

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Preserving Our Past

**Historical Society Unveils
New Cultural Heritage Center**
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Co-op Summer Outreach
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June 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 June 19, 2026, 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, Eric Odenbach, Tom Thorpe, Kelly Melius and Paula Petersen. Electrical Manager Ryan Holien, Director of Finance and Benefits Rhonda Tuscherer, and CEO Scott Moore.

Guest Employee: Perry Ptacek

Guest Member: Josh Heinrich

Changes to the agenda: none

Changes/Additions to Minutes from April 21, 2026, meeting: Under Changes/Additions Changed January to March.

Added Tom to motion to approve administrative business.

Changes/Additions to Minutes from May 19, 2026 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, July 21, 2026, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at FEM Electric Board Room in Ipswich, South Dakota.

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

The board and staff watched NRECA Governance Video titled "Building a Relationship Between the Board and the CEO".

Moved by Tom Thorpe seconded by Paula Petersen and carried to acknowledge the manager and staff reports along with East River Electric load management report.

The board acknowledges receiving and reviewing May 2026 Cyber Security Report.

No Executive Session but the board had a conversation to discuss FEM Electric's East River board seat as FEM's current East River board member Gary Bachman will officially retire June 23, 2026.

Resolutions and Contracts:

CEO Moore presented Memorandum for nominations to run for CFC District 6 manager-director board seat. No action needed or taken.

Moved by Tom Thorpe seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to nominate Kelly Melius as East River Voting Delegate and Tom Thorpe as Alternate Voting Delegate.

Membership Business:

Board acknowledged membership business.

New Memberships, Member Cancellations and Contracts:

Disconnects: Allene Eisenbeisz, Bowdle, SD, Vacant Farm; Hoffman Family, LLC, Leola, SD, House; Jamie & Sara Unser, Ipswich, SD, Active Farm; Judith & John Baudler, Arden Hills, MN, Pasture Pump
Reconnects: Blake & Glenda Eisenbeisz, Bowdle, SD, Vacant Farm; Kyler & Morgan Johnson, House; Karla & Shane Smetana, Cold Spring, MN, Active Farm; Dalton & Jamie Ellefson, Eureka, SD, Pasture Pump
Contracts: Gary & Leann Hardie, Seneca, SD, House; Tim Mehlhaff, Eureka, SD, 3 Phase Grain Bins; Wade & Judy Weiszhaar, Leola, SD, Calving Barn; Jerrad & Danielle Hoffman, Bowdle, SD, House
Retired Locations: None

Moved by Kelly Melius seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to approve service contracts for Gary and Leann Hardie, Tim Mehlhaff, Wade and Judy Weiszhaar, Jarrad and Danielle Hoffman.

Capital Credits:

Estates - June 2026: Two = \$2,318.45
73 & Older - June 2026: Two = \$3,170.62

Board acknowledged receipt of following financial business.

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

The check register for the month of May 2026 contained information on checks

Continued on page 6

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

FEM ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

(USPS 189-720)

Board of Directors

Tom Thorpe, President
Kelly Melius, Vice President
Eric Odenbach, Secretary
Paula Petersen, Treasurer
Josh Heinrich, 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.

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Design assistance by SDREA

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



Scott Moore
General Manager/CEO

Happy 250th Birthday America. The Rural Electric Act (REA) currently named Rural Utility Service (RUS) is turning ninety this year and FEM is the youngest of the three at eighty years old. At first, I thought these numbers were old but, in all reality, I would have to say rural electric is a young industry.

- Co-ops serve **42 million** people, including **92%** of persistent poverty counties.
- Co-ops power over **22 million** businesses, homes, schools and farms in 48 states.
- Co-ops return more than **\$1 billion** to their consumer-members annually as not-for-profit organizations.
- **830 distribution cooperatives** are the foundation of the electric cooperative network. They were built by and serve co-op members

in the community by delivering electricity and other services.

- **64 generation & transmission cooperatives** provide wholesale power to distribution co-ops through their own electric generation facilities or by purchasing power on behalf of the distribution members.
- **Rural Electric's serve 56%** of the landscape in some of the most rural areas in America.

