

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



This year's sunflower crop is expected to be bountiful as market forces have driven up demand and prices

## Sensational Sunflowers

**Sunflower market blooms**

Pages 8-9

**Everyone's welcome in the Chislic Circle**

Pages 12-13

# BOARD REPORT



The FEM Board of Directors meets with FEM staff for their monthly meeting.

A regular meeting of the Board of Directors of FEM Electric was held in Ipswich, South Dakota at 8:30 a.m. on July 20, 2022, 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, Kelly Melius, Eric Odenbach, Tom Thorpe, General Manager/CEO Scott Moore, Line Superintendent Rob Vetch, Director of Finance and Benefits Rhonda Tuscherer.

Ryan Holien and Jesse Brown were present until their board reports were given.

Gary Bachman welcomed guest employee Gregg Zwart.

**Changes to the agenda:** Removed Quarterly Inventory of Work Orders, Electrical Department Committee update and executive session. Moved the meeting report for SDREA Board Leadership Summit to next month.

**Changes/Additions to Minutes from June 21, 2022, meeting:** none

**Next Meeting Date:** After a review of calendars, directors agreed that the next regular meeting of the board would be on Tuesday, August 23, 2022, at 8:30 a.m.

to be held at FEM Electric Board Room in Ipswich, South Dakota.

Board reviewed minutes from June 28, 2022 Annual Meeting.

Board approved Minutes of FEM Board Reorganization Meeting June 28, 2022.

Motion by Paula Petersen, seconded by Eric Odenbach and carried to approve administrative business.

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

Board and manager/CEO performance appraisals forms were handed out.

The board acknowledged reviewing the June 2022 Cyber Security Report.

## **Resolutions, Contracts, and Nominations:**

Motion by Eric Odenbach seconded by Kelly Melius and carried to approve review and changes to policies: 416-Director and Employee Purchasing, 417-Compensation for Use of Vehicles, 418-Retired Employee Benefits, 419-Maternity Leave, 420-Safety Equipment and Practices

Tom Thorpe nominated Scott Moore

as NRECA Region 6 Voting Delegate; motion seconded by Paula Petersen. Motion for nominations to cease and unanimous ballot was cast for Scott Moore as NRECA Region 6 Voting Delegate.

Motion by Kelly Melius, seconded by Eric Odenbach to adopt the Restated NRECA RS and 401K Plans.

## **Membership Business:**

Board acknowledged membership business.

## **New Memberships, Member Cancellations and Contracts:**

**Disconnects:** Idaho Housing – Garber, Boise, ID, Active Farm

**Reconnects:** 3 Suns LLC, Fargo, ND, Active Farm

**Contracts:** Jerry Beadle, Bowdle, SD, Storage Sheds; Ormat Technologies, Reno, NV, Storage Building

**Retired Locations:** Charles Maule, Aberdeen, SD, Pasture Pump

## **Capital Credits:**

**Estates – July 2022 – none**

**73 & Older – July 2022 –** Five early retirements = \$9,458.64

**FEM Annual Meeting –** the board set June 27, 2023, as the date for FEM Electric's 75th Annual meeting.

**Financial Business:** The board acknowledged reviewing the following financial information: June 2022 financials and check register for the month of June 2022 contained information on checks #32601 through #32682 and all automatic payments/withdrawals for June 2022 totaling \$1,216,867.96.

Director of Finance and Benefits reviewed the Quarterly Budget Projection, Quarterly RUS/FFB/CFC Loan  
**Continued on pg 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. 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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employer.**



**Scott Moore**  
General Manager/CEO

As I put this article together, we are entering the month of August, and what a growing season it has been so far. With some luck we will get timely rains to complete the growing season. Crop producers will have to purchase a new truck to keep the grain away from the combines, and cattle producers will find it difficult to locate their calves as the grass is too tall.

FEM Electric has had flat but stable sales in 2022, and we have no complaints. We continue to see new service requests, both for ag related electric loads and residential loads. Operation crews are working to get these new services installed. The crews are also working to finish some of our work plan projects where FEM Electric replaced aging electrical overhead lines with underground. I would like to thank the members who signed easements and made time to talk to the crews while planning projects, and during construction. Planning before the construction begins always makes for a better finished project.

