


South Dakota Electric

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Cooperative Connections

APRIL 2017 VOL. 69 NO. 4



Working with The Grain

Page 8-9

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South Dakota Electric Cooperative Connections

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Editorial

#ThankALineman



Ed Anderson
General Manager, South Dakota
Rural Electric Association

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 10, 2017, 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:

"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



**THANK YOU
FOR POWERING
OUR LIVES.**

**NATIONAL
LINEMAN
APPRECIATION
DAY**

APRIL 10, 2017

#ThankALineman

Paying the Price of Power Theft

It's often an "invisible" crime. Someone illegally hooks into a power supply, hooks up a line that has been disconnected or tampers with a meter to avoid recording electricity usage. Legitimate electricity consumers do not engage in these behaviors, so the impact of electricity theft – including the danger – is often unrecognized.

Power theft carries deadly risks. Many thieves pay for the power they steal with their lives. Electricity theft is not just dangerous for those who steal.

If you are on the same power line as someone who steals electricity, you could pay the cost for their theft too. The power line could become overloaded with electric energy, which could harm your electronics and appliances that are designed to receive a certain, steady amount of electricity. Electricity theft makes power service less reliable and lower quality for paying customers.

Electricity thieves may also unknowingly feed energy back into the power line. This is dangerous for linemen who may assume that the power line they are working on is de-energized.



Safe Electricity reminds that everyone can help prevent and reduce power theft:

- Notify your electric utility immediately if you know of an illegally connected consumer.

- Do not cut the seal on

your meter base or tamper with your own meter for any reason.

- Apply for a legal connection if you do not have one.

- Remain aware of your surroundings and report any suspicious activities to your electric utility.

Most electrical theft crimes occur through meter tampering, bypassing meters and tapping power lines. Other less frequent crimes include tapping into neighboring premises, using illegal lines after being disconnected, self-reconnection without consent and electrifying fences. Possessing fraudulent electricity bills is also a federal crime and is punishable by law.

Everyone is affected by power theft and detecting and reporting illegal activity will help reduce the price paid.

Source: safeelectricity.org

10th Annual National Safe Digging Month

Always call 811 a few days before digging

April marks the 10th annual National Safe Digging Month, which reminds residents to always call 811 72 hours before any digging project. National Safe Digging Month is formally recognized by the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate and has traditionally earned the support from nearly every state governor across the country.

When calling 811, homeowners and contractors are connected to the local one-call center, which notifies the appropriate utility companies of their intent to dig.

Professional locators are then sent to the requested digging site to mark the approximate locations of underground lines with flags, paint or both.

Every six minutes an underground utility line is damaged because someone decided to dig without first calling 811. Striking a single line can cause injury, repair costs, fines and inconvenient outages. Every digging project, no matter how large or small, warrants a call to 811. Installing a mailbox, building a deck and planting a tree or garden are all examples of digging projects that should only begin a few days after a call to 811.

"As April marks the traditional start of digging season, we are using this month to strongly encourage individuals and companies to call 811 before they begin digging," said Larry Janes, Executive Director of South Dakota One Call. "By calling 811 to have the underground utility lines in their area marked, homeowners and professionals are making an important decision that can help keep them and their communities safe and connected."



Kids' Corner Safety Poster



"Never play by power lines."

Addison Hovorka, 9 years old

Addison is the daughter of Roger and Audra Hovorka, Tabor, S.D. They are members of Bon Homme Yankton Electric Association, Tabor, 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.

Appetizers and Beverages



Hot Cocoa Mix

- 1 large box instant dry milk
- 1 (16 oz.) box Nestles Quick
- 1 (6 oz.) jar of Coffee Mate
- 1 cup powdered sugar

Combine all ingredients and store in air-tight container. Add 1/4-cup mixture to 1 cup hot water. Top with marshmallows, if desired.

Emily Luikens, Tea

Easy Sausage Appetizers

- 1 lb. sausage
- 2 cups baking mix
- 8 oz. shredded or grated sharp Cheddar cheese

Crumble uncooked sausage with cheese. Mix in baking mix. Shape into small balls. Place on ungreased cookie sheet or parchment paper. Bake at 375°F. for 20 to 25 minutes until browned.

Elaine Rowett, Sturgis

Holiday Punch

- 11 cups water, divided
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 (6 oz.) pkg. red gelatin
- 1 (46 oz.) can pineapple juice
- 2 tsp. almond extract

Boil together 2 cups water and sugar for 1 minute. Remove from stove and stir in gelatin. Pour into 5-quart plastic container. Add remaining ingredients. Mix well, cover and freeze. Three hours before serving, remove from freezer. When soft, break up with spoon and fluff with electric mixer.

Clarice Roghair, Okaton

Texas Caviar

- 1 can shoepeg corn
- 1 can pinto beans
- 1 can black-eyed peas
- 1 small jar pimento
- 1 red pepper, chopped
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- Cilantro, to taste
- 1 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup apple cider
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- Scoop chips

Drain and rinse corn, beans, peas and pimento. Combine sugar, cider, oil, salt and pepper. Mix together all vegetables and marinate in dressing. Serve with chips.

