

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



SOUTH DAKOTA STAR QUILTS

**Honoring Cooperative
Legacy With
Time-honored Tradition**
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Rescuing Animals
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Photo by Frank Turner



FEM staff meet with the board of directors at the May board meeting.

May 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 May 20, 2025, 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, Eric Odenbach, Tom Thorpe, Kelly Melius. Electrical Manager Ryan Holien, Director of Finance and Benefits Rhonda Tuscherer, and CEO Scott Moore.

Guest Employee: Cody Scarrott

Changes to the agenda: Add under 6 I Acknowledge CFC Director Position Region 6.

Changes/Additions to Minutes from April 15, 2025, meeting: None

Next Meeting Date: After a review of the calendars, directors agreed that the next regular meeting of the board would be on Thursday, June 19, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at FEM Electric Board Room in Ipswich, South Dakota.

Motion by Paula Petersen, seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to approve administrative business.

Board and staff had conversation on demand charge for three phase loads. FEM received an increase January 1, 2025, but decided to wait and review financials in May 2025 before recommending a \$.60 per kw rate increase. Staff will bring back to June board meeting rate change for board approval.

Motion by Tom Thorpe, seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to acknowledge manager and staff reports along with East River Electric load management report.

April 2025 Cyber Security Report was acknowledged.

Resolutions and Contracts:

Discussion on contributing to Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI) through South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) to help complete funding for a building to be used for training in the Powerline Construction Program.

Motion by Eric Odenbach seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to approve donating \$2,000 per year for five years totaling \$10,000 starting in 2026.

Board members discussed National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) member resolutions and process and acknowledged NRECA Director Elections.

Motion by Paula Petersen seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to appoint Tom Thorpe as NRECA Voting Delegate and Scott Moore as Alternate NRECA Voting Delegate.

The board acknowledged NCSC annual meeting notice.

Motion by Kelly Melius seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to appoint Gary Bachman as NCSC voting delegate.

FEM board of directors acknowledged CFC annual meeting notice.

Motion by Kelly Melius seconded by Tom Thorpe and carried to appoint Gary Bachman as CFC voting delegate.

The board acknowledged receiving notice of CFC director position for Region 6.

Membership Business:

Board acknowledged membership business.

New Memberships, Member Cancellations and Contracts:

Disconnects: Scott Finley, Chelsea, SD, Active Farm; Mark Myran, Ipswich, SD, Road-Side Sign; Valerian Goetz, Onaka, SD, Active Farm; David Hansen, Orient, SD, Vacant Farm; Jay Finkbeiner, Desmet, SD, Active Farm; Lorie Steiner, Highmore, SD, Active Farm; Steve Bogenhagen, Aberdeen, SD, Active Farm
Reconnects: Jack Olson & Vickie Kitchell, Ipswich, SD, Active Farm; Gisi Pheasant Farms, LLC, Ipswich, SD, Road-Side Sign; BKG Family Farms, Inc., Onaka, SD, Active Farm; Ross & Evan Hansen, Onaka, SD, Vacant Farm; Michael Finkbeiner/Silka & Brent Kempema, Roscoe/Pierre, SD, Active Farm; Lori Wharton & Timothy Verret, Anchorage, AK, Active Farm; Zane Lentsch, Colton, SD, Active Farm

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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 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.

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Design assistance by SDREA

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



Scott Moore
General Manager/CEO

Reminder: June 24, 2025, is FEM Electric's Annual Meeting at the Ipswich Public School. The meal will start at 5:00 p.m. and the meeting will begin at 6:30 p.m.

June 28, 2025, FEM Electric employees assisted with the Farmers Union Safety Camp in Ipswich. FEM Electric likes to assist with youth safety camps along with our educational classes in area schools during the school year. FEM Electric also has access to the South Dakota Rural Electric "High Voltage" trailer which can demonstrate what can happen when a person makes contact with a high voltage conductor. If you have a group interested in learning about electricity at any age, please call the office and ask for Crystal Thorson, Ryan Holien, or Sonje Oban.

Please remember to contact FEM Electric office if your phone number or email address changes. Most of this information is collected when you become a member and after time the information can change. With your assistance we can keep your contact

information current. This information helps staff during outages, storm situations, and returning your capital credits.

Our underground contractor arrived June 2, 2025, to start plowing new underground cable. We plan to install around 25 miles of underground which should go smoothly. Roughly twenty miles of overhead line will be retired as part of our work plan. Operations will also have a contractor in the Hillsview area testing poles later this summer. We will try to contact our members when the tester arrives.

FEM Employees along with our engineer, Star Energy, will start creating our next four-year work plan in the fall of 2025 and first quarter of 2026. This plan will go through the approval process with a goal to be completed by the fourth quarter of 2026. The work plan along with an annual budget gives FEM Electric board and staff a road map for success.