We continue to work through the second year of a three-year project to replace our existing automatic meter reading system (Cannon), with new Verizon meters. We have completed the 2022-meter change outs in the Burkmere, Hillsvie, Mina, and Wetonka substations. The

meters to complete this project in 2023 have been ordered and, with luck, should arrive in January or February 2023. This project doesn't just affect the operations department but also creates work in the office, verifying and tracking both the new and the old meters. The best way to describe the electric meter is as if FEM Electric has about 2400 cash registers and small computers that we make sure are operating correctly daily.

County fairs will be finishing, and the South Dakota State Fair is just around the corner, which is a good reminder that fall sports and school have started or will be starting. Please think safety while driving, but especially on gravel roads. With the height of the row crops some intersections can have blind spots, and we don't need any accidents.

I would encourage our members if you were thinking of adding any electrical load in the next twenty-four months, please call FEM Electric early. The last thing we want is for FEM Electric to be standing in the way of you completing a project. Call Rob Vetch or Ryan Holien.

Once again think safety. Be safe and check your electrical equipment at your grain handling sites before you need them.

## Statement Mailing Dates

Aug 30, 2022 for Aug's energy

Sept 28, 2022 for Sept's energy

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

# Take safety precautions during harvest season

Harvest season brings long, grueling hours in the field, which can make workers weary and prone to neglect safety precautions that can prevent serious or fatal electrical injuries. Every year, an average of 62 farmworkers are electrocuted in the U.S., and many more are injured by shocks.

Farm operators, their family members and farm employees are urged to beware of overhead power lines, to keep farm equipment safely away and to know what to do if accidental contact is made with power lines.

The increasing size of farm equipment, particularly grain tanks on combines that have become higher with extensions, allows operators to come perilously close to overhead power lines over entrances to fields. It is vital to keep equipment safely away from these lines. Maintain a minimum 10-foot radius around electric lines.

Portable augers are the No. 1 cause of electrocution on the farm. Augers being maneuvered by hand around bin sites have caused the deaths of many farmworkers who became the path to ground for electricity when the top of the auger touched overhead power lines. Always retract or lower augers when moving or transporting.

Other equipment commonly involved in power line accidents includes oversized wagons, large combines and other tall equipment.

Harvest is the most likely period for farm-related injury accidents and fatalities. Combines and other equipment loaded onto trailers can contact power lines and cause electrocutions, as can raising the bed of a truck to unload. That's exactly how a 53-year-old Michigan truck driver was tragically killed when he raised the bed of his semitrailer truck while parked beneath a power line at the edge of a field. He was attempting to clean out the bed, and when he touched the truck bed, he became the path to ground for the electricity.

Follow these safety measures:

- Use a spotter when moving tall loads near power lines.
- Inspect farm equipment for transport height and determine clearance with any power lines under which the equipment must pass.
- Make sure everyone knows what to do if accidental contact is made with power lines. These accidents are survivable if the right actions are taken.

## STUDENTS LEARN HOW POWER IS PRODUCED

A group of high school students recently gathered together to take a trip and learn how electricity is produced and how it is used to power their homes, farms, appliances and local businesses.

The students traveled to Bismarck, N.D., to tour the power generation facilities of Basin Electric, which supplies electricity across nine states and is one of the largest power producers in the country.

To see a video of this event and learn more about how electric cooperatives serve our members, visit Cooperative Connections Plus by scanning the QR code at right.



Don't Mess With a Transformer Box



## Beware of the green box

### Cambrie Koistinen

Cambrie, age 11, advises electric cooperative members to use caution around pad-mounted transformers, also known as green boxes, because they contain high-voltage power equipment. Cambrie is the child of Lance and Holly Koistinen of Hayti.

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.

# FRESH FROM THE GARDEN

## ZUCCHINI SPINACH CASSEROLE

**Ingredients:**  
 2 lbs. zucchini  
 1 lbs. frozen spinach  
 1 chopped onion  
 4 cloves of garlic  
 5 beaten eggs  
 1/2 cup salad oil  
 1-1/2 cup cracker crumbs (save 1/2 cup for top)  
 1-1/2 cup cheddar cheese (save 1/2 for top)

### METHOD

Cook and drain first four ingredients. Add eggs, salad oil, cracker crumbs and cheddar cheese. Add salt, pepper and parsley to taste. Spread the remaining crumbs and cheese on top. Bake at 350 for 40 minutes.  
**Glenda Morton, Sioux Falls**

