

Cooperative Connections



The Annual Buffalo Round Up at Custer State Park is one of many activities of interest for visitors to South Dakota

**SD Tourism
continues
steady pace**

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**Anglers in hot
pursuit of cold
fish**

Pages 12-13

Students Could Kick Off The New Year With A Scholarship

Free Money For 2021



Ben Dunsmoor

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Scholarships are a way to invest in the students who will be the future leaders of our co-ops and our communities.

Want a good way to kick off the new year?

How about some free money?

Northern Electric Cooperative and our generation and transmission cooperative – Basin Electric Power Cooperative - are investing in area youth as we begin to put the past year in the rearview mirror. Applications are now being accepted for the Basin Electric and Northern Electric 2021 scholarship programs.

Basin Electric is headquartered in Bismarck, North Dakota, and operates the power plants and generation resources that provide electricity to more than 140 member cooperatives across nine different states. Every year, Basin Electric awards a \$1,000 scholarship to a high school senior or college student from each of its member cooperatives. Northern Electric is a member cooperative of Basin Electric and has been offering this \$1,000 scholarship to students in our service territory for the past 30 years. Basin Electric has awarded more than 5,000 scholarships worth more than \$5 million since the scholarship program began three decades ago.

Northern Electric has also offered its own scholarship in conjunction with the Basin Electric scholarship program. Northern Electric began offering a \$500 scholarship in 1996 and has awarded \$12,500 worth of scholarships to students from our service territory over the past 25 years. Northern Electric also contributes additional money directly to scholarship funds at Northern State University and Presentation College every year so those institutions can help more students in the region.

Your local co-ops offer scholarships because it is the cooperative way. Locally owned and operated electric cooperatives were created by members of our local communities to serve our communities. Scholarships are a way to invest in the students who will be the future leaders of our co-ops and our communities.

Applying for both scholarships is easy. Students simply need to complete one Basin Electric scholarship application to be eligible for both scholarships. The scholarship application can be found on the Northern Electric website by visiting northernelectric.coop/scholarships. Applications can also be requested from the co-op offices in Bath and Redfield. The application deadline is February 12; however, the long upcoming holiday breaks present the perfect opportunity for high school seniors and college students to complete their applications. More information on the co-op scholarship programs can be found on **page 15** of this issue.

I would encourage students to consider applying for these scholarship opportunities in 2021. There is no better way to kick off the new year than with some free money from your local electric cooperative.



(USPS 396-040)

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

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NOVEMBER BOARD REPORT

Making, December 4, 2020.

- Reminded the board of the Mid-West Electric Consumers Assoc. 63rd Annual Meeting, December 9, via virtual format.
- Informed the board that the 2020 Northeast Rural Utilities Annual Legislative Issues Forum will be cancelled.

Board Report

The board considered and/or acted upon the following:

1. Approved the date and time of the next regular board meeting for 8:30 A.M. on Monday, December 21, 2020.
2. Approved payment of legal fees for Harvey Oliver in the amount of \$660.83.
3. Approved Work Order Inventory #20-10 for \$296,237.60 to be submitted to the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) for reimbursement from loan funds for electric plant construction already completed.
4. Authorized board attendance for the 2020 Winter School for Directors, on-line, December 14-17, 2020.
5. Authorized acceptance and execution of arrangement letter offered by Eide Bailly LLP to perform audit for the Cooperative and its subsidiary for the year ending December 31, 2020.
6. Set the 2021 Annual Meeting date for Tuesday, September 21.
7. Authorized limited attendance to the SDREA Annual Meeting, January 14-15, 2021, in Pierre.
8. Approved the 2021 Capital Budget.
9. Held Executive Session.

Please direct questions to your co-op director, manager, or staff member.

Northern Electric Cooperative's regular board meeting was held November 19, 2020, via video conference at the headquarters in Bath with all directors present. East River Electric CEO/GM Tom Boyko and East River Electric General Counsel Bob Sahr were guests for the meeting via video conference. As the first order of business, the board approved the October 22, 2020, minutes and October expenditures.

East River Director Mark Sumption reported on the East River board meeting held November 12. General Manager Char Hager reported on the East River MAC Meeting which was held November 10. South Dakota Rural Electric Association Director Nolan Wipf reported on the SDREA board meeting held November 13. Director Donna Sharp and Communications Director Ben Dunsmoor reported on the Basin Electric Annual Meeting and Members Only Meeting, held via virtual format November 4.

Manager's Report

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

- Update on development projects.
- Update on Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) revolving loan fund.
- Legal and Legislative Report
- Informed the board of upcoming NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) Courses 2600-Director Duties and Liabilities, 2610-Understanding the Electric Business and 2640-Financial Decision Making, March 9-11, 2021. Courses 2620-Board Operations & Process and 2630-Strategic Planning, August 24-25, 2021.
- Reminded the board of the NRECA Board Leadership Courses 905.1-Assessing Governance: Taking a Continuous Improvement Approach to Governing Your Co-op, December 3, 2020 and 977.1-Equity Management and Boardroom Decision

Financial Report		October 2020	October 2019
kWh Sales		24,529,980 kWh	22,923,865 kWh
Electric Revenues		\$2,200,021	\$2,198,987
Total Cost of Service		\$2,424,898	\$2,170,341
Operating Margins		(-\$224,877)	\$28,646
Year To Date Margins		\$389,252	\$384,969
Residential Average Monthly Usage and Bill			
October 2020	1,994 kWh	\$207.63	.1041 per kWh
October 2019	1,897 kWh	\$205.71	.1084 per kWh
Wholesale power cost, taxes, interest, and depreciation accounted for 80.6% of NEC's total cost of service.			

