


South Dakota Electric

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Cooperative Connections

APRIL 2015 VOL. 67 NO. 4



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.** Pg. 8



EVERY MEMBER HAS A VOICE. MAKE SURE YOURS IS HEARD.

Here's something worth shouting about. As an electric co-op member, you have a say in how the co-op is run and the decisions that are made. Isn't that nice to hear? Learn more about the power of your co-op membership at TogetherWeSave.com.



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South Dakota Electric Cooperative Connections

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FEM Electric, Ipswich, S.D.
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H-D Electric, Clear Lake, S.D.
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Editorial

Co-ops Celebrate National Lineman Appreciation Day



Ed Anderson
General Manager, South Dakota
Rural Electric Association

"Whereas linemen leave their families and put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on; Whereas linemen work 365 days a year under dangerous conditions to build, maintain and repair the electric infrastructure; Whereas linemen are the first responders of the electric cooperative family, getting power back on and making things safe for all after storms and accidents; and Whereas there would be no electric cooperatives without the brave men and women who comprise our corps of linemen;

Therefore be it resolved that NRECA recognize the Second Monday of April of each year as National Lineman Appreciation Day and make available to electric cooperatives, materials and support to recognize the contributions of these valuable men and women to America's Electric Cooperatives."

We proudly recognize all electric linemen for the services they perform around the clock in dangerous conditions to keep power flowing and protect the public's safety.

Electric linemen do not often receive the recognition they deserve. They work all hours of the day, often in hazardous conditions far from their families, going above and beyond to restore power to their communities. Our linemen, as well as linemen from across the nation, truly deserve this special day of recognition.

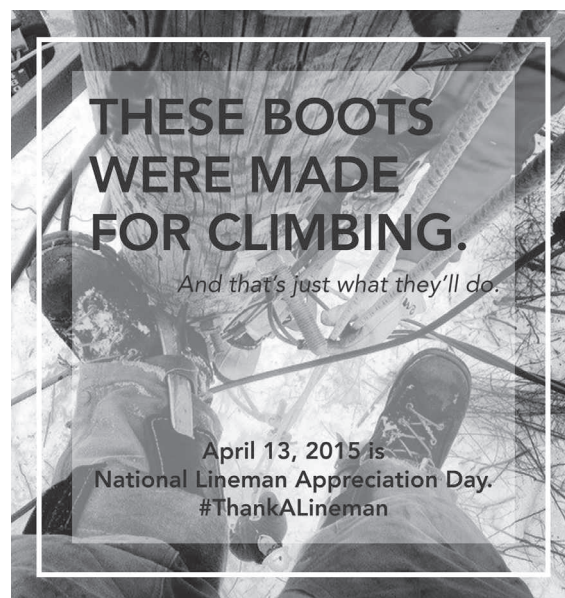
We invite everyone to take a moment to thank a lineman for the work they do.

Use #ThankALineman to show your support for the men and women who light our lives.

Americas electric cooperatives have designated the second Monday of April as National Lineman Appreciation Day.

On April 13, 2015, electric cooperatives nationwide will honor the hard working men and women who often work in challenging conditions to keep the lights on.

The full text of the resolution, which the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Board adopted unanimously, follows:



April Showers Bring... Hydroplaning



What is hydroplaning?

Hydroplaning is when your vehicle slides or skids on a wet road surface. Although it can happen on any wet surface, it is the most dangerous during the first 10 minutes of a light rain. Light rain mixes with the oily residue on the pavement and creates a slippery condition that can cause your vehicle to hydroplane. It is

especially dangerous for vehicles driving faster than 35 miles per hour, such a car in the merge lane heading on to a highway.

How do you reduce the risk of hydroplaning?

You should always keep your tires properly inflated in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications. Make sure that your tires are rotated so that their tread wears evenly. Replace old worn tires as needed. Pay special attention and slow down when driving in inclement weather. Leave extra space between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead of you in case you need to stop suddenly. Adjust your traveling speed in accordance with the weather conditions. If possible, drive in lanes that are not flooded with water and stay clear of rain puddling in the roadway. Do not engage cruise control in bad weather, because it sets the acceleration automatically.

What should you do if your vehicle starts to hydroplane?

If you feel your vehicle start to hydroplane, do not panic. The first thing to remember is to not brake or accelerate suddenly. If you brake or accelerate suddenly, it could cause your vehicle to spin out of control. Look for an empty space in the road ahead and steer gently in that direction. Ease off of the gas pedal slowly, so that your wheels can regain contact with the roadway. Drive safely!

Source: arifleet.com

Kids' Corner Safety Poster

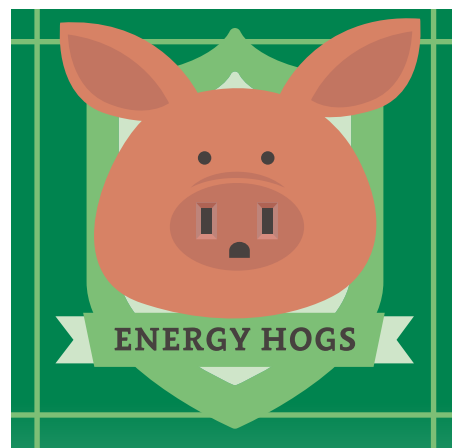
"Be careful with electricity – it can shock you!"



