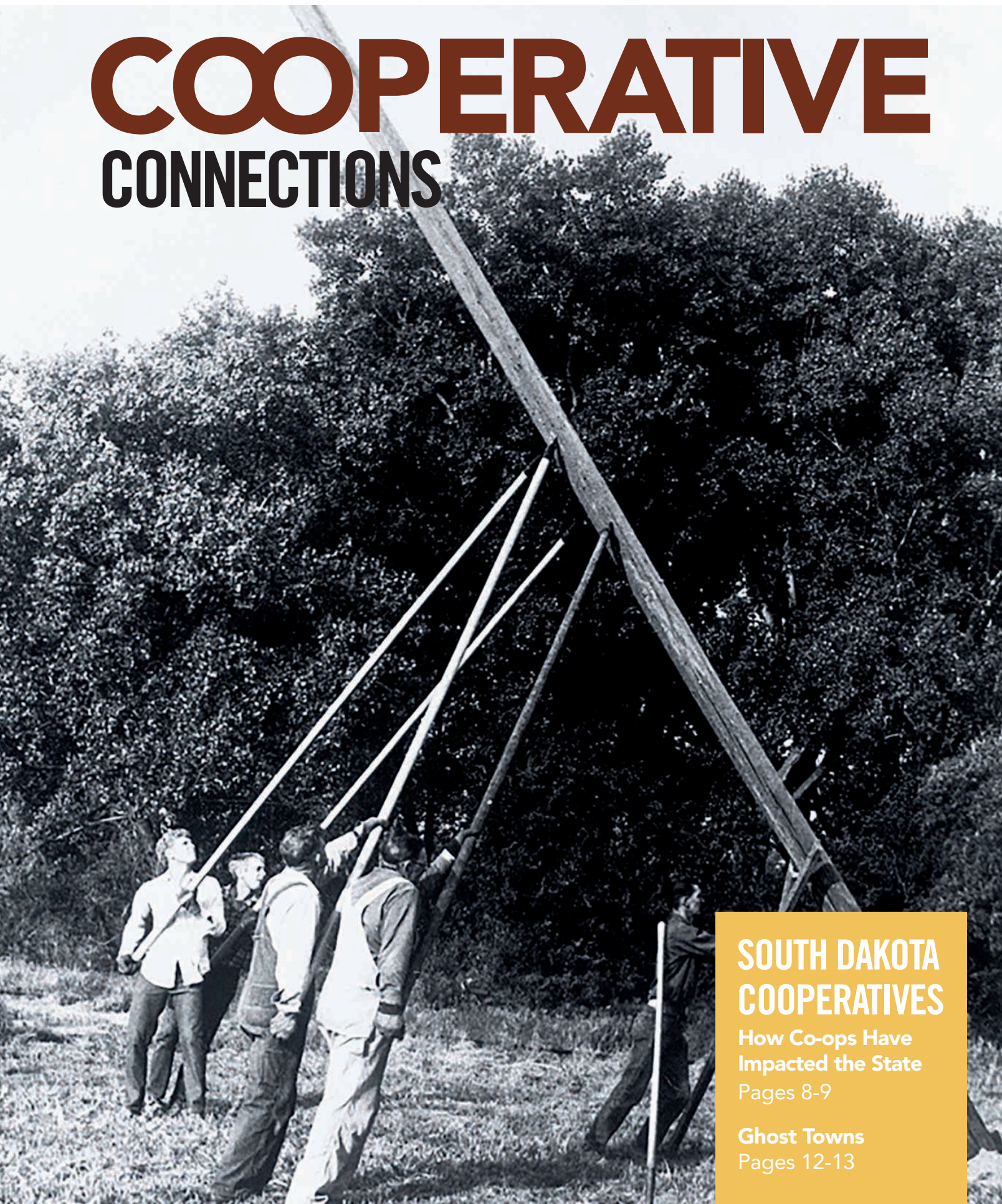


COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



SOUTH DAKOTA COOPERATIVES

**How Co-ops Have
Impacted the State**
Pages 8-9

Ghost Towns
Pages 12-13

BILL PAYMENT UPDATE

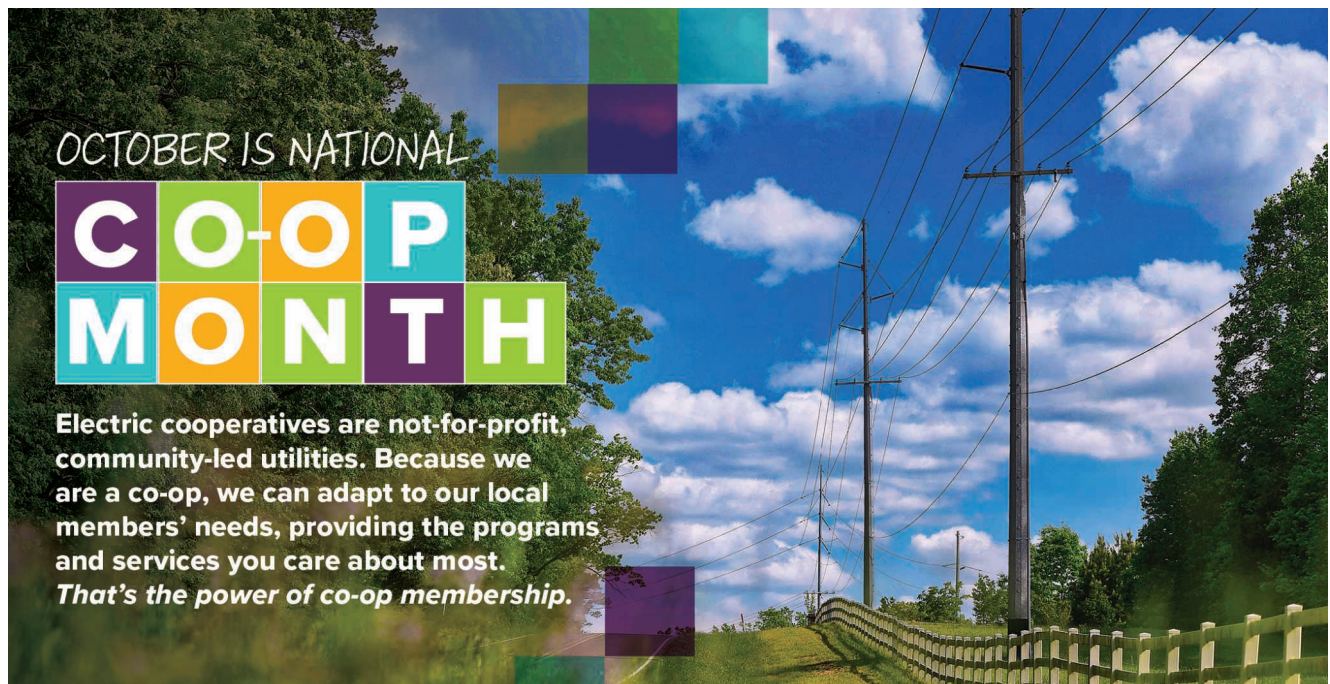
As of Sept. 25, 2024, for customers using our Pay By Phone automated system, the number will be changing to 1-855-939-3740.

