

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## Crisp Breezes and Corn Mazes

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Rodeo Champions  
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# BOARD REPORT



The FEM Board of Directors meet with staff at the July meeting.

## July Board Report

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of FEM Electric was held in Ipswich, South Dakota at 8:30 a.m. on July 16, 2024, pursuant to due call and notice. It being determined that a quorum was present, President Gary Bachman called the meeting to order. Secretary Eric Odenbach kept the minutes of the meeting. The following directors were declared present by roll call: Gary Bachman, Paula Petersen, Kelly Melius, Tom Thorpe, Eric Odenbach. Operations Manager Sean Christiansen, Accounting Clerk Angie Sieh, Manager/CEO Scott Moore, Electrical Manager Ryan Holien.

Guest Employee - Crystal Thorson

**Changes to the agenda:** Remove work order inventories under 3C and Add Basin Voting Delegate under 6E.

**Changes/Additions to Minutes from June 21, 2024, meeting:** add [motion carried](#) to approval of Form 990 motion.

**Next Meeting Date:** After a review of calendars, directors agreed that the next regular meeting of the board would be on Tuesday, August 20, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at FEM Electric Board Room in Ipswich, South Dakota.

Discussion was held on September board meeting date due to known meeting

conflicts. The September board meeting date will be set at August board meeting.

Motion by Kelly Melius, seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to approve administrative business with noted changes.

Motion by Kelly Melius, seconded by Paula Petersen and carried to acknowledge manager and staff reports.

June 2024 Cyber Security Report was emailed to board and employees on July 17, 2024.

### Resolutions and Contracts:

Motion by Tom Thorpe, seconded by Paula Petersen and carried to approve Policy 414 Job Accidents with correction of directors to direct and current date.

Motion by Eric Odenbach seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to vote for Matt Hotzler, manager of HD Electric, to fill the manager/board seat on RESCO Board of Directors.

Motion by Paula Petersen seconded by Tom Thorpe and carried to approve Sonje Oban, Logan Grunstein, Layne Henrich, Barb Schaefer, and Dan Feldhaus as the 2025 Wellness Committee.

Motion by Kelly Melius seconded by Tom

Thorpe and carried to nominate Scott Moore as NRECA Voting Delegate at the NRECA Region 6 Regional meeting.

Motion by Kelly Melius seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to nominate Gary Bachman as Basin Electric Voting Delegate and Paula Petersen as Basin Electric Alternate Voting Delegate.

### Membership Business:

Board acknowledged membership business.

### New Memberships, Member Cancellations and Contracts:

**Disconnects:** Joel Hoffman, Bowdle, SD, Active Farm; Dakota Electronics, Aberdeen, SD, Small Commercial; Tim & Delarie Kessler, Leola, SD, Active Farm; Spring Creek HB Inc., Forbes, ND, Feedlot; Robert Pond, Ipswich, SD, Active Farm;

**Reconnects:** Lindsay & Chad Drewitz, Bowdle, SD, Active Farm; Dakota Electronics, LLC, Aberdeen, SD, Small Commercial; Plainview HB Inc, Leola, SD, Active Farm; Grand Valley HB Inc., Leola, SD, Feedlot; Robert A. Pond Living Trust, Ipswich, SD, Active Farm

**Contracts:** Lawrence Secker, Roscoe, SD, Residence; HRK Acres, LLC, Roscoe, SD, Grain Bin; Lee Hansen, Faulkton, SD, Grain Bin/Shop

**Retired Locations:** Web Water, Aberdeen, SD, Tower and Water Tower; Valerian Goetz, Onaka, SD, Active Farm/Shop

Motion by Tom Thorpe seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to approve three construction contracts for new service.

