

Cooperative Connections



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Legislative Proposal Provides Framework for Compromise

Co-ops Support Summer Study Recommendation



Ben Dunsmoor

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Electric co-ops have come to the table throughout the past year to find a workable compromise to protect co-op members, electric service territory boundaries and improve state law.

Northern Electric Cooperative has been working with legislators and electric cooperatives across the state to protect electric service territory boundaries in South Dakota and bring long-needed improvements to state law. We believe the framework of a compromise that was recently adopted by a legislative committee in November is a step in the right direction.

Throughout the summer, the state's electric cooperatives have been actively engaged in the discussions surrounding the South Dakota Legislature's Electric Services in an Annexed Area Interim Committee. This legislative 'summer study' committee of nine lawmakers was formed during the 2019 legislative session. The main task of the committee has been to examine an exception in state law that gives municipally owned electric systems the option to take service territory from incumbent utilities when a city annexes new property.

First, a little background knowledge on the issue. There are three distinct electric utility business models in South Dakota.

- Investor-owned utilities serve most cities and densely populated urban areas of the state. These utilities are owned by shareholders.
- Electric cooperatives serve mostly rural areas of the state. Co-ops are owned by the members they serve and are governed by democratically elected co-op board members.
- South Dakota has 310 municipalities but only 35 have municipal electric systems. These systems are owned and operated by city government.

State law establishes territory boundaries for all electric utilities to protect consumers, facilitate efficient long-term planning of the electric grid and to avoid costly duplication of service and infrastructure. However, there are exceptions to this state law. The focus of the legislative summer study has been on the exception that gives the 35 municipal electric systems the option to take over service territory of an investor-owned utility or co-op in newly annexed areas.

South Dakota electric cooperatives have been telling lawmakers since 2018 that it is fundamentally unfair for municipal electric systems to have this option. The proposal adopted by the legislative committee in November provides a path forward to solve this problem.

The framework of the compromise that was adopted on an 8-1 vote would require regular meetings and good faith negotiations between all utilities involved in electric service territory boundaries in newly annexed areas. The compromise framework further states that if the utilities cannot negotiate an agreement as to who will serve the newly annexed areas the Public Utilities Commission would settle the dispute.

Electric co-ops are private corporations owned and governed by the members we serve. Most electric co-op members are the farmers, ranchers, families, and small business owners that are the heartbeat of the South Dakota economy. Electric co-ops have come to the table throughout the past year to find a workable compromise to protect co-op members, electric service territory boundaries and improve state law.

You will hear more about this issue as we approach the 2020 South Dakota Legislative Session. Please, know that your local electric cooperative continues to work to protect its members. We would be happy to have more detailed discussions with you about this issue as it develops.



(USPS 396-040)

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Northern Electric Cooperative's regular board meeting was held October 24 at the headquarters in Bath with all directors present. East River Electric CEO/GM Tom Boyko and East River Electric General Counsel Bob Sahr attended the meeting via teleconference. As the first order of business, the board approved the September 19, 2019, minutes and September expenditures. The board then reviewed and accepted monthly reports by management.

Directors viewed the East River Electric Power Cooperative video report. East River Director Mark Sumption reported on the East River Board meeting held October 2-3, 2019. South Dakota Rural Electric Association Director Nolan Wipf reported on the SDREA board meeting held September 26-27, 2019, in Pierre. Director Ronald Kaaz reported that South Dakota Wind Energy Association will have a meeting, November 26, 2019, in Pierre.

Manager's Report

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

- Update and discussion on development projects.
- Update on Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) revolving loan fund.
- Legal and Legislative Report
- Reminded the board and staff that ACRE dues are due by December 6, 2019.
- Reminded the board of the 2020 NRECA Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, March 1-4, 2020.
- Reminded the board of the Northeast Rural Utilities Annual Legislative Issues Forum, October 29, 2019, in Aberdeen.
- Reminded the board of strategic planning with National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) and NEC Board Meeting, November 20-21, 2019.

Board Report

The board considered and/or acted upon the following:

1. Approved the date and time of the next regular board meeting for Thursday, November 21, 2019, following the CFC strategic planning meeting.
2. Approved payment of legal fees for Harvey Oliver in the amount of \$1,665.66.
3. Approved Work Order Inventories #19-09 for \$62,689.52 and #19-09MC for \$66,134.86 to be submitted to the Rural Utilities Service for reimbursement from loan funds for electric plant construction already completed.
4. Approved revision to existing Electric Tariff.
5. Adopted a resolution approving the 2020 Load Forecast completed by Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. The forecast projects NEC's system demands and energy requirements through 2050.
6. Ratified Attorney Harvey Oliver's previous execution of filing doc-less intervention relating to Basin FERC filings.
7. Amended the Annual Authorizations approved at the September 19, 2019 board meeting to reflect moving RUS Cash Construction Fund Trustee Account from Wells Fargo Bank South Dakota, N.A. to Great Plains Bank, Aberdeen.
8. Approved Northern Electric's 2020 Capital Budget.
9. Held Executive Session.
10. Appointed Kirk Schaunaman, Aberdeen, to serve remained of Randy Kienow's term as District 6 director.