Brad James, Vermillion

Country Ham and Swiss Dip

- 1 cup milk
- 1 pkg. McCormick® Pork Gravy Mix
- 1 (8 oz.) container whipped cream cheese
- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1 T. yellow mustard
- 1 cup cubed ham
- 1/2 cup shredded Swiss cheese
- Pickle chips, optional
- Sliced baguette or crackers

Gradually stir milk into gravy mix with whisk in medium saucepan. Stirring frequently, cook on medium heat until gravy comes to boil. Reduce heat and simmer 1 minute. Stir in cream cheese, mayonnaise, mustard and ham. Spread mixture in glass pie plate sprayed with no stick cooking spray. Sprinkle with cheese. Top with pickles, if desired. Bake at 350°F. for 20 minutes or until cheese is melted. Serve with sliced baguette or crackers. Makes 16 servings, 2 T. each.

Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 95, Total Fat 7g, Saturated Fat 7g, Cholesterol 21mg, Sodium 323mg, Carbohydrates 4g, Dietary Fiber 0g, Protein 4g

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Dried Beef Log

- 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 T. prepared horseradish
- 1/3 cup chopped green olives
- 1-1/2 oz. dried beef, finely snipped
- Crackers

Blend cream cheese, Parmesan cheese and horseradish. Mix in olives. On waxed paper, shape mixture into 2 6-inch rolls. Wrap and chill several hours or overnight. Roll in snipped beef. Slice and serve with crackers.

Tina Haug, Pierre

Tortilla Pinwheels

- 1 (8 oz.) container sour cream
- 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 1 (4 oz.) can diced green chili's, drained
- 1 (4 oz.) can diced black olives
- 1 (2 oz.) can diced jalapeno's
- 1 cup grated Cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup chopped green onion
- Garlic salt to taste
- 8 to 10-inch tortilla shells
- Salsa, if desired for topping or dipping

Mix thoroughly all filling ingredients. Divide filling and spread evenly over tortilla shells. Roll up tortillas. Place on individual pieces of plastic wrap and roll tightly. Refrigerate overnight. Unwrap tortillas; cut in slices 3/4- to 1-inch thick. An electric knife works great for this. Lay pinwheels flat on plate to serve. Top each pinwheel with a small amount of salsa, if desired.

Monica Johnson, Marion

Please send your favorite casserole, dairy or 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 2017. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

Windows to the World:

Where to Start When replacing Your Windows



Patrick Keegan
Collaborative Efficiency

Dear Pat: We recently bought a home with windows from the 1960s that are drafty and need replacing. We would like to ensure that our new windows are energy efficient. Can you offer any tips? – Lena

Dear Lena: Replacing your windows is often the most costly and least cost-effective energy efficiency investment you can make. But there are

sound reasons besides energy efficiency to invest in new windows, such as comfort, resale value and aesthetics.

As you look into window replacement, think about your goals. If reducing your energy costs is important, you should weigh an investment in new windows against the other energy efficiency opportunities you may have. An energy audit by a qualified auditor is the best way to compare your options.

The auditor can perform a diagnostic test to determine how leaky your windows are. These tests often show that windows, even old ones like yours, are not as leaky as you might think and that you have more significant air leakage problems elsewhere in the home.

You may discover there are ways to reduce heat loss through your windows without replacing them, such as storm windows or window coverings.

As you begin to explore window replacement, ask yourself if you're happy with the number of windows you have and with the size and location. You could decide to increase or decrease the size of a window or to replace a window with an exterior door. Sometimes these types of changes are quite affordable, but the cost can be much greater if significant changes to the wall framing are required.

When considering whether to add more windows, remember that even very efficient ones are much less effective insulators than a home's exterior walls, which means they will be colder to the touch than the wall in the winter. Depending on orientation and shading, windows can let in too much direct sun in the summer, driving up indoor temperatures and air conditioning costs.

Window buyers have a number of choices to make. Double-pane windows are necessary to meet code for most applications, but the additional cost for triple-pane windows could be worth the investment if you live in an area with extreme temperatures. Choosing Argon or Krypton gas between the panes adds a little more efficiency.

A common option that can be well worth the investment is a low-emissivity coating added to the glass. The most important benefit of this "low-e" coating is its ability to reflect heat back into the interior space, which reduces heating bills and increases comfort. These coatings reduce solar heat gain as well, which can help with air conditioning costs.