In addition to our Pay By Phone we offer several convenient ways to help you manage and pay your bill.

- **Pay By Phone 1-855-939-3740** – An automated and secure way to pay over the phone via check or credit card.
- **Pay Online with SmartHub** – Register and login to the SmartHub website or app to pay your bill and access various other tools for your account.
- **Pay Now Online** – No online account necessary, simply go to our website and enter your information to pay.
- **Pay at the Office In Person** – All payment types and requests can always be handled at our Bath office in person or by using our convenient drive through.
- **Pay by Dropbox** – Check payments are accepted at our dropboxes located at our facilities in Bath and Redfield or Ken's Grocery in Aberdeen.
- **Pay by Mail** – Check payments are always accepted using the postal mail service to our office at PO Box 457, Bath SD 57427.

- **Pay by Automatic (ACH) Withdrawal** – Worry No More! Our automatic withdrawal option takes the payment amount directly out of a checking or savings account every month on the due date. This option can be set up online using SmartHub.
- **Pay by Automatic Recurring Credit Card** – Similar to the ACH method above, recurring credit card automatically charges the card on file every month on the due date. This option can also be set up on the Pay By Phone system or online using SmartHub.
- **Prepaid Billing** – An alternative to traditional billing methods, allows members to pay for their power up front with the funds being used up as the energy is used.
- **Budget Billing** – Another alternative to the traditional billing method, allows members to pay a standard average amount per month for the full year. Some regulations and exclusions apply.

All monthly payments must be received by the due date on the 21st of each month to avoid late fees. If you are interested in taking advantage of any special payment or billing methods and would like more information, please contact our office at 605-225-0310. More information and accessibility to several of these options is also available on our website at northernelectric.coop.



COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

NORTHERN ELECTRIC

(USPS 396-040)

Board President: Nolan Wipf

Board of Directors

Todd Hettich - Vice President
Scott Sperry - Secretary
Josh Larson - Treasurer
B.J. Hansen
Thomas Lambert
Kirk Schaunaman
Bruce Schumacher, Jr.
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

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.

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



AUGUST BOARD REPORT

Northern Electric Cooperative's regular board meeting was held August 23, 2024, at the headquarters in Bath with all directors present or via teleconference. As the first order of business, the Board approved the July 18, 2024, minutes, and July 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 the August 1, 2024, meeting. The next East River Board Meeting will be September 5, 2024, in Sioux Falls. South Dakota Rural Electric Association Director Nolan Wipf reported that the next SDREA board meeting will be held September 26, 2024. Directors Kirk Schaunaman, Nolan Wipf and General Manager Char Hager reported on the Basin Electric Annual Meeting, which was held August 13-15, 2024, in Bismarck, ND. Director Todd Hettich reported on the RESCO board meeting which was held August 8th, 2024.

MANAGER'S REPORT

- Update on Rural Electric Economic Development revolving loan fund activities held on August 5, 2024.
- Report on the East River MAC Meeting held on July 30, 2024.
- Report on the employee meeting held on July 23, 2024.
- Report on the Basin Member Manager Conference held July 24-26, 2025.

- Report on the Spink County Member Appreciation Breakfast held on August 1, 2024.
- Report on the Basin Electric Annual Meeting and Member Meeting held on August 14-15, 2024.
- Reminded directors of the East River Annual Meeting to be held in Sioux Falls on September 4, 2024.
- Reminded directors of the upcoming 2024 NRECA Regional 5 & 6 Meeting, September 16-18, in Minneapolis, MN.

BOARD REPORT

The board considered and/or acted upon the following:

- Approved the date and time of the next regular board meeting for 8:30 a.m. on Friday, September 20, 2024.
- Approved Work Order Inventory #24-07 for \$622,449.36 to be submitted to the Rural Utilities Service for reimbursement from loan funds for electric plant construction already completed.
- Held Executive Session.
- Approved 2025 Compensation Plan.
- Appointed Scott Sperry delegate and Kirk Schaunaman alternate for the 2024 RESCO Annual Meeting.

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

FINANCIAL REPORT

	July-24	July-23
kWh Sales	22,931,319	22,548,256
Electric Revenues	\$2,593,677	\$2,292,114
Total Cost of Service	\$2,423,563	\$2,355,280
Operating Margins.....	\$170,114	-\$63,167
Year to Date Margins	\$246,750	\$399,562

RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE MONTHLY USAGE AND BILL

JULY 2024.....	1,550 kWh.....	\$222.57	\$0.1436 per kWh
JULY 2023.....	1,413 kWh.....	\$186.96	\$0.1323 per kWh

Wholesale power cost, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for 85.0 % of NEC's total cost of service.

FIRE SAFETY

Cooking and heating are the leading causes of home fires and fire injuries, and winter months are the peak time for fire-related deaths. **Fire Prevention Week (Oct. 6-12, 2024)** is the perfect time to review and practice fire safety.

Minimize Your Risks

The good news: Deaths from home fires in the U.S. have trended downward since the 1970s, according to Injury Facts, but even one death from a preventable fire is too many. While fire doesn't discriminate by age, it is the third leading cause of death for children 1 to 14.

When cooking, make fire safety a priority by keeping these tips in mind:

- Be alert; if you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, don't use the oven or stovetop.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, boiling or broiling food.
- Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stovetop.

Heating is the second leading cause of home fires. Follow these tips:

- Keep all flammables, like paper, clothing, bedding, drapes or rugs, at least three feet from a space heater, stove or fireplace.
- Never leave portable heaters and fireplaces unattended; turn off heaters and make sure fireplace embers are extinguished before leaving the room.
- If you must use a space heater, place it on a level, nonflammable surface, like ceramic tile, not on a rug or carpet.
- Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
- When buying a space heater, look for models that shut off automatically if the heater falls over.

Working Smoke Alarms Are a Must

About three out of five fire deaths happen in homes without working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms are a key part of a home fire escape plan providing early warning to reduce your risk of dying in a fire. The National Fire Protection Association recommends you:

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas on the ceiling or high on the wall.
- Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen, at least 10 feet from the stove, to reduce false alarms.
- Use special alarms with strobe lights and bed shakers for

people who are hard of hearing or deaf.

- Test smoke alarms monthly.
- Replace batteries in your smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector annually.
- Replace smoke alarms that are 10 or more years old.

