

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

Keeping the Lights On

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Building update from Northern Electric Vice President



Todd Hettich
Board Vice President
and Building
Committee Chair

At the 2023 Northern Electric Annual Meeting, Board President Nolan Wipf informed the membership of the condition of the headquarters building located at Bath. The building serving the cooperative since 1967 has slowly deteriorated. He announced the board was working with an architectural firm to assess the current condition of the facility. The board commissioned an assessment to help determine the feasibility of remaining in the existing facility, remodeling the facility, or demolishing and rebuilding at the same location. The detailed findings from the assessment revealed numerous significant issues that must be addressed. Building issues included the need to replace the roof on the office building, replacement of original electrical switchgear and electrical panels, basement wall reconstruction, HVAC issues, and other issues too numerous to mention.

At the November 2023 board meeting, the board formed a building committee consisting of representation from both board members and staff. The committee was tasked with addressing the building issues while offering a solution that will provide a facility that is functional and able to serve the cooperative's needs well into the future. Upon completion of the architectural assessment, the committee reviewed the options with the architect and determined the most cost-effective option is to move forward with the remodel option at the current location. The committee did not make this decision lightly. We took into consideration the existing structure constructed of precast concrete which appears to be struc-

turally sound. Utilizing the existing concrete shell of the building will yield significant cost savings for the membership.

The committee presented the recommendation of the remodel option to the board at the February 2024 board meeting. The board approved to move forward given the committee's recommendation.

We will keep you informed as we move forward through this process. If you have questions about the building project, contact your director or co-op manager.



**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: Kelly Brandlee
 kbrandlee@northernelectric.coop

Executive Secretary: Amy Golden

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

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

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www.northernelectric.coop

**Northern Electric
 Cooperative**
 A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Northern Electric Cooperative's regular board meeting was held February 16, 2024, at the headquarters in Bath with all directors present or via teleconference. As the first order of business, the board approved the January 18, 2024, minutes, and expenditures. The board then reviewed and accepted monthly reports by management.

East River Director Kirk Schaunaman reported on actions taken by the board at its February 2, 2024, meeting. South Dakota Rural Electric Association Director Nolan Wipf reported that the next SDREA board meeting will be held March 28, 2024. Directors Kirk Schaunaman, Ron Kaaz, Nolan Wipf, Lorisa Rudolph, Russ, Ulmer, and Kelly Brandlee reported on the East River Energize Forum, which was held February 1-2, 2024 in Sioux Falls. Director Todd Hettich reported on the RESCO board meeting which was held on February 8-9, 2024.

MANAGER'S REPORT

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

- Report on Rural Electric Development (REED) Board Meeting held on January 30, 2024.
- Report on East River MAC Meeting held on January 30, 2024.

- Report on SDREA Managers Meeting on February 6, 2024.
- Written staff reports were presented.

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 Thursday, March 21, 2024.
- Approved Work Order Inventory #24-01 for \$319,155.10 and MC#24-01 for \$20,059.68 to be submitted to Rural Utilities Service (RUS) for reimbursement from loan funds for electric plant construction already completed.
- Approved revisions to Purpa Rate Electric Tariff.
- Approved to move forward with the building committee's recommendation of the building remodel option.
- Held Executive Session.

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

FINANCIAL REPORT

	January-24	January-23
kWh Sales	34,737,656 kWh	32,037,341 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$2,912,246	\$2,675,120
Total Cost of Service	\$2,893,379	\$2,582,000
Operating Margins.....	\$18,867	\$93,120
Year to Date Margins	\$44,280	\$127,423

RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE MONTHLY USAGE AND BILL

JANUARY 2024	3,549 kWh.....	\$303.53.....	0.0855 per kWh
JANUARY 2023	3,518 kWh.....	\$290.22.....	0.0825 per kWh

Wholesale power cost, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for 86.0% of NEC's total cost of service.

Break Dirt Without Breaking the Law

As the warmer spring temperatures cause the ground to thaw, contractors and homeowners alike are likely to begin on projects that require some sort of digging.

By law, anyone who is digging in South Dakota needs to call 811 and have a locate ticket in their hand before moving any ground. If you're not the one that's digging and you've hired a landscaper to do the work instead, that landscaper should have a ticket in their name.

When someone calls 811, the call goes through a center in Dallas, Texas. That call center then notifies utilities in the area, according to South Dakota 811 Executive Director Codi Gregg.