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

Financial Report	September 2019	September 2018
kWh Sales	18,468,290 kWh	19,126,094 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$1,938,194	\$1,967,642
Total Cost of Service	\$2,025,519	\$2,033,698
Operating Margins	(-\$87,325)	(-\$66,056)
Year To Date Margins	\$344,557	\$309,689

Residential Average Monthly Usage and Bill

	Usage (kWh)	Cost (\$)	Rate (per kWh)
Sept. 2019	1,140 kWh	\$157.05	.1377 per kWh
Sept. 2018	1,169 kWh	\$161.06	.1378 per kWh

Wholesale power cost, taxes, interest, and depreciation accounted for 78.7% of NEC's total cost of service.

Electrical Safety Tips for the Holidays

The holiday season is here and Christmas is just weeks away. While it's certainly the best time of the year to spend time with family and friends before the New Year, it's also important that you think about keeping your friends and family safe around all the electricity you'll likely be using. Here are a few essential electrical safety tips for the holidays.

- Before you use any electrical decorations, you should inspect them for damage. Look for damaged sockets, cracked sockets, loose connections and bare or loose wires. All of these things could cause a fire or a serious shock.
- Once you've confirmed that all your electrical decorations aren't damaged, you should count how many outlets you have in your home and where they're located. You should plan out your displays based on the number of outlets and their location. When putting up the displays, be sure to follow the care and manufacturer's use instructions that came with the electrical decorations. Be sure to use the extension cords with the right amperage rating to match the amperage needs of your electrical products.
- When you're installing outdoor decorations, you should be very careful when you're decorating near any power lines. You and your equipment should be at least 10 feet from any power lines.
- Don't overload your home's electrical outlets. Every year, many homeowners end up overloading the electrical outlets in their home because they go overboard when it comes to decorating. Faulty wires and overloaded electrical outlets are the most common causes of fire during the holidays. You should only plug a single high-wattage appliance into every outlet. This will help you prevent overloading the outlets in your home.
- You should never connect more than three strands of incandescent lights. Connecting more than three strings can cause a fire or trip circuit breakers. You should think about buying LED lights, which are cooler than incandescent lights and use less energy. Be sure that the spotlights that you use to illuminate decorations are far from flammable items, protected from weather, and are well-ventilated. Make sure that you always unplug your decorations before you replace the fuses or bulbs. Turn off the outdoor and indoor electrical decorations before you go to sleep or leave home.
- Be sure that any electrical decorations and extension cords were made to be useable outdoors. Keep all light strings and extension cords away from water and snow. When decorating outdoors, you should use fiberglass or wooden ladders rather than metal ladders. You should plug outdoor decorations and electric lights into circuits protected by circuit interrupters. You should buy portable outdoor GFCIs if the circuits aren't GFCI protected.

As you can see, there are many things that you can do to keep your family and friends safe during the holidays.

Source: www.protectamerica.com



KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"Don't drive on power lines."

Anna Engelbrecht, 9 years old

Anna is the grand-daughter of Alan and JoAnn Engelbrecht, Brandon, S.D. They are members of Sioux Valley Energy, Colman, 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.

Holiday Favorites

Fanny Farmer Fudge

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 4-1/2 cups sugar | 1 cup butter (use butter, not margarine) |
| 1 (12 oz.) can evaporated milk | 2 tsp. vanilla |
| 2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips | 1-1/2 cups chopped walnuts (optional) |
| 2 cups milk chocolate chips | |

Mix sugar and milk together; bring to rolling boil. Boil for 6 minutes. Remove from heat; add chocolate chips and butter. Beat with electric mixer until very creamy. Add vanilla and stir well. Add nuts if desired. Pour into a 9x13-inch pan (glass works best) sprayed with cooking spray. Refrigerate at least 4 hours before cutting. Store in airtight container. Will keep for months in refrigerator and still be smooth and creamy.

Nancy Stenson, Fort Pierre, SD

Andes Mint Cookies

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 2-1/2 cups flour | 2 large eggs |
| 3/4 cup cocoa powder | 1 tsp. vanilla extract |
| 1 tsp. baking soda | 1 tsp. peppermint extract |
| 2 sticks and 2 T. butter, softened | 1 cup chocolate chips |
| 1 cup granulated sugar | 1 cup mint chips or chopped Andes mints |
| 1 cup brown sugar | |

Sift flour, cocoa powder and baking soda in a medium bowl and set aside. Using a hand mixer, cream together butter and both sugars until fluffy. Add eggs, vanilla and peppermint extracts, mixing well. Add dry mixture to butter mixture and mix well. Stir in chocolate and mint chips. Roll dough into 1-1/2-inch balls. Place on prepared baking sheet and with 2 fingers, press down to about 1-inch thick. Bake at 350°F. for 15 to 18 minutes or until no longer glossy.