Electric cooperatives have come a long way in the past ninety years, from digging holes and setting poles by hand and recording financials and membership business on large paper ledgers.

What will help keep the rural economy strong? Good business practice and strong leadership at your local electric and phone cooperatives along with our rural water systems. We need each other to continue to be successful. South

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

August 27, 2026 for August's energy
September 30, 2026 for September's energy

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



As unmanned aerial systems (UAS) increasingly populate recreational and professional skies, safety remains paramount – especially near critical infrastructure such as overhead power lines. Today we reaffirm that drones should be flown in open spaces away from electrical lines and substations to prevent power outages and dangerous debris that can threaten public safety.

A drone colliding with a power line can cause outages and, if lines are downed, create serious electrical hazards for anyone nearby. Touching downed lines or debris that has fallen on fences, trees or other objects can result in severe injury or death. If you encounter downed power lines, immediately call 911 and notify emergency personnel and the utility company.

To ensure safe and compliant drone operations, follow federal registration and business-approval requirements, and stay informed about local, state and community regulations. FAA safety guidelines remain essential: Inspect your drone for damage before each flight and repair any issues prior to use. Fly at or below 400 feet unless FAA authorization or an allowed exception applies. Maintain visual line of sight; do not fly beyond it. Avoid airports, manned aircraft, stadiums and crowds of people. Do not fly for unapproved commercial purposes without FAA authorization. Refrain from flying in bad weather, including low visibility or high winds. Never fly recklessly or endanger others; violations can result in fines and penalties.

It is encouraged that drone operators plan routes

that maximize safety and minimize proximity to power infrastructure. Responsible pilots, adherence to FAA guidelines and awareness of local rules can prevent outages, injuries and potentially tragic consequences. For more information on legal requirements and best practices, consult FAA resources and your local utility providers.

Together, we can enjoy the benefits of drone technology while safeguarding our communities and critical electrical infrastructure.

As drone use expands, operators should build safety into every mission from the outset. Calibration, pre-flight checklists, and robust maintenance programs help catch issues before takeoff. Operators are encouraged to use situational awareness tools, such as real-time weather updates and wind assessments, to adjust flight plans accordingly. Community education events and outreach can foster a responsible culture among hobbyists and professionals alike, reinforcing the shared responsibility to protect power networks and nearby residents. By prioritizing safety, we preserve access to this transformative technology for all.



"Call 811 before you dig – always."

Laina Nelson, age 10

Laina reminds members to always call 811 before digging. Thank you for sharing your picture, Laina! Laina's parents are Nathan and Kristen Nelson – members of H-D 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.



Family FAVORITES

PARTY IN A PAN

Ingredients:

1 1/2 lbs. hamburger, browned
1 can cream of celery soup
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 box Stove Top Stuffing Mix
1 can corn, drained
3 cups mozzarella cheese,
shredded

Method

Combine the hamburger, celery soup and chicken soup in a bowl and set aside. Prepare the Stove Top Stuffing as directed on the box. Layer half the hamburger mixture, half the corn, half the stuffing and half the cheese; repeat layers again. Bake 30-40 minutes at 350°F or until cheese is melted. Makes 9x13 inch pan.

Kathy Zomer
Douglas Electric

WALLEYE WITH HORSERADISH SAUCE

Ingredients:

2 lbs. walleye fillets
1 cup Lawry's Herb & Garlic
marinade
1 tsp. Lawry's Season Salt
1 tsp. lemon pepper
1/4 cup butter
2 tbsp. horseradish
2 tsp. dill

Method

Marinate fish in herb & garlic marinade for 30 minutes. Drain. Sprinkle with season salt and lemon pepper. Bake fish until it flakes. Melt butter in saucepan. Remove from heat and add horseradish. Spoon onto fillet after cooked. Sprinkle on dill and serve.

Valerie Marso
Oahe Electric

BBQ MEATBALLS

Ingredients:

Meatballs

3# ground beef
1 can (12 oz.) evaporated milk
1 cup oatmeal
1 cup cracker crumbs
2 eggs
1/2 cup finely chopped onion
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
2 tsp. chili powder

Sauce

2 cups ketchup
1 cup brown sugar
1/2 tsp. liquid smoke, or to taste
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1/4 cup finely chopped onion

Method

Mix all meatball ingredients together and shape into meatballs. Place meatballs in a baking dish.