**Austin Waring,
8 years old**

Austin is the son of Jeremy and Ramona Waring, Colton, 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.



Did you know the refrigerator is one of the biggest energy hogs in your home? Use these simple tips on how to keep your fridge running efficiently.

- **REMEMBER TO COOL DOWN.** Warm food in the refrigerator forces the appliance to adjust the temperature, using more energy.
- **A FULL FRIDGE IS A HAPPY FRIDGE.** When your refrigerator and freezer are full, the appliance runs more efficiently.
- **KEEP IT CLEAN.** Remember to clean dust and dirt from the coils behind or underneath the refrigerator.
- **TAKE COVER.** Uncovered food and liquids release moisture and force the compressor to work harder.



Photo source: General Electric

Appetizers & Beverages



Cranberry Meatballs

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1 (16 oz.) can jellied
cranberry sauce | 3 T. brown sugar |
| 1 cup ketchup | 1 T. lemon juice |
| | 72 pre-cooked meatballs |

In large saucepan, combine first 4 ingredients. Cook, stirring frequently, until the cranberry sauce is melted. Add meatballs and heat thru.

Mary Jessen, Holabird

Yummy Fruit Dip

- | | |
|--|---------------------|
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese,
softened | 1/4 cup white sugar |
| | 1 tsp. vanilla |
| 3/4 cup brown sugar | |

Mix together all ingredients; refrigerate. Serve with fresh fruit.

Shirley Dreher, Clark

Pineapple-Strawberry Smoothie

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 (20 oz.) can pineapple
chunks | 1 cup pineapple juice |
| | 1 cup vanilla yogurt |
| 1 medium banana | 1/2 cup strawberries |

Combine all ingredients in blender. Serve in chilled glasses.

Stephanie Fossum, Hudson

Mocha Cooler

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2/3 cup milk | 1 T. instant coffee |
| 2 T. instant cocoa mix | 1/3 cup vanilla ice cream |

Mix milk, cocoa mix and coffee in electric blender. Add ice cream and blend until smooth.

Rebecca Hauser, Tripp

Baked Brie with Jam

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 (8 oz.) can crescent rolls | 1 (18 oz.) jar jam* |
| 1 (8 oz.) round Brie cheese | |

Unroll dough on greased cookie sheet; pat dough so perforations seal. Place Brie in the middle of the crescent rolls. Cover top of Brie with jam. Press dough evenly around Brie/jam – try to seal completely. Bake at 350°F. for 20 to 30 minutes or until golden brown. Cool 15 minutes. Serve warm with assorted crackers. *We prefer raspberry.

Mary Contz, Hendricks, MN

Bacon, Lettuce and Tomato Bruschetta

- | | |
|---|--|
| 8 to 10 slices bacon, crispy cooked
and crumbled | 1/4 tsp. salt |
| 3 to 4 roma tomatoes, (plum), seeded
and chopped, about 1-1/3 cups | 1/4 tsp. black pepper |
| 1 cup lettuce, chopped | 1/3 cup blue cheese or feta cheese,
crumbled (optional) |
| 2 T. fresh basil, chopped | About 1/3 cup olive oil |
| 1 clove garlic, minced | 1 (16 oz.) pkg. French bread, cut in
1/4-inch slices |

In medium bowl, stir together all topping ingredients; set aside. Brush olive oil on both sides of bread slices; place on baking sheet. Bake at 400°F., turning once, for 7 minutes per side or until crisp and golden brown; cool. Spoon about 1 T. topping on each toast round. Makes about 24 appetizers.

Nutritional information for 1 piece: 68 calories; 5g fat; 1g saturated fat; 2mg cholesterol; 2g protein; 6g carbohydrates; 1g fiber; 121mg sodium

Pictured, Courtesy of www.porkbeinspired.com

Vidalia Onion Dip

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 large Vidalia onion, chopped | 1 cup grated Swiss Cheese |
| 1 cup mayonnaise | |

Mix together and place in baking dish. Bake at 350°F. for 30 minutes or until hot and bubbly.

Glenda Morton, Sioux Falls

Sausage Dip

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 lb. bulk sausage | 1 (10 oz.) can Ro-Tel tomatoes
with green chilies |
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese | |

Brown and drain sausage. Add Ro-Tel and cream cheese. Put in small crockpot and cook until hot, stirring often. Serve with chips or crackers.

Amy Schoenfelder, Cavour

Graduation Punch

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 (6 oz.) can orange juice | 2 quarts water |
| 1 (6 oz.) can lemonade | 1 cup sugar |
| 1 pkg. orange koolaid | 1 (64 oz.) bottle ginger ale |
| 2 cups pineapple juice | |

Mix together all ingredients except ginger ale. Add ginger ale just before serving.

Jane Ham, Rapid City

Please send your favorite casserole, dairy and dessert 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 2015. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

What You Need to Know About Backup Generators



Jim Dulley

www.dulley.com

Dear Jim: When severe weather hits, I want to be prepared and I'm considering purchasing a backup generator for my home. What types would you recommend to take care of the entire house? – Jon H.