## CREAMY CUCUMBER SALAD

**Ingredients:**  
 1 1/2 long English cucumbers cut in half moons  
 1 1/2 lb tomatoes on the vine sliced in segments  
 1/4 cup red onion thinly sliced (optional)  
 3 tbsp dill finely chopped  
 2 small garlic cloves grated  
 1/2 cup sour cream  
 1/2 tsp salt  
 Ground black pepper to taste

### METHOD

In a large bowl, add cucumbers, tomatoes, red onion, dill, garlic, sour cream, salt and pepper. Stir gently from the bottom in the center of the bowl until well combined. Serve salad within next six hours or so.  
**ifoodreal.com**

## CUCUMBER SANDWICHES

**Ingredients:**  
 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened  
 1 pkg. Good Seasons Italian Dressing Mix (dry)  
 1 mini loaf of cocktail rye bread  
 1 cucumber, sliced  
 fresh dill weed, chopped

### METHOD

The night before serving the cucumber sandwiches, mix together the cream cheese and the Good Seasons Italian Dressing Mix. Refrigerate overnight. Shortly before serving, spread some of the cream cheese mixture on a slice of the cocktail rye bread. Top with a slice of cucumber and sprinkle with dill weed.

**Elaine Rieck, Harrisburg**

## CHERI'S SALAD

**Ingredients:**  
 1-1 lb. pkg. veggie spiral noodles  
 2 1/2 c. diced ham  
 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese  
 1 c. chopped celery  
 1 bag frozen peas, thawed

**Dressing:**  
 1/2 c. mayonnaise  
 1/2 c. sour cream  
 1 tbsp. mustard  
 1 tbsp. sweet pickle juice  
 3/4 tsp. onion powder  
 1/3 c. sugar

### METHOD

Cook noodles according to package directions, drain and rinse. Mix ingredients together in a bowl and set aside. Mix until blended and pour over salad. Stir until well blended.

**Jan Antonen, Arlington**

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 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

## Continued from pg 2

Summaries along with 2021 CFC KRTA statistical ratios.

Motion by Eric Odenbach, seconded by Tom Thorpe and carried to approve director and attorney fees.

**Legal Update:** none

### Meeting Report:

East River board update was given by Gary Bachman.  
East River Resolution Committee report was given by Eric Odenbach.  
SDREA Board Report was given by Tom Thorpe.

The board acknowledged the receipt of the June 6, 2022, Safety Meeting Minutes, East River switchman training for FEM operation employees, and the damage and accident reports.

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

## 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.

## WANT TO BE INFORMED?

Update your phone number!

### Give us a call!

Did you miss a call from us about an outage? Update your phone number to one you'd prefer so that you can stay up to date.

We always do a courtesy call before planned outages!

605-426-6891



# CORRECTION

In the August edition of FEM's Cooperative Connections, we printed Evan Olson's name wrong. Sorry Evan!

Evan was the winner of the Young Adults Light the Way Scholarship at the annual meeting, and won a \$500 scholarship!

Congratulations!



# Wordes works to master complexity of the pipe organ

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The many pastimes of Rachel Wordes include popular activities such as dance, soccer and volunteer work through her church.

And then there's the pipe organ. Wordes, a native of Clara City and recent graduate of Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, has been on a quest to perfect her musical skills on this arcane instrument since she joined the music program at Dordt.

She received scholarship support in dance and education, but also received a special private scholarship to study the pipe organ because of her proficiency on piano, her passion for music and eagerness to learn. She sat down at the imposing Casavant organ at Dordt and it was love at first listen.

Wordes read a history of the vaunted Casavant organ written by Dr. Joan Ringerwole, who described it as having voice and breath and taking on the qualities of a living being. The massive organ has 2,865 pipes, 57 ranks, 37 stops and 32 pedals.

"The appeal to me is that the pipe organ is like a palette you can use to paint a musical picture," Wordes said. "Every one is different and has its own unique tone and timbre."

Throughout her college career, Wordes taught piano and pipe organ lessons, led summer music camps, participated in recitals and distinguished herself in her ability to play and teach.



Rachel Wordes plays an organ at St. Bavorkerk in Haarlem, Netherlands. The instrument was built in the early 1700s and was played by Handel and Mozart.

During two weeks last spring, she was selected to take part in a pipe organ tour across the Netherlands. She has also traveled with her fellow Dordt College students and faculty to Europe for the opportunity to play 24 famous and historic pipe organs.