National Cut Your Energy Costs Day

If you resolved to spend less and save more in 2021, cutting back on a few regular expenses is a good place to start. Sunday, Jan. 10, is National Cut Your Energy Costs Day, so we've rounded up a few tips to help you trim your utility bills without making major lifestyle changes.

- **Cut heating and cooling costs.** We spend a great deal of energy heating our homes in the winter and keeping them cool in the summer, but are we really doing our best to minimize the cost of our comfort? A programmable thermostat can allow you to adjust the temperature when you're out of the house or sleeping. There's no reason to blast the heat when everyone is at work, and it's doubtful you need to sleep with the heat on high. So program your schedule into your thermostat, and it'll do all the work for you.
- **Watch out for energy draining appliances.** Big appliances like refrigerators, washers and dryers consume a lot of energy, so the next time you replace one of these appliances, upgrade to an energy-efficient Energy Star-certified model. These are designed to use much less energy than their older counterparts and often end up paying for themselves in savings over time. Keep these appliances clean and well maintained to ensure optimal performance and efficiency.
- **Pull the plug.** As we continue to be more and more "plugged in," it should come as no surprise that a greater proportion of our energy goes toward keeping our devices charged. To keep costs reasonable, plug electronics into a power strip and turn it off when they're not in use. This cuts off "phantom" usage and can save you a bundle. Some newer power strips even include an automatic shut-off feature.
- **Hit the lights.** As always, turn off the lights when leaving a room. You can also swap out light bulbs to increase your home's energy efficiency. Replace incandescent bulbs with LED versions for an easy and affordable way to save on electricity. Not only do LEDs last significantly longer, they also require much less energy.
- **Start with a simple home assessment.** Interested to know how your home's energy use compares to similar homes? Check out Energy Star's Home Energy Yardstick at energystar.gov to learn how much of your home's energy use is related to heating and cooling versus other appliance use, lighting and hot water.

Visit the new SDREA.coop

Want to know more about South Dakota's rural electric cooperative system? Check out our newly redesigned website at www.sdrea.coop. You'll find lots of useful information about our generation, transmission and distribution systems, energy efficiency ideas, legislative issues that impact electric rates, a statewide outage map and much more.



KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"Watch Out for Downed Power Lines!"

Gracie Richter, 9 years old

Gracie is a resident of Buffalo, S.D., and is the daughter of Jody Richter. They are members of Grand Electric Cooperative.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.

Warm and Cozy Soups

Tomato-Tortellini Soup

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 2 - 14 ounce cans
reduced-sodium chicken
broth | cheese spread with chive
and onion |
| 1 - 9 ounce package of
refrigerated tortellini | 1 - can tomato soup |
| 1 - 8 ounce tub cream | Fresh chives (optional) |

In a medium sauce pan bring broth to a boil. Add tortellini then reduce heat to simmer uncovered for 5 minutes. In a bowl whisk 1/3 cup of hot broth into the cream cheese spread. Whisk until smooth. Pour contents into sauce pan. Stir in tomato soup and heat through. Serve with fresh chives, if desired.

Family Features/Better Homes and Gardens

Slow Cooker Split Pea Soup

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1 lb. dried green split peas
(rinsed) | 2 cloves garlic, minced |
| 1 cup sliced carrots | 1 bay leaf |
| 2 stalks celery, diced, plus
leaves | 1/4 cup chopped parsley |
| 2 cups chopped onion | 6 cups chicken broth |
| | salt and pepper, to taste |

Layer ingredients in slow cooker in order given, adding broth last. DO NOT stir ingredients. Cover and cook on high for 4-5 hours or low for 8-10 hours until peas are very soft.

Gail Lyngstad, Pierre, SD

Baked Potato Soup

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2/3 cup butter | 6 slices of bacon, cooked
and crumbled |
| 2/3 cup flour | 1-1/2 cups shredded sharp
cheddar cheese |
| 7 cups milk | 1 cup sour cream |
| 4 to 6 baked potatoes,
peeled and cooled | 3/4 teaspoon salt |
| 4 green onions chopped | 1/2 teaspoon pepper |

Melt butter, add flour and stir until smooth. Add milk and stir. Add potatoes and onion. Cook until mixture comes to a boil. Turn to low heat immediately and add bacon, cheese, sour cream, salt and pepper. Stir well. Makes 1 crockpot full.