Dear Jon: These days, most families depend on electricity for nearly every activity, so purchasing a backup generator is becoming more common.

Residential backup generators are called standby models because they are only used when electricity from the utility grid fails. They are designed to run for a relatively short period of time until power is restored. Outages like this usually last between a few hours and a couple of days.

First, you must decide how much of your home you'd like to power in order to determine the size of backup generator you will need. There are common necessities, such as refrigeration and lighting, which you will definitely need. Others, such as air-conditioning, washing/drying clothes and vacuuming may not be top priority during a power outage.

Backup generators are sized by their KW (kilowatt) electricity output. A 12-KW generator can power most electrical needs of a typical family of four. If you can eliminate nonessentials, a smaller, less expensive unit will be adequate and the fuel costs to operate it will be less.

To get a rough idea of the size of generator you will need, list all electric items you want to power and total the wattages for all of these. Items and appliances with motors often require more electric current at start-up time, so remember to round up when determining the total wattage. A contractor or installation expert can also advise you on the proper size. It should be noted that installing a whole-house backup generator is not a do-it-yourself project.

For convenience and safety (for both your family and your electric co-op's emergency line workers), install an ATS (automatic transfer switch). This switch senses when the grid electricity goes off or the voltage drops below a critical point (also known as a brownout). It automatically disconnects your

home's wiring from the utility grid and starts the generator. This occurs quickly, so there is very little down time.

The ATS also runs the generator periodically (called exercising) to ensure everything is working properly. You may hear the generator start the exercise cycle, so don't be alarmed – the power may not be off.

If you have natural gas available at your house, this is the best fuel to power the backup generator. Natural gas engines run cleanly, require little maintenance and are relatively inexpensive to run. Also, if you have natural gas, you probably have a gas furnace for heat, so the size of the generator required is smaller.

Another clean-running fuel for a backup generator is propane. Many homes with electric heat still have propane available for cooking. In order to power a whole-house generator, a larger propane tank would be required. Even though propane is considered a clean running fuel, it is more expensive to use than natural gas.

A diesel engine-powered generator also requires a fuel tank. The shelf life of the diesel fuel is only a couple of years – even with a stabilizer – and the overall cost of installing a diesel generator will be higher. However, one advantage of using diesel is that you can always pour more fuel into the tank if you need to run the generator longer than originally expected.

Another option is a smaller, less-expensive portable gasoline-powered generator with several electrical outlets. This will provide enough electricity for the refrigerator and several lamps. These models also provide enough power to operate the blower in a gas, propane or oil furnace for heat.

Never attempt to plug this type of generator into an electrical outlet with a homemade double-male cord. This can backfeed 120-volt current into the grid, which is dangerous for utility line crews. For more information on backup generators, contact your local electric co-op or speak with a qualified contractor.

The following companies offer backup standby generators: Baldor, 479-646-4711, www.baldor.com; Coleman Powermate, 888-977-2622, www.powermate.com; Cummins Onan, 800-888-6626, www.cumminsonan.com; Generac Power Systems, 888-436-3722, www.generac.com; and Kohler Power Systems, 800-544-2444, www.kohlergenerators.com.

Have a question for Jim? Send inquiries to: James Dulley, *Cooperative Connections*, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit www.dulley.com.

Nelson Honored

One of the most coveted awards given by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association each year is the Clyde T. Ellis Award, named for NRECA's first general manager.



The 2015 Ellis Award recipient was Jeffrey Nelson, who was honored on Feb. 25, a year following his retirement as general manager of East River Electric Power Cooperative in Madison, S.D.

"Each of you has both the responsibility and the privilege to apply cooperative principles and values on behalf of member-owners. By doing so, you will continue to transform the future of rural America for the better," said Nelson, who spent 39 years with East River Electric, including 24 years as general manager, making him the co-op's longest-serving general manager.

Co-op Day at the Capitol

Electric cooperative leaders across South Dakota braved bad weather forecasts to gather for the third annual Electric Cooperative Day at the Capitol on March 3.

Attendees watched committee hearings, met with their senators and representatives, served a noon meal and heard updates on bills from electric co-op lobbyists. The group was also recognized by both chambers.



South Dakota, Minnesota Teams Advance to National Science Bowl

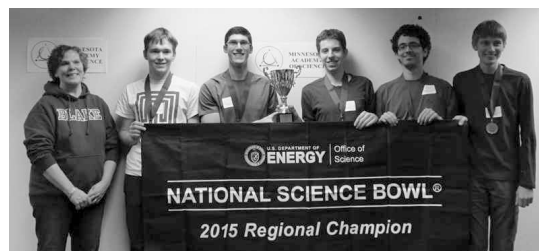
Teens from across South Dakota and Minnesota pitted their knowledge of science against other teams representing their respective state to advance to the U.S. Department of Energy's National Science Bowl to be held in Washington, D.C., April 30-May 4.

South Dakota teams competed at the 22nd Annual South Dakota Regional Science Bowl Champions on Saturday, Feb. 21, 2015, at the Huron Event Center in Huron, S.D. The contest,

hosted by the Western Area Power Administration, tested knowledge in biology, chemistry, math, physics, energy and general science. Twenty teams from high schools throughout South Dakota competed in this year's event which consisted of a round robin format in the morning and the top eight teams continued to the double elimination in the afternoon.

