

South Dakota Electric

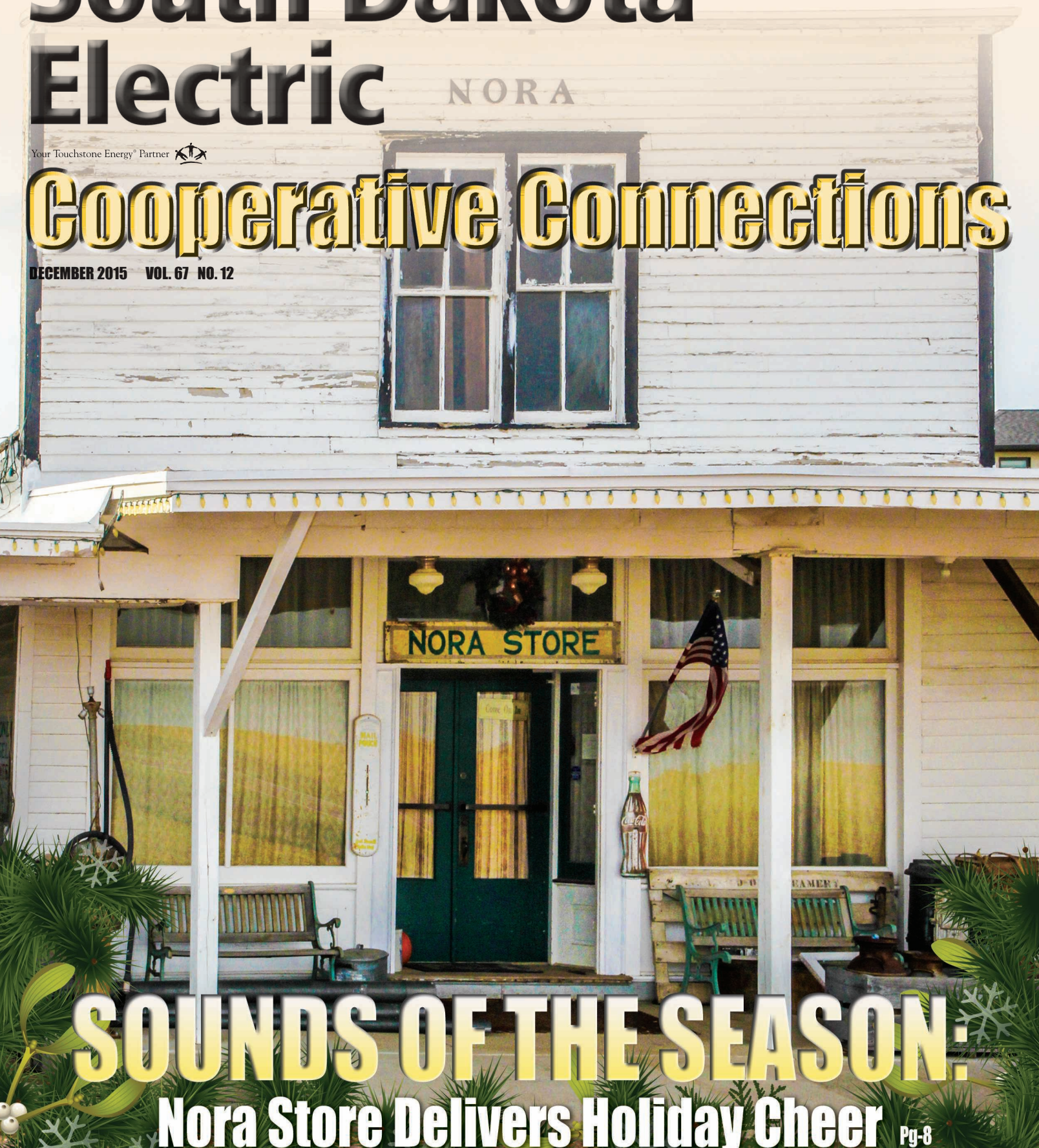
Your Touchstone Energy® Partner



NORA

Cooperative Connections

DECEMBER 2015 VOL. 67 NO. 12



SOUNDS OF THE SEASON:

Nora Store Delivers Holiday Cheer

Pg-8

merry & bright



What a wonderful time to celebrate hope, joy and family,
and share how much we care for our employees, members and
communities across the region. Happiest of holidays.

South Dakota Electric Cooperative Connections

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Editorial

'Clean Power Plan' a Bad Deal



Ed Anderson
General Manager, South Dakota
Rural Electric Association

characterizes the plan as "fair" and "flexible." America's Electric Cooperatives strongly disagree. How could a regulation be fair and flexible when it will impose a huge financial burden on millions of American families and businesses? On average, 23 percent of co-op households nationwide earn an annual income of less than \$25,000 – 11.5 percent below the national average. And as not-for-profits serving 93 percent of the nation's persistent poverty counties, America's Electric Cooperatives recognize first-hand the importance of affordable power. But EPA's plan will usher in an era of escalating electric bills and stifled economic growth. The hardest hit will be those who can least afford to pay more to keep the lights on – families living on fixed incomes or in poverty.

The CPP will hit America's electric cooperatives particularly hard. EPA acknowledges that the regulations will cause some co-op power plants to shut down. The forced closure of coal-fired power plants still repaying loans for construction or upgrades means co-op member-owners will be paying twice for their electricity: once for the shuttered plant and again to buy power from somewhere else. At the time these power plants were built, federal policy encouraged the use of coal to generate electricity.

The trouble doesn't stop there. Those responsible for ensuring the reliability of our nation's electric power system have raised red flags about the plan's impact. They believe the EPA underestimated the amount of time it would take to build new power plants and the necessary power lines needed to comply with the rule. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation noted that "constructing the resource additions, as well as the expected transmission enhancements, may represent a significant reliability challenge given the constrained time period for implementation."