Terri Halstead, Sioux Falls, SD

Clam Chowder

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 4 slices thick bacon cut and
fried | 4 cans 6.5 oz. minced clams
(save juice) |
| 1 onion | 1 15-oz. can chicken broth |
| 1 cup celery | 2 potatoes |
| 1/3 cup flour | 2 cups cream |
| 1 tsp. pepper | 1 bay leaf |

Cut and fry bacon. Add diced onion and celery and cook about five minutes. Stir in 1/3 cup flour using the drained clam juice until slightly thick. Add 1 teaspoon pepper, one can broth, 4 cans clams, 2 diced potatoes and one bay leaf. Cook until potatoes are tender, about 10 minutes. Add cream. Enjoy!

Sharon Waltner, Freeman, SD

My Mother's Tomato Soup

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 2 cups tomato juice or
pureed canned tomatoes | 1 qt. milk |
| 1/2 tsp. soda | salt to taste |
| | 1 tbsp. butter |

Combine tomatoes or juice with soda in a saucepan. Let froth up. Add milk, salt and butter. Heat and serve.

Doris Ekberg, Hamill, SD

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 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

This Year, Organize Your Energy



Pat Keegan

Collaborative Efficiency

If you plan to live in your home for many years to come, hiring an energy auditor may be the best investment you can make.

Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency write on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56% of the nation's landscape. For additional energy tips and information on Collaborative Efficiency visit: www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips.

Dear Pat and Brad: Last year brought financial hardships, and with a new year ahead, I'm looking for new ways to save money. I know there are things I can do to save energy at home and lower my monthly bills. Can you share a few ideas on how to start the year off right by saving energy? – Amy

Dear Amy: You bet! Here are a few simple tips to help you get organized and start an achievable path to saving energy. First, we'll take a look at three important steps when considering energy efficiency projects: information gathering, planning and taking action.

Start by gathering information. Begin by reviewing your 2019 energy bills. Knowing how and when you use energy can help you decide how ambitious your plan should be. If you have questions about your past bills or energy use, give your electric co-op a call - they're available to help you understand your energy bills. Your co-op may also offer a free app that can show you exact data about your home energy use.

Next, visit your electric co-op's website to see if they offer additional assistance, like energy improvement rebates, free energy audits or other special rates and programs.

Finally, the most important step is to schedule an energy audit, or conduct an online energy audit. (Remember: your electric co-op may offer free audits.) If you plan to live in your home for many years to come, hiring an energy auditor may be the best investment you can make. An energy auditor can tell you which energy efficiency actions will save you the most money or provide the biggest improvement in comfort. If you're looking for a faster, DIY (socially distanced) method, try an online energy audit like energystar.gov's Home Energy Yardstick.

Develop a plan. Now that you've gathered the information you need, you can develop a plan. It can be simple or more comprehensive. If your priority is cutting energy costs, you can select the measure that will deliver the most savings. Maybe you're already planning to do work on your home, such as roofing or renovating, and you can incorporate energy efficiency strategies into that project. To complete your plan, you'll likely need to check with local contractors or suppliers about costs.

Take action. Now that your planning is done, it's time to take action. If you're tackling any major energy efficiency projects that require a contractor, remember to do your research and hire a licensed, reputable professional.

In addition to energy efficiency projects and upgrades, there are other ways you can get organized to save energy:

- **Replace filters regularly.** A clean filter can improve the performance of your heating and cooling system, and reduce the electricity needed to pump air through your ductwork. Replace the filter now if it's been a while, then set a reminder on your phone, online calendar or paper calendar for the next replacement. Filters should be replaced every month if you're using an inexpensive filter, or every three months if you're using a higher-quality filter. A better filter will do a better job and last longer.
- **Program your thermostat.** Heating and cooling your home account for the most energy use, so setting your thermostat to match your lifestyle can make a major difference. If you don't have a programmable or smart thermostat, get in the habit of manually adjusting your thermostat throughout the day or setting it to the most energy efficient setting when you're away.
- **Label the circuits in your breaker box.** It may not reduce your energy use, but it's an easy way to get organized and will save a lot of headaches down the line!

We hope by taking a little time to complete these steps, you'll be well on your way to a more energy efficient 2021!

Indigenous Front Man Mato Nanji Eager to Get Back on the Road

Billy Gibson

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Mato Nanji is too gentle of spirit to be compared to a lion looking to leap out of a cage.

But ever since the blues and rock guitarist was blocked from touring by COVID-19 restrictions, he's been positively itching to get back out on the road.

Nanji, the front man for the band Indigenous, was reared on the Yankton Sioux Reservation. And that's where he's been sidelined since the coronavirus disrupted the highly popular Experience Jimi Hendrix tour last spring.

The soulful guitar slinger was in his prime element traveling around the country playing with some of his heroes, including former Hendrix bandmate Billy Cox, David Hidalgo of Los Lobos and Louisiana-born blues legend Buddy Guy. But last spring he returned to southeast South Dakota and has been spending ample time with his wife and collaborator, Leah, and their five children.

One of those children is 20-year-old Evan, who has joined Indigenous on rhythm guitar, along with Nanji's childhood friends Curt Olsen on drums and Justin Cournoyer on bass. They've been composing new songs, working on developing their sound and plan to do some touring of their own after the pandemic subsides.

