

# South Dakota Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



## Cooperative Connections

OCTOBER 2016 VOL. 68 NO. 10



Annual Meetings Give  
Members A Voice

P8-9





## Be the light.

The world we share provides abundant vitality — time with those we love and beautiful landscapes to explore. It's why we use our natural resources to create electricity in the cleanest, safest manner possible. To us, it's more than delivering light, it's being a light for our members and our communities by ensuring our environment remains vibrant for all future generations.



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# 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.  
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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

# Why We Celebrate Cooperatives



**Ed Anderson**  
General Manager, South Dakota  
Rural Electric Association

**Every October, cooperatives** from all sectors across the country celebrate National Cooperative Month. The purpose of this annual celebration is to recognize the cooperative difference and remind cooperative members and the public about our cooperatives' purposes.

I must admit that occasionally, I too have been somewhat cynical of the many different "days" and "months" that are celebrated, but National Cooperative Month is truly an opportunity to celebrate.

Celebrating National Cooperative Month informs others about our unique business model, which is based on the Seven Cooperative Principles: Voluntary and Open Membership; Democratic Member Control; Members' Economic Participation; Autonomy and Independence; Education, Training and Information; Cooperation Among Cooperatives; and Concern for Community.

For co-op employees and members that are familiar with the principles, the month of October is a great opportunity to renew our connection to each other and the purpose of our co-op.

To celebrate National Cooperative Month, cooperatives hold the annual Cooperative Hall of Fame Induction banquet to recognize leaders in the cooperative movement. Several co-ops hold member appreciation events and many reserve this special month for the fundamental part of cooperatives, the annual meeting where co-op members exercise their democratic control of the business they own.

In the U.S., there are more than 29,000 co-ops serving in every single industry. Many co-ops from different sectors join together during the month of October to educate members in the community about cooperatives.

There are more co-ops in our state and local communities than most people realize. In addition to your electric cooperative, there are telephone cooperatives, credit unions, Ace Hardware, True Value, Do It Best Hardware, agricultural co-ops, food co-ops, and more. Co-ops are even represented on the shelves at our local grocery stores, such as Land O'Lakes, Welch's, Organic Valley, Cabot Cheese, Sunkist, Ocean Spray and many more.

According to the latest data, more than 130 million people belong to a co-op in the U.S. alone, and co-ops employ more than 2 million Americans.

This speaks to the heart of why we must take every opportunity to celebrate and teach others about the cooperative business model. So, plan your own co-op celebration by purchasing co-op products, look to do business with co-ops right here in our state and be an active member of your local electric cooperative.

# Fall Electrical Safety Tips

**As the calendar makes** its way ever closer to October, we find ourselves preparing for fall. During this transitional period, when the kids are headed for school but the weather has yet to cool down, it's a good time to review fall electrical safety. When activities move inside, it's important to consider the electrical hazards that become more prevalent as the temperatures begin to plummet. We've put together a list of practical safety tips for both inside and outside the home.

## Outdoor Electrical Safety

**Electrical Wires** – When using your ladder outside, especially for projects on the roof or rain gutter, be mindful of overhead electrical wires.

**Battery Chargers** – Unplug and store those battery chargers for yard tools that won't be used until next spring.

**Outdoor Devices** – Protect outdoor electrical devices from moisture. Cover any exposed electrical outlets and check outdoor electrical cords for damage or a faulty connection.

**Leaves/Debris** – Keep fallen leaves away from outdoor outlets, power cords and outdoor lighting. Also make sure that tree debris is kept away from the air conditioner condenser.

**Cold Weather Tools** – Inspect the electrical tools that you will be using for fall yard work. Make sure to check the cords for wear and tear – and either repair damaged equipment or replace it.

**Outdoor Lighting** – Less sunlight in the fall will mean the exterior lights to the house will be on longer. Check the lights to ensure that the bulbs are the correct wattage and that any cords have not been damaged over the summer.

## Indoor Electrical Safety



**Electric Blankets** – Make sure that you inspect all of your electric blankets for worn areas both in the fabric and on the electrical cord. Never tuck an electrical blanket under a mattress or animals to sleep on them.

**Space Heaters** – If you use a space heater, inspect it and have a quick test run before running it this season. Be mindful of space heater placement. Always allow at least a foot of space around the perimeter of unit and never leave unattended toddlers in the same room with one.

**Smoke/CO Detectors** – Every season you should check your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Since the fall usually means more inside activities, including cooking and use of the fireplace, it's good practice to ensure the smoke detectors are working properly. If you own gas heater, stoves or other gas-fueled appliances, make sure that you own CO detectors – and that they are working properly.

**Light Bulbs** – In the fall we start to lose daylight, which will mean more dependence on indoor lighting. Check the bulbs throughout the house to make sure they are the proper wattage for the size of the light fixture.

Source: [www.universalhomeexperts.com](http://www.universalhomeexperts.com)





VOTE YES ON AMENDMENT R

★★ NOVEMBER 2016 ★★

WHAT  
WILL  
IT  
DO?