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FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

@FEMEelectric on

@fem_electric on

@FEMEelectric 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

July 29, 2025 for July's energy
August 28, 2025 for August's energy

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

Playground Safety

Source: National Safety Council

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, each year, more than 200,000 children go to U.S. hospital emergency departments with injuries associated with playground equipment.

As the weather warms up and trips to the park become frequent, take a moment to familiarize yourself with the risks on playgrounds and how you can prevent injuries.

Check for Playground Hazards

Nearly 80% of playground injuries are caused by falls. Watch out for these potential hazards when taking kids to the playground, and report any hazards observed.

Improper ground surfaces: Surfaces around playground equipment should have at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel, or mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials. Playgrounds should be free of exposed concrete footings, rocks or tree stumps.

Overcrowded play areas: The area under and around play equipment should be a minimum of 6 feet in all directions while swing set areas should be twice the height of the suspending bar both in back and front of the swings. Structures more than 30 inches high should be at least 9 feet apart.

Unprotected elevated areas: Platforms higher than 30 inches should have guardrails or barriers.

Head entrapment spaces: Openings between rails, bars, rungs and even ropes of cargo nets should be less than 3 1/2 inches or more than 9 inches.

Sharp points and edges: Playground equipment should be free of protruding bolt ends, "S" hooks, and other sharp points and edges.

Visit the American Academy of Pediatrics webpage on playground safety to learn more.

Avoid Strangulation Hazards

The American Academy of Pediatrics cautions that children should not wear or play with anything that could get caught on equipment and become a strangulation hazard.

- Never attach or allow children to attach ropes, jump ropes, clotheslines or pet leashes to play equipment.
- Leave sweatshirts with drawstrings and necklaces at home.
- Remove bike helmets when playing on the playground.

Be Cautious of Too Much Sun Exposure

Playgrounds should have full or partial sun protection between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., peak exposure time.

- Limit playtime at peak sun exposure time and know the signs of heat illnesses.
- Avoid burns; if playground equipment is hot to the touch, it is too hot for your child's bare skin.

Allow Only Age-Appropriate Activities

The Consumer Product Safety commission lists age-appropriate equipment in the Public Playground Safety Handbook. There is no substitute for parental supervision, especially for young children.



"Don't go outside during lightning storms!"

Marah Kinnunen, Age 8

Marah warns readers about the dangers of going outside during a lightning storm. Thank you for your picture, Marah! Marah's parents are Reuben and Sarine Kinnunen from Hayti, S.D.

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.

Delectable CHICKEN

CHICKEN MILANESE

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. McCormick® Chicken Parmesan One Sheet Pan Seasoning Mix
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 lb. thin-sliced boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 tbsp. oil

Method

Preheat oven to 400°F. Empty Seasoning Mix into shallow dish. Add Parmesan cheese. Brush chicken with oil. Coat evenly on both sides with Seasoning Mix. Discard any remaining Seasoning Mix.

Place chicken in single layer on foil-lined shallow baking pan sprayed with no stick cooking spray.

Bake 15 minutes or until cooked through, turn chicken halfway through cook time.

Mccormick.com

SWEET AND SOUR CHICKEN

Ingredients:

- 3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 2 tbsps. fat or oil
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 tbsps. cornstarch
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 20 oz. can pineapple chunks (drained, reserving juice)
- 3 tbsps. soy sauce
- 3/4 cup green pepper strips
- 1/4 cup onion (thinly sliced)

Method

Cube chicken into one inch squares; brown in fat. Add water. Cook in water until tender. In another pan combine cornstarch, salt, brown sugar, vinegar, pineapple juice and soy sauce.

Cook until slightly thick, stirring constantly. Pour sauce over hot chicken. Let stand at least 10 minutes. Add green pepper, onion, and pineapple chunks. Cook two to seven minutes until warmed through. Serve over hot rice. *Makes 4 servings.

Jan Grage
Clay-Union Electric Member

CHICKEN POT PIE

Ingredients:

- 1 pkg. prepared pie crust (top and bottom)
- 1/3 cup butter or margarine
- 1/3 cup chopped onion
- 1/3 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1 3/4 cup Progresso™ chicken broth (from 32 oz. carton)
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 1/2 cup chicken/turkey (shredded, cooked)
- 2 cups frozen mixed vegetables (thawed)

Method

Heat oven to 425°F. Prepare pie crusts as directed on box for two-crust pie using nine inch glass pie pan. In two quart saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion; cook two minutes, stirring frequently, until tender. Stir in flour, salt and pepper until well blended.

Gradually stir in broth and milk, cooking and stirring until bubbly and thickened. Stir in chicken and mixed vegetables. Remove from heat. Spoon chicken mixture into crust-lined pan. Top with second crust; seal edge and flute. Cut slits in several places in top crust. Bake 30 to 40 minutes or until crust is golden brown. During last 15 to 20 minutes of baking, cover crust edge with strips of foil to prevent excessive browning. Let stand five minutes before serving.