Mix all sauce ingredients together and pour over meatballs. Cover and bake at 350°F for one hour. The meatballs can be made ahead of time and frozen for several weeks. This makes a large batch, so it can be divided into smaller batches and frozen.

Karen Soulek
Charles Mix Electric

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 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

BOARD REPORT CONTINUED

Board Report continued from page 2

#36266 through #36334 and automatic payments/withdrawals for May 2026 totaling \$878,343.02.

May 2026 financials were reviewed.

Motion by Paula Petersen seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to approve IRS Form 990.

Federated Umbrella limit increase – no action, will be reviewed in July.

Moved by Eric Odenbach seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to approve board expense reports and attorney fees.

Legal Update: Moore reported on Leola Data and that it seems will continue through the process at South Dakota PUC.

Meeting Report:

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

The safety meeting minutes from May 22, 2026, were acknowledged along with employee meeting minutes held on June 3, 2026.

Adjourn: President Gary Bachman declared the meeting adjourned.



Manager's Report continued from page 3

Dakota has some of the best residents and many, if not most, rely on the cooperative business model to provide services to keep them prosperous.

To all the members, employees and directors that came before us, thank you for putting policies and programs in place to keep rural America strong.

FEM has requested that Star Engineering do a "Cost of Service Study" to help evaluate our current electrical rates and what may need changing. In July of 2025 electric cooperatives received notice of an 18.7% purchased power price increase from Basin Electric. After some negotiating, we were able to get the first year at around 9% increase knowing in January 2027 that power cost would increase again. As we move through this process, we will keep our members informed but with the help of the cost-of-service study our main objective is to make sure all members are paying their fair share and not subsidizing someone's power bill.

We could point fingers and play the blame game, but one thing is for certain, we need to collect enough revenue to cover our cost and banking ratios. Nationwide including our region, many facilities, transmission lines and generation are at end-of-life. They need to be rebuilt and upgraded to handle the excess capacity being placed on our facilities today and in the future. America, and especially rural America, will not run if we don't have safe, reliable power.

If you made it to FEM Electric's annual meeting in June thank you for attending. Your attendance means a lot to the employees and board of FEM Electric. Staying informed helps you understand why some decisions are made.

If you are planning to add any additional electric load, please call Ryan Holien or Sean Christiansen 605 426 6891.

Have a safe summer.

HELLO SUMMER



Bella Unser shares her favorite moments from the 2026 Youth Tour with the FEM board and membership.

ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

FEM Electric held the 78th Annual Meeting of the membership on June 23th, 2026 at the Ipswich School. 144 members attended with guests, and enjoyed meals from K&D Catering, Pickled Pig of Mellette, and from the Tiger Basketball Group of Ipswich. Dessert was furnished by Anderson's Baking Company of Roscoe.



Gary Bachman gives his last President's Speech at the 78th Annual Meeting.

President Gary Bachman brought the meeting to order, Kelly Melius presented the invocation, and the pledge of allegiance was recited.

Tom Thorpe was elected again to represent District 2 and Josh Heinrich was elected to represent District 3, replacing Gary Bachman as he

retired from the FEM Electric board after the annual meeting.

President Gary Bachman gave the president's report where he discussed how there are always issues in the rural electric world, the only difference is time. The cooperative world handles issues the same as always, by working together with other cooperatives. At the conclusion of his speech, Gary reminded members to live life to the fullest and to enjoy the ride.

Paula Petersen reviewed the treasurer's report and Austin Nash and Bella Unser both shared their favorite experiences from the 2026 Youth Tour, and thanked the board and FEM members for providing

the opportunity for them to attend.

Tom Thorpe and Kelly Melius presented certificates to Audrey Braun and Jessica Hadrick, both of whom won FEM scholarships. Trent Beyers was recognized for winning the Basin Electric \$1500 scholarship. A drawing was held for the Young Adults Light the Way \$500 Scholarship, and Audrey Braun, daughter of Dustin and Michelle Braun of Ipswich, was selected. Winners are chosen from high school juniors and seniors who attend the annual meeting with their member parent(s).