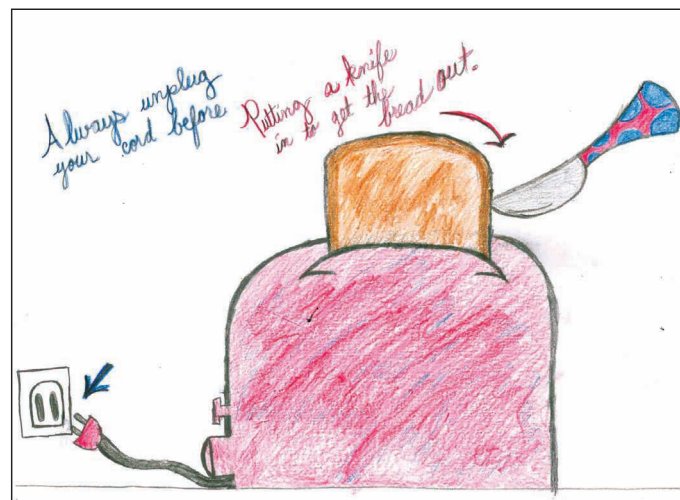
- Amendment R merely updates our Constitution's language to reflect today's marketplace for workers and employer needs.
- Employers will have an easier time finding specialized workers with a specific skill set.
- More students will have access to programs that bring them immediate employment.
- Technical institutes and career education programs will have direct access to government decision-makers for support and funding.
- Amendment R improves communication and support among the career and technical education schools and their governing body.
- As workers fill positions that would otherwise have remained empty, South Dakota's economy grows.

THERE IS NO COST TO THE TAXPAYER FOR AMENDMENT R

## Kids' Corner Safety Poster

**"Always unplug your cord before putting a knife in to get the bread out."**



**Jacyne Romey, 11 years old**

Jacyne is the daughter of Tracy Romey, Oelrichs, S.D. She is a member of Black Hills Electric Cooperative, Custer, 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.

# Plenty of Pasta



## Refrigerator Chicken Casserole

2 to 2-1/2 cups diced cooked chicken	1 small onion, finely chopped
2 cups elbow macaroni, uncooked	1/2 green pepper, diced
1 can cream of mushroom soup	1 (2 oz.) jar pimento, diced
1 can cream of chicken soup	1 (5 oz.) can sliced water chestnuts
1 soup can milk	8 oz. Cheddar cheese, grated
1-3/4 cup chicken broth	

Mix together all ingredients in order given. Pour into well-greased 9x13-inch pan. Cover with aluminum foil. Refrigerate overnight until ready to bake. Uncover and bake at 350°F. for 1 hour.

**Karen Huether, Tripp**

## Fettuccini Alfredo

24 oz. dry fettuccini pasta	1 dash garlic salt
1 cup butter	3/4 cup grated Romano cheese
3/4 pint heavy cream	1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
Salt and pepper to taste	

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add fettuccini and cook for 8 to 10 minutes or until al dente; drain. In a large saucepan, melt butter into cream over low heat. Add salt, pepper and garlic salt. Stir in cheese over medium heat until melted; this will thicken the sauce. Add pasta to sauce. Use enough of the pasta so that all of the sauce is used and the pasta is thoroughly coated. Serve immediately.

**Jillian Nedved, Harrisburg**

## Tomato Basil Linguine

1 lb. Brie cheese, rind removed and cut into small pieces	3 garlic cloves, minced
4 large tomatoes, coarsely chopped	1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup chopped fresh basil	1/4 tsp. pepper
1/2 cup olive oil	1-1/2 lbs. uncooked linguine
	Shredded Parmesan cheese

In a large serving bowl, combine Brie, tomatoes, basil, oil, garlic, salt and pepper. Let stand at room temperature for up to 1-1/2 hours. Cook linguine according to package directions; drain. Toss with cheese mixture. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Serve immediately.

**Stephanie Fossum, Hudson**

## Sausage and Pepper Spaghetti Pie

8 oz. spaghetti	1 tsp. garlic powder
1 T. olive oil	1 tsp. oregano leaves
1/2 lb. Italian sausage, casing removed	1 tsp. thyme leaves
1 cup thinly sliced green bell pepper	1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup thinly sliced onion wedges	2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese, divided
1 (14.5 oz.) can diced tomatoes, undrained	8 eggs
2 tsps. Rosemary leaves	

Cook spaghetti as directed on package. Drain well. Meanwhile, heat oil in large ovenproof skillet on medium-high heat. Break up sausage in skillet. Add bell pepper and onion; cook and stir 5 minutes or until sausage is browned. Add tomatoes, rosemary, garlic powder, oregano, thyme and salt; cook and stir 10 minutes until most of the liquid has evaporated. Beat eggs in large bowl. Add spaghetti and 1 cup of the cheese; mix well. Stir into mixture in skillet. Cook on medium-low heat 5 minutes or until bottom is set. Sprinkle with remaining 1 cup cheese. Bake at 350°F. for 8 to 10 minutes or until center is just set and cheese is melted. Cut into 8 wedges to serve.

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 367, Total Fat 19g, Cholesterol 246mg, Sodium 754mg, Carbohydrates 28g, Dietary Fiber 2g, Protein 21g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Spaghetti Corn

1 can creamed corn	1 can whole corn
2 cups broken spaghetti	1 cup Monterey Jack cheese
1 stick melted butter	Onion, optional

Combine all ingredients; pour into buttered casserole. Bake at 350°F. for 25 minutes with lid off and an additional 20 minutes with lid on.

