

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Sica Hollow State Park near Sisseton is one of several hidden gems in the park system that are waiting to be discovered

Spotlight on State Parks

Hidden treasures
for you to discover
Pages 8-9

REED Fund fills
community needs
Pages 12-13

BOARD REPORT



Paula Petersen - District 4 Director
Up for Re-Election

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of FEM Electric was held in Ipswich, South Dakota at 8:30 a.m. on January 18, 2021, 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 minutes of the meeting. The following directors were declared present by roll call: Gary Bachman, Paula Petersen (Teleconference), Kelly Melius, Eric Odenbach, Tom Thorpe, General Manager/CEO Scott Moore, Line Superintendent Rob Vetch, Director of Finance and Benefits Rhonda Tuscherer. President Gary Bachman welcomed guest employee Dan Feldhaus.

Ryan Holien was present until his report was given.

Changes to the agenda: Revised agenda was given to board before meeting.

Changes/Additions to Minutes from December 21, 2021, meeting: none

Next Meeting Date: After a review of calendars, directors agreed that the next regular meeting of the board would be on Friday, February 25, 2022, at 8:30 a.m. to be held at FEM Electric Board Room in Ipswich, South Dakota.

Motion by Eric Odenbach, seconded



Eric Odenbach - District 1 Director
Up for Re-Election

by Tom Thorpe and carried to approve administrative business.

Motion by Kelly Melius, seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to acknowledge manager, staff, electrical department reports, East River Load Management Report along with following work order inventories.

#575	\$200,642.77
#576	\$88,592.73
#577	\$118,063.59
#578	<u>\$42,666.85</u>
	\$449,965.94

The board acknowledged reviewing the December Cyber Security Report.

Resolutions, Contracts, and Nominations:

Motion by Kelly Melius, seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to approve review and changes to the following policies: 405 Sick Leave, 406 Personal Leave, 407 Holiday Leave, 408 Vacation Leave, 409 Grievance, 304 General Service Electric Rate, 305 General Service Electric Rate with Load Control, 306 Small Commercial Rate, 307 Three Phase Large Commercial, 309 Irrigation, 310 Large Power Standby Service, 317 Purchase of Interruptible Power, 315 Fees Policy

Membership Business: The board acknowledged the following membership

business as presented:

New Memberships, Member Cancellations and Contracts:

Disconnects: Dawn Stevens, Miranda, Active Farm; Frances Webb, Faulkton, Active Farm; Garry & Kathy Spriggs, Faulkton, Lake Home; Allan Gab, Bowdle, Active Farm & Pasture Pump; Lurantine Zeigler, Seneca, Active Farm & Pasture Pump

Reconnects: Layla Stevens, Miranda, Active Farm; Larry Webb, Faulkton, Active Farm; Bradley & Tamara McDanel, Faulkton, Lake Home; AW Properties, Bowdle, Active Farm & Pasture Pump; Wayne Zeigler, Seneca, Active Farm & Pasture Pump

Contracts: None

Retired Locations: None

Capital Credits:

Estates: January 2022: One = \$1850.76

73 & Older: January 2022: None

Financial Business: The board acknowledged reviewing the following financial information: Check register for the month of December 2021 contained information on checks #32143 through #32220 and all automatic payments/withdrawals for December 2021 totaling \$415,712.08.

Preliminary December 2021 financials were reviewed. FEM Electric should end the year with an unaudited positive net margin but may not make banking ratios. Year-end financials will be available at the February meeting.

The Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) from East River and the Basin Electric January 2022 bill credit were reviewed.

The 4th Quarter loan summaries for RUS and CFC were reviewed.

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

Continued on pg 10

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

FEM ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

(USPS 189-720)

Board of Directors

Gary Bachman, President
Tom Thorpe, Vice President
Eric Odenbach, Secretary
Paula Petersen, Treasurer
Kelly Melius, Asst. Sec./
Treasurer
Vaughn Beck, Attorney

CEO/General Manager

Scott Moore
info@femelectric.coop

Management Staff

Rob Vetch
Line Superintendent
Rhonda Tuscherer
Director of Finance and
Benefits

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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

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opportunity provider and
employer.**



Scott Moore
General Manager/CEO

That darn old groundhog saw his shadow on February 2nd, and now we prepare for six more weeks of winter. In the last one hundred and thirty-six years he has seen his shadow approximately eighty percent of the time, anyway that is what I've been told. We have seen more snow in the northern part of our service territory, but overall, we have had a dry winter with variable temperatures.

It may be hard to believe but green grass, baby calves, and spring planting isn't far off and, with some spring moisture, we plan to have a prosperous and safe 2022. Line crews have been busy as they completed tree trimming and are working on completing maintenance from 2021 line patrol. Line crews will be starting line patrol around the middle of March, or when load limits are put on roads.

Our office personnel are working through the annual audit with Eide Bailly of Sioux Falls. Over the years the process to obtain the information has changed along with the amount of time the auditors are on site. Everyday that we operate we are preparing for an audit. Working as a team, keeping detailed and accurate records daily,

makes the audit process easier. The employees work hard at keeping accurate records for the audit and the board of directors, so they have good information when making decisions.

We ended 2021 with a positive, unaudited margin of \$73,370.00. We did not meet all banking ratios but it is good to see our financials improve. If you attend our annual meeting June 28th, 2022, you will receive a full report, and the written annual report will be sent to all members in the Cooperative Connection in the month of July for your review.

