

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## **Kuchen Country**

**German Delicacy  
Celebrates 25 Years as  
South Dakota's Official  
Dessert**

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**Swimming Safely**  
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FEM staff meet with the board of directors at the April board meeting.

## April 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 April 15, 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, Operation Manager Sean Christiansen and CEO Scott Moore.

Guest Employee: Angie Sieh

**Changes to the agenda:** None

**Changes/Additions to Minutes from March 18, 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 Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at FEM Electric Board Room in Ipswich, South Dakota.

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

Motion by Kelly Melius, seconded by Tom Thorpe and carried to acknowledge manager and staff reports.

Gary Bachman presented Supervisor and Management Development Program (SMDP) Certificate to FEM Electric Billing Clerk, Crystal Thorson with congratulations from board and staff.

Derrick Larson with Eide Bailly joined the board meeting by Teams and reviewed the 2024 annual audit. Derrick answered all questions and reported on a clean audit.

Motion by Paula Petersen seconded Tom Thorpe and carried to approve FEM Electric's 2024 annual audit.

March 2025 Cyber Security Report was acknowledged.

### Resolutions and Contracts:

Discussion on contractors and bidding process was had. The following motion was made.

Motion by Tom Thorpe seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to approve a 2025 construction contract with K&H Electric for installing underground primary wire.

### Membership Business:

Board acknowledged membership business.

### New Memberships, Member Cancellations and Contracts:

**Disconnects:** Mark & Deb Kindelspire, Faulkton, SD, Active Farm; Mark Myran, Ipswich, SD, Commercial; Aaron Roth, Roscoe, SD, Vacant Farm; Robert & Patricia Olson, Ipswich, SD, Active Farm; Scott Carlson, Seneca, SD, Active Farm

**Reconnects:** Jared & Amanda Kindelspire, Faulkton, SD, Active Farm; Gisi Pheasant Farm, LLC, Ipswich, SD, Commercial; Bryce Malsam, Roscoe, SD, Vacant Farm; Homestead Hunting & Lodge, LLC, Ipswich, SD, Active Farm; Gunner & Sami McGee, Seneca, SD, Active Farm

**Contracts:** Kevin & Tammy Heupel, Leola, SD, Shop/Cold Storage; Michael Neuharth, Eureka, SD, House

**Retired Locations:** Connie Seibold, Bismarck, SD, Vacant Farm; City of Eureka, Eureka, SD, Active Farm

Motion by Eric Odenbach seconded by Paula Petersen and carried to approve two line construction contracts with Kevin and Tammy Heupel and Michael Neuharth.

### Capital Credits:

**Estates - April 2025:** None

**73 & Older - April 2025:** None

Motion by Kelly Melius seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to allocate December 31, 2024, Patronage Capital and Operating Margins of \$896,764.81.

Motion by Paula Petersen seconded by Kelly Melius to approve the review of two market rate margins for Aberdeen Energy and Agtegra Bowdle.

Board acknowledged receipt of following financial business.

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

*Continued on page 6*



## 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.

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Design assistance by SDREA

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



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

Here's a reminder that the FEM Electric Annual Meeting is on June 24, 2025. Please come and enjoy a choice of three different meals along with some social time with friends that you may not have seen for a while. The meeting starts at 6:30 p.m. in the Ipswich Public School air-conditioned theater. We always try to keep the business meeting short and informative.

As I write this article President Trump has just completed his first one-hundred days in office and as expected many changes have been proposed in all areas of government. Electric cooperatives haven't been excluded and there are many changes we are yet to see the effects of in daily operations. FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) has been mentioned as on the cut list, but FEM Electric hasn't seen any changes yet. The FEMA program managed in South Dakota by South Dakota Emergency Management has been good partners with FEM Electric while recovering from ice and

windstorms. FEM Electric and many other agencies have applied and received funding for mitigation grants to help strengthen our distribution electric system. This is accomplished by installing underground cable or putting up larger poles closer together alongside our improvements. I'm guessing there may be some changes but with some hard work, good information, and excellent communications we will be able to save this program for all of America.

