

South Dakota Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

Cooperative Connections

JUNE 2016 VOL. 68 NO. 6

Rodeo High School Athletes Compete

P8-9



A woman with dark hair, wearing a maroon sweater, is leaning over a bed, tucking a young child into bed. The child is wearing a red shirt and is sleeping. The bed has a white sheet with a pattern of small hearts and stars. A bedside lamp with a white shade is visible on the right, casting a warm glow. The room is dark, suggesting it is nighttime.

Be the light.

Electricity brings light to the darkness. You depend on it. And we work to ensure it's there when you need it. It's the assurance that you can provide light to comfort those that matter most to you.



**BASIN ELECTRIC
POWER COOPERATIVE**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Your energy starts here.

basinelectric.com
touchstoneenergy.coop

South Dakota Electric Cooperative Connections

ISSN No. 1067-4977

Produced by the following electric cooperatives in South Dakota and western Minnesota:

Black Hills Electric, Custer, S.D.
Bon Homme Yankton Electric, Tabor, S.D.
Butte Electric, Newell, S.D.
Cam Wal Electric, Selby, S.D.
Central Electric, Mitchell, S.D.
Charles Mix Electric, Lake Andes, S.D.
Cherry-Todd Electric, Mission, S.D.
Clay-Union Electric, Vermillion, S.D.
Codington-Clark Electric, Watertown, S.D.
Dakota Energy, Huron, S.D.
Douglas Electric, Armour, S.D.
East River Electric, Madison, S.D.
FEM Electric, Ipswich, S.D.
Grand Electric, Bison, S.D.
H-D Electric, Clear Lake, S.D.
Kingsbury Electric, De Smet, S.D.
Lacreek Electric, Martin, S.D.
Lake Region Electric, Webster, S.D.
Lyon-Lincoln Electric, Tyler, Minn.
Moreau-Grand Electric, Timber Lake, S.D.
Northern Electric, Bath, S.D.
Oahe Electric, Blunt, S.D.
Renville-Sibley Co-op Power, Danube, Minn.
Rosebud Electric, Gregory, S.D.
Rushmore Electric, Rapid City, S.D.
Sioux Valley Energy, Colman, S.D.
Southeastern Electric, Marion, S.D.
Traverse Electric, Wheaton, Minn.
Union County Electric, Elk Point, S.D.
West Central Electric, Murdo, S.D.
West River Electric, Wall, S.D.
Whetstone Valley Electric, Milbank, S.D.
City of Elk Point, S.D.

South Dakota Electric Cooperative Connections is published monthly for \$6 annually for member cooperatives, \$12 annually for non-members by South Dakota Rural Electric Association, 222 W. Pleasant Drive, Pierre, S.D. 57501. Correspondence to: Editor, *South Dakota Electric Cooperative Connections*, PO Box 1138, Pierre, SD 57501; telephone (605) 224-8823; fax (605) 224-4430; e-mail editor@sdrea.coop

Brenda Kleinjan, Editor
Dawn Trapp, Communications Specialist

Editorial

Make Rural Issues a Priority in 2016



Ed Anderson
General Manager, South Dakota
Rural Electric Association

Over the past several weeks, millions of Americans have trekked to local school gymnasiums, churches and community centers to cast votes in Presidential, Congressional and local races. Before the nominating process is over, millions more will follow suit. The enthusiasm with which citizens are participating in this election season is encouraging and foreshadows a robust debate as we head into the elections.

In the months ahead, it would be wise for candidates to remember the 42 million-member electric cooperative community, a diverse and vast group of Americans that reach into almost every district and

every state in this country.

Electric co-ops are not-for-profit energy providers that are owned by the members they serve. They provide coverage for 75 percent of our nation's landmass. They are a foundation in their communities and their consumers are making their voices heard this election on issues that matter most to them, such as affordable electricity, broadband internet access and job security for veterans.

By participating in the Co-ops Vote program and taking the pledge to make electric co-op issues a priority this November, consumers are sending a resounding message that candidates will need to put our concerns front and center in order to earn our vote.

To ensure that all electric co-op members are part of the debate this election season, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) has launched the Co-ops Vote initiative. This non-partisan

program has three goals: to increase rural voter registration and turnout, educate co-op consumers on key issues and elevate the influence of rural Americans in the outcome of this election.

By participating in the Co-ops Vote program and taking the pledge to make electric co-op issues a priority this November, consumers are sending a resounding message that candidates will need to put our concerns front and center in order to earn our vote. With millions of electric co-op members speaking out with one voice, we are already having a major impact in making our top issues part of the national conversation.

I encourage everyone, regardless of their political beliefs, to join America's electric co-ops in this national effort. Let's stand up for the priorities of the rural electric co-op community in the lead-up to November 8. Join us, and learn more at www.vote.coop.

Summer Electrical Safety Tips: Outdoor Hazards

Summer is the time when everyone wants to play outside, so it is important that everyone knows what possible electrical safety hazards to avoid in the out-of-doors. Go around the outside of your home and through your neighborhood with your family and show them where telephone poles and electrical lines are located. Explain the following so that everyone understands the dangers associated with them:

- Never play near or touch a power line with any part of your body, a toy, a stick or any other object whatsoever. Assume at all times that any power lines you see are live and dangerous. If you see a downed power line, stay well away and report it to your local utility company immediately.
- Never approach an electrical substation (or downed power lines) for any reason whatsoever. Period. If a friend, family member or a pet has entered this area, do not try to rescue them yourself – call 911 immediately.
- Never climb on or play around a utility pole. In fact,



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALAMAKEE-CLAYTON ELECTRIC

never post any signs or flyers on utility poles either as this can endanger you and utility workers that have to work on those poles.

