

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## Wings of Valor

**A Veteran's Hunting  
Retreat**

Pages 8-9

**Celebrating American  
Indian Heritage**

Pages 12-13



## Northern Electric Annual Meeting a success.



**Char Hagar**  
General Manager

Thank you to everyone who had the opportunity to attend our 76th Annual Meeting of the members in September. This year, we changed the format to include activities for the members prior to the business meeting. In lieu of a meal, vouchers to various restaurants were provided to each registered membership. Please redeem your meal voucher by the expiration date on October 31, 2023, at any of the participating restaurants listed on the back of the voucher.

We hosted several outdoor activities for kids and adults. One activity included safety demonstrations showing the dangers of electrical contact with the high-voltage trailer. Using fruit, Northern Electric linemen can illustrate what fruit looks like after contact with high-voltage electricity. In addition, kids could dress in lineman gear and climb a miniature electric pole for picture opportunities. The most popular station for all ages was the bucket truck rides. Many members climbed to new heights and experienced the linemen's view from above. We heard from many members that they enjoyed the opportunity to experience a wide variety of activities.

Another popular addition to this year's Annual Meeting was the ability to explore and test drive an electric vehicle. We thank East River Electric for allowing us the use of their Ford Mustang Mach-E for this event. Members enjoyed the experience and were surprised by the power and handle behind the Mach-E.

Congratulations to Josh Larson, Kirk Schaunaman, and BJ Hansen, who were re-elected to the board at the meeting.

Those in attendance at the Annual Meeting heard updates from the board and management. Northern Electric staff worked with engineers to develop a long-range plan and the next four-year work plan. Currently, the plans are being reviewed and 2024 budgets are being developed to determine future rate change

needs. Once the review process is complete, the membership will be informed of the status of a rate change for 2024.

Board President Nolan Wipf also discussed the aging condition of the headquarters building. The building serving the cooperative since 1967 has slowly deteriorated. The board is in the process of working with an architecture firm to determine the feasibility of remaining in the existing facility, remodeling the facility, or demolishing and rebuilding at the same location. Working with the architect and reviewing all the above options will help the board make the best decision for the membership. The shop attached to the office building is not being looked at for remodeling or replacement.

Another change happening at Northern Electric is regarding our Redfield Office. Diann Brenner, our on-site customer service representative will retire at the end of 2023. Diann has worked at the Redfield location for 18 years. We appreciate her work over the years and wish her the best in retirement. She will be greatly missed!

Along with Diann's retirement another change is happening at the Redfield office. Due to the decreased activity at this location, effective January 1, 2024, the Northern Electric Office in Redfield will no longer be open for walk-in traffic. This decision was not made lightly and was made after careful consideration by the board and management. In recent years, in-person assistance at the Redfield location has decreased to minimal numbers. Members have increased the utilization of the outside drop box and are opting to use various automated payment options. Due to the decrease in foot traffic at the office, and in an effort to reduce expenses, all customer service questions will now be handled by staff at the Bath location.

We are still here to assist our members and will work with you to accommodate your needs. Please contact us at 605-225-0310 for member assistance.

**COOPERATIVE  
CONNECTIONS**

**NORTHERN  
ELECTRIC**

(USPS 396-040)

**Board President:** Nolan Wipf

**Board of Directors**

Todd Hettich - Vice President  
Ron Kaaz - Secretary  
Josh Larson - Treasurer  
Fran Esser  
B.J. Hansen  
Kirk Schaunaman  
Mike Traxinger

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info@northernelectric.coop

**Chief Financial Officer:** Lorisa Rudolph

**Operations Manager:** Jerry Weber

**Manager of Member Services:** Russel Ulmer

**Manager of Information Technology:** Derek Gorecki

**Communications Director:** Kelly Brandlee  
kbrandlee@northernelectric.coop

**Executive Secretary:** Amy Golden

Northern Electric Cooperative Connections is the monthly publication for the members of Northern Electric Cooperative, PO Box 457, Bath, SD 57427. Families subscribe to Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. The purpose of Northern Electric Cooperative Connections is to provide reliable, helpful information to electric cooperative members on electric cooperative matters and better rural living.

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**Northern Electric  
Cooperative**  
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Northern Electric Cooperative's regular board meeting was held September 21, 2023, at the headquarters in Bath with all directors present or via teleconference. As the first order of business, the board held an executive session. Following the executive session, the board approved the August 25, 2023, minutes and August expenditures. The board then reviewed and accepted monthly reports by management.

