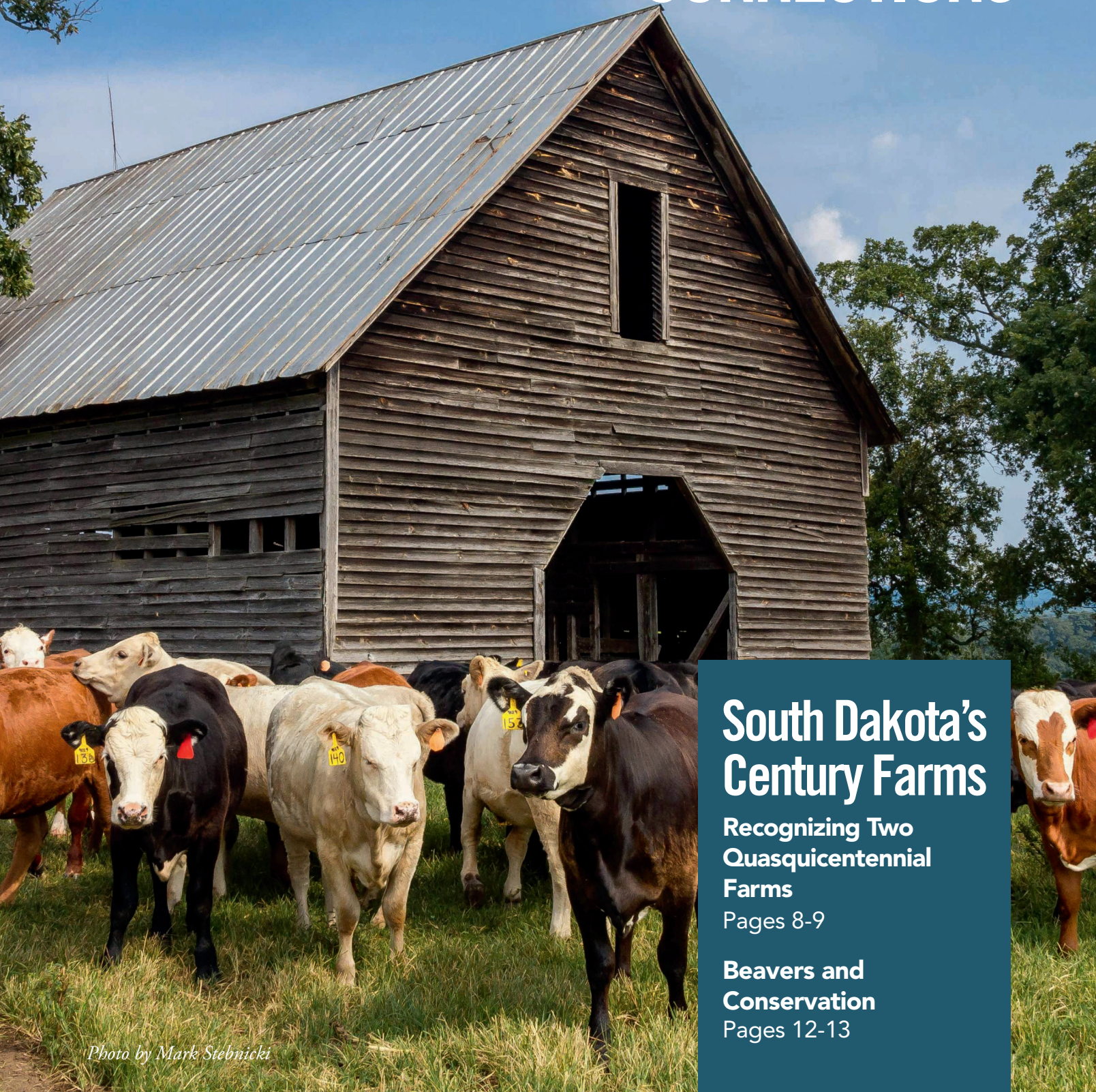




COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



South Dakota's Century Farms

Recognizing Two
Quasiquicentennial
Farms

Pages 8-9

Beavers and
Conservation

Pages 12-13

Photo by Mark Stebnicki

Members: Join us June 11 for the 77th Annual Meeting



Char Hager
General Manager

On behalf of the board of directors and employees, we invite you to the 77th Annual Meeting of Northern Electric Cooperative. The membership meeting will be held on June 11, 2024, at the Odde Ice Center on the Brown County Fairgrounds in Aberdeen. Registration will start at 4:00 p.m., with the business meeting beginning at 6:00 p.m.

Electric Cooperatives operate under a unique model that distinguishes us from investor-owned utilities or other corporations. YOU, our member-owners, decide the direction of YOUR Cooperative.

The annual meeting is not just a report session, but a platform for you to engage with your Cooperative. It's your chance to listen to reports from the board and staff about the operation of your cooperative, and more importantly, to meet with your District Representative and the employees. This is your opportunity to ask questions, share your thoughts, and understand how your co-op functions.