USDA/RUS is another service that FEM Electric has relied on for over seventy-five years to help fund our construction projects. In the past we have seen funding shortages along with labor shortages slowing paperwork completion and the completion of some local projects. Cooperative managers, staff, and directors have always figured out a way to get the work funded and completed and I'm sure we will do the same as we move into the future. I don't usually worry about topics that I can't control but like to stay informed as in

*Continued on page 6*

#### 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

June 27, 2025 for June's energy

July 29, 2025 for July's energy

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

# Summer Safety

## Mosquitoes and Ticks

*Source: American Red Cross*

Don't let mosquitoes and ticks ruin your carefree summer fun. As we spend more time outdoors for activities like camping, hiking, swimming, picnicking and barbecuing, there is a greater chance of getting bitten by mosquitoes and ticks. According to the American Mosquito Control Association there are 176 known species of mosquito in the U.S. – putting Americans at risk from coast to coast. And while mosquitoes may be the most obvious detractor from summer fun – ticks are silent but dangerous. Most active during warmer months (April to September), it is especially important to be vigilant of blacklegged ticks, more commonly known as deer ticks, especially if you live in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, North-central or Northwest.

Mosquitoes and ticks are more than just itchy and annoying – if infected, these pests can pose a major health risk to people by possibly transmitting diseases. Follow these tips to prevent mosquito and tick bites this summer:

- Use insect repellents containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) when you are outdoors. Be sure to follow the directions on the package.
- Consider staying indoors at dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants and tuck your pant legs into your socks or boots.



*Photo by Jimmy Chan*

- Use a rubber band or tape to hold pants against socks so that nothing can get under clothing.
- Tuck your shirt into your pants. Wear light-colored clothing to make it easier to see tiny insects or ticks.
- When hiking in woods and fields, stay in the middle of trails. Avoid underbrush and tall grass.
- If you are outdoors for a long time, check yourself several times during the day. Especially check in hairy areas of the body like the back of the neck and the scalp line.
- Inspect yourself carefully for insects or ticks after being outdoors or have someone else do it.
- If you have pets that go outdoors, spray with repellent made for their breed/type. Apply the repellent according to the label and check your pet for ticks often.
- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying sources of standing water outside of the home, such as from flowerpots, buckets and barrels.



### **"Never Touch a Power Line!!"**

#### **Kashton Schecher, Age 7**

Kashton cautions readers not to touch power lines. Thank you for your picture, Kashton! Kashton's parents are Brad and Brooke Schecher from Bison, 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.



# SOUPS & SALADS

## GERMAN KRAUT SOUP

### Ingredients:

2 pork steaks  
Water  
1 diced onion  
3 stalks celery  
1 large carrot  
Butter  
6 diced potatoes  
1 qt. sauerkraut  
3 cups heavy cream  
Salt and pepper (to taste)

### Method

Gently simmer pork steaks in about three cups of water until done. (You can substitute other meat you have on hand – left over roasts or Polish sausage is nice). Dice meat. Sauté onion, celery and carrots in butter. In a Crock-Pot, add four cups of water, potatoes, sautéed veggies, diced meat and sauerkraut. Cook on low four to six hours until potatoes are tender. Add cream, salt and pepper. Transfer to a serving dish to share and enjoy!

**Kari Bevers**  
Codington-Clark Electric Member

## BLACK BEAN SALAD

### Ingredients:

3 tbsps. lemon juice  
1 clove garlic (minced)  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/4 tsp. pepper  
3/4 tsp. ground cumin  
2 tbsps. olive oil  
(2)15 oz. cans black beans (drained and rinsed)  
1 pt. cherry tomatoes (halved)  
4 scallions or green onions  
1 yellow or green bell pepper (cut into thin strips)  
3 tbsps. fresh cilantro or parsley (chopped)

### Method

In a small bowl, stir together lemon juice, garlic, salt, pepper and cumin until salt is dissolved. Slowly whisk in oil until dressing mixture thickens. In a large bowl combine beans, tomatoes, scallions or onions, peppers and cilantro or parsley. Toss with dressing to coat. Let stand at least 15 minutes before serving. \*Makes 6 servings.