East River Director Kirk Schaunaman reported on actions taken by the East River Board at their annual & regular meetings held September 6-7, 2023. South Dakota Rural Electric Association Director Nolan Wipf reported that the next SDREA board meeting will be held September 28-29th, in Pierre. Directors Todd Hettich, B.J. Hansen, Communications Director Kelly Brandlee and General Manager Char Hager reported on the 2023 East River Annual Meeting, held September 6 in Sioux Falls, SD. Nolan Wipf, Todd Hettich and Scott Sperry reported on the NRECA Regional Meetings 5 & 6 held September 12-14 in Des Moines, Iowa.

**MANAGER'S REPORT**

General Manager Char Hager's report to the board included the following item:

- Reminder of the Mid-West Electric Consumers Association 66th Annual Meeting, December 12-14, Denver, Co.
- Informed the board of Vice President Todd Hettich's election to the Rural

Electric Supply Cooperative (RESCO) board.

**BOARD REPORT**

The board considered and/or acted upon the following:

As part of the Annual Board reorganization, the board elected officers: President Nolan Wipf, Vice-President Todd Hettich, Secretary Ronald Kaaz, and Treasurer Josh Larson.

Approved the date and time of the next regular board meeting for 8:30 A.M. on Thursday, October 19, 2023.

Approved Work Order Inventories #23-08 for \$856,969.18 and #23-08MC for \$24,723.07 to be submitted to the Rural Utilities Service for reimbursement from loan funds for electric plant construction already completed.

Approved requests for capital credit retirements of \$22,509.41.

Approved donation request to Farmers Union for \$250.

Talk to your director or co-op manager with questions on any of these matters.

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

	August-23	August-22
kWh Sales .....	21,494,744 kWh	23,810,247 kWh
Electric Revenues .....	\$2,360,335	\$2,334,053
Total Cost of Service .....	\$2,296,739	\$2,293,718
Operating Margins.....	\$63,596	\$40,335
Year to Date Margins .....	\$481,889	\$748,772

**RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE MONTHLY USAGE AND BILL**

<b>AUGUST-2023</b> .....	1,385 kWh.....	\$184.69.....	0.1334 per kWh
<b>AUGUST-2022</b> .....	1,416 kWh.....	\$187.69.....	0.1325 per kWh

Wholesale power cost, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for **81.4%** of NEC's total cost of service.

# Drowsy Driving

**Drowsy Driving Prevention Week (Nov. 5-11, 2023)**, held every year during the first full week of November, is a good time to remember that drowsy driving is impaired driving.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 1 in 25 adult drivers report having fallen asleep while driving in the previous 30 days, and many more admit to driving when they were sleep-deprived.

These startling figures show how prevalent drowsy driving is. What drivers may not realize is how much drowsy driving puts themselves – and others – at risk. In fact, an estimated 6,400 people died annually in crashes involving drowsy driving, according to the National Sleep Foundation.

### Impact of Drowsiness on Driving

Driving while drowsy is similar to driving under influence of alcohol.

- Drivers' reaction times, awareness of hazards and ability to sustain attention all worsen the drowsier the driver.
- Driving after going more than 20 hours without sleep is the equivalent of driving with a blood-alcohol concentration of 0.08% – the U.S. legal limit.
- You are three times more likely to be in a car crash if you are fatigued.

A driver might not even know when he or she is fatigued because signs of fatigue are hard to identify. Some people may also experience micro-sleep – short, involuntary periods of inattention. In the 4 or 5 seconds a driver experiences micro-sleep, at highway speed, the vehicle will travel the length of a football field.

### Prevalence of Drowsy Driving Crashes

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that every year about 100,000 police-reported, drowsy-driving crashes result in nearly 800 fatalities and about 50,000 injuries. The real number may be much higher, however, as it is difficult to determine whether a driver was drowsy at the time of a crash.

A study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety estimated that 328,000 drowsy driving crashes occur annually. That's more than three times the police-reported number. The same study found that 109,000 of those drowsy driving crashes resulted in an injury and about 6,400 were fatal. The researchers suggest the prevalence of drowsy driving fatalities is more than 350% greater than reported.

Beyond the human toll is the economic one. NHTSA estimates fatigue-related crashes resulting in injury or death cost society \$109 billion annually, not including property damage.

