

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Kuchen Country

**German Delicacy
Celebrates 25 Years as
South Dakota's Official
Dessert**

Pages 8-9

Swimming Safely
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COOPERATIVES PARTNERS IN PROGRESS

Northern Electric Cooperative 78th Annual Meeting June 16, 2025

Two Meeting Locations Available:

**Holum Expo Building
Brown County
Fairgrounds
Aberdeen, SD**

**Northern Electric
Service Center
17140 N Hwy 281
Redfield, SD**

Registration and Voting – 4:00-6:00 PM

Business Meeting – 6:00 PM

Activities for the whole family – 4:00-6:00 PM

No meal will be served, each registered membership will receive a meal voucher.

Complete Annual Report in this Cooperative Connections Magazine.

OFFICIAL NOTICE

Annual Meeting of the Members of Northern Electric Cooperative, Inc.

The 78th Annual Meeting of the Members of Northern Electric Cooperative, Inc., will be held at the Holum Expo Building on the Brown County Fairgrounds, Aberdeen, State of South Dakota and at the Northern Electric Service Center, 17140 N. US Highway 281, Redfield, State of South Dakota on the 16th day of June 2025, at 6:00 pm to take action on the following matters:

1. Approval 2024 Annual Meeting Minutes
2. Approval of Treasurer's Report
3. Reports of Officers and Committees
4. Election and Seating of Directors
5. Balloting for Proposed Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws Amendments
6. Discuss and Act Upon Any Other Business

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that although Directors for Districts 2, 5 and 9 will be elected by the membership at the meeting, paper ballots will not be needed. Todd M. Hettich (District 2), Scott Sperry (District 5) and Nolan Wipf (District 9) submitted petitions for open board seats by the May 2 deadline. Each of the eligible candidates is running unopposed. Since no further nominations can be submitted as the deadline for submissions has passed, the candidates will be automatically elected at the annual meeting.

Ballots will be cast by the membership at the meeting for the proposed changes to the Northern Electric Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. Voting will begin at 4:00 pm and end at 6:00 pm.

2025 Northern Electric Cooperative Board of Director Candidates

DISTRICT 2
Todd M. Hettich
Mina, SD

DISTRICT 5
Scott Sperry
Bath, SD

DISTRICT 9
Nolan Wipf
Hitchcock, SD

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

Scott Sperry
Scott Sperry, Secretary

May 23, 2025
Date

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

NORTHERN ELECTRIC

(USPS 396-040)

Board President: Nolan Wipf

Board of Directors

Todd Hettich - Vice President
Scott Sperry - Secretary
Josh Larson - Treasurer
Thomas Lambert
B.J. Hansen
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



APRIL BOARD REPORT

Northern Electric Cooperative's regular board meeting was held April 25, 2025, at the headquarters in Bath with all directors present. As the first order of business, the board approved March 28, 2025, minutes, & March expenditures. The board then reviewed & accepted monthly reports by management.

East River Director Kirk Schaunaman reported on actions taken by the East River Board at the April 3, 2025, meeting. The next SDREA Board Meeting will be held June 26-27, 2025. Director William (B.J.) Hansen reported that the South Dakota Renewable Energy Association annual meeting will be held on June 20 in Rapid City, S.D. Director Todd Hettich gave an update on RESCO activities. Hettich also gave an update on building committee activities.

Directors Kirk Schaunaman, Scott Sperry, Thomas Lambert, Bruce Schumacher, General Manager Char Hager, CFO Lorisa Rudolph, and Manager of Information Technology Derek Gorecki reported on the Lamont Rhodes Lecture Series which was held on April 8 at Northern State University.

MANAGER'S REPORT

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

- Update on Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) Board Meeting held on April 1, 2025, via Teams.
- Report on the East River MAC

Meeting held on April 1, 2025, via Teams.

- Report on the employee meeting held on April 2, 2025.

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 22, 2025.
- Approved Work Order Inventory #25-03 for \$66,916.73 to be submitted to the RUS for reimbursement from loan funds for electric plant construction already completed.
- Approved the 2024 Audit Report presented by Derrick Larson, Partner of Eide Bailly, LLP.
- Approved allocating \$1,938,711.54 of NEC's 2024 margins to member patronage capital credit accounts.
- The board approved a resolution to write off 16 uncollectable accounts in the amount of \$5,391.89.
- Appointed Char Hager as the alternate delegate for the election of NRECA Director for South Dakota.
- Held executive session.

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

FINANCIAL REPORT

	MARCH-25	MARCH-24
kWh Sales	24,721,352	27,732,053
Electric Revenues	\$2,524,536	\$2,520,625
Total Cost of Service	\$2,470,230	\$2,635,727
Operating Margins.....	\$54,305	(\$115,103)
Year to Date Margins	\$186,480	(\$91,717)

RESIDENTIAL AVERAGE MONTHLY USAGE AND BILL

MARCH 2025.....	2,137 kWh.....	\$235.53	\$0.1102 per kWh
MARCH 2024.....	2,492 kWh.....	\$238.35	\$0.0956 per kWh

Wholesale power cost, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for 82.8% of NEC's total cost of service.