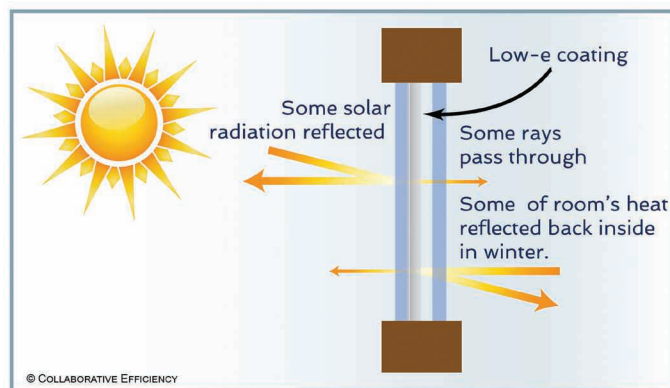
Window frames can be made of wood, composite materials, fiberglass, aluminum or vinyl. Each has pluses and minuses in terms of cost, maintenance, durability and energy efficiency.

Fortunately, windows are rated for energy efficiency, so you don't need to know all the details about their construction. The most important indicator of a window's energy efficiency is the U-factor, which measures the rate the entire window loses heat. Lower U-factors are more efficient. The window framing material, the number of layers of glass and the special coatings on the glass all contribute to the overall U-factor. In more extreme climates, it makes sense to have more efficient windows.

Another simple measure to look for is the ENERGY STAR® label. Only windows that are substantially more efficient than the code requires receive the ENERGY STAR label. The ENERGY STAR website (www.energystar.gov), which is maintained by the U.S. Department of Energy, has a climate zone map and a list of windows, doors and skylights that qualify for the ENERGY STAR label.

Working with a professional is important because a poor installation can result in long-term damage. Moisture problems are common if windows are not installed properly, which can create mold, mildew and rot in the wall. This can prevent the window from operating properly or cause the paint to peel.

Bids for new windows vary a great deal, so it's worth requesting more than one and comparing qualifications as well as price for something that will change the look and comfort of your home for many years to come.



This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency. For more ideas on energy efficient kitchen remodeling, please visit: www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips.

Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative Wins “Cooperative Purpose Award”

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) presented Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative (SMEC) the “Cooperative Purpose Award” for outstanding contribution to improving the quality of life and the purpose of the cooperatives in their community.

In 2013, Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative (SMEC) was formed by

12 electric distribution cooperatives to be the single point of contact for the purchase of Minnesota electric service territory from Alliant Energy. SMEC engaged their local community and business leaders through a grassroots campaign to educate them on the cooperative advantage. In 2015, SMEC’s vision became reality as the cooperative welcomed more than 43,000 new consumer-members into the cooperative community.

“The 12 cooperatives of SMEC perfectly exemplify the sixth cooperative principle, cooperation among cooperatives,” said Mel Coleman, NRECA President. “I applaud SMEC for their perseverance, leadership and concern for community.”

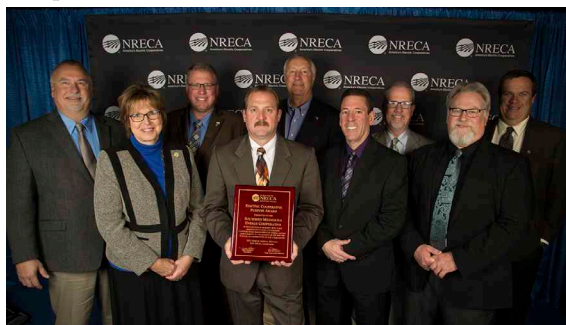
NRECA recognized the 12 SMEC member cooperatives:

BENCO Electric Cooperative, Mankato
Brown County Rural Electrical Association, Sleepy Eye
Federated Rural Electric, Jackson

Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services, Albert Lea

MiEnergy Cooperative, Rushford
Minnesota Valley Electric Cooperative, Jordan
Nobles Cooperative Electric, Worthington
People’s Energy Cooperative, Oronoco
Redwood Electric Cooperative, Clements
Sioux Valley Energy, Colman, S.D.
South Central Electric Cooperative, St. James
Steele-Waseca Cooperative Electric, Owatonna

More than 5,500 representatives from electric co-ops across the nation attended NRECA’s annual meeting celebrating its 75th Anniversary. The meeting ran from Feb. 23 through Mar. 1 in San Diego and sets NRECA’s legislative and organizational agenda for 2017. Co-op representatives also heard from NRECA officials, key public figures and business experts about issues affecting electric cooperatives and their consumer members. The annual meeting was held in conjunction with TechAdvantage, a technology learning event and expo that features more than 280 exhibitors showcasing their state-of-the-art technologies, equipment and services.



Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative won the NRECA Electric Cooperative Purpose Award. Receiving the award are representatives of nine of the 12 cooperatives that comprise SMEC: Ron Horman (Redwood), Elaine Garry (Peoples), Mike Heidemann (Brown County), Brian Krambeer (MiEnergy), Wade Hensel (BENCO), Tim McCarthy (Sioux Valley Energy), Syd Briggs (Steele-Waseca), Scott Reimer (Federated) and Adam Tromblay (Nobles).

Winners Announced For Big Idea Competition

The 10th BIG Idea Competition was a BIG success with 303 entries involving over 460 students from 40 schools. The event wrapped up Thursday, Dec. 8, on the campus of Northern State University and the winners were determined from among the eight final entries with over \$5,000 in cash and scholarships awarded.