An excavator or digger has to allow 48 hours for the utilities in the area they plan to dig into to come on site and mark the location of those underground utilities. On average, there are five to eight utilities notified per call.

If there's a potential loss of life or property, the allowed response time is shortened to a maximum of two hours during normal business hours.

"When the ticket goes in, the excavator is given a list of the utilities that are involved or are working or that are in that area where they're working," Gregg explained.

Those companies that own the utilities will make marks that identify the location. Those flags are also color coded according to the type of utility. As more and more overhead electrical lines are converted to underground lines, it's imperative that anyone who plans on doing a project that requires digging call 8-1-1 to avoid a dangerous and deadly situation.

"It's a free phone call for the excavator to make. There's no real reason for them not to make the phone call other than not being aware of it," Gregg said.

Kristie Fiegen, South Dakota Public Utilities Commission Chairwoman, echoed Gregg's comments, stating that making the call to 811 is the "most important and easiest call anyone can make before starting a digging project."

"This simple and imperative effort will help to prevent damages to vital underground utilities and safeguard critical services that our residents and economy depend on," Fiegen said. "During the 2024 construction season, I urge everyone to call 811 before you dig and protect all South Dakotans by abiding by our state laws and making safety our highest priority."

- Last year, there were 176,984 notices to the 811 Center of work occurring.
- South Dakota's 811 laws were established in 1993.
- In 2017, South Dakota 811 added damage reporting to our laws, stating if there was a damage, disturbance, or a dislocation of a utility – 811 was to be contacted to report the damage. It was also added that 911 was to be contacted first if there was a leak.
- Free accounts are offered upon request, allowing account holders to enter locate tickets themselves without calling an agent.
- A total of 1,944 utilities were reportedly damaged in 2023. Of that total, 375 excavators did not have a previous ticket.
- According to Common Ground Alliance's Damage Information Reporting Tool (DIRT) Report, the annual rate of damages to buried infrastructure costs the U.S. a staggering \$30 billion every year and 60% of nationwide damages to underground utilities are caused specifically by professional contractors not contacting 811 prior to digging.



Don't Fly Drones Near Power Lines Lyndon Kaski, Age 8

Lyndon Kaski warns readers to stay away from power lines when flying drones. Great advice! Lyndon's parents are Jonathan and Amanda Kaski, members of Kingsbury 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.

SALSA SAVORY

FRESH SALSA

Ingredients:

4-6 med. to large tomatoes, seeded and chopped
1 med. onion, chopped
4 fresh jalapenos, seeded and finely chopped*
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 tbsp. dried parsley or fresh cilantro to taste
1 tsp. salt

Method

*To prevent jalapenos from burning your fingers, lightly rub fingers with shortening, especially around fingernails.
Serve with tortilla chips.

Linda Hubbard
Rapid City, S.D.

LUANN'S FRESH SALSA

Ingredients:

4 med. tomatoes, peeled and chopped
1/4 cup finely chopped onion
1/4 cup finely chopped green pepper
1-2 tbsps. jalapeno or other hot pepper, seeded and finely chopped
1 tsp. salt
pepper to taste
1 tbsp. lime juice or red wine vinegar
1-2 tps. catsup
dash garlic powder
dash cayenne pepper
1-2 tps. sugar
cilantro (optional)

Method

Mix all ingredients. Serve with any tortilla or corn chips for dipping. Will keep approximately 1 week in the refrigerator.

Nancy Stenson
Fort Pierre, S.D.

TAMARIND PASILLA MANGO PINEAPPLE SALSA

Ingredients:

1 1/4 cups diced fresh pineapple
1 large mango, pitted and diced (about 1 1/4 cup)
1 small red onion, diced
1 small red bell pepper, diced
1/4 cup finely chopped fresh cilantro
1 med. jalapeño pepper, seeded and finely chopped
2 cloves fresh garlic, minced
3 tbsps. fresh lime juice
1 tbsp. honey
4 1/2 teaspoons Tamarind Naturally Flavored & Pasilla Chile Seasoning

Method

Mix all ingredients in medium bowl. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes before serving. Stir before serving. Serve with tortilla chips or use to top tacos or nachos.

McCormick

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.

Petitions are now available for 2024 board of directors seats

Nominating Petitions Due By April 26.

During Northern Electric Cooperative's 2024 Annual Meeting (Tuesday, June 11, 2024) members will elect Directors for Districts 1, 3, and 8.