Cortney Reedy, Tea, SD

Vanilla Pecan Pie

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 refrigerated pie crust | Vanilla Extract, divided |
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened | 1/2 cup light corn syrup |
| 3 eggs, divided | 3 T. butter, melted |
| 3/4 cup sugar, divided | 1/4 tsp. salt |
| 4 tsp. McCormick® Pure | 2 cups pecan pieces, toasted |

Prepare crust as directed on package for one-crust pie using 9-inch deep dish pie plate. Beat cream cheese, 1 egg, 1/4 cup sugar and 2 tsp. vanilla in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended and smooth. Spread evenly on bottom of crust. Bake at 350°F. for 15 minutes. Beat remaining 2 eggs and sugar in large bowl with wire whisk until smooth. Add corn syrup, butter, remaining vanilla and salt; stir until well blended. Sprinkle pecans evenly over cream cheese layer. Slowly pour corn syrup mixture over nuts. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until just set in center. Makes 10 servings.

Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 506, Total Fat 34g, Fiber 2g, Protein 7g, Cholesterol 96mg, Sodium 307mg, Carbohydrates 43g

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Filled Graham Crackers

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 lb. box honey graham crackers | 1/3 cup milk |
| 1 cup brown sugar | 1 egg, beaten |
| 1/2 cup butter or margarine | 1 tsp. vanilla |

Line up 22 (unbroken) graham crackers on a sheet of waxed paper. Place remaining crackers in a zip-lock bag and crush fine with a rolling pin. Combine brown sugar, butter, milk and egg. Bring to a boil then cook an additional 7 minutes. Remove from heat; add crushed crackers and vanilla. When mixture has cooled a little, spread filling on 11 of the crackers and top with the other 11. Leave uncovered to keep them crisp or cover for softer crackers.

Mardelle Brown, Redfield, SD

Please send your favorite soup, brunch or seafood recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in June 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

Co-op Delivers

Holiday Light



Daryl Rieck holds up a photo of himself and his brother from the early 1950s around the time the family farm received electricity.

Thoughts of Christmastime Electrification Bring Bright Memories

The flickers of candles illuminating a Christmas program at a country school is the idyllic image of a traditional holiday celebration. That image is often only captured in paintings and illustrations. However, Northern Electric Cooperative member Daryl Rieck remembers a time when light from lanterns and lit wicks were not used for ambiance but were a necessary way of life in rural Brown County.

“We had oil lamps with the wick you crank up and down,” Rieck recalls. “They would send a note home from school that would say when you come to the Christmas program please bring a lamp.”

That is because Rieck lived with his parents and three

siblings on a farmstead 22 miles southwest of Aberdeen. The Riecks attended a one-room country school and up until the early 1950s, there was no electricity in their corner of Brown County.

“I can remember when people got electricity. When you drove home (from Aberdeen) in the dark you could see yard lights on,” Rieck said as he shared memories of his childhood.

The co-op was working to bring electricity to the country. Rieck said his grandparents who lived in Warner and Aberdeen had power, so there was excitement that the electrification of rural Brown County was inching closer to his family’s farm.

to the Countryside

By: Ben Dunsmoor

During the late summer of 1953, the farm a mile north of the Rieck place received power from Northern Electric Cooperative. Rieck said his family was supposed to get electricity next – just in time for winter.

“That was the plan and we were going to get it,” Rieck said.

However, the anticipation of the bright light of electrification was quickly snuffed out by a visitor to the farm shortly before Thanksgiving.

“I was only in the fourth or fifth grade, but I could tell from a distance that it was not good news,” Rieck said.

Rieck said a representative from the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) stopped by the farm to talk with his dad. The REA representative said that they would not be able to hook up the rural farmstead until spring. The Riecks would have to go through another winter without electricity. Rieck remembers that his father, Lester, solemnly accepted the news and quietly walked into the house to tell his family.

“Dad just said, ‘Well, we are not going to get electricity.’ That event was a very sad time at our house,” Rieck said.

But that sad feeling of another dark winter on the farm quickly turned around. The next day the same car drove down the same rural gravel road and the same REA representative got out to greet Lester. Rieck recalls the REA representative said that he did not sleep well that night. The REA representative informed Lester that his quiet acceptance of the news that they would not get electricity ‘messed up’ his day.