**Nikki Larson, Hayti**

## Pasta Bake

1 lb. ground beef	1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided
3 cups penne pasta, cooked and drained	1-1/2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
1 (24 oz.) jar spaghetti sauce	

Brown beef and drain. Add pasta, sauce and 1/2 the Parmesan cheese, mixing well. Spoon into a 9x13-inch baking dish. Top with remaining cheeses. Bake at 375°F. for 20 minutes or until heated thru.

**Mary Jessen, Holabird**

*Please send your favorite crockpot, holiday treat and soup 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.*



# Do You Have an Energy Hog in Your Home?



**Patrick Keegan**  
Collaborative Efficiency

**Dear Pat:** I'm trying to make my home as energy efficient as possible. I recently installed a new heat pump and efficient water heater and increased the amount of insulation in my home. I also enlisted the help of a home energy auditor and he didn't find much in the way of air leakage. However, my energy bills still seem higher than they should be. Can you point out other areas of the home that I might be over-

looking? – Raymond

**Dear Raymond:** It sounds like you have made some solid investments with your focus on space and water heating, which are usually the major uses of energy in the home. Your energy auditor may be able to provide information about how your home's energy use compares to similar homes in the area—and if it is substantially higher, what could be causing the problem.

Your electric co-op could also be a valuable source of information. Many co-ops have installed smart meters at their members' homes, which can show detailed hourly energy use. This information can sometimes help pinpoint a large energy user. For example, you may be using more electricity on weekends, which would be an important clue to discovering what is driving up your energy costs.

Armed with whatever clues you can glean from your energy auditor or your co-op, you are better able to search for an energy hog in your home. Are there uses of energy outside your typical living space that are "out of sight, out of mind?" Below are some possible unconventional energy uses that could be adding to your energy bill:

## Swimming pools and spas

A swimming pool and spa are nice amenities to have in your home, but they can significantly contribute to your energy bill.

Your pool pump keeps the water circulating through its filtering system and could be the most energy intensive part of your pool. Older pool pumps run continuously on a single, high speed setting, but this circulation is more than the typical residential pool needs. An ENERGY STAR®-certified pool pump can be programmed to run at different speeds depending on your pool's needs – and can pay for itself in as little as two years.

If you heat your pool, try using an efficient heater. Pool heaters that run on natural gas or propane are the most common, but an electric heat pump, water heater or a solar water heater could be a more cost-effective option. Remember to put a cover on the pool when it is not in use to keep your heater

from working as hard.

If you have a hot tub or spa that you occasionally use, consider turning it off when it is not in use. If you use your spa frequently, use a cover with a high insulation value to keep the water warm and your electric bill low.

## Pump systems

Water pumps often run on electricity and can be found in many areas of your property.

**Irrigation:** If you have a larger property, you may have an irrigation system. Leaks in your irrigation system can greatly increase your pump's electricity use.

**Wells:** If your home uses well water, you have a well pump that helps bring the water from the well to your home. A malfunctioning well pump may run continuously to try and maintain proper water pressure – this can cause a significant increase in your electricity bill.

**Garden fountains:** Fountains make a charming addition to your garden, but the pumps that run them use about as much energy as a small lamp. If you have multiple fountains in your garden, look into installing a timer so that the fountains only run part of the day.

## Non-living spaces

You may have some energy hogs in your garage, outbuilding or basement. For example:

Do you have a second working, but inefficient, refrigerator or freezer plugged in? Is it in use, or can you consolidate its contents into your kitchen?

Do you have a recreational space in an uninsulated part of your home, like the garage or basement? Using space heaters or portable air conditioners in uninsulated spaces can definitely lead to higher bills.

Do you have a block heater to help warm your vehicle on cold mornings? Plugging in your heater overnight will use far more electricity than needed – use a timer to start the block heater just a few hours before you need your vehicle.

## Home business

If you run a business out of your home, there could be a large energy user contributing to your electric bill. For example, regularly using welding equipment, ceramic kilns or power carpentry tools can contribute significantly to your electric bill, as can equipment that supports home farming operations.

Look for energy hogs around your home and try to limit their use if possible. Find more ways to be energy efficient by contacting your local electric co-op.

*This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Amy Wheelless of Collaborative Efficiency. For more information on how to test and seal your ductwork, please visit: [www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips](http://www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips).*

# THE RURAL SUMMIT

## THE SUMMIT AT A GLANCE

July 19/20, 2016  
Aberdeen, SD

### WHO ATTENDED?

222 TOTAL ATTENDEES

AGE RANGE:

17 – 78 YEARS OLD

98 MEN – 134 WOMEN

### WHERE FROM?

South Dakota  
North Dakota  
Minnesota  
Iowa  
Nebraska  
Saskatchewan



### RURAL SECTORS REPRESENTED:

Agri-business  
Community / Economic Development  
Cooperatives  
Education  
Elected Officials  
Financial Institutions  
Foundations  
Health care  
Native American Representatives  
State and Federal Agencies  
Students  
Utilities