### Capital Credits:

**Estates - July 2024 - None**

**73 & Older - July 2024 - One = \$89.62**

Motion by Kelly Melius seconded by Paula Petersen and carried to set June 24,

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**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. Secretary/  
Treasurer  
Vaughn Beck, Attorney

**CEO/General Manager**

Scott Moore  
info@femelectric.coop

**Management Staff**

Sean Christiansen  
*Operations Manager*  
Ryan Holien  
*Electrical Department Manager*  
Rhonda Tuscherer  
*Director of Finance and  
Benefits*

**Editor's e-mail:**

oban@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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Design assistance by SDREA

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



**Scott Moore**  
**General Manager/CEO**

It may seem like a long time from now, but the FEM board of directors set June 24, 2025, as the date for FEM Electric's 2025 annual meeting. Don't worry, it will come quickly. Please put this date on your wall calendar, electronic reminder or any device that will remind you of the date.

The electric business is sometimes slow to react to trends and movement in the economy, but it seems increased costs usually show up on our balance sheet. As our power providers start to work on their long-range financial forecast the rumbling of increased purchased power cost is making noise in our local boardrooms. At this time, we are not sure what power cost increases we are looking at or if FEM Electric will be able to absorb this round of increases, but we will keep you informed. In 2023 64.3% of FEM's revenue was consumed by power costs. As many of you are aware electric generation has been under attack for decades and will continue to be driven by public and government policies.

FEM Electric is in a good position as a large portion of our electrical system, which is fairly new, was built when costs were much lower, and we were able to lock in our long-term loans at some record low interest. We have improved our reliability with new electrical transmission and substations both on the east and west sides of our electrical system. Locally, FEM Electric needs to stay focused on providing great customer service, as well as reliable, affordable, and safe electricity to every meter no matter what their electric usage is. I believe for our members and region to obtain strong economic growth FEM Electric needs reliable and affordable power.

We live in an ever-changing world no matter what occupation you participate in, and we must work hard to keep moving forward in a positive direction. Electricity is a must and FEM employees, and the board of directors will continue to monitor our operations and situations to keep power affordable to everyone, and not a luxury for a few.

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**FOLLOW US ON  
SOCIAL MEDIA**

@FEMEelectric on

@fem\_electric on

@FEMelectric on

We'll post outage updates, safety tips, news and more to keep our members informed on all the latest from FEM Electric.

**Statement Mailing Dates**

September 26, 2024 for September's energy  
October 25, 2024 for October's energy

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

# WHEN THUNDER ROARS, GO INDOORS

Each year in the United States, there are about 25 million cloud-to-ground lightning flashes and about 300 people struck by lightning. Of those struck, about 30 people are killed and others suffer lifelong disabilities. Most of these tragedies can be prevented. When thunderstorms threaten, get inside a building with plumbing and electricity, or a hard-topped metal vehicle!

The National Weather Service collects information on weather-related deaths to learn how to prevent these tragedies. Many lightning victims say they were “caught” outside in the storm and couldn’t get to a safe place. Other victims simply waited too long before seeking shelter. With proper planning, similar tragedies can be avoided.

Some people were struck because they went back outside too soon. Stay inside a safe building or vehicle for at least 30 minutes after you hear the last thunder. While 30 minutes may seem like a long time, it is necessary to be safe.

Finally, some victims were struck inside homes or buildings while they were using electrical equipment or corded phones. Others were in contact with plumbing, outside doors, or window frames. Avoid contact with these electrical conductors when a thunderstorm is nearby.

## AVOID THE LIGHTNING THREAT

- **Have a lightning safety plan.** Know where you’ll go for safety and ensure you’ll have enough time to get there.
- **Postpone activities.** Consider postponing activities if thunderstorms are forecasted.
- **Monitor the weather.** Once outside, look for signs of a developing or approaching thunderstorm such as towering clouds, darkening skies, or flashes of lightning.

- **Get to a safe place.** If you hear thunder, even a distant rumble, seek safety immediately. Fully enclosed buildings with wiring and plumbing are best. A hard-topped metal vehicle with the windows closed is also safe. Stay inside until 30 minutes after the last rumble of thunder. Sheds, picnic shelters, tents or covered porches do NOT protect you from lightning.
- **If you hear thunder, don’t use a corded phone except in an emergency.** Cordless phones and cell phones are safe to use.
- **Keep away from electrical equipment and plumbing.** Lightning can travel through the wiring and plumbing if your building is struck. Don’t take a bath or shower, or wash dishes during a storm.