- Never throw shoes or articles of clothing up onto power lines and never try to retrieve any object already hanging from a power line.
- To avoid getting kites, model aircraft or any other airborne toys stuck in power lines, play with these things in wide open spaces like parks or fields far away from power lines.

• Kids love to climb trees in the summer, but they should never climb trees that are too close to power lines; even if the tree isn't touching a line, the extra weight from someone climbing the tree could cause a branch to touch the line, which would be dangerous. In fact, if you feel that any trees in your yard or neighborhood are too close to power lines, talk with your local utility about having them trimmed or possibly removed.

• Keep an eye on the weather. Almost 100 people die each year and another 500 are severely injured from lightning strikes. If a thunderstorm is approaching, go indoors and stay there until the danger has passed.

Source: rootelectric.com

Kids' Corner Safety Poster

"Keep extension cords out of high-traffic areas like doorways or walkways where they pose a tripping hazard."



Lyla Michalek, 7 years old
Lyla is the daughter of Anthony Michalek, Okaton, S.D. He is a member of West Central Electric Cooperative, Murdo, 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.

STAND WITH CO-OPS



CO-OPS VOTE

A PROGRAM OF AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

JOIN HERE: WWW.VOTE.COOP

Dairy Delicious



Becki's Coconut Cream Cake

1 white cake mix
3 eggs
1/3 cup vegetable oil
1/2 tsp. coconut extract
1 cup sour cream
1 (8 oz.) can coconut milk

Frosting:
3 (4 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened
1 cup powdered sugar
1 (8 oz.) container Cool Whip

Combine the cake mix, oil, eggs, sour cream and coconut milk. Mix until well blended. Spread batter in greased and floured 9x13-inch pan. Bake at 350°F. for 25 to 30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. For frosting, mix cream cheese and powdered sugar until smooth. Fold in Cool Whip. Frost cooled cake and sprinkle with additional coconut.

Becki Hauser, Tripp

Elvis Pie

1 cup creamy peanut butter
1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
1/3 cup plus 1/4 cup sugar, divided
1-1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
2 cups cold heavy cream, divided
1 (9 inch) graham cracker piecrust
2 large bananas, cut into 1/4-inch slices
Chopped roasted peanuts

Cream together peanut butter, cream cheese, 1/3 cup sugar and vanilla at medium speed. In a separate bowl, whip 1 cup heavy cream until soft peaks form. Carefully fold whipped cream into peanut butter mixture until completely combined. Scrape half the filling into the piecrust and smooth with spatula. Layer sliced bananas on top of filling. Spread remaining filling over bananas. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until set, at least 1 hour. To make topping, whip remaining cream and sugar together until soft peaks form. Spread over pie. Sprinkled with chopped nuts.

Lynn Holzerland, Waubay

French Vanilla Coffee Mix

1/3 cup instant coffee
1 cup instant powdered milk
1/2 cup nondairy creamer
1/3 cup sugar
1/4 cup French Vanilla instant pudding mix

Combine all ingredients; store in a glass jar. For each serving, put 3/4 cup boiling water in mug. Add 2 heaping tsps. of mix; stir well.

Mary Jessen, Holabird

Strawberry Frozen Yogurt Squares

1 (14 oz.) can fat-free sweetened condensed milk, divided
Non-stick cooking spray
1 cup Post Grape-Nuts® or similar cereal
1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon

Pinch ground cloves
1 (10 oz.) pkg. frozen strawberries, about 2-1/2 cups
3 cups fat-free strawberry yogurt

Measure 1 cup of sweetened condensed milk; set aside. Line 8x8-inch baking pan with foil; spray with non-stick cooking spray. In medium bowl, combine cereal, cinnamon, cloves and remainder of sweetened condensed milk. Spread cereal mixture evenly on bottom of pan, place in freezer. Place strawberries and yogurt in a blender; cover and blend. Add 1 cup sweetened condensed milk; blend until smooth. Pour mixture over cereal, smoothing to edges of pan. Cover with foil (or plastic wrap) and freeze 8 hours or until firm. Use edges of foil to loosen and remove from pan; let recipe thaw for 5 to 10 minutes. Cut into squares and serve. Squares may be individually wrapped and stored in freezer for single servings. Makes 9 servings.

Nutritional Facts Per Serving: Calories 200, Total Fat 0g, Sat Fat 0g, Cholesterol 5mg, Sodium 150mg, Total Carbohydrates 42g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Protein 7g, Calcium 20% Daily Value

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Johnny Cake

1/2 cup butter
3 eggs, beaten
1 cup sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup sour cream
1 tsp. soda
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 cup flour
1 cup corn meal

Combine all ingredients. Pour into a 9x9-inch or 9x13-inch pan. Bake at 400°F. for 20 to 25 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.

Judy Jensen, Langford

Potato Salad Dressing

1/2 cup sugar
2 eggs
1/4 cup vinegar
3 T. butter
1 tsp. mustard
Salt and pepper to taste
1 cup mayonnaise

In a saucepan, mix together sugar, eggs, vinegar, butter, mustard, salt and pepper. Bring to a boil; boil until thick. Cool. Add mayonnaise; stirring well. Toss with your favorite potato salad ingredients

Mary Alice Bartel, Wolsey

Please send your favorite dessert, salad and garden produce 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 2016. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

Wash The Energy Waste Out of Your Laundry



Patrick Keegan
Collaborative Efficiency

Dear Pat: We have two kids, which means we do a lot of laundry – it never ends! What are some ways we can reduce our energy use in the laundry room? – Frank

Dear Frank: The average American family washes about 300 loads of laundry per year – all that laundry uses a lot of energy! However,

there are some easy ways to reduce your energy use in the laundry room.