If you need any assistance with your electrical projects, please call Rob Vetch or Ryan Holien at 605-426-6891.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

@FEMElectric on 

@fem_electric on 

@FEMElectric on 

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

Statement Mailing Dates

Feb. 25, 2022 for Feb.'s energy

Mar. 29, 2022 for Mar.'s energy

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

Four shocking electrical dangers in your home

Contact with electricity can result in something as innocuous (but still painful) as a mild shock to severe injuries like nerve damage and burns. In some cases, it can even cause cardiac arrest and death. Here's a list of some of the most common shock risks inside a home.

1. Appliances. Most shocks from household appliances occur during repairs. It's not enough to turn off an appliance before working on it - you need to unplug it to reduce risk. Large appliances are responsible for 18 percent of household electrical accidents; small appliances account for 12 percent.

There's also danger if your appliance comes into contact with water. Many of these hazards can be avoided by using a ground-fault circuit interrupter. A GFCI is a protective device installed on electrical outlets, primarily used where water is present. When the device detects an imbalance in the electric current, it turns off the power to minimize the potential for an electric shock.

2. Ladders. Typically, ladders present a falling hazard, but 8 percent of household shocks are also related to ladders. Electrocutation typically happens when the ladder makes contact with electrical wires. Before you use a ladder, make sure you can clearly see all power lines in the area - including those that may be hidden by tree branches. Ensure that the ladder is 10 feet away and won't contact a power line if it falls in any direction.

3. Power tools. Power tools account for 9 percent of consumer product-related shocks. According to OSHA, when you use power tools that are not double-insulated, are damaged or have damaged cords, you increase your chances of being injured. The chance of danger also increases when you use incompatible cords, use power tools incorrectly or use them in wet conditions. This is another situation in which GFCIs can help.

4. Electrical outlets and extension cords. Inserting anything that doesn't belong - screwdrivers, knives, fingers or toy cars, to name a few - into an electrical outlet can result in a dangerous electrical contact.

Use cover plates that fit properly and safety covers on all outlets. By installing tamper-resistant receptacles, outlets will have permanent security against foreign objects being inserted into the slots.

Any broken, loose or worn-out plugs, switches and light fixtures should be replaced immediately.

WE'VE GOT CO-OP COUNTRY COVERED



We know you love to read your local edition of Cooperative Connections magazine, but you'll get more great content when you visit our video companion, Cooperative Connections Plus. Scan the QR code or search YouTube for Cooperative Connections Plus and you'll be treating yourself to an intriguing repository of videos on interesting events going on around our state. There's walleye fishing, rodeos, electric vehicles, curling, Christmas at the Capitol, the State Fair and much more. Visit us today!



Call 811 before digging

Amelia Swift Hawk

Amelia Swift Hawk knows that it's wise to call 811 before digging into the ground. Amelia and her parents, Michael and Alyssa Swift Hawk, are members of Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber Lake.

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.

SAVORY SEAFOOD

OYSTER STEW

Ingredients:
 1 onion, chopped
 6 T. butter
 2 tsp. minced garlic
 6 cup whole milk
 1 pint (2 cans) oysters - do not drain
 1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes
 1/4 tsp. paprika
 1 tsp. parsley
 1/4 tsp. Tabasco sauce

METHOD

Sauté onion and garlic in butter. Stir in undrained oysters. Cook at medium heat about 5 minutes until oysters curl at the edges. Stir in milk, red pepper flakes, paprika, parsley, and Tabasco sauce. Heat to serving temperature. Serve with oyster crackers.

Jane Ham, Rapid City

GRILLED SALMON

Ingredients:
 1 1/2 lbs. salmon fillet cut into 6 slices
 2 tbsp. olive oil extra virgin
 1 lemon or lime (juice of)
 1 tsp. smoked paprika
 1 tsp. garlic powder
 1 tsp. onion powder
 1 tsp. salt
 Ground black pepper to taste

METHOD

In a small bowl, add olive oil, lemon juice, smoked paprika, garlic and onion powders, salt, pepper. Whisk to combine. In a shallow flat dish with edges, lay salmon slices and brush with marinade. Marinate from 10 minutes to 24 hours. Longer marinating time, more flavorful salmon. Preheat grill to 450-500. Clean grill and oil grates with oil-soaked paper towel to avoid salmon sticking to the grill. Place salmon on the grill skin side up, close the lid and grill for 4-5 minutes. Check with spatula – if salmon has grill marks and comes off easy, flip it. Cook uncovered for another 3-4 minutes or until thermometer reads 125 degrees for medium rare or 140 for medium. Serve hot or cold on top of salad, mango salsa, guacamole, brown rice or quinoa. ifoodreal.com

SHRIMP AND SAUSAGE JAMBALAYA

Ingredients:
 12 ozs. fully cooked andouille sausage, cut to 1/2-inch slices
 12 ozs. uncooked shrimp (31-40 per lb.), peeled and deveined
 1 med. green pepper, chopped
 1 med. onion, chopped
 2 celery ribs, chopped
 3 garlic cloves, minced
 2 tsps. Creole or Cajun seasoning (paprika, with cayenne pepper, oregano, dried sweet basil)
 1 can (14-1/2 ozs.) fire-roasted diced tomatoes, drained
 1 cup uncooked "instant" rice
 1 can (8 ozs.) tomato sauce
 1/2 cup chicken broth
 3 green onion sprigs chopped

METHOD

Preheat oven to 425°. In a large bowl, combine all ingredients. Divide mixture among six greased 18x12-inch pieces of heavy-duty foil. Fold foil around mixture and crimp edges to seal, forming packets; place on a baking sheet. Bake until shrimp turn pink and rice is tender, 20-25 minutes. Use caution when opening packets as they will be steamy. Consider adding jalapenos to taste and/or some chopped pineapple to cool the palate. Try serving for breakfast or brunch with sumptuous eggs and biscuits.

