

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Little cars, big smiles

**Smile makers build
Toys for God's Kids**
Pages 8-9

**Treatment center
changes young lives**
Pages 12-13

Asher Smith plays with a few
of the thousands of small
wooden cars built each year
by Toys for God's Kids

Something old, something new, and a holiday reminder for our members



Ben Dunsmoor
Editor

The holiday spirit of Northern Electric Cooperative is on full display during November and December. As an electric utility, it only seems appropriate that we help brighten the Christmas season for the community. As we get ready for our holiday celebrations, this month's column is going to include information about something old, something new, and a holiday reminder for you. ('Tis the season for rhyming!)

SOMETHING OLD

As I have been looking back at past holiday member publications for Northern Electric Cooperative, I came across a nice Christmas poem written by a former Northern Electric employee. The poem is a version of, 'Twas the Night Before Christmas,' with an electric cooperative spin. The holidays are often a time to be nostalgic about the past and the traditions we have formed with family and friends. I thought it would be appropriate to share this poem with our members more than 40 years after it was first published. You can read the entire poem on **page 10** of this issue.

You - the members - are the reason Northern Electric Cooperative exists and can continue to provide safe and reliable electricity year after year.

SOMETHING NEW

Northern Electric has become well-known for making the holidays bright by decorating the large front lawn of our headquarters building in Bath for the past five decades. That tradition will continue this year, but you are going to notice that things will be different.

We are upgrading the holiday light display at the Bath office with a new large 'Season's Greetings' sign adorned with candy canes and several other animated displays. Some of the new decorations will also be visible during the day so travelers passing by on U.S. Highway 12 will get a little bit of holiday cheer during the day and at night. The displays will be going up throughout November and will officially be turned on after Thanksgiving. The lights stay on through New Year's Day. I would encourage our members to drive by the headquarters office in Bath this year to check out the new lights!

A HOLIDAY REMINDER FOR YOU

Finally, I wanted to let our members know about our holiday office closures over the next few months. Since Christmas Day and New Year's Day will be on Sundays this year, our offices will be closed on Monday, December 26, and Monday, January 2. We hope this doesn't cause any inconvenience for our members. Members can always call 605-225-0310 to reach our after-hours dispatch center. Dispatchers answer the phones 24 hours a day and will be available if there are any outages or emergencies.

Northern Electric would like to thank all our members for their support of the cooperative during the past year. You – the members – are the reason Northern Electric Cooperative exists and can continue to provide safe and reliable electricity year after year. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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
Scott Sperry
Mike Traxinger

CEO/General Manager: Char Hager
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: Ben Dunsmoor
bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop

Executive Secretary: Kay Albrecht

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.

Subscription information: Northern Electric Cooperative members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Non-member subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. Periodicals postage paid at Bath, SD 57427.

Postmaster: Please send address changes to Northern Electric Cooperative Connections, PO Box 457, Bath, SD 57427; telephone (605) 225-0310; fax (605) 225-1684

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

www.northernelectric.coop



Northern Electric Cooperative's regular board meeting was held October 20, 2022, at the headquarters in Bath with all directors present. National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) Distribution Lending, Regional Vice President Darrin Lynch, and East River Electric Power Cooperative Inc. General Manager/CEO Bob Sahr (via Teams) were guests for the meeting. As the first order of business, the board approved the September 19, 2022, minutes, and September expenditures. The Board then reviewed and accepted monthly reports by management.

Directors viewed the East River Power Cooperative video report. East River Director Kirk Schaunaman reported on the ER board meeting held October 6. General Manager Char Hager reported on the ER MAC Meeting held October 5. South Dakota Rural Electric Association Director Nolan Wipf reported on the SDREA board meeting held September 29-30. Directors Michael E. Traxinger, Francis Esser, General Manager Char Hager, and Communications Director Ben Dunsmoor reported on the 2022 NRECA Region 5 & 6 meetings, held September 21-23, in Minneapolis, MN. Director Michael E. Traxinger attended director course 2640 Financial Decision Making, which is one of five required courses to become a Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD).

MANAGER'S REPORT

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

- Update on Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) revolving loan fund.

- Legal and Legislative Report.
- Reminded the board of the Mid-West Electric Consumers Assoc. Annual Meeting, Dec. 6-8, 2022, Denver, CO.
- Reminded the board of the 2022 NRECA Winter School for Directors, December 9-13, Nashville, TN.
- Informed the board of the 2023 NRECA Director Conference, Feb. 4-7, Kansas City, MO, or Feb. 6-7, online.
- Reviewed the CFC Key Ratio Trend Analysis (KRTA) with the board.