Cindy Foster
Codington-Clark Electric Member

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 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

BOARD REPORT CONTINUED

Board Report Continued from page 2

Contracts: Jeremy & Chantel Stoecker, Onaka, SD, House; Joe & Wendy Schmidt, Roscoe, SD, House

Retired Locations: None

Motion by Kelly Melius seconded by Paula Petersen and carried to approve two line construction contracts with Jeremy & Chantel Stoecker and Joe and Wendy Schmidt.

Capital Credits:

Estates – May 2025: Four = \$8,137.88

73 & Older – May 2025: Four = \$6,697.53

Motion by Eric Odenbach seconded by Tom Thorpe and carried to approve option one as presented for 2025 General Capital Credits Retirement.

Option 1:

2013 - Portion FEM Electric	\$348,666.52
2008 - Portion Basin Electric	\$215,700.10
2004/2005 - Portion East River Electric	\$73,503.55
Total	\$637,870.17

Rhonda Tuscherer reported that capital credit amounts will show credits on June statements and \$40.00 credit for attending FEM Electric annual meeting will show on July statements. Reminder members in attendance must turn in registration slips at the end of FEM Electric annual meeting June 24, 2025 to receive the \$40.00 energy credit.

The board and staff reviewed FEM Nominating Committee meeting held May 1, 2025, at Beck Law Office, Ipswich, South Dakota.

District 1 Eric Odenbach
District 4 Paula Petersen

Board acknowledged receipt of following financial business:

Financial Business: The board acknowledged reviewing the following financial information: The check register for the month of April 2025 contained information on checks #35232 through #35308 and all automatic payments/withdrawals for April 2025 totaling \$576,202.89.

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

Legal Update: Moore reported that he had talked to Attorney Vaughn Beck and there was nothing to report.

Director of Finance and Benefits Rhonda Tuscherer reported that the IRS Form 941 issue has been resolved with the help of Eide Bailly.

Meeting Report:

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

Gary Bachman and Scott Moore reported on SDREA/NRECA Legislative Fly-In was well attended and South Dakota Cooperatives had good conversations with all three elected officials.

The safety meeting minutes from April 28, 2025, were acknowledged.

Employee meeting minutes from April 15, 2025, were acknowledged.

Adjourn: President Gary Bachman declared the meeting adjourned.

Manager's Article Continued from page 3

The FEM board and employees would like to congratulate Chad Dutenhoffer on completing and passing his test for South Dakota Class B electrical license. Chad's completion of his Class B will only assist FEM Electric in having and providing an excellent electrical department that our members have started to rely on. All our operation employees that hold various stages of electrical licenses are dual trained as linemen.

As summer is here, please be careful not only around powerlines but also in your summer activities.

If you are adding or planning to add electrical load, please call early Ryan Holien or Sean Christiansen 605-426-6891. Have a safe summer.



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 receive \$520,810 in generation tax as a result of electric sales to the members.

GENERATION TAX BY SCHOOL DISTRICT

SCHOOL DISTRICT	TOTAL
Hoven 53-2	\$1,768
Northwestern Area 56-7	\$7,310
Faulkton Area 24-3	\$55,610
Edmunds Central 22-5	\$33,218
Ipswich Area 22-6	\$336,124
Bowdle 22-1	\$16,509
Warner 6-5	\$57
Eureka 44-1	\$16,982
Leola 44-2	\$53,232
TOTAL	\$520,810

Of this total, \$266,306 will be paid by FEM Electric and \$254,504 will be paid by East River Electric Power Cooperative of Madison, SD and Basin Electric Power Cooperative of Bismarck, ND.

The gross revenue tax is allocated to the different school districts through the County Treasurer's office. The following table shows the gross revenue that will be paid to each school

district by the County.

GENERATION TAX BY COUNTY

COUNTY	FEM	ER/BASIN	TOTAL
Faulk	\$33,320	\$31,844	\$65,164
Edmunds	\$193,733	\$185,146	\$378,879
McPherson	\$38,886	\$37,162	\$76,048
Potter	\$288	\$275	\$563
Spink	\$79	\$76	\$155
Walworth	<1	<1	<1
TOTALS	\$266,306	\$254,504	\$520,810

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.





SOUTH DAKOTA STAR QUILTS

Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative directors present retiring manager Melissa Maher (left) with a star quilt.
Photo by JJ Martin

Honoring Cooperative Legacy With Time-honored Tradition

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Across the prairie, few gifts carry as much meaning as a star quilt. For many, these quilts are more than just blankets – they are acts of honor. Rooted in Native American culture, particularly among Lakota, Dakota and other tribes of South Dakota, star quilts have long been used to mark some of life’s largest milestones, including graduations, marriages, memorials and moments of deep community respect.

