

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Forecasting the Future

**Basin Electric's Vision
for Reliable Energy**

Pages 8-9

**Wind Energy
Association Changes
Name, Advocates For
All Renewables**

Pages 12-13



November 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 November 19, 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, Tom Thorpe, Eric Odenbach, Kelly Melius. Electrical Manager Ryan Holien, Director of Finance and Benefits Rhonda Tuscherer, Manager/CEO Scott Moore.

Guest Employee: Josh Weigel

Changes to the agenda: None

Changes/Additions to Minutes from October 15, 2024, meeting: None

Next Meeting Date: After a review of calendars, directors agreed that the next regular meeting of the board would be on Tuesday, December 17, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at FEM Electric Board Room in Ipswich, South Dakota.

Motion by Tom Thorpe, seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to approve administrative business.

Motion by Kelly Melius, seconded by

Tom Thorpe and carried to acknowledge manager and staff reports.

Motion by Paula Petersen seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to approve:

Work Order Inventories:	
WO #615:	\$117,55.54
WO #616:	\$62,247.04
<u>Total:</u>	<u>\$74,002.58</u>

October 2024 Cyber Security Report was acknowledged.

Resolutions and Contracts:

Motion by Kelly Melius seconded by Tom Thorpe and carried to nominate Gary Bachman as SDREA Annual Meeting voting delegate and Eric Odenbach as SDREA alternate voting delegate.

Membership Business:

Board acknowledged membership business.

New Memberships, Member

Cancellations and Contracts:

Disconnects: David & Margaret Braun, Ipswich, SD, Active Farm & Pasture Pump; Josh & Makayla Mitzel, Rapid City, SD, Residence; Jeanette McCloud, Cresbard, SD, Grain Bin & Vacant Farm; Lorraine Jung, Aberdeen, SD, Active Farm

Reconnects: Dustin & Michelle Braun, Ipswich, SD, Active Farm & Pasture

Pump; James & Lisa Geier Jr., Bowdle, SD, Residence; Scott McCloud, Cresbard, SD, Grain Bin & Vacant Farm; Jack & Patricia Fuhrmann, Greeley, CO, Active Farm
Contracts: Jason Braun, Wetonka, SD, Grain Bin

Retired Locations: None

Motion by Paula Petersen seconded by Tom Thorpe and carried to approve one construction contracts for new service.

Motion by Kelly Melius seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to sign one Interconnection Distributed Resource Service Contract – Nature Conservancy.

Capital Credits:

Estates – November 2024 – one = \$1,105.13

73 & Older – November 2024 – one = \$1,710.15

Board reviewed the Unclaimed Property Listing.

Board acknowledged receipt of following financial business.

Financial Business: The board acknowledged reviewing the following financial information: The check register for the month of October 2024 contained information on checks #34755 through #34819 and all automatic payments/withdrawals for October 2024 totaling \$565,817.31.

Board acknowledged receipt of October 2024 financials.

Angie Sieh and Sonje Oban joined the meeting as staff presented 2025 Preliminary Budget to the board of directors. Staff will bring 2025 budget back for approval during December board meeting.

Continued on page 10

**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.

Subscription information: As part of their membership, FEM members devote \$1.00 from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$15 annually. (USPS 189-720) Periodical Postage Paid at Ipswich, SD 57451 and at additional offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to FEM Electric Cooperative Connections, Box 468, Ipswich, SD 57451-0468.

How to contact us:

FEM Electric
PO Box 468
Ipswich, SD 57451
Phone: 1-800-587-5880 or
605-426-6891
E-mail: info@femelectric.coop
Website:
www.femelectric.coop
Design assistance by SDREA

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



Scott Moore
General Manager/CEO

I hope everyone has a happy and safe Christmas season, and we wish you a prosperous 2025.

In the electric industry we are seeing requests for extremely large loads. In the urban areas it is requested to serve large shipping or manufacturing plants, and in the rural area it seems we are a magnet for data storage, AI (artificial intelligent) facilities, and crypto mining facilities. All these facilities have different needs except for one similarity: they all need extremely large amounts of power.

The South Dakota PUC held an informational meeting November 26, 2024, to discuss and get information on these loads and what requirements will be needed to serve this industry in South Dakota. Within the electric cooperative family, and all energy providers, the topic of these large information centers has been the top subject of conversation for over three years. As FEM Electric members probably know we don't move fast and that may be the difference

between receiving power from an energy provider that wants to make a profit and a cooperative that wants to serve our members with safe, affordable, reliable power every day and for many years to come. Many of these conversations start at 10 to 20 megawatts, and usually move to 50 megawatts before the phone conversation ends. On page 6, you can see the difference between current loads and projected load requirements for some of these new services.