### KEYNOTE DISCUSSIONS:



EMILY  
PILLOTON:  
DESIGNING  
THE FUTURE  
OF RURAL

TRADITION  
VS. INNOVATION  
PANEL  
DISCUSSION

ENTERTAINMENT:  
ROCK  
GARDEN  
TOUR

BECKY  
MCCRAY & DEB  
BROWN:  
SAVEYOUR.TOWN

JIM  
WOSTER:  
GENERATIONS  
OF RURAL

### TOPIC DISCUSSIONS:



RURAL SUCCESS STORIES  
SCHOOLS AS CENTERS OF INNOVATION/CREATIVITY  
SD WOMEN'S BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES  
MULTI-CULTURAL LEADERSHIP  
ROLE OF THE FAITH COMMUNITY  
LEVERAGING EXPONENTIAL TECHNOLOGIES  
LEARNING/SUPPORT NETWORK FOR EDP  
CONNECTING YOUTH TO COMMUNITY  
LEADERSHIP SUCCESSION AND SUSTAINABILITY  
RESOURCE HARVESTING  
ENCOURAGING COMMUNITY COOPERATIVE START-UPS  
THE ROLE OF AG PRODUCERS IN SMALL COMMUNITIES  
HOW TO TELL YOUR STORY  
SUSTAINABILITY OF RURAL CREATIVES  
RURAL HEALTH CARE

## News Briefs

# Conference on Local Foods Set

The 2016 South Dakota Local Foods Conference (SDLFC) is scheduled for Nov. 4-5 at the Highland Conference Center in Mitchell, S.D.

This conference provides educational programming and networking opportunities for producers, local food enthusiasts and resource providers of specialty crops and other niche local food products. Other components of the event include vendor booths and meals using local foods.

The conference will include two keynote speakers: Daniel Halsey, a certified permaculture designer and teacher for multiple academic institutions and organizations out of Prior Lake, Minn.; and "The Sioux Chef," Sean Sherman, who was born in Pine Ridge, S.D., and is now a caterer and food educator focusing on revitalizing indigenous food systems in a modern culinary context in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area.

The SDLFC will also expand by offering the pre-conference sessions on Nov. 3 to provide producers with more intensive training. Five different sessions are planned: 'Permaculture Design and Perennial Crop Systems Design' with keynote speaker, Dan Halsey; 'Cooking with Indigenous Food' with keynote speaker, Chef Sean Sherman; 'Social Media and Marketing'; 'Writing your 2017 Value Added, SARE, USDA and Specialty Crop Block Grant'; and 'Hops 101.' These sessions require advance registration separate from the conference registration.

The mainstay production, marketing and business tracks are offered during the main conference Nov. 4-5. Production topics range from marketing meat goats, hydroponics, hops, production of herbs, to honeybees 101. Some of the marketing track sessions include Moving to an International Market with George Paul Vinegars, the Marketing Story of Wild Idea Buffalo and a Brewers Panel. Business track sessions include a presentation by Wozupi Tribal Gardens, the Fundamentals of Creating a Business Plan, Building Natural Capital with Plant Systems with keynote speaker Dan Halsey and Food Safety.

The conference is meant to continue the dialogue on local foods among producers, growers, consumers, school nutrition programs, grocers, restaurants and resource providers. Anyone with an interest in local foods is encouraged to attend. Continuing Education hours are available to chefs who participate in the event.

Early bird registration runs through Sept. 30 for the two-day event at \$75 per person. Visit <http://2016sdlfcregistration.eventbrite.com> to register or email questions to [2016sdlocalfoods@gmail.com](mailto:2016sdlocalfoods@gmail.com).

**EMILY PILLOTON**  
Studio H, Oakland, CA

"The significance of this event is in bringing people together to realize the talent and creativity percolating out there in rural places. I think the important thing now is to start here and move forward. Everyone is an entrepreneur. Everyone has it in them to start something—whether it's a business, a Bible study, a book club...start something. The rewards are worth the risk."

**JEFF LAKNER**  
Lakner Farms, Wheatgrowers Board of Directors, Wessington Springs, SD

"It takes courage for people to take the first step to make a change. How do we identify that courage? Most people serve quietly and we need to let them know it's ok to make a little noise."

**EMILY FIRMAN-PIEPER**  
President of Flandreau Economic Development, Owner of Studio 52 and Community Volunteer, Flandreau, SD

"I don't want to feel like I'm living in my hometown because I don't know where else to be. I'm choosing it. Now I just need help figuring out what to do with all the potential."

**HUGH WEBER**  
Founder of OTA, Sioux Falls, SD

"Rural people can get things done. You know people, you call them up and you have a cup of coffee. You band together and get things done without a lot of hoops or red tape."



## Members' Democratic Participation

# Co-op Annual Meetings Give Members a Voice

By  
**Brenda Kleinjan  
and  
Meghaan Evans**

**E**ACH AND EVERY YEAR, COOPERATIVE MEMBERS are encouraged to attend their local cooperative annual meeting and exercise that most fundamental of democratic principles – the right to vote.

Your cooperative is not owned by far away investors, and it is not run by an appointed board of directors. It is run by a democratically elected board of directors – a board who is given the privilege to serve because of your vote.

A cooperative members' vote is his or her say in the business dealings of their cooperative, whether it be their electric cooperative, telephone cooperative, grain or elevator cooperative or similar businesses. That vote by the very same people using the business' products and services is what sets co-ops apart

from other types of businesses.

Votes for candidates for local boards of directors are not typically flashy affairs with big campaigns. In many cases, a nominating committee works to find interested people to stand for election. At other cooperatives, members petition to run for the board. The end result is that an individual is selected to represent his or her neighbors in making decisions that ensure their homes, farms/ranches and businesses are best served by the cooperative.