Summer Safety

Mosquitoes and Ticks

Source: American Red Cross

Don't let mosquitoes and ticks ruin your carefree summer fun. As we spend more time outdoors for activities like camping, hiking, swimming, picnicking and barbecuing, there is a greater chance of getting bitten by mosquitoes and ticks. According to the American Mosquito Control Association there are 176 known species of mosquito in the U.S. – putting Americans at risk from coast to coast. And while mosquitoes may be the most obvious detractor from summer fun – ticks are silent but dangerous. Most active during warmer months (April to September), it is especially important to be vigilant of blacklegged ticks, more commonly known as deer ticks, especially if you live in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, North-central or Northwest.

Mosquitoes and ticks are more than just itchy and annoying – if infected, these pests can pose a major health risk to people by possibly transmitting diseases. Follow these tips to prevent mosquito and tick bites this summer:

- Use insect repellents containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) when you are outdoors. Be sure to follow the directions on the package.
- Consider staying indoors at dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants and tuck your pant legs into your socks or boots.



Photo by Jimmy Chan

- Use a rubber band or tape to hold pants against socks so that nothing can get under clothing.
- Tuck your shirt into your pants. Wear light-colored clothing to make it easier to see tiny insects or ticks.
- When hiking in woods and fields, stay in the middle of trails. Avoid underbrush and tall grass.
- If you are outdoors for a long time, check yourself several times during the day. Especially check in hairy areas of the body like the back of the neck and the scalp line.
- Inspect yourself carefully for insects or ticks after being outdoors or have someone else do it.
- If you have pets that go outdoors, spray with repellent made for their breed/type. Apply the repellent according to the label and check your pet for ticks often.
- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying sources of standing water outside of the home, such as from flowerpots, buckets and barrels.



"Never Touch a Power Line!!"

Kashton Schecher, Age 7

Kashton cautions readers not to touch power lines. Thank you for your picture, Kashton! Kashton's parents are Brad and Brooke Schecher from Bison, S.D.

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.

SOUPS & SALADS

GERMAN KRAUT SOUP

Ingredients:

2 pork steaks
Water
1 diced onion
3 stalks celery
1 large carrot
Butter
6 diced potatoes
1 qt. sauerkraut
3 cups heavy cream
Salt and pepper (to taste)

Method

Gently simmer pork steaks in about three cups of water until done. (You can substitute other meat you have on hand – left over roasts or Polish sausage is nice). Dice meat. Sauté onion, celery and carrots in butter. In a Crock-Pot, add four cups of water, potatoes, sautéed veggies, diced meat and sauerkraut. Cook on low four to six hours until potatoes are tender. Add cream, salt and pepper. Transfer to a serving dish to share and enjoy!

Kari Bevers
Cotington-Clark Electric Member

BLACK BEAN SALAD

Ingredients:

3 tbsps. lemon juice
1 clove garlic (minced)
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
3/4 tsp. ground cumin
2 tbsps. olive oil
(2)15 oz. cans black beans (drained and rinsed)
1 pt. cherry tomatoes (halved)
4 scallions or green onions
1 yellow or green bell pepper (cut into thin strips)
3 tbsps. fresh cilantro or parsley (chopped)

Method

In a small bowl, stir together lemon juice, garlic, salt, pepper and cumin until salt is dissolved. Slowly whisk in oil until dressing mixture thickens. In a large bowl combine beans, tomatoes, scallions or onions, peppers and cilantro or parsley. Toss with dressing to coat. Let stand at least 15 minutes before serving. *Makes 6 servings.

Reta Eidem
Clay-Union Electric Member

LASAGNA SOUP

Ingredients:

1 lb. lean ground beef
1 cup chopped onion
1 can (28 oz.) petite diced tomatoes, undrained
1 can (15 oz.) tomato sauce
2 tbsp. garlic, herb and black pepper and sea salt all purpose seasoning
1 container (32 oz.) chicken stock, (4 cups)
8 oz. (about 10) lasagna noodles, broken into small pieces

Method

Brown ground beef in large saucepan on medium heat. Drain fat. Add onion; cook and stir 2 to 3 minutes or until softened.

Stir in tomatoes, tomato sauce, Seasoning and stock. Bring to boil. Add lasagna noodle pieces; cook 6 to 7 minutes or until noodles are tender.

Ladle soup into serving bowls. Serve with dollops of ricotta cheese and sprinkle with shredded mozzarella cheese, 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 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

2024 President and General Manager Report



NOLAN WIPF
PRESIDENT

This year's annual meeting theme, "Cooperatives – Partners in Progress" started early in the history of Northern Electric. In 1949 Northern teamed up with neighboring cooperatives across the region to form East River Electric Power Cooperative to provide the transmission and substation services for rural cooperatives. This cooperative partnership is still going strong today.

As we reflect on 2024 and the progress at Northern Electric, three big organizational wide developments come to mind. These include the exploration of director districts, the aging condition of our headquarters and the assessment of a rate study.

As you may recall from the prior annual meeting, the Northern Electric Cooperative Board of Directors has been exploring the makeup of our director districts. The policy committee and board of directors met throughout 2024 to discuss several different ideas to make representation more equitable, including: 1) redistricting the current director districts; 2) changing the number of districts from nine districts (one director per district) to three districts (three directors per district); or 3) reducing the number of directors and redistricting the director districts. Northern Electric's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws currently require nine directors and nine districts, meaning that options two and three above are not possible without an amendment to the articles of incorporation and bylaws. The policy committee preferred alternative options, but those options would require the members approving an amendment to the articles of incorporation and bylaws. For these reasons, the Northern Electric Cooperative Board of Directors has placed an amendment on the ballot at the upcoming 2025 annual member meeting that, if approved, would authorize the board to consider options two and three above, as well as other options. The proposed amendment would authorize the Northern Electric Cooperative Board of Directors to set the number of directors and districts in board policy, provided that the number of directors shall not be fewer than five directors and no more than nine directors.