Shannon Collins/Taste of Home

Please send your favorite beverage 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 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

FEM DIRECTOR DISTRICTS 1 AND 4

FEM Electric Directors in District 1 and District 4 will be up for election at the 2022 annual meeting June 28th, 2022.

Paula Petersen and Eric Odenbach will seek re-election for their districts.

To be an eligible nominee, one must be an active member (with an FEM Electric energy account in their name) who resides in the Director's District in which the nominee seeks to run. FEM Electric Director Districts are as follows: District No. 1: McPherson County Townships of Bauer, Bergdorf, Cleveland, Detmold, Glucksthal, Hillsview, Jackson, Kassel, Odessa, Petersburg, Rosenthal, Spring Creek and Stickel, and Edmunds County Townships of Hosmer, Modena, Sangamon;

District No. 2: McPherson County Townships of Arena, Blaine, Carl, Dewey, Harrison, Highland, Hoffman, Howard, Koto, Leola, Lincoln, Long Lake, Moscow, Spring, Wachter, Wacker, Washington, Weber, Willow;

District No. 3: Edmunds County Townships of Bowdle, Bryant, Cloyd Valley, Cottonwood, Glen, Glover, Hillside, Hudson, Madison, Montpelier, North Bryant, Odessa and Vermont, and Faulk County Townships of Clark, Enterprise and Sherman;

District No. 4: Edmunds County Townships of Adrian, Belle, Clear Lake, Cleveland, Cortlandt, Fountain, Harmony, Huntley, Ipswich, Kent, Liberty, Pembrook, Powell, Richland, Rosette and Union;

District No 5: Faulk County Townships of Arcade, Bryant, Centerville, DeVoe, Elroy, Ellisville, Emerson, Fairfield, Freedom, Hillsdale, Irving, Lafoon, Latham, Myron, O'Neil, Orient, Pulaski, Saratoga, Seneca, Tamworth, Thirteen, Union and Wesley.

FEM Electric Director Districts

McPherson County	Spring Creek	Detmold	Petersburg	Bergdorf	Harrison	Wacker	Weber	Wachter
	Glucksthal	Rosenthal	Odessa	Long Lake	Highland	Hoffman	Koto	Carl
	Bauer	Stickel	Kassel	Moscow	Arena	Spring	Leola	Willow
	Jackson	Hillsview	Cleveland	Blaine	Dewey	Howard	Washington	Lincoln
Edmunds County	Modena	Hosmer	Sangamon	North Bryant	Adrian	Rosette	Belle	Pembrook
	Bowdle	Cottonwood	Glen	Bryant	Huntley	Ipswich	Fountain	Cortlandt
	Odessa	Cloyd Valley	Glover	Montpelier	Cleveland	Harmony	Union	Richland
	Hudson	Madison	Hillside	Vermont	Liberty	Powell	Kent	Clear Lake
Faulk County	Sherman	Clark	Enterprise	Freedom	Emerson	Fairview	Union	
	Elroy	O'Neil	Saratoga	Pulaski	Myron	Devoe	Wesley	
	Seneca	Latham	Bryant	Tamworth	Lafoon	Centerville		
	Ellisville	Thirteen	Irving	Orient	Arcade	Hillsdale		

Nomination by Committee: The board of directors shall appoint a Nominating Committee which shall consist of three to seven members from the Director District(s) which are up for election and shall include one at-large position. This group shall be appointed no more than 180 days and no less than 60 days prior to the annual meeting. The committee shall post the nominations at least 30 days prior to the annual meeting of the members of FEM Electric Association, Inc. set for June 28th, 2022.

Nomination by Petition: Any 15 or more members of the cooperative may make additional nominations by listing their nominee and the appropriate Directorate District and signing such Petition for Nomination. The petition must be submitted to the board of directors at least 25 days prior to the annual meeting. Any such petition so submitted will be posted along with the list of nominations made by the Nominating Committee.

The colored areas of the district map are up for election in 2022.

District 1 Director Eric Odenbach will be seeking re-election.

District 4 Director Paula Petersen will be seeking re-election.

NOMINATIONS

There are two processes (committee and petition) by which an eligible member's name may be nominated for the board of directors election for FEM Electric Association, Inc. No nominations may come from the floor during your co-op's annual meeting.

Any member of FEM Electric requiring additional information may refer to the bylaws of the association or may contact the FEM Electric office at 605-426-6891.

District 2 is represented by Tom Thorpe of Forbes, ND, District 3 is represented by Gary Bachman of Bowdle, and District 5 is represented by Kelly Melius of Faulkton.



At more than 115 years old, Tyndall Bakery has been named “Best in South Dakota” and is also mentioned in a book by Webster native Tom Brokaw. Owners Ed and Carol Radack intend to keep the legendary establishment going strong.