Similarly, the Southwest Power Pool, which supplies power in fourteen states, worries that grid reliability could be overloaded in portions of six states and may well be severely overloaded in portions of three. In short, the EPA's aggressive timeline for implementing the plan, and the steepness of the emissions cuts, could jeopardize the affordable, reliable supply of electricity that helps power rural economies.

Finally, the CPP is illegal. It goes far beyond what the federal Clean Air Act allows EPA to do and will seriously challenge our nation's electric system. This is why the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association and 39 generation and transmission co-ops have asked the courts to recognize EPA's legal overreach and tell the EPA to go back to the drawing board and try again! Twenty-six states have done the same. And the U.S. Congress is considering legislation that would overturn the EPA rule.

EPA has characterized its public hearings as "unprecedented listening sessions." Yet the agency has repeatedly ignored calls from the nation's rural electric co-ops for common-sense safeguards to ensure affordable electricity and protect the reliability of our electric grid. Fairness and flexibility demand that EPA listen to those who will be most impacted by this proposal – the 42 million Americans, in 47 states, served by America's electric co-ops.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) heard public opinion in November on a proposal for how states may comply with sweeping federal regulations to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants. At issue is an ill-conceived regulation known as the Clean Power Plan (CPP). Made final in August and formally printed in the *Federal Register* in October, the CPP will adversely affect many not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, leading to higher electricity prices and the shutdown of co-owned power plants with years of life left in them.

Under the plan, the U.S. electric power sector must reduce overall carbon dioxide emissions by 32 percent by 2030. Each state has its own specific reduction requirement. Here in South Dakota, power plants are required to cut emissions by 48 percent. EPA

Thanks Extended to Cooperative Advocates

In the past year, thousands of cooperative members in Minnesota and South Dakota joined other cooperative members across the country in telling the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) about concerns over the EPA's proposed "Clean Power Plan." More than 1 million messages were sent in through Action.coop and TellePA.com because EPA's actions jeopardize rural America's supply of safe, affordable and reliable electricity.

EPA addressed a few concerns in its final rule. But the rule still has serious flaws. It is outside of EPA's authority. It will force electric co-ops to close power plants that consumers should be able to rely on for decades to come. Most importantly, without these plants, many co-op members will face higher energy bills.

Even though the rule is final, electric cooperatives aren't giving up. Instead, cooperatives are filing suit, asking a federal court to turn back this harmful rule. For more information about this and how to stay involved, visit www.action.coop.



Kids' Corner Safety Poster

"Turn off all lights before leaving the house."



Kaitlyn Waring, 11 years old

Kaitlyn was 11 years old when she submitted this safety poster. She is the daughter of Jeremy and Ramona Waring, Colton, S.D. They are members of Sioux Valley Energy, Colman, S.D.

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

Space Heater Safety

Heating equipment is the second leading cause of home fires in the United States. More than 65,000 home fires are attributed to heating equipment each year. These fires result in hundreds of deaths, thousands of injuries and millions of dollars in property damage.

Portable electric space heaters can be a convenient source of supplemental heat for your home in cold weather. Unfortunately, they can pose significant fire and electric shock hazards if not used properly. Fire and electrical hazards can be caused by space heaters without adequate safety features, space heaters placed near combustibles, or space heaters that are improperly plugged in.

Safety should always be a top consideration when using space heaters. Here are some tips for keeping your home safe and warm when it's cold outside:

- Make sure your space heater has the label showing that it is listed by a recognized testing laboratory.

- Before using any space heater, read the manufacturer's instructions and warning labels carefully.

- Inspect heaters for cracked or broken plugs or loose connections before each use. If frayed, worn or damaged, do not use the heater.



- Never leave a space heater unattended. Turn it off when you're leaving a room or going to sleep and don't let pets or children play too close to a space heater.

- Space heaters are only meant to provide supplemental heat and should never be used to warm bedding, cook food, dry clothing or thaw pipes.

- Install smoke alarms on every floor of your home and outside all sleeping areas and test them once a month.

- Proper placement of space heaters is critical. Heaters must be kept at least three feet away from anything that can burn, including papers, clothing and rugs.

- Locate space heaters out of high traffic areas and doorways where they may pose a tripping hazard.

- Plug space heaters directly into a wall outlet. Do not use an extension cord or power strip, which could overheat and result in a fire. Do not plug any other electrical devices into the same outlet as the heater.

- Place space heaters on level, flat surfaces. Never place heaters on cabinets, tables, furniture or carpet, which can overheat and start a fire.

- Always unplug and safely store the heater when it is not in use.

Holiday Favorites



No Bake Fruit Cake

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1 pkg. small marshmallows | 1/4 tsp. nutmeg |
| 4 T. orange juice | 1/8 tsp. cloves |
| 4 dozen graham crackers,
about 3/4 lb. | 3/4 cup broken walnuts |
| 1/4 tsp. cinnamon | 1 cup light seedless raisins |
| | 1 cup candied fruit |

Butter pan or jelly roll mold lightly. Mix orange juice and marshmallows in bowl; let stand until needed. Roll graham crackers into fine crumbs. Combine crumbs, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, walnuts, raisins and candied fruit. Add orange juice/marshmallow mixture. Press firmly into pan or mold. Chill 2 days. Keep in cool place. Need not keep in refrigerator.

Rose Tucker, Hot Springs

No Bake Oreo Truffles

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| 1 pkg. Doubled Stuffed Oreos | Almond bark, either chocolate
or vanilla |
| 4 to 8 oz. cream cheese,
softened | |

Chop Oreos up finely in food processor or crush cookies in a plastic resealable bag with a rolling pin. Save some of the crushed Oreos for garnish. Using a spoon (or hands), mash softened cream cheese and crushed Oreos until well combined. Roll into 1-inch balls and place on parchment- or wax paper-covered cookie sheet. Place in freezer for 15 minutes. While balls are in the freezer, melt almond bark according to directions. Take Oreos out of the freezer and dip into almond bark. Place on parchment paper or wax paper. Garnish with reserved Oreo crumbs. Let almond bark set and refrigerate.