Consider purchasing more efficient appliances: One of the biggest changes you can make is to purchase a new ENERGY STAR-certified washer and dryer. Washers with this certification use about 40 percent less water and 25 percent less energy than standard washers. ENERGY STAR washers can be top-loading or front-loading machines; however, front-loading machines are generally more water and energy efficient, helping offset any additional upfront costs. ENERGY STAR dryers use 20 percent less energy than standard dryers. Visit ENERGYSTAR.gov for more information about estimated water and energy use of all of their certified products.

Get out of hot water: The easiest source of energy efficiency in the laundry room is to stop using hot water. Almost 90 percent of the energy consumed by your washing machine is used to heat water – but most loads of laundry can be just as easily cleaned with cold water. Using cooler water is also easier on your clothes. If you need to use hot or warm water on a particularly dirty load of laundry, a well-insulated water heater will help decrease the costs of using warmer water.

Do fewer loads! When possible, wash a full load of clothes. However, when you must do a smaller load of laundry, remember to adjust the water level settings on your machine.

Help your dryer out: One of the best ways to reduce the amount of drying time is to get as much water out of the clothes as possible in the washing machine—use a higher spin setting to wring the extra water out of your laundry. When you are ready to dry, remember not to overfill the dryer so there is enough room for drying air to reach the clothes.

Use your dryer's features: If your dryer has a moisture sensor, use it rather than guessing how long each load of laundry will need to dry. A dryer's cool-down cycle uses the residual heat to

finish drying your clothes, without using as much energy.

Dry like with like: Heavy fabrics, like towels and blankets, should be dried separately from lighter fabrics, like T-shirts. When using a dryer's moisture sensor, the dryer will keep running until the wettest (and probably heaviest) item is dry. Rather than one towel extending the drying time for each of your loads of laundry, dry the towels together.

Live lint free: Clean the lint trap on your dryer regularly to help air circulation. Periodically use a vacuum nozzle to clean the area under or behind the lint filter, where lint can also get caught. If you use dryer sheets, scrub the filter clean about once a month – dryer sheets can leave a film on the filter that reduces air flow.

Remember safety: Your laundry room extends from the back of the dryer, down the dryer duct and all the way to the end of your dryer vent. Inspect your outside dryer vent regularly to make sure it is not blocked, and periodically work with a professional to clean your dryer ducts. Making sure the duct and vent are clear not only helps your dryer work more efficiently, but can also prevent a fire – more than 15,000 fires per year are sparked by clogged dryer ducts and vents. If possible, move the dryer closer to an exterior wall to shorten the length of the dryer duct and make sure the duct is as straight as possible – this helps reduce the opportunities for clogging and increases efficiency.

The average American family washes about 300 loads of laundry per year – all that laundry uses a lot of energy!

Use your solar-powered dryer: Going “old-fashioned” and air drying your clothes will definitely reduce your energy use! You can also tumble dry clothes until damp, then line dry them until fully dry – taking this step can prevent the “crunchy” feeling that line dried clothes can sometimes have.

There are many ways you can wash the energy waste out of your laundry routine. Try a few of these simple tips, and “load up” on the savings!

This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Amy Wheelless of Collaborative Efficiency. For more information on identifying and sealing air leaks, please visit: www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips or email Pat Keegan at energytips@collaborativeefficiency.com.

2016 Resource Conservation Speech Winners Named

The 55th annual State Finals of the Resource Conservation Speech Contest were held at the State Capitol in Pierre on Saturday, April 23, 2016. The theme of this year's contest was "Why Manage Water for Conservation."



Winning first place and a \$1,100 scholarship was **Esther Swift**. She was sponsored by the Gregory County Conservation District and is a home-schooled senior. She is the daughter of

David and Fawn Swift of Burke.

Receiving second place and a \$750 scholarship was **McKayla Carda**. She was sponsored by the South Brown Conservation District and is a sophomore at Aberdeen Central High School. She is the daughter of John and Brenda Carda of Aberdeen.

Receiving third place and a \$450 scholarship was **Reina Grimsley**. She was sponsored by the Davison County Conservation District and is a junior at Mitchell High School. She is the daughter of Ron and Misty Grimsley of Mitchell.

Scholarships totaling \$2,300 for the winners are provided by Touchstone Energy Cooperatives of South Dakota. The contest is co-sponsored by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture (SDDA), the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the South Dakota Association of Conservation Districts.

State contestants first participated in a local contest sponsored by their conservation district. Two students from each district were then eligible to participate in an area contest. From there, the top two winners from each of the designated areas were eligible to advance to the state finals. This year, nine contestants competed in the state finals.

Next year's theme is "Soil Health: What Will You Leave?" For more information, contact your local conservation district office or SDDA at 605.773.3623.

Parkston High School Senior Wins \$1,000 Scholarship

Some of the area's most impressive young people were honored Saturday, April 30, during the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives Scholar of the Year banquet held on the campus of Lake Area Technical Institute (LATI) in Watertown. The 35 students from eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota were chosen throughout the school year as the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week. For the 14th year, the Scholar of the Week program recognizes students for academic achievement, co-curricular involvement and community service. After they're selected the students are featured in weekly segments which air Mondays on KSFY Television and each student receives a \$100 scholarship from their local Touchstone Energy Cooperative for being chosen as the Scholar of the Week.