"It's been great being here and being back home with family," said Nanji, 46. "I've been out playing since I was 18, so it's good to have a break. But I can't wait for the next opportunity to get out on the road. It's in my blood."

Music really is in Nanji's blood. He was inspired to pursue music by his father, who introduced him to the work of artists like Otis Redding, Jimmy Reed and Carlos

Santana. A big source of inspiration was the late Stevie Ray Vaughn and his band Double Trouble.

When on tour with the Experience Hendrix show, Nanji often finds himself sharing the stage with Double Trouble bassist Tommy Shannon and drummer Chris "Whipper" Layton.

"Chris and Tommy are great guys and very talented," Nanji said. "I remember I was about 15 when Stevie Ray came through Sioux Falls, but I didn't get to see him. He inspired thousands of players. My dad brought home the album 'Couldn't Stand the Weather' and said, 'Check this out.' It blew me away. He had such a great feeling and vibe. It's an honor for me to play with members of his band and try to capture that tone. It's very inspiring for me."

Vaughn died in a helicopter crash not long after that Sioux Falls tour stop.

Along with getting Indigenous back into top form and headlining some of the Native American fair and festival events around the country, Nanji said he also has another goal to have the Experience Hendrix tour make a stop in South Dakota next year.

"It's an incredible show and I feel honored to play with such outstanding musicians," he said. "It's a special event and it's something I want to bring to the fans in



Indigenous front man Mato Nanji is eager to get back on tour with his band Indigenous in 2021. Photo courtesy of Experience Hendrix Tour.

South Dakota. I think it's something they'd really enjoy. It's good to come back home and be around people you grew up with."

In the meantime, Nanji will continue composing, collaborating and co-writing with Leah. They grew up together on the Yankton Reservation - which he calls his "base" - and were high school sweethearts. Leah typically comes up with a melody and then Mato fills in with the musical hooks, themes, tempos and riffs.

More than anything, he's grateful to be able to integrate his musical pursuits and the closeness of his family.

"Evan is a great kid. He's talented, and it's a thrill to have him in the band," he said. "Leah is also a great talent and always has new and refreshing ideas. A lot of musicians are into going out to parties after the show. I like going out, playing, and then coming home to my family."

Tourism in South Dakota has remained robust despite the impact of the global pandemic.
Photos courtesy of the SD Tourism Department.

SD TOURISM GOING STRONG

Tired of Being Shut In: Visitors Flock to South Dakota

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Probably the last time a member of the Hustead family was worried about going broke, it was back in the 1930s.

Ted and Dorothy Hustead had just purchased a small drug store in Wall and were having a hard time getting the business to grow in the middle of a severe drought and the Great Depression.

The business that went on to become known as Wall Drug has been named one of the busiest tourist attractions in the northern part of the country. The prospects of the Husteads going broke have been very slim since the store hit its stride.

That is until last March.

Third-generation owner Rick Hustead won't lie: he was downright worried that Wall Drug might bite the dust when COVID-19 prompted lockdowns and travel restrictions.

The entire operation – the stores, the restaurants, the galleries and even the free ice water – came grinding to a stop for 71 days just as the travel season was about to kick into gear.

"I was afraid we might go broke and we might not make it. They're projecting that half of the restaurants out there are going to close down permanently," Hustead said. "We were closed that whole time and had to cut back on our employees because we felt that trying to 'flatten the curve' was the right thing to do."

The business reported losses through the summer, but returned to the black in August due in part to traffic from the Sturgis motorcycle rally. Hustead reported that September and October also showed considerable increases over 2019 numbers.

"People just got tired of being shut in and they got in their cars and on their motorcycles and their RVs and came to South Dakota," he said, noting that even President Trump made his way to Mount Rushmore for a Fourth of July gathering.



The annual Buffalo Round Up at Custer State Park continues to attract visitors from throughout the country.

The Thing I Love Most about Living in South Dakota is...

What do you love most about living in South Dakota? Share your thoughts with us (200 words or less) and you could win a \$25 gift card!