"The Netherlands trip was remarkable," she said. "We got to play two or three pipe organs a day. We had some pieces picked out and played in the style represented during the time the organ was made, going all the way back to the 1300s. It was kind of like driving a car that's not yours. They're all different with

different tones, temperaments, character and personality. I learned a lot."

Knowledge is something Wordes is more than eager to share. In 2019, she spent the summer teaching music in La Entrada, Honduras. During the first five months of 2022, Wordes worked with students in Managua, Nicaragua, and recently returned there with a year-long commitment to teach English and music at a local private school.

Her career goal is to teach English as a Second Language (ESL).

"I love to teach and watch students expand their skills," she said.



# Sunflower commodity prices are making farmers smile

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

It's hard to keep from smiling when you're driving past a field of golden sunflowers in full bloom during the late summer months.

Wall Drug billboards, old red barns and shiny grain bins are no match for the attention of motorists along I-90 when the sunflowers are bursting forth in all their spectacular yellow splendor stretching far into the horizon.

The subject of many aerial and terrestrial photographers across the region, sunflowers have a special appeal as they grow tall in the field and seem to greet the day leaning forward with a positive energy that exudes joy and optimism.

The current sunflower commodity market certainly has given farmers a reason to smile. South Dakota farmers raised nearly 600,000 acres and more than 1 billion pounds of sunflowers

last year, ranking second only to North Dakota for sunflower production. In fact, for the past decade the Dakotas and Minnesota have alternated the top three spots in their friendly competition depending largely on the vagaries of weather patterns. At least 75 percent of the U.S. commercial sunflower production has taken place in those three states.

About 1,000 of those South Dakota acres were grown by Brad Schecher, a fourth generation farmer who also rotates wheat, corn, flax and soybean crops on his 3,500-acre spread located near Bison in the northwestern part of the state, one of the hot-bed regions for sunflowers.

Schecher took over the family farm from his father nearly 10 years ago and said the military conflict in Ukraine and other economic factors have converged to form a "perfect storm" that has constricted international supplies and created a favorable environment for the

current global sunflower oil market. Commodity prices have broken all-time records by soaring 60 percent compared to a year ago.

"It's as good as any of the 10 years I've been involved in it," Schecher said. "Ukraine was the largest producer of sunflowers and the largest exporter of sunflower oil on the world market with about 50 percent of the overall market, but a lot of their crop has been destroyed or confiscated by the Russian military. That's one of the things that have driven prices up, and it's been good for the farmers."

High prices and high returns are keeping Schecher interested in raising sunflowers, but sometimes he has his doubts. Especially when he gets tired of fighting the fires, a battle that all sunflower farmers are bound to face at some point.

Schecher said that for all the eye appeal sunflowers hold, it's not always easy to bring in the crop. He explained that reaping the high-yield, high-oleic variety that he grows for the sunoil market can cause fires to break out during the combining process in the





Brad Schecher farms roughly 1,000 acres of sunflowers near Bison. *Photo by Brooke Schecher*

fall. The elevated oil content of the plant - ranging anywhere from 38 to 44 percent - along with the dust that's created during combining can result in a combustible mixture that is sometimes ignited by the presence of static electricity.

To make sure he's prepared, Schecher keeps a battery-operated leaf blower aboard the combine at all times.

"I have to keep blowing the combine off when I get to the end of the field to keep a fire from breaking out," he said. "You can see the accumulated piles of dust start glowing red-hot, and you can usually smell it and get it put out before it gets out of control. It's a hazard that you just have to contend with. Sometimes it can happen two or three times a day, especially when it's dry conditions."

Other farmers, such as Lance Hourigan of Lemmon, S.D., have addressed this common problem by investing in after-market solutions. Hourigan reached northward across the state border and recruited Stelter Repair out of New Leipzig, N.D., to manufacture an air tower to help

Estimated number  
of sunflower acres  
**600,000**  
planted in South  
Dakota in 2021

reduce the risk of fire during harvest time. Resembling a chimney, the device draws in air from above the combine where there is much less dust and debris billowing from the threshing process, and blows the air over the engine to help it stay cool and clean.

While Schecher focuses on the high-oleic variety that represents about 80 percent of the market, there are other varieties grown for silage, birdfeed and other uses. Confection sunflowers, grown mostly in the eastern part of the state, are those found bagged up on convenience store shelves, the kind loaded with an assortment of flavors and

seasonings and meant for chewing.