Radacks keep Tyndall Bakery tradition alive

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The members of Danzig Baptist Church in Tyndall perk up when they see Ed and Carol Radack coming through the doors on Sunday morning.

They're grateful for all the faithful work the Radacks do for the congregation and the community. They appreciate the fact that Carol volunteers her time as a Sunday School teacher and Ed has served as a church trustee and always stays involved.

But they also know that when the Radacks come around, donuts can't be too far away.

For the past 15 years, Ed and Carol have been whipping up irresistible cakes and confections as owners of Tyndall Bakery. The establishment was opened by John Moser in downtown Tyndall in 1905 and has changed hands over the years. But during that time, the bakery has maintained its status as a go-to sweet shop. Two years ago, Taste of Home magazine proclaimed it “Best in South Dakota.”

The Radacks bought the business from Bob and Judy Rueb after Carol's employer, Chicago Rawhide, closed its doors. Looking for something different to do, Carol decided to go from building ball bearings to baking bismarcks. When it soon became clear Carol had her hands full with interminable shifts,

Ed left his job at the Department of Transportation to offer some help and the two have been baking shoulder-to-shoulder ever since.

While they learned the business on the fly, the couple remained committed to one thing: using the recipe that's been handed down for decades. And the regular customers make sure they stick with that plan.

“That's what keeps a lot of the old-timers coming back,” Carol said. “It's a good product, it's always home-made, and we always try to deliver the best service.”

On a recent Saturday morning there was standing room only as customers lined up for the apple fritters, long johns, kolaches, cinnamon twists and bismarcks. Most of them have called ahead to make sure their special orders are filled and they don't miss out on their favorite selections.

One of them was Mike Scheetz, owner of the bowling alley across the street. He got one armload of fresh-baked buns for his business and another armload for himself and his staff.

“They're the best around,” Scheetz said as he grabbed a bag of Bavarians. “They know what I like so they always have it ready for me.”

Scheetz turns to go get set up for local bowling league activities and the Radacks have slight smiles on their faces that seem to say, “Another satisfied customer.”

HIDDEN TREASURES

Despite its legacy as the site of an epic battle over good and evil, Sica Hollow State Park near Sisseton is a source of family fun for those who want to get away and enjoy the great outdoors. *Photos by SD Tourism.*

The State Park system has seen visitation increase with new programs in place to serve the public

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

At first blush, Sica Hollow State Park might seem like someplace you'd want to avoid.

The area was named after a Dakota Sioux word used to describe something sinister and features a winding pathway called the Trail of the Spirits. There are maroon-colored bogs, sangria-tinged streams and brown foliage that reminded early tribes of the blood and flesh of their ancestors.

The undulating terrain is said to be the site of an ancient spiritual battle in which the land and the people were overcome by a malevolent force. Local legend has it that the restless souls of the dead manifest themselves as unexplained bursts of fire and light in the night, disturbing sounds of agonized wailing and the ominous beat of war drums in the distance.

Apart from the spooky stories and eerie lore, Sica Hollow turns out to be one of many "hidden gems" in the

State Park system that are found off the beaten paths.

Sica Hollow is located in the northeast corner of the state near Sisseton where you'll find rustic bridges, winding creeks, scenic waterfalls and seasonal wildflowers festooning the eight miles of hiking trails. The Trail of Spirits, which today is a self-guided interpretive foot trail, was designated as a National Recreation Trail in 1971. The park also contains the Old River Warren and Coteau des Prairies, which have been named National Natural Landmarks.

With more than 60 facilities in its fold, the State Park system has lots to offer and includes several lesser-known destinations for families to discover such as Sica Hollow, Spirit Mound and Adams Homestead in the eastern part of the state and Shadehill, Rocky Point and Llewellyn Johns out west.

The Shadehill Recreation Area near Lemmon is situated on the shores of Shadehill Reservoir, which is one of western South Dakota's few large lakes.



At Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area, visitors will find a monument to Hugh Glass, a hunter who survived a vicious attack by a grizzly bear in 1823.

There are 85 campsites with seven camping cabins, a group lodge, and facilities for boating, fishing, canoeing, biking, archery and more.

Nearby is the much smaller Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area with just 10 campsites and an opportunity to enjoy

Approximate number of visitors

8,400,000

to South Dakota State Parks in 2021



a quieter and more secluded camping experience. There are points of historical interest close by as many historic figures have traveled through the area, including George Custer’s 1874 Expedition and Hugh Glass. According to first-hand accounts, in 1823 Glass was attacked by a grizzly bear, an event documented in the novel *Lord Grizzly* and recounted in the movie, *The Revenant*.

Nick Harrington, communications manager for Game, Fish and Parks, reports that the system is stronger and more popular than ever. Last year more than 8.4 million visitors passed through the parks, representing a 25 percent increase in visitation over the nine-year average. Custer State Park, the system’s most popular spot, saw a 3 percent increase in attendance with more than 2.3 million visitors.

Seventy-seven percent of visitors rated their camping experience as an A with 43 out of the 48 areas surveyed receiving the top rating.

To keep the momentum moving along, the State Park system has added 15 new facilities from a new Bison Center at Custer State Park to an improved boat ramp at West Whitlock Recreation Area.