Also reported on at last year's annual meeting was the aging condition of our headquarters building. The building committee consisting of both board members and

staff was tasked with addressing the building issues and offering a long-term solution that meets the cooperative's needs well into the future. Great progress has been made in the last year, and an update will be provided at the 2025 Annual Meeting.

As a cooperative we always strive to provide electricity at the most affordable rates possible. However, after holding rates steady for six years, the Northern Electric Board of Directors approved a rate increase effective June 1, 2024. The increase was due to significant cost increases for materials and equipment as well as major delays in their delivery due to supply chain issues. Increased interest rates and wholesale power costs also contributed to the need for a rate change. An interim rate increase was put in place from January 1, 2024, through May 31, 2024, while the study was being completed by Power System Engineering (PSE) with assistance from our Member Services and Accounting & Billing Department. While our goal is always to hold rates steady, we cannot guarantee the timing of additional future rate adjustments due to the current economic conditions.

As an electric cooperative we are in a season of constant dynamic industry changes. One thing that remains constant is our team of dedicated employees. Providing safe, affordable and reliable service to our members is the primary purpose for Northern Electric and our employees share that vision.

In 2024, the Operations Department completed the second year of our four-year workplan. The workplan, developed by PSE, identifies areas of our system in need of upgrades for reliability and growth. Some of the projects completed in 2024 include the addition of 44 new services in the HAPI housing development along with the installation of 33.5 miles of overhead line and 62 miles of underground line. Working with our cooperative partner East River Electric, a new circuit was installed at the Mina substation. We also extended circuits from the LaDelle and Tulare substations. These improvements will improve reliability and safety for our members.

The Northern Electric Member Services Department worked with members as they navigated the June 1st rate increase. They are also responsible for maintaining more than 10,000 meters, managing the co-op's 5,500 load



CHAR HAGER
CEO/GENERAL
MANAGER

control devices, administering the Cooperative's rebate programs, and responding to members' questions about new construction as well as service upgrades.

The Northern Electric Information Technology (IT) Department manages the Cooperative's technology and cyber security programs. Cybersecurity is a priority for our cooperative. Over the past year, the Northern Electric IT Department continued to implement numerous cybersecurity initiatives to protect members' information and personal data. Another important task of the IT Department includes deploying technology to the crews in the field so they can work more efficiently to bring reliable power to the members.

The Accounting and Billing Department is committed to serving the membership and managing the finances of Northern Electric Cooperative. As a cooperative, Northern Electric returns money to

its members annually in the form of capital credits which represent the members' share of the Cooperative's profits. In 2024, Northern Electric retired \$868,200 in capital credits, which were returned in the form of a bill credit on members' bills in September 2024.

Employee and member safety is a top priority across all departments at the cooperative. We are committed to providing a secure environment by implementing comprehensive safety protocols, conducting regular training, and maintaining high operational standards. Our employees' well-being is essential to delivering reliable service, and we continually invest in their safety and preparedness. Likewise, we prioritize the safety of our members by upholding rigorous safety measures in power delivery and facility operations. Moving forward, we will continue enhancing our safety programs and fostering a culture of awareness to safeguard our cooperative community.

2024 MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING

Pursuant to the notice to all members, the 77th Annual Meeting of the membership of Northern Electric Cooperative, Inc., was held at the Odde Ice Arena, Brown County Fairgrounds, Aberdeen, SD, on June 11, 2024, at 6 p.m. Registration from 4 to 6 p.m.

Vice President Todd Hettich welcomed the members to the 2024 annual meeting of Northern Electric Cooperative.

Vice President Todd Hettich called the meeting to order. Following the National Anthem, and the invocation given by Senior Accountant, Ben Krueger, Hettich recognized special guests, directors, and officers of the board.

President Nolan Wipf declared a quorum was present, with the official registration being 252.

Wipf gave a report on petitions for nominees. Wipf stated that petitions were received for the following Director candidates: District 1, Mike Traxinger, Claremont, along with new candidates District 3, Bruce Schumacher Jr., Aberdeen, and District 8, Thomas Lambert, Redfield.

President Nolan Wipf called for the Secretary's report. Upon motion, the reading of the minutes of September 19,

2023, 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, 2023. The treasurer's report was approved as presented.

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

President Nolan Wipf 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 during the past year.

President Wipf discussed the major item that had to be tackled in 2023 was looking at our rate structure. Wipf shared the significant cost increases in supplies and materials to construct new lines and maintain current infrastructure. The Northern Electric Board of Directors approved the new rates back in April, which went into effect on June 1, 2024.

Director Mike Traxinger reviewed the cooperative's policies and potential changes to director districts. Vice President Hettich presented a building committee update.

Vice President Hettich reviewed the benefit of being a member-owned cooperative is the allocation of the cooperative's profits to their members in form of capital credits. In 2023, Northern Electric Cooperative retired \$1,010,400 in capital credits which also included

retirements from Basin Electric and East River Electric.

Hettich stated that Northern Electric is also invested in the communities within our service territories. Northern Electric gave nearly \$30,000 back to communities through donations, scholarships and other contributions.

Hettich also reported that in 2023, Northern Electric crews buried 41 miles of new underground line and built more than 28 miles of new overhead line.

