperative information. This is only the fourth time during the past two decades that the design has been changed.

*Cooperative Connections* is currently one of the largest publications in the state of South Dakota with more than 120,000 copies mailed every month. It is important to keep co-op members across the state informed about the operation of their cooperative because every member who buys electricity from the co-op is a partial owner of the cooperative. The monthly publication not only informs members about the finances of the co-op, but it also provides notices about running for the board of directors and details about the cooperative's annual meeting. It is important information for members who would like to become more engaged in their local co-op.

The last redesign of this publication was about four years ago. We thought it was time for another refresh because the world continues to change at a rapid pace. We want to keep our communication channels clear, concise, and up to the modern-day design standards that our members expect.

Education is one of the seven core principles on which all cooperatives are built. Informed members are the cornerstone of strong co-ops. And, in the age of digital communication, *Cooperative Connections* still remains the most reliable way to reach all of our members every single month. So, even though this issue looks different, we hope that this publication continues to provide important updates and interesting articles.

Thank you for reading and enjoy the new design.

**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.**

# WHAT TO LOOK FOR AFTER A STORM

When the skies clear and the birds sing, know that the storm's fury could have created **electrical hazards that you may or may not be able to see**. Conditions in which stray electricity could energize the area, a person or objects include:

## DOWNED POWER LINES

- On the ground.
- Under storm debris.
- Draped over or touching a metal fence.
- Covered by standing water.
- Across or by the road.
- Hidden in tree branches.

## OTHER POSSIBLE DAMAGE

- Drooping or sagging lines (never try to move one).
- Split or broken utility poles.
- Damage to a padmount transformer (green box).
- Lightning strike to a substation transformer.
- Damaged or unstable guy wires.

**NEVER GO NEAR** downed power lines or other damaged electrical equipment to assess damage or clean up the area.

**STAY AWAY** and call 9-1-1 to report damage.

Power lines and other electrical equipment **do not have to be sparking, arcing (giving off a flame) or on fire to be energized.**

 Safe  
Electricity.org®



## FEM Electric participates in Safety Day Camp

A safety day camp was held on June 2nd in Ipswich sponsored by the Edmunds County and McPherson County 4-H/Extension Offices.

Youth ages 8-13 were encouraged to attend and did not have to be a 4-H member.

Session topics included electrical safety, fire safety, texting while driving, first aid, gun safety, grain bin safety, lawn mower safety, PTO safety and ATV safety with a simulator.

Linemen Ryan Holien and Jesse Brown performed several demonstrations on the dangers of electricity.

A free lunch and tee shirt were included with the registration. The Safety Day Camp was supported in part by a South Dakota State 4-H Leaders Association grant.



# SENSIBLE SOLAR

## South Dakota's electric cooperatives promote fair, sensible solar policies

**Billy Gibson**

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

With summer in full swing, the sun is bearing down on South Dakotans. But that wasn't the case just five months ago when an unexpected polar vortex covered much of the country in a blanket of snow and ice.

As co-op members now reach for the sunscreen and a cold beverage, it's easy to forget that back in February the same solar panels that are streaming torrents of ions today were reduced to a trickle when a convergence of circumstances caused a series of rolling blackouts.

That historic event alerted policymakers from Texas to the Canadian border to hit the pause button and take another look at how renewable power fits into the national grid-based energy picture.

Across the country, the solar market is facing what can be described as growing pains. Those pains stem from the fact that the nascent stages of solar energy were heavily subsidized through taxpayer dollars, as early adopters benefited from an array of state, federal and municipal government tax credits, exemptions, incentives, rebates and subsidies designed to get the industry off the ground. Tapping into these programs, owners of solar installations have been able to deduct up to half of their costs.

But as more homeowners and businesses opt for solar and as the cost of solar has dropped 80 percent since 2010, those subsidies are shrinking and the industry is in the process of having to eventually stand on its own feet. At the federal level, for instance, the Investment Tax Credit (ITC) established in 2005

has allowed new residential and commercial solar owners to deduct 26 percent of their installation costs from their federal taxes. The ITC is set to be reduced to 23 percent in 2023 and eliminated for homeowners by 2024. The Biden Administration has proposed extending the program for another two years.