The Northern Electric Board has three seats up for election: Mike Traxinger (District 1), Ron Kaaz (District 3), and Fran Esser (District 8). Neither Kaaz nor Esser submitted petitions to continue their terms. Mike Traxinger (District 1), Bruce Schumacher Jr. (District 3), and Thomas Lambert (District 8) submitted petitions for open board seats by the April 26 deadline. Since all candidates are running unopposed, no election will be held during this year's Annual Meeting.

A variety of activities for the family, as well as snacks, will be available at the Annual Meeting. Safety demonstrations will be performed with our high-voltage trailer and our Neon Leon Power Town display. Additional activities offered include bucket truck rides, trying on

lineman safety gear, and more for the kids. Back by popular demand are meal vouchers to be used at participating restaurants. In lieu of a meal, one \$35 meal voucher will be issued to each registered membership, available for pick up only at the Annual Meeting during registration. We've partnered with local restaurants from throughout our service territory, and we encourage you to use these vouchers to support them. Your support benefits our community and strengthens our Cooperative's ties with local businesses.

"The annual meeting is not just a report session, but a platform for you to engage with your Cooperative. It's your chance to listen to reports from the board and staff about the operation of your cooperative, and more importantly, to meet with your District Representative and the employees."

This issue of *Cooperative Connections* includes the 2023 Annual Report to update readers on the co-op's activities over the past year and financial status.

We hope you can join us at the Annual Meeting. If you are unable to attend the Annual Membership Meeting that evening, we encourage members to come during registration to visit with staff and board members, pick up a meal voucher and gift, register for door prizes, and enjoy activities.

We look forward to seeing you on June 11!

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.

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

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www.northernelectric.coop



**Northern Electric
Cooperative**
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Northern Electric Cooperative's regular board meeting was held April 26, 2024, at the headquarters in Bath with all directors present except for Nolan Wipf. As the first order of business, the board approved the March 21, 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 the April 4, 2024, meeting. No South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) report was given. The next SDREA Board Meeting will be held June 27 & 28, 2024.

Director Todd Hettich and General Manager Char Hager reported on the NRECA Legislative Conference, which was held April 21-24, 2024, in Washington, D.C. Director Hettich also reported on director course 973.1 which he attended on April 21, 2024 in Washington, D.C.

MANAGER'S REPORT

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

- Update on the Rural Electric Development (REED) Board Meeting held on April 2, 2024.
- Report on the East River MAC Meeting held on April 2, 2024.
- Report on the SDREA regional training held at Northern Electric on April 3 & 5, 2024.

- Report on the Lamont-Rhodes 2024 Lecture Series held on April 9, 2024
- Informed the board of the Grow Spink update visit with Executive Director Gianna Schieffer on April 15, 2024.

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 May 23, 2024
- Approved Work Order Inventories #24-03 for \$802,623.36 to be submitted to the RUS for reimbursement from loan funds for electric plant construction already completed.
- Approved the 2023 Audit Report presented by Audit Manager Parker Van Zee of Eide Bailly, LLP.
- Approved allocating \$2,351,956.81 of NEC's 2023 margins to member patronage capital credit accounts.
- The board approved a resolution to write off 18 uncollectable accounts in the amount of \$4,851.79.
- The board approved the 2024 rate tariffs as presented.
- Held executive session.

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

FINANCIAL REPORT

	March-24	March-23
kWh Sales	27,732,053 kWh	30,081,408 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$2,520,625	\$2,485,415
Total Cost of Service	\$2,635,727	\$2,493,707
Operating Margins	-\$115,103	-\$8,292
Year to Date Margins	-\$91,717	\$275,777

RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE MONTHLY USAGE AND BILL

MARCH 2024	2,492 kWh	\$238.35	0.0956 per kWh
MARCH 2023	3,245 kWh	\$272.43	0.0840 per kWh

Wholesale power cost, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for 82.1% of NEC's total cost of service.

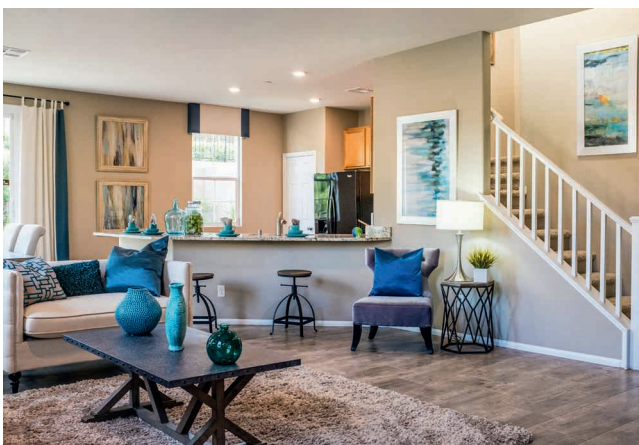
Prepare Your Family for Fire Emergencies

In only a matter of minutes, a small house fire can rage out of control, reaching temperatures of up to 1,500°F. In most cases, you have one to two minutes to get out safely.