While sunflowers are native to the continent, their history in North America can be traced to American Indian tribes in present-day Arizona and New Mexico. Archaeologists have found that these tribes domesticated the crop as early as 3000 B.C. The seed was ground or pounded into flour for cakes, mush or bread. Some tribes mixed the meal with vegetables such as beans and squash. The seed was cracked and eaten for snacking, while the oil was squeezed from the seed and used in making bread.

Non-food uses included purple dye for textiles, body painting and other decorations. Parts of the plant were used to treat snakebites. The oil was used on the skin and hair, and the dried stalk was used as a building material.

Today, agricultural scientists are exploring new uses for the plant while also figuring out how to provide protection from wireworms and other threats. Meanwhile, bullish farmers are keeping their eye on the global markets while exuding the same sense of sunny optimism associated with the sunflowers they work so hard to raise.

# AIR CONDITIONING ASSISTANCE

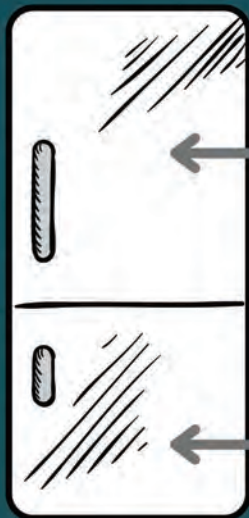
LIEAP, or the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program, provides assistance to South Dakotans who own their own home. Services include funding for heating homes in the winter, and sometimes for cooling homes in the summer months. Through the Department of Social Services, LIEAP distributes funds directly to energy suppliers on behalf of the member.

LIEAP also provides help to repair or replace air conditioning systems. Grow South Dakota serves the FEM area and can facilitate the AC repair or replacement program as well as the energy assistance program. Grow South Dakota can be reached at 605-698-7654 or at <https://www.growsd.org>. All program monies are distributed on a first come, first served basis.



## Keep Food Safe During and After a Power Outage

Refrigerated or frozen foods may not be safe to eat after a power outage. Use these tips to minimize food loss and reduce risk of illness.



4

Refrigerated food will last four hours. After four hours, place refrigerated foods in a cooler with ice.

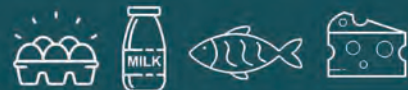
24 OR 48

Food in a **half-full** freezer will last 24 hours. Food in a **full** freezer will last 48 hours.

### Food Safety Tips

1. Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.
2. Throw out any food with an unusual odor, color or texture.
3. Throw out perishable food in your refrigerator after four hours without power or a cold source (like a cooler with ice).

When in doubt, throw it out!



# STAY SAFE ON YOUR RANCH OR FARM

There are all types of precautions ranchers and farmers take to stay safe. Electrical hazards, however, can sometimes be overlooked since electricity is not seen or heard and overhead power lines can become part of the landscape.

Here are some electrical safety tips to implement on your farm or ranch:

- In general, look for exposed energized parts and unguarded electrical equipment that could become energized unexpectedly.
- Be careful when operating watering tanks with electric pumps. In addition, sprays of water from irrigation systems should not be near overhead power lines.
- Inspect electrical fencing regularly to ensure that everything is tight and secure and that no parts are frayed. A sagging fence not only means that animals could escape, but it can also create electrical issues.
- Ensure your electric fence is well supported. A lack of support can cause it to sag.
- Make sure electric fencing is visible by using electric fence tape, warning signs or other methods.
- Cap posts, especially metal T-posts, to prevent an animal (or human) from becoming impaled.
- Be aware of overhead power lines when moving bales of hay.
- Do not store hay bales under power lines.
- Be aware that tarps that cover hay can come loose and blow in heavy winds, sometimes causing an outage if the tarp gets too close or contacts a power line.
- When using a generator and double throw switch, make sure they are in good working order and up to code.
- Check electrical center pivot equipment before and after use to ensure it is grounded, that the housing is protected and that the wiring is sound (this protects livestock and people).
- Ensure that irrigation equipment is regularly inspected. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for inspection and maintenance.
- Always turn off the power before working on an irrigation system.
- After a storm, make sure the system has not become ungrounded due to lightning.
- Position irrigation pipes at least 15 feet away from power lines; also, store unused pipes away from power lines.