**Reta Eidem**  
Clay-Union Electric Member

## LASAGNA SOUP

### Ingredients:

1 lb. lean ground beef  
1 cup chopped onion  
1 can (28 oz.) petite diced tomatoes, undrained  
1 can (15 oz.) tomato sauce  
2 tbsp. garlic, herb and black pepper and sea salt all purpose seasoning  
1 container (32 oz.) chicken stock, (4 cups)  
8 oz. (about 10) lasagna noodles, broken into small pieces

### Method

Brown ground beef in large saucepan on medium heat. Drain fat. Add onion; cook and stir 2 to 3 minutes or until softened.

Stir in tomatoes, tomato sauce, Seasoning and stock. Bring to boil. Add lasagna noodle pieces; cook 6 to 7 minutes or until noodles are tender.

Ladle soup into serving bowls. Serve with dollops of ricotta cheese and sprinkle with shredded mozzarella cheese, 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 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

## **Board Report Continued from page 2**

financial information: The check register for the month of March 2025 contained information on checks #35150 through #35231 and all automatic payments/withdrawals for March 2025 totaling \$1,195,414.52.

### **March Financials:**

1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2025 Budget Projection Update with TIER  
RUS and CFC Loan Summaries  
2024 Audited RUS Statistical and Operating Report  
CFC MCS and SCTC interest  
CFC Benefits of Ownership Statement 12/31/2024

Motion by Paula Petersen seconded by Kelly Melius to authorize board members to sign RUS Special Construction Fund Transfer Confirmation in the amount of \$1,085,000 on 03/27/2025.

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

**Legal Update:** Moore reported on Leola Data Center/MDU territory transfer. Moore also reported that FEM is working with Eide Bailly on past issues with the IRS.

### **Meeting Report:**

East River monthly board report was given by Gary Bachman along with a video report.  
Tom Thorpe also reviewed SDREA board meeting and discussion.

The safety meeting minutes from March 26, 2025, were acknowledged.

Safety Committee meeting minutes from March 31, 2025, were acknowledged.

Employee meeting minutes from March 18, 2025, were acknowledged.

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



## **Manager's Article Continued from page 3**

most cases sometimes we just need to discuss issues with the right people who are helping make the final decisions.

As we move through uncertain times, I'm guessing if we work together as a team locally, statewide, and nationally we will keep our goals in sight: providing affordable, reliable, and safe power to rural America.

As we move into summer, please remember to be safe while working in the fields and traveling on summer vacation.

If you are planning on adding any electrical load, please contact Ryan Holien or Sean Christensen early in the planning process.

Remember working as a TEAM big things get done.

## **ENERGY EFFICIENCY** TIP OF THE MONTH

Take advantage of the warmer weather to reduce home energy use. Avoid using your oven and use a grill instead. Not only will cooking outdoors eliminate the energy used to power the oven or stove, but it will also avoid raising the temperature inside your home, reducing the need for additional air conditioning.

You can also avoid using the oven with tasty no-bake recipes. Get creative in the kitchen and explore new ways to save energy!

Source: [energy.gov](https://www.energy.gov)



# OFFICIAL NOTICE

**FEM Electric Association, Inc.**

## Official Notice of Annual Meeting of Members

Notice is hereby given that the 77th Annual Meeting of the members of FEM Electric Association, Inc., will be held at the Ipswich High School in the City of Ipswich, State of South Dakota, at **six-thirty p.m. on Tuesday, June 24th, 2025**, for the purpose of:

1. The reports of officers, directors and committees
2. The election of directors for three-year terms

With the election of a director at this meeting, the following member has been nominated for director by the Nominating Committee in accordance with the bylaws of the Cooperative:

- Eric Odenbach - District 1
- Paula Petersen - District 4

Please take further notice that any fifteen or more members of the cooperative may make additional nominations by listing their nominee and the appropriate Directorate District and signing such Petition of Nomination. The petition must be submitted to the board of directors at least 25 day prior to the annual meeting. Any such petition so submitted will be posted, along with the list of nominations made by the Nominating Committee.

3. Transacting any such other business as may properly come before the meeting or any adjournment thereof.

*Eric Odenbach, Secretary*  
FEM Electric Association, Inc.



**FEM ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
**IPSWICH, SOUTH DAKOTA**  
**May 1, 2025**

We, the Nominating Committee, in session on May 1, 2025, at the Beck Law Office in Ipswich, South Dakota, hereby nominate the following:

**District 1 – Eric Odenbach**

**District 4 – Paula Petersen**

*Brian Ingerson*  
Chairman

*for [Signature]*  
Secretary

We, the undersigned, certify that the foregoing minutes are true and correct.