Incumbent directors Mike Traxinger, Claremont (Dist. 1), Ron Kaaz, Aberdeen (Dist. 3), and Fran Esser, Redfield (Dist. 8) are all eligible to run again and are up for re-election.

Northern Electric Cooperative uses a petition process to nominate directors. A petition must be circulated for each candidate. Candidates must be cooperative members and reside in the district they wish to represent. A designated representative of an entity may seek election. The representative must reside within the district in which they would represent. Each petition must be signed by at least ten (10) cooperative members residing in that candidate's specific district.

Only one party of a joint membership may sign a petition; but not both.

Petitions are available at the Northern Electric offices in Bath. Director petitions must be submitted not more than one hundred-twenty (120) nor less than forty-five (45) days before the Annual Meeting to have names placed on the official ballot and the Notice of the Meeting.

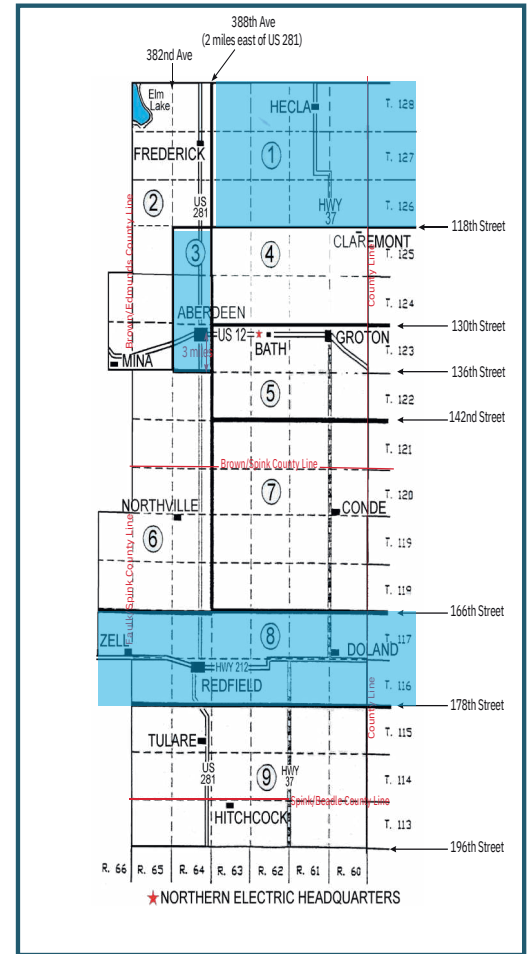
Petitions must be filed at the Bath Northern Electric Cooperative office by close of business (4:30 p.m.)

Friday, April 26, 2024. No petitions filed after April 26, 2024 shall be considered valid.

Nominations are not permitted from the floor during the meeting.

Members may only sign ONE nominating petition for a director candidate from their district of record.

For a complete copy of the Northern Electric Cooperative Bylaws contact Northern Electric at 605-225-0310 or stop by the Bath office. The bylaws are also available online at www.northernelectric.coop/cooperative-bylaws



South Dakota Rural Electric YOUTH EXCURSION July 22-24, 2024



- **Learn where South Dakota's electricity comes from!**
- **Tour the Great Plains Synfuel Plant, Freedom Coal Mine and Antelope Valley Station Power Plant!**
- **Meet new friends!**

Visit: www.northernelectric.coop for more information and to apply.



DIRECTOR NOMINATION AND ELECTION PROCESS

DIRECTOR QUALIFICATIONS

Northern Electric Cooperative Bylaws
Article IV Section 4

No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director who:

- a. Is an employee of the Cooperative.
- b. Is not a member and bona fide resident of the service area served by the Cooperative located within the particular District provided that if the member is an entity other than a natural person then such person must be the Designated Representative of the entity, and such Designated Representative must reside within the district they represent.
- c. Is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or business selling electric energy or supplies to the Cooperative or a business primarily engaged in selling electrical or plumbing appliances, fixtures or supplies to the members of the Cooperative.
- d. Has been previously removed as a Director in accordance with the procedures provided for removal in these Bylaws.
- e. Has failed to attend at least 2/3 of all regular board meetings during any consecutive twelve (12) month period.
- f. Has been employed by the Cooperative in the past five (5) years.
- g. Has pled guilty or has been convicted of: a felony, any crime involving dishonesty, or any crime involving moral turpitude.
- h. Does not have the capacity to enter into legally binding contracts.