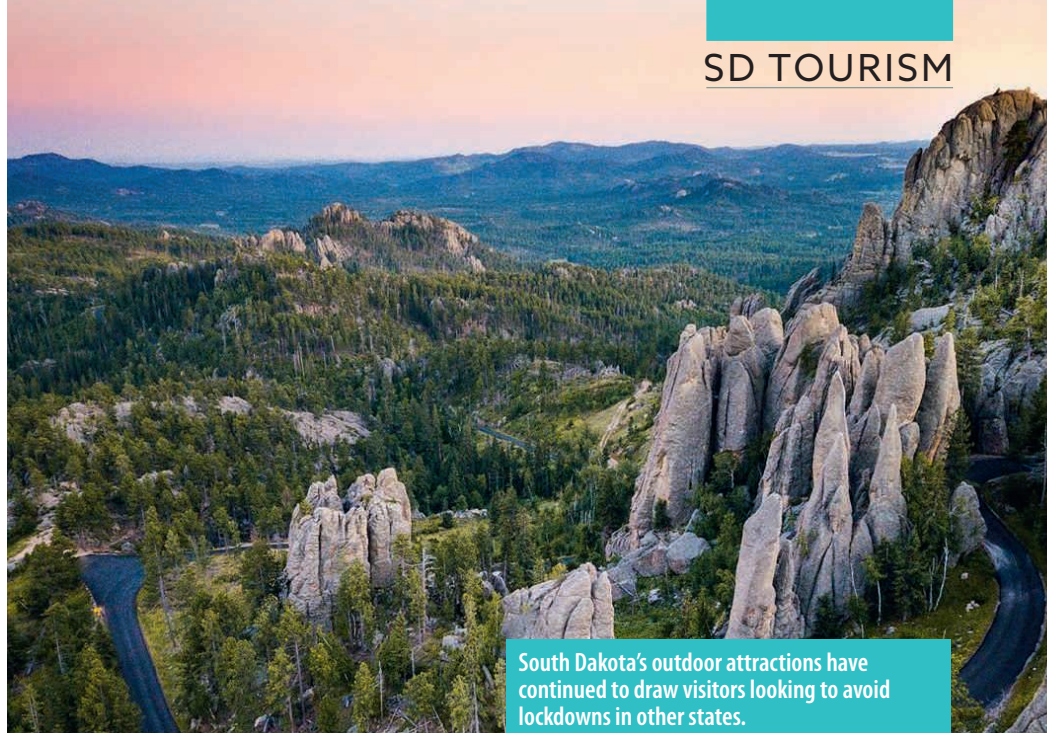
Send your response to editor@sdrea.coop by Jan. 4, and don't forget to include your contact information.

Hustead said he took public safety measures such as installing Plexiglas barriers, posting hand-sanitizer stations and requiring that employees wear masks. He said no employees have been known to contract the coronavirus. The bottom line also received a boost from some federal relief money.

Once the financial fog lifted, Hustead called his mother Marjorie – who is in a care facility in Rapid City but is “still involved in the business” – and told her he felt Wall Drug was going to make it through the crisis after all.

“I told her, ‘Mom, I think we’re going to make it.’ And that made her happy,” Hustead said.

He was quick to heap praise on the South Dakota Office of Tourism and leader Jim Hagen.



South Dakota's outdoor attractions have continued to draw visitors looking to avoid lockdowns in other states.

In assessing the state of tourism in South Dakota, officials paint a picture similar to Hustead. While many annual events have been canceled or postponed to a later date, outdoor events and activities such as Sturgis, walleye fishing, pheasant hunting and the many outdoor tourist attractions have led to a healthy industry performance and outlook.

Hagen's office has also taken the initiative to develop innovative programs to ensure that South Dakota stays top-of-mind when people throughout the region and nation make their travel plans.

The department recently launched an on-line learning program for children and their families to learn more about South Dakota and experience the attractions of the state from the comfort of their homes or in a classroom setting. There are eight virtual pages that allow site visitors to learn more about the icons, wildlife, people and history of the state, each featuring games and activities for the entire family to explore.

“These online lessons provide an opportunity to educate children and adults alike about our state's Great Faces and Great Places,” said Gov. Kristi Noem. “We hope that they are used as a tool to engage families

and inspire them to explore our great state.”

The department also partnered with Badlands National Park to promote its virtual Junior Ranger program. Once the virtual exploration is complete, kids can become official Badlands National Park Junior Rangers.

Last summer, the department teamed up with tourism officials in Wyoming to develop a program called “Black to Yellow” to entice travelers to explore scenic routes that wind from the Badlands National Park to Wyoming's iconic Yellowstone National Park.

To help travelers plan their trip, the states put together itineraries that explore their most well-known attractions and lesser-known gems. From taking in roadside stops, like Wall Drug and Wyoming's Devils Tower, to exploring the scenery of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area and Badlands National Park, travelers were encouraged to explore the beauty of the states' wide open spaces, unparalleled wildlife and the freedom of the open road.

State tourism leaders will meet in Pierre on Jan. 20-21 for the 2021 Governor's Conference on Tourism. There will be limited in-person engagement as well as an online attendance option. The theme for this year's meeting is, “Onward!” While 2020 could have been worse, leaders are hoping that travel will continue to be a significant economic driver in the state.



Business & Development BULLETIN

Have an idea for a business or development story?

Submit your ideas to editor Ben Dunsmoor at bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop or call 605-225-0310.

New Business Hopes To Hit The Bullseye

Hub City Axe Throwing Opened In November

Ben Dunsmoor

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A simple form of entertainment for early frontiersmen and lumberjacks is becoming a new way to relieve modern-day stress and be competitive with family and friends. Axe throwing is growing in popularity across the country and an Aberdeen couple hopes their business will be on the cutting edge of the sport.

"I compare it to golf. It is all about muscle memory and being able to repeat the motion."

"It's a new thing so people have a lot of questions," Hub City Axe Throwing owner Ryan Perrion said.

Ryan and Amanda Perrion of Aberdeen opened Hub City Axe Throwing on November 27. The couple has spent the past two months building eight axe throwing lanes in the old Radio Shack location at Uptown Aberdeen; formerly known as the Aberdeen Mall.