“Dad had no clue what he meant,” Rieck said. “Then the guy said, ‘Most people

get mad and cuss me out when I have to bring them this news and then I don’t feel too bad. You didn’t do that and then I remembered your four kids and how disappointed they would be. I could not sleep last night.”

The REA representative said he had visited with the crews back at the Northern Electric headquarters and they were going to do whatever they could to make sure the Rieck farmstead was electrified before winter. It was a promise that was kept and the Rieck home had power shortly before Christmas.

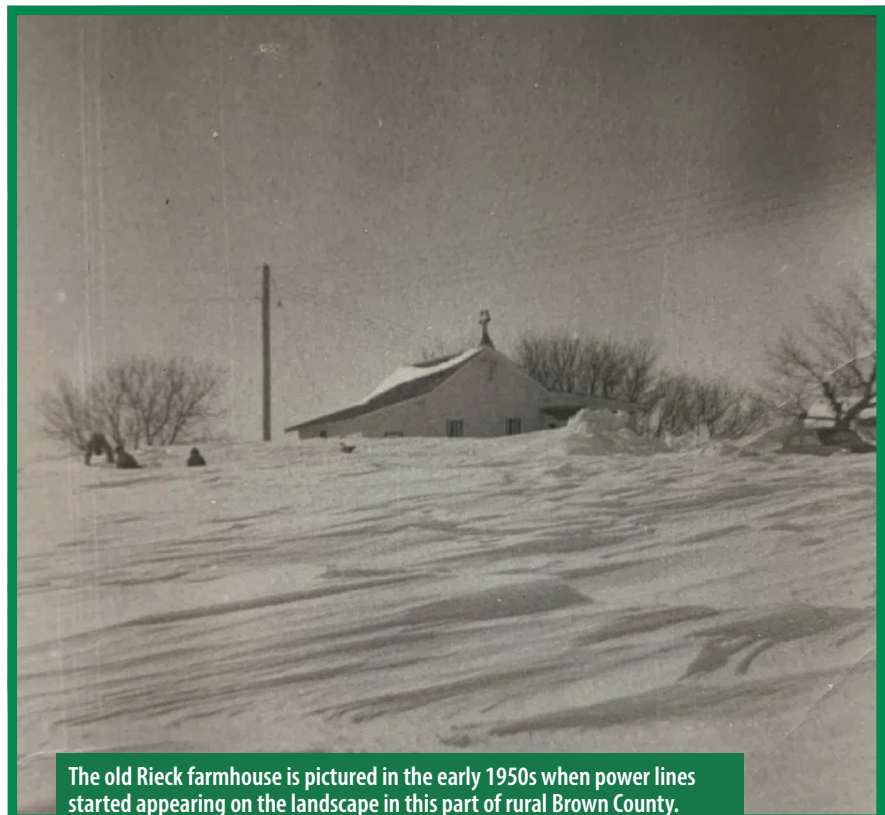
“The moment that I really remember

was when I was in the barn helping dad milk the cows after dark that night and seeing every window in the house brightly lit,” Rieck said. “They got our school connected too, so things were brighter everywhere that winter.”

Electric lights decorated the Christmas tree for the first time that year and the school did not request lamps for the Christmas program.

Rieck remembers that electrification was a great Christmas present, but his mother thought the new request from school was not.

“Mom thought the lamps were nice.”



The old Rieck farmhouse is pictured in the early 1950s when power lines started appearing on the landscape in this part of rural Brown County.



Riverview Christmas Tree Farm is located near Canton, S.D., near the Big Sioux River.

OH, CHRISTMAS TREE

Cut-Your-Own Tree Opportunities

Brenda Kleinjan

editor@sdrea.coop

Traditions can be an important part of the holidays and for many, nothing matches the aroma and feel of a fresh-cut Christmas tree.

Many have taken advantage of the cut-your-own tradition at the Black Hills National Forest. But for those not wanting to trek across the Rushmore State to the Black Hills, Christmas tree farms closer to home have been part of holidays.

In eastern South Dakota, families have been cutting their own trees at the Riverview Christmas Tree Farm at Canton, S.D., since 1989.

The tree farm is a family business that was opened in 1989 by Bill and Darlene Keizer. The business is now operated by the Todd and Shari Gannon family.

Families search the acres of trees looking for the perfect tree for their family. Five tree varieties ranging in sizes from six to 10 feet provide families several options. The tree farm provides the saw for cutting the tree and a tractor/trailer brings the family and their tree back to the farm's lodge to enjoy hot drinks and holiday treats.

The farm is open four weekends in November and December. In 2019, the farm will be open Saturdays (Nov. 23, Nov. 30, Dec. 7 and Dec. 14) from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays (Nov. 24, Dec. 1, Dec. 8 and Dec. 15) from Noon to 5 p.m. as well as Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 28 (2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.) and Black Friday, Nov. 29 (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.)