- Always be aware of overhead power line locations and use a spotter when working close to lines or poles.
- Follow safe digging procedures; call 8-1-1 to have underground utilities marked before breaking ground.

To learn more about electrical safety on the ranch or farm or in general, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.safepower.org).

## HARVEST SAFETY TIPS FOR FARMWORKERS

- **Maintain a 10-foot clearance** around all utility equipment in all directions.
- **Use a spotter and deployed flags** to maintain safe distances from power lines and other equipment when doing field work.
- **If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed power line, contact us immediately** by phone and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab, without touching it at the same time, and hop away to safety.
- **Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle.** Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipe and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.

Source: Safe Electricity



Roger and Lori Pietz claimed the New Age Nosh Award at last year's Chislic Festival in Freeman. Photos by SD Chislic Festival

## Step inside the Chislic Circle for unique food and lots of family fun

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

In a world already rife with scads of dander-raising hot-button issues, add chislic to the list. It seems that anytime more than a few cocksure chislic chefs gather around a grill, controversy can't be too far away.

The bickering typically begins with picking the proper protein. Opt for the traditional scrumptious cubes of mutton or lamb, or take a risk and go hog-wild with pork or maybe buffalo? How about swinging farther to the edge with venison, goat, beef or chicken? Dare we add emu to the list?

At least one restaurant is sending the chislic cosmos into spasms by serving up plates of (gasp) "fish-lic."

The plethora of opinions surrounding the preparation of chislic starts with the choice of meat and springboards from there into seasonings, cooking methods and even serving techniques. Grilled,

deep fried or air fried? Fork, toothpick or skewer? Don't get a chislic enthusiast started on the sauce selection.

Many people and various cultures have a strong attachment to their particular favorite types of food, but South Dakota's desire for chislic is unusually intense – especially for those who dwell within the Chislic Circle.

If the name Chislic Circle evokes images of a secret society that conducts mysterious midnight rituals around a raging bonfire deep in the forest, well, it's not quite that. It's more of a clever marketing concept, and an effective one for community leaders who take pride in their chislic lore. In fact, everyone is invited to come inside this circle.

At the center of the Chislic Circle lies Freeman, S.D., with the chislic realm falling inside a 100-mile radius and including communities such as Kaylor, Menno, Hurley, Marion, Bridgewater, Emery and others. The Circle was spun into creation in 2018 when a small

but passionate contingent of chislic connoisseurs decided to celebrate and demonstrate their pride in their unique culinary heritage.

Andrea Baer was part of that early chislic cadre. She said the catalyst came when chislic was officially declared the "state nosh" by the Legislature four years ago.

"Before then, when you mentioned chislic outside of the area, there was hardly anyone who knew what you were talking about," said Baer, who is a native of Turkey Ridge still living on the farm her forebears from Denmark settled several generations ago. "It's something that's very unique to the area and we



like to celebrate it.”

That celebration has taken the form of an annual event that’s been recognized by tourism officials as one of the state’s fastest-growing festivals with an estimated 10,000 attendees last year after a pandemic pause in 2020. Organizers were expecting up to a couple thousand for the inaugural event in 2018, but four times that many showed up. The following year, the party was moved from the Freeman softball field to the more spacious 40-acre Prairie Arboretum.

This year’s festival was held on July 30 with the usual food vendors touting their unique savory recipes, libations, live music, a family-friendly kid zone, bingo, dancing, a cornhole competition, 5K run/walk, helicopter rides and other forms of family-oriented fun.

Festival board member and chislic expert Ian Tuttle also presented, “From Russia with Love: The History of Chislic” at the nearby Heritage Hall Museum and Archives.

Tuttle enjoys telling the story of how chislic arrived in the late 1800s with a particular group of immigrants described as “Germans from Russia.” A group of German Mennonites and Hutterites originally fled religious persecution in the 16th century and migrated eastward through the Russian Empire where they raised crops and sheep.

They chopped the meat into small pieces, cooked it over a fire and called it “shashlik,” a word for “skewer” rooted in the Turkic languages of Central Asia. The word is a close cousin to the more widely known “shish kebab.”

Eventually, those migrants found their way to present-day southeastern South Dakota and made sure to bring their shashlik with them. Those residing



inside the Chislic Circle generally recognize Johann Hoellwarth as the individual who introduced chislic to the Dakota Territory. Born in 1849 to a German Lutheran family in the Crimea, Hoellwarth settled just outside of where Freeman is today and was laid to eternal rest in the town.