The Basin board of directors approved the retirement of Basin Capital Credits to East River in the amount of \$6,027,046.56. The East River board of directors approved returning the total amount to their distribution members, which FEM Electric is. The FEM Electric portion is \$215,700.10, and in the past your board usually approves returning these capital credits to you the members. FEM Electric management and staff will be asking for direction on these funds early in 2025.

FEM Electric is looking to finish 2024

Continued on page 6

**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

January 28, 2025 for January's energy
February 27, 2025 for February's energy

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

Snow Safety

There is no end to the terms for “really big snowstorm,” and those terms come in handy, particularly in America’s snowiest cities. Just check out these average annual snowfall totals in towns of at least 10,000 residents, according to the Farmer’s Almanac:

Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan – 119.3 inches
Syracuse, New York – 114.3 inches
Juneau, Alaska – 93.6 inches
Flagstaff, Arizona – 87.6 inches
Duluth, Minnesota – 83.5 inches
Erie, Pennsylvania – 80.9 inches
Burlington, Vermont – 80.2 inches
Muskegon, Michigan – 79.3 inches
Casper, Wyoming – 77 inches
Portland, Maine – 70 inches

But with really big snow storms – and even everyday, run-of-the-mill snowfalls – comes a risk of death by shoveling. Nationwide, snow shoveling is responsible for thousands of injuries and as many as 100 deaths each year.

So, why so many deaths? Shoveling snow is just another household chore, right?

Not really, says the American Heart Association. While most people won’t have a problem, shoveling snow can put some people at risk of heart attack. Sudden exertion, like moving hundreds of pounds of snow after being sedentary for several months, can put a big strain on the heart. Pushing a heavy snow blower also can cause injury.

And, there’s the cold factor. Cold weather can increase heart rate and blood pressure. It can make blood clot more easily and constrict arteries, which decreases blood supply. This is true even in healthy people. Individuals over the age of 40 or who are relatively inactive should be particularly careful.

National Safety Council recommends the following tips to shovel safely:

- Do not shovel after eating or while smoking.
- Take it slow and stretch out before you begin.
- Shovel only fresh, powdery snow; it’s lighter.
- Push the snow rather than lifting it.
- If you do lift it, use a small shovel or only partially fill the shovel.

- Lift with your legs, not your back.
- Do not work to the point of exhaustion.
- Know the signs of a heart attack, stop immediately and call 911 if you’re experiencing any of them; every minute counts.

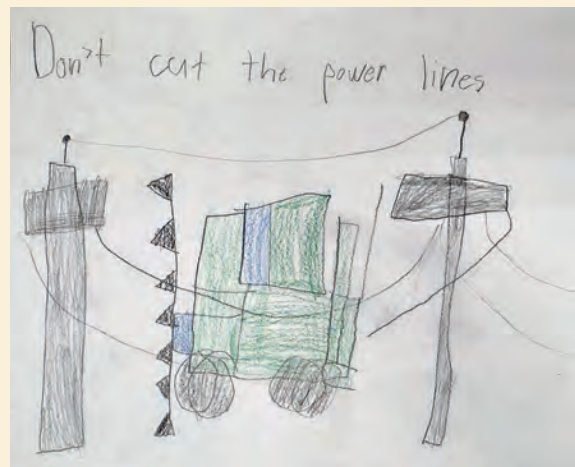
Don’t pick up that shovel without a doctor’s permission if you have a history of heart disease. A clear driveway is not worth your life.

Snow Blower Safety

In addition to possible heart strain from pushing a heavy snow blower, stay safe with these tips:

- If the blower jams, turn it off.
- Keep your hands away from the moving parts.
- Be aware of the carbon monoxide risk of running a snow blower in an enclosed space.
- Add fuel outdoors, before starting, and never add fuel when it is running.
- Never leave it unattended when it is running.

Source: National Safety Council



“Don’t Cut the Power Lines!”

David Raak, Age 7 ½

David Raak cautions readers to be careful when working around power lines. Thank you for your picture, David! David’s parents are Nathaniel and Katie Raak, members of Central 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.

Crockpot GREATNESS

CROCKPOT CORN

Ingredients:

3 16-oz. packages frozen corn
8 oz. cream cheese
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter
2 tbsps. sugar
2 tbsps. water

Method

Place corn in crockpot. Cut cream cheese and butter into small cubes. Add cream cheese, butter, sugar and water to corn. Stir. Cook on high for 45 minutes. Stir. Turn to low and cook for three more hours, stirring occasionally.