The top eight teams included two teams each from Rapid City Stevens and Brandon Valley and one team each from Rapid City Christian, Miller, Dakota Valley and Aberdeen Central.

Aberdeen Central was undefeated in the afternoon double elimination rounds until facing the Rapid City Stevens Team No. 1 that came back through the losing bracket and defeated Aberdeen twice to capture the win.



Blake School team members Eli Bogursky, Radek Chlebicki, Merrick Pierson Smela, Solomon Polansky and Geordie Roscoe will compete for Minnesota.



Rapid City Stevens Team No. 1 members are James Donhiser, Gabriel Spahn, Joshua Morin-Baxter, coach Tisa Weisbeck, Talha Ahmad and Rachel Fenega.

Hundreds of students representing dozens of high schools from all over the state of Minnesota tested their knowledge of all major areas of science and mathematics at the Minnesota State Regional Science Bowl for High School Students Jan. 24 at Macalester College. Students competed in five-person teams solving technical problems and answering questions in all branches of science and math.

The Blake School, Minneapolis, won the competition and will represent Minnesota at the national competition.

Don't Just Dig It

Simple Call to 811 Can Save Money, Lives

APRIL MAY BE KNOWN FOR ITS SHOWERS, BUT IT'S also a month set aside to raise awareness for safe digging.

According to the Common Ground Alliance's Damage Information Reporting Tool (DIRT) Report, an underground utility line is damaged every six minutes because someone decided to dig but didn't call 811. At that rate, in a 24-hour-a-day society, that's more than 87,000 times in a year where people – someone's mother or father, son or daughter – risked injury or costly damages.

The 2013 DIRT Report found that nationwide there were an estimated 335,000 events involving dig-ins to utilities. The cause of those dig-ins were identified in about 75 percent of the situations reported in 2013.

Of those events with causes listed, half were due to insufficient excavation practices, a quarter were because notification simply was not made and 16 percent were due to insufficient locating practices.

The 2013 DIRT Report also noted that nationwide, occupants and farmers were the groups most likely not to call 811 prior to digging.

Building a deck? Planting a tree? Installing a mailbox? 811 is the new number you should call before you begin any digging project.

The federally mandated national "Call Before You Dig" number, 811, was created to help protect you from unintentionally hitting underground utility lines while working on digging projects. People digging often make risky assumptions about whether or not they should get their utility lines marked due to concerns about project delays, costs and previous calls about other projects.

HOW DOES 811 WORK?

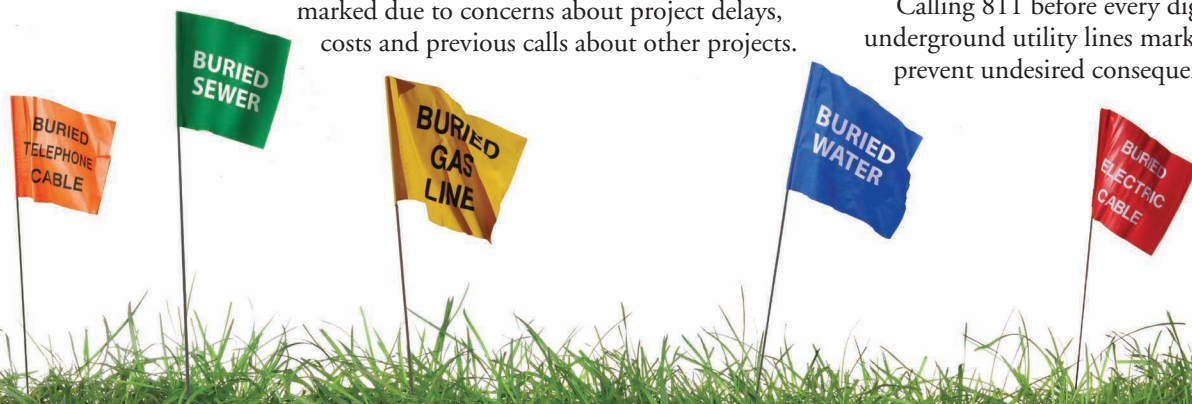
When someone calls 811 in the United States, he or she is connected to the local one call center, where a representative collects information about the caller's planned dig site. The one call center then communicates the information to the appropriate utility companies, which send professional utility locating technicians to identify and mark the approximate location of lines within a few days of the phone call. Once lines have been marked, the caller may dig safely around the marks.

These assumptions can be life-threatening. Every digging job requires a call – even small projects like planting trees or shrubs. If you hit an underground utility line while digging, you can harm yourself or those around you, disrupt service to an entire neighborhood and potentially be responsible for fines and repair costs. Homeowners often make risky assumptions about whether or not they should get their utility lines marked, but every digging job requires a call – even small projects like planting trees and shrubs. The depth of utility lines varies and there may be multiple utility lines in a common area.

Digging without calling can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm you and those around you and potentially result in fines and repair costs.

Calling 811 before every digging job gets your underground utility lines marked for free and helps prevent undesired consequences.

