

# South Dakota Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

## Cooperative Connections

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The background of the cover features a perspective view of a tunnel. The walls and ceiling of the tunnel are composed of a grid of glowing blue binary code (0s and 1s). In the center of the tunnel, the silhouettes of three lineworkers are visible. They are positioned as if they are working on or inspecting the structure. The lighting is dramatic, with the blue glow of the binary code illuminating the scene from the sides and top, creating a sense of depth and technology.

**LINEWORKERS  
OF THE FUTURE**

Pg 8



# YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW MUCH MONEY CAN SQUEEZE THROUGH A CRAWLSPACE.

I know I was. But once I insulated the crawlspace under my house, my budget became much more comfortable. About \$155 a year more comfortable. What can you do? Find out how the little changes add up at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).



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West Central Electric, Murdo, S.D.  
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# Planting Grassroots Power



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

**Every spring**, I start planning my vegetable garden. The timing must be perfect. You can't plant too early, because a late frost could wipe out seedlings. You can't plant too late since the buds may not have time to take root and produce a crop. Without the protection of water and a strong grassroots system, most vegetables can't survive a hot summer.

Oddly enough, great ideas are the same. If you share an idea too early without a community's support, it gets lost in the shuffle. If you lobby for an idea no one knows about – even something that would help

everyone – lack of interest may cause the idea to wilt and die.

How do great ideas thrive? They need grassroots support.

At the South Dakota Rural Electric Association, we're looking out for you, making sure you have affordable, reliable and safe electricity. Sometimes state or federal laws and regulations threaten this, so we lobby hard on your behalf. But without your support, our ideas often don't reach the right ears.

No matter how loudly we speak out on how legislation or an agency rule may impact electric bills, our voice dims in comparison to one of the most untapped resources in our community – YOU. We're a statewide association – YOU are a voter. We're working hard on your behalf, but your support helps ideas take root and survive.

**But without your support, our ideas often don't reach the right ears.**

Ready to help electric co-ops build a deeper grassroots base? Go to [www.ourenergy.com](http://www.ourenergy.com).

coop, and sign up for e-mail alerts when your voice needs heard to keep your electric bill affordable.

Make your voice heard by joining the South Dakota Action Committee for Rural Electrification Co-op Owners for Political Action® program. This political action committee works on your behalf to support lawmakers who support co-ops.

And, mark Feb. 26 on your calendar and head to Pierre for the Co-op Day at the Capitol. This event is designed to bring co-op members, directors and employees to Pierre to see their state lawmaking process in action. You'll have a chance to watch committees in action, see some floor debate and meet with your elected officials.

SDREA and our 28 electric distribution cooperative members across the state are committed to powering your community and empowering you to improve your quality of life. We work closely with political leaders and want to arm you with the tools needed to help us plant deeper grassroots. Learn more at [www.sdra.coop](http://www.sdra.coop).

## Rapid City Teen Represents Electric Cooperatives



**When Mikaela Frank** went on the 2012 Youth Tour representing West River Electric Association in Wall, S.D.

little did she know that her experience would lead her to a national stage.

Frank, a senior at Rapid City Central High School in Rapid City, was selected from the 39 participants who represented South Dakota on the 2012 Youth Tour as the group's Youth Leadership Council delegate.

As the delegate representing South Dakota, Frank returned to Washington in July for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's YLC Conference.

The conference agenda included leadership and team building exercises, meeting with Capitol Hill staff members who are alumni of NRECA's Rural Electric Youth Tour and a speech competition to select NRECA's National Youth Spokesperson.

The YLC – comprised of students from 43 states – delved more deeply into electric cooperatives, energy issues and leadership development.

While in Washington, YLC members also gained a broader understanding of cooperatives through discussions with Glenn English, CEO of NRECA, and Sheldon Peterson, Governor of the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC).

The YLC reunites in February at NRECA's annual meeting in New Orleans where the group of energetic teens will assist with annual meeting break out sessions, carry their respective state flags in for the meeting's opening ceremonies and work in the cooperatives' grassroots action center encouraging meeting participants to get involved in political efforts important to cooperatives.

## Tips To Maintain a Healthy Heart This Winter

**While we may** be accustomed to battling frigid temperatures and the inevitable snow storms that arrive every winter, many of us are unaware of the dangers these pose to our hearts.

"When the temperature outside drops, our blood vessels narrow to prevent our bodies from losing heat. This is a natural response that can also put people with heart conditions and those involved in strenuous exercise at greater risk of having a heart attack <<http://www.news-medical.net/health/What-is-a-Heart-Attack.aspx>>," says Dr. Holly Andersen, director of education and outreach at the Ronald O. Perelman Heart Institute of New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill Cornell Medical Center.