BOARD REPORT

The board considered and/or acted upon the following:

1. Approved the date and time of the next regular board meeting for 1:00 p.m. on Friday, December 2, 2022.
2. Approved Work Order Inventory #22-09 for \$110,560.67 to be submitted to the Rural Utilities Service for reimbursement from loan funds for electric plant construction already completed.
3. Authorized Director Ron Kaaz to vote on the Basin Electric proposed bylaws change to Deferred Revenue Cap.
4. Adopted resolution for the 2023 Basin Electric Load Forecast.
5. Authorized board attendance to the 2022 East River Member System Director and Employee Orientation, November 14, at East River, in Madison, SD.
6. Authorized board attendance to the NRECA Board Leadership Courses (BLC), December 6 & 7, 2022, in Pierre.
7. Approved revision to Electric Tariff, effective October 20, 2022.

Talk to your director or co-op manager if you have questions on these matters.

FINANCIAL REPORT

	Sept-22	Sept-21
kWh Sales	18,390,168 kWh	19,656,820 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$1,984,952	\$2,070,412
Total Cost of Service	\$2,045,692	\$2,150,471
Operating Margins.....	(-\$60,740)	(-\$80,059)
Year to Date Margins	\$755,616	\$303,211

RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE MONTHLY USAGE AND BILL

SEPT-2022.....	1,137 kWh.....	\$163.96.....	0.1442 per kWh
SEPT-2021.....	1,120 kWh.....	\$160.52.....	0.1433 per kWh

Wholesale power cost, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for 85.2% of NEC's total cost of service.

Deck your halls with home safety in mind

It's time to deck those halls - safely. More than 800 home fires are caused by holiday decorations each year, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

An additional 170 home fires are caused by Christmas trees each year. Keep these tips in mind for a safe holiday season:

- Carefully inspect all electrical decorations before you use them. Cracked or damaged sockets and loose or exposed wires can cause serious shock or start a fire.
- Make sure all extension cords and electrical decorations are being used properly - indoor-rated cords indoors, outdoor-rated cords for outside decorations.
- Inspect extension cords for damage and discard (not repair) any that are not completely intact.
- Never mount or support light strings in a way that might damage the cord's insulation.
- Outdoor electrical lights and decorations should be plugged into circuits protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters.
- Exercise caution when decorating near power lines. Keep yourself and your ladder at least 10 feet from power lines.
- Turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations before leaving home or going to sleep.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many decorations or electrical devices. They can overheat and cause a fire.
- Never connect more than three strings of incandescent lights together.
- Water your Christmas tree daily.
- Keep all decorations at least 3 feet away from heating equipment.
- Avoid using candles. The flames are just too dangerous with all the flammable decorations around.
- Purchase electrical decorations from reputable retailers and that are approved by a nationally recognized testing lab such as UL, Intertek or CSA.

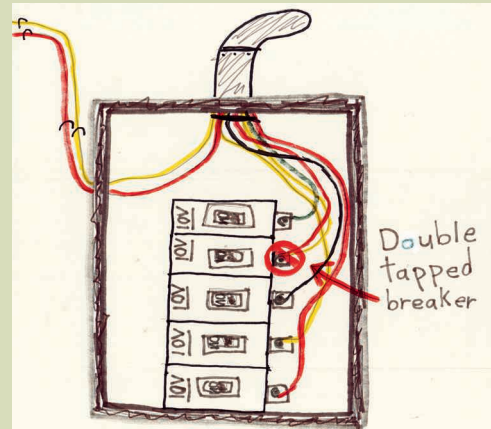


A NEW TEACHING TOOL FOR SOLAR POWER EDUCATION



Rushmore Electric and Touchstone Energy have joined together to construct a demo trailer designed to teach co-op members across the state more about how solar power functions. The trailer is equipped with fold-out collection panels and also battery storage capability. Co-op energy experts use the trailer to frame discussions about net metering, interconnection agreements and more.

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



Don't play on transformer boxes

Olaf Sahlstrom

Olaf Sahlstrom, 9, shares a tip he learned from his parents, Ben and Naomi Sahlstrom: Double-tapped breakers are unsafe and can lead to overheating, arcing, and electrical fires. The Sahlstroms reside in Tracy, MN and are members of Lyon-Lincoln Electric Cooperative.

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.