By Brenda
Kleinjan



More Than Half of Homeowners Put Themselves at Risk by Not Calling 811

A 2014 survey by the Common Ground Alliance found that 51 percent of American homeowners who planned to dig in 2014 for projects that included landscaping, installing a fence or mailbox and building a deck or patio would put them selves and their communities at risk by not calling 811 to learn the approximate location of underground utilities.

Digging without knowing the approximate location of underground utilities increases the likelihood of unintentional damage, which can cause serious injuries, service disruptions and repair costs.

There are more than 100 billion feet of underground utilities in the United States, according to data compiled by CGA from various industry groups. That figure equates to more than one football field's length (105 yards) of buried utilities for every man, woman and child in the U.S.

The 2014 survey also found that homeowners will call 811 for certain projects, but not for all DIY landscape projects. Homeowners will not call 811 for the following DIY projects:

- 84 percent – Planting shrubs
- 63 percent – Planting a tree
- 61 percent – Installing a pole for a basketball goal
- 50 percent – Building a deck
- 46 percent – Installing a fence
- 45 percent – Digging a patio

**(Editor's Note:
811 should be
called before
ALL of these
activities.)**

The survey also identified top reasons why people do not plan to call 811 before digging. Fifty-six percent said that they felt they already knew where utilities were buried on their property and 47 percent did not think they would dig deep enough to come in contact with utility lines, despite the fact that utilities can sometimes be just a few inches below the surface due to erosion and other topography changes. CGA's 1,500 members, the U.S. Department of Transportation, most governors and many mayors have proclaimed April as National Safe Digging Month as a way to bring extra attention to the issue and reduce the risk of unnecessary infrastructure damage. As part of National Safe Digging Month, CGA encourages homeowners to take the following steps when planning a digging project this spring:

- Always call 811 a few days before digging, regardless of the depth or familiarity with the property.
- Plan ahead. Call on Monday or Tuesday for work planned for an upcoming weekend, providing ample time for the approximate location of lines to be marked.
- Confirm with your local one call center that all lines have been marked.
- Learn what the various colors of paint and flags represent at www.call811.com/faqs.
- Consider moving the location of your project if it is near utility line markings.
- If a contractor has been hired, confirm that a call to 811 has been made. Don't allow work to begin if the lines aren't marked.

CGA is a member-driven association of 1,500 individuals, organizations and sponsors in every facet of the underground utility industry. Established in 2000, CGA is committed to saving lives and preventing damage to underground infrastructure by promoting effective damage prevention practices. CGA has established itself as the leading organization in an effort to reduce damages to underground facilities in North America through shared responsibility among all stakeholders. For more information, visit CGA on the web at www.commongroundalliance.com.

Safe Digging Starts by Calling 811

From planting shrubs to building a fence, many outdoor projects require digging. This spring, electric cooperatives and the Safe Electricity program (www.safeelectricity.org) remind you to call 811 before the shoveling begins. This simple step could prevent serious injury or even save your life.

"Outdoor projects take planning and preparation," says Molly Hall, executive director of the Energy Education Council and its Safe Electricity program. "Part of that preparation is planning to avoid underground utilities and 811 helps both consumers and contractors to do this."

The 811 "Call Before You Dig" number is a free, national line that was created to help prevent people from coming into contact with underground utility lines during digging projects.

When you call, 811 routes you to your local electric co-op's locating service. Make sure to tell the operator where you plan to dig and what type of work you will be doing. From there, it takes a few business days for a professional to come mark your public utilities with flags or spray paint. If you are in a rush to complete a project, a few days might seem like a long wait. However, a small waiting period can spare you an injury that could take years of recovery.

Even digging professionals can run into trouble with buried power lines.

Tom Dickey, a contractor for an underground utility provider in Auburn, Ill., learned the dangers of underground electricity years ago when he was on the job. Dickey was asked to add a small task at the end of the workday – after his safety gear was already headed back to his shop in another truck. He made a decision that put time and efficiency above safety. With one accidental slip, he came in contact with lethal levels of electricity. Fortunately, Dickey survived, but even years later he still copes with the pain.

Even if you previously had utilities located by calling 811, it is best to call before every digging project. Underground utility lines can shift and it is important to be certain of where they are.

Cooperatives care about their members' safety and urge you to start all outdoor digging projects the safe way – by calling 811.

For more information about 811 and electrical safety, visit call811.com and SafeElectricity.org.

Safe Electricity is the safety outreach program of the Energy Education Council, a non-profit organization with more than 400 electric cooperative members and many others who share the mission of educating the public about electrical safety and energy efficiency.



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

Co-ops: Doing Politics on a National Level

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES ARE IN AN IDEAL POSITION to build rock-solid grassroots political strength by tapping innovative ways of engaging their members and building their communities, NRECA CEO Jo Ann Emerson said.

In a spirited support of the cooperative model, Emerson called on co-op leaders from across the country to recommit to their members as the best way to be heard in the political corridors of Washington, D.C.

"If you're going to tweet anything today, tweet this: We do local politics on a national level," Emerson said Feb. 23 during her keynote address at the first general session of the 73rd NRECA annual meeting.