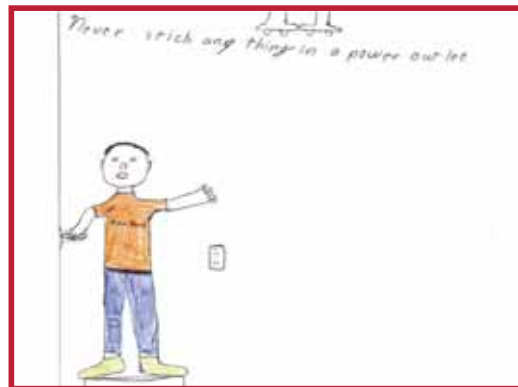
Shoveling snow is one of the most strenuous and dangerous winter exercise activities. It can raise blood pressure and coupled with the effects of colder temperatures, shoveling can increase heart attack risk drastically.

Dr. Andersen offers the following tips for safe shoveling and maintaining a healthy heart this winter:

- Warm up. Warm up with stretching and light activity before shoveling, exercising or beginning more strenuous physical activities.
- Bundle up. When going out to shovel, always wear a scarf over your mouth and nose to warm the air before you breathe in and dress in layers. Layering clothes underneath a windproof and waterproof outer shell helps maintain body heat.
- Push the shovel. It is less strenuous to push the snow rather than lifting it and this reduces the risk of overexerting yourself.
- Take breaks. You should take frequent breaks while shoveling to give your muscles, especially your heart muscle, a chance to relax. You may also consider sharing the work with a friend to make the workload lighter and ensure that you are not alone in the event of an emergency.
- Consult a doctor. If you are over the age of 50, overweight, out of shape or have suffered a heart attack, you should consult a doctor before shoveling snow or starting any exercise routine.

Source: *New York-Presbyterian Hospital*

## Kids' Corner Safety Poster



**"Never stick anything in a power outlet."**

**Kirby Tschetter, 10 years old**

*Kirby is the son of Ryan and Elaine Tschetter, Revillo, S.D. They are members of Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative, Milbank, 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.

# Brunch Favorites



## Corn Bread 'n Sausage

- 12 pork sausage links
- 2 T. water
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup yellow cornmeal
- 1/4 cup wheat germ
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 eggs
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/4 cup cooking oil
- 1 (8 oz.) container plain yogurt
- Honey Butter:**
- 1/2 cup butter
- 2/3 cup honey

Brown sausage with water in skillet over medium heat. Remove from skillet and drain. Stir together next 5 ingredients. Combine eggs, honey, oil and yogurt in another bowl; blend well. Add to dry ingredients, stirring just enough to moisten. Pour into greased 12x8x2-inch pan (2-quart baking dish). Arrange sausages on top of batter. Bake at 350°F. for 25 minutes or until corn bread tests done. Serve warm with honey butter. To prepare honey butter, melt butter in saucepan; add honey. Cook over medium heat until mixture comes to a boil. Boil 1 minute. Cool slightly. Makes 1 cup. Serves 6.

**Mary Jessen, Holabird Cooperative Connections**

## Cranberry Orange Muffins

- 1-3/4 cups flour
- 1 cup plus 1 T. sugar, divided
- 4 tsp. baking powder
- 2 cups Honey Bunches of Oats cereal, divided
- 3/4 cup fat-free milk
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. grated orange peel
- 1/3 cup orange juice
- 2 T. plus 1 tsp. oil, divided
- 1 cup fresh or frozen cranberries, coarsely chopped

Combine flour, 1 cup sugar and baking powder in large bowl. Mix 1 cup cereal and milk in medium bowl; let stand 3 minutes. Add egg, orange peel, orange juice and 2 T. oil; mix well. Add to flour mixture; stir just until moistened. (Batter will be lumpy.) Gently stir in cranberries. Crush remaining 1 cup cereal; mix with remaining 1 T. sugar and 1 tsp. oil. Spoon batter evenly into 16 paper-lined medium muffin cups. Top with cereal mixture. Bake at 375°F. for 22 minutes or until muffins are golden brown and wooden toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pan 5 minutes; remove to wire rack. Serve warm or cooled. Makes: 16 servings.

*Nutritional information per serving: 150 calories; 2.5g total fat; 0g saturated fat; 15mg cholesterol; 160mg sodium; 30g total carbohydrates; 3g dietary fiber; 15mg sugars; 3mg protein.*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Cinnamon Roll Pancakes

- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 2 tsp. salt
- 4 cups milk
- 4 T. vegetable oil
- 4 large eggs, lightly beaten
- Cinnamon Filling:**
- 1 cup butter, melted
- 1-1/2 cups brown sugar, packed
- 2 T. ground cinnamon
- Cream Cheese Glaze:**
- 1/2 cup butter
- 4 oz. cream cheese
- 1-1/2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla

For pancakes, mix dry ingredients in one bowl and wet ingredients in another bowl. Stir them together until moistened leaving a few lumps. Combine cinnamon filling ingredients. Place in a disposable piping bag and snip the end off or put in a Ziploc bag and snip the corner off. Heat griddle to 325°F as you don't want these to cook too quickly. Make desired size pancake on greased griddle and then, using the piping bag and starting at the center of the pancake, create a cinnamon swirl. Wait until the pancake has lots of bubble before turning it. You will find that when you turn it, the cinnamon swirl will melt. If you have your griddle too hot, it will burn the cinnamon, so I suggest 325°F. The cinnamon melts out and creates the craters which then fill perfectly with the cream cheese glaze. For glaze, in a microwave-safe bowl melt butter and cream cheese; stir together. Whisk in powdered sugar and vanilla. Add a little milk if needed to make it a glaze consistency. Drizzle over pancakes.