We practice fire emergency drills at work and school, but don't forget to create and practice a home escape plan, as well. It is beneficial to keep your plan visible, like on the refrigerator, to help family and visitors remember what to do. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) stresses that even children as young as three years old can understand an escape plan.

Helpful Planning Tips:

- Plan for two ways to escape from each room.
- Pick a meeting location away from your home.
- Plan for everyone in your home, including babies and others who may need help to escape.
- Teach children not to hide during a fire; they must get out and stay out.



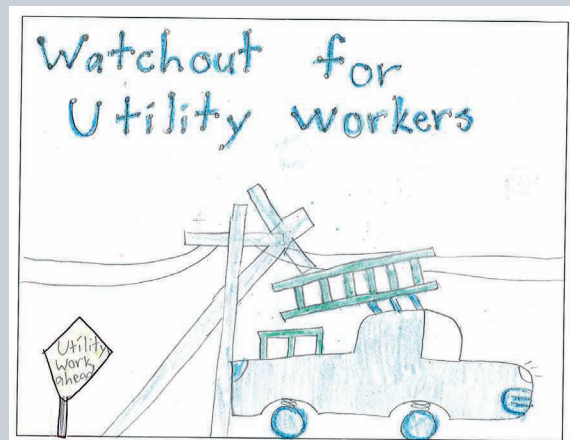
- Practice your escape drill with everyone in your family at least twice a year.

Ways to Stay Safe:

- Clear toys, furniture and other clutter from exits.
- Check that windows open easily – fix any that stick.
- Test the batteries in your smoke alarms monthly.
- Be sure that security bars on doors and windows have a quick-release latch, and everyone knows how to open them.

Special Considerations for Apartment Buildings:

- If you live in a multi-story apartment building, map out as many escape routes as possible to get to the stairways on your floor.
- If you live in a high-rise, plan to use the stairs – never the elevator – to escape a fire.
- A secondary route might be a window onto an adjacent roof or a collapsible ladder for escape from upper-story windows – purchase only collapsible ladders evaluated by a nationally recognized laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratory (UL).



Stay Away from Power Lines

Reese Rindels, Age 9

Reese Rindels cautions readers to watch out for utility workers. Reese's parents are Rochelle and Kyle 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 *Dairy*

CHOCOLATE FUDGE FROSTING

Ingredients:

2 1/4 cups confectioners' sugar
1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1/4 tsp. cinnamon
6 oz. (3/4 package) cream cheese, softened
3/4 cup (1 1/2 sticks) butter, softened
8 oz. semi-sweet chocolate, melted and cooled slightly
1 tbsp. pure vanilla extract

Method

Mix sugar, cocoa powder and cinnamon in medium bowl until well blended. Set aside. Beat cream cheese and butter in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until smooth. Gradually beat in cocoa mixture on low speed until well blended. Gradually beat in melted chocolate then vanilla until well blended.

McCormick.com

RED VELVET HOT CHOCOLATE

Ingredients:

4 cups whole milk
1/4 cup sugar
10 oz. semi-sweet baking chocolate, coarsely chopped
2 tsps. red food color
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
Vanilla Whipped Cream
1/2 cup heavy cream
2 tbsps. confectioners' sugar
1/2 tsp. pure vanilla extract

Method

Place milk and granulated sugar in medium saucepan. While stirring, bring to simmer on medium heat. Remove from heat. Stir in chocolate with wire whisk until melted. Stir in food color and vanilla. Serve with marshmallows. For the vanilla whipped cream, beat heavy cream, confectioners' sugar and vanilla in medium bowl with electric mixer on high speed until stiff peaks form.

McCormick.com

LEMON PUDDING DESSERT

Ingredients:

1 cup COLD butter
1 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
1 8 oz. tub cool whip, divided
2 pkgs. (small) instant lemon pudding
2 cups flour
1 cup powdered sugar
3 cups COLD milk

Method

In bowl, cut butter into flour until crumbly. Press into an ungreased 9 x 13 inch glass pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 18 to 22 minutes or until set. Cool on wire rack. In mixing bowl, beat cream cheese and powdered sugar until smooth. Fold in one cup cool whip. Spread over cooled crust. In bowl, beat milk and pudding mixes on low speed for 2 minutes. Carefully spread over cream cheese layer. Top with remaining cool whip. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour or more. Yields 12 to 16 servings.

Mary Jessen
Holabird, S.D.

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.

MINUTES OF 2023 NORTHERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Annual Meeting

Pursuant to the notice to all members, the 76th Annual Meeting of the membership of Northern Electric Cooperative, Inc., was held at the Brown County Fairgrounds, Aberdeen, SD, on the 19th day of September 2023, at 6:30 p.m. Registration from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

General Manager Char Hager welcomed the members to the 2023 annual meeting of Northern Electric Cooperative. Hager thanked the members for attending the meeting and for their dedication and commitment to the cooperative.