"The more technology we deploy, the more clout we have," she said. "The stronger we are in

politics, the more change we make in our communities. The better we serve consumers, the more trust we gain in the halls of Congress."

The three-day meeting drew more than 8,000 participants to the Orange County Convention Center for the annual business meeting, the TechAdvantage Conference & Expo, insider briefings on hot topics and director education programs.

Under the theme of "Commitment, Engagement, Cooperation," Emerson said co-ops have proven they can make a difference by delivering 1.2 million comments to the Environmental Protection Agency on its greenhouse gas rules.

And, in recent years, co-ops have gained service territories from some investor-owned utilities and municipal systems, she noted.

By
Steven Johnson
ECT Staff Writer





Above: Mike Eggl of Basin Electric participated in a panel discussion on EPA. **Top:** Mark Reindl of Central Electric presents his voting credentials. **Upper right:** Kingsbury Electric Director Verne Jensen casts his co-op's vote. **Above right:** Cam Wal Electric directors check out the Tech Advantage Show. **Right:** South Dakota's Youth Leadership Council representative Kristina Luczak carries the state flag at opening session. **Bottom right:** Renville-Sibley Electric representatives check their meeting agendas. **Opposite page:** NRECA CEO Jo Ann Emerson addresses meeting attendees.

"We've acquired more members and we can serve them better. That is the cooperative difference. We are committed to our members," Emerson said.

The challenge, she told directors, managers and staffers, is to fortify those bonds during a time of rapid economic, social and technological change.

In the coming years, that means extending a hand to some of the 160,000 active duty U.S. service members who transition out of the military every year.

"Help them find jobs in the community at your co-op or elsewhere. They will identify with you," Emerson said, noting that co-ops will have more than 14,000 jobs to fill in the next five years.

Other tools to engage members include embracing smart technology in a cooperative manner; addressing the causes of poverty in rural America and stepping up NRECA International efforts to bring electricity to 1.5 billion people around the world who are now in the dark.

"No matter where you are in the country, no matter how big or small, no matter what kind of fuel you use or generate, let's put the cooperative difference at the center of our mission," Emerson said.

Home **Safe** Home

AS ADULTS LOOK TOWARD THE FUTURE TO ENVISION how they will spend their golden years, they think about spending time with family or enjoying well-earned leisure. They often envision spending those years in the home where they raised their children and spent their working years.

One in five houses in South Dakota was built prior to 1940. Rural areas have higher rates of these homes (26 percent compared to 14.1 percent in more urban areas). This is important to consider as we plan for our retirement because older homes were not often constructed with accessibility in mind. Accessibility refers to the ability to enter and use a building and its features by people with disabilities.

Features of homes that pose challenges for people with disabilities:

Multilevel

Steps to enter building

Narrow doors and halls

Electrical outlets placed near the floor

Small bathrooms

Poor lighting

Laundry room in the basement
Lack of bedroom on main floor
Split level
Round door knobs

Age and disease are two different processes, however, older age does increase the chance of developing chronic disease or disability. Adults who experience these challenges may find it difficult to remain in their home with modifying it. Home modifications are an essential component of any retirement plan. We are often concerned that home modifications will make our homes look like a nursing home. Nothing could be further from the truth. Modern contractors are very skilled at making home modifications for accessibility while maintaining visual appeal. In fact, grab bars can be disguised as towel rods or toilet paper dispensers. The key is to evaluate our homes prior to the need for modification and include the cost of modifications in our retirement plans.

See more at: <http://igrow.org/healthy-families/aging/should-home-modifications-be-part-of-our-retirement-plan/#sthash.TmLACqEp.dpuf>

**By Lacey E.
Brown**

**SDSU Extension
Gerontology
Field Specialist**



Elements of Universal Design/Home Modification

What is Universal Design?

Universal design is a worldwide movement that is based on the idea that all environments and products should be usable by all people, regardless of their ages, sizes or abilities. Because this movement applies to everyone, the concept of universal design is known around the world as “design for all,” “inclusive design,” and “life-span design.”

An important component of universal design is the maintenance of aesthetics. In other words, to create something that is still “visually pleasing” to others despite being accessible to everyone. Function does NOT have to sacrifice beauty. As a result, universally designed homes and public buildings can be just as beautiful and welcoming as any other design approach. Increasingly, experts are referring to the concept of universal design as the “wave of the future.” It is the hope of universal design advocates that eventually all buildings, homes and products will be designed to meet the needs of everyone.

Why Home Modification?

Whether you are building a new home or repairing or renovating an existing home, you too can incorporate, through home modification, characteristics of universal design. Home modification can vary from building a new home with universally designed features, to simple installation of lever door knobs on an older home to more complex structural changes in an existing home, such as installing a walk-in shower or an accessible ramp. The goal of home modification for existing homes is not to entirely redesign the home but to make a range of changes or repairs that result in your home being a comfortable, user-friendly and safer place to live.

Implementing universal design home modifications can result in a home that you can remain in as you age. This concept is often referred to as “aging in place.” The idea behind “aging in place” is to enable individuals to live independently in their homes for as long as possible. The goal is to avoid having to relocate simply because one’s home is too difficult to get around in.