And just in time for the spring and summer camping season there is a new and improved way of helping campers navigate the parks and outdoor facilities. Through www.gooutdoorsouthdakota.com, customers can secure a camping reservation or buy an annual park

Sica Hollow is one of the “hidden gems” in the state park system where visitors can commune with nature while learning about local lore.

entrance license while also purchasing hunting and fishing licenses all from the same transaction. A new mobile app provides 360 degree views of the more than 4,000 campsites in the system.

The Department of Tourism has also launched a free mobile pass called South Dakota Great Finds that helps users explore the state’s many attractions, including hidden treasures like Sica Hollow. The pass can be accessed at travelsouthdakota.com, and there is no app to download.

According to Department of Tourism Secretary Jim Hagen, “This mobile experience allows us to better highlight what truly makes up the great state of South Dakota. It showcases rural America, unexpected businesses and parks, and gets people off the beaten path to discover something new.”

Search for “Go Outdoors South Dakota” to find GFP’s official mobile app for iOS and Android.

Top 10 most visited state parks in 2021

1. Custer State Park
2. Lewis & Clark Recreation Area
3. Spring Creek Recreation Area
4. Oahe Downstream Recreation Area
5. Cow Creek Recreation Area
6. Angostura Recreation Area
7. Roy Lake State Park
8. Farm Island Recreation Area
9. Springfield Recreation Area
10. Newton Hills State Park

Continued from pg 2
director and attorney fees.

Legal Update: Attorney Vaughn Beck discussed nominating committee.

Meeting Report: East River board update was given by Gary Bachman. Tom Thorpe, Eric Odenbach, and Gary Bachman discussed SDREA annual meeting.

The board acknowledged the receipt of the Safety Meeting Minutes with current accident and near miss reports from December 13, 2021. The board packet also included minutes from December 13, 2021, and January 4, 2022 employee meetings.

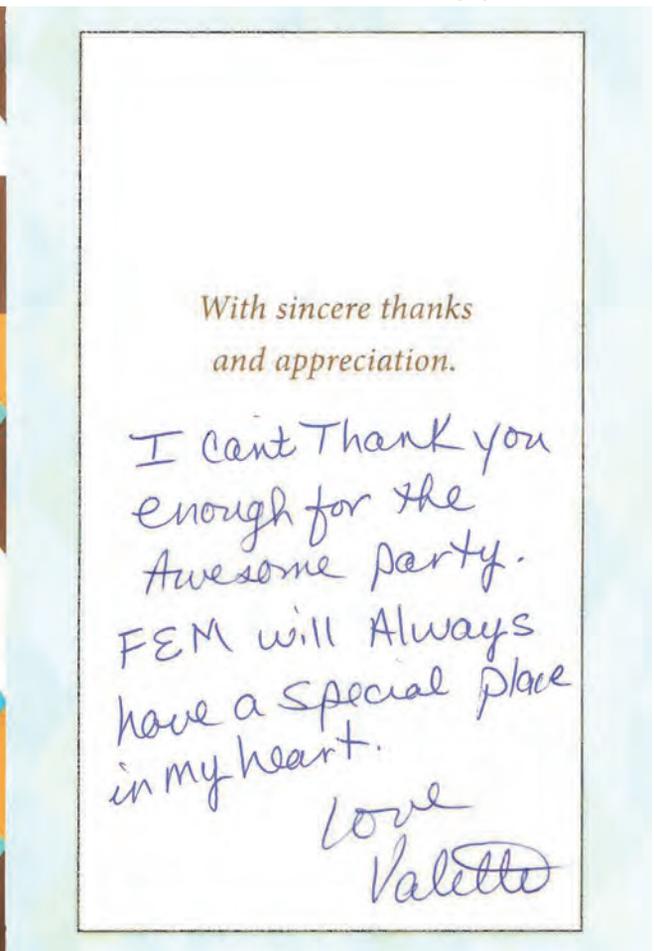
Adjourn: President Gary Bachman declared the meeting adjourned..

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

When was your cooling system last serviced? Most manufacturers recommend an annual tune up for your home's cooling system. March is a great time to schedule this service so you can beat the summer rush when the pros are busiest.

A qualified professional can check the amount of refrigerant, accuracy of the thermostat, condition of belts and motors and other factors that can greatly impact the efficiency of your system.

Source: Dept. of Energy



SCHOLAR OF THE WEEK



FEM Electric and Dakota News Now are pleased to announce that Vincent Petrich was selected as the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week and will receive a \$250 scholarship. Vincent's story will be featured on Dakota News Now Monday, March 28th at 6:00 pm and Tuesday, March 29th between 6:00 and 7:00 am.

In 2002, Touchstone Energy Cooperatives joined with Dakota News Now to recognize area high school seniors for their academic and community achievements. Seniors who are selected for scholarships often excel in the classroom, and are highly involved in extracurriculars inside and outside the school.

Vincent is a senior at Leola High School and is active in football, basketball, band, FBLA and student government. He was selected to be his senior class president, and displays his leadership qualities both on and off the field.

While he is still undecided on where he would like to go, he is considering either Mitchell Tech's Electrician program, or Lake Area's Ag program.

Vincent's parents are Gordon and Mary Petrich out of Leola, SD.

FEM Electric would like to extend a congratulations to Vincent Petrich for winning Touchstone Energy's Scholar of the Week!