*for [Signature]*  
*Brian Ingerson*  
*Paula Petersen*  
*[Signature]*  
*[Signature]*

We, the Nominating Committee, wish to place the above names in nomination.





Pietz's Kuchen Kitchen & Specialties employees Amanda Garcia and Myra Bachman with owners Lori and Roger Pietz.  
Photo by Jacob Boyko

# SOUTH DAKOTA IS KUCHEN COUNTRY

## German Delicacy Celebrates 25 Years as State's Official Dessert

**Jacob Boyko**

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

On a brisk spring morning, balls of dough rise hours before the sun. One at a time, they're placed onto a press and flattened before being positioned into tins. Carefully, Lori Pietz ladles custard overtop, sprinkles in fruit, and passes off a tray of the desserts to her husband, Roger, for baking. As Roger pulls open the door of the stainless steel commercial oven, a wave of heat emanates across the kitchen. He slides the tray of five desserts onto a shelf in the oven, then removes another tray and sets it aside to cool before they begin packaging.

Roger and Lori will repeat this process at least 100 more times this morning to keep up with their customers' orders.

In the town of Scotland, northwest of Yankton, Pietz's Kuchen Kitchen & Specialties is one business that has turned South Dakotans' love for kuchen – a

delectable unification of cake, custard and pie – into a thriving business.

Kuchen, the German word for cake, has been a staple at European kitchen tables for centuries. The delicacy has stood the test of time, continuing to serve as a tea-time – or any-time – favorite across cultures and continents, especially right here in South Dakota.

"I think it's because of the population, because the greatest proportion of immigrants (in South Dakota) are the Germans from Russia," co-owner Lori Pietz said of kuchen's popularity. "There are German areas, there are Czech areas, there are Norwegian areas — but there are a lot of Germans from Russia."

Roger comes from one of those German-Russian families where the tradition of baking homemade kuchen has been passed down for generations.

"I watched my mother make kuchen as a little kid," Roger remembered. "I'd stand a little ways from the oven and I'd watch

her make it and I loved it."

Staying true to his German-Russian roots, Roger's love for kuchen never faded. After marrying Lori, Roger remembers telling her that if he could ever recreate his mother's kuchen recipe, he could probably market it and sell it.

Owning a kuchen shop was always a retirement dream, the couple recalled. But after going through several farm accidents, the Pietzs' decided to pivot in 2008. Trading plows for whisks, Pietz's Kuchen became a reality.

The operation quickly outgrew their make-shift basement kitchen, so Roger and Lori opened up a storefront and commercial kitchen in the nearby town of Scotland in 2011.

Today, the store ships an estimated 2,500 kuchen monthly to grocery stores, butcher shops, and restaurants across South Dakota and the Midwest.

Roger and Lori's kuchen offerings range from Americanized options – blueberry, peach, strawberry – to the more traditional blends of 18th and 19th century Europe, including rhubarb,



prune and cottage cheese.

Lori explained that historically kuchen was made using ingredients that were readily available, making it the ideal comfort-food and cultural dish for immigrants building their lives on South Dakota farms.

“There are a lot of Germans from Russia who brought rhubarb over with them, so they made a lot of rhubarb kuchen,” Lori said. “Flour and sugar were available, and they all had chickens and cows, so that’s kind of how it kept going.”

Lori didn’t grow up eating much kuchen. Her mother, who was of Czech descent, favored fluffy pastries called kolaches – filled with jam, poppy seeds or cream cheese.

But once Lori joined the Pietz family, she saw an opportunity to bridge both traditions. Drawing on the popularity of poppy seed kolaches in the Czech community, she created a Czech-inspired twist: poppy seed kuchen.

“There’s a lot of Czech people out there that like poppy seed kolaches,” Roger said. “And when they hear there’s poppy seed kuchen, they’re buying it.”

Kuchen’s footprint in South Dakota extends far beyond Scotland. Annual events like the Kuchen Festival in Delmont and Schmeckfest in Freeman invite locals and visitors alike to sample a variety of recipes and baking styles.

In McPherson County, the town of Eureka also has a reputation for being a kuchen-tasting hot spot, with several local kitchens offering their own takes on the dish.