Mercedes Peterson, Hunter Matthaei, and Christian Westhoff of McCook Central High School took first place with MCH Design, which creates spirit bands and key chains to show school pride. Their prizes included a \$1,000 cash prize, a \$1,000 scholarship to NSU, and a \$1,000 scholarship to Presentation College. Second place went Claire’s Sweet Treats by Claire Mischel of Milbank High School, a made-to-order bakery. Second place prizes include \$500 cash, \$500 Presentation College scholarship and \$500 NSU scholarship.

The \$250 third place prize went to Jasmine Green of Ipswich High School with Green Décor which makes home décor out of scrap steel.

The Marketing Design competition is an option for students create an ad for their business idea. The \$500 cash award was sponsored by McQuillen Creative Group. One hundred nine entries were judged in this category, and the winner was Party Bling by Gameillia Becker, Conner Torrence, and Meghan Odegard of Aberdeen Central High School, a party planning business for busy parents.

A new award this year was for the best business idea in the Wellness Category and Sanford Health sponsored the \$500 cash prize. Thirty nine entries were in the category and the winner was chosen



Students from Salem’s McCook Central High School placed first.

from the top ten scoring entries. The winner was Conquer My Concussion by Jake Sandvig and Noah Steinlicht of Milbank High School. The idea was for an app that included a concussion test along with recovery protocols to help athletes get back to competition.

Working with Wood

Co-op Board Member Makes Handcrafted Creations

NORTHERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE BOARD president Mike McHugh finds inspiration for his woodworking projects in many places. If you step into his Brown County home, you'll see some of those projects filling up many spaces.

"I like to see pictures of something and then go build it," McHugh said.

Like the first table, he built out of a piece of wood known as 'flame birch' that now sits in the living room of his house just eight miles north of the Northern Electric Cooperative headquarters. McHugh, who also sits on the South Dakota Rural Electric Association board, crafted the table after seeing a picture of a similar one about eight years

ago. His wonder for the world of woodworking has continued to grow ever since he finished the piece.

"After I quit farming, and semi-retired from farming, it was something to do,"

McHugh said.

McHugh took over the family farm after he graduated from college and cultivated crops and corralled cattle for several decades before he retired in 2000.

He went to work for Wells Fargo following his time on the farm until he retired for good in 2014, which is when he really started

kicking up dust in the woodshop he retrofit in the back of his old horse barn.

"Really when I got started was in 4-H," McHugh said.



Ben Dunsmoor



McHugh made a few projects during his 4-H days as a kid on the farm after his dad purchased a piece of equipment called a Shopsmith, but in the past few years, McHugh has made everything from tables to bowls to the gavel he now uses to preside over monthly meetings at Northern Electric.

"I'll probably spend 15 to 18 hours a week (in the shop)," McHugh said about the time he spends on his various projects.

But McHugh points out that his woodworking is different than a full-time job because he can create the projects he wants to make when he wants to make them.

Two years ago, he built a large entertainment center that now sits in the middle of his living room. He was shopping online with his wife, Mary, for a piece that would hold their flat-screen TV when they found one they liked but sticker shock deterred them from adding it to their cyber shopping cart. McHugh said he would build one instead. The McHughs ended up with a handcrafted oak ensemble that now supports their 60-inch flat screen.

Woodworking in the Great Plains, however, can be difficult because there is often a lack of product to produce projects.

"Trying to find the wood can be a challenge," McHugh said.

It's why he keeps his eyes open as he travels for exotic slabs that he can craft. Last summer he built two coffee tables out of California redwood. He has two more unfinished pieces of redwood sitting in his shop ready to be turned into furniture.

"It's relaxing and it's still challenging," McHugh said.

The fruits of most of McHugh's labor have ended up in the homes of family and friends, but he's running out of corners in his own home for new hand-crafted pieces. He said he may try selling a few items at festivals and 'arts in the park'-type events this summer, but he cautions that it's not going to be a job; just something he likes to do.

"It's just the challenge of it that I enjoy."

Which is why he will continue to search for inspiration anywhere he can find it as he makes plans for future creations.



Left: Two tables McHugh made from California Redwood trees last summer.

Opposite Page, Inset: Among McHugh's creations are "crazy bowls."