Ryan Perrion and his wife Amanda are the owners of Hub City Axe Throwing.

The journey to open the business started about a year ago when the Perrions planned to travel to Minnesota to try twirling a few axes at a Twin Cities business. The trip never happened but they became interested in the new entertainment option again this past spring during the COVID-19 shutdown.

"We were looking for something to do and I put a target up in our backyard," Ryan Perrion said.

The Perrions started to sharpen their skills throughout the spring and became more curious about the sport of axe throwing.



Hub City Axe Throwing opened its doors on November 27 at Uptown Aberdeen (formerly Aberdeen Mall).



Hub City Axe Throwing has eight lanes where interested axe throwers can aim for the bullseye.

"We spent a lot of time looking at websites because we couldn't go anywhere," Ryan said. "I got to watch the 2019 world championships and thought this was pretty cool how can we bring that type of excitement here (to Aberdeen)?"

The Perrions looked for a space to start a league and received encouragement to open a standalone location specifically for axe throwing. They got the keys to the old Radio Shack location on October 15 and opened Hub City Axe Throwing by the end of November. Northern Electric Cooperative provides the power for the new business.

"I got to watch the 2019 world championships and thought this was pretty cool how can we bring that type of excitement here (to Aberdeen)."

Interested axe throwers can reserve lanes at Hub City Axe Throwing by visiting the business's website at hubcityaxethrowing.com. The Perrions are also looking forward

to starting several axe throwing leagues during the upcoming winter. Hub City Axe Throwing is an official affiliate of the World Axe Throwing League (WATL). The only other WATL affiliates in South Dakota are located in Sioux Falls and Rapid City.

"That's how we started this, we really wanted to start a league environment," Ryan Perrion said.

Hub City Axe Throwing offers some basic concessions along with beer and other non-alcoholic beverages. The main focus of the business is getting others across the region interested in the sport.

"I compare it to golf. It is all about muscle memory and being able to repeat the motion," Perrion said.

And, according to Perrion the key to the sport is the same trait needed to start a new business.

"Patience," Perrion said. "Just get it (the axe) to stick the first time."

More information about Hub City Axe Throwing can be found on the business's website hubcityaxethrowing.com and on its Facebook page at: facebook.com/hubcityaxethrowing

RECIPES NEEDED FOR THE COUNTRY COOKIN' COOKBOOK

Your recipe could be featured in the 37th volume of East River Electric's Country Cookin' cookbook!

Help us create another great cookbook by submitting your favorite recipes.

Submit recipes via email to ahall@eastriver.coop, fax to 605-256-8057, or contact your local cooperative for more information.

Submission deadline is January 12, 2021.





Ice fishing is a pursuit that's enjoyed each winter by South Dakotans of every stripe.

Guys, Gals and Castles on Ice

South Dakotans Stay in Hot Pursuit of Cold Fish

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

What happens if you hold an ice fishing tournament and it turns out there's no ice?

You improvise.

That's what organizers of the annual Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament had to do 10 years ago when Mother Nature refused to cooperate and left them scrambling to come up with a Plan B.

At that time, the tournament was just gaining traction as a main winter attraction for Mobridge. No one dreamed that what started as just a handful of anglers vying to win an ice auger has grown into a field that's capped at 525 two-person teams arriving from 16 different states.

Jeff Jackson is owner of the Wrangler Inn in Mobridge and one of the founders of the tournament marking its 20th anniversary this year. He remembers a bit of panic setting in when hundreds of fishermen were scheduled to descend on Mobridge and the ice on the Missouri River wasn't thick enough to ensure the safety of competitors. Fortunately, the organizing committee had scheduled enough attractions and activities around the one-day tournament that there was plenty for the eager visitors to do.

"We got the word out that the competition was canceled, but 420 out of the 450 teams that were registered showed up anyway," Jackson recalls. "They wanted to come and have a good time."

Those non-angling activities included raffles and prize drawings, an expo featuring all the latest fishing gear, gizmos and gadgets, and according to Jackson, lots of libations.

"People keep coming back year after year," Jackson said, noting that the town's population doubles in the second week of each January. "We've had to limit the number of participants so we have an Ebay auction for three spots that can go as high as \$3,000, and we have another lottery drawing for 26 spots where we usually have up to 800 names."

Instead of a simple ice auger as a grand prize, today the tournament gives away roughly \$225,000 in prizes, including Ice



Hundreds were in attendance at the Dakota Anglers Fishing Expo in Sioux Falls. Photo provided by Dakota Angler.



Castles, four-wheelers, a Polaris Ranger, \$5,000 worth of Scheel's gear, \$3,000 in Runnings gear, clam shacks and more.

The tournament is a boon for Mobridge, bringing an economic impact of \$500,000. According to Jesse Konold, chairman of the town's tourism committee, over the past four years proceeds paid for South Dakota's first climate-controlled indoor fish cleaning station, ADA compliant bathrooms, improvements to the town's rodeo grounds and more than \$100,000 in donations to local non-profits. This year's tournament will be held Jan. 7-9 at the Sherr-Howe Center in Mobridge.