Electric cooperative leaders Donovan Young Man, a former director of Lacreek Electric who was honored shortly before his passing earlier this year, and Melissa Maher, the former manager of Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative, recently accepted star quilts from their cooperatives in recognition of their many years of service to their member-owners.

So what makes the star quilt such an honor? According to International Quilt Museum Collections Manager Jamie Swartz, the quilts are special because they take an incredible amount of skill and experience to assemble.

Many star quilts are block quilts, constructed from dozens or even hundreds of small fabric pieces carefully cut and stitched together. At the heart of the design is an eight-pointed star, a

shape that demands near-perfect precision.

“There are so many small pieces that make up a star quilt,” Swartz said. “When you are combining so many small pieces together to make a large, over-all design, there is more room for error. A small mismeasurement can create bumps, ripples or puckers in the patchwork.”



Photo Courtesy of the International Quilt Museum, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1997.007.0123

That level of precision, care and time-honored tradition a star quilt represents is a part of what makes it such a meaningful gift. In recent years, the practice of gifting star quilts has been embraced by some electric cooperatives as a way to express a deep appreciation for their employees who have dedicated a lifetime of work to their cooperatives and communities.

Remembering Donovan Young Man

Before his passing earlier this year, Donovan Young Man was honored by his cooperative at the Lacreek Electric annual meeting with a star quilt for his 31 years of service to Lacreek Electric, serving as a director for both his cooperative and the South Dakota Rural Electric Association. Specifically, the cooperative honored Donovan's commitment to both his cooperative and community.

Lacreek Electric CEO Josh Fanning said Young Man was known for both his calm and steady presence, and his exceptional ability to bridge tribal relations, fostering understanding and unity within the community.

In his community, Donovan was known for his profound impact on his community's youth. For 41 years, he devoted himself to the Oglala Lakota County School District, leaving a lasting legacy of dedication, education, and empowerment for the youth. Beyond education, Donovan served his community in many other ways, including as a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council.

"Donovan had a lasting impact on our cooperative," Fanning said. "His wisdom, leadership, and steady guidance helped shape its direction and strengthen its foundation. His contributions will be remembered and felt for years to come."

"We chose a star quilt because gifting one is a deeply meaningful gesture in our area – an expression of profound respect, honor and the warmth of community," Fanning continued. "In many Indigenous cultures, the star quilt represents the highest form of recognition, symbolizing heartfelt gratitude for the recipient's enduring contributions. It also serves as a guiding light, reflecting the inspiration and direction they provide for future generations."

Honoring Melissa Maher

Moreau-Grand Electric honored Melissa Maher with a star quilt at the co-ops annual meeting in October for her 40 years of service at the cooperative. In addition to Maher, the cooperative also presented Larry Hieb with a quilt for his 55 combined years of service as both an employee and director.

Maher joined the cooperative in 1984 as manager's secretary. Through the years, Maher remained with the cooperative, serving as the member service director and later Moreau-Grand Electric's manager, the first woman to hold this title.

"I've always loved star quilts, what they stand for – the celebration and honoring of someone with an heirloom that they can enjoy for hopefully generations to come," she said.

Maher first experienced the star quilt tradition through her



Lacreek Electric employees gift director Donovan Young Man a star quilt to celebrate his 31 years of service to the electric cooperative.

Photos by Mandy Scherer



mother, who taught kindergarten at Cheyenne-Eagle Butte School. As a teacher in the Eagle Butte community, her mother received star quilts from several of her students' families.

Seeing the joy it brought her mother, Maher continued the star quilt tradition into her years at the cooperative, gifting quilts to retirees of the cooperative, gifting dozens of star quilts made by quilt maker Bonnie LeBeaux to employees of the co-op, honoring retirements, directors, and even key members of the construction crew that helped build the new Moreau-Grand Electric office.

"It's hard to guess how many star quilts I have gifted over the years," Maher said. "Probably dozens if I had to guess."

The tradition came full circle at her retirement party when Moreau-Grand Electric presented Mellisa a star quilt of her own.

"We wanted to honor her 40 years of service and highlight abilities as a manager," said Paul Lawrence, a director of Moreau-Grand Electric. "It's a way of conveying that she led with honor and integrity, and she did exactly that."

CAPITAL CREDITS COMING

SOME MEMBERS MAY SEE CAPITAL CREDIT RETIREMENTS ON THEIR JUNE STATEMENT

It's that time of year again, and FEM members may see an additional line on their statement called Capital Credit Retirement.

Capital credit retirements are FEM's way of paying our members back for their investment in FEM. When members pay their bills, FEM uses that money to make improvements and cover expenses.

Years when FEM has a positive margin, those margins are set aside, or allocated, back to members. Allocations are seen on members April statement.