Photo by SD Tourism

Visitors to the tree farm can enjoy the beautiful scenery, shopping for holiday crafts and Christmas wreaths. They can also pet the animals in the pen and see Santa!

Riverview Christmas Tree Farm Tree Varieties

- Fraser Fir
- Balsam Fir
- Canaan Fir
- White Pine
- Black Hills Spruce

Riverview Christmas Tree Farm features cut-your-own trees, ranging from six to nine feet tall, sell for \$9 to \$11 per foot, depending on the variety. Pre-cut trees, ranging from six to 10 feet tall sell for \$7 to \$8 per foot.

Learn more about Riverview Christmas Tree Farm at <http://www.riverviewtreefarm.com/>

Tips for Trees Cut at Black Hills National Forest

Cutting Guidelines

- The maximum tree height is 20 feet.
- Cut the stump within six inches of the ground.
- Cut and scatter the limbs and other unused parts of the tree so they lie within a foot of the ground.

Setting Up Your Tree

- Keep your tree as fresh as possible.
- Store your tree upright in a bucket of water in the garage or basement until you are ready to move it indoors.
- In the house, keep the tree well watered at all times.
- Keep the tree away from fireplaces, stoves or heating vents.

Kinds of trees available:

- **Ponderosa pine** is noted for its full shape and long graceful needles. It grows almost everywhere in the Black Hills.
- **Spruce** is very popular as a holiday tree. It grows at higher elevations and on wetter, north-facing slopes and drainage bottoms. Spruce has a classic tapered form and its short needles allow for easy stringing of lights and ornaments.
- **Juniper** is a shorter tree found at lower elevations in the southern and western parts of the Black Hills. Many people like its full shape and bluish-green coloring.

Cut Your Own Fresh Christmas Tree This Year From the Black Hills National Forest

Christmas tree tags will be available Nov. 12 to Dec. 24, 2019, at Forest Service offices in western South Dakota and northeast Wyoming.

The Black Hills National Forest will also continue the Fourth-Grade Free Christmas Tree Program again this holiday season.

Fourth-graders are eligible for a FREE Christmas tree permit through the Every Kid Outdoors initiative. Every Kid Outdoors is a nationwide call to action to build the next generation of conservationists. All fourth graders are eligible to receive a fourth-grade pass that allows free access to federal lands and waters across the country for a full year.

In order for students to receive a free Christmas tree permit, they must present a valid fourth grade pass or paper voucher printed from the Every Kid Outdoors website: <https://everykidoutdoors.gov>. To obtain the voucher, visit the website, click on the "Get your pass" button and follow the instructions. Print out the paper voucher and bring it with you to a district office or the supervisor's office on the Black Hills National Forest.

White spruce, ponderosa pine and western juniper are available and can be cut in many parts of the National Forest.

Each permit is accompanied by a handout with guidance about appropriate tree removal. Trees may not be cut in developed recreation sites, Forest Service administrative sites, active timber sales, the Black Hills Experimental Forest near Rochford, the Black Elk Wilderness, the Beaver Park area near Sturgis or within Spearfish Canyon.

Individual permits cost \$10, up to a maximum of five permits are allowed per individual and the maximum allowable height of cut trees is 20 feet. Permits require that you cut the entire tree, leaving no more than six inches of stump and that you cut unused branches so they lay flat on the ground.

The adhesive permit tag must be attached before a tree is removed from the cutting area; a citation can be issued for possession of a cut-but-untagged tree, even if a tag is available in person or in your vehicle.

Trees should be placed in water as soon as possible to help keep needles fresh. Once indoors, trees should be placed away from stoves, heaters or heating ducts. After Christmas, used trees should be disposed of properly as yard waste. Do not dump used trees on national forest land.

There are no refunds for uncut trees or unused permits. Please note that Forest Service offices will be closed on Thanksgiving Day. Dec. 24 is the last day permits will be sold at Forest Service offices. Private vendors may sell tags until Dec. 24.

Tags are available by mail from the Forest Supervisor's Office, 1019 North 5th Street, Custer, SD, 57730. Enclose a check or money order in the amount of \$10 for each tree permit, up to a maximum of five trees per individual as well as a self-addressed stamped envelope. The Forest Service will mail tags and cutting instructions.

Schaunaman Selected To Fill District 6 Vacancy



Kirk Schaunaman

seated left vacant by Randy Kienow who moved outside the co-op's service territory this summer.

"I want to give back to the community and give back to my neighbors," Schaunaman said about being appointed to the board. "We have had a good run of board members in our district and hopefully I can continue that."