When and How to Use a Fire Extinguisher

Always put your safety first; if you are not confident in your ability to use a fire extinguisher, get out and call 9-1-1. The American Red Cross cautions you to evaluate the situation and ensure:

- Everyone has left or is leaving the home
- The fire department has been called
- The fire is small, not spreading, and there is not much smoke
- Your back is to an exit you can use quickly

Remember the acronym PASS:

Pull the pin.

Aim low at the base of the fire.

Squeeze the handle slowly.

Sweep the nozzle side to side.

Source: National Safety Council



Power Line Safety "Watch Out for Power Lines!"

Archer Rindels, Age 7

Archer Rindels warns readers to be careful around power lines. Thank you for your picture, Archer! Archer's parents are Kyle and Rochelle Rindels, members of Sioux Valley Energy.

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.

Delicious CHICKEN

CHEESY CHICKEN BUNDLES

Ingredients:

1 (11 oz.) can condensed cream of chicken soup
1/2 cup milk
3/4 cup Velveeta, shredded or cubed
1 (10 oz.) can chunk chicken, drained and flaked
1 (8 oz.) can crescent rolls

Method

Combine soup, milk and cheese. Heat until melted and smooth. Pour into a 7x11 inch pan that has been sprayed with vegetable oil.

Separate crescents into 8 triangles. Place 2 tbsps. of chicken on wide end of crescent roll. Pinch to seal. Place on top of sauce.

Bake uncovered at 375 degrees for 25 minutes and until golden brown. Serve with sauce on top.

Yields eight chicken bundles or four servings.

Janet Ochsner
Box Elder, S.D.

CROCKPOT CHICKEN PARMESAN SOUP

Ingredients:

3 boneless chicken breasts
1 tbsp. minced garlic
1 can crushed tomatoes (28 oz. can)
1 can tomato sauce (15 oz. can)
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. ground black pepper
2 tsp. Italian seasoning
4 cups chicken broth
1 cup parmesan cheese (freshly shaved)
1 cup heavy whipping cream
8 oz. rotini pasta (uncooked)
1 1/2 cup shredded Mozzarella

Method

Add the chicken breast, minced garlic, crushed tomatoes, tomato sauce, salt, pepper, Italian seasoning and chicken broth to the Crock-Pot.

Cover Crock-Pot with lid and cook on low for 6-8 hours.

Shred the chicken. Stir in the shredded parmesan cheese, heavy whipping cream and rotini pasta. Cover and cook on low for 30 minutes.

Top the individual soup servings with mozzarella cheese.

Kayla Beaner
Centerville, S.D.

BUTTER CHICKEN

Ingredients:

4 tps. Garam Masala blend
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1/2 tsp. ground ginger
1/2 tsp. ground turmeric
1/8 tsp. crushed red pepper
4 tbsps. butter, divided
1 can (14.5 oz.) petite diced tomatoes
1 med. red onion, chopped
1 1/4 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch cubes
1/4 cup heavy cream
1/2 tsp. sea salt

Method

Mix Garam Masala, garlic, ginger, turmeric and crushed red pepper in small bowl. Heat large non-stick skillet on medium heat. Toast seasoning mixture 1 min. or just until fragrant, stirring constantly. Add 2 tbsps. of the butter to skillet, swirling to melt. Add onion; cook and stir 2 to 3 mins. until softened. Stir in tomatoes; cook 5 mins. Carefully transfer mixture to blender container; cover. Blend until smooth, scraping sides as needed. Return pureed sauce to skillet. Bring to simmer on med.-low heat. Add chicken; cook 8 to 10 minutes or until chicken is cooked though, stirring occasionally. Stir in remaining butter, cream and salt until well blended. Simmer on med.-low heat 2 to 3 minutes until sauce is slightly thickened. Stir in additional crushed red pepper to taste and serve with hot cooked basmati rice or warm naan bread, if desired. Garnish with fresh cilantro leaves, if desired.

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 2024. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Find Hidden Energy Savings and Extra Storage in Your Attic



Miranda Boutelle
Efficiency Services
Group

Q: Do you have any tips on finding hidden energy savings in my home?

A: I've been in a lot of homes. One common hiding spot for energy savings is the attic. It is also a common location for storing holiday decorations and infrequently used sentimental items.

Yet, using your attic for storage can be problematic when trying to maximize your home's energy efficiency. Let's explore how you can improve insulation levels and properly store items in your attic.

Attic insulation is one of the best low-cost ways to make your home efficient. People often associate insulation with keeping your home warmer in the winter, but it also provides benefits in the summer. Insulation reduces heat transfer from the attic to the house, which lowers energy bills for air conditioning and makes your home more comfortable.

Attic insulation is measured in R-value, which is a measurement of how well a material resists the flow of heat. For attic insulation, thicker is better. The recommended R-value is typically between R-38 and R-60, depending on your climate. Hawaii and the southernmost tips of Florida and Texas recommend R-30. Measured in inches, that ranges from around 10 to 20 inches, depending on the type of insulation you have. In most homes, the ceiling joists are buried in insulation to achieve the recommended R-value.

The problem with attic storage is it typically doesn't offer enough space for the recommended R-value. Often, plywood or boards are placed directly on top of the ceiling joists, which isn't enough space for the insulation. Insulation can get compacted by people moving items in or out, reducing the effective R-value.

Ideally, the attic would not be used for storage so it can be properly insulated, but that's not feasible for everyone. Here are some strategies for maintaining attic storage and recommended insulation levels.

The best location for attic storage is over an

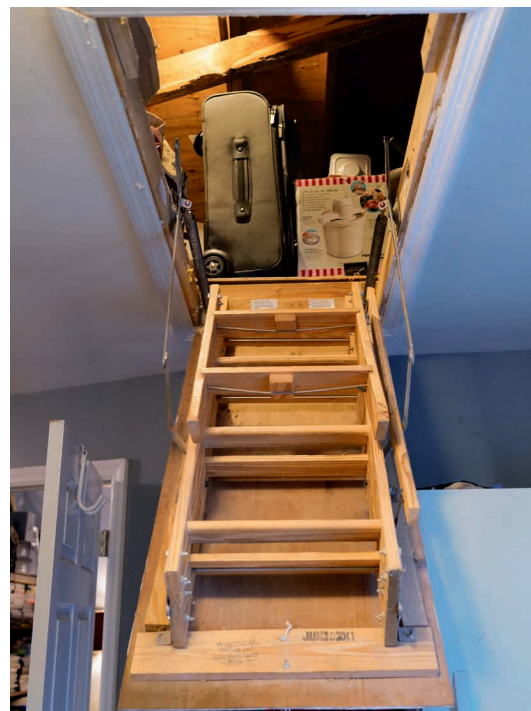
unconditioned area of your home, such as the garage. You don't need insulation in attic spaces over a garage or unconditioned area because you are not heating or cooling the space below. This makes it the perfect spot to tuck away items for storage.