Emily Luikens, Tea

Choco-Mallow Pizza

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 (12 oz.) pkg. real chocolate
chips | 1 tsp. vegetable oil |
| 1 lb. white almond bark, divided | 1 (6 oz.) jar red maraschino
cherries, drained and halved |
| 2 cups miniature marshmallows | 3 T. green maraschino cherries,
drained and quartered |
| 1 cup Rice Krispies | 1/3 cup coconut |
| 1 cup peanuts | |

Melt chocolate chips and 14 oz. almond bark in large saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly; remove from heat. Stir in marshmallows, cereal and peanuts. Pour on greased 12-inch pizza pan. Top with cherries, sprinkle with coconut. Melt remaining 2 oz. almond bark with oil over low heat, stirring until smooth. Drizzle over coconut. Refrigerate until firm. Store at room temperature. Can also be made in the microwave.

Mary Jessen, Holabird

Peanut Butter and Grape Trifle

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|---|---|
| 1 (16 oz.) container nonfat vanilla Greek yogurt | 3 cups red seedless California grapes,
plus more for garnish |
| 8 T. creamy peanut butter | 3 cups green seedless California grapes,
plus more for garnish |
| 2 T. honey | 1/4 cup honey-roasted peanuts, chopped
(optional garnish) |
| 1 (8 oz.) container lite whipped topping,
divided | |
| 1 (16 oz.) store-bought pound cake, sliced into
1-inch cubes | |

In medium bowl, stir together yogurt, peanut butter and honey until well combined. Gently fold in half of whipped topping. Set aside. In clear glass trifle dish or bowl, layer half each of pound cake cubes, peanut butter mixture, red grapes and green grapes. Repeat layers a second time and top with remaining whipped topping. Garnish with additional grapes (sliced in half) if desired and chopped peanuts, if desired. Makes 14 servings.

Nutrition information per serving (with peanuts): 313 calories; 15 g fat (5 g saturated fat); 42% calories from fat; 8 g protein; 38 g carbohydrate; 1 g fiber; 73 mg cholesterol; 197 mg sodium; 206 mg potassium.

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Date Pinwheels

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|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 cup butter or margarine | 1 tsp. soda |
| 1-1/2 cups white sugar,
divided | 1/2 tsp. salt |
| 1 cup brown sugar | 1 lb. dates, pitted |
| 3 eggs | 1/2 cup water |
| 4 cups flour | 1 cup nuts |

Cream together butter, 1 cup sugar and brown sugar. Add sugar mixture to eggs and beat. Add flour, soda and salt. Roll out to 1/2-inch thick. For filling, boil together dates, 1/2 cup sugar, water and nuts. Cool. Spread filling onto dough. Roll up and refrigerate before slicing. Bake at 350°F. for 10 to 12 minutes or until set.

Linda Rauscher, Aberdeen

Hot Fudge Sauce

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| 1/2 cup cream | 1/4 tsp. salt |
| 1/4 cup brown sugar | 2.5 oz. bittersweet chocolate,
cut into pieces |
| 4 tsp. butter | |
| 1/2 tsp. vanilla | |

In a small saucepan over medium-low heat, combine cream and brown sugar, bringing to a simmer while whisking occasionally. Add butter and whisk until melted; remove from heat. Add chocolate, stirring until melted. Add vanilla and salt. Cool slightly and serve warm over your favorite ice cream. To store, transfer to an airtight container and refrigerate.

Lynn Holzerland, Waubay

Please send your favorite soup and bread/breakfast recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in June 2016. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

Upgrading Your Heat System?



Jim Dulley
www.dulley.com

Dear Jim: My heating and cooling system is 20 years old and it's time to replace it. I am trying to decide which type of system is best. What do you recommend? – Russ H.

Dear Russ: When changing the entire system, you have the option of many fuel types for heating. Electricity

is the only cooling fuel option for an air conditioner or heat pump.

Operating cost and comfort are the primary factors in selecting a new system. Efficiency and relative cost of the various fuels determine the operating cost. Fuel prices can fluctuate dramatically over time as we have seen recently with fuel oil and propane.

A geothermal heat pump is the most efficient year-round system because it heats and cools using stored heat from the ground. I installed one in my own home last spring. Select a two-speed or variable-speed model for the best comfort. It continuously matches heating and cooling output to the house needs.

The initial cost of a geothermal system is substantially more than other complete systems, but the utility bill savings easily pays back its higher cost. There still is a 30-percent federal tax credit for geothermal heat pumps installed before 2017.

Install a heat pump instead of just a central air conditioner even if you plan to have a fossil fuel furnace (called a hybrid system). The installed cost of the system with a heat pump is not significantly more expensive and your annual utility bills will be lower.

The advantage of a heat pump is it heats very efficiently during mild spring and fall weather. During these times, it runs instead of the furnace burners to heat the house. When it gets much colder, the furnace takes over. A heat pump cools as efficiently as a central air conditioner during summer.

If natural gas is available in your area, a condensing furnace generally is the most cost effective choice. With the glut of domestic natural gas from fracking, there should be an adequate supply at reasonable prices for the foreseeable future. Efficiencies are as high as 97 percent.

Since natural gas is not available in many rural areas, a propane or oil furnace provides equally comfortable heating. A propane furnace is almost identical to a gas one, but propane is typically more expensive to use and can be in short supply as it was several winters ago. Oil is readily available, but oil furnace efficiency is not as high and they require more extensive maintenance.