What are the Principles of Universal Design?

A group of universal design advocates from the Center for universal design at North Carolina State University developed seven principles of universal design. These principles can be applied to evaluate existing environments or products, serve as guidelines in the development or renovation of existing environments, and serve to educate consumers and professionals wanting to understand the characteristics of this design approach.

Principle 1: Equitable Use – The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.

Principle 2: Flexibility in Use – The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

Principle 3: Simple and Intuitive Use – Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user’s experience, knowledge, language skills or current concentration level.

Principle 4: Perceptible Information – The design

communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions of the user’s sensory abilities.

Principle 5: Tolerance for Error – The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.

Principle 6: Low Physical Effort – The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.

Principle 7: Size and Space for Approach and Use – Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation and use, regardless of the user’s body size, posture or mobility.

The American Association of Retired Persons provides a list of common challenges individuals encounter and some universal design features that may serve as possible solutions (www.aarp.org/universalhome/solutions.html). Below are some examples:

Limited Lifting or Flexibility

- Install lever faucet handles or single lever faucets that are easy to turn.
- Choose u-shaped drawer handles for cabinets and drawers that are easier to grasp.
- Consider decorative grab bars in the shower or by the toilet and tub to increase safety.
- Replace standard light switches with rocker switches that are easier to use.



Limited Mobility

- Install a bath/shower seat or tub with a transfer bench to ease getting in and out of the bath.
- Use transition wedges at door thresholds to avoid tripping.
- Give sidewalks and driveways a textured surface to increase traction and stability.
- Use handrails on both sides of stairways.

Limited Vision

- Purchase appliances with large print controls.
- Install lighting near outside walkways, stairs and entrances.
- Use nightlights where appropriate.
- Install under-the-cabinet lights, or task lighting, over kitchen counter work areas.

Remember, a home that has universal design features is a home that fits everyone’s needs, whether they are young or old, short or tall, with physical limitations or without.

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Living in an Inventors' Paradise

ENTERPRISING INVENTORS WILL BE FLOCKING TO Minneapolis, Minn., in late April for the Inspire™ 2015 Innovation Expo.

Since 1958, the Minnesota Inventors Congress, based in Redwood Falls, Minn., has presented this internationally known event that showcases innovation and provides an opportunity for aspiring, emerging and established inventors to move from ideas to manufacturing to the marketplace.

Inventors have the opportunity to get their inventions in front of investors, manufacturers, licensing agents, product scouts, and consultants from the US Patent and Trade Office, US Small Business Administration, and LegalCORPS at Inspire, 2015

Innovation Expo, April 30 and May 1 at the Minneapolis Convention Center.

According to organizers, the information exchanged at this event can be instrumental in successfully bringing marketable products through the invention development process.

At the 2011 Expo, Inventor Greg Amundson of Scandia Minnesota made the connections he needed to help bring his Easy Caulk peel and stick caulk strips to the marketplace. Amundson says, "My success started at this show." His company, Cornerflex, is now selling Easy Caulk via amazon.com and they are about to launch three new products. And in 2013 Sequence® board game inventor Doug Reuter

By Brenda
Kleinjan



was the Grand Prize winner, for his new game QB8.

"Innovation is a driving force behind the U.S. economy," said Program Director Deb Hess.

"Inventors from across the country come to test market their products at our show and attend our Inventing Success™ Workshops, hosted by experts who teach the product development process."

Pitch the Experts Panels

Pitch the Experts Panels are scheduled from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. both days.

Inventors, innovators and idea creators are invited to participate in a "Pitch the Experts" panels. Sponsored by the United Inventors Association, the "Pitch the Experts" panel gives inventors the opportunity to practice, refine and gather feedback on their products from national product scouts – and potentially secure real licensing opportunities.

Inventors interested in pitching the experts must first submit their new consumer product entries for formal review and selection by April 10, 2015. Up to 20 inventors, each day, will be selected to pitch their inventions in 4-5 minutes to the expert panel, and receive feedback on the spot. Exhibitors showcasing a consumer goods product at Inspire will be given a priority status in the selection process.

The "Pitch the Experts" panel includes local and national experts and product scouts:

Among the experts invited are:

- Michael Antino. Founder and CEO of leading DRTV marketer, Merchant Media
- Scott Hynd. QVC On-Air Product Expert, Proformance Marketing
- Trevor Lambert. President, Enhance Product Development and Lambert and Lambert.
- Warren Tuttle. Outside Contractor and Open Innovation Liaison for Lifetime Brands and Techtronics Industries NA; President, Monashee Marketing
- Matt Becker. Target Corporation. Buyer
- Carrie Jeske. Inventor, investor and distribution licensee

New Design Corner scheduled for Thursday

Industrial Designers from Enhance Product Development will be in the New Product Design Corner from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Thursday April 30 and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Friday. Industrial Designers from Enhance will provide free 20-minute design consults for any inventor wanting to flesh out their invention concepts. Enhance Product Development (www.enhancepd.com), is based in Minneapolis, and will provide professional "ideation" sketching.

Nondisclosure Agreements will be signed and all designs completed during the consult will be emailed to the inventor. Stop by the booth during expo hours to reserve your spot, as it will be offered on a first-come-first-serve basis.