Sydney Bormann, a senior at Parkston High School was the winner of a \$1,000 scholarship sponsored by Touchstone Energy Cooperatives. Bormann plans to attend South Dakota State University in the fall. When she was selected as a Scholar of the Week earlier in the school year Bormann received \$100 from Southeastern Electric Cooperative, a local Touchstone Energy Cooperative. Caleb Whitmyre, a senior at Webster Area High School, won a \$500 scholarship. He plans to attend Northern State University. A second \$500 scholarship went to Sydney Gall from Scotland High School. She plans to attend South Dakota State University.

Former WNBA star Olympia Scott served as the keynote speaker during the event. Scott is a Stanford University graduate and member of the Stanford Hall of Fame who went on to play 10 seasons in the WNBA, winning two world championships. KSFY News anchor Courtney Collen served as the master of ceremonies.

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives in eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota are part of a network of consumer-owned utilities which provide safe and reliable electricity to more than 115,000 homes and businesses. The cooperatives have sponsored the Scholar of the Week program since 2002. In that time Touchstone Energy Cooperatives have awarded over \$75,000 in scholarships to high school seniors as part of the Scholar of the Week program.



From left, Back Row: Tristan Hayes, Thomas Trautman, Caleb Whitmyre, Olympia Scott, Ryder Grantham, Austin Arends, Jared Hueser, Isaac Groft; Middle Row: Kendra Pikarski, Tasha Determan, Sydney Gall, Sydney Bormann, Morgan Carmody, Allyson Monson, Rebecca Burrows, Nicole Thomes, Hannah Noonan, Margaret Thares, Kristen Hoffman; Front Row: Madalyne Schuldt, Allison Tschetter, Jenna Erickson, Georgialee Quail, Abby Hora, Katherine Brockevelt, Allison Bich, Talitha Greaver, Sophie Beers, Nicolette Kneeland.

Competing with Heart

S.D. High School Rodeo Athletes Hit the Arena

By
Brenda
Kleinjan

On the cover: Siarra Johnson of Castlewood was the Barrel Racing Champion with 76.0 points. **Below:** Jeremiah Johnson of Huron competes in steer wrestling. He placed 15th overall in the 2015 finals.

Photos Courtesy CowboyImages.net

WHILE MANY OF THE AREA'S HIGH SCHOOL athletes will have put their sports gear away for the summer having competed in their sport's state event, the South Dakota's high school rodeo athletes are just hitting their stride.

For high school rodeo athletes, June is their month. South Dakota regional rodeos are set for the first two weekends in June with Buffalo, Wall, Highmore and Huron hosting events June 3-5 while arenas in Dupree, Sturgis, Fort Pierre and Watertown will welcome athletes June 10-12. In Minnesota, regional rodeos are scheduled for weekends in May at Verndale, Long Prairie and Fergus Falls and June 4-5 in St. Peter with the state finals held June 10-12 in Hugo.

No matter where they compete, the approximately 450 members of the South Dakota High School Rodeo Association will have their sights set on Belle Fourche, host of the 2016 South Dakota High School Rodeo Finals June 14-18.

For Digger Rutten, public relations chairman

for South Dakota High School Rodeo Association, high school rodeo is at the heart of keeping the spirit of the West going.

"It's a good event and keeps the western heritage alive in South Dakota is what we stress with the athletes," said Rutten.

He notes that you'll find the state's high school rodeo athletes competing in school events throughout the year from football and volleyball to basketball and wrestling and golf and track.

"The kids are involved in other sports in their school, too, but the high school rodeo is something the whole family travels together. It's more of a family sport," said Rutten.

Rutten estimates that 300 contestants will qualify for the state finals. And, in the stands will be hundreds of family members and friends.

"It's a great fun family event, fun to compete in and fun to watch," said Rutten.

South Dakota's Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives have been supporters of high school rodeo



©CowboyImages.net

for several years. The cooperative brand adorns barrels used in regional and state competitions in the Rushmore State. And, athletes who earn short go shirts through their performances will carry a bit of co-op pride with them whenever they wear their shirt. As the short go shirt sponsors, the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives logo is stitched onto the shirt.

Nearly 120 such shirts were awarded after the 2015 finals.

According to Rutten, athletes qualify for the state final's short go by combining the scores earned at the regional rodeos with the results of the first two go's at the state rodeo.

The top four point getters in each event qualify for the national team while the 11 other athletes are recognized for making the short go.

In South Dakota, rodeo athletes compete in bareback riding, barrel racing, breakaway roping, bull riding, boys' cutting, girls' cutting, goat tying, pole bending, reined cow horse, saddle bronc, steer wrestling, team roping and tie-down. There is also a queen competition and shooting events.

"High school kids aren't running for money. They rodeo for the points and prizes," said Rutten, noting some differences between high school rodeo and pro rodeo.

"It's more the competition to see how good you can be versus going for some money," he said.

Additionally, high school rodeo has events that one doesn't see in some other levels of rodeo.

"Pole bending is something you see in high school and 4-H rodeo, but not at some of the other levels," Rutten said. "We have goat tying which you don't see in the pros and cutting and reined cow horse is a new event for us."

Behind the scenes at the rodeos are dozens of volunteers who work to keep the sport going for the teens.