Audrey Braun accepts the \$500 Young Adults Light the Way Scholarship from board member Kelly Melius.

The lucky cash door prize winners were: \$250 - Jason or Heidi Preszler of Roscoe, SD, \$100 - Natanya Olson of Forbes, ND, \$100 - Robert Pond of Ipswich, SD and \$50 - Jon or Lesley Braun of Mina, SD.

At the conclusion of the meetings, attending members turned in their ticket for a \$40 bill credit on their July statement, and were provided with ice cream and bars for dessert.

FEM Electric's board and staff would like to thank everyone who attended the meeting, K&D Catering, Pickled Pig, the Tiger Basketball group, Anderson's Baking Company, the Ipswich Snow Queens, Nate Collins - music teacher at Ipswich School, as well as the Ipswich School for all the services each provided to make the annual meeting a success. We hope to see you all again next year!





SOUTH DAKOTA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A PAST FIT FOR THE FUTURE

A new lobby welcomes visitors to the Cultural Heritage Center.

Photo by Jacob Boyko

Cultural Center & State Museum Reopens After Extensive Renovation

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

After more than two years spent closed for renovation, South Dakota's state museum and cultural center is back up and running to share the story of South Dakota and its people with visitors from across the state and beyond.

The iconic museum built into the Pierre hillside held its grand reopening July 1 in time for the nation's 250th birthday, showing off new exhibits, a gift shop and an expansion that includes a larger meeting room and more space for its archives.

For Museum Director David Grabitske, the reopening marks a new chapter for the South Dakota State Historical Society, which oversees both the museum and state archives housed there. But it also honors the first laws set forth by the Dakota Territory's first territorial legislature, outlining specific steps and functions for historical preservation for untold future generations of its citizens.

According to Grabitske, many of the

first Dakotan settlers were determined to preserve the history they were making day by day as settlers on the vast American frontier.

"The first three acts [by the territorial legislature] were all about transferring property at the end of life – it's all about inheritance," Grabitske explained. "The fourth act of the territory created the historical society. In my mind, the fourth act goes along with those first three acts; it's about how we give things to the future."

Establishing a historical society demonstrated confidence that there would be a future for the Dakota Territory – complete with a permanent population that would live, grow and prosper there.

"We have a mantra around here," Grabitske said. "We collect today for tomorrow's history."

What that sentiment has amounted to is a sprawling collection of more than 17,000 cubic feet of paper, 50 terabytes of data on its servers, and more than 35,000 individual objects.

"The very first collections that arrived were in 1863, and we still have those in our library," Grabitske said. "They were

library books – 514 of them in 11 boxes."

In the process of collecting and disseminating information, historical societies at the time would collect and make copies of books to trade with other historical societies to expand their collections and diffuse knowledge across a wider area and reduce the risk of losing records to fire.

You'll find those 160 years' worth of books, deeds, contracts and reports



On the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Little Bighorn, Curator of Collections Katy L. Schmidt holds a can found on the battlefield.

Photo by Jacob Boyko

throughout the high-ceilinged, climate-controlled archive wing of the building – but you'll also find objects that aren't necessarily old or inherently valuable.

"The reason we add something into our collection is because it's historic, and what we mean by historic is it has significance and integrity," Grabitske explained. "Something being 'old' just fixes it in time. What makes something historic is that it is significant – it tells the story of people in South Dakota, and it has integrity, which means a certain completeness to tell that story."

To illustrate the point, Grabitske described a recent addition to the museum's collection – a painted tire with the words "no hunting."

"You see these things going down the road [in South Dakota], and we realized we were missing [one for the museum]," he explained. "We found one near Timber Lake which had a story. The lady who gave it to us (family of Dorothy Dopp, courtesy of the Timber Lake & Area Museum) had put it up in 1967 and she had faithfully painted it over the years and knew the dates she had painted it. We don't need 400 of these tires – we need one to represent the whole state."