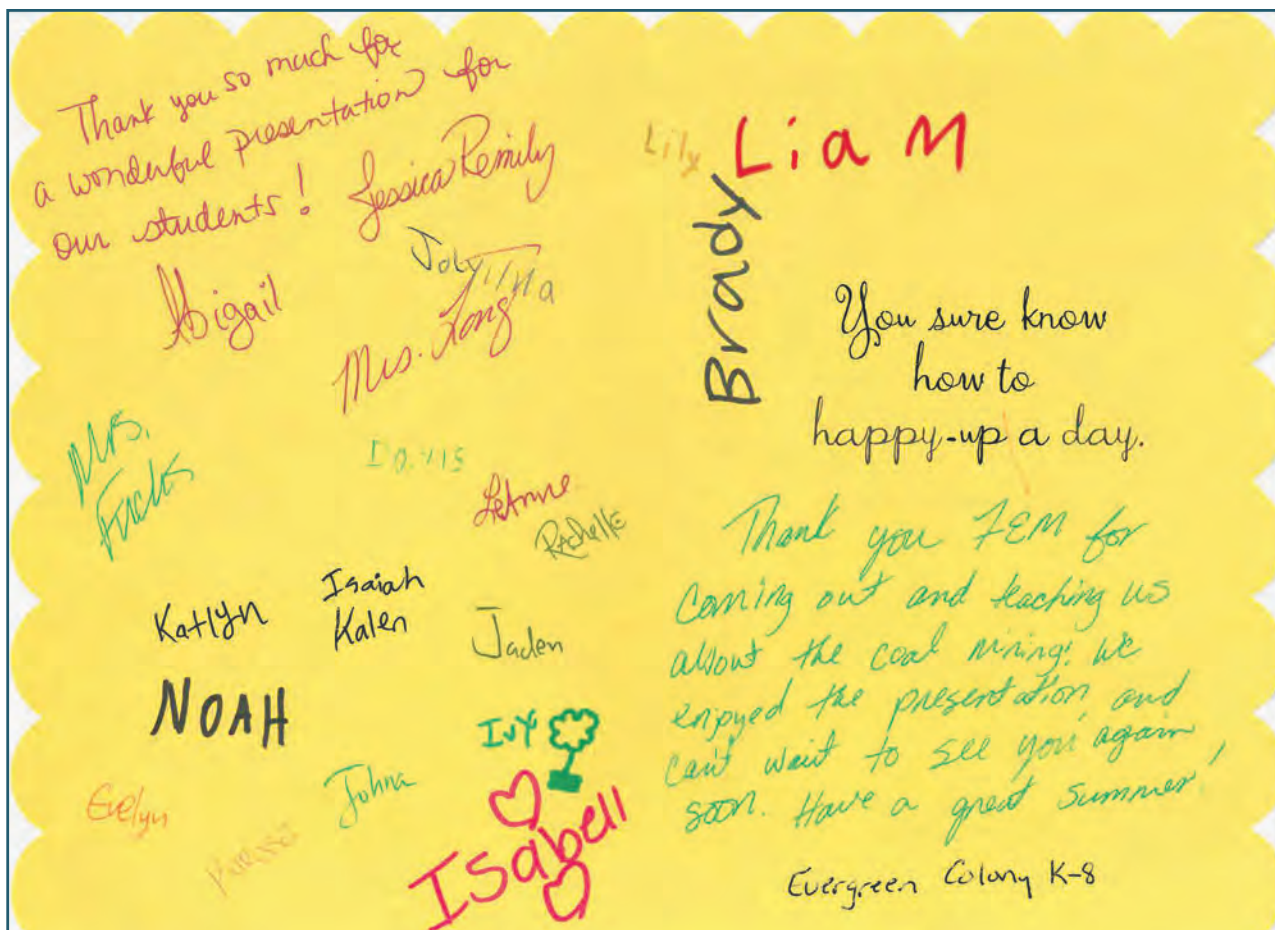
Members should review their June statement

carefully, as they may not owe a payment for their June energy. Below is an example of a statement where a member would not have to pay.

Account Number	1234567
Total Amount Due 07/09/2024	-366.56
Credit Balance - Do Not Pay	

Capital credit retirements are based on a number of factors, such as how much energy a member uses, the financial health of the cooperative, how large of margin was allocated in previous years and other factors.

If members have questions about their statement or capital credits, give FEM a call at 605-426-6891 or 1-800-587-5880,



FEM EDUCATES AT FARMER'S UNION DAY CAMP

FEM EMPLOYEES TALK ABOUT RENEWABLE AND NON-RENEWABLE ENERGY

On May 28th, 2025 FEM participated in the Edmunds County Farmer's Union Day camp, which focused on cooperatives, games, natural resources and more.

FEM employees Crystal Thorson and Sonje Oban spent the morning presenting on renewable and non-renewable energy resources, emphasizing the pros and cons of each.