Also consider alternative fuels such as firewood, corn, pellets, etc. for supplemental heating. Newer models are convenient to use and the fuel is renewable. For example, new dual-fuel wood furnaces automatically switch to gas or propane when the wood burns out over night.

To compare operating costs, use the following heat contents and your local fuel costs: natural gas – 1,025 Btu/cubic foot, oil – 138,700 Btu/gallon, propane – 91,000 Btu/gallon, electricity – 3,414 Btu/kilowatt-hour, firewood – 22,000,000 Btu/cord, and corn – 448,000 Btu/bushel. Divide your local cost per Btu by the various system efficiencies to compare operating costs.



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

Assistance Available During Open Enrollment

For families who need affordable health insurance coverage, now is the time to check out the options on the health insurance exchange in their state. Open Enrollment for health insurance begins on Nov. 1, 2015, and ends Jan. 31, 2016. Insurance exchanges were created through the Affordable Care Act to provide families with quality healthcare at an affordable cost. About 17.6 million uninsured people have gained health coverage as the law's coverage provisions have taken effect. For many people, financial assistance in the form of tax credit subsidies and cost reductions is available to significantly lower health insurance premiums and other out-of-pocket expenses. The subsidy is paid directly to the insurance company on the consumer's behalf, resulting in lower monthly premium costs and additional savings on deductibles and co-pays. Tax credit subsidies are based on a household's modified adjusted gross income and are available to those earning between 100 percent and 400 percent of the federal poverty level (\$24,500 to \$97,000 for a family of four). Final premiums are based upon income, age, location and tobacco usage. Subsidies and cost savings are only available to those who enroll in a plan through the federally facilitated Health Insurance Marketplace (in South Dakota) or the State-based MNSure for those living in Minnesota. There are a variety of private plans from which to choose and each one provides at least 10 essential health benefits as required by the Affordable Care Act. Those who enrolled in a plan in 2015 should actively re-enroll during this period to update information and review the plan options which might have changed for the coming year.

The process of getting coverage may be a bit confusing, so Navigators, Certified Application Counselors and agents in

each state are available at no cost. The Department of Health and Human Services estimates that nearly three in five of the uninsured are either confused about how the tax credits work or don't know that they are available. Navigators and Application Counselors are trained staff from trusted community organizations who provide free face-to-face application and enrollment assistance.

After Open Enrollment ends on Jan. 31, 2016, health insurance can only be obtained if a consumer has a qualifying life event that triggers a Special Enrollment Period. These life events include marriage, birth of child, loss of coverage, release from prison or a move to another state. Members of federally recognized Indian tribes can enroll in a Marketplace plan at any time during the year. A qualifying consumer can apply for Medicaid at any time during the year.

For 2016, the penalties for non-coverage will be \$695 per individual or 2.5 percent of the household's income, whichever is greater. The penalty will be assessed when filing federal income tax for 2016. Some exemptions are available to individuals in special circumstances. Local assisters can help with completing exemptions and appeals. Consumers who have questions about obtaining health insurance through the Health Insurance Marketplace or MNSure can find certified assisters in the following ways:

- South Dakota Community Action Partnership Navigator Locator Line 1-855-371-4987
- Health Insurance Marketplace Call Center 1-800-318-2596 (TTY: 1-855-889-4325).
- www.healthcare.gov (enter: Find Local Help)
- <https://www.mnsure.org/> (click on Get Help)

Dates to Remember

Nov. 1, 2015 – Open Enrollment Begins. Consumers can purchase health insurance from the Health Insurance Exchanges or through an agent. Tax Credit Subsidies are only available to those who purchase a plan through the Health Insurance Exchanges.

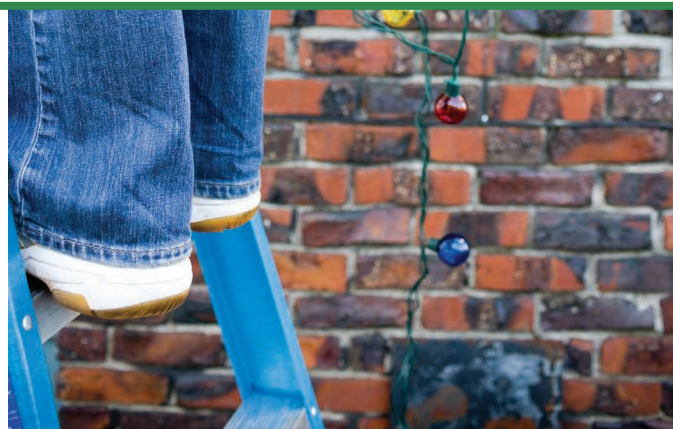
Dec. 15, 2015 – This is the last day to enroll in a plan if coverage is needed starting on Jan. 1, 2016.

Jan. 31, 2016 – Final day of Open Enrollment for healthcare plans. After Jan. 31, 2016, health insurance can only be obtained if a consumer has a qualifying life event that will trigger a Special Enrollment Period.

LOOK UP & LIVE!

Before you climb that ladder to string outdoor lights, check for overhead power lines nearby. Make sure tree limbs are not growing among power lines, since they can also become energized. **Remember to keep at least 10 feet away from overhead lines at all times.**

Have a safe and happy holiday season!



Nora Store

Holiday Harmonies Ring on Iowa Border

By
Mike Kjose

EACH DECEMBER, CHRISTMAS CAROLS FLOW OUT OF a carefully restored pipe organ at the Nora Store in rural Union County in southeastern South Dakota.

For the past 25 years, Michael (Mike) Pedersen has opened the doors to his Nora Store to anyone that wanted to experience what Christmas really represents.

It all began when Pedersen was given an old and disassembled pipe organ many years ago.