Not Everyone is Hooked

Among the state's population of electric cooperative linemen, there are many who look forward to chasing walleye in winter. In Josh Lemburg's case, the term "chasing" walleye would be close to accurate.

Lemburg, operations foreman at Moreau-Grand Electric who lives in Timber Lake, prefers to stay on the move when he fishes on the ice. Eschewing the "ice castle" approach that calls for staking out a spot and staying put for the weekend, Lemburg uses a portable flip-over shack and keeps his auger close at hand.

"Ice castles are fun, but I'm not afraid to move around and dig holes," he said. "If I'm not catching fish in an hour, I'll 'run-and-gun' til I find them."

Even with his "move-and-groove" approach, Lemburg has failed to get his entire family sold on the merits of ice fishing. Even hooking a lunker walleye didn't

convince his son to swear a life-long oath to ice fishing.

Several years ago, Lemburg took his dad and his elementary-age kids, Landon and Kendal, out on the ice. His dad and daughter were in one shack and he and Landon were in the other. After a few hours, just as Landon was getting bored and ready to call it a day, a walleye snatched his bait.

"Landon had his line in the water and I saw a big mark on my Vexilar," Lemburg recalls. "I told him he had a big fish on the line but he just gave me his pole and said he wasn't interested. I kept trying to get him to reel it in, but he kept giving me the pole back. Finally, I got the fish to the surface I looked in the hole and there was nothing but fish. My dad reached down in the water to his armpits and it was a 12-pound walleye."

Brent Reilley is an electrician at Selby-based Cam Wal Electric, which serves the Mobridge area. Over the past 20 years, he has only missed the tournament twice - once when he had to decide between ice fishing and a week in Cancun.

He and his wife, Tandy, have actually both claimed titles at the prestigious Mobridge tournament. One particular year the husband-and-wife duo were on separate teams. Brent was on the first-place team and Tandy and her partner placed second. But Tandy believes she has her



Above, hundreds attend the Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament each year. Below, "ice castles" bring comfort and convenience to the sport.



husband beat: her second-place finish was clinched by reeling in a 25-inch walleye while she was six months pregnant.

The two have always had pretty good luck with the raffles and random prize drawings as well. Tandy won a side-by-side one year and a family friend has won two four-wheelers.

"We just love being outdoors in the winter when there's nothing else to do," Reilley said. "You can get outside and enjoy the fresh air. It gets cold, but it beats sitting inside and it's something great to do with the family. My son is addicted. He'd love it if all he could do is fish all day."

ELECTRIC CO-OPS COMMIT TO RELIABLE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY FUTURE

Northern Electric Cooperative is a member of a large cooperative network that is making a commitment to renewable energy and positioning itself as a stable and reliable source of power in 2021 and beyond.

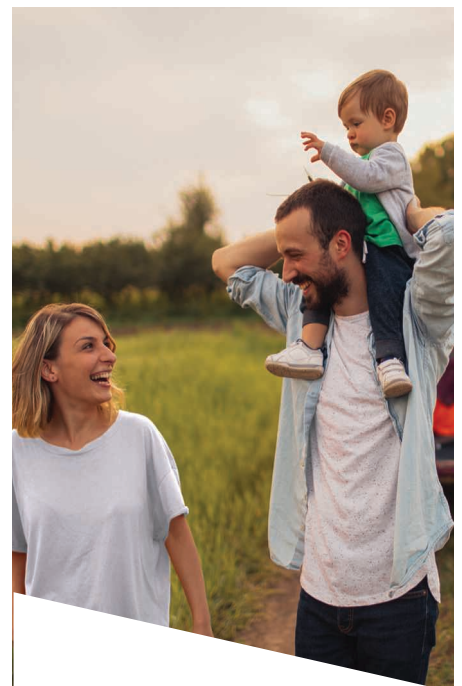
In December, Basin Electric Power Cooperative announced it has purchase agreements for two utility-scale solar projects in the state of South Dakota. The West River Solar Project was unveiled at the end of 2020 and will be a 20-megawatt solar project near the Rapid City airport. Basin Electric also has a purchase agreement with the 128-megawatt Wild Springs Solar Project in Pennington County. The Public Utilities Commission approved the construction permit for that project in December. These two projects will add solar generation to the diverse energy mix that flows down to Northern Electric members at the end of the line.

Northern Electric receives its electricity from wholesale power provider East River Electric Power Cooperative and its

resilient grid of transmission lines and substations throughout eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota. East River purchases power from Basin Electric Power Cooperative. This three-tier cooperative network was set up in the 1940's and 1950's to ensure distribution electric cooperatives can supply a consistent and stable supply of power to homes, farms, and businesses in the region.

One of the seven principles of a cooperative is "cooperation among cooperatives." The co-op-owned power supply system that has been in place in South Dakota for decades demonstrates the strength of that principle. The family of co-ops have signed long-term contracts as a promise between neighbors to work together in the best interest of all members.

The evolving generation mix and commitment to future solar projects in South Dakota is proof that the co-op system continues to explore all avenues for affordable and reliable power for its members.