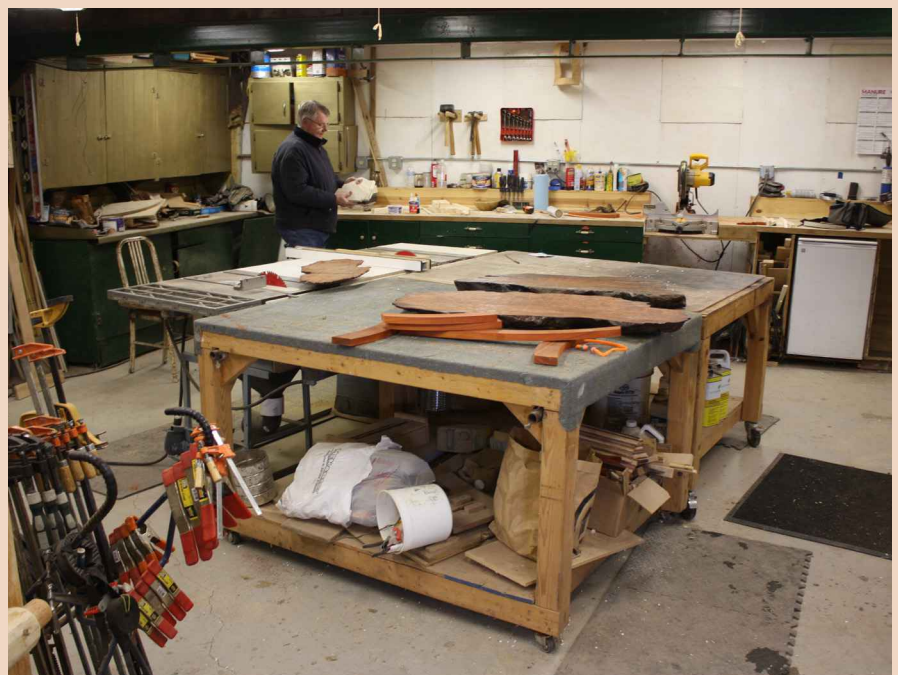
Below: The first table Mike McHugh made from wood known as 'flaming birch.'

Below: McHugh's creativity is not limited to just his wood projects. Here, a repurposed baby stroller serves as a portable clamp cart.



Left: A clock McHugh made out of a wood burl sits on a shelf of the hand-crafted entertainment center in McHugh's living room.

Below: Mike McHugh works in his shop at his farm north of Bath, S.D. **Opposite Page:** An entertainment center McHugh built himself two years ago.



Celebrating 75 Years

South Dakota Electric Cooperatives Working Together

NRECA CEO JIM MATHESON CALLED ON THE nation's electric cooperative leaders to strengthen their ties with their members by embracing a mood of change that is sweeping across the industry and the country.

Addressing the 75th NRECA annual meeting held in March in San Diego, Calif., Matheson told co-op directors, managers and staffers they can tap into that change by focusing on innovative solutions for their communities.

"This unique direction in which our industry is heading – it plays right to our strengths," he said. "We are much more than poles and wire companies. We are in the relationship business. We always have been. And now is the time to capitalize on that."

Matheson's first speech to an annual meeting as NRECA CEO came Feb. 27 at the inaugural session of the three-day event.

The meeting attracted more than 9,000 participants to the San Diego Convention Center for, among other things, director training, official as-

sociation business, workshops on issues confronting co-ops and the popular TechAdvantage Conference & Expo.

A series of kiosks traced the history of NRECA since it was founded in 1942, partly to alleviate wartime constraints on construction materials. Annual meeting speakers also highlighted milestones in NRECA history, such as the development of the power marketing administrations and President Nixon's attempt to abolish federal loans for rural electrification.

In describing an era of change, Matheson pointed to technological advances such as solar arrays, smart thermostats and internet-connected devices that he said co-ops must master to fulfill their roles as their members' trusted energy experts.

"We need more information than ever before to be successful in the energy business, among a range of new competitors," he said. "We need the tools, resources, partnerships and plans to reach consumers with relevant data, flexibility, new value proposi-

Steven Johnson





tions.”

A different kind of change is taking place in Washington, in part because rural voters made their voices heard in the presidential election – showing co-op votes matter.

“We have the attention of elected officials who now know one thing they perhaps did not know before: Ignore the voters in rural communities at your own risk. The people in power, and anyone who wants to be, must hear you,” Matheson said.

For co-ops, that means building on that foundation of strength to influence policies in the new Trump administration on behalf of their members’ best interests, he said.

“All over Washington, the new focus on rural America plays to our strengths best of all. We want to make it clear that the good of the co-op and the good of the community are one and the same.”

Officers Elected

Two electric cooperative directors and a co-op CEO will make up the leadership of the NRECA Board for the next two years.

NRECA Illinois Director Phil Carson will move from vice president to president at the conclusion of the 75th NRECA annual meeting on March 1. The board elected Carson to his new position during its Feb. 27 meeting at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront.

Carson, a director at Tri-County Electric Cooperative in Vernon, Ill., will take the gavel from Mel Coleman, CEO of Salem-based North Arkansas Electric Cooperative, who has guided the board since 2015.

The pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Nashville, Ill., Carson is a former dairy and grain farmer who has represented his state on the national board since 2006. He holds a master’s degree from Covenant Theological Seminary.

The new vice president is Curtis Wynn, president and CEO of Roanoke Electric Cooperative in



Aulander, N.C. He has been on the national board since 2007, and just completed a two-year term as secretary-treasurer.

Wynn has focused on the delivery of affordable, reliable electricity and economic development issues at Roanoke Electric, where he has been the top executive since 1997. The Troy University graduate also is chief executive officer of Roanoke Economic Development Inc. in Rich Square.