### Interventions for Drowsy Driving

Drowsy driving affects everyone, including adolescents and teens, who are not getting enough sleep (according to the CDC, it is recommended that teens get 8-10 hours of sleep each night). That means interventions focusing on this age group can help reduce drowsy

driving. One such intervention is for parents to incorporate discussions and rules on drowsy driving while completing their parent-teen driving agreements.

#### Other ways to reduce drowsy driving include:

- **Crash avoidance technologies:** New and existing safety technologies, such as drowsiness alert and lane departure warnings, can detect common drowsy driving patterns and warn drivers to stay in their lane or take a break
- **University interventions:** College students receive less than average sleep, with some estimates at less than six hours a night; education programs aimed at college students may help curb drowsy driving and instill healthier behaviors that can last into adulthood
- **Getting more sleep:** According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the Sleep Research Society, adults should get seven or more hours of sleep each night
- **Medication labels:** An article by Consumer Reports found that side-effect warnings are not always clear; new labeling guidelines may help drivers understand when to drive or not drive after taking these medications
- **Employers:** Workplaces with strong off-the-job safety and health programs can include key information on getting sufficient sleep and refraining from driving drowsy

*Source: National Safety Council*



### Don't Fly Kites Near Power Lines!

#### Jason Willman, Age 9

Jason Willman advises people it's not safe to fly kites around power lines. Jason is the son of Dave and April Willman from Yankton, S.D., members of Clay-Union Electric Corporation.

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.



# EASY CROCKPOT CREATIONS

## MOM'S ROAST

### Ingredients:

3-5 lbs. beef roast  
1 can beefy mushroom soup  
1 pkg. au jus (dry)

### Method

Place roast in crock pot at bedtime. Mix au jus and soup together and pour over the roast. Cook on low. Roast will be ready to serve in its own gravy for dinner tomorrow.

Elaine Rieck  
Harrisburg, S.D.

## CREAMY GARDEN ROTINI

### Ingredients:

1 lb. cooked and drained sausage or beef  
1 large can (26 oz.) cream of chicken soup  
1 soup can of milk  
1 can (14.5 oz.) chicken broth soup  
1 tbsp. Italian seasoning  
1 cup fresh mushrooms  
6 cups fresh spinach  
1 pkg. Garden Rotini

### Method

Add ingredients in the order given to the instant pot. Pressure cook on high for 20 minutes. Allow pressure to reduce to normal for 10 minutes, then serve! You will need an instant pot for this recipe!

Jean Cave  
Sioux Falls, S.D.

## CROCKPOT CASHEW CHICKEN

### Ingredients:

1 pkg. slow cookers limited edition cashew chicken seasoning  
2 lbs. boneless skinless chicken thighs, cubed  
1 cup frozen chopped onion and pepper blend  
1/3 cup water  
3 tbsps. soy sauce  
2 tbsps. ketchup  
1 cup cashew pieces  
2 green onions, finely chopped

### Method

Place chicken and vegetables in slow cooker. Mix seasoning, water, soy sauce, and ketchup in bowl until well blended. Pour over chicken and vegetables; stir to coat. Cover. Cook eight hours on low or four hours on high. Stir in cashews. Sprinkle with green onions. Serve over cooked rice, if desired. If cooking on low, decrease water to 1/4 cup.

McCormick.com

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2023. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.



## A new location and format considered a success at the Northern Electric Cooperative 76th Annual Meeting.

**Kelly Brandlee**

[kbrandlee@northernelectric.coop](mailto:kbrandlee@northernelectric.coop)

Warm weather on September 19 brought 200 members along with guests to the Brown County Fairgrounds Club House in Aberdeen for the Northern Electric 76th Annual Meeting.

Attendees enjoyed many outdoor activities, including bucket truck

rides, test driving an electric Ford Mustang Mach-E, and safety demonstrations with the high voltage trailer and Neon Leon Powertown displays.

This year, we did not provide an on-site meal. Instead, members enjoyed snacks and received one \$35 meal voucher issued to each registered membership.

Meal vouchers are redeemable at participating local restaurants including Anchors Away, Richmond Lake; Big Fella's, Aberdeen; Elm Lake Resort, Frederick; Flinn's, Melette; Hecla Bar, Hecla; Karen's Bar, Columbia; Leo's, Redfield; Millstone, Aberdeen; Minerva's, Aberdeen; Patriot Take Out, Tulare; Red Horse Inn, Groton; The Shed, Westport; Tokyo Sushi & Steakhouse, Aberdeen; Wakeside, Mina Lake.