2024 Annual Meeting Scheduled For Tuesday, June 11

NORTHERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE BYLAWS ARTICLE IV SECTION 6

Section 6. Nomination of Directors. Any ten (10) or more members including a Designated Representative of an entity, in such District may file or sign a nominating petition, in the form provided by the Cooperative, with the Secretary placing in nomination any qualified member from such District. Each signatory shall place the date of signing and the member's address on said petition. No member may sign a petition to nominate more than one candidate, and to do so shall invalidate the member's signature on the petition signed on the latest date.

This procedure shall be followed in each director district in which the director term shall expire. Upon receipt of such petition and having found the same to be in order, the Secretary shall post such nomination in the principal office of the Cooperative. Candidates so nominated shall be identified in the Notice of the Meeting and shall also be named on the official ballot. Such Petition for Nomination shall be filed with the Cooperative not more than one hundred-twenty (120) nor less than forty-five (45) days before the membership meeting. The order in which the nominees

shall appear on the printed ballot shall be determined by lot under the supervision of the Secretary. If any nominee should refuse to become a candidate or is not qualified, in accordance with the requirements of these Bylaws, the Secretary of the Cooperative is authorized and directed to remove the name or names from the list of posted nominees and/or from the ballot.

The Secretary shall be responsible for mailing with the notice of the annual meeting, or separately, but at least ten (10) days before the date of the meeting, a statement of the number of directors to be elected and the names and addresses of the candidates nominated. No nominations shall be permitted from the floor. Each member of the Cooperative present at the meeting shall be entitled to vote for one candidate from their specific district from which a director is to be elected. Upon establishment of a quorum the annual member meeting shall be deemed convened. Voting may occur in accordance with the procedure established by the Board. The candidate from each district receiving the highest number of votes at the meeting shall be considered elected as a director.



Elliot and Janaye Rayman at their second annual Barefoot Fitness Memorial Day fundraiser.

One Lineman's After-hours Outreach

Frank Turner

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Across the state, linemen are charged with keeping South Dakota's power going. It's a big responsibility: troubleshooting electrical systems, operating heavy equipment, and maintaining power lines. These workers are frequently asked to navigate high voltage and confront dangerous challenges in all kinds of extreme weather. In the face of these challenges, it takes a truly community-minded individual to ensure the community's lights stay on. Many of these crucial workers demonstrate their commitment to their community daily, both during and outside of work hours.

Butte Electric Journeyman Lineman Elliot Rayman, who has been with the cooperative for seven years, serves as just one example of an electric cooperative employee who has pulled extra hours for his local community of Spearfish, S.D. In addition to his role as a lineman, Elliot wears many hats in his community beyond just the hard hat of a co-op employee. He is a veteran of the National Guard, having served a deployment overseas. Elliot and his wife, Janaye, are also deeply involved in their community as the owners of Barefoot Fitness, a gym in the Spearfish community. Janaye, a cancer survivor, operates the gym and is an integral part of their community efforts.

Janaye and Elliot purchased Barefoot Fitness in 2018, fulfilling Janaye's long-standing dream of owning a gym. Shortly after their purchase, the couple learned that Janaye's cancer, previously in remission, had metastasized into Stage 4 breast cancer.

"In 2020, I had reoccurrence everywhere – brain, lungs, liver, bones," said Janaye. "Since then, I have been on a mission every day to heal and recover. It's also been my goal to help others every single day, day in and day out, and that's

what keeps me going. That's my job and it's what I love to do, so I'm not stopping."

"My wife is an inspiration to many people," added Elliot. "She is the strongest person I know."

Undeterred, Elliot and Janaye decided to press on and use their gym as a platform to engage with their local community. Despite Janaye's ongoing battle with breast cancer, the two started a new Barefoot Fitness tradition – an annual Memorial Day fundraiser to benefit South Dakota's gold star families, the families of fallen soldiers.

"After a few years of owning the gym, we decided we needed to give back to the community, because the community had really been there for us through everything," said Elliot. "We knew we had the ability and the platform to give back to the community through Barefoot Fitness, so we settled on a Memorial Day fundraiser that would benefit gold star families in our state."