Visitors to the museum this summer can experience the first three rooms of the updated exhibits. These sections house a welcome area, 'What is History?' exhibit and a gallery. The remaining sections are slated for completion in December 2026 and will feature exhibits on South Dakota's environment, people, politics, conflicts and more.

For more information on the Cultural Heritage Center and the South Dakota State Historical Society, visit history.sd.gov.



An exhibit showcasing the famous people of South Dakota.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



This plaster doll (left) was gifted to South Dakota by Japan in 1927 to commemorate the United States' 150th birthday. Fifty years later, for the nation's 200th birthday, Japan gifted South Dakota another doll (right).
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Museum Director and South Dakota State Historical Society Assistant Director David Grabitske walks through the extensive art archive, revealing a painting of an electrical lineman working through a winter storm.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Grabitske demonstrates the new movable shelves installed over tracks within the floor. This upgrade will maximize the available archival space.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

CELEBRATING GARY BACHMAN

June 19th was President Gary Bachman's last board meeting at FEM Electric. After almost 30 years as a board member, Gary has decided to retire. FEM staff and board members celebrated his last meeting with a lunch, and invited past board members and staff to join in the festivities.

In 1997, Gary Bachman joined the FEM Electric Board of Directors, replacing Ralph Dewald. He hadn't planned on staying longer than finishing Ralph's term. However, in 1998, FEM redistricted, downsizing the board from 9 to 5 director districts, and Gary decided to stay.

During his years as a board member, Gary served as Vice President from 1999-2017, and President from 2017 to today. He also spent time serving on the board for SDREA in Pierre, SD from 2010 to 2013 before moving to serve on the East River Electric board in Madison, SD from 2014 to today. Gary also spent time attending educational classes for cooperative board members at local, regional and national conferences. He earned NRECA's Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate (CCD), Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) and Director Gold Credential (DGC) Program designations. Through these classes, he learned to make educated and financially sound decisions for FEM members.

Gary has watched FEM evolve over the years, helping shape decisions such as moving to AMI, advancing technology within the office such

as ACH, new accounting software, new meter reading software and more. He was involved in creating North Star Energy, WildBlue satellite internet, the Golf View housing development, and creating FEM's Electrical Department. His leadership was instrumental in helping FEM grow with new services, new substations, a new office building and new large loads. Throughout his 30 years of service, he's seen many storms roll through the FEM system, including the infamous 2010 ice storm, and watched the resiliency of the Cooperative model in action.

Gary's steady leadership will be missed, but his new retirement is well deserved. The FEM staff and employees wish to thank Gary for his years of service, and wish Gary a happy, healthy, and long retirement!



Gary says thanks to attendees, and shares his plans for the future.



Past and present employees and board members come together to celebrate Gary's retirement from the FEM Electric board.



LITHIUM-ION BATTERY SAFETY AT HOME

Rechargeable lithium-ion batteries power many everyday devices, including phones, laptops, e-bikes, tools and toys. These batteries store a lot of energy in a small space. Learn how to buy, charge, store and recycle batteries safely to help prevent fires at home.

Use lithium-ion batteries safely

- Buy batteries and chargers with a nationally recognized safety certification mark.
- Only use chargers made for your devices and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Don't leave devices charging for longer than is necessary.
- Charge on hard, flat surfaces. Do not charge on beds, couches or under pillows.
- Store batteries at room temperature and away from anything that can catch fire.
- Have repairs conducted by a qualified professional.

! Stop using a battery if it smells unusual, gets very hot, makes popping sounds or changes in shape or color.

Charge e-bike and e-scooter batteries safely

- Charge your battery outdoors in a flat, dry area away from direct sunlight.
- Do not use a battery or charger that is damaged.
- Store batteries at room temperature, away from hot or cold areas.
- Never charge in areas that may block exits or create tripping hazards.
- Keep batteries away from anything that can catch fire.

What if batteries have been exposed to floodwater?

- Do not charge lithium-ion batteries that have been submerged or show signs of damage.
- Place exposed devices or batteries in noncombustible containers. Store them outside, away from buildings until recycled.