General Manager Char Hager thanked East River Electric Power Cooperative Marketing Coordinator Erica Fitzhugh for providing the audio equipment for the meeting. Hager announced that in lieu of a meal each registered membership received a voucher for \$35 at registration. The vouchers allow the opportunity for multiple establishments within our service area to provide the annual meeting meals for our members.

General Manager Char Hager called the meeting to order. Following the National Anthem, and the invocation given by Director Ron Kaaz. Hager introduced directors, and officers of the board.

President Nolan Wipf declared a quorum was present, with the official registration being 198. Wipf gave a report on petitions for nominees and stated that petitions were received for the following Director candidates: District 4, Josh Larson, Columbia, District 6, Kirk Schaunaman, Aberdeen, and District 7, William (B.J.) Hansen, Turton.

President Nolan Wipf called for the Secretary's report. Upon motion,

the reading of the minutes of the September 13, 2022, Annual Meeting was waived and the minutes, as previously mailed to all the members prior to this meeting, were approved as printed and mailed.

President Nolan Wipf called for the Treasurer's report. Wipf stated that the financial statements printed in the annual report represented an accurate reflection of the audited financial status of the Cooperative, as of December 31, 2022. The treasurer's report was approved as presented.

President Wipf called for any unfinished or old business. There was none.

General Manager Hager thanked all members who participated in the election of the restated and amended bylaws proposal. The cooperative's bylaws had last been amended by the membership in 2012 and had not been thoroughly reviewed since the merger in 1997. The membership overwhelmingly approved the restated and amended bylaws via mail voting in April 2023.

President Wipf reported that in 2022, Northern Electric crews buried 47.5 miles of new underground line and built more than 24 miles of new overhead line. Wipf stated that the cooperative returned \$863,000 to the members in capital credit retirements.

President Wipf shared concerns regarding the suggested proposals by the EPA and the impacts they could have on reliability if coal is not available in our generation mix. Northern Electric, East River Electric and Basin Electric support an "All of the Above" generation mix which includes coal as well as renewables.

President Wipf welcomed East River Chief Member and Public

Relations Officer, Chris Studer to give an East River Electric update and share the importance of an "All of the Above" generation mix.

General Manager Hager gave an update on the impacts of the November 2022 ice storm and the related issues. She also discussed supply chain issues and the inflationary impact on the cost of materials. Hager gave examples of two items and the cost increases for each between 2018 and 2023. Poles increased by 227% and transformers by 173% during that time period.

President Wipf stated that the stable rates in 2023 were largely due to power bill credits Northern Electric received from East River and Basin Electric in 2022. Wipf informed members that we would be evaluating the need for a rate increase for 2024.

General Manager Hager informed the membership that Northern Electric was working with an engineering firm to develop the next four-year work plan and long-range plan. These plans serve as guides for the operations department as they plan future projects that will improve the reliability and safety of the co-op's distribution infrastructure. The new workplan includes the replacement of 221 miles of old infrastructure.

President Wipf informed the membership of the deteriorating condition of the office building in Bath. The building has served the cooperative since 1967. He stated that the board is in the process of working with an architecture firm to determine the feasibility of remaining in the existing facility, remodeling the facility or demolishing and rebuilding at the same location.

President Nolan Wipf stated to the members that they can refer to the

Annual Report distributed at registration for a full recap of the activity at the co-op over the past year.

General Manager Hager thanked the Board of Directors and all the employees of Northern Electric Cooperative for all the progress that has been made to move the cooperative forward.

Four Northern Electric employees celebrating milestone anniversaries with the co-op were recognized for their years of service. Jerry Weber, Operations Manager, 40 years, Benji Grajczyk, Network Systems Technician, 10 years, Brandon Flack, Member Services Representative, 10 years and Steven Beck, Journeyman Lineman, 10 years.

New employees who joined the cooperative within the past year were also recognized. Quinn Vinger, Apprentice Lineman, Kelly Brandlee, Communications Director, and Amy Golden, Executive Secretary.

President Wipf called for any new business. Wipf moved forward with the meeting to take action on the election of directors. Attorney Harvey Oliver explained the voting rules and procedures of the election of directors and explained that the candidates for District 4, 6 and 7 being unopposed, the chair declared the nominees as elected by general consent.

Wipf called for any other business to come before the meeting, there being none, he declared the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m. and thanked all for attending.



Powering Possibilities



Northern Electric Cooperative
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

2024 Annual Meeting
Tuesday, June 11
Brown County Fairgrounds
Odde Ice Center
4:00PM - 6:00PM - Activities
6:00PM - Business Meeting



South Dakota's Century Farms

Shannon Marvel

shannon.marvel@sdrea.coop

Soukup Homestead: Raising families and farmers for over 125 years

Nestled in the heart of southcentral South Dakota lies a cherished piece of land with a name that's been long-established in Charles Mix County – the Soukup Homestead.

Almost anyone with Wagner ties knows a Soukup.