CHRISTMAS DESSERTS

PEANUT BUTTER PIE

Ingredients:

1 heaping c. peanut butter
1 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese
(softened)
1 8 oz. tub cool whip (thawed)
1/2 c. milk
2 c. powdered sugar graham
cracker pie crust (prepared)
Crushed Butterfingers or Reeses
for garnish

METHOD

Thoroughly mix peanut butter and cream cheese. Add 1/2 cup milk and slowly add 2 cups powdered sugar. Mix well. Fold in cool whip. Put in a prepared graham cracker crust. Makes two 9" pies or one 10" pie with a little extra. Top with crushed candy. Place in freezer until frozen. Remove from freezer 10 minutes before serving.

Elaine Rieck, Harrisburg

HOLIDAY HOT CHOCOLATE

Ingredients:

8 qt. box powdered milk
1 lb. can Nestles Cocoa Mix
7-8 oz. jar powdered creamer
3 c. powdered sugar
1/3 c. cocoa

METHOD

Mix in order given in large bowl. Put in air tight container. Use 1/4 cup mix per cup of hot water. Makes about 16-cup mix.

Phyllis Niemann, Clear Lake

MOM'S CHRISTMAS DESSERT

Ingredients:

2-1/2 c. Rice Krispies
1/2 c. light brown sugar
1 c. slivered almonds or toasted
nut meats
1/2 c. butter, melted
1/2 gal. vanilla ice cream
1 can pie cherries
1/2 tsp. almond flavoring

METHOD

Mix first four ingredients together. Spread half mixture in a 9x13 pan evenly. Cut and press vanilla ice cream on top and spread remaining mixture on top. Freeze. When ready to serve, stir pie filling and almond flavoring together and heat on stove top or microwave and use for topping individual pieces.

Patty Sinning, Lennox

GINGERBREAD KISSED THUMBPRINT COOKIES

Ingredients:

3 c. flour
2 tsp. ground ginger
1 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. baking soda
1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
1/4 tsp. salt
3/4 c. (1-1/2 sticks) butter,
softened
3/4 c. firmly packed brown sugar
1/2 c. molasses
1 egg
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
1/4 c. granulated sugar
60 milk chocolate kisses

METHOD

Mix flour, ginger, cinnamon, baking soda, nutmeg and salt in large bowl. Set aside. Beat butter and brown sugar in large bowl with electric mixer on medium until light and fluffy. Add molasses, egg and vanilla; mix well. Gradually beat in flour mixture on low speed until well mixed. Press dough into a thick flat disk. Wrap in plastic wrap. Refrigerate 4 hours or overnight. Preheat oven to 350°F. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Roll in granulated sugar to coat. Place 2 inches apart on ungreased baking sheets. Bake 8-10 minutes or until edges of cookies begin to brown. Immediately press a chocolate candy into center of each cookie. Remove to wire racks; cool completely. Store cookies in airtight container up to 5 days.

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



DON'T GET CAUGHT OUT IN THE COLD

The best way to stay safe is to listen to winter weather warnings and be prepared for the worst if you venture outside

Ben Dunsmoor

bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop

The winter season is approaching which means it is time to start preparing your home, your farm, and your vehicle for the cold and snowy months ahead. Officials say the top two things that will keep you and your family safe this winter are listening to local winter weather warnings, and getting your vehicle equipped with winter necessities in case you need to travel in the snow.

“The biggest issue is people not heeding the ‘no travel’ warnings,” Brown County Emergency Manager Scott Meints said about the most common winter emergencies his office encounters. “Most of these people are not prepared to be out in the storm and stranded.”

LISTEN TO THE WARNINGS AND ADVISORIES

The first step to winter safety is keeping an eye on the forecast. It is a good idea to prepare for winter weather before the storm hits your area. The National Weather Service issues several different watches,

warnings, and advisories throughout the winter. The National Weather Service Office in Aberdeen shared a list of what the terminology means.

WATCHES

Winter storm and wind chill watches are issued before snowy or cold weather hits an area. Watches are meant to alert the public to prepare. When a winter storm watch or a wind chill watch are issued it means that there is a potential for heavy snow or subzero temperatures.

WARNINGS

There are several types of warnings issued in the winter. When a warning is issued it means those conditions will likely be affecting the warning area within the next 24 hours. Here is a list of the common warnings that are issued in the winter.



Emergency responders recommend that travelers pack a winter survival kit which includes warm clothing, a shovel, cellphone charger, and a first-aid kit.

- **Winter Storm Warning** – Heavy snow of more than six inches is expected within the next 12 hours; or eight inches of snow is expected within the next 24 hours.
- **Blizzard Warning** – Issued when wind speeds will be more than 35 miles per hour and there is falling or blowing snow. A blizzard warning is also issued when visibility is less than a quarter mile for more than three hours.
- **Ice Storm Warning** – When ice accumulations of more than a quarter inch are expected.
- **Wind Chill Warning** – When wind chills are expected to be below -35 degrees below zero with winds of five miles per hour or more for more than one hour.
- **Wind Chill Advisory** – When wind chills are between -25 degrees below zero and -34 degrees below zero for more than an hour.