South Dakotans’ love for kuchen runs so deep that it’s been codified into law; In 2000, State Sen. James Lawler, whose district included Eureka, helped lead the charge in Pierre to designate kuchen as the official state dessert.

Lawler, who once served as a judge for a local kuchen contest in Eureka, said the bill was part of a broader push to support local industries and breathe new life into small towns.

“The town of Eureka really got behind me and supported that bill,” Lawler recalled. “Those women up there got together and made enough kuchen for the whole legislature, and we fed them all and got the bill passed.”

A framed commemorative print of that bill hangs on the wall by the checkout counter in Roger and Lori’s shop – a tribute to all of the kuchen fans who have made their business what it is today.

“If you asked me 15 years ago what our business was going to be...I’d have said we’d sell a few,” Roger laughed. “I thought if it flopped, my friends would buy some from me and they wouldn’t let me down. Never did I anticipate this. Never. It’s just unbelievable.”

## The Germans From Russia

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Russian leaders made an appeal to German families to emigrate to Russia, promising land, religious freedom and military service exemptions.

According to the Prairie Public Broadcasting documentary, *The Germans From Russia: Children of the Steppe*, Children of the Prairie, the first wave of German immigrants arrived in 1764 during the reign of Catherine the Great. For Catherine, this was strategic; adding population to the sparser areas of her empire not only developed Russia’s agricultural economy, but also helped create a buffer against invaders from central Asia.

The settlements dotted the Volga River in Russia and the Black Sea in modern Ukraine and Crimea. The German villages closely resembled the communities they left behind as well as the ones they’d later build on the American prairie, with distinct churches and earth-brick houses.

While the Germans held onto their language, culture, and customs, Slavic influence gives the Germans from Russia a distinct identity. One notable difference is in their kuchen. While the traditional German dish resembles a yeast-based fruit cake, the eastern version is typically richer and made with custard.

Later in the 19th century, the special privileges German settlers had been granted were slowly being eroded. The Germans’ special status was lowered to that of common peasants, they could now be drafted into the Russian army, and were forced to assimilate to the Russian language and education system.

Many German settlers left their villages in Russia to start over once again in North America and South America, while those remaining in Russia would go on to suffer through civil and world wars and the man-made Holodomor famine during the 20th century.

The Germans who had settled the banks of the Volga River went on to populate large swaths of Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado, while the Germans from the Black Sea region primarily settled the Dakota Territory and Canada – bringing kuchen with them.

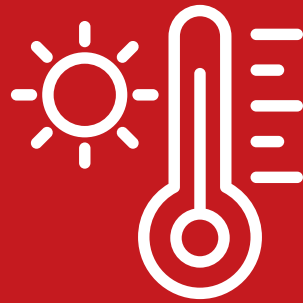


Fruit is sprinkled over the dough, followed by a ladle of custard. Lori Pietz uses a scale to ensure nutrition labeling is precise.

*Photo by Olivia Opland*

## Safety Tip

If you work outdoors, hydration is key. Drink water every 15 minutes, even if you're not thirsty, to help prevent heat exhaustion. Take breaks in a shady or a cool area, and schedule heavy work for cooler times of day.