*Source: National Weather Service*



### Power Line Safety “Don’t Fly Kites Close to Power Lines”

#### Lillee Pannell, Age 11

Lillee Pannell cautions kite flyers to be careful around power lines. Great advice, Lillee! Hobie’s parents are Scottie and Kimberly Pannell, members of Southeastern Electric Cooperative.

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 SWEETS

## SUMMER FRUIT TART

### Ingredients:

1 refrigerated pie crust  
1 egg white, lightly beaten  
1/3 cup sugar  
2 tbsps. cornstarch  
1/2 tsp. cinnamon  
1/4 tsp. ginger  
2 cups sliced peeled peaches,  
(about 3 peaches)  
1 cup blueberries  
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

### Method

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Prepare crust as directed on package. Place on foil-lined 12-inch pizza pan. If necessary, press out any folds or creases. Brush crust with about 1/2 of the beaten egg white. Mix sugar, cornstarch, cinnamon and ginger in medium bowl. Add fruit and vanilla; toss gently. Spoon into center of crust, spreading to within 2 inches of edges. Fold 2-inch edge of crust up over fruit, pleating or folding crust as needed. Brush crust with remaining egg white. Bake 20 minutes or until crust is golden brown. Cool slightly before serving.

**McCormick**

## RHUBARB PIE

### Crust

1-2 cups flour  
1/2 stick butter or margarine  
1/4 cup water

Add ingredients and knead to complete a pie crust. Amounts will vary due to humidity. Knead dough into pie pan and poke holes into the bottom as needed. You may make creative edges as you wish, however it is not necessary.

### Pie

3 tbsps. butter or margarine  
1 cup sugar  
3 eggs, separated  
2 tbsps. flour  
1/8 tsp. salt  
2 1/2 cups rhubarb  
Smucker's Caramel Sundae  
Syrup

Soften butter or margarine and stir together with the sugar, egg yolks, flour and salt. Beat egg whites until stiff. Add rhubarb and fold in the egg whites. Add the filling to the 8-inch unbaked pie crust. You may add a drizzle of Smucker's sundae syrup for additional flavoring before baking. Bake in oven set at 400 degrees until golden brown. You may also add more Caramel syrup to pie after baking for ultimate effect.

**Lisa Soukup (Kummer)  
Tea, S.D.**

## PEACH DELIGHT

### Ingredients:

1/2 cup butter, melted  
1 3/4 cups flour  
Pinch of salt  
2 tbsps. sugar  
2 cups water  
2 cups sugar  
4 tbsps. cornstarch  
3 oz. package peach jello  
1 tbsp. butter  
10 fresh peaches

### Method

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine butter, flour, salt and 2 tbsps. sugar. Mix and pat in 9x13 inch pan which has been sprayed with Pam. Bake for 15 minutes. Let cool when done baking. Combine 2 cups sugar and 2 cups water. Whisk in 4 tbsps. cornstarch until smooth. Cook until thickened in the microwave – stirring often. Remove from microwave and add 1 tbsp. butter and package of peach jello (do not add any water). Stir until dissolved and let cool. While cooling, dip fresh peaches in hot water and plunge in cold water bath. Remove skins and pits. Place back in cold water until all peaches are peeled. Drain peaches, slice into bite size pieces and mix into cooled peach glaze. Carefully pour the glaze over the crust and chill until firmly set. May be served with whip cream. You can substitute strawberry jello and sliced strawberries in place of the peaches. This makes a delicious cool summer dessert.

**Shirley Fletcher  
Rapid City, S.D.**

Please send your favorite 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 2024. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

# BOARD REPORT CONTINUED

Continued from pg 2

2025 as the date for FEM Electric's 2025 annual meeting.

Board acknowledged receipt of following financial business.

**Financial Business:** The board acknowledged reviewing the following financial information: The check register for the month of June 2024 contained information on checks #34434 through #34531 and all automatic payments/withdrawals for June 2024 totaling \$1,458,393.28.

Board acknowledged receipt of June 2024 financials.

Board acknowledged RUS AA45 Loan Funds FR1 transfer in the amount of \$575,000.00. Documentation was signed.

The board reviewed the quarterly budget projections and TIER Review.