PREPARE YOUR VEHICLE FOR WINTER TRAVEL

If you do have to travel during a winter weather warning or advisory it is important to be prepared. Here are some basic items everyone should keep in their vehicles according to the Brown County Emergency Management Office.

- Blankets and warm winter clothing
- Cellphone and phone charger
- Non-perishable food and water
- First-aid kit
- Flashlight and batteries
- Jumper cables
- Shovel

Meints said the best piece of advice is to never leave your vehicle if you become stranded in the winter. Your vehicle is your protection. And, even better advice is to not leave your home during a winter storm.

“Best advice is to stay home unless it is an emergency. Be prepared for the worst and make sure you have a survival kit,” Meints said.

ADVISORIES

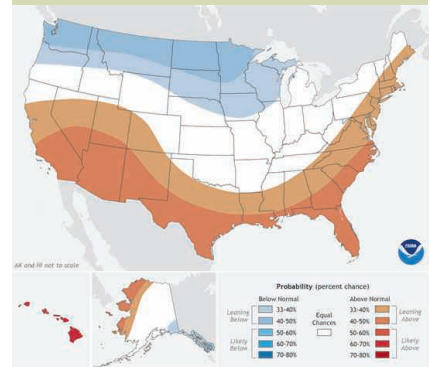
The National Weather Service issues advisories when winter weather will have only a minor impact on day-to-day life.

- **Winter Weather Advisory** – This advisory is for a snow event that is less than six inches and below the winter storm warning thresholds.

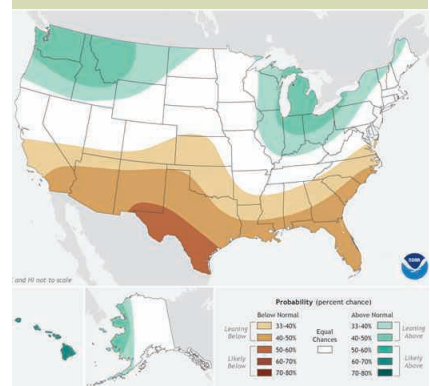
Winter Outlook

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) issued its 2022-2023 U.S. Winter Outlook on October 20, 2022. This is what is expected for South Dakota.

- **BELOW-NORMAL TEMPERATURES** NOAA is forecasting that South Dakota and much of the northern portion of the United States will experience a higher probability of below-normal temperatures this winter.



- **NORMAL PRECIPITATION** South Dakota falls into the category of equal chances of below and above average precipitation. Expect normal precipitation amounts during the winter of 2022-2023.



Source: NOAA U.S. Winter Outlook
10/20/2022



LeRoy Iedema, Richard Ringling and Duane Strand crank out nearly 60,000 toy cars each year from their 12x10-foot workshop in Platte.
Photo by Billy Gibson

Duane Strand gets lots of 'smileage' out of making toy cars for children

Billy Gibson

editor@sdrea.coop

Frustrated moms across the ages have been searching for a surefire method for getting an unruly child to simmer down.

Duane Strand is pretty sure he's found a failsafe solution: toy cars.

Several years ago, Strand began building tiny wooden cars in his nondescript backyard shed in Platte. He recalls visiting Pierre one evening and having dinner at a local restaurant when a young boy suddenly started pitching a fit and hollering at the top of his lungs.

Strand just happened to have one of the cars in his pocket. He reached out and handed it to the child and was rather amazed at the result. Not only did the whining stop forthwith, but that boy's frown turned upside down as the

kid started beaming from ear to ear.

"He quit yelling right then and there. His whole attitude changed," Strand recalls. "These cars really have a soothing effect on the kids."

That's the impact Strand is shooting for as he and his three-man team of retirees crank out nearly 60,000 toy cars each year. They're looking to squeeze all the "smileage" they can get out of the toy cars they build.

The main construction crew includes retired farmer Richard Ringling and retired mechanic LeRoy Iedema. Ringling usually works the drill press to create holes in the wood where the axles will go. Then Iedema follows up by pressing the wheels onto the axles. He came up with a way to make sure the wheels roll straight and stay in place and dares anyone to try and pull off a wheel.