Each year a panel of seven fearless judges takes on the task of naming the festival’s “best chislic.” For the past two years the top Traditional Division Award has gone to Kyle Sturzenbecker and his squad of Sheep Flockers.

Sturzenbecker said he and his fellow chef Josh Goehring don’t characterize themselves as competitive, but he also isn’t about to give away any trade secrets.

“You don’t have to do a whole lot. I just let the flavor of the meat speak for itself,” he said. “Honestly, I never

thought I’d win. I just like to cook good food that people enjoy eating.”

In 2021, the non-traditional New Age Nosh Award was claimed by Roger Pietz, owner of the Pietz Kuchen Kitchen. The establishment is mostly known for its rich custard dessert, but for the festival Pietz decided to go in a different direction and put together a tangy chislic pizza.

Ultimately, the Chislic Festival is about celebrating family, honoring the past and preserving the rural lifestyle.

“The tradition of chislic comes not from cities, the wealthy, or the privileged,” Baer said, “but from the rural, hardworking farm tradition of the people who settled this area. We thrive on the rural, while building the region through vibrant community.”

# GENERATOR SAFETY

Before you grab your portable generator to use it for backup power, there are important lifesaving safety steps you should know. It is best to familiarize yourself with how to use a generator properly before needing one.

Before using a portable generator, be sure to do the following:

- Check carbon monoxide (CO) detectors. Protect yourself and those you love by making sure there are battery-operated CO testers in your home that are working properly/have fresh batteries.
- Read the instructions. Many people are tempted to skip this step, but incorrectly using a generator can cause CO poisoning, which is often deadly. These are instructions you should take the time to read.
- Know how to use one properly. Operate generators at least 20 feet from doors and windows and never use one in any type of enclosed structure, such as a garage, shed or tent. If your RV has a generator, be sure to operate it safely to avoid CO poisoning.
- Keep it dry. If it is wet outside, place the portable generator on a tarp. If it is raining or snowing, position it under a portable canopy (but not under a carport).
- Keep utility workers and others safe. Never plug a portable generator into a wall outlet. Never use a permanent generator without throwing the transfer switch. Doing either of these things can cause dangerous backfeed into the power grid.
- Make sure the transfer switch is endorsed by a reputable testing laboratory, such as UL, and that the installation meets all applicable electrical codes.
- Plug items directly into a portable generator and use heavy-duty extension cords that are in good working condition and are the correct gauge. The lower the gauge number and the thicker the cord, the more electricity it can safely carry; refer to the owner's manual for specifics. Do not plug one extension cord into another.
- Let the generator cool down before refueling. Also, store fuel safely.
- Keep it well maintained and have it inspected regularly.

To learn more about safe generator use and electrical safety in general, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).

## What to do before using a PORTABLE GENERATOR



### Prepare

Install battery operated carbon monoxide (CO) alarms throughout your home; ensure they are working properly.

### Position

Place a portable generator at least 20 feet from windows and doors; do not use one in a garage or carport.



### Read

Carefully review and then follow all manufacturer's instructions.

### Protect

If it is wet outside, keep it dry by placing it on a tarp. Position it under a portable canopy (not a carport).



### Refuel Safely

Turn off your portable generator and let it cool down before refueling.

### Inspect and Maintain

Inspect a portable generator before each use and make sure it is properly maintained.



Using a portable generator can be useful during an outage; however, use one correctly to prevent CO poisoning and to stay safe.

# TIRED OF LATE FEES?

## Sign up for FEM Electric’s automatic payments

FEM offers a variety ways to pay your monthly energy statement, including ACH! You can sign up easily using the form below. Fill it out and return it to FEM Electric at PO Box 468, Ipswich, SD 57451. Your monthly payments will be automatically withdrawn from your checking or savings account before late fees are applied! You won't have to worry if your payment will be made on time.