Elaine Rieck
Harrisburg, S.D.

CROCKPOT BAKED BEANS

Ingredients:

2 cans black beans
2 cans red beans (drained)
2 cans great northern
1 can baked beans with brown sugar
1 lb. diced ham
1 heaping tsp. mustard (regular)
2 full tbsps. ketchup
Garlic powder (optional)
1 small onion (chopped)

Method

Mix all ingredients in crockpot except ham. Cook 2 hours on high. Mix in ham and cook another hour on high. Enjoy!

Rose Tucker
Hot Springs, S.D.

CHICKEN FIESTA SLOW COOKER RECIPE

Ingredients:

2 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breasts
1 package slow cooker fiesta chicken seasoning mix
2 cans (14 1/2 oz. each) diced tomatoes, undrained
1 can (15 3/4 oz.) whole kernel corn, drained
1 can (15 oz.) black beans, drained and rinsed

Method

Place chicken in slow cooker. Mix seasoning, tomatoes, corn and beans until blended. Pour over chicken. Cover. Cook eight hours on LOW or four hours on HIGH. Remove chicken from slow cooker. Shred chicken, using two forks. Return chicken to slow cooker; mix well. Serve over cooked rice with assorted toppings, if desired.

McCormick.com

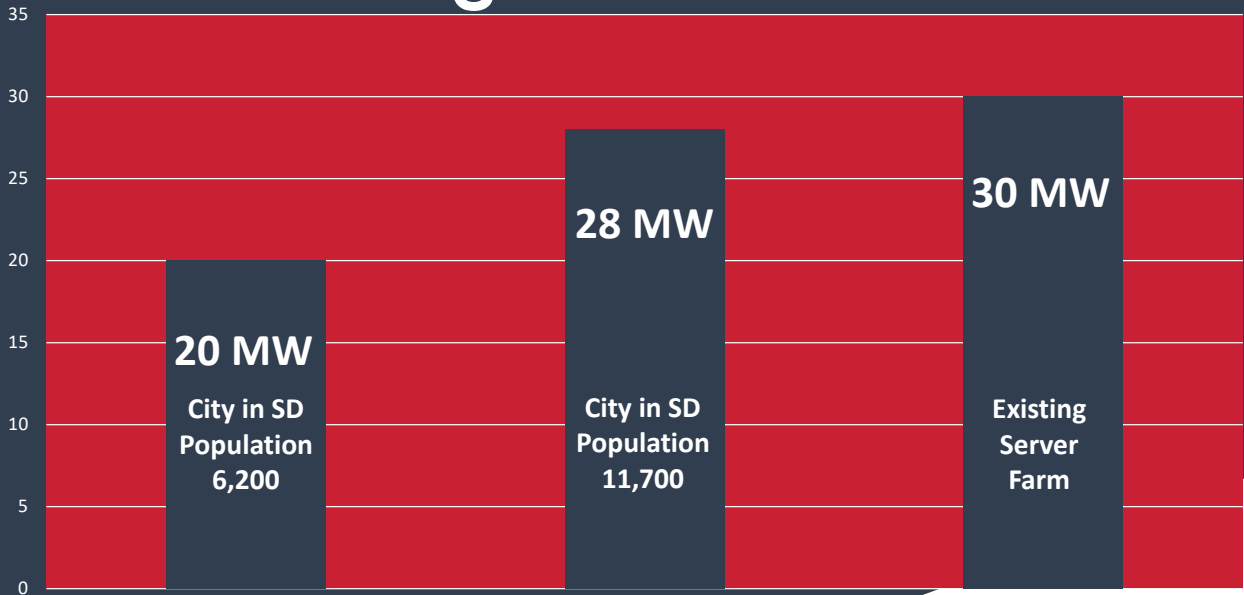
Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2024. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Manager's Article Continued from page 3