The Northern Electric Cooperative Board of Directors has selected Kirk Schaunaman of rural Aberdeen to fill the open seat in District 6. Schaunaman was one of two candidates who applied for the

Schaunaman is a farmer and rancher and runs a grain and livestock operation with his family southwest of Aberdeen. In 2018, the Schaunaman family was named the Farm Family of the Year by the Farm Forum at the Aberdeen Area Chamber of Commerce Ag Appreciation Banquet.

Schaunaman's father, Don Schaunaman (1973-1982), and grandfather, Henry Schaunaman (1948-1961), have both served on the Northern Electric Board of Directors. Kirk's aunt, Trudy Schaunaman, also served on the Northern Electric board from 1991-2000. However, Kirk said it was service and not legacy that drove him to apply for the open board position.

"Our family has been very community and civic-minded," Schaunaman said. "Our family serves on a lot of boards and does a lot of committee work and a lot of community work so it's a good fit."

Schaunaman currently sits on the Farmers

Union Industries board and is a delegate for Agtegra Cooperative. Schaunaman is also a Class I graduate of the South Dakota Agricultural and Rural Leadership (SDARL) Foundation. Schaunaman has also served on numerous boards in the past including the South Dakota Corn Utilization Council, Brown County Extension, Brown County Farm Service Agency (FSA), and Farmers Union.

The Northern Electric Board of Directors interviewed both Schaunaman and applicant Burt Elliott in October to fill the vacancy. The board appointed Schaunaman to fill the open seat during the October 24 board meeting. Schaunaman will serve the remaining ten months of Kienow's term and must take out a petition in July of 2020 if he intends to remain on the board of directors.

Schaunaman and his wife Kim have three adult daughters.

Rhodes Honored As Scholar of the Week

Aberdeen Central High School Senior Lauren Rhodes believes it is easy to stay motivated and excel in the classroom when you like your classes.

"I choose classes I am really interested in," Rhodes said. "It is really easy to keep up with things when you enjoy what you are doing."

Rhodes has a 4.32-grade point average and was named the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week on November 4 for her achievements. She is currently taking several advanced placement (AP) courses including AP literature, AP science, and AP history.

"I think it is a really big honor," Rhodes said about receiving the Scholar of the Week.

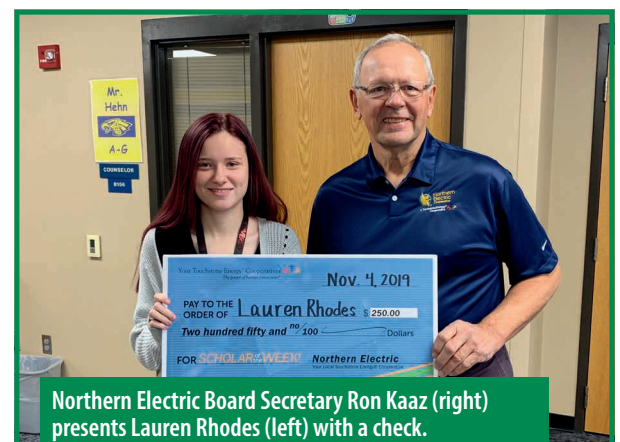
Outside the classroom, Rhodes competed in the National Speech and Debate Tour-

nament in Dallas, Texas, this past summer. She is also involved in the Model UN and LGBT clubs at Aberdeen Central.

Rhodes would like to attend college in California after she graduates from Aberdeen Central. She will be studying biology and hopes to pursue a career as an orthopedic surgeon.

"Northern Electric Cooperative salutes Lauren and all students who set an example of hard work and high academic standards," Northern Electric Cooperative Communications Director Ben Dunsmoor said.

Rhodes received a \$250 check from Northern Electric Cooperative and was



Northern Electric Board Secretary Ron Kaaz (right) presents Lauren Rhodes (left) with a check.

featured on KSFY Television for being named the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week. Since the Scholar of the Week program began, more than \$80,000 in scholarships have been awarded to more than 500 students throughout eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota.



CELEBRATE THE SEASON AND THE SAVINGS

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

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

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

RE-ENERGIZING EFFICIENCY



Keeping Good Cheer

Holiday Safety and Crime Protection

National Neighborhood Watch

<https://nnw.org/holiday-safety>

The jolly man in red is the only visitor that's supposed to be entering homes stealthily this Christmas, shimmying down chimneys and stealing bites of cookies washed down with gulps of milk.

But, for too many, St. Nick isn't the only unexpected holiday visitor. Porch pirates are stealing holiday joy and other criminals are itching to find untended digital portals into homes.

A 2017 study titled "Package Theft Report: Porch Pirates, Purchase Habits and privacy" by Schorr.com found that nearly 1 in 3 Americans say they have experienced package theft. A separate study by www.insurancequotes.com found that around 25.9 million Americans have had a package delivered during the holiday shopping season stolen, up from 23.5 million reported porch thefts in 2015.