At the end of the day, the members hold the power with their vote.

The directors of your local cooperative are members of your community. They are concerned with the issues you face every day because they face them







Photo Courtesy Southeastern Electric Cooperative/Marion, S.D.

**Left:** A banner hoisted between two bucket trucks welcomes members to their annual meeting in Lennox this June. **Opposite Page:** The annual meeting format allows members to learn more about issues facing their cooperative on a national, state and local level. **Inset:** Future co-op members, such as Brooklyn Kodet at her co-op annual meeting in Bird Island, Minn., in March, often win prizes selected just for kids.

too. And don't forget – members of a local cooperative are eligible to run for the board – that includes you!

Each year, thousands of co-op members in South Dakota and western Minnesota will attend their

co-op's annual meeting. These meetings are designed for co-op members to gather, share experiences, hear from co-op leadership and – perhaps most importantly – vote to elect the board members or approve bylaw changes.

Many co-ops seek to make these annual meetings community events, offering meals, kids' activities and entertainment. Some also offer prizes to members.

The food, games and prizes are often considered the best parts of the meeting, but there is so much more to the event.

The annual meeting is an occasion to discuss and learn more about the issues affecting local communities and cooperatives? For example, in the past year, many cooperatives have talked about the federal Clean Power Plan. While national press coverage of the plan gives far-off perspectives, the co-op annual meeting gives attendees the opportunity to learn first-hand what impacts the plan may have on their local cooperative and, perhaps more meaningfully, on the members' monthly electric bill.

The annual meeting is an opportunity to learn more about the topics that impact you and talk

about what local individuals, working as a community, can do to address our most pressing challenges and take advantage of available opportunities.

The meeting also affords members the chance to visit with others in the co-op community – it's

also a great opportunity to learn about programs offered by the cooperative and get to know your co-op staff. The annual meeting makes it possible for co-ops to gather feedback from members by providing a forum where they can let the co-op know how it can better serve you and your family.

A democratic and open election is one of the many elements that make electric cooperatives stand out from other utilities. Having a voice in who makes the major decisions that directly affect your life and your family is a right we all share as Americans. We all vote for our state and federal Congressional representatives, but not every American has the right to vote for those

who will represent community interests within their electric utility. You have that right, so why not exercise it?

Rest assured, no matter what happens, electric cooperatives remain dedicated to providing you with safe, reliable and affordable electric service, but all cooperative members are encouraged to take part in helping their cooperative improve how it delivers that service.



Photo Courtesy Renville-Sibley Co-op Power Association/Danube, Minn.

**Not every American has the right to vote for those who will represent community interests within their electric utility. You have that right, so why not exercise it?**



# East River Electric Annual Meeting: On the Road to New Opportunity

By Shayla Ebsen

**Below:** East River Electric General Manager Tom Boyko, left, and Board President Jim Ryken give their report during the East River Electric annual meeting Sept. 7 in Sioux Falls.

**E**AST RIVER ELECTRIC POWER COOPERATIVE HELD its 66th annual meeting Wednesday, Sept. 7, 2016, at the Best Western Plus Ramkota Hotel in Sioux Falls, S.D., to explore the future of the quickly changing energy industry. The theme of this year's annual meeting was "The Road to New Opportunity." The meeting included a report from cooperative leaders on the past year's key projects and milestones. Speakers also discussed issues affecting the electric cooperative industry and highlighted ways that East River and its members are keeping an eye on future opportunities.

"We face many challenges in this quickly changing industry, but we also have great future opportunities that will allow East River to continue to enhance the value of its member systems," said Tom Boyko, East River Electric's general manager. "Our network of cooperatives work very well together and we are always looking for more ways we can share services and add value to our member systems."

A candidate forum began the meeting's afternoon session where political candidates for statewide elected offices in South Dakota shared their perspectives on energy-related issues affecting cooperatives as well as other important topics. Candidates for the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House along with the candidates for the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission were all invited to attend.

East River Electric also honored two individuals with the cooperative's Eminent Service Award: South Dakota State Sen. Scott Parsley from District 8 and Western States Power Corporation Executive Director Daniel Payton. East River board director Isabel Trobaugh was also honored for the 20 years she has served on the cooperative's board representing the City of Elk Point.

Following the political candidate forum was a business meeting which included the director election and the adoption of the cooperative's policy statements.







# ELECTRIC CO-OPS BUILD COMMUNITY

## ELECTRIC CO-OPS:

- ★ Serve 42 million people in 47 states.
- ★ Own and maintain 2.6 million miles, or 42 percent, of the nation's electric distribution lines
- ★ Employ 70,000 people in the U.S.



# Think Before You Aim and Fire

By  
Brenda Kleinjan

**Below:** Each fall, a reminder to be safe while hunting greets visitors to FEM Electric Association in Ipswich, S.D.

**W**HETHER IT'S CARELESSNESS OR INTENTIONAL vandalism, shooting at or near power lines or associated equipment can create big problems.

Any responsible hunter or outdoors person knows that before pulling the trigger, one is to be certain of what lies beyond one's target.

"Be sure of what you're shooting at," said Roger Crom, a gun safety instructor from Watertown, S.D., who is also responsible for safety education for the state's electric cooperatives.