Each one of the committees that hosts a regional rodeo has a committee of volunteers that puts on the regional rodeos.

A state level board of directors helps oversee things statewide, but regional committees and the state finals host committee are crucial to the program's success.

"The regional meets are designed so that they don't have to travel more than 200 miles to compete," said Rutten.

For more on Minnesota High School rodeo, visit <http://www.mnhsrodeo.com/>. For more information on South Dakota High School Rodeo, go to <http://www.sdhsra.com/>



Rachael McCoy (top) and Lathen Stevens (below) were among recipients of the South Dakota High School Rodeo Association's short go shirts. McCoy earned her shirt in the pole bending event while Stevens competed in the saddle bronc event. They were among nearly 120 SDHSRA athletes receiving short go shirts in 2015.

Huron to Host National Junior High Finals Rodeo

The South Dakota State Fairgrounds in Huron, S.D., has been selected to host the 2018 and 2019 National Junior High Finals Rodeo (NJHFR) by the National High School Rodeo Association. The NJHFR is the second largest rodeo in the world with approximately 1,000 contestants and over 1,500 entries. During these events, three countries are represented including 42 U.S. states, five Canadian Provinces and the country of Australia.

While the official rodeo performances take place over the course of seven days, the entire event encompasses a total of 15 days from set-up to tear-down. Along with the rodeo, comes one of the largest western trade shows in the nation. There are also a myriad of other contestant recreational and sporting activities including one of the fastest growing shooting competitions in the U.S. Officials estimate the event will have an economic impact of over \$9.2 million for Huron and the surrounding area.

"This is going to be a great undertaking for Huron and the SD State Fairgrounds," stated Peggy Besch, SD State Fair manager, "but, we are up for the task! This will clearly be a partnership between the State Fair, the City of Huron, Huron Chamber & Visitors Bureau, Beadle County, businesses and organizations in the Huron area, and many volunteers."

"Not only is this event great for Huron and the SD State Fairgrounds, but it is great for the entire state," said Laurie Shelton, president and CEO of the Huron Chamber & Visitors Bureau. "All of these people will be traveling through South Dakota. They will be stopping for fuel, food, lodging and visiting the many tourist attractions along the way."

The NJHFR is scheduled for June 24-30, 2018, and June 23-29, 2019, in Huron, S.D.

Created in 2004, the NHSRA Junior High Division was established to bring the excitement of the sport to sixth, seventh, and eighth graders and to serve as a feeder system into the high school ranks of the Association. Today, all 48 states and provinces that belong to the NHSRA also produce a Junior High Division as well, with over 2,500 members in total now competing. Junior High Division students compete in a variety of events, including Barrel racing, pole bending, goat tying, breakaway roping, tie-down roping, chute dogging, team roping, ribbon roping, junior bull riding, bareback steer riding and saddle bronc steer riding.

Gallup, N.M., hosted the NJHFR from 2005 through 2013. The rodeo moved to Des Moines, Iowa, for 2014-15 and the 2016 NJHFR is set for June 19-25 in Lebanon, Tenn., which will also host the 2017 finals. South Dakota's state junior high finals were held May 13-15, 2016, in Rapid City.

Electric Cooperative Youth Tour Inspires Students and Fosters Civility

ON A MILD MONDAY EVENING LESS THAN A WEEK after Mardi Gras, 18-year-old Collin Craig was sitting in a downtown New Orleans hotel room talking to himself. He wasn't having some sort of psychological episode; he was practicing an important speech.

The next day Collin would stand on a stage in a giant exposition hall at the New Orleans Convention Center. Behind him would be a dazzling array of video screens, some projecting his image larger than life. In front of him would be a sea of 6,000 faces, all several decades older than him, and all quietly waiting to hear what this high school senior from Slocomb, Ala., had to say.

Tuesday morning arrived, and Collin stood backstage in the green room waiting. The emcee called his name, music started playing, and Collin climbed up the steps and into the spotlight. He stood at the podium, and, reading from the kind of teleprompter that's typically reserved for presidents, told the crowd gathered for the 74th annual meeting of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) about the journey he'd taken in the past year.

A year earlier, Collin had been selected by Wire-

grass Electric Cooperative to participate in the 2015 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

Every June, nearly 1,700 students from electric cooperatives across the country, including more than 70 participants from Minnesota and South Dakota, converge in our nation's capital for the Youth Tour. Students spend the week visiting monuments and museums, meeting Senators and members of Congress from their state, learning about leadership and the cooperative business model, and forging lifelong friendships with fellow Youth Tour participants from far-away places who were strangers just a few days before.

Each of the 44 states that participate in the program selects one member of their delegation to represent it on the Youth Leadership Council. Members of the council come back to Washington for additional leadership development experiences, serve as youth ambassadors at events hosted by their state's electric co-ops and represent their states at the annual meeting of America's electric cooperatives.

The Youth Leadership Council elects one of its members to be the group's spokesperson and deliver an address at the annual meeting. Last year, they selected Collin.

By Justin LaBerge

Minnesota's Youth Leadership Council representative, Shantelle Des Marais, center, poses with fellow YLCers.



In his speech, Collin told the audience, “there is a bigger picture that can only be reached through the actions we take to make the world a better place. We can’t do that by ourselves. It’s a collective effort from the leaders in our community who take action and look beyond their own lives.”

When he concluded his remarks, he was given a standing ovation and NRECA President Mel Coleman praised Collin and his 43 fellow members of the Youth Leadership Council.