Motion by Eric Odenbach seconded by Tom Thorpe and carried to approve board expense reports and attorney fees.

**Legal Update:** Moore updated the board on IRS notices that Attorney Vaughn Beck is working on.

**Meeting Report:**

East River monthly video was watched and report given by Gary Bachman.

Tom Thorpe reported on SDREA board meeting and activities within the association.

Safety meeting minutes from June 17 and employee meeting minutes from June 24, 2024, were acknowledged.

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



**Continued from pg 3**

If you are looking to add any electrical load yet this fall or in 2025 it is never too early to contact Sean Christiansen or Ryan Holien 605-426-6891.

## YOUTH TOUR HIGHLIGHT

FEM Electric sent three students to represent FEM on the 2024 Youth Tour trip to Washington D.C. Jessica Hadrick, Chase Melius and Hannah Beyers made the trip in June, where they toured many historic sites, the US capital, and learned about the importance of political involvement.



**HAPPY LABOR DAY**

Wishing you a Labor Day filled with relaxation and appreciation for all your hard work.

FEM Electric will be closed Monday, September 2nd.

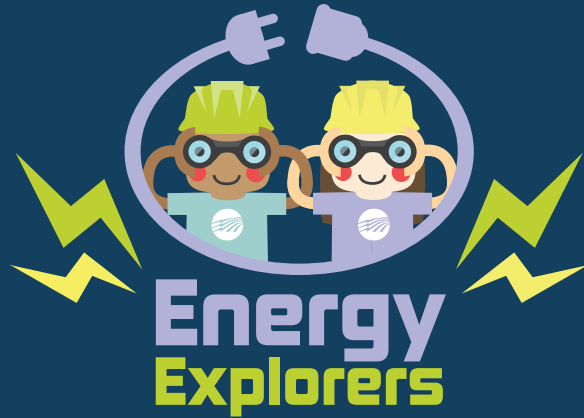
**SEPT 02**

# PREPAREDNESS MONTH WORD SEARCH

Did you know September is National Preparedness Month? There are several ways you and your family can be prepared for an emergency.

Read the tips below, then find and circle the bolded words in the puzzle.

*(Use the word bank as a guide.)*



## PREPAREDNESS TIPS:

Keep a list of emergency **phone numbers** in a location that's easy to find.

Learn about different types of **emergency alerts** and understand what they mean.

Make an emergency **kit** that includes items like flashlights, batteries, water, non-perishable food and a First Aid Kit.

Designate a **safe area** in your home in the event of a severe storm. This should be an area in the center of the home, away from windows.

Make sure **smoke alarms** are installed on every floor of your home and outside bedrooms. Test alarms every month to ensure they're working properly.



**WORD BANK:** phone numbers, emergency, alerts, kit, safe area, smoke alarms





# CRISP BREEZES AND CORN MAZES

A broken-down 1950s-style Chevrolet pickup welcomes visitors to the Back Forty Beef corn maze. *Photo submitted by Back Forty Beef.*

## Celebrating Autumn on the Family Farm

**Frank Turner**

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

The first signs of autumn sweep across the plains as daylight dwindles and treetops wither into amber. For some, the nostalgia of fall is evoked by the first crisp breeze at a football game or the taste of a freshly picked apple from the orchard. But for Clint and Kelly Brandlee, Lake Region Electric members living in rural Pierpont, the magic of the harvest season begins with the opening of their family-owned corn maze.

The Brandlee family homesteaded their land in 1886 on the western edge of the Coteau Hills, an area characterized by rolling hills, fertile ground and native pastures. With deep roots extending through five generations of ranching and farming, Clint and Kelly's daughters, Jaycee

and Kylie, represent the sixth generation on the farm.

Over the years, the family has maintained their commitment to traditional farming values while embracing innovation. In 2020, Clint and Kelly

transformed their operation into a direct-to-consumer agriculture business, launching Back Forty Beef, LLC. Their new venture allowed them to provide locally raised beef at a fair price while giving customers the opportunity to see



Back Forty Beef hosts a number of family-friendly events including duck races. *Photo submitted by Back Forty Beef.*



how their animals and crops are raised, from farm to table.