President Nolan Wipf presided over the business meeting. The minutes of the 2022 annual meeting and the 2022 financial report were approved by the members



who attended. Wipf and General Manager Char Hager shared updates from the Cooperative. A recap of the previous year's activities can be found in the Annual Report every member received in the September *Cooperative Connections* magazine.

East River Chief Member and Public Relations Officer Chris Studer shared with the membership the importance of an "All of the Above" generation mix, which includes coal, renewable energy, and natural gas.

The 76th annual meeting wrapped up with the announcement of District 4, 6, and 7's director elections. Three incumbent candidates were up for re-election. Josh Larson, District 4; Kirk Schaunaman, District 6; and BJ Hansen, District 7, all submitted nominating petitions to retain their seats on the board. All three were unopposed, resulting in the reinstatement of their seats on the Northern Electric Board of Directors.



Northern Electric Cooperative Board of Directors. Front row left to right: Nolan Wipf, Hitchcock; Scott Sperry, Bath; Todd Hettich, Mina; and Kirk Schaunaman, Aberdeen. Back row left to right: Josh Larson, Columbia; Mike Traxinger, Claremont; B.J. Hansen, Turton; Ronald Kaaz, Aberdeen; and Fran Esser, Redfield.

## ANNUAL MEETING PRIZE WINNERS

Prizes were drawn from the list of the 198 members who registered for the meeting. The winners are listed below.

- \$200 bill credit – Paul Erdmann
- \$100 American Express gift card – Robert Karst
- \$100 American Express gift card – John Kippley
- \$50 American Express gift card - Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc
- \$50 American Express gift card - Leroy Haffner
- \$50 American Express gift card – Stanley Gage
- East River Electric Car Kit– Alan Zoellner

The kids coloring contest and drawing winners are listed below. Each winner recieved a \$20 American Express gift card.

- 11 and up - William age 12
- 6-10 years old - Mia age 10 and Evey age 10
- 5 and under - Franklin age 5

### Kids Drawing Winners

- Ashland, Aberdeen
- Henry, Aberdeen





Veterans enjoying their stay at Wings of Valor.

# WINGS OF VALOR

## A Veteran's Retreat

Shannon Marvel

shannon.marvel@sdrea.coop

Wings of Valor Lodge isn't just a hunting retreat offering veterans a good time and a free pheasant hunt, it's a place for them to come home.

The non-profit organization offers all U.S. military veterans an all-expense paid hunt in the heart of pheasant country, about five miles south of Parker, South Dakota.

The organization runs almost entirely on volunteers, donations and sponsorships and has already served more than 500 veterans from over 40 states since it began operations in 2019.

Sean Adams, the organization's president and co-founder, said the idea to open a hunting lodge came after discussions with the organization's now-CEO Bruce Weller back in 2018.

Weller owned a private hunting lodge called Birds, Bucks and Berries, and was host to Adams and other veterans during his annual veterans' hunt.

"Bruce was saying how the veterans' hunt was always the best day of the year, so I said, we can make every day the best day of the year if you want," said Adams.

Adams, who was grievously injured while serving in Afghanistan resulting in a double amputation of his legs in 2012, said he was well-versed in the non-profit community by the time he and Weller began discussing opening a hunting lodge that served veterans.

"I know pretty much how it works. If you do what you say, do it on time, do it well, serve veterans with a level of professionalism, and have a little faith, people will come," Adams said.

"From that conversation to Nov. 1, 2019, we worked on build site plans that I designed with one of the volunteers. We took a pavilion area that (Weller) used for weddings and put chalk lines everywhere, which is how we mapped out a building plan."

Adams said he rolled his wheelchair around each room, and if he hit a chalk line, he'd remark the line to ensure it was handicap accessible. That was in





**Above:** CPL USMC (RET) Sean Adams

**Right:** Sean Adams recovers in a hospital after suffering serious injuries in an IED explosion in Afghanistan in 2011.



January of 2019. Eleven months later, the lodge had been built and a group of veterans came to hunt under the newly established Wings of Valor Lodge.

Adams said a premise of Wings of Valor Lodge is to welcome veterans' home to something that's not chaotic, a place where they can find purpose and peace.

There's no religious angle, nor any requirements other than having taken the oath to serve our country for a veteran to have their travel expenses and entire hunting trip paid for by the non-profit.