Though Collin was the man in the spotlight at the annual meeting, all Youth Leadership Council members are leaders in their schools, communities and extracurricular activities.

Shantelle Des Marais, a freshly minted high school graduate from Pipestone, Minn., is one of them.

As a three-sport athlete and competitive dancer, Shantelle keeps a busy schedule. Though she is active in her community, coaching children enrolled in beginner gymnastics and track programs at the local rec center, she had never really paid attention to politics.

Last year, she saw a flyer for a program sponsored by her local electric cooperative, Sioux Valley Energy, called EmPower Youth Leadership. She talked to her school counselor and applied for the program.

After completing the program, she was selected to be a member of the Minnesota Youth Tour delegation, and was later chosen to be the state’s Youth Leadership Council delegate.

“At the start of this whole process, I didn’t even know what a co-op was at all,” Shantelle said. “Now I’ve learned so much about the model and the Seven Cooperative Principles, and it reminds me of how I’d like our country to run. I wish we could all keep those principles in mind and be good to one another.”

Her experience with Youth Tour and the Youth Leadership Council inspired the 18-year-old to get involved in her first presidential election. Not only did Shantelle caucus for the first time, she was selected to be a county delegate.

“The best thing about this whole experience is that it has opened my eyes to different possibilities,” she said.

Another young woman who participated in this eye-opening program was Emma DeMaranville from Tonganoxie, Kan.

Emma was familiar with her local electric cooperative, but had no idea how many different types of cooperatives there are and the impact they’ve had throughout the U.S. and the world.

Her grandmother had seen the opportunities other students had gained through the Youth Tour program and urged Emma to apply.

An active member of Family Career and Community Leaders of America who also participates in forensics, debate and theatre, Emma was selected to represent Leavenworth-Jefferson Electric as a member of the Kansas Youth Tour delegation.

“Every kid on Youth Tour has big aspirations, and

their goals inspired me to do something with my career and future that could make an impact,” Emma said. “Being in the nation’s capital with some of the most passionate and intelligent people I have ever met made me feel like I could do anything.”

One common theme mentioned by all three of these young leaders was the need to cooperate, be respectful and find common ground to solve problems.

Collin recounted the many spirited conversations he had with other YLC delegates on important issues. “There were times when we might have different opinions, but there were never any fights, rivalries or hatreds. In fact, we used these debates to strengthen each other. We learned how to unite. Diversity doesn’t cause adversity, it can demolish it,” he said.

Emma said she’s gained a better understanding of other people, and the similarities and differences in their lives. “I want to do bipartisan work to make a difference for the people around me. Youth Tour helped me see the struggles others face, and has instilled in me a desire to create change on a global level.”

Shantelle said her experiences have helped her realize that great leaders are real people, too. “You go to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial or the Lincoln Memorial, and you think about the great things these leaders did and how they helped me get where I am today. It always feels like something so far off. But then I got to meet my Senators and you realize that they’re real people and maybe I could do this some day.”

All three of these students plan to attend public universities in their home states this fall, and say the experiences they’ve gained over the past year have influenced what they’ll study and how they plan to live their lives after college.

“If you had asked me a year ago what I wanted to do with my life, I would’ve said ‘I don’t know. Probably something with computers.’ I still plan to major in computer science, but that’s just the foundation for many different things Youth Tour has inspired me to pursue,” Collin said.

Youth Tour is a joint investment made by local electric cooperatives, their statewide organizations and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. When Youth Tour participants arrive in Washington each June, the expectation is that they will learn from our political leaders and be inspired to do great things in their communities.

Based on the wisdom and maturity displayed by Collin, Shantelle and Emma, our future is certainly bright, and our current elected leaders could learn as much from the students as the students learn from them.

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.

Co-ops Vote

Co-ops Launch Non-Partisan Voter Engagement Program

By
Justin LaBerge

AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES HAVE LAUNCHED a non-partisan, nationwide effort to promote civic engagement and voter participation in the communities they serve.

Jeffrey Connor, interim CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, unveiled the Co-ops Vote program in time for the 2016 election

cycle.

"Through Co-ops Vote, we want to help our members know when elections are, what's at stake and how to make their voices heard," Connor said. "Who folks vote for isn't really as important as the fact that they do vote."

The Co-ops Vote initiative focuses on eight



VISIT **VOTE.COOP** TO LEARN HOW
TO BECOME A CO-OP VOTER.

issues that are important to health and prosperity of communities served by electric cooperatives:

- Rural Broadband Access
- Hiring and Honoring Veterans
- Low-Income Energy Assistance
- Cybersecurity
- Water Regulation
- Rural Health Care Access
- Affordable and Reliable Energy
- Renewable Energy

“Electric cooperatives are perfectly designed to help address these important issues,” Connor said. “We can make politics ‘local’ again because civic engagement is part of our DNA.”

A new website, vote.coop, offers co-op members information on the voter registration process in their state, dates of elections, information on the candidates running in those elections, and explanations of the eight key issues the campaign aims to address.

In keeping with its non-partisan goals, the initiative will not be endorsing specific candidates for office.

Mel Coleman, president of NRECA and CEO of North Arkansas Electric Cooperative said the program would help ensure the voices of rural Americans are heard.

“We want to make sure our government knows that rural America matters,” Coleman said. “This campaign isn’t about divisive, partisan issues. It’s about real people in real places facing real challenges. It’s about our co-ops living out the principles of our movement: Concern for community and democratic control.”