“During the pandemic, people were looking for a direct source for their beef, and we wanted to provide that,” Kelly said.

Through Back Forty Beef, Clint and Kelly supplied their area with local beef and discovered new ways to engage their community. Just last year, the two started an annual tradition by planting a 12-acre, agriculture-themed corn maze as a way to bring something new to their part of the state. In just a year, the maze has become a hub for families to come together and celebrate agriculture and the harvest season.

“We wanted to do something really fun and get families outside in northeastern South Dakota during the fall, and what better way to do that than through a corn maze?” Kelly said. “It’s a way for us to share our passion for agriculture and our story. As a population, we are getting two to three generations removed from the farm. There is less of a connection to rural life, so any time we can provide people an opportunity to get out onto the farm and learn something, that benefits the whole of agriculture.”

This fall, Clint and Kelly are again inviting their surrounding communities to visit their homestead and explore this year’s newly designed maze. The maze is set to be open to the public every weekend after



A bird’s-eye view of last year’s Back Forty Beef corn maze. Photo submitted by Back Forty Beef.

Labor Day to the last week of October. The theme is pollinators, featuring images of a corn cob, flower, bee and barn. Several twists and turns will be embellished with fun facts about pollinators and crop production in South Dakota, making it an educational experience for all ages.

Along with the corn maze, Back Forty Beef is planning to incorporate other family-friendly activities, including duck races, farm animal exhibits, farm basketball, a straw mountain slide and more. Back Forty Beef will also host a farm store where customers can buy everything from local pumpkins to their homegrown beef.

Other local businesses are also joining

in the fun. A different local food truck is scheduled to attend each weekend during the open season, and local businesses are offering small discounts and deals for participants who complete the maze.

“There are checkpoints in the maze, and each checkpoint is equipped with a fun fact and a partnered local business,” said Kelly. “For example, Dairy Queen is offering a buy one, get one free offer for those who hole punch their card at their checkpoint and read the fun fact about pollinators and production agriculture.”

Clint and Kelly’s efforts to engage the community have resulted in a community that engages with their business. Like many other direct-to-consumer operations, Back Forty Beef has its own website and online shop for its brand of beef, dairy products, merchandise and even hand-poured tallow candles. The Brandlee family has also found success through their beef subscription club where boxes are regularly delivered to the doorsteps of customers every month. Whether it’s through the corn maze or the subscription beef boxes, Kelly said the local community has fully embraced Back Forty Beef.

“We had a lot of people who attended that had never done a corn maze before, so a lot of people were excited to do something new and different,” said Kelly. “We had a great turnout to our maze last year, and that’s why we decided to do it again.”



Owner-operators of Back Forty Beef, Kelly and Clint Brandlee and their two daughters, Jaycee and Kylie. Photo submitted by Back Forty Beef.

# GO ABOVE AND BEYOND FOR A SAFE HARVEST

### Anne Prince, NRECA

Modern farming often relies on data and equipment with GPS and auto-guidance systems. However, even with these modern conveniences, farm workers must remain vigilant. That's because farming is considered one of the most dangerous jobs.

Massive machinery is indispensable to farming, but the same impressive size, height and extensions make them particularly vulnerable to contacting power lines. That's why staying alert, focused and knowledgeable about potential hazards and safety procedures is crucial.

During a busy harvest season, the familiar sights around the farm can easily fade into the background, and farm workers can overlook the power lines overhead. However, failing to notice them can lead to deadly accidents.

### 360 Awareness:

Awareness of your surroundings, around, above and below, and planning safe equipment routes can significantly reduce the risk of accidents. Even with GPS and auto-steering, it's imperative that farm workers keep a close eye on the equipment's location and are ready to take action if necessary.

Exposed underground powerlines, defective wiring in farm buildings and extension cords are also hazards. Grain bins can pose a potential danger as well. The National Electrical Safety Code requires power lines to be *at least* 18 feet above the highest point on any grain bin with which portable augers or other portable filling equipment are used. If you plan to install new grain bins or you're concerned about the proximity of power lines to existing grain bins, contact our office at 605-426-6891 or 1-800-587-5880.