"My generation fought in a war that was religious based," Adams explained. "We do have a spiritual setting, but we don't press anything. We never want a veteran to feel that they are oppressed by any sort of a faith."

Whether a veteran is religious, Christian, Muslim, atheist, or simply spiritual, they will be amongst others who understand what they've been through.

"No veteran is broken, they just need to come home," Adams said.

"God did not call the qualified, he called the unqualified that were willing to do

whatever was asked. Don't think because you did something overseas that your any worse than the pastor in the pulpit. We're all sinners on this earth."

Nature is also a powerful tool that Adams believes helps mend the mind, body and spirit. It's peaceful, which he said is the type of environment veterans need.

"You need all those to regroup yourself back in society. It's really hard to come out of a war, or wars, and describe that to the average human being," Adams said.

The lodge has hosted veterans of World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam to

veterans who have served in the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Operation Desert Storm.

Many of the veterans that have come to the lodge have never had a chance to heal or "come home", Adams said.

Some of those

men were Marines that Adams served with directly a decade ago.

"They saw me in an IED blast. They didn't have time to heal. They were able to see that I was okay and it was time for them to start healing. They had given enough to the country. It was time to start the healing process," Adams said.

"We also had a veteran talk about

Vietnam. He hadn't talked about it since 1968," Adams said.

Combat veterans, regardless of where they served or experienced warfare, establish a connection with one another at the lodge.

Older veterans find purpose in helping their younger counterparts. Adams said the connection can be overwhelming at times for the Vietnam veterans because of the newfound sense of purpose they find in these interactions.

Adams said raising kids and having companionship with your wife or husband is meaningful to veterans, but they often go without the relationships they had with their fellow soldiers they had beside them in the heat of battle.

"Giving someone millions of dollars, houses, or trip – that's great. But that's only mending the problem. Giving someone a sense of purpose is something we have to do," Adams said.

"When the Vietnam veterans tell my generation 'I get it, and it won't last forever', it gives the Vietnam guys a sense of purpose. The longer you hold it in the deeper it gets. That's something we realized at Walter Reed. We started getting off our medications the more we talked about what happened."

Adams said any veteran who wants to come and hunt at the Wings of Valor Lodge need only apply.

Individual applications come to the lodge free of charge. That means the organization will cover the cost of travel and any other expenses incurred to ensure the veteran doesn't pay a dime out of their own pocket.

To apply for a hunt or learn more about Wings of Valor Lodge, go to [www.wingsofvalorlodge.org](http://www.wingsofvalorlodge.org).



A handicap accessible bedroom at Wings of Valor lodge

# Happenings at Northern Electric

## GARY NORLAND PRESENTATION



Employees from neighboring coops FEM Electric Association, Lake Region-Electric, and Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc. joined Northern Electric for an inspiring story from electrocution survivor Gary Norland.

Gary and his wife Jeanne walked the group through their life-altering experience when Gary came in contact with a 12,500 volt power line. They talked about the ripple effect an injury has on a person, their family, coworkers, and community. The Norlands encouraged the group to always have a safety mindset and never take a moment for granted.

## HETTICH ELECTED TO RESCO BOARD



Northern Electric Board President Nolan Wiipf congratulated District 2 Director Todd Hettich on his recent election to the Rural Electric Supply Cooperative (RESCO) board.

RESCO is a member owned, not for profit wholesale distributor of high voltage electrical products. They work closely with hundreds of dependable manufacturers to meet high-voltage electrical distribution and transmission needs.

## NORTHERN ELECTRIC EMPLOYEES CELEBRATE YEARS OF SERVICE MILESTONES



Steve Beck  
Journeyman Lineman  
10 Years



Brandon Flack  
Member Services  
10 Years



Benji Grajczyk  
Network Systems  
Technician  
10 Years



Jerry Weber  
Operations Manager  
40 Years





# CUT CORN NOT CORNERS

Time is a precious commodity, especially during harvest. However, cutting safety corners while harvesting around power lines can be deadly. Taking a moment to be prepared can help prevent catastrophic accidents. Knowing what to do if an accident does occur can be the difference between life and death.

## **RE-ENERGIZING SAFETY**

Contact your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative  
or visit **[YourCoopPower.com](https://YourCoopPower.com)** to find safety tips and make a plan.





Dignity courtesy of Travel South Dakota

# DIGNITY

## Celebrating American Indian Heritage

Scott Waltman

Rising from the prairie land as it gives way to bluffs on the east side of the Missouri River is a spectacular sculpture commemorating both South Dakota's 125 anniversary and the state's original inhabitants.