If that isn't an option, consider minimizing the number of stored items or the storage area's footprint. A great way to do this is by building an attic storage platform. A raised platform allows the space underneath it to be fully insulated. These platforms are available in ready-to-install kits, or you can buy materials and build them yourself.

Allow enough space underneath the platform to achieve the proper R-value. Use lumber to build a frame perpendicular to the existing joists and cover it with plywood or oriented strand board. Once your storage area is set up, add insulation inside the platform to bring the R-value up to the proper level.

Your attic might also have trusses that allow you to build shelves and maximize space by storing items vertically.

Always wear a dust mask or respirator when working in the attic. Don't forget to weatherstrip the attic hatch to ensure a tight seal. Take a look around your attic to see if you can find any hidden opportunities for energy savings.





WHEN THE LIGHTS CAME ON

Herman and Nina Rosenau Photo credit: Shannon Marvel

WWII Veteran Remembers How Electricity Modernized Life on the Farm

JJ Martin and Shannon Marvel

For the last 66 years, Herman Rosenau has been thankful he hasn't had to pump water for the cows by hand at his farm and ranch near Glad Valley.

In 1957, Rosenau became one of the first members of Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative in Timber Lake, S.D.

Coming of age at the tail end of World War II, Rosenau bore witness to some major world changes. As rural South Dakota started electrifying, Europe and East Asia were in turmoil. Before shipping off for the war, Rosenau's life was all manual labor. After seeing the metamorphosis that the other half of the world went through, Rosenau watched his own world drastically change. Electricity slowly spread out across the Moreau-Grand service area like lightning in slow motion.

With a mischievous smile, Rosenau

sat down at the kitchen table with his morning coffee to discuss how he remembered the lights coming on at his home. After haying all morning, he was happy for a break.

"Things changed not all overnight, but pretty steady," Rosenau said. "We got an electric refrigerator, then we got electricity out of a pump jack on the well. Everything kept growing little by little."

Before electricity, Rosenau recalls watering the cows with a windmill in the water tank.

"And when the wind didn't blow, you pumped the water by hand," Rosenau said.

He remembers when the first electric bills totaled around \$7 per month.

"Well, story of my life was a pitchfork and a team of horses until around 1947," he said with a laugh.

With electricity becoming available

to rural folks in South Dakota, Rosenau recalled being able to purchase a deep freeze. That electric appliance allowed him to store food, particularly beef, for long periods of time and saved him the 70-mile round-trip to Lemmon to the meat locker.

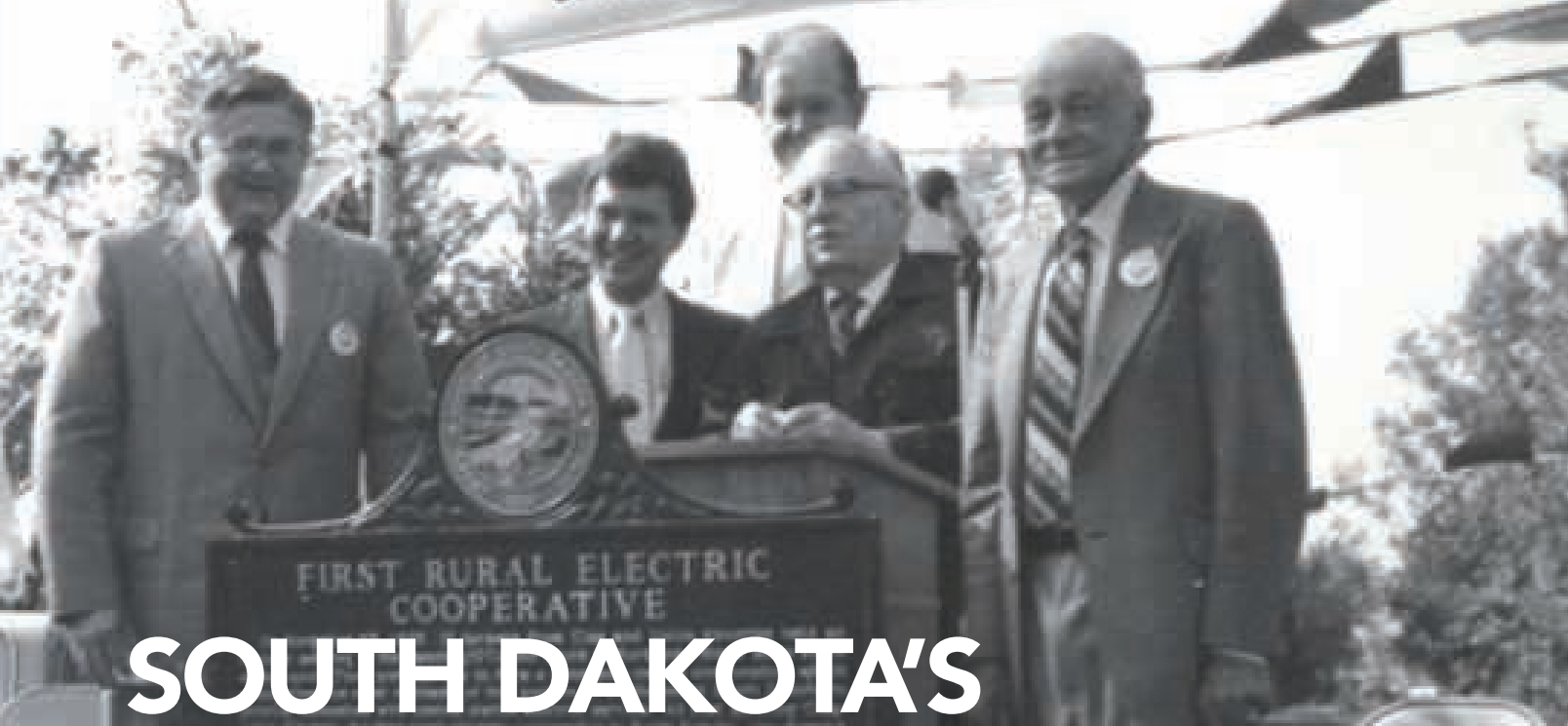
Rosenau is not one to forget how thankful he is for having access to electricity and freedom. The electricity reached his home a few years after he returned home from serving in the Army. The World War II veteran said he went in at the time of the Belgian Bulge.

"I went to the Texas Infantry in the spring when it looked like the war in Europe was getting under control," Rosenau said.

"I was in Manila when they dropped them two little eggs on Japan. And if they hadn't done that, I don't think I'd be here. Because they told us if we have to go ashore in Japan, we will lose a half million to a million boys going ashore. That's the total population of South Dakota."



Linemen placing poles in the early days at Moreau-Grand Electric.