East River Chief Financial Officer, Scott Shewey gave an East River Electric update about the importance of an "All of the Above" generation mix.

Two Northern Electric employees celebrating milestone anniversaries with the co-op were recognized for their years of service. Derek Gorecki, Manager of Information Technology, 20 years and Kelby Fey, Member Services Representative, 10 years.

Wipf called for any new business. Wipf moved forward with the meeting to take action on the election of directors. Harvey Oliver, Northern Electric's attorney explained the voting rules and procedures of the election of directors and explained that the candidates for District 1, 3, and 8 being unopposed, the chair declared the nominees as elected by general consent.

President Wipf thanked Fran Esser and Ron Kaaz for their service and dedication to the membership during their time on the Northern Electric Board.

Wipf called for any other business to come before the meeting, there being none, he thanked everyone for attending the meeting and declared the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.



Pietz's Kuchen Kitchen & Specialties employees Amanda Garcia and Myra Bachman with owners Lori and Roger Pietz.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

SOUTH DAKOTA IS KUCHEN COUNTRY

German Delicacy Celebrates 25 Years as State's Official Dessert

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

On a brisk spring morning, balls of dough rise hours before the sun. One at a time, they're placed onto a press and flattened before being positioned into tins. Carefully, Lori Pietz ladles custard otopop, sprinkles in fruit, and passes off a tray of the desserts to her husband, Roger, for baking. As Roger pulls open the door of the stainless steel commercial oven, a wave of heat emanates across the kitchen. He slides the tray of five desserts onto a shelf in the oven, then removes another tray and sets it aside to cool before they begin packaging.

Roger and Lori will repeat this process at least 100 more times this morning to keep up with their customers' orders.

In the town of Scotland, northwest of Yankton, Pietz's Kuchen Kitchen & Specialties is one business that has turned South Dakotans' love for kuchen – a

delectable unification of cake, custard and pie – into a thriving business.

Kuchen, the German word for cake, has been a staple at European kitchen tables for centuries. The delicacy has stood the test of time, continuing to serve as a tea-time – or any-time – favorite across cultures and continents, especially right here in South Dakota.

"I think it's because of the population, because the greatest proportion of immigrants (in South Dakota) are the Germans from Russia," co-owner Lori Pietz said of kuchen's popularity. "There are German areas, there are Czech areas, there are Norwegian areas — but there are a lot of Germans from Russia."

Roger comes from one of those German-Russian families where the tradition of baking homemade kuchen has been passed down for generations.

"I watched my mother make kuchen as a little kid," Roger remembered. "I'd stand a little ways from the oven and I'd watch

her make it and I loved it."

Staying true to his German-Russian roots, Roger's love for kuchen never faded. After marrying Lori, Roger remembers telling her that if he could ever recreate his mother's kuchen recipe, he could probably market it and sell it.

Owning a kuchen shop was always a retirement dream, the couple recalled. But after going through several farm accidents, the Pietzs' decided to pivot in 2008. Trading plows for whisks, Pietz's Kuchen became a reality.

The operation quickly outgrew their make-shift basement kitchen, so Roger and Lori opened up a storefront and commercial kitchen in the nearby town of Scotland in 2011.

Today, the store ships an estimated 2,500 kuchen monthly to grocery stores, butcher shops, and restaurants across South Dakota and the Midwest.

Roger and Lori's kuchen offerings range from Americanized options – blueberry, peach, strawberry – to the more traditional blends of 18th and 19th century Europe, including rhubarb,

prune and cottage cheese.

Lori explained that historically kuchen was made using ingredients that were readily available, making it the ideal comfort-food and cultural dish for immigrants building their lives on South Dakota farms.

“There are a lot of Germans from Russia who brought rhubarb over with them, so they made a lot of rhubarb kuchen,” Lori said. “Flour and sugar were available, and they all had chickens and cows, so that’s kind of how it kept going.”

Lori didn’t grow up eating much kuchen. Her mother, who was of Czech descent, favored fluffy pastries called kolaches – filled with jam, poppy seeds or cream cheese.

But once Lori joined the Pietz family, she saw an opportunity to bridge both traditions. Drawing on the popularity of poppy seed kolaches in the Czech community, she created a Czech-inspired twist: poppy seed kuchen.

“There’s a lot of Czech people out there that like poppy seed kolaches,” Roger said. “And when they hear there’s poppy seed kuchen, they’re buying it.”

Kuchen’s footprint in South Dakota extends far beyond Scotland. Annual events like the Kuchen Festival in Delmont and Schmeckfest in Freeman invite locals and visitors alike to sample a variety of recipes and baking styles.

In McPherson County, the town of Eureka also has a reputation for being a kuchen-tasting hot spot, with several local kitchens offering their own takes on the dish.

South Dakotans’ love for kuchen runs so deep that it’s been codified into law; In 2000, State Sen. James Lawler, whose district included Eureka, helped lead the charge in Pierre to designate kuchen as the official state dessert.

Lawler, who once served as a judge for a local kuchen contest in Eureka, said the bill was part of a broader push to support local industries and breathe new life into small towns.

“The town of Eureka really got behind me and supported that bill,” Lawler recalled. “Those women up there got together and made enough kuchen for the whole legislature, and we fed them all and got the bill passed.”

A framed commemorative print of that bill hangs on the wall by the checkout counter in Roger and Lori’s shop – a tribute to all of the kuchen fans who have made their business what it is today.