General Holiday Safety and Crime Prevention Tips

Courtesy of the Knoxville, Tenn., Police Department

At Home

- Make sure all doors and windows have secondary locks (window pins, deadbolts, dowels, etc.) and use them!
- Don't hide spare keys in mailboxes or planters or under doormats.
- Ensure that dark areas and entrances have outdoor lights that are turned on after dark or are activated by sensors.
- Keep trees and shrubbery trimmed so they do not conceal doors and windows. Remember, overgrown foliage can provide a hiding place for criminals.
- Place gifts where they can't be seen from the outside.



Packages left on doorsteps can attract holiday thieves.

- Consider safe deposit boxes for coin and stamp collections, seldom-worn jewelry, stock bonds, etc.
- Be sure to mail cards, checks or gift certificates from the Post Office or at a blue U.S. Postal Service collection box.
- Lock your vehicle and remove all the valuables. Yes, even in your driveway.

Strangers at Your Door

- Use caution anytime there is a stranger at your door.
- Be suspicious of unexpected sales calls or deliveries. Ask for identification.
- Be aware of scams that criminals commit to take advantage of people's generosity during the holidays.

Avoid Porch Theft:

Five tips to Protect Your Packages

- Network with Neighbors
- Have Packages Delivered to Work
- Leave Specific Drop-off Instructions
- Use a Smart Lock
- Install Security Cameras

Keeping Your Devices Secure

- **Use Security Software.** Install anti-virus software, anti-spyware software and a firewall. Set your preference to update these protections often. Installing these types of programs will help protect against intrusions and infections that can compromise your computer files and passwords. These programs install security patches for your operating system and other software programs.
- **Avoid Phishing Emails.** Don't open files, click on links or download programs sent by strangers. Opening a file from someone you don't know could expose your system to a computer virus or spyware that captures your passwords or other information you type.
- **Be Wise about Wi-Fi.** Before you send personal information over your laptop or smartphone on a public wireless network in a coffee shop, library, airport, hotel or other public place, see if your information will be protected. If you use an encrypted website, it protects only the information you send to and from that site. If you use a secure wireless network, all the information you send on that network is protected.
- **Lock Up Your Laptop.** Keep financial information on your laptop only when necessary. Don't use an automatic login feature that saves your user name and password and always log off when you're finished. That way, if your laptop is stolen, it will be harder for a thief to get at your personal information.
- **Read Privacy Policies.** Yes, they can be long and complex, but they tell you how the site maintains accuracy, access, security and control of the personal information it collects; how it uses the information and whether it provides information to third parties. If you don't see or understand a site's privacy policy, consider doing business elsewhere.



Outdoor decorations can also be targets of holiday grinch.

- Investigate charities before making donations. Ask how the funds will be used.

Leaving for the Holidays

- Ask a trusted friend, neighbor or Neighborhood Watch member to watch your home.
- Use timers for lights and radios while you're away.
- Remember to make arrangements for mail and newspapers.

After the Holidays

- Don't advertise expensive toys, electronics or other gifts received by the boxes left for garbage collections. Compress large boxes and place them in black garbage bags for pick-up.
- Add new items to your home inventory. Take photos or video of all items of value in your home and list each item's make, model, serial number and other information.
- Engrave new items to help identify them in the event they are stolen.

What to do if you've become a victim of a porch pirate

- Check with your delivery company to make sure your package was actually delivered.
- Know exactly what's in the missing box.
- If you see the thief, pay attention to

Six Ways to Grinch-Proof Your Holiday Light Displays

- **Shut down at night**
- **Set up surveillance**
- **Crime-proof your yard**
- **Consider bringing in valuable items at night**
- **Stay connected**
- **Report, report, report**

what his or her vehicle looks like and its license plate number. Second to that, get the thief's physical description – gender, approximate height and weight and what they're wearing – so you can tell an officer.

- Call 911 and ask for an officer to come to your home.
- If you have a security camera on your home, get a copy of the video to police. Ask your neighbors if their cameras captured the thief in action.

Source: National Neighborhood Watch, A Division of the National Sheriffs' Association



Wall Elementary students eat their lunch, complete with locally raised beef.

BEEF: IT'S FOR LUNCH

Beef to School Program Launched

Jocelyn Romey

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Local beef is on the lunchtime menu for Wall, S.D., students, thanks to the efforts – and donations – of local producers and businesses.

“We consider this a must-do for the kids and our community,” said Ken Charfauros, owner of Wall Meats Processing, who with others, spearheaded the Beef to School program in the school in January 2019.

The program has grown from that first 90-pounds of locally raised beef eaten by more than 200 students in the school. It is now a sustainable program in Wall and serves as an example to area schools that value the educational and financial benefits of serving up beef from local ranches. Other South Dakota schools currently in the pilot phase of implementing this program are in Custer, Edgemont, Faith, New Underwood and Philip.