Plant Trees Safely

Before you dig, call 811 to locate buried utility lines.

LOW TREE ZONE

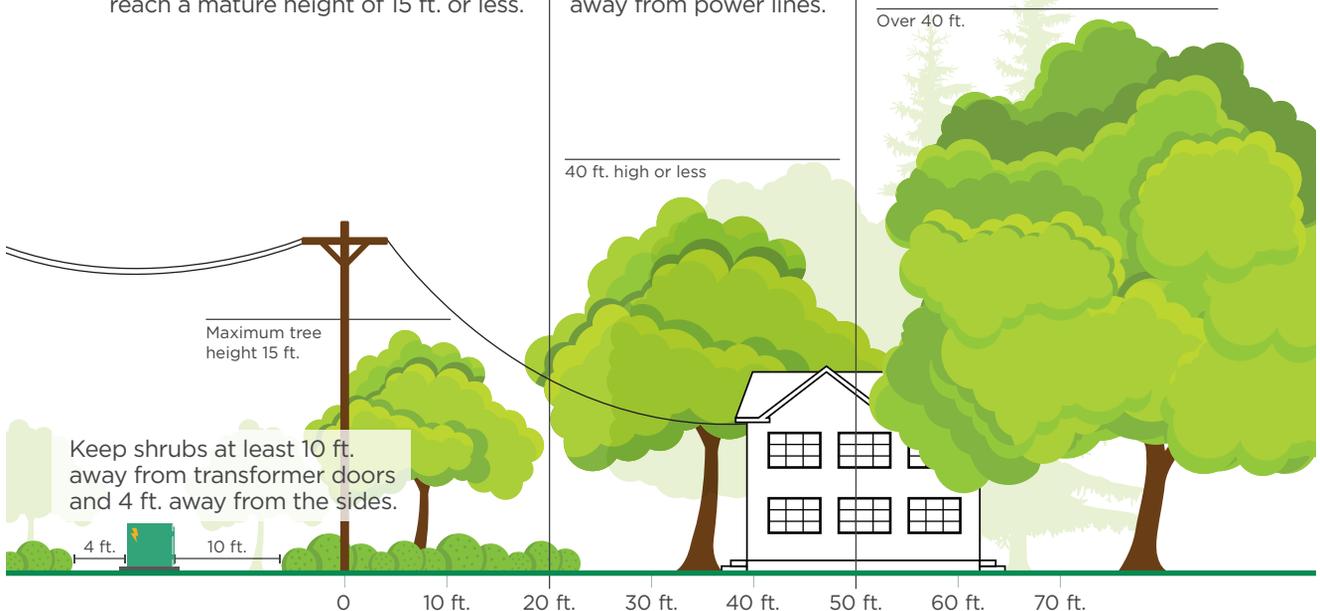
Avoid planting within 20 ft. of power lines. If planting is unavoidable, only plant shrubs and small trees that reach a mature height of 15 ft. or less.

MEDIUM TREE ZONE

Plant medium trees (under 40 ft. when mature) at least 25 ft. away from power lines.

LARGE TREE ZONE

Plant large trees (over 40 ft. when mature) at least 50 ft. away from power lines.



REED FILLS THE NEED

Pictured at right, Renville-Sibley Co-op Power CEO DeeAnne Newville (left), presents a check to the local Community Center and Cougar Club daycare facility in Franklin, MN, through the electric cooperative REED Fund.

Electric cooperative REED Fund helps meet many needs for communities in South Dakota and western Minnesota

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Leaders of the Garretson community northeast of Sioux Falls had the vision for a much-needed expansion of the small town's non-profit daycare center. Since cobbling together two older structures in 2019 and taking in more tykes, it was apparent that the current white-hot demand for childcare was going to necessitate yet another expansion.

So they set their jaws, put together a plan and mustered up the will to make it happen for the sake of local families and the greater good of the community.

Now, all they needed was a miracle.

That miracle came in the form of a random conversation that took place between Blue Dragon Academy Board Member Kris Frerk and Sioux Metro Growth Alliance CEO Jesse Fonkert.

Frerk was in full fret mode over a lack of funding for the project, but it turned

out Fonkert had a fail-safe solution.

Through his contacts Angie Neises at East River Electric and Jay Buchholz at Sioux Valley Energy, Fonkert was aware of the Rural Electric Economic Development Fund, or REED Fund. He knew it was a valuable financial resource made available by electric co-ops in South Dakota and western Minnesota just for this kind of project.

Bottom line: Blue Dragon Academy will begin work in April with plans to complete the 3,500-sq. ft. project in November. Best of all, nearly 40 more families in and around the town of Garretson will have access to quality child care services.

While Frerk doesn't recall any trumpets blaring or harps playing in the background, she contends that her off-hand discussion with Fonkert was delivered by divine intervention.

"It's a pure miracle," she said. "We had been putting feelers out for funding because we have a big need in this area.

When I got that information from Jesse, it was just like a miracle. We jumped on it, we got accepted by the REED Fund Board and now we're ready to get the work done."

Blue Dragon secured a low-interest REED loan for nearly \$700,000. The non-profit organization is required to match \$239,000. Now Frerk and her crew are heavy on the fund-raising trail and have already received tremendous support from many donors in the community, she said. The Blue Dragon Board hopes to pay the debt off early with plans to hire five or six more workers once the project is complete.