"You have to be sure you know what your target is and what your back stop is," Crom said, who has instructed about 150 students a year for the past two decades on gun safety.

"A .22 shell can travel about a mile-and-a-half and high-powered shells can travel 3.5 to 4 miles," Crom said. And, shotguns can have a range of 90 to 100 feet, but the spray pattern widens out.

Crom noted that one doesn't shoot at water or

rocks. Or power lines, for that matter.

"The immediate danger in shooting at a line is that it could break and fall down putting the shooter or nearby people or animals at risk," said Crom.

And, the damage isn't always immediate.

"It can fray and cause problems down the line," said Crom.

While the potential for damage caused by bullets to electric equipment is a concern, the frequency of the problem has been decreasing.

"It's not as much as it used to be. During the earlier dove hunting times, people were shooting them off the power lines causing frays. Now, the rules for hunting call for further set backs," said Crom.

According to the South Dakota Game, Fish and Park's web page on mourning dove hunting, one is not to hunt doves on or within 50 yards of a public road nor is one to shoot at a bird that is not flying.





**Left:** Crews at FEM Electric Association in Ipswich, S.D., found bullet holes in an cabinet this fall. The damage from the bullets did not cause immediate outages, but did weaken the equipment.

immediately apparent.

Just this September, FEM's crews found evidence of a cabinet being shot.

"We have no idea when it happened. Our crews were out GISing our system," said Vetch, referring to the process co-ops are using to record all electric equipment and its locations into geographic information systems.

"I look at my guys going in there, if something is knicked it could arc and injure them. Or, I could have one of my guys working on the other side of that equipment when it's being shot," said Vetch.

"It's just plain being foolish," said Vetch.

Vetch remains optimistic that the damage was not intentional and is more an issue of ignorance rather than intent.

"I hope that it's the kid having fun and not the 40-year-old drunk or the person with a grudge," said Vetch.

No matter the cause, it's preventable and can be avoided.

"It's just a matter of using common sense," said Matt Eldridge, line superintendent at Oahe Electric Cooperative in Blunt, S.D.

"Shooting so close to a power line is not a good idea," said Eldridge. "It causes frays of the wire and makes the line weak."

Like FEM's employees, Oahe Electric crews don't always find the damage right away.

"Usually, we find the damage during line patrol or when there's an outage and the line burns down," said Eldridge, noting that fall and winter seem to be the seasons with greater problems.



**Left:** A bullet dented portions of the electrical equipment inside the underground cabinet that FEM Electric Association crews found damaged by gunshots.

Crom said most hunters are responsible, but that the "slob" hunters are causing the problems. "These are the ones shooting transformers or using a high-power rifle to shoot transformers or the insulators off of lines."

Sometimes the damage caused by a poor decision is unintentional, such as when a hunter takes aim at birds sitting on a power line, assuming the spray of his or her shot won't spread far or cause damage. However, the BBs often hit the conductor, sometimes breaking the strands of wire that form the line or simply nicking a strand causing it to weaken and become vulnerable for failure at a later – and often inconvenient – time.

"Often, the dove hunters don't even realize the damage they've caused," said Rob Vetch, line superintendent at FEM Electric Association in Ipswich, S.D. "They shoot a dove and the BB penetrates the wire and weakens it. As time progresses, it wears that wire down."

"Then, the temperature will hit 20 below and tension is on that wire and "poof" – it breaks," said Vetch.

Sometimes, the shot will cause the wire to fray which will be noticed during annual line patrols conducted by co-op crews to assess the condition of the co-op's equipment.

"On line patrol, every year you run across frays that when they go up and make the repair, they know it was shot," said Vetch.

While an errant shot can have devastating consequences, possibly more concerning are the vandals who purposefully take aim at co-op equipment.

"You often wonder why it's being done," said Vetch.

"To me it's like a stupid kid doing something he shouldn't be doing; they have a gun and looking for something to shoot," said Vetch. "They're not thinking of the damage it could cause."

And, that damage creates risks that could potentially involve peoples' lives.

When underground cabinets, transformers and even substations are shot at, the damage isn't always



# Co-op Leaders Recognized

**A**LIFE OF COOPERATIVE SERVICE DESERVES RECOGNITION and, at times, an induction. For their service in advancing their communities and this state's cooperatives, three of South Dakota's cooperative leaders were honored with induction into the South Dakota Cooperative Hall of Fame during the Cooperative Month Banquet held Sept. 13 in Pierre, S.D.

By Jocelyn Romey

Inductees for 2016 were Bill Bielmaier from West River Electric Association in Wall, Mark Hofer from Central Electric Cooperative in Mitchell and Ronald Sandine from TrioTel Communications in Salem

"As a member of the Selection Committee, I am so amazed at the humbleness of the inductees. They are surprised that people would think their actions are worthy of honor and recognition. Yet without

the dedication of these men and others like them, the cooperative system would not be the success that it is today. I am proud and blessed to have had the privilege to meet each and every inductee of the South Dakota Co-op Hall of Fame," said Brenda Forman, executive secretary of the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives.

An induction into the Cooperative Hall of Fame is the highest honor bestowed upon men and women who have contributed to the cooperative industry in significant ways. In order to qualify, an inductee must show a commitment to the cooperative community; attain identifiable improvement to the cooperative industry; and demonstrate statesmanship, innovation, personal commitment, leadership and vision in the cooperative movement.