"When I got it back to the store and had all the pieces laid out on the floor, I thought 'now what do I do with it?'" Pedersen recalled.

So Pedersen called some friends that he knew in the organ business and were also really good at putting things together.

"They came over, looked at it and said looks like it's all here, we should be able to put it together and it ought to work," Pedersen continued.

In the fall of 1989, the group started working on the organ as a long winter project and as time went by, things started looking real promising. Then, one evening while they were working, Pedersen got an idea and told those helping him, "We need to hurry this along!"



With surprise, the others said, “What’s the hurry?” Michael responded with, “I want to share this with the community and sing Christmas carols this Christmas.”

That December, 26 years ago, was the first time Pedersen shared his antique organ and the first song played was “Jesus Loves Me.”

As he gazes upon the pipe organ, Pedersen says he has no idea why he was blessed with this beautiful instrument or the ability to play it. But, what he does know is that he wants to “share those blessings with everyone that is willing to sing and celebrate Christmas.”

When you come in the door, you are made to feel very welcome. “Come in, Come in, Come in,” Pedersen will greet visitors, adding “There’s no one to impress here, just pick up one of the music books and sing along.”

He continues to instruct visitors, “If you don’t know the person you’re sitting with, you will before the night is over!”

Pedersen rang in the 25th anniversary in 2014 by opening with that first song that started it all off: ‘Jesus Loves Me’.

He also loves a little crowd participation and had different bells and horns on several chairs.

The people gathered join in ringing sleigh bells to accompany songs such as “Jingle Bells,” one can almost envision the one-horse open sleigh pulling up to the front of the store.

The crowds overflow the store’s main room, leaving many to stand on the building’s front porch or the roofed overhang that is large enough to park two vehicles (or vintage sleighs).

Youngsters take delight in getting to sit close to Pedersen, with their eyes all wide-open, lit up and sparkling as they watch him play.

A large potbelly stove adds warmth to the festive gathering and the walls and ledges of the store are adorned with holiday treasures, keepsakes and Christmas decorations.

The experience combines to create a feeling of what rural holiday gatherings must have been like years ago when families, neighbors and friends would gather together during this season to celebrate the spirit of Christmas, to support each other though their communities and in their homes. Each year, this little community of five grows by 50 or 60 – and maybe more – for a couple weekends in December, to celebrate and sing praise to the true spirit and story behind Christmas.

Nora Store Holiday Gatherings

Nov. 27-29, Dec. 4-6, 11-13, Starting at 6:30 p.m.

Also there is an afternoon event from 1:30 to 4 p.m. on Sundays (Nov. 29, Dec. 6 and Dec. 13)



Top: In 2014, guest musician Shawn Cable brought his accordion to accompany Mike Pedersen on the pipe organ. **Center photo:** A local violinist also provided accompaniment at a 2014 session. **Below:** The store’s front room fills to capacity quickly. **Opposite Page:** Young and old gather for old-time Christmas fun at the Nora Store. **Cover Photo:** The Nora Store sits at the corner of two paved roads at the intersection of 307th Street and 475th Avenue in Union County, South Dakota, not far from the Iowa border.



FOCUSED ON PEOPLE, WORKING TO DELIVER POWER, WITH ONE PURPOSE – to serve. “People. Power. Purpose.” That was the theme of Basin Electric’s 2015 annual meeting of the membership. It’s the how, what and why Basin Electric exists.

Basin Electric board president Wayne Peltier, representing District 9 of Minnesota Valley Cooperative Light and Power, Montevideo, Minn., underscored the importance of always remembering why Basin Electric was created – to serve. “Our purpose is to take care of each other, solve problems in our community and indeed power our communities. Basin Electric must never lose sight of that. ... There was no bigger proof of our commitment than this year, when we faced many monu-

This past year marked a number of history-altering shifts in the way the cooperative operates. Basin Electric joined Southwest Power Pool, a regional transmission organization; changed its relationship with the Rural Utilities Service; and was dealt a mighty blow from the Environmental Protection Agency with its Clean Power Plan. Through it all, Basin Electric remains firmly grounded in its values and mission – its cooperative members.

Myth: Low-Cost Fossil Energy is Bad for Society

Energy Consumption, 1000 metric tons of oil equivalent

GDP per capita, million int \$ at purchasing power parity

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) = Monetary value of finished goods and services produced in country, usually annually.

CLEAN POWER PLAN TOWN HALL

PEOPLE. POWER. PURPOSE.

10 December 2015 • COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

“This rule is a threat to our members. We are fighting it with all we’ve got – legally, legislatively and publicly. If we can’t beat this rule, we must meet it with a plan that doesn’t severely impact our member-consumers. This will involve close work with our membership, other states in the region and our congressional delegations.”

Highlights:

- Basin Electric hosted a Clean Power Plan (CPP) Town Hall to help shed light on the expansive impacts of the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Clean Power Plan. The final rule, which impacts existing coal-based power plants, was published in the Federal Register Oct. 23, 2015. Representatives from utilities from across the region presented how the rule will challenge their ability to provide reliable, cost-conscious power for their consumers. Many states and utilities have begun legal action on the rule, requesting a stay of the rule until further analysis and compromise can be reached.

- Presenters during the CPP Town Hall included Chris Zygarlicke, Energy & Environmental Research Center, University of North Dakota; John Novak, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association; Dale Niezwaag, Basin Electric; Stacey Dahl, Minnkota Power Cooperative; Kenric Sheevel, Dairyland Power Cooperative; and Paul Griffin, Tri-State G&T Association.

- Senior staff provided reports following Basin Electric’s 2015 Cooperative Plan regarding operational excellence; supporting growth and innovation; commitment to cooperative, workforce and community; and financials. They addressed the milestone events Basin Electric experienced this last year with joining SPP and buying out of RUS; as well as the continued efforts to build for membership load growth; construction activities with regard to generation and transmission; financial status and regulatory/legislative updates.