SOUTH DAKOTA'S COOPERATIVES

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Picture life in rural South Dakota 100 years ago. Each morning, families woke before dawn to work by the flicker of kerosene lamps, hand-pumped water to fill a gas-powered wringer-washer, and retrieved breakfast ingredients from a dripping ice box. Looming in the backs of producers' minds were fears that the market would trend downward and they may not be able to cover their debts, or even harvest their fields.

Today, South Dakota's rural farmers and ranchers enjoy virtually all of the accommodations of modern living their suburban counterparts enjoy. Past luxuries like running water, full-time electricity, internet and telephone are now standard, and many farmers enjoy stronger economic security compared to the past's tumultuous markets.

That's because for over 100 years, rural South Dakotans have pooled their resources by forming cooperatives that level out some of the disparities between rural and urban life. Thanks to members' ingenuity, rural America is not just a viable, but a thriving place to live and work.

The First Cooperatives

The first cooperatives in South Dakota were agriculture-focused. Far too often, an

oversupply of goods led to price crashes, resulting in farmers unable to economically harvest crops or market livestock. This led to tremendous waste and crushed livelihoods.

As producers grew weary of the uncertain market, they organized to collectively market and distribute their products: they coordinated, shared risk and pooled resources.

South Dakota's earliest farm supply and marketing cooperatives started popping up a little after the turn of the 20th century. The South Dakota Secretary of State's office lists Lake Andes Farmers Cooperative, formed in 1909, as the oldest ongoing cooperative in the state.

During this early period, cooperatives operated in a legal gray area. Since producers working collectively in a cooperative setting could be viewed as monopolistic or collusive, they were under careful watch by the Federal Trade Commission as well as their larger competitors.

That changed in 1922 with the passage of the Capper-Volstead Act.

"Capper-Volstead allowed producers to come together and market their products and not be in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act," explained Brenda Forman, South Dakota Association of Cooperatives executive director. "[Cooperatives] were not considered to be a monopoly as long as they were a cooperative association formed

Clay-Union Electric Corporation was the first electric cooperative in South Dakota.

by producers, owned by the members, one member gets one vote in cooperative elections, etc."

The presence of ag cooperatives surged in the 1930s as producers looked for stability during the Great Depression, the South Dakota Farmers Union says. With effectiveness proven, the cooperative strategy has stuck around since.

Today, there are 63 farm supply and marketing cooperatives serving over 130 South Dakota communities, Forman said.

Those same visionaries who established the first ag cooperatives identified another need that was not being met. Using the same cooperative model that changed their lives once already, farmers would bring power to the prairie.

Electricity

Before energy infrastructure was widespread, many small towns in South Dakota relied on local power plants. However, with distribution lines only serving the city, living even a mile or two out of town was the difference between flipping a light switch and carrying a lantern.

Despite requests from farmers to run lines to their homes – some of whom even offered to pay installation costs – most municipalities and investor-owned utilities (IOUs) refused because undertaking the effort didn't lead to any meaningful profit.

Even many of the state's elected representatives seemed resigned to the idea

that the future of energy for their farming constituents was tied to on-site generation, like the modest Delco-Light plants that could power a few small appliances and light bulbs. To them, it seemed laughable that there was any feasible way to run lines in a state where the service would average out to a sparse 2.2 customers per mile of line, and for many, that was the end of the conversation.

The narrative changed when President Franklin D. Roosevelt expanded his New Deal programs to modernize rural America, creating the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) to finance ambitious projects.

The profit-minded IOUs were largely uninterested in expanding into sparse territory for measly returns, and little progress was made toward Roosevelt's vision.

In 1936, once it was apparent IOUs wouldn't be making the foray into rural territories as farmers had hoped they would, Roosevelt signed the Rural Electrification Act. Now, cooperatives could organize and receive REA loans while the IOUs idled.

A group of 17 farmers from Clay and Union counties jumped at the opportunity to finally bring their homes into the modern age. Just months after the REA was established, and at a time when just 5% of South Dakota farms had power, the group hatched out a plan to secure an REA loan for their newly-formed Fairview Rural Electric System, today Clay-Union Electric Corporation.

Going door to door and collecting \$5 sign-ons from neighbors ranging from ecstatic to skeptical, the cooperative finally got the REA's green light and received a \$70,000 loan to build 67 miles of line that would serve about 300 members, according to a 1936 Argus Leader report.

The success of South Dakota's first electric cooperative brought hope to still more than 90% of South Dakota farmers without power. It wasn't long before dozens more newly-formed cooperatives were each going door to door collecting sign-on fees to secure their own REA loans.

Serving Everyone

In 1946, roughly 10 years after the state's first electric cooperative debuted, rural farmers and ranchers from the state's

remote northwest corner met in Lemmon to form their own cooperative. The board understood securing a loan from REA to serve such a vast and sparse territory would be a big ask, so they opted to charge members a \$10 monthly minimum, which was twice the minimum rate of most South Dakota cooperatives, and equal to about \$170 today.

Even so, would-be members agreed to the terms of the longshot project and paid their \$5 membership fee. Despite federal hesitation about the feasibility of such a project, the REA loan was approved.

Grand Electric Cooperative received more than \$1.8 million over two loans that would build 1,127 miles of line and serve 948 members. The investment amounted to one of the REA's largest and riskiest yet in the state, but proved to be a success.

Cooperative members did the impossible; the wires in northwest South Dakota had finally been energized. Board members then eyed another ambitious goal – bringing telephone to Northwest South Dakota.

West River Cooperative Telephone Company was formed as a separate entity, but in the spirit of cooperation, the telephone and electric cooperative would be jointly operated. The two would, and still to this day, share a building, staff and infrastructure.

"Up here, we cover almost 8,000 square miles and have 4,000 miles of wire, but we only have 1,800 members," explained Eric Kahler, the cooperatives' joint general manager. "When you look at the economics of this type of service territory, if you're in the business to make money, you're not going to be too successful here. The cooperative model is really the only model that could work here."

And the community knows that fact and is grateful for their cooperative, says Patricia Palmer, who has spent much of her last 63 years working in Grand Electric and West River Telephone's member services.

"They're thankful," she said. "Very thankful. We have a terrific telephone work crew and line department. At times, they work tirelessly in horrible weather conditions... You can't believe the thank you notes that we get."

Growing up on a farm near McIntosh, Palmer has a firsthand account of the impact

of cooperatives. And she says it's one she will never forget.

The night she watched her family's farmhouse light up for the first time was also the beginning of a new chapter, she recalled. A chapter with an automatic washer, a refrigerator and a toaster.

As times change, cooperatives continue to be at the forefront of bringing service that might otherwise be out of reach.

"When I came to the cooperative, it was just telephone and electricity, and now we have high-speed internet and TV," Palmer said. "Over the years, the cooperative has really grown!"