### Smart Harvest Safety Tips

To ensure a safer harvest season, SafeElectricity.org recommends the following tips to avoid electrical accidents on the farm:

- **Exercise caution near power lines.** Be careful when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- **Use spotters when operating large machinery near power lines.** Ensure the spotters do not touch the machinery while it is moving near power lines.
- **Lower equipment extensions, portable augers or elevators before moving or transporting equipment.** Do not raise equipment, such as ladders, poles or rods into power lines. Remember that non-metallic materials like lumber, tree limbs, ropes and hay can conduct electricity, especially when damp, dusty or dirty.
- **Never attempt to raise or move power lines to clear a path.** Doing so could result in electric shock or death.
- **Avoid using metal poles inside bins.** Don't use metal poles to break up bridged grain inside or around bins.
- **Hire qualified electricians.** Ensure that qualified electricians handle work on drying equipment and other farm electrical systems.

While rare, the only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire. However, if it happens, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the machinery and the ground at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

*Anne Prince writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56% of the nation's landscape.*

# 5 Tips for a Safe Harvest

Electrical safety during harvest season requires vigilance and proactive measures. Follow these tips to reduce the risk of electrical accidents.

- 1. Maintain at least a 10-foot distance from power lines when operating equipment like grain augers, elevators and other tall machinery.
- 2. Use a spotter to navigate safely around power lines and other electrical equipment.
- 3. Ensure all farm workers are trained on electrical safety procedures.
- 4. Regularly inspect all electrical equipment and machinery for signs of wear and damage.
- 5. Keep first aid kits and emergency contact numbers in an easily accessible location.



# TWO YOUTH ATTEND SDREA YOUTH EXCURSION FROM FEM



Two brothers, Noah and Aaron Ingerson, were selected to represent FEM for the 2024 Youth Excursion. This trip is hosted once a year, and students are given the opportunity to tour North Dakota's state capital and learn where their electricity comes from.

Basin Electric, FEM's power generation provider, hosted the students while they toured the Great Plains Synfuel Plant, Freedom Coal Mine and Antelope Valley Station Power Plant to see where South Dakota's power is generated.

We hope they had fun and learned about how their electricity is produced!





# RODEO CHAMPIONS

## Short Go Finalists Win Touchstone Energy Shirts During the State Competition in Ft. Pierre

**Jocelyn Johnson**  
jocelyn.johnson@sdrea.coop

South Dakota's electric cooperatives united in celebrating rodeo on June 15 during the state high school competition in Ft. Pierre, S.D. Cowboys and cowgirls competed in events that mimic the daily chores of a typical rancher, racing to place in the Short Go.

Short Go state finalists earned the coveted Touchstone Energy shirts that mark them as the top competitors of a beloved rural pastime. After a season of competing, the visual representation of wearing this shirt is

more than a fashion statement.

"These shirts are almost like a trophy," said Kylee Ellerton, a member of Black Hills Electric Cooperative in Custer, S.D. "It's something you can keep and look back on to remember."

Ellerton earned the Short Go shirt, sponsored by Touchstone Energy electric cooperatives. She won 10th place in goat tying at state.

"My grandpa and dad grew up rodeoing," Ellerton said. "So, I got started in rodeo pretty young."

High school rodeo events began in 1949, and by 1951, South Dakota was among five states that established the National High School Rodeo

Mataya Ward keeps her eyes on a goat she tied during the Short Go.  
Photo credit: Charles Minor

Association.

It's a shared heritage for many in the state, and electric cooperatives have a 22-year history of celebrating rodeo by sponsoring the Touchstone Energy Short Go Shirt program. More than \$150,000 has been given to this program since 2002, and these funds are used to honor the contestants who make it to the Short Go round



Photo credit: Charles Minor



Kailey Deknikker rounds a Touchstone Energy barrel during the state Short Go in barrel racing. Photo credit: 4-C Photography

of the state finals competition in their respective events.

Kailey Deknikker, member of Southeastern Electric Cooperative in Lennox, S.D., has a passion for rodeo and wishes to go as far as she can in the sport. She will be attending Mitchell Technical College this fall for business management and joining

the college rodeo team in barrel racing and pole bending.