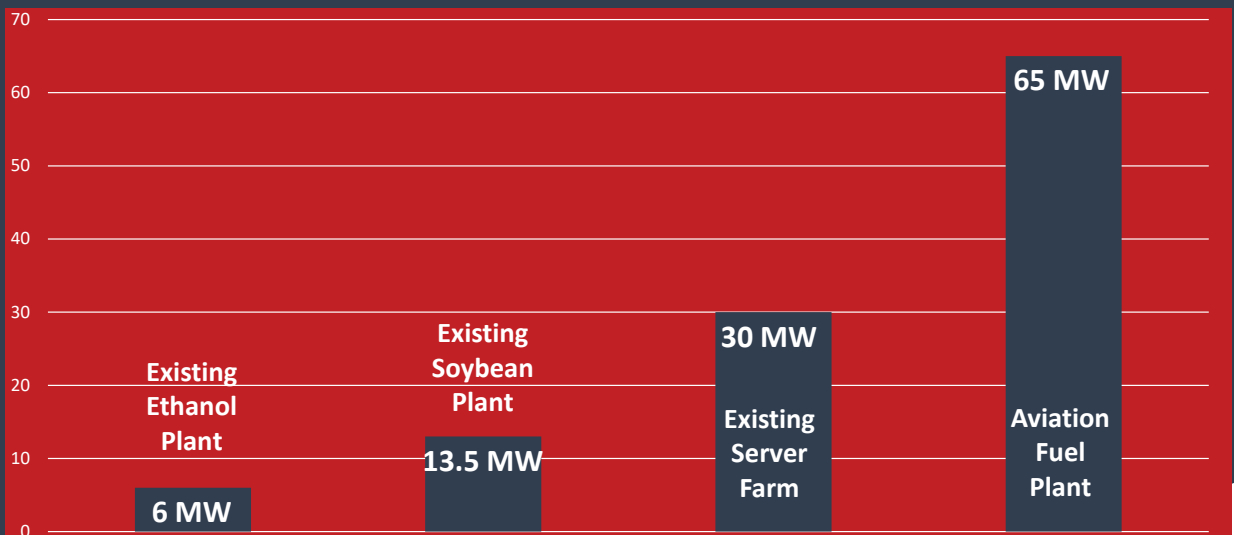
with strong financials and we are looking at board approval for the 2025 budget at the December board meeting. The FEM Electric operations department has had a good year completing projects along with building new electric services and upgrading existing services. The department still has some maintenance and poles to complete and as weather allows, they will continue working to get this work completed.

As you plan your 2025 additions and upgrades to your operations, please remember to contact Ryan Holien or Sean Christiansen so we can schedule any work FEM Electric will need to do and get equipment ordered.

What is a large load?



What is a large load?





A historic photo shows a man standing in front of an auger used to dig holes for utility poles.
Photo submitted by Moreau-Grand Electric



Janet Gesinger
Photo by Frank Turner

When the Lights Turned On: Janet Gesinger Remembers the Days Before Power

Frank Turner
frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Memory is a fickle thing. It's funny how a certain smell or simple photo can evoke vivid memories of an age long past. After all, how can a memory be lost when we can't even remember losing it?

At the age of 89, Janet Gesinger doesn't remember the exact moment when Cam Wal Electric, her local rural electric cooperative, introduced electricity to her childhood farm and ranch 13 miles west of Gettysburg, but she does remember the days without it.

"It's amazing that I can remember some things from my childhood so vividly, but I couldn't tell you what I had for lunch last week," Gesinger laughed.

Gesinger remembers growing up on the farm during a time when the glow of kerosene lamps helped her family navigate the dark and a cistern well kept their food cool.

"I don't know how we could see with the little lamps, but we did," she said. "People were careful because they knew

what the risks were, carrying around those lamps."

At the age of 9, Gesinger and her three older siblings lost their mother. The profound loss meant that Gesinger had to step up to help her siblings and father keep the farm and ranch going.

"I ended up helping my dad outside more than I did anything inside the house," she said. "We lived in such a remote place. There weren't even gravel roads back then. If I ever wanted to leave the farm, I had to help my brother milk cows and do chores so he would take me into town."

In high school, Gesinger's horizons broadened past the farm, and she began working as a waitress at the Medicine Rock Café where she met her late husband, Robert Gesinger. A year later the couple married and moved to Robert's family farm and ranch just a few miles north of Ridgeview in 1954. The Ridgeview community gained power just one year earlier in 1953, and Janet continues to live there now as a member of Moreau-Grand Electric.

When Janet moved to Ridgeview it was a bustling, small town with a grain elevator, a grocery store with a post office in it, a liquor store, a school, and electricity. Today, nearly all those amenities are a distant memory, but the rural electricity that continues to power the homes of the roughly 25 residents of Ridgeview, including Janet, remains.

"Ridgeview had gotten electricity just before we got married," she said.

Once she lived in a home with electricity, Janet found it hard to imagine life without it. One winter storm in 2010 wreaked havoc on the rural landscape and broke more than 200 utility poles, leaving Robert and Janet without power for 21 days.

"By day three of the outage, we ended up getting a PTO driven generator that could hook up to the tractor," Janet said. "Robert was sure glad when the power came back on, because that way we didn't have to fuel the tractor twice a day to run it – and the cost of diesel to run it."