This May, Elliot and Janaye will host their fourth Barefoot Fitness Memorial Day fundraiser. Like previous years, the event will feature local catering from Spearfish businesses, such as Spearfish Brewing Company and Timmons Market. The event will also include an optional community workout for all ages.

"We kick off our day with the National Guard leading the pledge of allegiance and national anthem," said Janaye. "We do a prayer, and then we do our Memorial Day workout. It's a team workout that people are encouraged to complete with their family or friends."

According to Janaye and Elliot, the team workout is about more than just breaking a sweat. Instead, it's about remembering those who gave their lives for this country.

"You always hear about people doing things for veterans, but you never hear about the story on the other side of

that – the families," Janaye said. "A lot of times the family is forgotten so we really want to honor the families that also made a sacrifice."

At the end of the day, Elliot and Janaye said none of their efforts would be possible without the support they have received from the Spearfish community, the veteran community,

and the electric cooperative community.

"Butte Electric and the co-op world have helped us out so much," said Elliot. "The culture of the co-op community is huge: there is brotherhood – it's the way people help each other out. You just can't ask for a better group of people, and that's the same way with the veteran world."



Janaye and Elliot lead a community workout session, challenging participants to complete 300 weighted ball throws.



Northern Electric's Four-Year Plan Underway.

Kelly Brandlee

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The Northern Electric Operations Department works to maintain, improve, and upgrade the Northern Electric infrastructure. Northern Electric maintains over 1,500 miles of overhead and 1,000 miles of underground line; it can be a big undertaking. Keeping the lights on for Northern Electric members

is more challenging than just keeping the lines energized. Many other factors affect the operation department's ability to keep the lights on. Weather, regulatory issues, and the current state of the economy are all issues that can have implications on finances and future system upgrades.

Over the last several years, cooperatives have faced weather challenges, regulatory burdens, and supply chain issues across the

country. The Northern Electric team has been working hard to stay the course despite unpredictable challenges and continue delivering affordable electricity to member households, farms, and businesses.

The previous four-year construction work plan was completed in 2022. The team began working with Power System Engineering in 2022 to develop the next four-year work plan and a 20-year long range work plan. These plans will serve as a guide to Northern Electric and our electric providers, East River Electric and Basin Electric, through 2026 as we plan future projects that



Northern Electric crews placing new electric poles in the Aberdeen area last summer.

will improve the reliability and safety of the co-op's distribution infrastructure.

The new work plan includes the replacement of 220 miles of old infrastructure. The \$34.5 million U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) loan focuses on replacing older infrastructure and building new lines in projected growth areas. Only a year into the new four-year plan, progress is well underway. The Hecla area received two and a half miles of underground line to replace four miles of inaccessible overhead line. This project will significantly improve reliability in the northeast corner of Northern Electric territory. To better service the growth and increased load around Mina Lake, crews installed four miles of underground line around the Mina area. Another larger project the operation department focused on in 2023 was in the Turton area. Here, crews replaced five miles of old single-phase line with a three-phase line. This line change will help correct voltage issues in the area and accommodate future load growth.

Two Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) projects were completed in 2023. Those two projects replaced three miles of overhead with underground lines.

In 2024, the Northern Electric Operations Department has several planned projects to improve the Northern Electric grid. Upgrades of single-phase lines to three-phase will be done to better balance the system and provide three phases to larger loads needing additional power. In addition, seven projects have been submitted and are awaiting FEMA approvals. Substations have been on a schedule to equip substation

circuits with electronic breakers. All substations will have new electronic breakers installed by 2025.

Northern Electric continually assesses our members' needs not only for today but also for the future of our Cooperative's transmission and generation requirements.





SDHP Trooper Megan Koch stands by her patrol vehicle. Koch works within the state's Motor Carrier Division. *Photo Credit: Shannon Marvel*

COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Shannon Marvel

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When commercial motor vehicles come into the state of South Dakota, it's the job of the South Dakota Highway Patrol's Motor Carrier Division to ensure the drivers of those vehicles have the necessary paperwork, permits and documents.

The task is one of public safety.

Making sure the carriers are adhering to safe driving practices is just another way to ensure that everyone is as safe as they can be while driving on the state's roadways.

South Dakota Highway Patrol

Trooper Megan Koch is one of the officers who works within the motor carrier division.

"Our main focus is making sure the motor carriers or trucks are safe on the roadways and keeping everybody else safe. It helps them perform their job of carrying their property or passengers across the state lines and within the state. We help make sure that they can do that job," Koch explained.