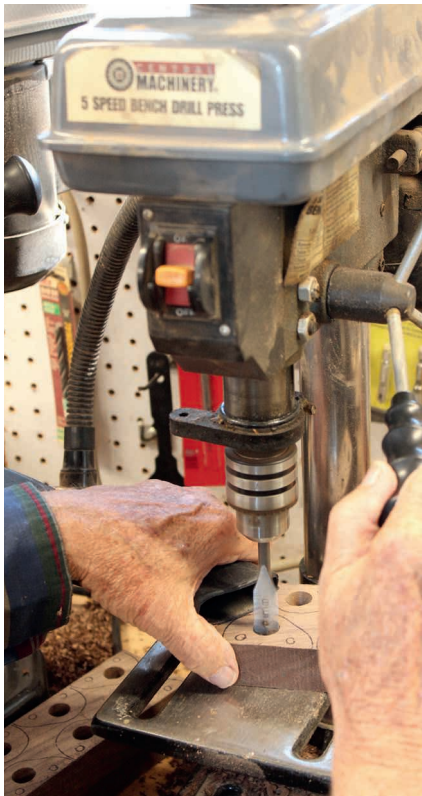
There are others who join in the

process: Justin Kok cuts the wood into manageable blocks; Brett Wynia performs repairs on the drill presses, band saws, sanders, routers and other pieces of equipment when they break down; and Curtis Versteeg helps to sand down the rough surfaces on the cars.



Toy cars are distributed by military personnel serving overseas.

And just down the road from the shop is the Platte Lumber Yard, where many of the material supplies are stored until needed for production. Strand said it was the folks down at the lumber yard who initiated the vital connection with



Dustin Knutson of Boyds Hardwood Gunstock supplies the toy makers with the laminated wood used to create the tiny cars (inset) for worldwide distribution. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Boyds Hardwood Gunstock that keeps the operation humming along.

“Without Boyds we wouldn’t be able to do any of this,” Strand said.

Dustin Knutson, a member of Central Electric Cooperative and part owner of the company that bills itself as the largest after-market gun stock maker in the world, is a Shriner with a heart for community service and said he was all-in when Strand approached him about supporting the program by supplying excess wood.

“They’re really easy to work with,” he said, noting that he keeps one of the cars on his desk. “They take whatever they can get and they show up consistently. We started saving off-cut blocks of wood specifically for the cars. The laminated wood works well because it’s colorful and looks good and the kids can pick out their favorite one.”

Strand’s distribution system is a bit scatter shot but he still manages to send them all over the globe. Anyone he knows who is planning a trip gets a supply of cars. Knutson, for instance, takes them with him when he travels for business or pleasure, whether vacationing in Mexico or hunting in Africa.

“People in America may think these are just simple toys, but I’ve been in parts of the world where a toy for a kid is a stick and a rock,” Knutson said. “But these little cars give kids something to smile about. Duane and his guys are just beautiful people doing good things for the good of humanity and we’re happy to help them any way we can.”

The toys also ride along in ambulances, military satchels and police vehicles in the event a child needs to be calmed. They show up in doctor’s offices, churches and other venues.

The operation is affiliated with a group called Toys for God’s Kids, a non-denominational organization based in Denver. Strand is the only affiliated “smile maker” in South Dakota.

While the three-man crew claims they’re working harder than they used to before retiring, Iedema assigns a greater value to his toil beyond the opportunity to put a smile on a kid’s face. He said his heart doctor has informed him that he’s in better shape than before he started woodworking three years ago. He’s slimmer, more active and feels a lot better.

Strand chips in, “...yeah, and he’s



more ornery than ever, too!”

Collectively, the guys crank out about 250 cars a day scrunched inside the 12 x 10-foot shed. Each unit has to be dipped in linseed oil to protect children from any potential toxicity. The toys are boxed and shipped to their destination at the recipient’s expense.

Strand doesn’t know how much longer he’s going to be able to keep cranking out cars. He’ll reach the age of 90 in a few months and his friend Ringling has a plan: “I told him when he turns 90 we’re going to take him up by the interstate and take a picture underneath the sign that says I-90. Get it?”

Vintage Christmas Poem Highlights Dedication to Cooperative Members

The following poem was originally printed in the December 1981 issue of *Northern Electric Northern Lights*, which was the member publication of Northern Electric prior to the creation of *Cooperative Connections*. The poem was written by Miki Tolle who was the cooperative's member communications director from 1981-1988. The piece emphasizes the dedication of cooperative employees who keep the lights on for members at any time of day and in any weather conditions.

"TWAS THE NIGHT..."

'Twas the night of a blizzard,
with heavy snow setting in
All creatures were inside,
except Northern Electric linemen;

The trucks were all loaded
and ready to roll.
In hopes that the wind
would not continue to blow;

Our consumers were nestled
all snug in their beds;
While visions of power outages
danced in their heads;

The line superintendent at his radio
taking power outage calls.
Hoping damage would be minor,
it was Christmas Eve afterall -

When out on a farmstead
there arose such a clatter,
The farmer got up to see
what was the matter.