### ACH AUTHORIZATION FORM

Customer Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Billing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cell or Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

I (we) hereby authorize FEM Electric Cooperative, Inc. to initiate debit entries (charges) to my (our) checking or savings account indicated below and the depository financial institution named below, for my monthly electric bill, heat loan bill and/or other services, from my bank account. This authority is to remain in full force and effect until company has received written notification from me (or either of us) of its termination in a timely manner. I understand I will continue to receive billing statements as normal show that month's charges. I will contact the co-op directly concerning billing disputes.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**ATTACH A PHOTOCOPY OF A VOIDED CHECK HERE - NO DEPOSIT SLIP**

Or complete the following: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bank Name and Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bank Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your Account Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Bank Routing Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list all of FEM monthly energy accounts you wish to withdraw from your bank account. If you have more accounts than there's space for, please use an additional sheet of paper. Indicate if you would like your heat loan and/or other service bills added to this process:

FEM Account #: \_\_\_\_\_ FEM Account #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 FEM Account #: \_\_\_\_\_ FEM Account #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 FEM Account #: \_\_\_\_\_ FEM Account #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other Services: \_\_\_\_\_ Heat Loan: \_\_\_\_\_



If ACH is not right for you, that's okay! We have other options available, such as SmartHub. You can sign up for SmartHub by downloading the SmartHub app on your smart device, and choosing FEM as your provider. With SmartHub, you can set up recurring payments with your credit card, or bank information, and never miss a payment again. You can visit [www.femelectric.coop](http://www.femelectric.coop) and click the SmartHub info tab to learn more.

## REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Your E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**SEPTEMBER 1-5**  
**South Dakota State Fair**  
*Photo Credit: SD State Fair*

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.

**AUGUST 24-28**  
**Corn Palace Festival**  
604 N Main St., Mitchell, SD,  
605-995-8430

**AUGUST 24-28**  
**Kool Deadwood Nites**  
Citywide, Deadwood, SD,  
605-578-1876

**AUGUST 25-28**  
**Prairie Village Steam Threshing Jamboree**  
Prairie Village, Madison, SD,  
605-256-3644

**AUGUST 26-27**  
**Hill City Wine, Brew and BBQ**  
Elm St., Hill City, SD, hillcitywine  
brewandbbq.com

**AUGUST 26-27**  
**Sizzlin' Summer Nights**  
Main St., Aberdeen, SD,  
605-226-3441

**AUGUST 27**  
**Picken on the Prairie - Fall Junk Market**  
36836 155th St., Chelsea, SD,  
605-252-8424

**SEPTEMBER 1-5**  
**South Dakota State Fair**  
890 3rd St. SW, Huron, SD,  
sdstatefair.com

**SEPTEMBER 4**  
**Dakota Five-O**  
City Park, Spearfish, SD,  
dakotafiveo.com

**SEPTEMBER 8-11**  
**S.D. State Senior Games**  
Watertown, SD, 605-491-0635  
or 605-753-3668

**SEPTEMBER 10**  
**605 Black Hills Classic**  
Lions Park, Spearfish, SD,  
605-274-1999

**SEPTEMBER 10**  
**Germanfest**  
Fawick Park, Sioux Falls, SD,  
siouxfallssistercities.com/event

**SEPTEMBER 10**  
**Insect Festival**  
McCrary Gardens, Brookings,  
SD, 605-688-6707

**SEPTEMBER 10**  
**Sidewalk Arts Festival**  
Main Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD,  
605-367-6000

**SEPTEMBER 16-18**  
**South Dakota Film Festival**  
Capitol Theatre, Aberdeen, SD,  
southdakotafilmfest.org

**SEPTEMBER 17-18**  
**Northeast South Dakota Celtic Faire and Games**  
37925 Youth Camp Rd.,  
Aberdeen, SD, 605-622-0144

**SEPTEMBER 23-24**  
**Hops and Hogs Festival**  
Citywide, Deadwood, SD,  
605-578-1876

**SEPTEMBER 23-25**  
**HNIRC Championship of Champions**  
Stanley County Fairgrounds,  
Fort Pierre, SD, horsenations  
indianrelay.com

**SEPTEMBER 24**  
**Great Downtown Pumpkin Festival**  
Main Street Square, Rapid City,  
SD, 605-716-7979

**SEPTEMBER 24-25**  
**Menno Pioneer Power Show**  
Pioneer Acres, Menno, SD,  
mennopowershow@yahoo.com

**SEPT. 29-OCT. 1**  
**Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup & Arts Festival**  
Custer, SD, gfp.sd.gov/buffalo-roundup

**SEPT. 30-OCT. 1**  
**Oktoberfest**  
Citywide, Deadwood, SD,  
605-578-1876

**SEPT. 30-OCT. 2**  
**SiouxperCon**  
1201 N West Ave., Sioux Falls,  
SD, siouxpercon.com

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