Mainly, Koch works specifically with commercial motor vehicles that carry over a certain weight or property of monetary value within the state or interstate.

"When we do an inspection on a driver, we're checking a bunch of different things. Weight sometimes is one of them, but not always. It just depends on the situation," Koch said.

"They have to have certain paperwork with them and they are required to follow certain rules. It depends on what they're doing."

The dependent variables include whether a carrier is traveling with goods within the state or going out of the state and how far away they are from the hub, or where they leave every day or go home to every day.

Koch also checks their paperwork to ensure the drivers are within compliance of state law.

"They have to follow certain hours that they can work so that they don't get tired while driving. It's a big thing that we follow for safety," Koch said.

"We also check things like

equipment violations, headlights, taillights, tires, you know, stuff that makes them safe on the roadway and keeps them safe. We'll also check for things such as bad driving behavior, if they're not staying within their own lane, using blinkers, not properly stopping at stop sign – stuff like that. So, if we see something like that, we can initiate an inspection."

Koch, a Plankinton native whose father was a truck driver, said the division is typically checking brake lines and lights.

In South Dakota, there are four main ports of entry. The ports are located along Interstate 29 in Jefferson and Sisseton, and along Interstate 90 in Sioux Falls and Tilford.

Each carrier is issued a "safety score," which is assessed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

"That's based on whether or not they have the proper paperwork, if they're driving within their hours, if they have the proper equipment and whether or not they've received any driving or alcohol violations," Koch said.

If a driver has a high enough safety score, they aren't required by law to stop at a port for inspection.

Overall, it all comes down to keeping the roadways safe for everyone, regardless of what type of vehicle they are driving.

"These rules and laws are in place for a reason. They have to be extra alert and awake while they're driving and that all of their equipment works properly. If you're driving a very heavy, large vehicle, you need excellent brakes. You have to be able to stop in time. That is the main reason we're checking all these things. It helps everybody on the road."

The division also works

with rural electric cooperatives when oversized loads travel along the state's highway system, according to Lieutenant Austin Schmitz, District Four Assistant Commander with the South Dakota Highway Patrol.

Sometimes oversized loads require that overhead power lines be moved out of the way to let the carrier pass through.

"As a district we do work with a lot of the cooperatives such as East River Electric. We all get together when planning for oversized loads coming through our area," Schmitz said.

"They usually run the route first and let us know what lines they need to move."

That was the case when a massive generator was moved across the state. The generator was so heavy and huge that the truck carrying it could only travel 30 miles per hour. That truck was also equipped with over a hundred tires, Schmitz said.

"That generator came through Watertown a couple of years ago and we've got some more coming in two or

three years," Schmitz said, referring to the multi-million pound machines.

"The planning for those started last year. That equipment will be coming in through the Great Lakes on a ship. They'll pick them up there and then they'll move through our state then Wyoming, Montana, however they can go," Schmitz said.

The truck carrying the heavy equipment is too big to go across most bridges and overpasses, so finding a route that allows the machinery to snake across the country is tricky.

While moving huge pieces of machinery can be one of the more interesting parts of the job, it's the flexibility of the job that Koch enjoys most.

"I get to pick and choose where I want to go for the day. I get to do something a little bit different every day. Because, I mean, nothing is ever the same," Koch said.

"It's kind of nice to be able to do that and make the day what you want of it."



A SDHP officer has the latest technology at his or her fingertips to ensure trucks on South Dakota roads are operating safely. Photo Credit: South Dakota Highway Patrol



**JUNE
17 & 18**



JOIN US ON THE VIP TOUR TO **BASIN ELECTRIC**

Want to learn how electricity gets from the power plant to your home?

Join us on a Northern Electric and Lake Region joint members-only tour of the Basin Electric Power Cooperative facilities in North Dakota.

The tour is FREE for members.

Visit the website for a complete list of tour rules and to apply.

Applications are due May 24

APPLY ONLINE AT:
NORTHERNELECTRIC.COOP/VIPTOUR



'WHO POWERS YOU' CELEBRATES LOCAL HEROES

Nominate friends and neighbors making a difference in your local communities

Nominations are now open for *Who Powers You*, a contest being hosted by Northern Electric Cooperative and the region's Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives. The third annual *Who Powers You* contest seeks to highlight local figures who are making a difference in their communities.