Reflecting on her experiences, Janet acknowledges the transformative impact of electricity on rural life and finds it hard to imagine a world without electricity.

"It's an amazing convenience that we rely on," Janet said. "People today couldn't live without it because what in the world would ever replace it? We have a lot of technology in this world, but there is nothing that can replace electricity."



An aerial view of the Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV near Williston, N.D. Photo submitted by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

FORECASTING THE FUTURE

Basin Electric's Vision for Reliable Energy

Frank Turner
frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Keeping the lights on in a dynamic world isn't as simple as flipping a switch. It requires a forward-thinking approach, almost like gazing into a crystal ball, to anticipate future energy demand. Energy infrastructure projects begin long before the first shovel breaks ground, and it's a challenge that Basin Electric Power Cooperative confronts every day to ensure consistent and

reliable power amid an ever-changing landscape of new technologies and growing membership.

A new plant or transmission line can take years of planning and coordination by Basin Electric and its member cooperatives. The process is similar to predicting the weather; it all begins with a forecast to determine what energy demand is brewing on the horizon.

Basin Electric works with the members and other stakeholders to

develop highly accurate load forecasts. Those load forecasts are then compared against our existing resource portfolio. If any gaps are identified, resource alternatives are identified and reviewed against each other to arrive at the best resource portfolio outcome.

"Once a need for a new generation project or transmission project has been identified, Basin Electric assembles a project team," explained Matt Ehrman, vice president of engineering and construction at Basin Electric.

"Developing and defining project scope is vital to project success as it's really the foundation for the project," Ehrman continued. "Good upfront planning minimizes project execution

risks later, so Basin places a lot of emphasis on the development work that happens before any detailed engineering design can begin.”

Basin Electric is currently undertaking one of its largest single-site electric generation projects in the last 40 years near Williston, North Dakota, known as Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV. Once completed, this project will add 580 megawatts of natural gas generation capacity to Basin Electric’s energy portfolio. Although the project broke ground in March 2023, planning for the project began in 2021, standing as a testament to the cooperative’s long-term mindset and commitment to meeting its load forecast.

So what goes into the planning of such a major project? Ehrman says everything from identifying project objectives to permitting and contracting strategies to engineering studies all take place within the years leading up to new infrastructure.

“In the case of a generation project, the project site, fuel, water, and transmission sources are identified during the project development phase,” Ehrman said. “After the development phase is complete, the more detailed engineering design work can begin. This is when the engineers really begin to dig into the details of how to arrange and interconnect all of the many different types of equipment



The first gas turbine delivery for Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV. Photo submitted by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

required for a given project. Eventually, those design details are used to develop construction specifications, contractors are selected and construction begins.”

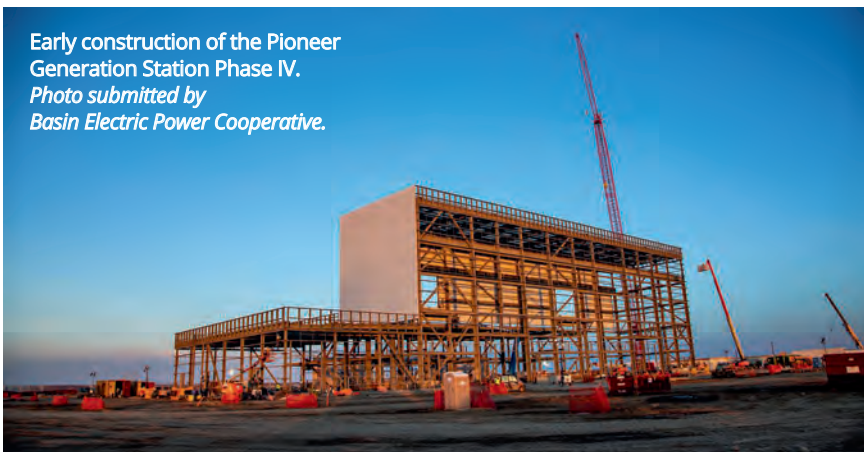
Beyond the demanding complexity of the project itself, Basin Electric’s project team must also navigate regulatory matters and policy. While many projects share similarities, no two are identical when navigating federal, state, and local permitting requirements.

“Large generation and transmission projects can take years to permit, and the permitting duration depends on the project,” Ehrman said. “Basin’s

teams have successfully permitted and executed many projects over the years and as a result have learned a lot about those processes in our service territory.”