There are even a few members of the Soukup family who are also part of South Dakota's rural electric cooperative family, including Charles Mix Electric District 1 Director Denise Soukup.

But it all had to start somewhere, and good things take time.

That was the case for the Soukup's Century Farm and the Gronseth/Fiegel/Nelson/Evans homestead, a farm located near Britton that's served by Lake Region Electric.

Really, it's a common theme for Century Farm families to be located within rural electric cooperative service areas.

The South Dakota Farm Bureau and the South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources began the Century Farm Program in 1984 to recognize farm and ranch families who have kept the farm in the family for 100 years or more.

Farms reaching the milestone of 125 years, known as

Quasquicentennial Farms, and the venerable Sesquicentennial Farms, marking an impressive 150 years, are also given their due recognition.

With over 3,000 families honored to date, the program continues to shine a light on the enduring legacy of South Dakota's agricultural heritage. To qualify for these prestigious honors, farms must encompass at least 80 acres and provide documented proof of their original purchase date. That means a family member must have always had ownership of the land over the last 100 years, including during the Great Depression and Dust Bowl.

The annual award presentation is a cherished tradition held at the South Dakota State Fair.

After migrating with family from what is now known today as the Czech Republic in the late 1800s, Joseph and Mary Soukup



Tom Soukup stands beside his Farmall Red International Harvester 460 tractor. *Photo courtesy of Linda Soukup*

came to the Dakota Territory at a time when most of the land open for settlement had already been settled.

While living in Tabor with family, Joseph Soukup applied for a homestead on reservation land that was now open for settlement at the U.S. Land Office in town of Mitchell on Jan. 30, 1896.

"In the following five years he built a frame house 13 feet by 18 feet in order to establish a residence, then a grainery, a corn crib, and he also fenced in 80 acres," said Linda Soukup, the wife of Tom Soukup. Her husband is Joseph and Mary's grandson.

Joseph and Mary raised ten children on the very homestead that Tom and Linda raised their kids.

"There's a lot of pride in the heritage and the legacy of, you know, having it passed down," Linda said. A new house was built on the site of Joseph and Mary's original home's structure in 1952.

That's where Tom and Linda lived and became the third generation to live on the homestead.

"When we lived here and Tom's parents and their brothers and sisters used to all come here," Linda said, as she started walking towards one of the farm buildings on the property referred to as "the shed."

"And they would butcher hogs and cattle and we would process them down there. We had a meat cooler in the basement. And then one of the families owned the meat saw and one owned the sausage stuffer," she recalled. "That was always kind of what we did until, well, families got bigger, and you couldn't. You just couldn't keep up, you know? We could have had a critter in there all the time," she said.

Tom and Linda raised their children – Becky, David, Kathy and Mary – in the house as well.

Their son David works as a project engineer for Phillips Petroleum in Texas. Two of their daughters live in different towns but remain relatively close to the homestead.

Kathy Jaeger lives in Tyndall and Mary Ringling lives in Platte. In 1996, their daughter Becky and her husband, Mike

Brunsing were living in Montana when Tom and Linda decided to move into town, so in 1998 the Brunsings moved back to South Dakota and began helping Tom on the farm while living in the house.

Becky raised three children of her own in the house she grew up in herself.

Becky and Mike still live on the homestead but in a more recently built home.

Now her son Dylan, 28, is raising his own family in the 1952 farmhouse.

In doing so, he became the fifth generation on the homestead.

Dylan and his wife, Keely, have two sons – a 20-month-old and an infant born in late March.

After 126 years, Torger Gronseth's homestead continues to bring family together.

It's hard for Carol Evans to put into words how she feels when she reflects on the 126 years of history of her family's farm in Marshall County.

"It's so important to us," Evans said. Then she takes pause.

"I'm sorry, it's emotional for me," she says, before telling her family's – and the farm's – origin story.

In 1872, her great grandfather, Torger Gronseth, immigrated to America from Norway at only 14 years old.

He made the trip to join his eldest brother in Minnesota. He officially "staked his claim" and homesteaded in the Pleasant Valley Township of Marshall County in 1901.

Over the next two decades, Torger and his wife, Berthe Lea, amassed over 960 acres of undeveloped land in the Coteau de Prairie of northeastern South Dakota.

To each of their six children, Torger bequeathed a quarter of land.

The pioneering couple sold a quarter to their daughter, Louise, upon her marriage to George Fiegel for \$1.

While they were building the house that Carol and Frank Evans now call home, the Fiegels welcomed their first child.

"All of them were born in that house built in 1920. The first born was born on

the actual homestead. The house was being built when my first aunt was born," Evans said.

Louise and George owned the house and quarter of land until 1972, at which point ownership was passed onto their daughter Joyce and her husband Orvin Nelson.

"We bought the house in 2011. Last year after my mom passed, we were able to buy the entire quarter," she recalled.

Carol and Frank then got to work refurbishing the 800-square-foot house.

The Evans live in Arizona in the fall, winter, and spring months, but spent years renovating the farmhouse over the course of several summers.