For any questions regarding the New Product Design Corner, please e-mail Enhance at support@enhancepd.com or call them toll-free at 877.99.ENHANCE.

About Minnesota Inventors Congress

Inventors need reliable information to successfully bring a marketable product through the invention development process. In 1985, the Minnesota Inventors Congress opened a year-round office and through its knowledgeable staff, inventors are taught that the most importance investment they can make is to learn how successful inventors develop marketable products. By directing inventors to reliable resources MIC helps them understand that by being intimately involved in the process they will be able to make the best decisions for them. MIC also provides information that is available from the United States Patent and Trademark Office and the Federal Trade Commission about invention promotion firms. (However, MIC is not a law firm and does not provide legal or patent, trademark or copyright advice.)

MIC will provide potential inventors with easy to understand information that will teach them how to:

- Find information to protect your intellectual property.
- Know where to spend your money wisely and where it will be most valuable.
- Identify companies who have a mutual interest in your product.
- Avoid invention promotion companies.

MIC contends that being an educated inventor is the best investment inventors can make to protect their intellectual property and bring a product successfully to the market.

The Minnesota Inventors Congress provides helpful information guiding each inventor through the process of obtaining patents to marketing products. We facilitate professional workshops at minimal costs to the inventor. Finally through fellowship with other inventors our members enjoy encouragement to succeed. We sincerely look forward to meeting with you!

Inventor protection. The MIC provides access to information that is available from the United States Patent and Trademark Office and the Federal Trade Commission about invention promotion firms. Unlike for-profit invention development companies, the volunteers and staff of this organization do not derive any financial benefit from assisting inventors in protecting, developing and marketing their inventions.

There is no list of people waiting to pay you for your idea!

Inventors need to prove to a company that you can make them money and there are steps you can take to make sure you are spending your money the right way. Let us do the direct you to reliable resources who can help you learn the product development process that successful inventors use to develop marketable products. Private business needs to focus on developed products and their own bottom line. This is why Minnesota Inventors Congress was founded.

Today, as a non-profit organization, MIC stands in this gap as it has for over 50 Years! We have met annually in June ever since 1958!

For more information about Minnesota Inventors Congress located in Redfield, Minn., visit www.minnesotainventorscongress.org or call 507-627-2344.

Regional Dateline

March 18-22

State 8-ball Tournament
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

March 21-22

Farm Toy and Collectibles
Show Aberdeen, SD
605-225-4841

March 21-22

Spring Craft Show
Watertown, SD, 605-882-1734

March 21-22

Curt Carter Gun Show
Watertown, SD, 605-793-2347

March 27-29

Black Hills Home Show
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

March 28-29

Little Britches Rodeo
Rapid City, SD, 605-341-7900
www.centralstatesfair.com

April 6

Shrine Circus, Huron, SD
605-225-4841

April 9-11

Shrine Circus, Aberdeen, SD
605-225-4841

April 9-11

Forks, Corks and Kegs Food
and Wine Festival
Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876
www.deadwood.org

April 11

Spring Fling Home & Garden
Show, Hot Springs, SD
605-745-4140



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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.

Events of Special Note

April 20-21

Shrine Circus, Chamberlain, SD
605-336-1117

April 23-26

Shrine Circus, Sioux Falls, SD
605-336-1117

May 1-3

Shrine Circus, Rapid City, SD
605-342-3402

April 11-12

Dakota Territory Gun Show
Rushmore Hall, Rushmore Plaza
Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

April 18

LATI Auto Club Car Show
Watertown, SD, 605-882-5284

April 18

Lunafest Film Festival
Custer, SD, 605-517-1664
www.lunafest.org

April 18-19

Annual AMA Coins Show
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-321-9195

April 18-19

Banff Mountain Film
Festival World Tour
Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4101

April 23-25

Black Hills Fiber Arts Fair
Rapid City, SD, 605-791-0711
www.blackhillsfiberartsfair.org

April 25

RiverRat Marathon and
Bike Ride, Yankton, SD
www.riverratmarathon.com

April 27-29

Shrine Circus, Mitchell, SD
605-336-1117

May 2

S.D. Coin & Stamp Club Show
Watertown, SD, 605-886-4609

May 2

Spring Market and Boats, Jets
and Pets, Rapid City, SD
605-716-7979

May 6-10

Black Hills Film Festival
Hill City, SD, 605-574-9454
www.blackhillsfilmfestival.org

May 9-10, 16-17, 24-25

NE Area Pari Mutual
Horse Racing
Aberdeen, SD, 605-715-9580

May 20-23

Shakespeare Garden
Planting Festival
Wessington Springs, SD
605-539-1529
shakespearegarden.blogspot.com

May 22

Williams & Ree Comedy
Show, Watertown, SD
1-800-658-4717

May 23-24

Black Hills Music Festival
Spearfish, SD, 605-645-1880
www.bhmusicfest.com

May 23-24

SDRA Foothills Rodeo
Wessington Springs, SD
605-770-4370

June 20-21

Parrot Festival, Black Hills
Parrot Welfare and Education
Center, Belle Fourche, SD
605-892-2336
blackhillsparrotwelfare.org