“If you asked me 15 years ago what our business was going to be...I’d have said we’d sell a few,” Roger laughed. “I thought if it flopped, my friends would buy some from me and they wouldn’t let me down. Never did I anticipate this. Never. It’s just unbelievable.”

The Germans From Russia

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Russian leaders made an appeal to German families to emigrate to Russia, promising land, religious freedom and military service exemptions.

According to the Prairie Public Broadcasting documentary, *The Germans From Russia: Children of the Steppe*, Children of the Prairie, the first wave of German immigrants arrived in 1764 during the reign of Catherine the Great. For Catherine, this was strategic; adding population to the sparser areas of her empire not only developed Russia’s agricultural economy, but also helped create a buffer against invaders from central Asia.

The settlements dotted the Volga River in Russia and the Black Sea in modern Ukraine and Crimea. The German villages closely resembled the communities they left behind as well as the ones they’d later build on the American prairie, with distinct churches and earth-brick houses.

While the Germans held onto their language, culture, and customs, Slavic influence gives the Germans from Russia a distinct identity. One notable difference is in their kuchen. While the traditional German dish resembles a yeast-based fruit cake, the eastern version is typically richer and made with custard.

Later in the 19th century, the special privileges German settlers had been granted were slowly being eroded. The Germans’ special status was lowered to that of common peasants, they could now be drafted into the Russian army, and were forced to assimilate to the Russian language and education system.

Many German settlers left their villages in Russia to start over once again in North America and South America, while those remaining in Russia would go on to suffer through civil and world wars and the man-made Holodomor famine during the 20th century.

The Germans who had settled the banks of the Volga River went on to populate large swaths of Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado, while the Germans from the Black Sea region primarily settled the Dakota Territory and Canada – bringing kuchen with them.



Fruit is sprinkled over the dough, followed by a ladle of custard. Lori Pietz uses a scale to ensure nutrition labeling is precise.

Photo by Olivia Opland

2024 Financial Report

BALANCE SHEET

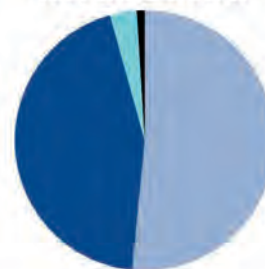
ASSETS (What We Own)	12/31/2024	12/31/2023
Fixed Assets		
General Plant	\$9,803,574	\$9,710,534
Electric Distribution Plant	\$97,404,505	\$88,964,898
Less Depreciation Reserve	\$27,836,767	\$26,475,171
Total Fixed Assets	\$79,371,311	\$72,200,261
Current Assets		
Cash	\$5,033,708	\$2,109,829
Receivables Less Uncollectible	\$3,117,711	\$3,033,151
Line Material on Hand	\$3,378,221	\$2,869,809
Prepaid Insurance and Dues	\$128,589	\$119,514
Other Current and Accrued Assets	\$3,030	\$3,037
Deferred Debits	\$138,397	\$180,578
Total Current Assets	\$11,799,656	\$8,315,918
Other Property and Investments		
Non-Utility Property	\$196,457	\$208,603
Patronage Capital From Assoc. Co-ops	\$23,233,082	\$22,514,878
Investments in Assoc Co.	\$379,094	\$379,094
Other Investments	\$551,704	\$510,800
Restricted Cash – Revenue Deferral	\$1,842,605	\$1,492,605
Total Other Property & Investments	\$26,202,942	\$25,105,980
Total Assets	\$117,373,910	\$105,622,159

LIABILITIES AND EQUITIES	12/31/2024	12/31/2023
(What We Owe)		
Long Term Debt		
Long Term Obligation to RUS/FFB	\$68,077,073	\$57,174,002
Long Term Obligation to CFC	\$6,568,589	\$7,253,283
ER Rural Development Member Loans	\$3,806	\$8,496
Total Net Long Term Debt	\$74,649,469	\$64,435,780
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable	\$2,051,328	\$1,892,886
Consumer Deposits	\$207,116	\$179,595
Other Current & Accrued Liabilities	\$1,228,355	\$1,165,791
Total Current & Accrued Liabilities	\$3,486,800	\$3,238,272
Deferred Credits	\$1,932,052	\$1,575,858
(What We Are Worth)		
Net Worth		
Patronage Capital Assigned	\$34,358,326	\$33,549,407
Unassigned Capital	\$2,947,263	\$2,822,841
Total Net Worth	\$37,305,589	\$36,372,248
Total Liabilities and Equities	\$117,373,910	\$105,622,159