Other Applications

The cooperative model is also used in many other sectors; there are 34 South Dakota credit unions that offer member-owners better interest rates and reduced fees compared to for-profit banks.

Even some rural water systems, while not wholly cooperatives themselves, borrow some of the cooperative fundamentals to make serving large areas more practical.

"Cooperatives are pretty significant in the impact they've had," Forman said. "And the other cooperatives we have – there are daycare co-ops, food co-ops, education co-ops – there's a number of different structures that the cooperative model has been used for, because of that ownership and one member, one vote."

Today, there are 141 cooperatives in the state, providing more than 78,500 jobs, \$2.8 billion in worker salaries and \$3.9 billion in gross domestic product (GDP), according to a South Dakota State University study titled *The Economic Impact of Cooperatives in South Dakota*.

That means cooperatives contribute almost 13% of South Dakota jobs, more than 11% of salaries, and 6.2% of the state's entire GDP.

"In a cooperative, your board is local," Forman said. "[The co-op board and employees] support and participate in sports functions, 4-H barbecues, you may go to church with them, or they may be at family dinner. Which means when something is a concern or challenge, you have somebody to go to and you have contacts close that know you and understand the system."



SECURING CONNECTED DEVICES ON YOUR HOME NETWORK

Ryan Newlon

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, and while we should always be vigilant of the latest cyber threats and risks, this is a great time of year to raise awareness about simple steps we can take to make our digital lives more secure.

Every day, we are integrating more smart devices into our home networks, often without a second thought. From smart light bulbs to connected kitchen appliances, our homes are becoming increasingly interconnected. While the convenience of controlling our environments with a smartphone is exciting, it brings a host of security concerns that we must consider.

When you bring new connected devices into your home, it's crucial to understand what you're adding to your network and how to do so securely. If you connect devices without understanding the implications, you could be opening the door to potential problems. Remember, manufacturers typically prioritize functionality and profit over security. They deliver the basics of what you need, leaving you responsible for securing the rest.

To help you navigate this complex landscape, here are a few tips to help you

secure connected devices on your home network.

Secure your router (or modem). Your router comes with a default ID assigned by the manufacturer. Consider changing the router name to one that is unique to you. You should also change the router's default password to a stronger one that is at least 12 characters long and includes letters, numbers and symbols. Speaking of passwords...

Be smart about passwords. Remember to change default login passwords on all devices, and use strong, unique passwords for every device and online account. Avoid reusing passwords, and if you have trouble remembering them, enlist the help of a password manager.

Know what you're connecting to your home network. Understand the purpose of each device on your network. If possible, keep your most critical devices on a separate network from your smart home gadgets to minimize risk. Many routers allow you to create a secondary (guest) network, which can be used to separate your smart devices from other connected electronics, like your laptop.

Set devices to update automatically. Most device manufacturers roll out updates

to resolve bugs and enhance functionality. You should be able to select an "automatic update" option to ensure your devices include the latest security patches and features.

Feeling overwhelmed? Find a cyber buddy. Connect with a family member, friend or even a neighbor in your community who is tech-savvy. You can also check to see if your Internet Service Provider (ISP) offers support.

Taking steps toward better cybersecurity habits is about ownership, vigilance and proactive measures. With so much technology at our fingertips, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. Remember: it's a journey, so if you find managing multiple devices cumbersome, consider simplifying your digital surroundings. Being proactive now can prevent cyber issues down the line.

For your local electric cooperative, cyber threats don't stop at our front door, which is why we are deeply committed to staying on top of the latest cybersecurity practices. We belong to a network of hundreds of co-ops, and we work together to learn about the latest risks and share our experiences. Staying informed in this digital age can turn challenges into steppingstones that increase our overall security.

Together, we can secure our digital lives and support each other through the complexities of the modern age. Let's take these steps together and build a safer digital future for everyone.

ENERGY INNOVATION CREATES NEW CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Scott Flood

You may never have heard of an energy storage specialist or a smart grid engineer, but you'll want to know that smart people are serving in those roles. Their jobs are all about making your electricity even more reliable and affordable—and they are careers that didn't even exist a decade or two ago.

The energy industry has gone through profound changes in the last decade as organizations like your local electric cooperative rush to meet growing needs for power while addressing concerns about sustainability and climate. As new technologies have been developed to address key issues, they've led to significant increases in new careers.

This month, electric co-ops across America will recognize Careers in Energy Week, October 21-25. It's an industry-wide initiative to connect today's energy workforce with tomorrow's by making people aware of the important and rewarding career opportunities.

Co-op members are familiar with some people who work in the energy industry. The lineworkers who restore their power after a storm and the member service representatives who take calls about outages and billing are the most familiar examples, since members are more likely to interact with them. But no less important are the people who are playing important behind-the-scenes roles in shaping tomorrow's energy landscape.

Take that energy storage specialist. You know solar energy has the potential to provide more of our electricity, but it has a fundamental problem: it works only when the sun is sufficiently bright. Engineers, technicians and others are close to creating giant battery-like devices that can store

excess solar energy so it's available when the sun's out of sight.

Then there are renewable energy engineers, hard at work designing and implementing more efficient ways to harness energy from the sun, wind and water. They've been behind many of the advancements you've seen in recent years. Another group of engineers focuses on improving the smart grid, the nationwide network that connects power producers and users. They're seeking ways to reduce energy that gets wasted while improving coast-to-coast reliability.

More environmental scientists are needed to help energy producers better understand how to meet the demands of consumers while protecting local and global ecosystems. It also takes skilled energy policy analysts to analyze data, evaluate the impacts of proposed policies and advise governments and organizations on energy-related issues.

Many of these new positions require extensive education, but others provide entry-level opportunities. For example, as more homeowners want to use new technologies like solar panels, they need trained technicians to install them. Another growing opportunity is for energy advisors, who have the skills to examine homes and businesses to identify changes that could lead to lower energy bills.

While opportunities abound throughout the energy industry, people who have an interest in energy often find work environments they enjoy at local electric cooperatives. There are many reasons for that, and one that's particularly important is that co-ops play a critical role in the safety and well-being of the communities they serve. People who are proud of the places they call home are eager to give back, and

knowing you play a role in keeping your neighbors' lights on and making your community economically stronger can be quite satisfying.

In this era of job-hopping, a surprising number of co-op employees spend most or all of their careers there. Co-ops tend to be some of the community's most stable employers, and they typically provide plenty of opportunities for personal and professional growth, such as access to specialized training or classes. While co-ops are not-for-profit organizations, that doesn't mean they're skimpy when it comes to pay. Both wages and benefits tend to be competitive.