Dignity of the Earth and Sky was built by Sturgis-based sculptor Dale Claude Lamphere, who used to be the state's poet laureate.

The sculpture was erected in 2016 after Norm and Eunabel McKie announced it as a gift to South Dakota upon the state's quasiquicentennial in 2014.

Dignity towers 50 feet above the ground, beckoning motorists as they travel along Interstate 90. From the

east, it's the gateway to West River en route to the beautiful Black Hills. From the west, it's a sign to travelers that they are closer to the Minnesota border than the state's most popular playgrounds that range from Wall to Spearfish to Hot Springs.

Ashley Riehle of Sylvania, Ohio, which is on the northwestern outskirts of Toledo and just south of the Michigan

border, said the stretch of I-90 alone makes South Dakota one of the best road trip states in the nation.

She visited South Dakota in 2021, driving from Sioux Falls to the Black Hills and back and twice stopping at the Dignity monument. She planned to visit the sculpture during her drive but said the Chamberlain area also doubled as a logical place to take a break.

As a history buff, Riehle appreciates







Jeremy and Stacey Waltner of Freeman visit the Dignity of Earth and Sky sculpture in 2018.

both the beauty and the significance of Dignity.

"I thought it was great that South Dakota acknowledges the first people that occupied the state," she said.

Many states don't, she said, and she doesn't know of any such significant recognitions in Ohio or Michigan.

Jeremy Waltner of Freeman, South Dakota, also appreciates the sculpture on multiple levels.

"It is as impressive as you can imagine just in terms of both size and impact," he said.

Being a South Dakotan, he knew of Dignity and that he wanted to visit. But he also wanted to make sure his wife Stacey, daughter Ella and son Oliver could share the experience. They stopped during a trip west in summer 2018.

The sculpture pays homage to South Dakota's Native American population, setting it apart from so many other tourist stops in the state, Waltner said.

"It's education as much as it is art," he said, adding that the context behind Dignity is critical.

Three Native American women from Rapid City served as models for the sculpture, which was created east of the town in an isolated area along the Cheyenne River.

Lamphere's other creations include work in the South Dakota State Capitol in Pierre and the Arch of Dreams in Sioux Falls. He's done commissioned portraits of Bob and Dolores Hope, Burl Ives, Walter Annenberg, George and Eleanor McGovern and others, according to his website.

For Dignity, he had a specific goal.

"I wanted something that would really honor the indigenous people of the Great Plains, and I kept that in mind all the time. I made the work reflect the name that it has of Dignity, and I think that's part of what makes it work so well," Lamphere has said of his creation.

Riehle noted that the star quilt Dignity wears has meaning.

It's comprised of more than 100 blue diamonds as Dignity holds it behind her back in her outstretched arms.

In Native American culture, star quilts are a sign of respect and are often given as gifts to honor somebody for a substantial achievement in their life.

Including the quilt was a nice touch that took some planning, Riehle said, because it's a direct tie to the Lakota culture.

While there is a plaque at Dignity that briefly tells the story of the sculpture, Waltner said he's not sure most people realize the history.

In fact, he said, he's not sure if most people set out to visit Dignity or just happen across her as they zip through the heart of the state on the interstate.

"It's South Dakota's greatest conversational piece outside of two gigantic granite carvings in the Black Hills," Waltner said, referring to Mount Rushmore and the Crazy Horse Memorial.

Either way, he said, people who take time to admire the grand piece of art wind up learning a little bit.

When he stopped with his family, he said there was a good crowd of people visiting about the sculpture, smiling as they looked on in awe and waiting in line so they could get their pictures taken

with Dignity.

Waltner said he has stopped to see the sculpture twice on his own.

Riehle met friends from Denver and Chicago in the Black Hills as part of her trip. She had been to South Dakota before but got to see and do much more in 2021. She visited Sioux Falls, Mitchell's Corn Palace, Deadwood, the Badlands, Wall Drug, Spearfish Canyon, Custer State Park, the Chapel in the Hills, Pactola Lake, Palisades State Park and other popular places.

All were fun, but Dignity was special, she said, because it is a reflection of the true foundation of South Dakota's history.

"So much history focuses on when the white settlers got there," Riehle said.

Dignity is deeper.