Joining the leadership team as secretary-treasurer is Montana Director Chris Christensen. A director at NorVal Electric Cooperative in Glasgow, Christensen is a farmer, rancher and educator. He started managing the family ranch at age 14 and later earned an associate’s degree in farm and ranch management from the University of North Dakota and a bachelor’s degree in agricultural education from Montana State University. He taught in Wolf Point and Hinsdale for 15 years.

Active in FFA and agricultural education groups and known for sporting his cowboy hat, Christensen has been on the NorVal board since 2005 and the national board since 2014.

Above: Directors Gary Bachmann of FEM Electric in Ipswich and Kermit Pearson of Lake Region Electric Association in Webster discuss resolutions with East River Electric Power Cooperative’s Chris Studer before the NRECA business meeting. **Top:** South Dakota’s YLC delegate, Anneliese Taggart of Clay-Union Electric Corporation in Vermillion, S.D. encouraged meeting participants to send messages to Congress. **Above Left:** NRECA CEO Jim Matheson addressed attendees of the organization’s 75 annual meeting.

Private Generation

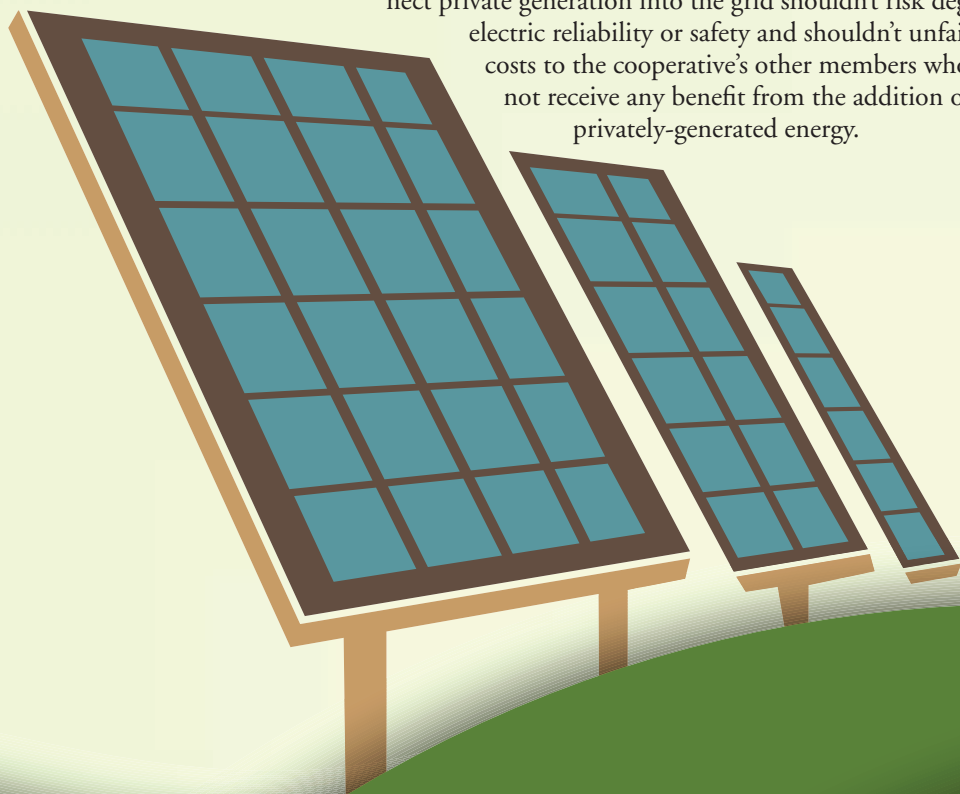
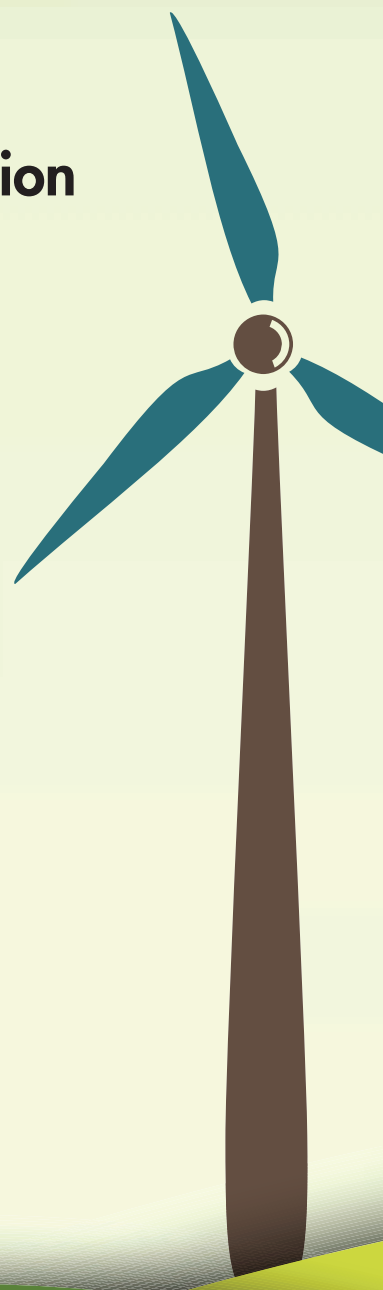
Supporting cooperative members through a responsible approach to distributed generation

What Is Private Generation?