Whether you're a student getting ready to pursue that first "real" job or an individual who feels ready for a career change, the energy industry is definitely worth exploring. It offers both stability and growth, and opportunities that run the gamut from member services to engineering to construction, science and financial management. Your local co-op also gives you the chance to be the person your neighbors know they can depend upon. That's a benefit that's tough to beat.



GHOST TOWNS

South Dakota's History Remembered

Jacob Boyko

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Scattered across open fields and through narrow mountain gulches, a careful eye can spot many of South Dakota's nearly 250 long-lost prairie villages and prospecting towns.

Many of these communities were once thriving outposts, railroad hubs, farming villages and mining towns, but were dealt their final blows by the hardships of the dust bowl, changes to railroad systems and the depletion of natural resources.

Most of the towns are long forgotten, their existence marked only by the rotted shell of an old wood barn or a crumbling foundation poking up from the ground.

Thanks to the work of local historical societies who have pieced together the history of the communities' "booms and busts" through old newspaper clippings, plat maps and land records, we can get a glimpse into the lives of the first rural South Dakotans and learn about the communities that once bustled with life.

Galena

Unique among a cavalcade of abandoned Black Hills gold-rush towns, Galena's roots are in its silver. The town was settled in the late 1870s after prospectors Patrick Donegan and John F. Cochran discovered layers of lead and silver ore near Bear Butte Creek while searching for gold deposits.

The U.S. government removed the two men from the area in accordance with Native American treaties. However,

their exile turned out to be short-lived. Donegan and Cochran returned shortly after to mine their claim as more and more gold-hungry settlers tested the increasingly unenforceable treaties.

The claim, which would later become the Sitting Bull mine, turned out to be a mother lode, according to Galena Historical Society member Jeff Jacobsen.

Over the next several years, other mining operations popped up in the gulch as the miners' families made Galena their new home. The town soon had multiple houses, a hotel, restaurant, stores, a catholic church, cemetery and school, attracting new settlers through its peak between 1881 and 1883.

Arriving from Chicago in hopes of expanding his fortune, Col. John Davey soon became a Galena mining heavyweight, buying up claims along the Bear Butte Creek, including the Sitting Bull claim.

Davey's more than 125-man operation was running smoothly until trouble arose from a claim dispute. The owners of the nearby Richmond claim suspected Davey was digging too far into the hill and mining their silver. Davey claimed he was following the path of the ore, which according to mining law, he was allowed to follow onto another claim. The Richmond claim owners said the law didn't apply to a horizontal blanket formation of ore, like the one in Galena.

A lengthy court battle ensued, and the judge shut down the Sitting Bull mine

until the ruling. Galena was suspended in controversy as many of the townsfolk found themselves out of work.

Thus began Galena's rocky "boom and bust" cycle, Jacobsen explained.

"The boom time was when Col. Davey and other mines were producing, and then the lawsuit shut that down and you have a bust," he said.

The judge ruled against Davey, and the operation never recovered. Galena would never again be the bustling town it was in the early 1880s.

"In 1892, some more people came into town and tried to start up again, so that was a boom, and then they went bankrupt, so there's a bust," Jacobsen continued. "There's like three or four cycles like that in Galena."

By the mid 1930s, the town had seen its final bust. The mining wasn't comparable to the riches of the past, and interest in the gulch slowly started to fade. The tracks were removed and the school house closed in 1943.

Today, Galena is the best-preserved Ghost Town in South Dakota. On the second Saturday of each June, visitors can tour the town, visit the maintained graveyard and go inside the newly-restored schoolhouse, courtesy of the Galena Historical Society.

"It just kind of stands out," Jacobsen said. "Galena is just one of the very few silver mining areas in the Black Hills when almost everyone else was trying for gold."



Galena School
Photo Credit: Galena Historical Society

Did You Know

In 1947, Deadwood resident Ollie Wiswell came across an orphaned coyote pup while he was out on a hike. He gave the pup, named Tootsie, to Fred and Esther Borsch of Galena. Tootsie gained fame as the mascot for the Borschs' Deadwood liquor store, famously appearing on the store's sign. Fred taught Tootsie to howl along to his singing, and the two recorded the album "South Dakota Tootsie."

Tootsie, at this point a South Dakota mascot, rode through parades, was featured in an airline advertising campaign, and even embarked on a nationwide tour where she visited the White House and performed for President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Vice President Richard Nixon.

Gov. George Mickelson, a fan of Tootsie himself, signed legislation in 1949 making the coyote the state's official animal. Tootsie died in 1959 and is buried near her home in Galena.

Argonne

About nine miles northwest of Howard, just off state Highway 25, lay the remains of the ill-fated farming community, Argonne.

Marked by a blue historical sign, travelers-by can catch a glimpse of the town's massive cement bank vault with its swinging iron door, an old silo bearing the town's name, several concrete foundations, and a house falling into its own footprint.

The town's founder, Dr. Louis Gotthelf, was a Prussian-born physician who emigrated to the United States in the aftermath of the Prussian revolution. Gotthelf staked his claim in 1881 and established the townsite in 1886.

The town was originally called St. Mary's, named after Gotthelf's daughter, and was strategically positioned along the Chicago and North Western railroad, with the streets running parallel to the railroad rather than the traditional east-west layout. Confusion with another St. Mary's led to the residents voting to change the name to Argonne in 1920, which was chosen to honor local soldiers who had served in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive during World War I.

Despite having what should have been a prime location, Argonne failed to grow to Gotthelf's satisfaction, and he left with his family for Parker in 1889.

A 1919 land boom in South Dakota finally turned things around for Argonne, Miner County Historical Society member George Justice Forster said.

"Most of the growth that happened initially was when it kind of took off as a

trade center," he explained. "Suddenly the town had a railway depot, lumberyard, farmer's cooperative and general store."

In the early 20s, Argonne's population boomed to about 100 residents, and the town offered new amenities including a school, blacksmith and post office.

Argonne's peak was short-lived, and by 1930 the population had fallen to about 65 residents.

When Doug Jerlow moved to town in 1953, much of what was built in the town's prime was left abandoned, and most of the businesses that did remain were struggling.

"It was past the peak," Jerlow recounted. "One general store closed when the post office inside it closed, and that was an elderly lady who ran that and lived in a house by herself. The Haxby family's store was open for maybe a year or two after that."

Though the town was facing a bleak outlook, there remained one huge point of pride for Argonne: high school basketball.

Delbert Gillam, also known as the

Argonne Ace, led the Argonne Arrows to a 10-1 start in his junior year in 1953. Gillam also broke the state record for the most points scored by a player in a single game, making 31 field goals and 10 free throws, scoring 72. Argonne still holds this record.

The high school closed in 1956, but the community limped on for a few more years before the grade school closed in 1970 when the railroad picked up and left.

Doug Jerlow's family, the last residents of Argonne, left town that same year.