"We go back in May every year, and we've renovated the house from the chimney to the basement," Evans said.

Their summer stay at the farm begins with the help of Lake Region Electric Association.

"The first thing we do when we get there is turn the power on. Then we turn the water on and then we mow," she said.

The week over the Fourth of July holiday is especially meaningful to Carol. That's when her grandchildren make their pilgrimage back to the Gronseth/Fiegel/Nelson/Evans homestead.

"They're always here around Fort Sisseton Days," Evans said.

The traditional agenda for the kiddos also includes picnics at Roy Lake, routine farm work, and touching up the paint on an American Flag pallet display located at the base of Torger Gronseth's tombstone.

"Every one of the kids has learned how to drive when they're back in South Dakota – because it's safe," Evans said.

Evans ensures the next generation knows their family history.

"They know their great grandpa was only 14 years old when he left Norway. The strength of the person to do that – the longevity of our genetic background, the struggle, and the fact that we're so fortunate – are something they'll understand," Evans said.

"And that it's home. It's never going to the farm. It's going home."

Lambert and Schumacher Submit Petitions for Northern Electric Board

Kelly Brandlee

kbrandlee@northernelectric.coop

Bruce Schumacher graduated from Groton High School and Northern State University (NSU). He spent 17 years at 3M before returning to his alma mater, Northern State University, as a carpenter. Schumacher currently serves on the Lincoln Township Board and volunteers for the Aberdeen Rural Fire Department.

“We live in an exciting time with rapidly growing technological advancements. I am excited to help our customers expand their operations while seeking opportunities to grow our Northern Electric portfolio,” Schumacher said. “I know several of the current board members and am looking forward to working with a really good group of people.”

When asked why he would like to serve on the Northern Electric Board, Schumacher stated, “I have always been curious about what goes into making decisions for the coop and our electricity. I also want to learn how our entire structure functions between Touchstone Energy, Northern Electric, East River Electric, and Basin Electric. I look forward to learning about it all.”



**Bruce Schumacher Jr.,
Aberdeen, SD**



**Thomas Lambert,
Redfield, SD**

Schumacher and his wife, Deanna, live in Aberdeen and have two children, John, and Isabelle.

Thomas Lambert is a fourth-generation farmer raising corn, soybeans, and wheat. Lambert is active in his community, serving on the Redfield School Board for 11 years while currently serving on his local township board. Previously, he has spent time on the Farm Service Agency (FSA) board.

As the District 8 representative, Lambert looks forward to being involved in Northern Electric Cooperative’s decision-making process and representing his district members.

“I have always been interested in electricity and how it gets from generation to the end user. I am also very interested in the cooperative structure and the great value cooperatives bring to the community,” says Lambert about his desire to serve as a Northern Electric Cooperative Director.

Lambert and his wife Carol live near Redfield and have four children Brady, Lauryn, Bridgette, and Libbie.

OFFICIAL NOTICE MEMBERS OF NORTHERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC

The Annual Meeting of the members of Northern Electric Cooperative, Inc. will be held at the Odde Ice Center at the Brown County Fairgrounds in Aberdeen, SD on the 11th day of June 2024, at 6:00 p.m. to take action on the following matters:

1. APPROVAL OF 2023 ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES
2. APPROVAL OF TREASURER’S REPORT
3. ELECTION AND SEATING OF DIRECTORS

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that although Directors for Districts 1, 3 and 8 will be elected by the membership at the meeting, paper ballots will not be needed. Michael E. Traxinger (District 1), Bruce Schumacher Jr. (District 3) and Thomas Lambert (District 8) submitted petitions for open board seats by the April 26 deadline. Traxinger, Schumacher, and Lambert are the only eligible candidates for their Districts. Since no other nominations can be submitted, the candidates will be automatically elected at the annual meeting.

2024 NORTHERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE BOARD OF DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

DISTRICT 1

Michael E. Traxinger
Claremont, SD

DISTRICT 3

Bruce Schumacher Jr.
Aberdeen, SD

DISTRICT 8

Thomas Lambert
Redfield, SD

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Secretary has posted such nominations in the principal office of the Cooperative.
Ronald Kaaz

May 20, 2024

People • Power • Purpose



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



Application Form

To apply for 2024 Youth Excursion, complete the form below and return it to: Northern Electric Cooperative
The deadline to apply is May 28, 2024. If you have any questions, please call the Northern Electric Office at
605-225-0310

2024 Youth Excursion Application

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____
School: _____ 2024-2025 Class/Year: _____
Gender: _____ T-shirt Size: _____

Return this information by May 28, 2024 to:

Northern Electric Cooperative, PO Box 457, Bath, SD 57427 or email kbrandlee@northernelectric.coop



REBUILDING HABITATS

Beavers provide many environmental benefits including drought resilience, flood control and wildlife habitat. *Photo Credit: Richard Hamilton Smith.*

BEAVER-INSPIRED STREAM RESTORATION

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Centuries ago, the arrival of European traders in North America marked the beginning of a multi-century hunt for furs. The pelt of the North American beaver was at the forefront of this fur trade, prized for its use in crafting felt hats. These stylish hats fueled an ever-increasing demand for beaver furs that persisted for centuries, leading to a severe decline in beaver populations. By the early 1900s, beavers had become critically endangered, nearly vanishing from the expansive wetlands across the continent.