## 2016 Inductee William "Bill" Bielmaier

**William "Bill" Bielmaier** has served electrical cooperatives since 1983, when he was elected to West River Electric Association's board of directors in Wall, S.D. One year after being elected to the board, Bill was voted in as treasurer where he served for six years before being voted in as secretary in September 1996, the same position he holds today. Throughout his years of service, Bill has offered leadership not only on the West River Electric board of directors, but also on the board of directors for the South Dakota Rural Electric Association in Pierre, S.D., for 28 years and other national committees representing electric cooperatives.

After 33 years of serving rural electric cooperatives, Bill will step down from the boards and committees he has supported and retire. However, his service in the utility world will be remembered. Bill has been a staunch supporter of innovation and technology in the industry and has witnessed changes such as automated meter reading systems, electronic line staking programs, iPads, new mapping systems and supervisory control

systems. The members at the end of the line were Bill's focus and concern. Their needs caused Bill to plan carefully and make decisions based on the member's best interests.

Bill is a Korean War Era veteran with a ranch and farm outside of Wall. Bill and his wife Marjorie who is now deceased had three daughters and three sons. Their sons are still involved with farming and ranching in the family business.

Andy Moon, WREA Board President, wrote, "Through [Bill's] many years as a part of the cooperative family, he has gained a knowledge of the electric cooperative industry that is unmatched at our WREA board table...He has always been available to explain an issue that is unclear, and makes you feel that you are a part of transformed rural America."



Bill Bielmaier



The South Dakota Cooperative Hall of Fame provides recognition for a person contributing in especially significant ways to the enhancement of the cooperative idea, its broader acceptance or to the substantial advancement of cooperative enterprise in any of its various forms.

— From the South Dakota Cooperative Hall of Fame Nomination Form

### 1985

Arthur Jones (1905-1985)  
Emil Loriks (1895-1985)

### 1986

Albert Schramm (1916-2000)  
Herman D. Holt (1909-1986)

### 1987

John Riedy (1911-2001)  
August Dahme (1901-1980)

### 1988

J. Evan Rasmussen (1905-1990)  
John Skage (1904-1989)

### 1989

Darrell Moseson  
Warren G. Grebner (1920-2014)

### 1990

J.E. Krull Sr. (1909-1999)  
Lawrence Stoley (1901-1987)

### 1991

Clifford G. Bell (1904-2000)  
Warren Moe (1925-2011)

### 1992

Ken Holum (1915-1998)  
John A. Cink (1911-2002)

### 1993

Clement J. Kloucek (1925-2005)  
S. Douglas Murphy (1904-1996)

### 1994

Philip Testerman  
Max Farrar (1897-1980)

### 1995

Quentin E. Loudon (1919-2012)  
Oscar C. Johnson (1880-1965)

### 1996

Vernon L. Berg (1920-1998)  
Leo P. Flynn (1908-2001)

## 2016 Inductee Mark Hofer

**Mark Hofer** from Spencer, S.D., has served electric cooperatives since 1990 when he became a director for the Intercounty Electric Association in Mitchell, S.D. This cooperative merged with Tri County Electric in 2000 during Mark's service and became Central Electric Cooperative.



**Mark Hofer**

In 1999, Mark was elected to serve on the South Dakota Rural Electric Association's board and continues to serve on this board. Later, while representing SDREA, Mark served on the South Dakota Value Added board of directors as president from 2007-2010. Since 2009, Mark has also been representing Central Electric on the South Dakota Wind Energy board of directors.

As a respected leader with a commitment to serve this state's cooperatives, Mark was elected by the members of South Dakota's electric cooperatives as the state's representative on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association board in 2006. In this position, Mark served in a variety of committees dedicated to perfecting cooperatives, assisted in reconstructing rural electric safety and developed a new safety program for cooperatives. NRECA's Interim CEO Jeffrey Conner wrote, "Through [Mark's] leadership, we are better able to identify areas where NRECA can contribute to the technical proficiency of electric cooperatives and anticipate challenges in a changing industry... Mark not only understands rural communities and what makes them special places to live and work, but he is also their champion."

Mark resides with his wife, Kathy, on his family farm near Spencer where he was born and raised. They both are strong supporters in the future of cooperatives and the next generation of leaders. To show their support, the Hofers sponsor two different scholarships at Mitchell Technical Institute for students entering the electric power industry. Growing since 2008, the sponsored amount is now more than \$30,000, and the Hofers have been recognized as Individual Donors of the Year at MTI.

## 2016 Inductee Ronald Sandine

**Ronald Sandine** has supported South Dakota cooperatives since 1975, when he joined the board of directors of TrioTel Communications Inc. in Salem, S.D. During 41 years of service on this board, Ron has been dedicated to serving TrioTel members and the community of Salem. He served the last 19 years as the president of the board.



**Ronald Sandine**

Ron has aided the cooperative industry faithfully and has seen many changes in policy and technology. He has served members through periods of industrial growth, natural disasters and policy changes. Under Ron's progressive and innovative leadership platform, TrioTel achieved a major success in 2010 when the board was granted a \$12.3 million federal broadband loan/grant under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This led to the implementation of a Fiber-To-The-Home (FTTH) infrastructure.