“The shirt shows that your hard work paid off,” explained Deknikker after placing in the Short Go and winning a Touchstone Energy Short Go shirt. “It shows your accomplishment.”

Decknikker placed 7th in barrel

racing after running a time of 18.246 seconds in the 1st Go, 17.802 seconds in the 2nd Go, and 18.078 seconds in the Short Go.

Leighton Sander, a member of Black Hills Electric Cooperative in Custer, S.D., won 6th place in the bareback riding Short Go competition. Sander works with his family on a cow/calf operation outside of Custer, S.D.

“There’s some pride that goes with wearing that Short Go shirt,” said Sander. “You go to a rodeo and see a couple people wearing those shirts outside of the high school season, and you think, ‘they must have been good enough to make it to the Short Go – I better watch that guy.’”

Sander explained that his draw to one of the toughest events in the sport of rodeo is the adrenaline rush. He hopes to use his bareback riding skills in future horse training efforts while noting, “being able to stick to a horse is important.”

“I don’t know how to explain it,” Sander said. “It’s super scary before you start, but once you climb into that chute and they open up the gate, it’s like eating your favorite cake.”



Finalists wear Touchstone Energy Short Go shirts. Photo credit: Charles Minor

# GENERATOR SAFETY

## BEYOND OPENING THE BOX: TAKE STEPS TO OPERATE A GENERATOR SAFELY

When the electricity goes out, your initial thought might be to run to the local hardware or big box store and buy a generator. However, using a generator should not be taken lightly, since it can be dangerous and even life-threatening if used incorrectly. There are several steps you should take before ever starting one up.

### But first, homework

Before purchasing a generator, the first step is to research the best option for your home and budget. The second, and more important step, is to educate yourself on how to use one safely.

Homeowners can choose from two types of generators: standby and portable. Standby generators are installed directly into the home's electrical system and are typically powered by natural gas or propane. These generators start automatically when the power goes out.

A portable generator is usually gas powered and is, well, portable. You can power appliances by plugging them into it. Your generator should have more output than the wattage of the electronics plugged into it. This way, the generator can create the extra electricity it takes for the initial power surge. Make sure there is nothing plugged into the generator when turning it on.

### Safety tips

When you refuel a portable generator, make sure the engine is cool. Keep children and pets away from the generator, as it could burn them.

Generators pose electrical risks, especially when operated during inclement weather. Use a generator only when necessary during wet conditions. Protect the generator by operating it under an open, canopy-like structure and on a dry surface where water cannot form puddles or drain under it.

### Generators can be deadly

Carbon monoxide fumes emitted by the gasoline

engine on the generator can be deadly. Always operate your portable generator outdoors at least 20 feet from your home.

Misusing a portable generator or using a standby generator that is not installed correctly (and does not meet the electrical code) can cause backfeed, which puts others in danger. Backfeed happens when a generator feeds electricity back through a home's electrical system and meter into the power lines. To prevent this dangerous scenario, standby generators should have a transfer switch installed by a licensed professional. Do not plug a portable generator directly into a home outlet or electrical system. Instead, use a properly rated extension cord to plug appliances into an outlet on the generator for power.

### When not in use

Operate your generator once a month for 10 minutes to ensure it is running properly. Keep your generator well maintained and follow all manufacturer's instructions. Have a standby generator installed in an easily accessible, weatherproof area.

For more electrical safety information, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).

**WHAT IS backfeed?** Backfeed happens when a person connects their portable generator to a wall outlet, which allows power to flow in reverse – that is, the alternate power source feeds energy back through their home's electrical system, their meter and back into the power lines.

**Avoid deadly backfeed and help keep lineworkers safe.** Potentially deadly backfeed can also happen with permanently installed generators that are not used or installed correctly. They should be wired into your home by a qualified electrician, who will install either an automatic or manual transfer switch, depending on the generator. The job of this switch is to transfer a power source safely from its primary source to a backup source.

To keep utility crews safe, never plug a portable generator directly into a wall outlet or electrical system, and ensure transfer switches are professionally installed and working properly. Electric lineworkers thank you in advance.