Private generation (also known as distributed generation) is the generation of electric power from a energy source, such as wind or solar. Private generation systems are built at a member's location and are designed to offset or supplement electricity generated by the local utility.

A common form of private generation is the use of solar panels to generate electricity at a home. The electricity generated is typically used to satisfy a portion of a homeowner's energy needs. If generation exceeds a home's usage, the extra energy may be sold back to the electric cooperative at a pre-specified rate.

Adding private generation to the grid must be done in a responsible manner. In the view of electric cooperatives, regulatory requirements to interconnect private generation into the grid shouldn't risk degrading electric reliability or safety and shouldn't unfairly shift costs to the cooperative's other members who do not receive any benefit from the addition of the privately-generated energy.



As interest in private generation rises, cooperatives continue assessing their rate structure to ensure those rates match the changing grid.

For example, we must assess whether the rate the cooperative pays a member for excess privately-generated energy that flows back on the grid accurately reflects the value of that energy. If the rate paid for privately-generated energy is inflated, the cooperative's other members are the ones who ultimately pay the price, resulting in a cost shift.

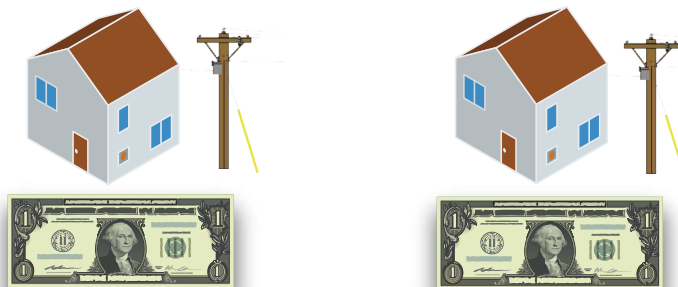
We must work together as a cooperative family to integrate private generation sources onto the grid in a manner that won't shift costs to members who won't stand to benefit from those private energy sources.

As a not-for-profit, member-owned cooperative, our primary focus remains providing the reliable, affordable and safe energy that you need to power your home. Any margins (profits) are invested into the electric system or allocated to our member-owners in the form of capital credits.

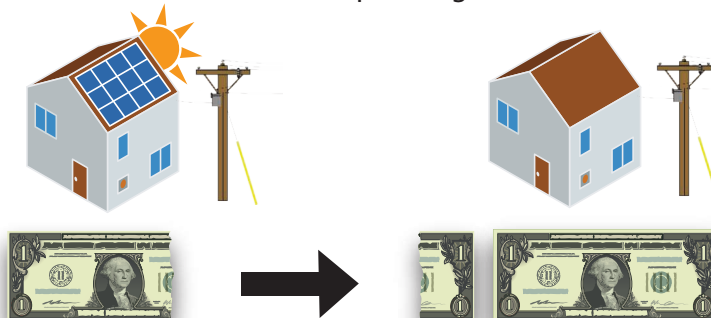
Co-ops Support Renewables

Electric cooperatives are committed to further diversifying their energy generation portfolio and are continuing to add more renewables to the mix. The amount of renewable energy added to the electric co-op power supply mix continues to rise.

Two member homes before private generation. Power costs are similar, fixed costs are shared equally.



Two member homes after private generation was installed in the form of solar panels. Power costs are reduced for the member with solar. Fixed costs are shifted unfairly to the member without private generation.



If you have questions about whether private generation is worth the investment, contact your local electric cooperative to find out more.

Co-op Careers

Offer Paycheck and a Purpose

By Justin
LaBerge

EVERY DAY IN THIS COUNTRY, MORE THAN 75,000 men and women go to work at America's electric cooperatives to keep the lights on for 42 million energy consumers in 47 states.

It's challenging work, but in addition to a paycheck, co-op employees go home each night knowing they've helped make their communities better places to live.

Over the next five years, thousands of workers will get to experience that sense of purpose and pride as America's electric cooperatives hire nearly 15,000 employees nationwide. These new hires will replace Baby Boomers reaching retirement age and accommodate organic growth in the energy industry.

Despite competitive wages, excellent benefits, job

stability and rewarding work, electric cooperatives and other energy companies often have a difficult time attracting new employees.

Many career options

A line worker high atop a pole is the first image that comes to mind for most people who think about electric cooperative employees. It's true that line workers comprise the largest segment of the co-op workforce – approximately 25 percent – but it takes a variety of talents to keep a cooperative running smoothly.