His security pole was down
and his wires astray,
He looked cross the yard
with total dismay;

His power was out and
the lights they were gone,
He stood at the window
and looked all around -

When what to his wondering
eyes should there be;
But REC trucks and
some linemen you see,

With two men in the truck
and four men working the line
The farmer, he knew,
it was a matter of time
Before his power was restored
and he was back on the line.

The farmer he whistled and shouted
and found joy in the same,
"Hey all you REC linemen,
I'm sure glad you came!"

Then into the basket
on the truck they did go,
And up they climbed
to the top of the pole;

The line it was repaired
and replaced right away,
While Mother Nature she fought
and stood in their way;

When the pole was replaced
and the power restored,
The farmer walked over
and stood at the door -

And then in a moment
he saw in the drive,
Red lights, engines starting
and coming alive;

Their work it was done
at this first snowy stop,
But more was in store,
not a little, a lot!

Work lasted a few hours
and then it came time,
To head back in,
to rest, to unwind;

Back to the shop,
one foot on the ground,
When up from above
there came such a sound -

All eyes gazed into the sky
at the glimmer of light,
As a red-suited, white-bearded
man shouted, ere he drove out of
sight

Good work REC linemen,
Merry Christmas,
Good Night!

By: Miki Tolle

Northern Electric Member
Communications Director 1981-
1988

*Originally Printed in December 1981
'Northern Electric Northern Lights'*

CELEBRATE THE SEASON AND THE SAVINGS

Enjoying the holidays doesn't have to mean extra energy costs. You can:

- Decorate with LED holiday lights and limit usage with a timer
- Lower the thermostat by a degree if you're baking or entertaining
- Buy energy star certified electronics

*For more tips, contact your local electric cooperative.
And here's to a happy holiday for you and your loved ones!*

RE-ENERGIZING EFFICIENCY





CHANGING YOUNG LIVES

The Great Plains Youth Regional Treatment Center near Mobridge is a place where at-risk youth can go to address their challenges with drug and alcohol abuse. *Photo by Roger Lawien*

Treatment center helps young people get back on the right path

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

It was a small compliment, but it meant everything to the young lady who wasn't quite accustomed to receiving positive reinforcement. A simple affirmation spoken softly and sincerely into her ear: "You're gorgeous, and you're worthy." And the tears began to flow.

The Indian Health Service Great Plains Youth Regional Treatment Center near Mobridge is a place where at-risk youth can go to address their challenges with drug and alcohol abuse and find the support they need to deal with difficult situations.

Acting Clinical Director Charita Dowdell remembers that encounter with the young woman.

"I tell all of our residents how gorgeous they are and that I see the beauty in them and who they are deep down inside," Dowdell said. "I told her she was worthy and that she had value,

and she just broke down. She told me that nobody had ever said that to her."

That's just one of the stories about how the treatment center's staff strive to change the lives of teens who enter the program. There are many others.

Program Director Lavon Booth has been involved with the residential program for 20 years, initially as an administrative officer when she started in 2002. She previously served at the Cheyenne River Service Unit in her hometown of Eagle Butte before starting at the YRTC.

She sees the transformation of residents captured in plain view during graduation ceremonies that take place when the 12-week session concludes.

"We're very fortunate to see the change that happens in our residents from the time they arrive until the time they graduate," she said. "We see them moving in a positive direction and at graduation we get to hear them speak intimately about what they've learned and you see how it all comes together.

They come in very shy and reserved, and they leave here carrying a more positive spirit and more confidence. It's really touching for us and very rewarding."

The treatment center is housed in the old Chief Gall Inn hotel on land leased from the Standing Rock tribe. Youth between the ages of 13 and 17 are referred through tribal alcohol programs, local schools, community service organizations and other agencies.

According to the center's mission statement, the program "is dedicated to promoting a healthy lifestyle restoring balance and harmony in mind, body and spirit to our American Indian youth and their families."

Dowdell said playing a role in watching that mission statement come true to life in the form of changed behaviors and more positive attitudes makes her know she's definitely making a profound difference.

One effective modality is a mentoring program where residents taking part in the rehabilitation process shepherd those who are just entering the facility. Not only do the incumbent residents show the newbies around the physical



The youth treatment center is located in the former Chief Gall Inn hotel near Mobridge. *Photo by Roger Lawien*

space, but they also listen to their concerns, answer questions and try to allay their fears that stem from living in a new environment with certain rules, guidelines and expectations.