Connor cited partisan gridlock in Washington, the explosive growth of money in politics and the effects of gerrymandering as important reasons for launching the program. In 2014, 318 of

435 House races had a margin of victory of 20 points or more¹, and 30 House candidates – 16 Democrats and 14 Republicans representing 11 states – didn’t even face an opponent in the general election².

“Elections aren’t won and lost in November anymore,” Connor said. “They’re really decided in primaries months sooner, when fewer voters recognize the opportunity to vote, fewer participate and only a handful of issues are up for debate.”

This results in a Congress where more members represent the extremes of each political party and are less inclined to seek compromise and bipartisan solutions to problems.

“The electric cooperative movement has always been non-partisan, and our communities are facing too many challenges to have a government crippled by bickering,” Coleman said. “When our parents and grandparents set out to electrify rural America, they didn’t have time to ask the person next to them about their views on economic or social policy. Their economic policy was ‘we need to save this community’ and their social policy was ‘let’s do it together.’ I hope the Co-ops Vote program can help rekindle that spirit of cooperation.”

For more information about Co-ops Vote and the impact of these eight key issues on the people of South Dakota, western Minnesota and north central Nebraska, contact your local electric cooperative or visit vote.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.



CO-OPS VOTE

A PROGRAM OF AMERICA'S
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

- ✓ Pledge to be a co-op voter
- ✓ Find key election information
- ✓ Learn about the issues
- ✓ Register to vote



✓ TAKE THE PLEDGE

- ✓ Commit today to make your voice heard on Election Day!
- ✓ Get reminders about the upcoming election.
- ✓ Recruit your friends, family, and co-workers to become co-op voters today.



CO-OPS
VOTE

A PROGRAM OF AMERICA'S
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

VOTE.COOP

¹ https://ballotpedia.org/Margin_of_victory_analysis_for_the_2014_congressional_elections

² <http://atr.rollcall.com/elections-2014-running-unopposed-congress/>

NRECA Legislative Conference Brings Electric Co-op Messages to D.C.

LONGTIME NRECA GENERAL MANAGER CLYDE T. Ellis put it best, electric cooperative officials said at the kickoff of the association's 2016 Legislative Conference: "We support our friends and stand by them. If they're not our friends, we will make them our friends."

That was the message delivered to 1,500 co-op directors, managers and staffers at the annual NRECA Legislative Conference – use their roles as community leaders to sway support for co-op priorities on Capitol Hill.

"Time, money and gridlock are all working overtime against us," said NRECA interim CEO Jeffrey Connor, who referred to Ellis during his May 2 remarks. "What cuts through the noise is what you have – influence, involvement, engagement and trust."

The three-day conference at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill in Washington included briefings by NRECA lobbyists on issues for co-op leaders to raise in face-to-face meetings with senators, congressmen and their staffs.

Also part of the conference was a series of forums on hot topics in Co-op Nation and addresses by regulatory and political experts.

Connor noted that co-op issues have changed in the 80 years since the dawn of rural electrification. Then, it was a matter of stringing wires and mounting poles to bring power to unserved parts of the country – the so-called "last mile."

Now, the role of co-ops in the communities means expanding the availability of broadband, building economic opportunities and helping communities prosper.

"We're going to conquer the next mile because we are electric cooperatives and that's what we do," Connor said.

The 114th Congress was not in session during this year's conference. But Kirk Johnson, NRECA senior vice president of government relations, said buttonholing congressional staffers can be as important as sitting down with elected officials.

That's because high stakes legislation and regulation in Washington could affect co-ops' ability to

By Steven Johnson and
Michael W. Kahn
ECT Staff Writers





provide reliable, affordable electricity

"We need to be the ones looking out for our cooperative members' destinies because if we don't do that for ourselves, someone else will do it to us," he said.

Travis Kavulla of Montana, president of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, said co-ops provide local leadership that's an antidote for increasingly centralized decision-making in energy policy.

"It's important for all of you to stay engaged," he said.

Making the Case for Co-op Drones

When it comes to drones and electric cooperatives, "we probably have one of the best uses for this technology in the country," Keith Dennis said. That's at the heart of NRECA's efforts to make it easier for co-ops to fly drones.

"We have power lines that cover three-quarters of the nation's land mass," said Dennis, NRECA senior principal, end use solutions and standards. "It's a natural fit for us."

Speaking at a May 2 NRECA Legislative Conference forum on drones, Dennis updated co-op leaders on the association's efforts to change the status quo. Currently, when co-ops want to fly a drone it's considered commercial use, so a Section 333 Exemption has to be obtained from the Federal Aviation Administration. Among the many requirements is a pilot's license.

"We're really looking at finding a streamlined process for how we can operate this technology in a cost-effective way," said Dennis.

A bill passed by the Senate in April would ease restrictions. It directs the FAA to provide guidelines for the safe operation of drones used to protect and maintain critical infrastructure.

"The FAA's top priority is safety of the airspace," Dennis said, so NRECA is stressing safety.

"We're in very safe areas. We don't have a high density population. We're not trying to fly over cities," Dennis said. "We're trying to fly over rural areas, in rights of way that we already have access to and that people don't generally go in."

There are amazing things that co-ops could be doing with drones, if allowed. The list includes safely surveying damage after emergencies.

"Having critical infrastructure that needs to be repaired when power goes out, in a fast way, to keep the power running — that's actually a health, safety and welfare issue. So we have a really good case for being part of this discussion," said Dennis.

"We really need to have some certainty on how we can go forward."