A short video was played about reclamation mining in North Dakota, where lignite coal is mined and used for always available energy production. After the video, camp attendees were given a chocolate chip cookie and a tooth pick, and were tasked to "mine" the chocolate chips out of the cookie without damaging the cookie too much. Once they mined all of the chocolate chips out, the mini miners attempted to put their cookies back to their original condition without the chocolate chips.

This small demonstration shows how difficult reclamation mining is. However, the effort put in to return the land to its previous state outweighs the difficulty. Tens of thousands of acres of land have been mined and returned to their land owners in the same condition, or better, to benefit them for years to come.



A group of camp attendees examine each other's work while mining their chocolate chip cookies.



FEM Electric,

The Aberdeen Head Start Preschool would like to thank you for your kind donation of bottled water! These were used for our end of the year field trip to Wylie Park/ Storybook Land. It allowed our preschoolers to stay hydrated in the heat! Your kindness is so very appreciated and we hope to partner with you again in the future!

Sincerely,
NESD Head Start Staff & Children.



Cam Wal Electric member Tami Schanzenbach with her dogs Mac, Cash and Blu. *Submitted Photo.*

RESCUING ANIMALS

Co-op Members Foster and Support Pets In Need

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Tami Schanzenbach has always wanted to help animals.

From her earliest days in Aberdeen where she worked as a veterinary technician and helped start the Aberdeen Area Humane Society, to her later Pets N Stuff store in Mobridge, Tami's focus has always been on humans' furry companions and getting them into loving homes.

And even after a long career and a so-called retirement, she still finds ways to help. Through the Wamakaskan Onisca Humane Society, she opens her home to animals in need.

"I'm a foster failure," Tami laughed, admitting three of her own beloved pet dogs were originally supposed to be adopted out.

Served by Cam Wal Electric, Tami's home near Selby is the halfway point for countless animals on their journey from neglect, abuse and homelessness to their forever homes.

"If I have a person that calls me, if someone has found a dog, I ask initially

if they're able to help me with taking care of that dog for a little bit until we can determine whether it belongs to somebody," she explained.

The pets will go to a foster home for the time being — Tami credits volunteers like her friend Annie Walker, a member of Moreau-Grand Electric from the McIntosh area, for stepping up and opening her home to foster animals.

"One day, Tami had a picture of a litter of puppies that needed to be bottle fed," Walker said about her first fostering experience.



Annie Walker with rescue, Layla. *Submitted Photo.*

I keep taking some animals from time to time."

If the dog isn't claimed, the rehoming process begins, starting with veterinary care.

"We go through and we vaccinate and treat the animal and do what's needed to be able to make that puppy or dog available for adoption," Tami continued.

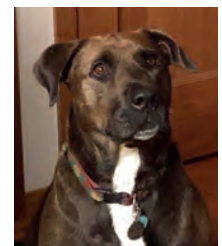
Sadly, the circumstances in which she receives them usually aren't pleasant.

The pets come from around Selby, many from the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations, where they're often found abandoned. Tami recalls coming upon shocking discoveries, like "bait dogs" used to train fighting dogs in the Bismarck area.

"People will steal puppies and kitties and train their pitbulls for fights, and they have a dog that's called a bait dog," she explained. "And that you see in our area as well ... days where [multiple] people are missing their dogs. People are coming in and stealing them and using them as bait dogs."

That's what Tami suspects happened to Cash, a 7-year-old pitbull/lab cross found "in the middle of nowhere" covered in pellet shots and bite marks.

"It took a long time for him to trust and know he's going to be okay here," Tami said. "And I don't



Cash, who was used as a "bait dog," was adopted by Tami. *Submitted Photo*

blame him, because he's never been taken care of.

Tami has made it her mission to end the cycle of animal neglect and abuse where she's able by sterilizing the pets coming into her care before they're adopted out. She also sponsors sterilizations for other peoples' pets.

"We just had about 12 dogs that we sponsored to be spayed at the local vet," she said. "We had a lady that helped me with a donation and wanted it geared toward people that couldn't afford to have their animals spayed and neutered ... We have so many people that always have two litters per year."

Stopping the cycle also means barriers to adoption – if someone isn't a good fit, there's a chance that animal will be surrendered back to the rescue and the process will start from the beginning.

Tami conducts interviews with potential pet owners with hopes of finding a perfect match.

She added that she sometimes steers people with busy and demanding schedules away from getting dogs. A cat – famously independent – is often a better fit, she said.

Tami also employs sustainable adoption practices she says make for better-behaved dogs – eight weeks is generally the earliest age when she'll allow adoptions to occur.

"We have puppy socialization that occurs" when the puppies are little, she explained. "They wrestle and play with their siblings, and they create a lot of socialization that way. And there's a lot of research that has proven that if you keep them with their siblings during that period of time, they make a heck of a lot better dog going forth, because they've been through that socialization."