“Basin Electric has a tremendous story to tell and it’s reflected in our sky-blue generation fleet – from the coal-based units that started with the spark of innovation and our hundreds of wind turbines that canvas the prairie, to our gas peaking units that were built to address load development in the Williston Basin. We operate a clean fleet and we do it safely,” Peltier said.

“In addition to the construction under way on the AVS to Neset transmission line in North Dakota, the board and employees have also been particularly engaged in Dakota Gasification Company,” Sukut said. “We’ve taken great steps to diversity the products at the plant. ... The new urea plant is under construction. I love this project. I love what it stands for. I love that we’re positioning the Synfuels Plant into the future to more directly serve our members with valuable agricultural products. This project makes sense in so many ways. And the economic benefits of it are real indeed.”

- Former U.S. Sen. Byron Dorgan, who served as a congressman and senator for North Dakota for 30 years before retiring in 2011, provided the keynote address on Nov. 4. Dorgan is currently active in his post Senate life teaching, speaking, consulting, writing and much more. During his presentation, Dorgan addressed the issue of energy development, shared insight on the national political landscape and how he foresees it changing and discussed how cooperatives can serve in the future.

“I always thought the Clean Power Plan would give credit for early actions. We put those wind turbines on this prairie and I know that Basin did because I was involved in some of the discussions you had,” Dorgan said. “You did that believing we’re heading toward a future in which lower carbon is going to be important and putting wind as part of the power mix is going to be important to do, it’s the right thing to do. Investing a billion and a half dollars on new technology for power plants, putting those turbines on the prairies, collecting CO2 and shipping it to Canada to be sequestered, that ought to be a source of pride to the EPA. And it has to be, it must be, it should be recognized in any Clean Power Plan.”

- The membership also heard reports from U.S. Sen. John Hoeven (R-N.D.), U.S. Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.) and U.S. Rep. Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.). All three shared thoughts on the energy regulatory and legislative landscape the nation is facing with regard to the Clean Power Plan.

- The following directors were re-elected to the Basin Electric board:

- Kermit Pearson, District 1, East River Electric Power Cooperative
- Allen Thiessen, District 8, Upper Missouri Power Cooperative
- Charlie Gilbert, District 11, Corn Belt Power Cooperative

- A new director was elected to the Basin Electric board:

- Troy Presser, District 3, Central Power Electric Cooperative

More information, including reports, video and social media feeds can be found at basinelectric.com, basinelectric.wordpress.com or through #Basin2015. A business meeting and director election was held and the co-op’s policy statements were also adopted during the meeting.



Above: Basin Electric board vice president Kermit Pearson presides over a portion of the cooperative’s annual meeting Nov. 5 in Bismarck, N.D. Pearson is a director for Lake Region Electric Association in Webster, S.D. He represents LREA on the East River Electric Power Cooperative board in Madison, S.D., and represents East River on the Basin Electric board. He is Basin Electric’s representative on the South Dakota Rural Electric Association board of directors in Pierre, S.D. **Opposite Page:** Panelists discuss challenges of the Clean Power Plan prior to Basin Electric’s annual meeting.

NOT ALL **IMPOSTORS**
ARE THIS EASY TO SPOT



Avoid counterfeits.
Only buy electrical
products from
reputable retailers.

ESFi

For more information visit www.esfi.org



PREVENTION:

It's the gift that keeps on giving

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, approximately **47,000 fires** occur during the **winter holiday season**. Keep your home and loved ones safe by preventing the most common causes of **holiday fires** with these tips from ESFI:

CO AND SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES.

Install CO and smoke alarms on every level of your home and outside each sleeping area.

Be sure to test the alarms once a month, and change the batteries yearly.



Happy Holidays
from ESFI

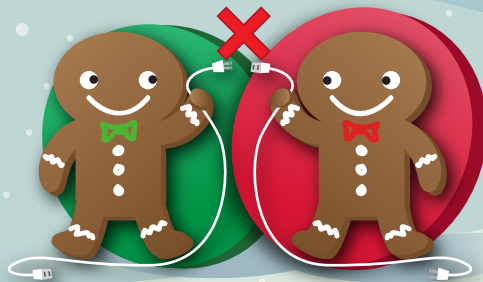
PREVENTION IS...

keeping decorations, or any other **flammable items** at least **3 ft** away from open flame and heat sources.



PREVENTION IS...

ensuring multiple **extension cords** are **never strung together** or run under rugs, carpets or furniture. And making sure those used **outdoors** are labeled "for outdoor use."



PREVENTION IS...

never leaving a **space heater** unattended and **turning it off** when you're leaving a room or going to sleep, and not letting **pets or children** play too close to a space heater.



PREVENTION IS...

inspecting all decorations to ensure they do not have any **frayed or pinched wires** and discarding any **worn decorations**.



PREVENTION IS...

never leaving cooking equipment **unattended** and **turning off burners** if you have to leave the room.



PREVENTION IS...

watering Christmas Trees daily and **discarding trees** when they are dry and begin **dropping needles**.



Before the Storm

By
Brenda Kleinjan

LONG BEFORE THE WINTER WINDS HOWL AND ICE and sleet accumulate, electric cooperatives are preparing and doing what they can to make sure they are ready to respond in case Mother Nature decides to knock out your power.