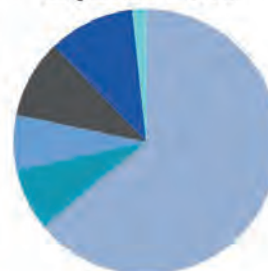
OPERATING STATEMENT

INCOME (What We Took In)	12/31/24	12/31/23
Sale of Electric Energy	\$29,653,259	\$28,035,891
Miscellaneous Electric Revenue	(\$193,046)	\$206,556
Total Gross Income	\$29,460,213	\$28,242,447
EXPENSES (What We Spent)	12/31/24	12/31/23
Purchased Power	\$18,798,875	\$17,891,677
Operation Expenses of Distribution Lines	\$465,217	\$373,216
Maintenance Expenses of Distribution Lines	\$1,514,715	\$1,563,665
Consumer Accounting and Collecting Expense	\$389,499	\$439,280
Consumer Service, Information And Sales Expense	\$642,991	\$656,186
General, Administrative, Office Expense and Insurance	\$1,480,625	\$1,508,126
Director Fees and Expenses	\$136,927	\$82,002
Legal Counsel Expense	\$29,578	\$36,716
Auditing, Programming and Other Outside Services	\$39,922	\$44,931
Maintenance of Buildings and Land	\$83,155	\$66,199
Depreciation of Electric Plant, Property and Equipment	\$3,096,950	\$2,869,938
Taxes	\$504,611	\$507,369
Interest	\$2,231,787	\$1,943,174
Other Deductions	\$1,242	\$10,697
Total Gross Expense	\$29,416,094	\$27,993,176
MARGINS (What We Have Left)	12/31/24	12/31/23
Operating Margins	\$44,119	\$249,271
Non-Operating Margins	\$323,708	\$261,587
Other Deferred Patronage Capital Credits	\$1,570,884	\$1,841,099
Total Margins	\$1,938,712	\$2,351,957

2024 Electric Revenue Dollar



2024 Electric Expense Dollar



OFFICIAL BALLOTNORTHERN ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC.

AMENDED ARTICLES AND BYLAWS

Attorney Statement:

A vote yes will have the effect of adopting both the proposed amendments to Article IV of the Articles of Incorporation, as well as approving amendments to Article IV Section 1 and 5 of the cooperative's bylaws. A vote no has the effect of rejecting any and all proposed amendments to the articles and bylaws and as a result the existing articles and bylaws will remain unchanged.

In order to avoid legally inconsistent results, it is necessary to vote upon both the amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and bylaws in a single ballot question.

Because the proposed amendments contain an amendment to the articles of incorporation, in order for the measures to pass, two thirds of those present and voting must vote in favor of the proposed amendments.

Should the proposed amended articles and bylaws of Northern Electric Cooperative Incorporated as printed in the notice of meeting be adopted?

☐ YES

☐ NO

PROPOSED AMMENDMENT TO ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION OF NORTHERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC.

ARTICLE IV

DIRECTORS. The management of the Cooperative shall be vested in a Board of Directors consisting of no fewer than five members and no more than nine members of which there shall be one from each district. The names and addresses of the directors are as follows:

1. Randy Knecht, PO Box 28, Houghton, SD 57449
 2. Dale Engelhart, PO Box 7, Barnard, SD 57426
 3. Trudy Schaunaman, 38298 123rd St, Aberdeen, SD 57401
 4. Charles Anderson, 40984 122nd St, Claremont, SD 57432
 5. Maralyn Hoops, PO Box 51, Groton, SD 57445
 6. Larry Braun, 38774 143rd St, Warner, SD 57479
 7. Wayne Wright, HCR 2, Box 94, Turton, SD 57477-9367
 8. Ted Pazour, RR1, Box 36, Frankfort, SD 57440-9760
 9. Dale Smith, HC 75, Box 75, Hitchcock, SD 57348-9615
-
1. Michael E. Traxinger, 11409 411th Ave, Claremont, SD 57432
 2. Todd Hettich, 418 Nesbitt Dr, Mina, SD 57451
 3. Bruce Schumacher, Jr, 12884 384th Ave, Aberdeen, SD 57401
 4. Josh Larson, 39756 124th St, Columbia, SD 57433
 5. Scott Sperry, 13186 396th Ave, Bath, SD 57427
 6. Kirk Schaunaman, 13627 383rd Ave, Aberdeen, SD 57401
 7. William Hansen, 39594 163rd St, Turton, SD 57477
 8. Thomas Lambert, 17088 393rd Ave, Redfield, SD 57469
 9. Nolan Wipf, 18622 404th Ave, Hitchcock, SD 57348

PROPOSED AMMENDMENT TO BYLAWS OF NORTHERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

ARTICLE IV**BOARD MEMBERS**

Section 1. General Powers. The business and affairs of the Cooperative shall be managed by the Board consisting of no fewer than five members and no greater than nine members, the total number of which shall be determined by the Board of Directors. Each director shall be nine members elected by the membership from districts as provided in this article.; A director each of whom shall be a member of the Cooperative; and if the member is an entity other than a natural person, is the Designated Representative of the entity member; which Board shall exercise all of the powers of the Cooperative, except those set forth by law, the Articles of Incorporation, these Bylaws, or as conferred upon or referred to the members. It shall be the duty of each Director to participate in such activities as are deemed necessary to enhance the prestige of the Cooperative, broaden its operation and fulfill its public obligation as a member of the various

communities in which it does business and in furtherance, thereof, to devote reasonable time and attendance at meetings of affiliate organizations and at training sessions to assist and improve Directors and Officers in carrying out their duties.

Section 5. Director Districts. The territory served or to be served by the Cooperative shall be divided into director districts, the number of districts to be determined by the Board of Directors, nine (9) director districts, The boundaries of each district shall be being established by the Board based upon number of members, types of services, density, area served and such other equitable factors as the Board reasonably determines. The Board of Directors shall determine the number of directors to be elected from each district. One (1) director shall be elected from each district. The Board shall from time to time review the districts and may reconstitute the districts to ensure that the districts equitably represent the members.

SWIMMING SAFELY

Tips to Ensure Your Family Swims Safe This Summer

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

The leading cause of death for American children under the age of five: drowning.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 4,000 fatal drownings occur each year in the U.S., with the number of deaths sharply increasing in May and reaching a peak in July.

And according to Consumer Affairs, that number has been on the rise since 2020, especially among young children.