For East River Electric Economic Development Director Eric Fosheim, it was another day at the office. His job is to match the money with the need, and he says many recipients respond with the enthusiasm and gratitude Frerk expresses when they receive funds.

He does fall just short of uttering the "M" word, however.



“It’s extremely satisfying to be in a position to help people solve problems and overcome challenges in their communities,” Fosheim said. “We try to work together with folks to cut through the red tape and bureaucratic impediments and come up with clever ways to get projects across the finish line. This is all made possible through the electric cooperatives and the fact that they take their responsibilities and obligations to their communities very seriously.”

The REED Fund has backed scores of projects and loaned out more than \$100 million since it was established in 1996. Fosheim sees it as the perfect tool for promoting local economic growth, improving infrastructure, enhancing community facilities and contributing to job, business and wealth creation.

Funds have gone to retail and service businesses, industrial parks and office facilities, fire protection projects, manufacturing firms, housing projects, health care facilities and more.

Approximate amount of money
\$100 million
 loaned through the electric cooperative REED Fund

Chris Larson, general manager at Clay-Union Electric in Vermillion, and his board tapped REED funds to support the Wakonda Heritage Manor assisted living facility. They also worked with the business to secure a zero-interest loan through the USDA’s Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program.

“It’s truly an honor for us to have this tremendous resource available to help improve the lives of our members and the community at-large,” Larson said.

The real meaning of the REED program came to light when he and the board visited the place.

“We viewed the improvements they’d made, and heard from the people there about how it enhanced their quality of life. It really warms your heart to know you’re part of a co-op system that can have a positive impact on families and businesses. It just shows how much of a difference we can make when we all work together, pool our resources and get things done.”

East River cooperatives serving western Minnesota have also participated in the program. As with the Garretson community, parents in Franklin, MN, also had a need for a daycare center.



The Cougar Cub Child Care Center was launched with the help of REED funds obtained through Renville-Sibley Co-op Power after two of the town’s three daycare facilities closed.

Renville-Sibley CEO DeeAnne Neville said, “We were happy to help fill the gap. Concern for community is one of the seven cooperative principles. It’s an example of the city, school and economic development coming together for the good of the people in our rural communities.”

For more information about the REED Loan program, visit www.reedfund.coop.

SOW SEEDS OF SAFETY THIS PLANTING SEASON

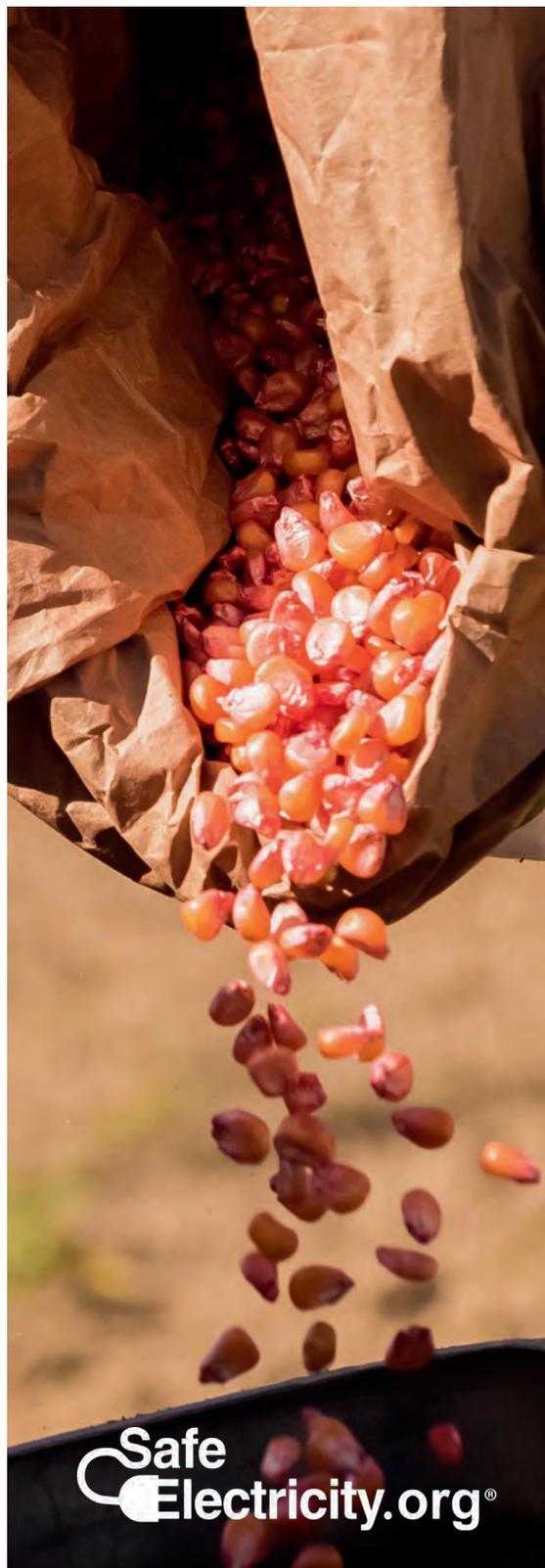
Whether you've been through 30 planting seasons or three, be alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines. You and anyone working or doing business on your farm should know and follow electrical safety precautions to avoid potential hazards.