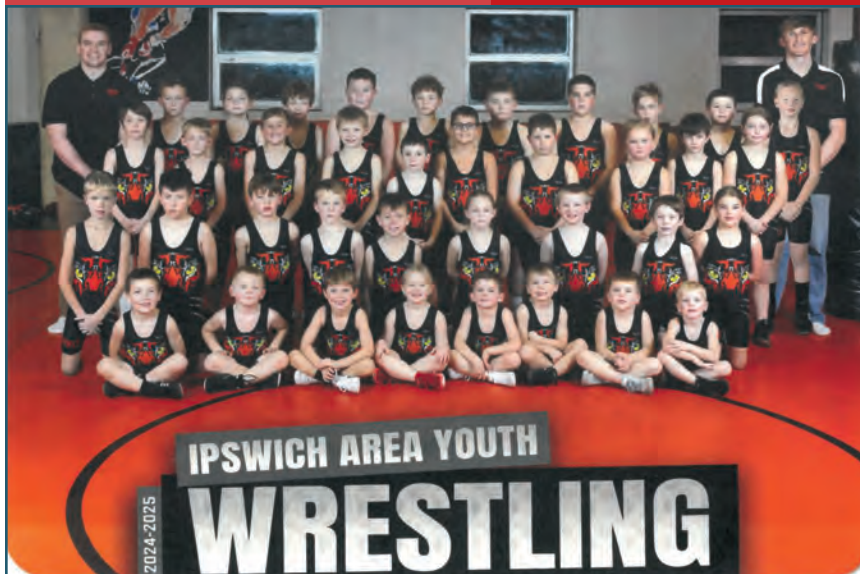


Safe  
Electricity.org®

## TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Some scammers will pose as utility workers or contractors affiliated with your electric utility by knocking on your door and claiming to be employed or hired by the utility company. They may claim they were hired to reset, repair, replace or inspect your electric meter or other utility-related device. If a utility employee or authorized contractor needs access to your home, we will schedule an appointment in advance, and proper identification will be provided for your review.

Source: Utilities United  
Against Scams



Thank you for volunteering at our Ipswich wrestling tournaments in 2025. Our tournaments were a huge success. Our youth wrestlers have had a fun season and were coached by 2 NSU wrestlers Ayden Viox and Ryan Hirschorn. We appreciate all of our volunteers who make our Ipswich Area Youth Wrestling successful.

Thank you for donating winter for our home wrestling tournaments we appreciate your support in making our tournaments successful!  
Ipswich Wrestling Booster Club  
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# FEM EMPLOYEE OBTAINS PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE

## CRYSTAL THORSON ACHIEVES MILESTONE IN NATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Across the U.S., a vast number of supervisors and management staff at electric cooperatives, public power districts and public utility districts are participating in the Supervisor and Manager Development Program from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

FEM Electric is recognizing Crystal Thorson for her commitment to professional development and leadership best practices by achieving the SMDP-20 level in the Supervisor and Manager Development Program (SMDP).

NRECA created the SMDP specifically for employees responsible for leading others. The SMDP is a tiered educational program in which participants earn recognition for every five credits of SMDP course work they successfully complete. Achieving the SMDP-20 level in the program requires active participation in 20 credits worth of SMDP course work. This course work focuses on strengthening the leadership skills, knowledge and abilities needed to hire, develop and lead others, manage performance, build teams, communicate effectively and make decisions.

The leadership skills, knowledge and abilities covered in the SMDP are based on the input from electric cooperative leaders across the nation. Only rural electric cooperative, public power and public utility district employees participate in the program, ensuring the program's focus and content is on leadership challenges unique to these organizations.

NRECA represents more than 900 consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives, public power districts and public utility districts in the United States. These utilities provide electricity to approximately 42 million consumers in 47 states and sell approximately 12% of all electric energy sold in the United States. FEM Electric services approximately 1,294 members in Faulk, Edmunds and McPherson counties in South Dakota.



Dear FEM-

Thank you for your donation of bottled water. It's perfect to hand out for the runners at the FUN/RUN - EurekaFest!

Thanks again-

EurekaFest Committee

# SWIMMING SAFELY

## Tips to Ensure Your Family Swims Safe This Summer

Jacob Boyko

[jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop](mailto:jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop)

The leading cause of death for American children under the age of five: drowning.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 4,000 fatal drownings occur each year in the U.S., with the number of deaths sharply increasing in May and reaching a peak in July.

And according to Consumer Affairs, that number has been on the rise since 2020, especially among young children.

Whether at a waterpark, lake, backyard pool, or even a hot tub, being safety-aware and educating others can prevent drownings and other pool accidents and save lives.

According to Holly Hardy, aquatics director for the Oahe Family YMCA in Pierre, safety begins with supervision.

“Somebody should always be observing the water when there are kids in a pool,”

Hardy said. “It doesn’t matter if it’s our (YMCA) pool, a backyard pool, or the river. There needs to be a person there that’s responsible for watching the kids.”

At the YMCA’s pool, lifeguards who aren’t sure about a child’s swimming skills can have them do a swim test, where the child has to either show they can swim the length of the pool or remain in the shallow end.

“At our (YMCA) pool, we have those big slides and kids want to go down them because their buddies are going down them, and they want to go down but they can’t swim,” Hardy explained. “That’s where we pull the most people out of the water – the slide or the diving board.”