In 2018, Wall Meats Processing partnered with the school, Wall FFA and the Ag Committee of Wall Economic Development Corporation to plan and implement the project. Three months later, ranchers began donating the beef and Wall Meat Processing contributed the cost of processing and delivering. This community partnership has grown more effective and continues to provide



U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson joined Wall students for lunch to learn about the district's Beef to School program.

local beef to the school district.

Wall Economic Development believes that the purpose of this project is to provide an educational opportunity and help develop the local economy. Students receive an education on what they eat and where it comes from. They are also able to actively learn about beef nutrition through outreach conversations.

“This program is a good educational piece for FFA students and a good project for future farmers,” said Charfauros.

But it’s not just the students who are learning. Charfauros said his staff and those involved in developing this program are also learning how to effectively cut healthy meat selections that fit every schools’ requirements. The Wall School District requires meat that has a 90 percent lean to 10 percent fat ratio. However, other schools who are in the pilot phase of the program may require different ratios. How the meat is cut and delivered is determined by local schools as well as federal and state regulations.

Another purpose of this program is to benefit the community. Charfauros commented that the local economy profits when local people buy local things and



that money is saved when the school district does not have to pay federal fees for meat being delivered from out of state.

“The major thing about local food is that it helps your local economy. That money goes back to the community and gets spent several times,” said local rancher Josh Geigle, who participated in the Wall Beef to School program.

Due to the current success of the Beef to School program, South Dakota’s leadership is taking notice. State Rep. Johnson

and Sens. Thune and Rounds along with the South Dakota Governor’s Office of Economic Development reached out to Charfauros to discuss the programs achievements. From Charfauros’ outreach, more school districts are showing interest in adopting the program and promoting beef nutrition, student education and local economic development.

“This is an outreach program to our communities, our producers and our kids,” Charfauros said.



Members of the Wall FFA Chapter along with area beef producers, the Wall Economic Development Corporation and Wall Meats Processing partnered with the Wall School District to implement the Wall Beef to School program in 2018.

October 19-January 5

Pheasant Hunting Season, Statewide, Pierre, SD, 605-223-7660

November 15-December 18

Black Hills Christmas Tree Permit Season, Custer, SD, 605-673-9200

November 22-23

Holiday Arts Christmas Craft Show, Masonic Hall, Mitchell, SD, 605-359-2049

November 22-January 5

Winter Wonderland, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-275-6060

November 23-24

Winterfest: A Winter Arts Festival, Aberdeen, SD, 605-226-1557

November 26-December 26

Christmas at the Capitol, Pierre, SD, 605-773-3178

November 29

Annual Holiday Open House, Cultural Heritage Center, Pierre, SD, 605-773-3458

November 29-30

1880 Train Holiday Express, Hill City, SD, 605-574-2222

November 30

Holiday Celebration and Winter Market, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

December 6-7, 12-14, 19-21

Strawbale Winery Twilight Flights, Renner, SD, 605-543-5071

December 7

Christmas in the Village Craft Fair, Community Center, Oacoma, SD, Contact Leslie at 605-730-1076

**December 14: Frontier Christmas,
Lake City, SD, 605-448-5474**

Photo courtesy: travelouthakota.com

December 7

Holidazzle Light Parade, Spearfish, SD, 605-717-9294

December 7

Rapid City Garden Club's 58th Annual Wreath & Centerpiece Sale, Canyon Lake Activity Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-343-0710

December 7-8

Living Christmas Tree, Civic Arena, Aberdeen, SD, 605-229-6349

**December 7-8, 14-15,
21-24 and 27-28**

1880 Train Holiday Express, Hill City, SD, 605-574-2222

December 14-15

Black Hills Cowboy Christmas, Lead, SD, 605-584-2067

December 15-March 31

South Dakota snowmobile trails season, Lead, SD, 605-584-3896

December 31

Make-A-Wish New Year's Eve Benefit and Dance, Ramkota Hotel & Convention Center, Doors Open at 7 p.m., Aberdeen, SD, 605-370-4588

January 7-9

Dakota Farm Show, Vermillion, SD, 800-873-1411

January 16-17

Media One Funski, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-339-0000

January 24-25

Pro Snocross Races, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

January 25

31st Annual Living History Fair 2020, A trade fair with historic arts, crafts, displays, museums and clubs representing times of A.D. 1000 to A.D.1890, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Lake Area Technical Institute, Watertown SD, 605-693-4589 or christy@cchsmuseum.org

January 31-February 9

Annual Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo, Rapid City, SD, 605-355-3861

March 14

28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride and Tour, Lead, SD, 605-641-4963

March 20-21, 27-28

Annual Schmeckfest, Freeman, SD, 605-925-4237

March 28

Annual Ag Day at the Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

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.