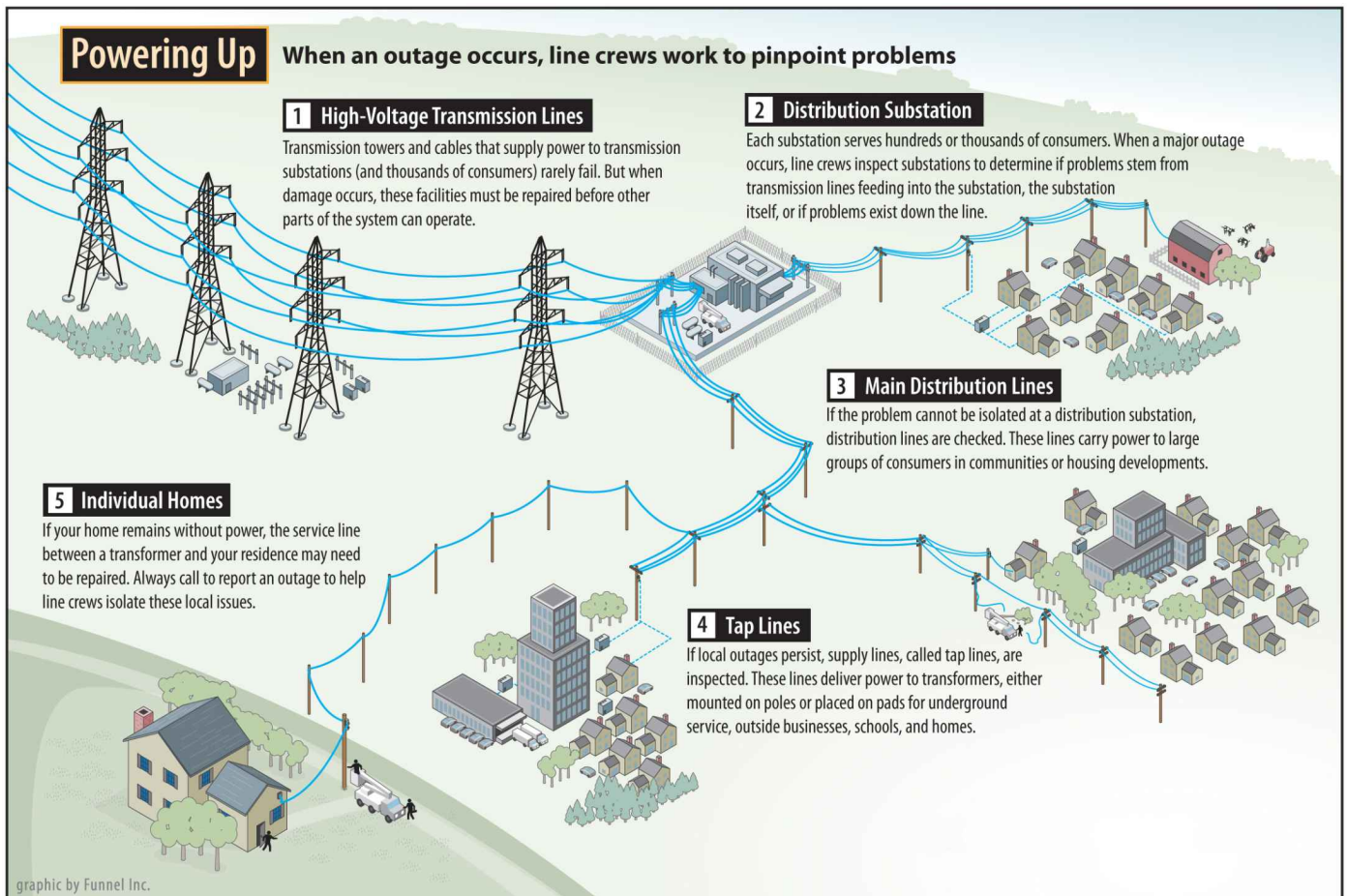
For cooperatives, it's a multi-layer preparation, from ensuring employees are available when bad weather is predicted to testing poles to ensure that they are in good condition to addressing potential problem areas caused by trees and other vegetation growing too closely to lines.

Timing is Everything

Cooperatives staff key personnel to make sure

that they are available nights and weekends to quickly respond to outages and problems. At times when particularly bad weather is predicted, additional crews will be asked to stay in the area for quick response. And, as many a spouse of a line worker will attest, if a storm rolls in, family vacations and visits are often shortened so that all hands are on deck to restore power quickly.

And when damage is widespread, cooperatives rely on mutual aid agreements they have with neighboring cooperatives, other cooperatives in the state and even those in surrounding states. And, when storm damage is massive, crews will travel from several states away to assist with repairs.



When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark.

Look Out for That Tree

Trees may seem harmless on a calm, sunny day. But add a bit of wind or ice on a stormy night and those towering pillars may threaten your home's electric supply.

Every storm, a good portion of line damage is caused by wire breaks from trees and tree branches falling into the lines.

Electricity interruptions can occur when branches break and fall across power lines, or when trees tumble onto power lines. When strong winds blow, limbs growing too close to power lines may sway and touch wires. These momentary power disruptions (commonly called "blinks" or "blips") aren't just mild annoyances – they can damage computers and other sensitive electronic equipment and leave digital clocks flashing. And then there's arcing – when electricity uses a nearby tree as a path to the ground. That action poses hazards to anyone in the vicinity and could spark a fire.

Most cooperatives employ a proactive tree-trimming program to cut back branches that may cause problems with the lines.

The Strong Silent Type

Wood poles battle a wide array of adversaries: acidic soil in the Midwest, heavy moisture in the South, and woodpeckers in the Mid-Atlantic. Utilities generally inspect poles on a 10- to 12-year cycle to identify potential problems.

Poles age differently depending on region, so RUS divided the nation into five decay zones. Poles in Zone 1 – Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah, Nevada, Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico, and portions of Alaska, Nebraska, South Dakota, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas – face the lowest risk of decay, while Zone 5 poles in Louisiana, Florida, Hawaii, and the coastal regions of Alabama, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina, and Virginia sustain the highest risk. Utilities generally replace 2 to 3 percent of aging and decaying poles every year.