The YMCA lifeguards also have a rule against seeing how long you can hold your breath – children can hyperventilate before submerging and faint, which is called a

hypoxic blackout. Hardy also stresses the importance of swimming lessons, since understanding basics like how to float, swim, exit water and feeling oriented and calm are critical for water safety. She recommends to begin swimming lessons as soon as possible – The YMCA offers swimming lessons for children as young as six months old.

But swimming lessons are not a substitute for properly securing a pool.

According to Consumer Affairs, 87% of fatal drownings for the 0-5 age range occur in backyard pools.

That’s why a sturdy fence and self-latching gate around the pool area are still essential for preventing accidents. Even temporary mesh fence options can work in some instances.

Additionally, submersion alarms and door alarms can audibly alert you when someone enters the pool or pool area.

By communicating the pool safety rules to children and guests, as well as taking preventive measures to prevent accidents in the first place, you may be saving lives.



# Pool Safety Checklist

## Is there supervision?

- All children should be under responsible adult supervision.
- Designate “water watchers” and minimize distractions.
- Keep a phone close by for calling 911.
- Always swim with a buddy – Never alone.
- Keep throwing equipment or reaching equipment nearby.
- Consider CPR training – it could save a life.

## Can everybody in the pool swim?

- Ensure everyone in the pool can at least swim from one end of the pool and back.
- Weak or new swimmers should keep to shallow water and use flotation aids.
- Parents should stay close – preferably within arm’s reach – to weak or new swimmers.
- Sign up for swimming lessons – it’s a lifesaving skill.

## Are there safety barriers?

- Install and maintain a proper fence and self-latching gate around the pool.
- Consider a door alarm and pool alarm for an audible alert when someone enters the pool or pool area.
- Hot tubs should have properly-latched covers.

## Recognize hazards.

- Stay away from drains and water intake pipes, as body parts, hair, jewelry, and loose clothing can get pulled in. Drains should have anti-entanglement drain covers, and pumps should have accessible shut-offs.
- Ensure tiles, handrails, anti-slip pads, and ladders are properly installed and maintained.

- Electrical work should be done by a qualified electrician. Chargers, extension cords and other electronics should be kept away from the pool area.
- Check your pool water regularly to avoid illness from contaminants and chemical burns.
- Avoid slips and falls by picking up pool toys and other hazards. Do not run or roughhouse near the pool.
- If you’re not sober, don’t swim.
- Diving can result in serious injury. Make sure others know when a pool is not safe for diving.
- Store pool chemicals and additives somewhere inaccessible to children.
- Ensure proper lighting is installed around the pool area and never swim in the dark.
- Consider an animal escape ramp for pets and wild animals.

## Remind your children and guests...

Establish pool-safe rules for your children and any guests at your home. Remind your children to...

- Never swim without permission and supervision. Other children are not supervisors.
- Don’t enter a pool area or go near water alone.
- Never roughhouse or run in the pool area.
- Never dive in shallow water.
- Stay away from chemicals and additives.
- Keep the pool area tidy and hazard-free.
- Keep electrical devices and cords away from the pool area.
- Never hyperventilate or try and see how long you can hold your breath underwater. Hyperventilating can induce fainting, called hypoxic blackouts and lead to drowning.



# DO NOT OVERLOOK OVERHEAD POWER LINES

It can be easy to overlook things that we see every day, including overhead power lines. However, failure to notice overhead lines can be deadly. If you or an object you are touching contacts or gets too close to a power line, you could be seriously injured or killed.

Overhead power lines require 10 feet of clearance in all directions. This distance rule applies to the power lines draped from pole to pole that line roads (distribution lines), as well as the drop-down lines that service homes or other structures.

If your job requires you to operate equipment in the vicinity of large transmission lines and towers, they require even more clearance than distribution and drop-down lines. That clearance is determined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). OSHA mandates line clearance distances for all types of power lines.

Be mindful of overhead power lines when completing the following tasks:

## **Home maintenance**

Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long tools, such as ladders, pool skimmers and pruning poles. Lower long tools and equipment before moving or transporting them. Other safety tips include:

- Carry ladders and other long items horizontally whenever possible.
- Be careful when working on or around your roof.
- Never go on a roof in windy or bad weather.