According to the Energy Information Administration, direct federal government subsidies for solar alone totaled \$34.4 billion between 2010 and 2019.

As solar subsidies decline, the true costs for ratepayers to have 24-hour access to both intermittent renewable power and more reliable traditional power at the same time are coming to bear.

In Nevada, for example, incentives for homeowners were phased out in 2016 after the state's largest energy company argued that its costs of creating and delivering power weren't being fully covered and the expenses of serving every home and business in the system were being shifted to those exercising their right not to have rooftop panels placed on their homes.

Predictably, once the incentives

*Sensible Solutions for Our Energy Future*



South Dakota's electric cooperatives support reasonable strategies for our energy future that make sense for our members:

- Renewable energy solutions that are both productive and practical
- Rate structures that take affordability into account
- Balanced strategies centered on the best interests of co-op consumers
- Technology-based policies that promote economic development

**“WE RELY ON INTERMITTENT RENEWABLE SOURCES TO CURB EMISSIONS AND MORE RELIABLE FOSSIL FUELS TO DELIVER THE BASELOAD POWER OUR MEMBERS NEED.”**

ROBERT RAKER

West River Electric, characterized the state’s electric cooperatives as being neither pro-renewable energy nor anti-renewable energy.

“We’re pro-reliability and pro-affordability for our members,” he explained. “We rely on intermittent renewable sources to curb emissions and more reliable fossil fuels to deliver the baseload power our members

to communicate with one another as each cooperative in the state has its own set of interconnection requirements and policies determined by their management.

“If one of our members wants to get involved in renewable energy, we need to know about it so we can work with the member to make sure the process goes as smoothly as possible,” Raker said.

Chris Studer, chief member and public relations officer at East River Electric, echoed Raker’s comments and emphasized another important factor in open member-to-cooperative communication: safety.

“Just make sure to call your co-op. It’s a safety issue. Improperly installed equipment could put the homeowner’s property and co-op employees who work on the infrastructure at risk and that’s what we want to prevent.”

Studer said the state’s cooperatives will continue to play an active role as the renewable market evolves.

“At this stage in the emergence of the distributed generation market, the fixed costs that electric utilities have invested in their infrastructure needs to be taken under consideration as more members bring localized solar installations into the system,” he said.

“Other states have addressed this issue by establishing fixed charges for distributed generation owners in a way that was fair for everyone, while also setting up a system to streamline the resolution of any disputes that may arise. We’ll continue to serve as an advocate for all co-op consumers.”

were sun-setted and solar owners had to pay for maintaining the same grid that they depend on when their panels aren’t producing power, demand decreased.

In South Dakota, where there are no state government subsidies, investor-owned Black Hills Energy has followed Nevada’s lead by proposing that the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission institute tariffs on homeowners to compensate the power company for those fixed costs required to keep the system functioning for all ratepayers who use it.

Opponents argue that the tariffs could potentially obliterate the state’s growing solar market, which saw 462 MW installed through the first quarter of 2021.

As for South Dakota’s electric cooperatives, the system’s leaders paid close attention to the polar vortex event and the lessons learned in the aftermath. Robert Raker, public relations manager at

need. It’s like a parent trying to determine which is their favorite kid. We favor both of them because we need to help protect the planet but we also need to fulfill our obligation to serve our members whether it’s day or night, hot or cold, sunny or cloudy, windy or calm.”

Raker noted that co-ops have embraced the integration of renewable power into the state’s fuel mix. Electric co-ops were leaders in introducing wind power, which now makes up roughly 25 percent of the supply while 17 percent comes from hydroelectric dams along the Missouri River. Co-ops are also involved in the construction of Wild Springs solar farm, which is expected to go on-line next year as the largest solar array in the western part of the state.