“When they start feeling homesick or afraid or stressed and they just need someone near their age to talk to, it helps them make the adjustment so they can settle down and focus on what they need to do to make changes. That bond is something that actually helps both of them get through and graduate successfully,” she said.

Dowdell noted there is a concern among staff about residents returning to a challenging environment. So, upon graduation, the youth receive support through a tracking system where staffers make regular check-in calls after three days, three months, six months and a year. A tele-health network is also

available to the graduates.

Role-playing also helps re-integration, Dowdell said. She added that the residents are taught to anticipate the same kind of challenges they faced before and how to handle them with a different approach.

“They return as a changed person, but everybody else around them will be doing the same things,” she said. “We tell them to stay connected to their support system and manage their emotions; how to be true to yourself while being respectful to others. We prepare them for what life is going to look like when they leave.”

She mentioned one particular youngster who entered the program with a defiant attitude and dealing with depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress. She knuckled down academically and caught up to her class grade. After

graduation, she returned to juvenile detention for seven months. But in the end, she straightened out her life by applying the things she learned at the center.

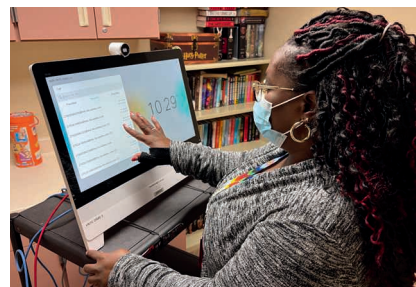
“She struggled with treatment, but she sent us a letter thanking us for what the program did for her,” Dowdell said. “She said she was grateful for giving her the skills to manage the difficult predicament she was going through. She changed her mentality and grew and matured and became a new person.”

Dowdell stressed that parents can play a key role in helping their children navigate through rehabilitation or prevent them from becoming a candidate in the first place.

“Listen to your children,” she emphasized. “They are saying something to you, but often they don’t feel like they’re being heard. Before you shut that door, listen to what they’re saying. You may have to shut the door anyway, but at least take the time to listen to what they have to say.”

Visit www.ihs.gov/greatplains/healthcarefacilities/greatplainsyrtc/.

Lavon Booth, left, and Charita Dowdell, work to provide students the skills they need to change the direction of their lives.





APPLY FOR 2023 SCHOLARSHIPS

Students Can Apply Now For \$1,000 and \$500 Co-op Scholarships

Students of Northern Electric Cooperative members who are currently enrolled in a post-secondary school - or plan to enroll in the fall of 2023 - can now apply for two co-op-sponsored scholarships.

Bismarck-based Basin Electric Power Cooperative, which generates electricity for Northern Electric Cooperative, is awarding a \$1,000 scholarship to a student within the Northern Electric service territory. Northern Electric is also awarding a \$500 scholarship to a student of a co-op consumer. Students can apply for both scholarships by filling out one Basin Electric 2023 scholarship application which can be found on the Northern Electric website at northernelectric.coop/scholarships. Applications can also be picked up at a Northern Electric office.

In 2022, Dillon Browning of Mansfield was awarded the \$1,000 Basin Electric scholarship and Matthew Mitzel of Mina was the recipient of the \$500 Northern

Electric scholarship. Browning enrolled at Harvard University and Mitzel is enrolled at South Dakota School of Mines and Technology in Rapid City.

The scholarship application includes information about the student's academic record, work experience, an applicant appraisal from an advisor or supervisor, and a one-page essay on the topic: *'What challenges face rural electric cooperatives in the coming years and how do you think challenges should be addressed?'*

The entire application must be completed and turned into one of the Northern Electric Cooperative offices in Bath or Redfield by the **February 10, 2023** deadline.

A committee of cooperative employees will critically evaluate the applications and award both the \$1,000 and \$500 scholarships from the pool of applicants. Scholarships will be directly paid to the institution where the recipient is enrolled in the fall of 2023.

How to Apply

• SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY

Applicants must be U.S. citizens under the age of 25, and natural or adopted children of Northern Electric Cooperative consumers/ members. Any applicant must be a student who is enrolled, or planning to enroll, in a full-time graduate or undergraduate course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university, or vocational/technical school.

• THE SELECTION PROCESS

All applications are critically evaluated by a committee of cooperative employees using a combination of several criteria including: a written essay, participation in school and community activities, grade-point average, SAT/ACT scores, a statement by the student explaining his/her educational and career goals, financial need, and a written recommendation from a third party. The winning \$1,000 entry will be sent to Basin Electric for scholarship distribution. The committee will also select the winning entry for the \$500 Northern Electric scholarship.