The McKies donated \$1 million to the Dignity project. Less than a decade later, that investment helps the thousands upon thousands of people who stop just east of Chamberlain each year take a moment to remember and acknowledge the rich history of South Dakota's first citizens.

## Additional Facts:

- November is National American Indian Heritage Month. It's a time to remember and celebrate the important contributions of Native people and their cultures, traditions, and histories.
- The first state to declare and celebrate an American Indian Day was New York on the second Saturday in May 1916.
- In 1990, the month of November was approved by a joint resolution and signed by President George H. W. Bush as "National American Indian Heritage Month."
- Central Electric Cooperative proudly powers Dignity and the rest area where thousands of visitors stop each year to celebrate the beauty of the American Indian.

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(1) Paid Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541	1,492	1,527
(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541	3,453	3,505
(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS	0	0
(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS	0	0
c. Total Paid Distribution	4,945	5,032
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution		
(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541	55	57
(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies included on PS Form 3541	45	45
(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS	0	0
(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail	5	5
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution	105	105
f. Total Distribution	5,050	5,139
g. Copies not Distributed	45	45
h. Total	5,095	5,184
i. Percent Paid	98%	98%
16. Electronic Copy Circulation		
a. Paid Electronic Copies	0	0
b. Total Paid Print Copies	4,945	5,032
c. Total Print Distribution	5,050	5,139
d. Percent Paid	97.9%	97.9%
17. Publication of Statement of Ownership will be printed in the November 2023 issue of this publication.		
Kelly Brandlee, Editor	9/28/2023	



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in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

**MAIL:**

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of Asst. Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

**FAX:**

(202) 690-7442; or

**EMAIL:**

[program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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**Nov. 2-4**  
**Huron Ringneck Festival and**  
**Bird Dog Challenge**  
 Huron, SD  
 605-352-0000

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.

**OCT. 24-28**  
**Grey Goose Halloween Display**  
 6 p.m.  
 19988 Grey Goose Rd.  
 Pierre, SD

**OCT. 31**  
**Downtown Trick or Treat**  
 4 p.m.  
 Groton, SD

**OCT. 31**  
**Trunk or Treat**  
 5:30 p.m.  
 United Methodist Church  
 Groton, SD

**NOV. 3**  
**Plankinton Service Club Fun Night**  
 7 p.m.  
 Aurora County Ag Building  
 Plankinton, SD

**NOV. 5**  
**American Legion Post 15 Pancake Breakfast**  
 8:30 a.m.  
 S.D. Military Heritage Alliance Building  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**NOV. 5**  
**Turkey Dinner/ Silent Auction**  
 11:45 a.m.  
 RVUMC  
 Rapid City, SD

**NOV. 10-12**  
**Christmas at the Barn**  
 10 a.m.  
 Groton, SD

**NOV. 11**  
**Sisseton Area Merchants & Crafters Holiday Extravaganza**  
 Sisseton, SD

**NOV. 23**  
**Community Thanksgiving**  
 11:30 a.m.  
 Community Center  
 Groton, SD

**NOV. 25**  
**Mid-Winter Fair**  
 Gregory Auditorium  
 Gregory, SD  
 605-830-9778

**NOV. 30-DEC. 3**  
**Hatchery Holidays**  
 D.C. Booth Fish Hatchery  
 Spearfish, SD

**DEC. 2**  
**6th Annual Holiday Party, Tour of Homes, Silent Auction**  
 4 p.m.  
 Olive Grove Golf Course  
 Groton, SD

**DEC. 9**  
**Santa Claus Day**  
 9 a.m.  
 Professional Management Services  
 Groton, SD

**OCT. 28**  
**Hill City Children's Boo Bash and Pumpkin Festival**  
 Hill City Visitor's Center  
 Hill City, SD  
 605-574-2368

**OCT. 28-29**  
**Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Association**  
 Ramkota Hotel Exhibit Hall  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-731-9155

**NOV. 10-12**  
**Christmas at the Barn**  
 10 a.m.  
 Groton, SD

**NOV. 11**  
**Sisseton Area Merchants & Crafters Holiday Extravaganza**  
 Sisseton, SD

**DEC. 2**  
**6th Annual Holiday Party, Tour of Homes, Silent Auction**  
 4 p.m.  
 Olive Grove Golf Course  
 Groton, SD

**DEC. 17**  
**Christmas Cantata**  
 3 p.m.  
 Hermosa United Church of Christ  
 Hermosa, SD

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