**RE-
ENERGIZING
CO-OP MEMBERSHIP**

**YOUR VOICE. YOUR
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The best part about being a member of your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative is just that ... it's YOUR cooperative. That means:

- One member = One vote
- You have a say
- Your co-op answers to you
- Invested in community
- Capital credits (get money back!)



Learn more about the power of membership at
YourCoopPower.com

How to Apply

- **Scholarship Eligibility**

Applicants must be U.S. citizens, under the age of 25, and natural or adopted children of Northern Electric Cooperative consumers/members. Any applicant must be a student who is enrolled, or planning to enroll, in a full-time graduate or undergraduate course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university, or vocational/technical school.

- **How the Selection Process Works**

All applications are critically evaluated using a combination of several criteria including: SAT/ACT scores, grade-point average, work experience, participation in school and community activities, a statement by the student explaining his/her educational and career goals, financial need, and a written recommendation by a third party.

A committee of cooperative employees will evaluate the applications and submit the entry to Basin Electric for scholarship distribution and select the winning entry for the Northern Electric scholarship.

- **Application**

Applications are available from local high school guidance counselors, on the Northern Electric Cooperative website at www.northernelectric.coop/scholarships, or directly from the Northern Electric offices in Bath or Redfield.

Completed applications MUST BE RETURNED BY FEBRUARY 12, 2021 to:

Northern Electric Cooperative
ATTN: Kay Albrecht
PO Box 457
Bath, SD 57427

For more information contact Kay Albrecht at: **605-225-0310**



Students Can Apply Now For \$1,000 and \$500 Co-op Scholarships

2021 Scholarship Applications Being Accepted

Students of Northern Electric Cooperative members who are currently enrolled in a post-secondary school - or plan to enroll in the fall of 2021 - can now apply for two co-op-sponsored scholarships.

Bismarck-based Basin Electric Power Cooperative, which generates electricity for Northern Electric Cooperative, is awarding a \$1,000 scholarship to a student within the Northern Electric service territory. Northern Electric is also awarding a \$500 scholarship to a student of a co-op consumer. Students can apply for both scholarships by filling out one Basin Electric 2021 scholarship application which can be found on the Northern Electric website at www.northernelectric.coop/scholarships. Applications can also be picked up at a Northern Electric office.

In 2020, Christine Stoltenberg of Stratford was awarded the \$1,000 Basin Electric scholarship and Matthew Sperry of Bath was the recipient of the \$500 Northern

Electric scholarship. Stoltenberg enrolled at Northern State University and Sperry is enrolled at South Dakota State University.

The scholarship application includes information about the student's academic record, ACT/SAT test scores, work experience, an applicant appraisal from an advisor or supervisor, and a one-page essay on the topic: 'Describe how cooperatives can be economic engines for their local communities.' The entire application must be completed and turned into one of the Northern Electric Cooperative offices in Bath or Redfield by the **February 12, 2021** deadline.

A committee of cooperative employees will critically evaluate the applications and award both the \$1,000 and \$500 scholarship from the pool of applicants. Scholarships will be directly paid to the institution where the recipient is enrolled in the fall of 2021.

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

November 27-December 27

Trees and Trains at the South Dakota Railroad Museum, Weekends, Contact the Museum for Days and Times. Hill City, SD
605-574-9000

December 4-25

Fort Sisseton Drive Thru Christmas Light Display, Fort Sisseton Historic State Park, Lake City, SD
605-448-5474

December 5-January 1

Custer State Park Festival of Trees, Custer, SD
605-255-4515

December 5-January 6

Garden Glow, McCrory Gardens Education & Visitor Center, Evenings From 5-8 p.m., Brookings, SD
605-688-6707

December 16-19

Lakota Nation Invitational, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

December 17-20, 27

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

December 19

Cirque Dream Story, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

January 9

Dakota Ridgetop Toy Show, Codington County Extension Complex, Watertown, SD
712-261-0316



Black Hills Stock Show and Rodeo, Jan. 29-Feb. 6, 2021

January 14-17, 21-24

Elf The Musical, Area Community Theatre, Mitchell, SD
605-996-9137

January 15-17

BH Rapid Winter Classic Indoor Soccer Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

January 16

Annual Burning Beetle Festival, 5 p.m., Pageant Hill, Custer, SD
605-673-2244

January 18-25

Chinook Days, Spearfish, SD
605-717-9294

January 29-February 6

Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
605-335-3861

January 29-30

Pro Snocross Races, Days of '76 Rodeo Grounds, Deadwood, SD
605-578-1976

January 29-31

Winterfest, Lead, SD
605-335-3861

February 5-6

Mardi Gras Weekend, Main Street, Deadwood, SD
605-578-1976

February 10-13

Watertown Winter Farm Show, Codington County Extension Complex, Watertown, SD
605-886-5814

February 18-25

Twelfth Annual Black Hills Film Festival, Virtual,
605-574-9454

February 20-27

SD State High School Wrestling Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD

March 13-14

Philip Area Annual 2021 Gun Show, American Legion Hall, Philip, SD
605-859-2280

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.