• APPLICATION

Applications are available from local high school guidance counselors, on the Northern Electric Cooperative website at northernelectric.coop/scholarships or directly from the Northern Electric offices in Bath or Redfield.

COMPLETED APPLICATIONS MUST BE RETURNED BY FEBRUARY 10, 2023 TO:

Northern Electric Cooperative
Attention: Kay Albrecht
PO Box 457
Bath, SD 57427

For more information contact Kay Albrecht at: **605-225-0310**

2022-2023 HEATING SEASON LIEAP INCOME LIMITS	
HOUSEHOLD SIZE	MAXIMUM 3-MONTH INCOME
1 Person	\$6,795
2 Person	\$9,155
3 Person	\$11,501
4 Person	\$13,692
5 Person	\$15,883
6 Person	\$18,074
7 Person	\$18,485
8 Person	\$18,895
9 Person	\$19,306
10 Person	\$21,026

Source: South Dakota Department of Social Services

HEATING ASSISTANCE

Heating assistance is available through the South Dakota Department of Social Services

South Dakotans who need help paying their heating bills this winter can request energy assistance from the Department of Social Services (DSS). Energy assistance can help low-income families pay for heating costs; however, the assistance does not cover all costs associated with heating. Funds for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) are distributed on a first-come basis for meter readings from October 1 – May 15.

To be eligible for the South Dakota DSS Low Income Energy Assistance Program households must:

- Complete the DSS Low Income Energy Assistance Application
- The total gross income of the household must not exceed maximum income guidelines.
- The applicant must be responsible for paying the home heating costs.

DSS also has an Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP) that is available from October 1 – March 31. This program offers income-eligible households emergency assistance if they have a disconnection notice for their heat source or an eviction notice if the heat bill is included with rent.

For more information – or to obtain an application for LIEAP – contact DSS:

- **Website:** dss.sd.gov/economicassistance/energyassistance/lowincome.aspx
- **Phone:** 1-800-233-8503

LIEAP applications can also be picked up at one of the Northern Electric Cooperative offices in Bath or Redfield.

PLANNING FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE

Your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative is committed to powering your tomorrow. That is why they work alongside other cooperatives to plan for safe, reliable electricity long into the future.

Learn more about how your co-op plans for a future with safe, reliable electricity at yourcooppower.com.



**RE-ENERGIZING
RELIABILITY**

REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth in LaCroix Hall at the Black Hills Stock Show to win an electric snow blower!

Your Phone Number: _____
Your E-mail Address: _____



December 15-18, 2022
Christmas at the Cathedral
521 N Duluth Ave.
Sioux Falls, SD
605-988-3765

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.

NOV. 25
Olde Tyme Christmas Kick-off and Parade
Hill City, SD

NOV. 25
"Light up the Night" Parade and Fireworks
Belle Fourche, SD

NOV. 25-26
Kris Kringle Kraft Fair
Hill City, SD

NOV. 26
Gregory Mid-Winter Fair
Gregory Auditorium
Gregory, SD
605-830-9778

DEC. 2-3
Christmas in the Hills
Mueller Center
Hot Springs, SD
605-745-4140

DEC. 3
Santa's Thrift Village
Minneluzahan Senior Center
Rapid City, SD
605-394-1887

DEC. 3
Tabor's Holiday Light Parade
Tabor, SD
605-660-0274

DEC. 3
60th Annual Wreath and Centerpiece Sale
Central States Fair Grounds,
Rapid City, SD
605-343-0710

DEC. 3
Julefest 2022: Scandinavian Christmas Festival & Bazaar
8 a.m.-2p.m.
Our Savior's Lutheran Church
Spearfish, SD

DEC. 4
Sioux Falls Legion Post 15 Pancake Breakfast
8:30 a.m.-noon
1600 W Russell St.
Sioux Falls, SD

DEC. 4
Hartford Hometown Christmas
Hartford, SD
www.hartfordhtc.com

DEC. 4
Walk Through Bethlehem
United Methodist Church
Webster, SD
605-345-3747

DEC. 10
Frontier Christmas
Fort Sisseton Historic State Park
Lake City, SD
605-448-5474

DEC. 15-18
Christmas at the Cathedral
521 N Duluth Ave.
Sioux Falls, SD
605-988-3765

DEC. 17
Custer Christmas for Kids
Custer High School
Custer, SD
custerchristmas4kids@gmail.com

JAN. 14
Coats for Kids Bowling Tournament
Registration Starts at 1 p.m.
\$80 for a four-person team
Meadowood Lanes
Rapid City, SD
605-393-2081

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