Recycle batteries the right way

- Do not throw lithium-ion batteries in the trash or curbside recycling bins. Doing so can start fires.
- Recycle batteries and devices at an approved battery recycling location.
- Contact your local waste department or visit batterynetwork.org to find a recycling site near you.

! The best way to cool a lithium-ion battery that is overheating or on fire is to flood it with water or submerge it in water.

Source: National Fire Protection Association

To learn more, visit:

Safe
Electricity.org®

CO-OP SUMMER OUTREACH

Join Us at S.D. State Fair, Dakotafest, Minn. Farmfest

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Attention all co-op members! If you're heading to the South Dakota State Fair, Dakotafest or Farmfest this summer, stop by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives booths for some great family fun and a chance to win a prize!

Make sure you fill out your coupon on the back of this magazine and bring it with you to the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives booth at the South Dakota State Fair or Dakotafest for your chance to win one of two electric grills sponsored by Karl's TV & Appliance.

South Dakota State Fair – Sept. 3, 2026

South Dakota's electric cooperatives will host the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives booth at the South Dakota State Fair in Huron, Thursday, Sept. 3, 2026.

This one-day event will feature a slew of energy-themed activities, from bucket truck rides lifting you more than 50 feet above the state fairgrounds to an interactive pole climbing demonstration complete with real spiked boots and climbing gear that linemen use every day on the job. We've also partnered up with South Dakota One Call to remind you to always call 811 before you start digging – but your kids are welcome to use our mini excavator in our sandbox to uncover buried treasure!

While you're here, check out our on-site displays for select highly efficient, all-electric heat pumps and mini-splits, water heaters, yard tools and more!

Find our booth near the Horticulture Building.

Dakotafest – Aug. 18-20, 2026

You'll want to stop by the South Dakota Touchstone Energy Cooperatives building at Dakotafest in Mitchell, Aug. 18-20!

Join us for fresh-off-the-grill brats, oven-baked cookies and freezie pops as you learn about the latest in home energy savings and efficiency. We'll have other cool stuff for you to check out, including an automatic lawn mower, a solar panel display and an EGO Power+ Portable Power Station.

Minnesota Farmfest – Aug. 4-6, 2026

Minnesota members, come visit your electric cooperative at Minnesota Farmfest near Redwood Falls, Aug. 4-6, 2026. Members may enter a raffle drawing for one of five battery-operated yard tools. We'll even have the high-voltage trailer on site for a live demonstration to remind visitors to be safe around overhead and buried power lines.



Kids perfected their utility pole climbing skills at the South Dakota State Fair.

Photo by Jacob Boyko



Touchstone Energy Cooperatives host a booth at Dakotafest in 2025.

Submitted Photo



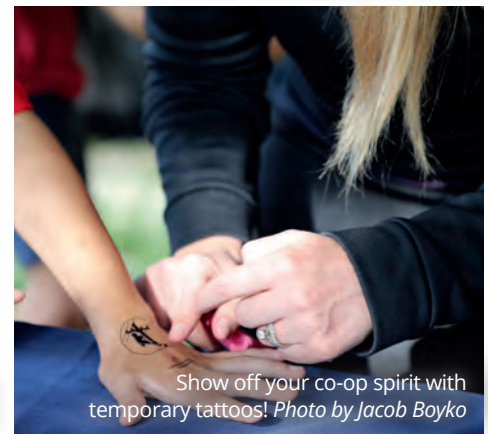
Charles Mix Electric Lineman Joe Michael shows off the bucket truck at the State Fair.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Fairgoers get a lineman's view of the State Fair! *Photo by Jacob Boyko*



A future lineman readies for his climb.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Show off your co-op spirit with temporary tattoos! *Photo by Jacob Boyko*



A line forms for bucket truck rides.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Booth visitors can win prizes by playing Plinko.
Submitted Photo

TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



One of the best ways to protect yourself from online scams is by using strong passwords. While many people focus on complexity—adding symbols, numbers and capital letters—password length is equally important. A longer password or passphrase is generally harder for cybercriminals to crack than a short, complex one. Consider creating a memorable phrase made up of several unrelated words, and avoid using personal information like birthdays or pet names. Use a unique password for each account and enable multi-factor authentication when possible. Taking these simple steps can help keep your personal information and online accounts secure.