Natural decay, storm damage, and bird and bug attacks aren't the only concerns. People shorten a pole's lifespan, too.

Several cooperatives use pole testing processes to identify potential weakened poles and replace them.

Ready with a Plan

In addition to the above, cooperatives also have Emergency Response Plans in place which are reviewed and updated. These plans cover a multitude of scenarios and contain information on topics from emergency contact numbers to lodging options for outside crews.



Be Ready for Winter Weather and Extreme Cold

While the danger from winter weather varies across the country, nearly all Americans, regardless of where they live, are likely to face some type of severe winter weather at some point in their lives. That could mean snow or subfreezing temperatures, as well as strong winds or even ice or heavy rain storms. One of the primary concerns is the winter weather's ability to knock out heat, power and communications services to your home or office, sometimes for days at a time.

Prepare for Winter Weather

- ❄ Make sure your home is well insulated and that you have weather stripping around your doors and window sills to keep the warm air inside.
- ❄ Familiarize yourself with the terms that are used to identify winter weather.

- ❄ Freezing Rain creates a coating of ice on roads and walkways.
- ❄ Sleet is rain that turns to ice pellets before reaching the ground. Sleet also causes roads to freeze and become slippery.

- ❄ Winter Weather Advisory means cold, ice and snow are expected.

- ❄ Winter Storm Watch means severe weather such as heavy snow or ice is possible in the next day or two.

- ❄ Winter Storm Warning means severe winter conditions have begun or will begin very soon.

- ❄ Blizzard Warning means heavy snow and strong winds will produce a blinding snow, near zero visibility, deep drifts and life-threatening wind chill.

- ❄ Frost/Freeze Warning means below freezing temperatures are expected.

- ❄ Thoroughly check and update your family's emergency supply kit before winter approaches.

- ❄ Include adequate clothing and blankets to

keep you warm.

- ❄ If you have a car, fill the gas tank in case you have to leave.

- ❄ Visit NOAA for more weather-related information.

Make a Plan

- ❄ Plan to stay inside and make it on your own, at least for a period of time.

- ❄ If you have a wood burning fire place, consider storing wood to keep you warm if winter weather knocks out your heat.

Stay Informed

- ❄ Listen to NOAA Weather Radio to stay informed of winter weather watches and warnings.

- ❄ Also monitor commercial radio, television and the Internet. For a full description of what to listen for, and an explanation of different weather terms, refer to the NWS guide.

- ❄ Keep in mind that during a severe winter storm it could be hours, or even days, before emergency personnel are able to reach you.

For more information go to: <http://www.ready.gov/winter-weather>

Regional Dateline

November 20

Lighted Parade and Chili
Cook-Off, 6 to 9 p.m.
Sisseton, SD, sissetonchamber
@venturecomm.net

November 20-January 10

Winter Wonderland, Falls Park
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-275-6060

November 21

Annual Buffalo Auction
Buffalo Corrals on Wildlife
Loop Road, Custer, SD
605-255-4515

November 21-22

37th Annual Winterfest
Civic Arena, Aberdeen, SD
605-626-7081

November 27

Shawn Cable and Erik Aplan
Concert, Redlin Art Center
Watertown, SD, 605-882-3877

November 27

Uptown Holiday Lighted
Parade, 6:30 to 7:45 p.m.
Watertown, SD, 605-886-3040

November 27-28 and

December 12, 19, 20 and 23

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

November 28

Greater Madison Area Show
and Sell, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Madison, SD, 605-256-2454

November 28

Holiday Celebration and
Winter Market, 1 to 6 p.m.
Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979



PHOTO BY CHAD COPPES, SD DEPARTMENT OF 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

November 24-December 26

Christmas at the Capitol
8 a.m. to 10 p.m., Pierre, SD
605-773-3178

December 5

Christmas Parade and Holiday
Gift & Craft Fair, Custer, SD
605-673-2244

November 28

Williams and Ree
Deadwood, SD, 605-559-1188

November 28-29

Holidazed and Confused
Comedy Show, Mobridge, SD
605-845-2500

December 3

Christmas with the Celts
8 to 9:30 p.m., Deadwood, SD
605-559-1187

December 4-5, 10-12, 17-19

Strawbale Winery Twilight
Flights 2015, 5 to 10 p.m.
Renner, SD, 605-543-5071

December 5

Breakfast with Santa, 8 a.m. to
1 p.m., Sioux Falls, SD
605-367-7003

December 5-6

Living Christmas Tree
7 to 9 p.m., Aberdeen, SD
605-229-6349

December 6

Phillips, Craig & Dean in
Concert, 7 to 9 p.m.
Watertown, SD, 605-753-0282

December 7

Motley Crue Final Tour
7 to 11:45 p.m.
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

December 11-12

Sharpshooter Classic
6:30 to 9 p.m., Winner, SD
605-842-1533

December 12

Breakfast with Santa
8 to 10 a.m., Watertown, SD
605-882-6269

December 15

The Oak Ridge Boys: Christmas
Night Out, 8 to 9:30 p.m.
Deadwood, SD, 605-559-1187

December 15-March 31

South Dakota snowmobile
trails season, Lead, SD
605-584-3896

January 7-9

15th Annual Ice Fishing
Tournament, Mobridge, SD
605-845-2500

January 12

37th Annual Ranchers
Workshop, Antelope
Multi-purpose Building
9 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. CST
Mission, SD, 605-259-3252 ext. 3

January 21-24

Snowmobile Rally
Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

January 22-23

ISOC SnoCross Shootout
12:45 to 8:30 p.m.
Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

January 29-30

Mardi Gras Weekend
Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

January 31

Eureka Hymns Annual
Concert, Eureka, SD
jalvarez@mmgyglobal.com