Jerlow pointed out that while many other communities along the rail line like Unityville, Canova, Carthage, and Esmond struggled to recover from the abandonment of the line, for Argonne, it was the death blow.

Now, Forster and other members of the Miner County Historical Society are working to preserve the history of Argonne.

A historical marker will soon be placed east of Argonne on state Highway 25 that will tell the story of Argonne from its founding to its final household.

Though Jerlow now lives near Madison, he still farms near Argonne and owns most of the former townsite. As the unofficial mayor of Argonne, as Jerlow sometimes calls himself, he wants to keep the memory of his childhood hometown alive.

"It was just a nice community to grow up in," he said. "Those small communities, I think it's becoming harder to find them anymore."



Argonne Arrows

Photo Credit: Miner County Historical Society



RELIABLE ENERGY

How the EPA's Power Plant Rule Jeopardizes Grid Reliability

Jocelyn Johnson

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The energy future outlined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Power Plant Rule means more blackouts, greater uncertainty and higher electric bills. This is the concern of electric cooperatives and other industry leaders who are in litigation with the EPA over the legality of the power plant rule issued in May of this year.

"The administration and the EPA specifically have made it a priority to undertake a 'death by a thousand cuts' approach to regulating the utility sector," said Stephen Bell, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's vice president of advocacy, press and member communications. "They've enacted a number of rules, including the EPA Power Plant Rule. As a result, they're proposing rules and regulations at a

rapid pace that have a direct impact on our industry specifically."

Boiled down, the EPA's Power Plant Rule requires coal-fired and natural gas power plants to capture 90% of carbon dioxide emissions using carbon capture and sequestration technology by 2032. This is not attainable according to NRECA who represents electric cooperatives nationally.

Alongside other industry leaders and 27 states' attorneys general, NRECA filed a lawsuit and stay request in the D.C. Circuit against the EPA earlier this year. The stay request, which attempted to delay the implementation of the rule, was denied in July and an appeal was immediately made to the U.S. Supreme Court, arguing that

the Clean Air Act's Section 111 requires EPA's standards be based on technology that has been adequately demonstrated. A system that meets all of EPA's requirements has never existed and therefore cannot be considered adequately demonstrated.

"No operating coal or natural gas power plants in America exist that use carbon capture at the scale that would comply with EPA's regulation," said Bell. "Their final rule is unreasonable, unrealistic and unachievable, because it relies on technology for implementing greenhouse gas reductions that just isn't ready for prime time."

Grid reliability is a concern for many in the energy industry – including local distribution cooperatives whose mission is to provide safe, affordable and reliable energy to member-consumers.

"The numbers don't add up," said Bell. "I think we are in a situation where reliability is being put at risk

by a policy that doesn't focus on the importance of keeping the lights on."

South Dakota Rural Electric Association's General Manager Steve Barnett added the same sentiment, acknowledging that the timing of the power plant rule was troubling.

"At the same time the EPA is leading our nation down the path to fewer power plants, utilities are facing a surge in electricity demand – driven by the onshoring of manufacturing, the growth of the American economy and the rapid expansion of data centers to support artificial intelligence, e-commerce and cryptocurrency," said Barnett.

Grid reliability affects everyone's ability to turn on the lights, heat their homes and use electric appliances. However, the future of grid reliability does not have a positive outlook for many in the energy industry.

As it stands, the EPA's rule would cause debilitating pressure on an already strained grid. It would also

have a potential impact on consumer costs.

"When demand is high and supply is low, costs go up," Barnett said. "We're concerned about threats to reliability as well as cost increases to our members."

This growing demand – and shrinking supply – is why the North American Electric Reliability Corporation has warned that 19 states could see rolling blackouts over the next five years during times of high electrical usage, including during life-threatening cold snaps and heat waves.

"Demand for power is increasing and supply is not keeping up," said Bell. "Against that backdrop, the EPA has proposed a rule that will force electric co-ops to take power plants offline. They will be forced to do more with less in a situation where we need more. This is not a recipe for success."



SEPT. 14-OCT. 27
Mazing Acres Fall Festival

10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
30851 433rd Ave.
Yankton, SD
605-760-2759



SEPT. 27-29
Coal Springs Threshing Bee and Antique Show
Meadow, SD
605-788-2299

OCT. 4-5
Holman Acres Pumpkin Fest and Vendor Show
Philip, SD
605-441-1060

OCT. 4-5
25th Annual Pumpkin Fest
Webster, SD
<https://webstersd.com/home>

OCT. 5-6
Run Crazy Horse Marathons
Crazy Horse
605-390-6137
www.runcrazyhorse.com

OCT. 5-6
Magic Needlers Quilt Show
Codington County Extension Complex
Watertown, SD
605-881-3273

OCT. 5-6
The Black Market
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds
Sioux Falls, SD
605-332-6004

OCT. 6
Giant Pumpkin Festival
Bentley Memorial Building
Bison, SD
Enter Pumpkins by 11:30 a.m.
605-244-5475

OCT. 10-11
Rural Women in Agriculture Conference
Oct. 10 from 1-9 p.m.
Oct. 11 from 7 a.m.-3 p.m.
The Lodge of Deadwood
Deadwood, SD
SouthDakotaWomeninAg.com

OCT. 11-12
Junkin' Market Days
Ramkota Exhibit Hall
Sioux Falls, SD
605-941-4958

OCT. 19
Buffalo County Fall Ball
Live Music and Food
8 p.m.
Fire Hall
Gann Valley, SD

OCT. 25-27
Forest of Fears Haunted Trail
7 p.m.-10 p.m.
Reclamation-Ranch
40787 259th St.
Mitchell, SD

OCT. 26
Hill City Children's Boo Bash and Pumpkin Festival
Hill City, SD
605-574-2368

OCT. 26
Hartford Women of Today Fall Craft Fair
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
West Central Becker Center
Hartford, SD
605-359-2049

OCT. 26
Owl-O-Ween
Noon-5 p.m.
Black Hills Raptor Center
Caputa, SD
605-391-2511

OCT. 31
Treat Street
5:30 p.m.-7 p.m.
Main St.
Milbank, SD
605-432-6656
MilbankSD.com/Chamber

NOV. 2
Fall Fling Craft Show
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Dakota Christian School
Corsica, SD
605-366-7940

NOV. 2
Reliance Christmas Carousel
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Legion Hall
Reliance, SD
605-730-0553

NOV. 22-23
Holiday Arts Christmas Craft Show
Davison County Fairgrounds
Mitchell, SD
605-359-2049

NOV. 30
A Hometown Christmas Market
2 p.m.-6 p.m.
Main St.
Elk Point, SD

To have your event listed on this page, send complete information, including date, event, place and contact to your local electric cooperative. Include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Information must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to your event. Please call ahead to confirm date, time and location of event.

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