When near power lines, poles and other utility equipment:

- Maintain a 10-foot clearance in all directions.
- Realize that electricity can arc/"jump" when equipment is too close.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting.
- Designate preplanned routes that avoid potential hazards.
- When approaching or in the field, use a spotter and deploy flags.
- Before exiting the cab, look up to ensure proper clearance of all equipment.
- Lower extensions to the lowest setting before moving loads.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- Contact your electric utility if you think a pole or line may have been damaged.

If your equipment does come in contact with a power line or other utility equipment, do not exit the cab. Instead, call 9-1-1 and wait until utility workers say it is safe to exit.

If you are in imminent danger (e.g., equipment is on fire) and need to exit the cab, make a solid, clean jump out of the cab and hop with both feet together as far away as you can.



PANCAKE BREAKFAST

The 2022 FEM Electric Pancake & Sausage Breakfast was held on January 21st, 2022 at the FEM Electric office. Donations were accepted for local food pantries in Faulk, Edmunds and McPherson counties. FEM linemen and staff served over 130 people who braved cold weather and snowy conditions.

FEM members were able to enjoy all you can eat pancakes, sausage and beverages while staff and linemen visited with them.

FEM would like to thank everyone who attended and who were able to donate!



Back: FEM Director Tom Thorpe flips and serves pancakes.
Front: Lineman Josh Weigel serves sausage.



Front, seated: General Manager/CEO Scott Moore enjoys some breakfast and conversation.

Back, standing: FEM Director Kelly Melius visits with pancake breakfast attendees.



Donations from pancake breakfast separated and ready to be delivered to local food pantries in Faulk, Edmunds and McPherson counties.

LOOKING FOR A QUALIFIED ELECTRICIAN? GIVE US A CALL!

FEM Electric offers electrical wiring services in Faulk, Edmunds and McPherson counties. Some services include wiring houses, pasture pumps, shops, and grain bins.

Services are provided for cooperative members as well as non-members, so spread the word!

Call us at 605-426-6891 to discuss your electrical needs or upcoming projects. If you have a large project, please plan ahead and call us early. Like much of the world, we are not immune to supply chain delays, and we would like to be able to service your project in a timely manner.



March 12
28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride and Tour
 Spearfish Canyon Lodge, Lead, SD

Photo by 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.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

FEBRUARY 25-26
Mardi Gras Weekend
 Main Street, Deadwood, SD,
 605-578-1876

FEBRUARY 25-27,
MARCH 3-5
Making God Laugh
 Grand Opera House, Pierre,
 SD, 605-224-7826

FEBRUARY 26
The Music of John Williams
 Washington Pavilion, Sioux
 Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

MARCH 3-5
Pro Snocross Races
 Days of '76 Rodeo Grounds,
 Deadwood, SD, 800-344-8826

MARCH 4-5, 10-13
The 39 Steps
 Orpheum Theater Center,
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

MARCH 4-6
Home & Garden Show
 Brown County Fairgrounds,
 Aberdeen, SD, 605-225-2055

MARCH 5
I Hate Winter Cornhole
Tournament
 Scherr Howe Arena,
 Mobridge, SD, www.mobridge.org/Corn-Hole-Tournament

MARCH 5
Mountain West® Whiskey
Festival
 Rushmore Hotel, Rapid City, SD,
www.mountainwestwhiskeyfestival.com

MARCH 5
Road 2 Destruction Tour
 The Monument Summit Arena,
 Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

MARCH 5-8
2022 Summit League Men's
and Women's Basketball
Championships
 Denny Sanford Premier Center,
 Sioux Falls, SD, www.thesummitleague.org/tickets

MARCH 10
Singing in the Rain: Dinner
& A Movie
 Goss Opera House, Watertown,
 SD, 605-753-0200

MARCH 10
TobyMac Hits Deep Tour
 The Monument Summit Arena,
 Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

MARCH 10-13
Annual Sioux Empire
Sportsmen's Show
 Denny Sanford Premier Center,
 Sioux Falls, SD, www.siouxfalls.sportshow.com

MARCH 12
28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride
& Tour
 Spearfish Canyon Lodge, Lead,
 SD, www.28below.com

MARCH 12
Meraki Dance Competition
& Convention
 Washington Pavilion, Sioux
 Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

MARCH 12-13
Hill City's Antique and
Railroad Show & Sale
 440 Main Street, Hill City, SD,
 605-574-2821 or 605-877-6629

MARCH 14
Harlem Globetrotters
 The Monument, Rapid City,
 SD, 605-394-4115

MARCH 18-19
St. Patrick's Day Weekend
 Main Street, Deadwood, SD,
 605-578-1876

MARCH 18-19
Sioux Empire Arts & Crafts
Show
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux
 Falls, SD, 605-332-6000

MARCH 18-19, 25-26
Schmeckfest
 748 S Main Street, Freeman,
 SD, 605-925-4237

MARCH 19
Dakota Coffee Festival
 Denny Sanford Premier Center,
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

MARCH 19
St. Patrick's Day Celebration
 Various Locations, Watertown,
 SD, 605-886-5814

MARCH 26
Annual Ag Day
 Washington Pavilion, Sioux
 Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

MARCH 30
Elton John Tribute Concert
 Performing Arts Center,
 Mitchell, SD, 605-770-7813
Note: Please make sure to
call ahead to verify the event
is still being held.