As the beavers dwindled, so did their dams. Lazy streams and rivers, once

tamed by beaver dams, began to flow more rapidly. The disappearance of the dams caused waterways to narrow and floodplains essential to willow trees and cottonwoods to vanish. The loss of these beaver-engineered habitats set the stage for the significant erosion of precious prairie lands.

In 2020, The Nature Conservancy set out to combat these issues by launching a project in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, South Dakota State University and local conservation agencies to restore stream health in western South Dakota.

“Our West River streams make up a small percentage of the total landscape – just under two percent of our total acreage is stream and valley

bottom,” said Lori Brown, riparian health program manager with The Nature Conservancy. “Yet, nearly everything in the prairie depends on these streams, including us in our rural communities.”

Prior to launching the project, The Nature Conservancy engaged local landowners in discussions to best understand their challenges and needs. During the discussions, several landowners faced similar issues: streams were eroding the land, fence lines were being washed away, and the water table was too low. Despite having effective tools for managing grasslands, landowners lacked the means to best maintain healthy streams.

“We needed to explore options

that any landowner could implement – strategies that didn't require a hydrologist to implement or an engineer to design," Brown said. "Our ranchers and landowners are some of the best stewards of the land. A lot of them are hungry for information and tools that can help them help the land."

The solution was simple, inspired by the ingenious works of an aquatic rodent: an artificial beaver dam. After all, if a beaver can engineer a dam, why can't a landowner?

Known as beaver analog devices, these simple speedbump-like structures quickly became integral to a broader strategy known as process-based restoration, a method that uses nature to help nature. Composed of locally sourced sticks, rocks and mud, beaver analog devices replicate a key natural process once performed naturally by beavers centuries ago. When established correctly, they filter water,

slow fast-flowing streams, and even recreate floodplains.

After settling on a solution, The Nature Conservancy set out to implement the idea in the real world, working with 10 landowners to help build and record the effects of the simulated beaver dams.

"Every day that I go out to one of these sites and I see that the beaver dams that we have built aren't totally washed out, it absolutely amazes me," Brown said. "I've read the manuals and I know how it's supposed to work, but I'm always in awe at what we are able to accomplish with the right building blocks in place."

After four years of the project, Brown said there is a lot to be excited about as the benefits of the project are evident. Signs of stream restoration are well underway. Sediment is accumulating rather than eroding, and revitalized floodplains are sprouting new willow trees.

"Without any planting on our part, woody species are now returning to these stream channels," Brown said. "The next step will be to lean into the success of this project. We want to act as a support for our conservation partners and other interested landowners that want to see their stream condition improve on their properties."

Others have been inspired by demonstrations led by The Nature Conservancy and other conservation organizations in the state to take action to slow down and hold water.

"We are just starting to see some of the effects from our outreach and education side of this project," said Brown. "The most rewarding part of this effort has been hearing the stories from local ranchers and landowners and hearing them get excited about the project."



A rock structure installed to help prevent headcuts from eroding upstream reaches. *Photo Credit: Joe Dickie, Generation Photography, Inc.*



Reliable Energy is in Jeopardy

Steve Barnett

General Manager of the South Dakota Rural Electric Association, a statewide association that represents 31 member-owned electric cooperatives. He previously served as Secretary of State for South Dakota.



South Dakota's families and businesses rightfully expect their lights to stay on at a price they can afford. Our national energy policies should support our cooperative mission, which is to provide safe, reliable, and affordable electricity to our member-owners.

Unfortunately, our country is now confronted with a harsh reality – we are quickly approaching a point where there won't be enough electricity to go around.

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) is the nation's grid watchdog. For years, the organization has issued a string of increasingly dire reports warning that threats to grid reliability are mounting, and more frequent rolling blackouts could soon become the norm. NERC's recent assessment predicts more than 110 gigawatts of always-available generation, enough to power about 35 million homes, will retire through 2033.

And all or parts of 19 states are at high risk of rolling blackouts during normal peak conditions over the next five years.

Keeping the lights on is not a partisan issue. Yet, politics and energy policy have had an outsized impact on how we got here. The current state of our nation's energy policy related to electricity can be summed up simply: Do more with less.

That's just not sustainable. From data centers to EVs, from home heating and cooling to the way we run America's farms, our nation is increasingly reliant on electricity to power the economy. As technology and energy demands advance, a recipe for rolling brownouts and blackouts is brewing.

Opposite that increasing demand for electricity is an alarming reduction in supply as our country shutter's existing always-available power plants to comply with various federal and state regulations.