Learn more at: [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org)

# MORE THAN A FEW CANS OF SOUP...

Which Foods Are In Your Emergency Kit?



## THE FOOD IN YOUR EMERGENCY KIT SHOULD:

- Have a long storage life.
- Require little or no cooking, water or refrigeration.
- Include nourishment for infants and toddlers if applicable.
- Meet special dietary needs.
- Include the needs of pets if you have them.

## WATER AND PREP ITEMS

Include in your supplies:

- One gallon of water per person per day to last at least three days.
- A manual can opener and cooking supplies.
- Indoor warming methods, such as chafing dishes and fondue pots.

## EMERGENCY STASH

Plan for several days' worth of food for each person in your household. Edible items could include:

- Canned meats, fruits and vegetables.
- Grains, such as crackers and multigrain cereals.
- Protein or fruit bars.
- Dried fruit.
- Peanut butter.
- Canned soups, meats and beans.
- Powdered milk.
- Dried meat/jerky.
- Oatmeal or breakfast bars.

**BE PREPARED TO KEEP THOSE YOU LOVE SAFE, NOURISHED AND HYDRATED DURING AN EMERGENCY.**

Learn more at:  

[Safe Electricity.org](https://www.safeelectricity.org)

Sources: FEMA and CDC

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Now is the time to schedule annual maintenance for your home's heating system. During fall months, HVAC technicians are typically less busy, making this an excellent time for maintenance and any necessary repairs before the winter months.

A qualified technician can clean filters, check for leaks and ensure all system components are working efficiently to keep you home cozy and warm when the temperatures begin to drop.



## 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: \_\_\_\_\_



Photo Credit: SDStateFair

### **SEPT. 20-22** **South Dakota Festival of Books**

Various Locations  
Brookings, SD  
605-688-6113

### **SEPT. 27-29** **Coal Springs Threshing Bee and Antique Show**

Meadow, SD  
605-788-2299

### **OCT. 5-6** **Run Crazy Horse Marathons**

Crazy Horse  
605-390-6137  
www.runcrazyhorse.com

### **OCT. 5-6** **Magic Needlers Quilt Show**

Codington County Extension Complex  
Watertown, SD  
605-881-3273

### **OCT. 5-6** **The Black Market**

Saturday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Sunday 10 a.m.-3 p.m.  
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds  
Expo Building  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-332-6004

### **OCT. 6** **Giant Pumpkin Festival**

Bentley Memorial Building  
Bison, SD  
Enter Pumpkins by 11:30 a.m.  
605-244-5475

### **OCT. 10-11** **Rural Women Conference**

The Lodge of Deadwood  
Deadwood, SD  
SouthDakotaWomenInAg.com

### **AUG. 28-SEPT. 2** **South Dakota State Fair**

7 a.m.-8 p.m.  
Huron, SD  
www.SDStateFair.com

### **SEPT. 1** **Studebaker Car Show**

10 a.m.-3 p.m.  
Custer, SD  
605-673-2244

### **SEPT. 2** **Hidewood Valley Steam Threshing Show**

Starts at 1 p.m.  
Clear Lake, SD  
605-881-8405

### **SEPT. 6-7** **Ribs, Rods & Rock n' Roll**

Vermillion, SD  
www.sdbbq.us

### **SEPT. 8** **Homesteader Day**

1-4 p.m.  
Valley Springs, SD  
Beaver Creek Nature Area

### **SEPT. 12-15** **South Dakota Film Festival**

Downtown Capitol Theatre  
Aberdeen, SD  
605-226-5494

### **SEPT. 13-14** **Black Hills Polkapalooza**

Each Night at 4-10 p.m.  
Palmer Gulch  
Hill City, SD  
605-574-2525

### **SEPT. 13-14** **Holiday Arts Fall Craft Show**

Davison County Fairgrounds  
Mitchell, SD  
605-359-2049

### **SEPT. 14-15** **2024 Kuchen & Harvest Festival**

Delmont, SD  
605-928-3792

### **SEPT. 17** **EV Expo**

W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds  
Sioux Falls, SD

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.

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