Whether at a waterpark, lake, backyard pool, or even a hot tub, being safety-aware and educating others can prevent drownings and other pool accidents and save lives.

According to Holly Hardy, aquatics director for the Oahe Family YMCA in Pierre, safety begins with supervision.

“Somebody should always be observing the water when there are kids in a pool,”

Hardy said. “It doesn’t matter if it’s our (YMCA) pool, a backyard pool, or the river. There needs to be a person there that’s responsible for watching the kids.”

At the YMCA’s pool, lifeguards who aren’t sure about a child’s swimming skills can have them do a swim test, where the child has to either show they can swim the length of the pool or remain in the shallow end.

“At our (YMCA) pool, we have those big slides and kids want to go down them because their buddies are going down them, and they want to go down but they can’t swim,” Hardy explained. “That’s where we pull the most people out of the water – the slide or the diving board.”

The YMCA lifeguards also have a rule against seeing how long you can hold your breath – children can hyperventilate before submerging and faint, which is called a

hypoxic blackout. Hardy also stresses the importance of swimming lessons, since understanding basics like how to float, swim, exit water and feeling oriented and calm are critical for water safety. She recommends to begin swimming lessons as soon as possible – The YMCA offers swimming lessons for children as young as six months old.

But swimming lessons are not a substitute for properly securing a pool.

According to Consumer Affairs, 87% of fatal drownings for the 0-5 age range occur in backyard pools.

That’s why a sturdy fence and self-latching gate around the pool area are still essential for preventing accidents. Even temporary mesh fence options can work in some instances.

Additionally, submersion alarms and door alarms can audibly alert you when someone enters the pool or pool area.

By communicating the pool safety rules to children and guests, as well as taking preventive measures to prevent accidents in the first place, you may be saving lives.

Pool Safety Checklist

Is there supervision?

- All children should be under responsible adult supervision.
- Designate “water watchers” and minimize distractions.
- Keep a phone close by for calling 911.
- Always swim with a buddy – Never alone.
- Keep throwing equipment or reaching equipment nearby.
- Consider CPR training – it could save a life.

Can everybody in the pool swim?

- Ensure everyone in the pool can at least swim from one end of the pool and back.
- Weak or new swimmers should keep to shallow water and use flotation aids.
- Parents should stay close – preferably within arm’s reach – to weak or new swimmers.
- Sign up for swimming lessons – it’s a lifesaving skill.

Are there safety barriers?

- Install and maintain a proper fence and self-latching gate around the pool.
- Consider a door alarm and pool alarm for an audible alert when someone enters the pool or pool area.
- Hot tubs should have properly-latched covers.

Recognize hazards.

- Stay away from drains and water intake pipes, as body parts, hair, jewelry, and loose clothing can get pulled in. Drains should have auto-entanglement drain covers, and pumps should have accessible shut-offs.
- Ensure tiles, handrails, anti-slip pads, and ladders are properly installed and maintained.

- Electrical work should be done by a qualified electrician. Chargers, extension cords and other electronics should be kept away from the pool area.
- Check your pool water regularly to avoid illness from contaminants and chemical burns.
- Avoid slips and falls by picking up pool toys and other hazards. Do not run or roughhouse near the pool.
- If you’re not sober, don’t swim.
- Diving can result in serious injury. Make sure others know when a pool is not safe for diving.
- Store pool chemicals and additives somewhere inaccessible to children.
- Ensure proper lighting is installed around the pool area and never swim in the dark.
- Consider an animal escape ramp for pets and wild animals.

Remind your children and guests...

Establish pool-safe rules for your children and any guests at your home. Remind your children to...

- Never swim without permission and supervision. Other children are not supervisors.
- Don’t enter a pool area or go near water alone.
- Never roughhouse or run in the pool area.
- Never dive in shallow water.
- Stay away from chemicals and additives.
- Keep the pool area tidy and hazard-free.
- Keep electrical devices and cords away from the pool area.
- Never hyperventilate or try and see how long you can hold your breath underwater. Hyperventilating can induce fainting, called hypoxic blackouts and lead to drowning.

NORTHERN ELECTRIC BOARD AND MANAGEMENT



NOLAN WIPF
PRESIDENT
DISTRICT 9 -
HITCHCOCK



TODD HETTICH
VICE PRESIDENT
DISTRICT 2 - MINA



SCOTT SPERRY
SECRETARY
DISTRICT 5 - BATH



JOSH LARSON
TREASURER
DISTRICT 4 -
COLUMBIA



KIRK SCHAUNAMAN
EAST RIVER DIRECTOR
DISTRICT 6 -
ABERDEEN



MIKE TRAXINGER
DISTRICT 1
CLAREMONT



**BRUCE
SCHUMACHER JR.**
DISTRICT 3
ABERDEEN



B.J. HANSEN
DISTRICT 7
TURTON



THOMAS LAMBERT
DISTRICT 8
REDFIELD



CHAR HAGER
CEO/GENERAL
MANAGER
20 YEARS



LORISA RUDOLPH
CHIEF FINANCIAL
OFFICER
4 YEARS



JERRY WEBER
OPERATIONS
MANAGER
42 YEARS



RUSSEL ULMER
MANAGER OF MEMBER
SERVICES
20 YEARS

CONSULTANTS TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND MANAGEMENT

LEGAL:
HARVEY OLIVER
AUDITOR:
EIDE BAILLY, LLP
ENGINEERING:
POWER SYSTEM
ENGINEERING, INC.
(PSE)