Jim Matheson

CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association that represents the nation's more than 900 not-for-profit, consumer owned electric cooperatives. He previously served seven terms as a U.S. representative for Utah.



South Dakota experiences extreme weather conditions throughout the year with temperatures rising above 100 degrees in the summer and falling far below zero in the winter. When the sun is not shining and the wind is not blowing, renewable energy sources do not fit the bill for reliability. We simply cannot fully retire power plants that still have a useful life ahead of them.

The final challenge to meeting our nation's energy needs is the arcane set of rules and regulations required to build anything in this country. The process for siting, permitting and building infrastructure – everything from solar farms, to pipelines to transmission lines – is mired in red tape and years of litigation.

These trends are not going to get any better in the coming years.

On April 25, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) finalized four new rules to regulate power plants. The path outlined by the EPA is unrealistic, unachievable, and unlawful – exceeding the EPA's authority and disregarding Supreme Court rulings. It undermines electric reliability and poses grave consequences for an already stressed electric grid.

The American economy can't succeed without reliable electricity. Smart energy policy recognizes this fundamental truth, while keeping the lights on. This barrage of new EPA rules ignores our nation's ongoing electric reliability challenges and is the wrong approach at a critical time for our nation's energy future.

EPA finalized its rule against a backdrop of daunting threats to reliability as electricity demand surges and supply decreases. This will lead directly to more blackouts, higher costs, and uncertainty for America. That's a dangerous approach to regulation.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association filed a lawsuit with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit challenging the EPA over its unlawful power plant rule on May 9. This suit points out that the rule goes far beyond what Congress has authorized the agency to do, violates the Clean Air Act and disregards recent Supreme Court rulings. The rule hinges on the widespread adoption of carbon capture and storage – a promising technology that is simply not ready for prime time.

South Dakota's Attorney General is also one of several dozen that have filed suit against the EPA for similar reasons.

Policymakers cannot overlook the laws of physics or the reality of the current situation. Adding more renewable resources to the nation's energy portfolio can be part of the solution; however, since the wind doesn't always blow and the sun doesn't always shine, our country also needs a robust supply of readily available energy resources to call on at a moment's notice.

Any long-term solution requires policymakers to recognize the need for time, technology development and new transmission infrastructure. These are essential ingredients for an energy future that prioritizes reliable electricity for all consumers.

Electricity powers industries, businesses, and technology. It fosters economic development vital for medical facilities, ensuring the functioning of life-saving equipment. Reliable power is essential for emergency services, law enforcement, and disaster response efforts. It also fuels innovation by supporting research, development, and deployment of new technologies.

Keeping the lights on is vital to South Dakota's economy. The stakes are too high to get this wrong.



JUNE 12-JULY 20, 2024
Prairie Repertory Theatre
Summer Season
 Oscar Larson Performing
 Arts Center
 Brookings, SD
 605-688-6045



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.

MAY 27
Memorial Day Services
 12 p.m.
 Groton Union Cemetary with
 lunch at Legion Post #39I
 Groton, SD

MAY 31-JUNE 2
Lake Andes Fish Days
 Citywide
 Lake Andes, SD

MAY 31-JUNE 2
Fort Sisseton Historical Festival
 11907 434th Ave.
 Lake City, SD
 605-910-4465

JUNE 1
LaFramboise Island Bike Race
 10:30 a.m.
 S. Poplar Ave.
 Pierre, SD
 605-222-0338

JUNE 1
Annual Casey Tibbs Match of Champions
 Stanley County Fairgrounds
 Fort Pierre, SD
 605-494-1094

JUNE 1-2
We Love Locals Weekend
 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
 Keystone, SD

JUNE 1-SEPT.28
Malchow Plaza Farmers Market
 Saturdays, 8:30 a.m.-12 p.m.
 Main Street
 Aberdeen, SD

JUNE 1
Blessed Sacrament Pastorate-Wide Celebration
 3:30 p.m.
 Aberdeen Civic Center
 Aberdeen, SD
 605-216-2081

JUNE 8
Grace's Gas-Guzzlers Car Show, Carnival & Silent Auction
 Grace Lutheran Church
 Watertown, SD

JUNE 9
Brookings Car Show
 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Pioneer Park
 Brookings, SD

JUNE 12-13
Rangeland & Soil Days Contest
 Codington County Extension Building
 Watertown, SD

JUNE 20
Prairie Partners Master Gardeners Garden Walk
 Aberdeen, SD

JULY 13
9th Annual Auto Value Car Show
 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Hav-A-Rest Campground
 Redfield, SD

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

JULY 20
21st Annual "On the Road to Wishes" Poker Run for Make a Wish
 10:30 a.m.
 Bieglers Motors/CNS Motor Sports
 Aberdeen, SD

JULY 25
Groton Summer Downtown Sip & Shop
 5-8 p.m.
 Groton, SD

AUG. 22-24
Delta Kappa Gama Used Book Sale
 Wylie Park Pavillion
 Aberdeen, SD
 605-225-6713

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

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