Source: CISA



ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

August heat can put your air conditioner to the test, making it a great time to check your system's air filter. A dirty, clogged filter restricts airflow, forcing your cooling system to work harder than necessary to keep your home comfortable. That extra strain can reduce efficiency, increase energy use and contribute to unnecessary wear and tear on equipment. Inspect your filter monthly during periods of heavy air conditioner use and replace it if it appears dirty. A clean filter supports efficient operation and can even enhance indoor air quality—helping you stay cool and comfortable during the hottest days of summer.



THANK YOU

Dear FEM Employees,

Thank you for choosing my water bottle design. Thank you for the mini bluetooth speaker and the 10 dollar gift card. I'm excited to see my design on a water bottle!

Sincerely, Austin Smith

Safety Tip

Heading to college? Never charge your phone under a pillow, on bedding or in bed with you. It can overheat and cause burns or start a fire. Instead, set up a dedicated charging station on a hard surface in your room.



Safe
Electricity.org®



BROWN COUNTY FAIR

FARM SAFETY PARTY

Thursday, August 13
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Brown County Fair
Kids' Zone Tent

*Learn more about safety around the farm and
community from these organizations:*



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: _____ Dakotafest – Find us in the Touchstone Energy Building!
Your Email Address: _____ S.D. State Fair – Find us in the Horticulture Park!

WIDER OWNED BY THOSE WE SERVE
WAYS AND COOL OFF IN OUR
LEARNING ABOUT ELECTRICITY



AUG. 18-20
Dakotafest
2300 E. Spruce St.
Mitchell, 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.

JULY 30
Spurs Grand Classic
Equestrian Competition
9 a.m.
Aberdeen, SD
605-226-1099

AUG. 1
3rd Annual Celebration
in the Park/Rib Cook-Off
1-9 p.m.
Groton, SD

AUG. 1-2
Family Camping Weekend
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

AUG. 4-6
Farmfest 2026
8 a.m.-4 p.m.
Morgan, MN
Ideagroup.com/Farmfest

AUG. 5
Ag Appreciation Day
11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Sioux Empire Fair
Sioux Falls, SD

AUG. 7
Raise Em' Rank Bull Riding
& Breakaway Roping
Geddes, SD
605-680-2763

AUG. 8
Peever 125th Celebration
9 a.m.-12 p.m.
Parade, Bean Bag Tournament,
Tractor Pull, Street Dance
Peever, SD

AUG. 8-9
South Dakota Senior Games
Events for People Ages 50+
Huron, SD
Register by July 26
SouthDakotaSeniorGames.org
605-295-2039

AUG. 13-15
Watertown Senior Games
Watertown Parks & Rec.
\$5 per event, \$20 unlimited
WatertownParksandRec.com
Watertown, SD
605-882-6260

AUG. 15
Melon Festival
Car Show, Live Music,
Bean Bag Tournament
Forestburg, SD

AUG. 27-30
Steam Threshing Jamboree
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

SEPT. 1-6
Sturgis Mustang Rally
Sturgis, SD
SturgisMustangRally.com

SEPT. 3
Touchstone Energy Cooperatives
at the South Dakota State Fair
9 a.m.-5 p.m.
State Fairgrounds –
Horticulture Park
Huron, SD

SEPT. 10-12
DKG Used Book Sale
Wylie Park Pavilion
Aberdeen, SD
605-225-6713

SEPT. 11-12
Center of the Nation
9/11 Remembrance
6 p.m. Fri: Remembrance Walk
Sat. 8 a.m.-4 p.m.: Blood Drive
Belle Fourche, SD

SEPT. 12
Lion's Club Fall Citywide
Rummage Sale
8 a.m.-3 p.m.
Groton, SD

SEPT. 19
Your Race, Your Pace
9:30 a.m. Start
Wylie Park Pavilion
Aberdeen, SD
Register: runsignup.com/race/sd/Aberdeen/raceatourpace
605-380-6762

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.