Bryan Roth, General Manager and CEO of TrioTel Communications, wrote that Ron's "persistence in providing co-op members with the latest and most technologically advanced services vaulted TrioTel as the first cooperative communications company in the state of South Dakota as 100 percent fiber strong." This fiber optic network infrastructure proved to be the breakthrough opportunity for members needing high speed internet.

Along with his extensive experience as a cooperative leader, Ron is an advocate of agriculture. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Agronomy from South Dakota State University in 1964. Ron has served as a supervisor on the McCook Conservation Board for 34 years. He has also worked in the farm equipment business, the Farm Service Agency Center in Salem and in fertilizer sales as the state manager.

Ron and his wife, Gloria, have been married for 56 years and have four sons, Calvin, Craig, Clyde and Owen, and are now grandparents of 11 grandchildren.

### 1997

Ben Raddiffe (1915-2014)  
G.L. Moseson (1894-1973)

### 1998

J.D. Lynd (1933-2013)  
George A. Hargens, Jr.  
(1921-1999)

### 1999

Raymond M. Judy (1919-1997)  
Virgil Fodness (1922-2013)

### 2000

Keith Taylor (1923-2002)  
Joseph Hieb

### 2001

Robert A. Johnson (1921-2014)  
Donald N. Olson (1928-2006)

### 2002

Vincent Erz (1926-2012)  
Donald Wynia

### 2003

Brian Meyer (1943-2003)  
Don Paulsen

### 2004

Ed Fritzsche (1923-2005)  
Dean Rasmussen

### 2005

Robert Ching (1924-2012)  
Darrell Henderson  
Alex Stoeser (1925-2000)

### 2006

Dennis Hagny  
Robert Rademacher

### 2007

Leroy Schecher  
Ralph Schreurs  
Merlin VanWalleghen

### 2008

Charles Olsen  
Donald Fieber

### 2009

Delbert Bushong  
Owen Jones

### 2010

Jake Boomsma  
Milo Gilbertson  
Barry Jensen

### 2011

Jeffrey L. Nelson  
Wayne Wright

### 2012

Luverne Crosser  
Gary French  
Ron Minnaert  
Larry Wilson

### 2013

Thomas Hueners  
John D. Johnson  
Loren Noess

### 2014

Gene Kroell  
John Van Beek  
Harvey Wollman

### 2015

Keith Hainy  
Roy Ireland  
Rodney Renner  
Carlyle Richards

### 2016

William Bielmaier  
Mark Hofer  
Ronald Sandine



## Regional Dateline

### September 21-25

South Dakota Film Festival  
Aberdeen, SD, 605-725-2697

### September 24

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

### September 24

22nd Annual Radio Chili  
Cook-off, Watertown, SD  
605-882-6269

### September 24

South Dakota Women's Expo  
Huron, SD, 605-353-7340

### September 24

Great Downtown Pumpkin  
Festival, Rapid City, SD  
605-716-7979

### September 24-25

Pioneer Power & Toy Show  
Menno, SD, 605-387-5166

### September 29-October 1

Custer State Park  
Buffalo Roundup & Arts  
Festival, Custer, SD  
605-255-4515

### September 30-October 1

Oktoberfest, Deadwood, SD  
605-578-1876

### October 1

11th Annual Custer Stampede  
Buffalo Art Auction, Custer, SD  
605-673-2244

### October 1

27th Annual Buffalo Wallow  
Chili Cook-off, Custer, SD  
605-673-2244



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHAD CORPUS, 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

### October 15-January 3

2016 Pheasant Hunting Season  
Statewide, Pierre, SD  
605-223-7660

### October 20

C&NW Historic Railroad Depot  
Box Lunch Day, Redfield, SD  
605-472-4550

### October 1

Bierbörse, Rapid City, SD  
605-716-7979

### October 1

Prairie Village Hobo Marlin  
Pumpkin Train, Madison, SD  
605-256-3644

### October 8

Carrie Underwood:  
The Storyteller Tour  
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

### October 8

Strawbale Winery Harvest  
Festival, Renner, SD  
605-543-5071

### October 8

Oktoberfest, Aberdeen, SD  
605-225-3441

### October 9

28th Annual Farm, Toy & Doll  
Show, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Codington County Extension  
Complex, Watertown, SD

### October 13-15

Wild West Songwriters Festival  
Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

### October 15

Dare to Dream Conference  
Rushmore Plaza Holiday Inn  
Convention Center, Rapid City, SD  
605-361-3171, sdparent.org

### October 15

Arts and Crafts Festival  
Faulkton, SD, 605-380-8444

### October 21-23

Autumn Festival, An Arts &  
Crafts Affair, Sioux Falls, SD  
402-331-2889

### October 22

Chris Young in Concert, Swiftel  
Center, Brookings, SD  
605-692-7539

### October 24

Pentatonix, Sioux Falls, SD  
605-367-7288

### October 28-30

Zoo Boo, Sioux Falls, SD  
605-367-7003

### October 29

Zoo Boo, Watertown, SD  
605-882-6269

### October 29-30

Haunted Heartland Country  
Corn Maze, Harrisburg, SD

### November 3-5

S.D. Local Foods Conference  
Highland Conference Center  
Mitchell, SD, 605-342-2180

### November 5

77th Annual Lutefisk Feed  
Summit, SD, 605-881-4377

### November 12

Holiday Open House  
Extravaganza, Sisseton, SD  
605-698-7425

### November 22-December 26

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