Slated to be operational in 2025, Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV will come on board during a time when electricity demand is increasing significantly. The completion of the project will expand Basin Electric’s resource portfolio, which uses a vast diversity of generation resources to serve its member cooperatives. Even still, Ehrman said it still takes a massive effort to stay prepared for what the future may bring.

“Planning and building energy infrastructure is a massive team effort that involves teams from Basin and its membership,” he said. “These are complex projects, and there are challenges involved in all phases of the projects. Basin has extremely talented, dedicated and hard-working teams developing these projects that really enjoy working out all the technical and non-technical details while mitigating risks to achieve success and deliver the best possible outcome for the membership.”



Early construction of the Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV. Photo submitted by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

REPORTS CONTINUED

Board Report Continued from page 2

Motion by Eric Odenbach seconded by Paula Petersen and carried to approve board expense reports and attorney fees.

Legal Update: None

Meeting Report:

East River monthly board report was given by Gary Bachman along with a video report.

Safety meeting minutes from October 30, 2024, were acknowledged along with Employee meeting.

Adjourn: President Gary Bachman declared the meeting adjourned.

SEND US YOUR COMMUNITY EVENT DATE!

Your event could be listed here!

OCT. 31
Treat Street
10 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Milledale, SD
505-432-4656
Milledale-SD.com

OCT. 26
Harford Women of Today
Fall Craft Fair
4 p.m. - 8 p.m.
West Central Barben Centre
Harford, SD
605-393-2026

OCT. 26
Owl-O-Ween
6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Black Hills Visitor Center
Spearhead, SD

OCT. 6
Great Pumpkin Festival
6 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Lester Park
Lester, SD
505-744-3473

OCT. 10-11
Rural Women in Agriculture
Conference
OCT. 10: 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
OCT. 11: 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
The Lodge of Wheelwright
Spearhead, SD
SpearheadWomeninAg.com

OCT. 11-12
Junker Mania
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Spearhead, SD
605-399-7945

OCT. 19
Buffalo
Garn Valley, SD
OCT. 25-27
Foreman

NOV. 2
Fall Fling Craft Show
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Spearhead Christian School
Spearhead, SD
505-399-7945

NOV. 22-23
Holiday Arts Christmas
Craft Show
Cottonwood County Fairgrounds
Milledale, SD
505-399-7945

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Taking steps to help your home heating system run more efficiently can reduce energy use and lower your winter bills. Check to see if any air vents around your home are blocked by furniture, curtains or other items. Obstructed vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and can increase pressure in the ductwork, causing cracks and leaks to form. If necessary, consider purchasing a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture or other obstructions.

Source: energy.gov



Dear FEM Electric
Thank you for the \$250 scholarship for the Touchstone Energy Scholar of The Week. I am honored to have been selected for such an award. Thank you again.
Jonathan Butler

Happy Holidays

Wishing you a safe, and happy holiday season

FEM Electric will be closed

◆ Dec 25 and Jan 1st ◆

FEM ELECTRIC'S ANNUAL PANCAKE & SAUSAGE BREAKFAST

Jan 31, 2025
NORTH
SHOP
7 am - 10 am

FREE



JOIN US FOR BREAKFAST!

Accepting free will donations of paper products
and cleaning supplies for our local food pantries.



LOOKING AHEAD

An aerial view of the Wild Springs Solar Project near New Underwood, S.D. Photo submitted by East River Electric

Wind Energy Association Changes Name, Advocates For All Renewables

Jacob Boyko
jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

The South Dakota Wind Energy Association is getting a fresh coat of paint this year with a rebrand that will expand the association’s advocacy mission to include more forms of renewable energy.

As solar energy generation in the state increases with new and upcoming projects, expanding the association — now called the South Dakota Renewable Energy Association — to include other forms of renewable energy and battery storage was the clear way forward according to association president and Sioux Valley Energy Director Gary Fish.

“The association started out as being very wind oriented, and that’s our legacy,” Fish explained. “But we also have somewhat migrated to having an energy portfolio where wind coexists

with coal, natural gas and solar, and that was the driver behind changing our name.”

The change comes in the wake of South Dakota’s first large-scale solar farm near New Underwood, which began commercial operation in March 2024. Basin Electric Power Cooperative will purchase 114 megawatts of the 128-megawatt renewable project.

The association began with the

leadership of East River Electric Power Cooperative in the mid-2000s as the generation and transmission co-op looked for ways to develop wind generation in the state to serve its growing member utilities and bring economic development and job opportunities to the state.

“Wind energy was at that time starting to become a more viable utility-scale source of power generation,” said Chris Studer, chief member and public relations officer at East River Electric.