Jen Uecker, Board President of the Pierre/Fort Pierre Area Humane Society, also known as Paws Animal Rescue, says without volunteers like Tami and Annie, shelters like hers would be overrun and rescuing animals from abandonment wouldn't be possible.

"We rely heavily on volunteers to help ease the burden of our limited staff and resources," Uecker said. "The foster volunteers open their home to these animals not really knowing a whole lot

about them, their demeanor, where they came from, or anything, and they open their homes to help them feel comfortable and confident until they're ready for their new forever family."

Tami encourages people to volunteer, support their local rescues, adopt if they're able and above all, love their pets.

"There are a lot of dogs and cats and it's just not their fault – they get the bad end of things," Walker said. "Tami is super dedicated ... She's always willing to step in and help these animals find a better life."

For Tami, it all comes down to giving that love back.

"They provide unconditional love to humans, and sometimes we forget that," she said. "We work all day ... When you come home, you need to spend some time with your pets."

HUMANE SOCIETY & SANCTUARY DIRECTORY

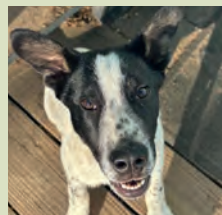
Wamakaskan Onsica (Mobridge).....	(605) 850-8430
Paws Animal Rescue (Pierre).....	(605) 223-2287
Sioux Falls Area Humane Society.....	(605) 338-4441
Humane Society of the Black Hills (Rapid City)....	(605) 394-4170
Battle Mountain Humane Society (Hot Springs)....	(605) 745-7283
Beadle County Humane Society (Huron).....	(605) 352-8955
Aberdeen Area Humane Society.....	(605) 226-1200
Glacial Lakes Humane Society (Watertown).....	(605) 882-2247
Brookings Regional Humane Society.....	(605) 697-7387
Western Hills Humane Society (Spearfish).....	(605) 642-1576
Heartland Humane Society (Yankton).....	(605) 664-4244
Siouxland Humane Society (Sioux City).....	(712) 252-2614
Mitchell Animal Rescue.....	(605) 770-2170
Oglala Pet Project (Kyle).....	(605) 455-1518
Wakpá Wašté Animal Shelter (Eagle Butte).....	(605) 964-7387
Fur and Purr Cat Shelter (Milbank).....	(605) 432-4505
Lake Traverse Animal Rescue (Sisseton).....	(605) 742-0219

Tami says her most rewarding rescue was Fez, an 8-week-old shepherd/collie cross found with mange, a skin disease caused by mites. She said she refused to give on Fez, who is now a healthy dog with a full coat of hair.
Submitted Photo.

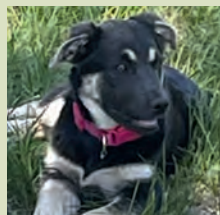


Looking for a new home...

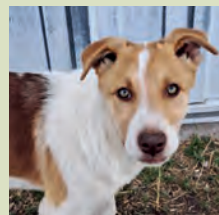
(plus many more)



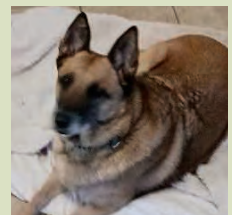
Buddy



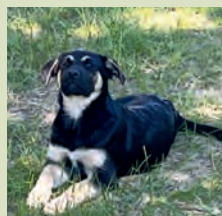
Margot



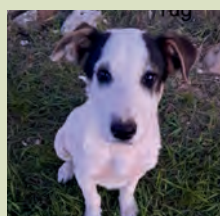
Chopper



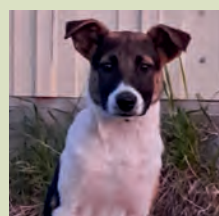
Eliza



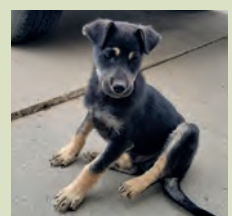
Agnes



Tug



Scooter



Leo



HOW TO KEEP YOUR DEVICES CHARGED WHEN YOU'RE OFF THE GRID

Spending time outdoors is important. It's also important to stay connected while you're camping, hiking or on the water so you can track weather conditions and handle emergencies.

Without easy access to outlets, keeping your electronics charged requires planning. Here are ways to extend battery life, and stay powered up and safe outdoors.

CHARGE BEFORE YOU GO

Fully charge your phone, camera, GPS or other devices before you hit the road. Don't forget extra batteries for flashlights or headlamps.

Keep chargers in your car, but only charge devices while the engine is running to avoid draining the car battery. Hide cords and chargers from view if you leave your car unattended.

PACK SMART

When you're camping, everything you pack needs to be worth its weight in gold, or at least double as a backup battery. Bring lightweight power banks and multi-use gear like solar lanterns with USB ports. Emergency radios and portable speakers often offer charging jacks, too.