## **Yard work**

When trimming trees, do not allow yourself or trimmers to

come within 10 feet of overhead power lines, including service lines to your home or outbuilding. Also:

- Do not trim trees near power lines; instead, leave this to certified line clearance tree trimmers.
- Do not use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines.

## **Farming**

Review power line locations and other potential electrical hazards with all workers at morning safety meetings. Equipment that could get too close or contact a power pole or line includes sprayer tips, tall equipment, dump trucks, augers and other extensions.

## **At work**

Follow all OSHA distance requirements when operating dump trucks, cranes, concrete pump truck extensions and when working on a roof or in a bucket.

## **Other reminders**

Do not come within 50 feet of a downed or damaged power line. Warn others to stay away. Call 9-1-1 to report it.

Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines are not touching the tree, they could come in contact when weight is added to the branch.

Look up and look out for overhead power lines. Contact can happen in an instant. For additional electrical safety tips, go to [safeelectricity.org](http://safeelectricity.org).



# *Who's calling you?*

## It might be us!

When our linemen are in your area, they may need to contact you regarding maintenance work. FEM does not provide linemen with cell phones. This means they are calling you from their personal numbers.

You may see their number come up as unknown or from a town or city not local to our area depending on their cell carrier.



**Remember:** FEM staff or linemen will never ask you for your social security number or demand payment over the phone. If you receive a call like this, hang up!



**JUNE 19-21**  
**Czech Days**  
 Music, Dancing, Foods & Parades  
 Tabor, SD

*Photo courtesy of Travel South Dakota*

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.

**MAY 24-SEPT. 13**  
**Buggy Museum**  
 Free Buggy Rides + More  
 Saturdays 10 a.m.-4 p.m.  
 Stockholm, SD  
 605-938-4192

**JUNE 5**  
**Danish Constitution Day Celebration**  
 6:15 p.m.-9 p.m.  
 Danish Folk Dancing & Music  
 Viborg, SD  
 danevilleheritage.com

**JUNE 5, 7**  
**Wheel Jam**  
 7 p.m.  
 Dakota State Fair Speedway  
 Huron, SD

**JUNE 6**  
**Northern Bull Riding Tour**  
 6:30 p.m.  
 Madison, SD  
 www.prairievillage.org

**JUNE 6**  
**Joy Fest**  
 John Mogen Piano Performance  
 7 p.m. CDT  
 Okaton, SD  
 cristenjoyphotography.com

**JUNE 6-8**  
**SDHSRA Regional Rodeos**  
 Buffalo, Huron, Wall, Kadoka, SD  
 www.sdhsra.com

**JUNE 7**  
**Eureka Citywide Rummage Sale**  
 Eureka, SD  
 605-230-1777

**JUNE 7**  
**Car Show & Kids Carnival**  
 11 a.m.-3 p.m.  
 202 2nd St. SE  
 Watertown, SD

**JUNE 7**  
**Prairie Village Tractor Pull**  
 3 p.m.  
 Madison, SD  
 www.prairievillage.org

**JUNE 11**  
**Agricultural Women's Day**  
 9 a.m.-4 p.m.  
 Agar-Blunt-Onida School  
 Onida, SD  
 605-769-0013

**JUNE 13-15**  
**SDHSRA Regional Rodeos**  
 Dupree, Watertown,  
 New Underwood, Winner, SD

**JUNE 13-15**  
**Ipswich Trail Days**  
 Ipswich, SD  
 ipswichtraildays.com  
 ipswichtraildays@gmail.com

**JUNE 14**  
**Roslyn Vinegar Festival**  
 Roslyn, SD  
 320-808-8873

**JUNE 15, 29**  
**1880 Train Old West Shootout**  
 5 p.m.  
 Hill City, SD

**JUNE 17-21**  
**SDHSRA State Finals Rodeo**  
 Fort Pierre, SD

**JUNE 20-22**  
**Farley Fest**  
 Milbank, SD  
 605-432-6656  
 www.farleyfest.com

**JUNE 21**  
**Hobby Horse Relay**  
 McCrossan Boys Ranch  
 1 p.m.  
 Lake Lorraine  
 Sioux Falls, 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

**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.