A look on the ground as crews prepare the Wild Springs Solar Project for power generation. Photo submitted by East River Electric

“East River led an effort to build an association of stakeholders in South Dakota that can help advocate for the wind industry.”

It’s a mission that’s propelled South Dakota to being the state with the third highest renewable energy makeup, with more than 54% of in-state power generated from renewable wind and solar resources.

“We’ve gone from essentially zero wind energy to more than 3,000 megawatts of installed capacity in the state,” Studer said. “We have far surpassed what our original goal was.”

In the South Dakota Wind Energy Association’s initial stages, the board was composed mostly of utilities and developers focused on studying potential economic benefits and the infrastructure needs that come with increasing generation.

“I think everyone knew we had a great wind resource, but the real issue was having additional transmission to get the power out,” Fish said. “Could we build

the towers? Yes. Could we get the power to market? That was the challenge.”

As the association successfully made the case for wind energy, the membership grew to include other G&Ts and investor-owned utilities, landowner groups, turbine manufacturers, servicing companies and others from the wind energy supply chain.

One of the first large-scale renewable energy wins for the South Dakota Wind Energy Association and rural electric cooperatives was the 2011 commissioning of the 172-megawatt Crow Lake Project north of White Lake, South Dakota. The association membership helped support the launch of South Dakota Wind Partners to bring local residents an opportunity to invest in and own several turbines in the project.

According to East River Electric, the program generated about \$16 million worth of local investment.

“It was a very unique and successful

project that the South Dakota Wind Energy Association had involvement in and advocated for,” Studer said. “The people that invested got tax equity benefits over time, and after about 10 years they sold it back to Basin Electric and got their investments back.”

Moving forward, the association will continue to advocate for a renewable energy-friendly business environment to propel South Dakota energy projects forward.

“South Dakota Renewable Energy Association is here to make sure our state’s tax policies are fair, that developers still want to come here and develop renewable energy projects, and that there’s a market for all of the supply chain that’s needed for wind energy and now for solar, as well as the necessary transmission,” Studer continued.

A new South Dakota Renewable Energy Association website and promotional material will debut within the next several months.



The Crow Lake Wind Project near White Lake, S.D., is the largest wind project owned solely by a cooperative in the United States. The \$363 million wind project went into operation in 2011.

Photo submitted by East River Electric

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: BE ENERGY EFFICIENT YEAR- ROUND

SEAL IN COMFORT AND SAVINGS

As energy consumers, we can all play a part in conserving resources and reducing our bills. Here are some practical tips to boost your home's energy efficiency throughout the year:

Know your energy consumption

Start by reviewing your energy bills for the past 12–24 months. Calculate your average monthly usage to establish a baseline for measuring your energy-saving efforts.

Adopt no-cost ways to save energy

Small changes can lead to significant savings:

- Turn off lights and unplug electronics such as chargers when not in use.
- Close or lower window coverings to regulate the temperature indoors.
- Change your air filters regularly as recommended.
- Use ceiling fans strategically: counterclockwise in summer and clockwise in winter to force warm air down.
- Grill outdoors in summer to keep the heat out of the kitchen.

Insulate your home

Weatherproofing is key to maintaining comfort and reducing energy use:

- Check for air leaks around windows and doors using the wet finger or tissue test.
- Apply caulk or weather stripping to prevent drafts.
- Remember to keep doors closed to maintain indoor temperature.

Get smart with your thermostat

Optimize your heating and cooling by using your programmable thermostat's features — many

homeowners never use them — and allow it to adjust the temperature when you're asleep or away.

- Consider upgrading to a smart thermostat for automatic adjustments
- In general, adjust the thermostat a few degrees up or down for energy savings.

Explore renewable energy

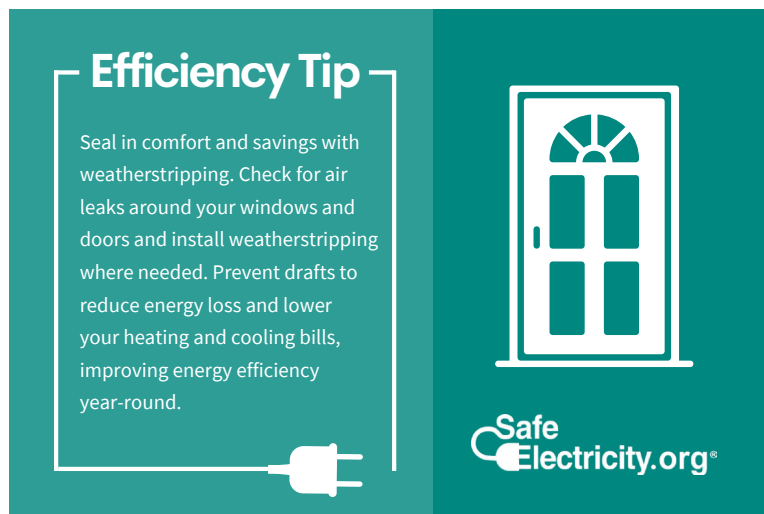
Consider harnessing the power of natural energy sources:

- Look into installing solar energy panels for your home.
- Research local community solar programs that may be available.