OPTIMIZE BATTERY LIFE

Switch to airplane mode to prevent your phone from searching for a cell signal. This also helps you fully unplug without the distraction of text messages or Instagram notifications.

Turn off Bluetooth, Wi-Fi and GPS when not in use. Dim screen brightness or enable power saving mode — or simply turn your phone off when not in use. Save your battery for essential tasks such as navigation or emergencies.

CHOOSE CAMPSITES WITH POWER

Look for campgrounds with electric hookups to make charging simple and stress-free. Bring an outdoor-rated extension cord to charge multiple devices at once.

HARNESS ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

Flexible solar panel chargers are perfect for sunny days outdoors. Hook one up directly to your phone or power bank. For overcast conditions, hand-crank chargers can offer enough power for an emergency phone call, while wind, water and fire-powered options provide additional back up.

PROTECT YOUR DEVICES

Keeping your devices safe and functional is just as important as keeping them charged.

- Use waterproof cases to guard against rain or spills.
- Avoid extreme temperatures, as batteries drain faster in hot or cold weather. During cold weather, keep electronics close to your body for prolonged battery life.
- Store devices securely to prevent damage from falls or dirt exposure.

With these tips, you'll stay safe and connected while you recharge in the great outdoors — ready for any adventure!

QUICK TIPS:

- Bring power banks and a solar charger for backup power in the wilderness.
- Keep chargers in your car to recharge while you're on the road.
- Use airplane mode, dim screen brightness or simply turn off your phone to save battery life.
- Make sure you pack flashlights and extra batteries.



BLEND UP *Summer* REFRESHMENT

Nothing beats a refreshing smoothie on a hot summer day! Before you blend, keep electrical safety in mind:

- Dry your hands completely before plugging in or operating your blender.
- Plug your blender (and other high-wattage appliances) directly into an outlet instead of power strips to prevent overheating.
- Make sure kitchen outlets, and any outlets near a water source, have Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) protection to help prevent shock.
- Replace appliances with broken plugs or cords that look frayed, worn or cracked.
- Unplug your blender before removing stuck ingredients or cleaning it.
- Never submerge the blender base in water.

 **Safe
Electricity.org**®

TROPICAL SUMMER SMOOTHIE

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup frozen mango
- 1 banana
- ½ cup coconut water
- ½ cup Greek yogurt
- ½ cup pineapple chunks
- Ice as needed for desired consistency

DIRECTIONS:

1. Add the mango, banana, coconut water, yogurt and pineapple to blender.
2. Blend until smooth.
3. Add ice and blend until smooth.
4. Pour into glasses, enjoy!

(makes 2 servings)



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: _____



JULY 16-20

Danish Days

Dancing, food, parade, etc.
Viborg, 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.

SATURDAYS UNTIL SEPT. 13

Buggy Museum

Free Buggy Rides + More
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Stockholm, SD
605-938-4192

JUNE 20-22

Farley Fest

Milbank, SD
605-432-6656
www.farleyfest.com

JUNE 21

Fireman's Triathalon

8 a.m.-11 p.m.
Groton, SD

JUNE 25-28

Crystal Springs Rodeo

Clear Lake, SD
605-874-2996

JUNE 27-28

Buckhorn Rodeo

Britton, SD
605-880-5077

JUNE 27-29

Leola Rhubarb Festival

Leola, SD

JUNE 27-29

Bowdle Tower Days

Bowdle, SD

JULY 1-5

106th Annual Black Hills Roundup

Rodeo, Parades, Concerts & Fun
Belle Fourche, SD

JULY 9-12

Aberdeen Senior Games

605-626-7015

JULY 11-12

Frontier Days

White River, SD

JULY 12

39th Annual Spearfish Canyon Half Marathon & 5K

7 a.m.
Spearfish, SD
605-722-4558

JULY 17-20

Danish Days

Daneville Heritage Museum
Viborg, SD

JULY 19

6th Annual Wakonda

American Legion Tractor Pull

3 p.m. Start
4 p.m. Kids Pedal Pull
Wakonda, SD

JULY 25-27

Winner Elk's 56th Annual Rodeo to Benefit LifeScape

Tripp Co. Fairgrounds
Winner, SD
605-842-5830

JULY 25-27

Clear Lake Days

Clear Lake, SD
ClearLakeDays.com

JULY 26

Planes, Trains, & Automobiles

Car Show, Train Rides, Flyovers
10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

JULY 26

South Dakota Chislic Festival

Freeman, SD
www.sdchislicfestival.com

JULY 26

Richmond Lake Association's

Annual Pontoon Poker Run

Aberdeen, SD
605-225-0609

JULY 31

SPURS Grand Classic Horse Show

9 a.m.-4 p.m.
SPURS Therapeutic Riding Center
1006 130th St.
Aberdeen, SD
605-226-1099

Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.