Left: South Dakota co-op leaders met with members of Sen. John Thune andn Mike Rounds' staff (pictured) as well as a member of Rep. Kristi Noem's staff. **Left:** Travis Kavulla of Montana, president of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, addressed the gathering.

Key 'Asks' at 2016 NRECA Legislative Conference

By Steven Johnson | ECT Staff Writer

Some 1,500 electric cooperative leaders advanced key co-op issues to members of Congress and their staffs at Capitol Hill meetings during the 2016 NRECA Legislative Conference, held May 1-3 in Washington, D.C.

Here's a rundown of the key "asks" for co-ops:

EXTEND GEOTHERMAL CREDIT

Tax credits for highly efficient geothermal heat pumps expire at the end of 2016. Co-ops help their members save energy and money by promoting geothermal heat pumps. Co-ops asked lawmakers to extend the geothermal tax credit.

SUPPORT COAL ASH LEGISLATION

A bill introduced by Sens. John Hoeven, R-N.D., and Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., would prevent the Environmental Protection Agency from reversing course on its coal ash regulations and require states to implement the EPA rule through a permitting program. Co-ops sought more Senate sponsors for S. 2446.

SUPPORT FEMA REAUTHORIZATION

Co-op leaders sought Senate support for H.R. 1471, a bill passed by the House that cuts red tape. Without FEMA, many electric cooperative consumers living in disaster-stricken areas could face significantly higher electric rates.

BETTER LAND MANAGEMENT

Federal land management policies complicate co-op efforts to ensure reliable service by maintaining rights of way on or near federal property. H.R. 2358, introduced by Rep. Ryan Zinke, R-Mont., and Rep. Kurt Schrader, D-Ore., passed the House in December and would streamline the process. Co-op leaders asked senators to support the bill, the Electricity Reliability and Protection Act, as part of a final energy bill.

OPPOSE POLE ATTACHMENT LEGISLATION

Discussion draft legislation before the House Energy and Commerce Committee would extend federal regulation of attachments to electric co-op power poles. Co-op leaders asked their officials to maintain the federal pole attachment exemption for electric cooperatives and remove language that would increase regulation.

JOIN NEW CAUCUSES

Legislative Conference participants asked representatives to join two new House caucuses to help promote co-op priorities. The Rural Broadband Caucus will focus on bridging the digital divide while the Co-op Business Caucus will focus on promoting the co-op business model.

Regional Dateline

May 20-22

South Dakota Birding Festival
Pickstown, SD, 605-487-7603

May 27-October 10

Legends in Light® Laser Light
Show, Nightly, Crazy Horse
Memorial, Crazy Horse, SD

June 1-2

Governor's Ag Summit
Brookings, SD, 605-773-5711

June 1-4

South Dakota Senior Games
Rapid City, SD, Contact Kristi
Lintz at 605-394-4168

June 2-5

RibFest, W.H. Lyon
Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD
605-367-7288

June 3-4

The Original SD BBQ
Championships, Huron, SD
605-353-7340

June 3-4

South Dakota Senior Games
Sioux Falls, SD, Contact Scott
Juhnke at 605-367-8222

June 3-5

Wheel Jam, Huron, SD
605-353-7354

June 3-5

Black Hills Quilters Guild
Quilt Show and Sale
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center
Rapid City, SD
info@bhquilters.org
www.bhquilters.org



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.

June 4

Casey Tibbs Match of
Champions, Stanley County
Fairgrounds, Fort Pierre, SD
605-494-1094

June 4-5

Spring Volksmarch at
Crazy Horse Memorial
Crazy Horse, SD, 605-673-4681

June 9-12

South Dakota Shakespeare
Festival, Prentis Park
Vermillion, SD, 605-622-0423

June 10-11

Two Rivers Exposition
Expo Center, Fort Pierre, SD
605-224-8686

June 10-11

South Dakota Senior Games
Spearfish, SD, Contact Kris
Harwood at 605-722-1430

June 10-12

Trail Days, Ipswich, SD
605-426-6155

June 11

Art and Wine Festival
Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

June 11

Blue Star Fundraiser Quilt
Show/Garden Tour, 10 a.m.
to 5 p.m., Buses running
from Beresford Library, Rural
Beresford, SD, 605-661-9151

June 11-12

Siouxland Renaissance
Festival, Sioux Falls, SD
866-489-9241

June 16-19

Czech Days, Tabor, SD
www.TaborCzechDays.com

June 17-19

Crazy Horse Stampede Rodeo
and Gift from Mother Earth
Crazy Horse, SD

June 24-25

South Dakota Senior Games
Mitchell, SD, Contact Barb
Pierkowski at 605-995-8048

Events of Special Note

June 3-5

Fort Sisseton Historical
Festival, Lake City, SD
605-448-5474

June 14

Seventh Annual Ag Women's
Day, First Lutheran Church
Activity Center, Brookings, SD
605-692-8003 Ext. 2

July 7

Naja Shrine Circus
Fairgrounds, 6 p.m.
Faith, SD, 605-342-3402

July 8

Naja Shrine Circus
Fairgrounds, 6 p.m.
Hettinger, ND, 605-342-3402

July 9

Naja Shrine Circus, Rodeo
Grounds, 2 and 7 p.m.
Deadwood, SD, 605-342-3402

July 9

Dare to Dream Conference
Convention Center
Watertown, SD, 605-361-3171
or 800-640-4553
www.sdparent.org

July 10

Naja Shrine Circus, Rodeo
Grounds, 2 p.m., Philip, SD
605-342-3402