"In rural South Dakota, we live in tight-knit communities where individuals volunteer to make their school, church, or other community minded groups great," said Northern Electric Cooperative Communications Director Kelly Brandlee. "Those people don't do it for the recognition, but they deserve to be recognized, and we'd like to help make that happen."

Member-owners, employees, and

citizens who live or work within Northern Electric Cooperative's service territory are eligible to be nominated. Nominations are currently being accepted online through April 7, 2024, at WhoPowersYouContest.com.

Weekly finalists will be announced and featured on Keloland Living starting March 7, 2024, and the three contest winners will be announced on Keloland Living at the end of May.

The *Who Powers You* contest grand prize winner will receive a \$3,000 prize. The second-place winner will receive \$1,500 and the contest's third place winner will receive \$500.

Bob and Nancy Montross

NOMINATE SOMEONE 'WHO POWERS YOU'

Visit WhoPowersYouContest.com to nominate an individual

- Anyone who is making a difference in the communities served by Northern Electric Cooperative can be nominated.

Weekly finalists will be announced on Keloland Living

- Finalists will be featured on Keloland Living starting March 7.

Three winners will be announced in May

- The three winners of the contest will be announced on Keloland Living and receive cash prizes.
 - 1st Place - \$3,000
 - 2nd Place - \$1,500
 - 3rd Place - \$500

of DeSmet, SD, won the first place \$3,000 prize in 2023. Bob and Nancy kept active in their community by helping raise money for the DeSmet Events and Wellness Center, helping the Arts Council bring concerts to their area, and helped fundraise for the athletic complex. The Montross' were involved with the cemetery board, Highway 14 Trail and Observation Tower project among other events.

"The *Who Powers You* contest highlights the commitment of our co-op to the communities and member-owners that we serve. We know that our co-op community is filled with people making a difference," Brandlee said.

To learn more about the *Who Powers You* contest and to nominate someone in your community, visit WhoPowersYouContest.com.



APRIL 5-7, 2024
PBR: Unleash the Beast
 Denny Sanford
 PREMIER Center
 Sioux Falls, 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.

APRIL 2
Clay-Union Electric
Ribbon Cutting & Open
House
 3 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.
 31321 SD Hwy. 19
 Vermillion, SD

APRIL 5
A Night at the Races
Fundraiser for Safe Place of
Eastern SD
 6:30 p.m.
 Highland Conference Center
 Mitchell, SD

APRIL 5-7
71st Annual Hayes Play:
Under a Cowboy Moon
 7 p.m.
 Hayes Community Hall
 Hayes, SD

APRIL 13
Front Porch 605 Shop Hop
 9 a.m.
 Groton, SD

APRIL 14
Front Porch 605 Shop Hop
 12 p.m.
 Groton, SD

APRIL 14
Hill City Senior Sunday
Breakfast
 8 a.m.
 Hill City Center
 Hill City, SD

APRIL 20
Groton Firemen's Spring
Social
 7 p.m.
 Groton Fire Station
 Groton, SD

APRIL 21
Fiddle & Popular Song
 2 p.m.
 Gayville Hall
 Gayville, SD

APRIL 26
Mitchell Technical
College Alumni Cornhole
Tournament
 6:30 p.m.
 World's Only Corn Palace
 Mitchell, SD

APRIL 27
66th Annual Lions Pancake
Jamboree
 7 a.m.
 Masonic Hall
 Mitchell, SD

MAY 5
Opening Day
 Historic Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

MAY 11-SEPT.28
Malchow Plaza Farmers
Market
 Saturdays, 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m.
 Main Street
 Aberdeen, SD

MAY 18
Prairie Partners Master
Gardeners Plant Sale
 9 a.m.
 Brown County Fairgrounds
 Aberdeen, SD

MAY 27
Memorial Day Services
 12 p.m.
 Groton Union Cemetary with
 lunch at Legion Post #391
 Groton, SD

JUNE 20
Prairie Partners Master
Gardeners Garden Walk
 Aberdeen, SD

JULY 14
Lion's Club Summer Fest/
Car Show
 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Groton City Park
 Groton, SD

AUG. 8
Family Fun Fest
 5:30-7:30 p.m.
 Groton, SD

OCT. 31
Groton Downtown Trick or
Treat
 4-6 p.m.
 Groton, SD

NOV. 28
Groton Community
Thanksgiving
 11:30 a.m.
 Groton, SD

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