NICK NIELSEN
ASSISTANT MANAGER
OF MEMBER SERVICES
14 YEARS



DEREK GORECKI
MANAGER OF
INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY
21 YEARS



AMY GOLDEN
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
3 YEARS

NORTHERN ELECTRIC EMPLOYEES

Accounting



BEN KRUEGER
SENIOR ACCOUNTANT
5 YEARS



BRITTANY HOLCOMB
SENIOR BILLING
SPECIALIST
4 YEARS



TIFFANY HUBERT
ACCOUNTANT
20 YEARS



CHRISTY NAGEL
BILLING CLERK
15 YEARS



KARLI STUBBE
ACCOUNTING CLERK
3 YEARS

Member Services



BRANDON FLACK
MEMBER SERVICES
REPRESENTATIVE
12 YEARS

Operations



BEN PETERSON
LINE FOREMAN
19 YEARS



BRIAN HANSEN
LINE FOREMAN
9 YEARS



TYLER MARKEN
JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN
35 YEARS



STEVE BECK
JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN
12 YEARS



SEAN SCHWARTZ
JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN
10 YEARS



KELBY FEY
MEMBER SERVICES
REPRESENTATIVE
11 YEARS



KYLE MILLER
JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN
7 YEARS



NICK DEAN
JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN
6 YEARS



RILEY WHITLEY
JOURNEYMAN LINEMAN
4 YEARS



QUINN VINGER
APPRENTICE LINEMAN
3 YEARS



DYLAN GRIMES
APPRENTICE LINEMAN
1 YEAR



KENNETH SWANSON
REDFIELD FOREMAN
38 YEARS



SHAWN EVANS
REDFIELD JOURNEYMAN
LINEMAN
25 YEARS



CHRIS PIEHL
REDFIELD JOURNEYMAN
LINEMAN
15 YEARS

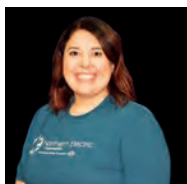


COLLIN GADES
REDFIELD JOURNEYMAN
LINEMAN
6 YEARS



WILLIAM TORRENCE
REDFIELD JOURNEYMAN
LINEMAN
5 YEARS

IT Services



RENE WALDMAN
DISPATCH/ENGINEERING
AIDE
15 YEARS



AARON NUHSBAUMER
OPERATIONS/DISPATCH
AIDE
10 YEARS



LANCE DENNERT
PURCHASING AGENT
13 YEARS



ROBERT BERNHARDT
GENERAL PLANT
MAINTENANCE
19 YEARS



BENJI GRAJCZYK
NETWORK SYSTEMS
TECHNICIAN
12 YEARS



JUNE 19-21
Czech Days
 Music, Dancing, Foods & Parades
 Tabor, SD

Photo courtesy of Travel South Dakota

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 24-SEPT. 13
Buggy Museum
 Free Buggy Rides + More
 Saturdays 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Stockholm, SD
 605-938-4192

MAY 26
Memorial Day Services
 12 p.m. Lunch at Legion Post #39
 Groton Union Cemetery
 Groton, SD

MAY 31
Auto Parts Swap Meet & Car Show
 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Brown County Fairgrounds
 Aberdeen, SD

JUNE 5
Danish Constitution Day Celebration
 6:15 p.m.-9 p.m.
 Danish Folk Dancing & Music
 Viborg, SD
 danevilleheritage.com

JUNE 5, 7
Wheel Jam
 7 p.m.
 Dakota State Fair Speedway
 Huron, SD

JUNE 6
Northern Bull Riding Tour
 6:30 p.m.
 Madison, SD
 www.prairievillage.org

JUNE 6-8
SDHSRA Regional Rodeos
 Buffalo, Huron, Wall, Kadoka, SD
 www.sdhsra.com

JUNE 7
Car Show & Kids Carnival
 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
 202 2nd St. SE
 Watertown, SD

JUNE 7
Groton Baseball/Softball Foundation Day of Play
 Groton, SD

JUNE 7
Prairie Village Tractor Pull
 3 p.m.
 Madison, SD
 www.prairievillage.org

JUNE 12-14
Gumbo Ridge Wagon Train
 Murdo, SD
 605-530-3638

JUNE 13-15
SDHSRA Regional Rodeos
 Dupree, Watertown,
 New Underwood, Winner, SD

JUNE 13-15
Ipswich Trail Days
 Ipswich, SD
 ipswichtraildays.com
 ipswichtraildays@gmail.com

JUNE 14
Roslyn Vinegar Festival
 Roslyn, SD
 320-808-8873

JUNE 15, 29
1880 Train Old West Shootout
 5 p.m.
 Hill City, SD

JUNE 17-21
SDHSRA State Finals Rodeo
 Fort Pierre, SD

JUNE 19
Prairie Partners Master Gardeners Plant Sale
 9 a.m.
 Brown County Fairgrounds
 Aberdeen, SD

JUNE 20-22
Farley Fest
 Milbank, SD
 605-432-6656
 www.farleyfest.com

JUNE 21
Fireman's Triathlon
 8 a.m.-11 p.m.
 Groton, SD

JUNE 25-28
Crystal Springs Rodeo
 Clear Lake, SD
 605-874-2996

JUNE 27-28
Buckhorn Rodeo
 Britton, SD
 605-880-5077

JUNE 27-29
Leola Rhubarb Festival
 Leola, SD

Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.