Consult your electricity provider early in the process. They can provide valuable information about:

- Grid connection requirements.
- Cost considerations.
- Potential rebates available for renewable energy installations.

By implementing these tips, you'll not only save on energy costs but also contribute to a more sustainable community. For more tips on building a resilient and efficient home, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Efficiency Tip

Seal in comfort and savings with weatherstripping. Check for air leaks around your windows and doors and install weatherstripping where needed. Prevent drafts to reduce energy loss and lower your heating and cooling bills, improving energy efficiency year-round.

SafeElectricity.org

6 Tips for Year-Round ENERGY SAVINGS

- 1 Use your ceiling fan** counterclockwise in the summer for a down breeze, and clockwise in the winter for an updraft to force warm air down into your room.
- 2 Turn off lights** and unplug chargers and electronics when not in use.
- 3 Regularly change or clean your furnace and indoor AC filters** as recommended, and keep the area around your outdoor AC unit clear of obstructions.
- 4 Close or lower window coverings** to keep out heat or cold.
- 5 Insulate your home** and weatherproof windows and doors.
- 6 Use a programmable or smart thermostat.** Adjust the temperature a few degrees for overall savings.

Get more tips on creating a resilient and efficient home:

 Safe
Electricity.org®

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Never make a utility bill payment to anyone calling you on the phone, coming to your door (unless that is a verified bill payment method used by your utility company), texting you or emailing you. Always call your utility company at the number provided on your bill or on the utility's website if you have a question about payment or billing information. Know your utility bill payment options—online, by phone, automatic bank draft, mail or in person.

Source: Utilities United Against Scams



REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo to win a Blackstone electric grill!

Your Phone Number: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____



JAN. 11
Snow Queen Coronation
7 p.m.
Aberdeen Civic Theater
Aberdeen, SD
SDSnowQueen.com

Photo courtesy of South Dakota Snow Queen Festival

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.

UNTIL DEC. 26
Christmas at the Capitol
8 a.m.-10 p.m.
Pierre, SD
605-773-3178

UNTIL DEC. 29
Trees & Trains Exhibit at SD State Railroad Museum
Hill City, SD
605-665-3636

UNTIL DEC. 31
Olde Tyme Christmas at participating businesses, Lane of Lights Viewing
Hill City, SD

UNTIL DEC. 31
Garden Glow at McCrory Gardens
5-9 p.m.
Brookings, SD

UNTIL DEC. 31
Hall of Trees
12-4 p.m. Mon.-Sat.
The Mead Museum
Yankton, SD

DEC. 31
American Legion Post 15 Save the Last Dance 2024
8 p.m.-12:30 a.m.
El Riad Shrine
Sioux Falls, SD
605-336-3470

DEC. 31-JAN. 1
New Year's Eve in Deadwood
Deadwood, SD
800-999-1876

JAN. 5, FEB. 2
American Legion Post 15 Pancake Breakfast
8:30 a.m.-12 p.m.
1600 W. Russel St.
Sioux Falls, SD
605-336-3470

JAN. 7-9
Dakota Farm Show
Tue. & Wed. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Thurs. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
USD DakotaDome
Vermillion, SD

JAN. 11.
Coats for Kids Bowling Tournament
Meadowood Lanes
Rapid City, SD
605-393-2081

JAN. 15
46th Ranchers Workshop
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Community Events Center
White River, SD
605-259-3252 ext. 3

JAN. 18
Breakin' the Winter Blues Chili Cookoff
Main Street
Hill City, SD

JAN. 26
Souper Supper Fundraiser Rapid Valley United Methodist Church
5:30-7:30 p.m.
Tickets \$6
5103 Longview Dr.
Rapid City, SD

JAN. 31-FEB. 8
Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo
Central States Fairground
Rapid City, SD
605-355-3861

FEB. 14-17
11th Annual Frost Fest
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Brookings, SD
605-692-7444

FEB. 22
Bellator Titans Charter Casino Night Fundraiser
6-11 p.m.
316 2nd St.
Aberdeen, SD

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