Information technology and engineering are two rapidly growing career opportunities at co-ops. The need for more high-tech workers is driven by the shift to a smarter electric grid and the growth



of renewable energy sources that must be carefully monitored and managed.

Other in-demand career paths at electric cooperatives include finance, member services, equipment operators, energy advisors, communications and marketing, purchasing, administrative support and human resources.

Hundreds of co-ops. One purpose.

For people who enjoy the rural quality of life but want to explore other parts of the country, an electric cooperative career might be the perfect option. There are more than 900 electric cooperatives in the United States, and combined they serve 75 percent of the nation's land mass.

Co-op lines stretch across every region, climate and geographic feature America has to offer, and each cooperative reflects the character of the community it serves. No matter what living situation and work environment prospective employees might be seeking, they're sure to find it somewhere in the electric cooperative network.

Who says you can't go home?

Although the national statistics are impressive, it doesn't mean much to a job seeker if his or her local co-op is fully staffed and doesn't anticipate any openings in the near future. Many jobs – especially lineworkers, equipment operators and other similar roles – are available through regional and national contractors.

These contractors are typically hired to supplement local utility crews to help build large projects or repair widespread storm damage. They move from project to project over time, offering employees a chance to see different parts of the country.

They provide a great option for individuals who would like to join their hometown co-op when a position becomes available, but want to start working in the energy industry immediately.

Second careers

Some people think the only time to start a new career is fresh out of high school or college. While the energy industry offers many rewarding careers to recent grads, it is also a great place to start a second or third career.

Lineworker training programs offered through community colleges are growing in popularity among people who previously worked in oil and gas, manufacturing, mining, forestry and other similar industries.

Electric cooperatives are also eager to hire military veterans and their spouses. Last year, America's electric cooperatives launched a program called "Serve Our Co-ops; Serve Our Country" to

CO-OP CAREERS

Over the next five years,
America's electric cooperatives will hire

15,000 PEOPLE.

ARE YOU ONE OF THEM?



honor and hire veterans and their spouses. More information about the program is available at www.ServeVets.coop.

Conclusion

As not-for-profit, member-owned, locally based businesses, America's electric cooperatives offer careers that allow employees to make a difference in the communities they serve. Cooperatives are guided by a set of principles that put people ahead of profits, and offer fulfilling work to those who enjoy serving others.

To learn more about the opportunities available across the cooperative network, visit careers.touchstoneenergy.coop.

Justin LaBerge writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Regional Dateline

December 15-March 31

South Dakota Snowmobile
Trails Season, Lead, SD
605-584-3896

March 24

Mother King In Concert
Spearfish, SD, 605-642-7973

March 24-25, March 31-April 1

59th Annual Schmeckfest
Freeman, SD, 605-925-4237

March 24-26

Black Hills Home Builders
Home Show, Rushmore Plaza
Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
blackhillshomebuilders.com

March 25

SD All-State Band Concert,
Lorang Theatre, Sioux Falls, SD

March 25-26

SD State AAU Wrestling
Tournament, Rushmore Plaza
Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

March 28

Badlands Bad River Regional
Job Fair and Business Expo
School Fine Arts Building
Philip, SD, 605-441-2059

March 30

I Love The '90s Tour
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

March 31-April 1

Holiday Arts Spring Craft
Show, Friday 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Masonic Temple, Mitchell, SD
605-248-2526



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHAD COPPERS, S.D. TOURISM

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 26-29

Black Hills Film Festival
Hill City, SD, 605-574-9454

May 19-20

Sioux Empire Film Festival
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

March 31-April 2

Professional Bull Riders
Built Ford Tough Series
Sioux Falls, SD
605-367-7288

April 20

Peter Mawanga and the
Amaravi Movement
Spearfish, SD, 605-642-7973

May 6

Frühlingsfest and Spring
Market, Rapid City, SD
605-716-7979

April 1

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

April 22-23

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

May 12-14

Siouxpercon, Sioux Falls, SD
www.siouxpercon.com

April 1

Lunafest Film Festival
Custer, SD, 605-517-1664

April 28-May 7

The Last Five Years Community
Theater, Mitchell, SD
605-996-9137

May 19

Tesla Car Rally, Custer, SD
605-673-2244

April 3-9

American Indian Awareness
Week, Spearfish, SD
605-642-6578

April 30

Lorie Line in Concert at the
Abbey, Marvin, SD
605-398-9200

May 19-21

State Parks Open House and
Free Fishing Weekend
Pierre, SD, 605-773-3391

April 7-8

Forks, Corks and Kegs
Food and Wine Festival
Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

May 5-7

Naja Shrine Circus
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
Rapid City, SD, 605-343-4076

June 17-18

Coin and Stamp Show
Fort Meade Gym, Sturgis, SD
605-381-4625

April 8

Winefest Renaissance 2017
Aberdeen, SD, 605-225-8714

May 6

Cinco De Mayo Festival
Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

June 23

148th Annual Midsummer
Festival, Dalesburg Lutheran
Vermillion SD, 605-253-2575
www.dalesburg.org