Without a clear and complete set of rules in place for distributed generation, Raker said it’s paramount that members and their cooperatives work together



FEM Electric will be closed on Monday, July 5th, in observance of the Independence Day holiday



## Fireworks Safety Tips

- ★ Never allow **children** to play with or ignite fireworks.
- ★ **Never** try to **re-light** or **pick up** fireworks that have not ignited fully.
- ★ Keep a **bucket of water** or a **garden hose** handy in case of fire or other mishap.
- ★ Make sure fireworks are **legal** in your area before buying or using them.
- ★ Light fireworks **one at a time**, then **move back** quickly.
- ★ More Fireworks Safety Tips – [www.cpsc.gov/fireworks](http://www.cpsc.gov/fireworks)



*Board report continued from page 2*

Check register for the month of April 2021 contained information on checks #31489 through #31562, and all automatic payments/withdrawals for April 2021 totaling \$469,362.57.

The board reviewed CFC Integrity Fund letter with option to change election. No change.

Motion by Tom Thorpe, 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. Gary Bachman discussed NRECA Board Leadership Courses 974.1 and 953.1.

The board acknowledged the receipt of the Safety Meeting Minutes from April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, and Safety Committee Minutes from April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021, along with Employee Meeting minutes from May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Near misses, accident reports and investigations were also reviewed.

Adjourn: President Gary Bachman declared the meeting adjourned.



**Maintaining 2,040+ miles of line  
for our members!**

## Billboard gets update

Have you noticed that the FEM Electric billboard east of Ipswich has been changed?

The sign was updated and changed out the 3rd week of May. FEM makes every effort to give a new look to the billboard about every four years.

The message tries to focus on the member-owner, along with an informative statistic while focusing on the rural landscape. We try to keep it very simple so your attention is only diverted for a short period of time to glance at it.



## REGISTER TO WIN!

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

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

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



**July 4**  
Independence Day

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 19-20**  
**Aberdeen Arts in the Park**  
Melgaard Park, Aberdeen,  
SD, 605-226-1557

**JUNE 25-27**  
**Leola Rhubarb Festival**  
City-wide, Leola, SD,  
605-439-3234

**JUNE 30-JULY 4**  
**Annual Black Hills Roundup**  
300 Roundup Street, Belle  
Fourche, SD, 605-723-2010

**JULY 2-4**  
**Custer's Old Time Country  
Fourth of July**  
Various Locations, Custer,  
SD, 605-673-2244

**JULY 2-4**  
**Gold Camp Jubilee Days**  
Various Locations, Lead,  
SD, 605-584-1100

**JULY 2-4**  
**Sitting Bull Stampede Rodeo**  
Rodeo Grounds, Mobridge,  
SD, 605-845-2387

**JULY 4**  
**Fall River Fourth of July**  
Various Locations, Hot Springs,  
SD, 605-745-4140

**JULY 4**  
**Fourth of July Celebration**  
703 Main Street, Deadwood,  
SD, 800-344-8826

**JULY 4**  
**Fourth of July Parade**  
Kemp Avenue, Watertown,  
SD, 605-886-5814

**JULY 9-11, 16-18, 23-25**  
**Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant**  
43379 Rose Lane, De Smet,  
SD, 605-983-5251

**JULY 9-11**  
**Annual Hot Harley Nights**  
J&L Harley-Davidson, Sioux  
Falls, SD, 605-334-2721

**JULY 10-11**  
**50th Annual Brookings  
Summer Arts Festival**  
W Highway 14 and 1st  
Avenue, Brookings,  
SD, 605-692-2787

**JULY 16-17**  
**Aberdeen Senior Games**  
Aberdeen Parks and Rec,  
Aberdeen, SD, 605-216-2822

**JULY 16-17**  
**Storybook Land Festival**  
Wylie Park, Aberdeen,  
SD, 605-626-7015

**JULY 16-24**  
**Senior Summer Tournaments**  
Rapid City, SD, Contact Lindsey  
Meyers at 605-394-4175

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

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

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

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

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