**Lois Hanson, Howard Cooperative Connections**

## Baked Fruit

- 1 large can sliced peaches
- 1 large can pear halves, quartered
- 1 large can apricots
- 1 large can pineapple chunks
- 1 jar maraschino cherries
- Sauce:**
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2 T. cornstarch
- 1/2 cup light corn syrup
- 1 cup orange juice
- Orange zest, if desired
- 2 T. butter

Drain all fruits well. Combine sugar, cornstarch, corn syrup, orange juice and orange zest; cook until thick and clear. After bubbling, add butter, stirring until melted. Arrange fruit in a 9x13-inch pan. Pour sauce over fruit and bake at 325°F. for 30 minutes. Serve hot.

**Pauline Schmidt, Willow Lake Cooperative Connections**

## Homemade Granola

- 4 cups old-fashioned oats
- 1 cup wheat germ
- 1 cup chopped walnuts or almonds
- 1/2 cup sesame seeds
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/3 cup oil
- 1/3 cup water
- 1/3 cup honey
- 6 oz. dried fruit

Combine dry ingredients; add liquids and mix well. Bake at 300°F. for 40 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes. Cool and add dried fruit. Makes about 7 cups.

**Becki Hauser, Tripp Cooperative Connections**

*Please send your favorite seafood, appetizer and beverage 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 2013. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name*

# Keep Indoor Air Healthy



**Jim Dulley**  
www.dulley.com

**Dear Jim:** I want the best air quality at home for my family. Which type of central air cleaner is best and will installing a central air cleaner make my heating and cooling more efficient? – Steve D.

**Dear Steve:** Indoor air quality is becoming a greater

issue for families as homes become more airtight for energy efficiency. And with all the synthetic products used in homes today, indoor air is often more polluted and hazardous to your health than outdoor air.

Installing a high-quality central air cleaner or filter in the furnace/air conditioner duct system does not technically improve the efficiency of your heating and cooling system. What it will do is keep the units running at their highest original efficiency levels. Most air cleaners use little or no electricity to operate.

With a lower-quality air cleaner, such as the standard one-inch-thick fiberglass filter, dust and dirt can build up on the heat exchanger and cooling coil surfaces. This dust creates a layer of insulation so that heat is not transferred as effectively as it should be. This reduces the overall energy efficiency.

If you don't change the filter often enough, dirt can clog the many pores in the filter medium and reduce air flow through it. This further reduces efficiency because the heating and cooling coils and heat exchangers are designed for a specific air flow rate.

Within the past several years, manufacturers have begun producing new, super-efficient central air cleaners. They use a combination of electronic air charging and filter media to trap almost all of the tiniest particles in the air. They can even catch flu viruses and bacteria as they pass through the duct system.

Standard electronic air cleaners use wires to give air particles a negative charge. A collection cell has plates with a positive charge so the negatively charged particles stick to it. When the collection cell is dirty, you can wash it in the dishwasher or bathtub and slip it back into the unit.

For many people, this standard type of electronic air cleaner is adequate. I use one in the heat pump in my own home. For people with allergies to some of the smallest particles in indoor air, the new electronic air cleaners with the charged filter media

may be more effective. The electricity cost to operate either type of electronic air cleaner is not significant.

It's important to regularly clean the collection cell of the standard electronic air cleaner to keep it operating at maximum cleaning performance and reduce the amount of ozone generated. When the cell gets dirty, the charge can arch from the wires to the collection plate. This may produce excessive concentrations of ozone gas, to which some people are sensitive. I set mine to a lower charging voltage to reduce ozone.

Another option is a pleated media air cleaner. This type of unit is less expensive and relies on many square feet of folded filter material to catch particles as the air passes through it. There are various levels of media quality and price. The cleaning effectiveness of various models can be compared by their MERV (minimum efficiency reporting value) rating.

If you don't want to have the ducts modified to install a new air cleaner, consider a self-charging electrostatic model. This slips into the existing furnace filter slot and is many times more effective than a fiberglass filter. Just the air flowing over the resin filter material creates a charge that tends to trap more dirt particles.

**If you don't change the filter often enough, dirt can clog the many pores in the filter medium and reduce air flow through it.**

Another option is a bypass HEPA (high efficiency particle air) cleaner that has its own air circulation motor. A HEPA is a very dense media filter, which makes it very effective, but it may create too much resistance for the furnace blower to force adequate air flow through it. The bypass design has its own blower so the air flow through the coils or heat exchanger is not impeded.

With any central air cleaner, it cleans only when a furnace/air conditioner blower is running. To get around this, Aprilaire offers a new controller which mounts next to the wall thermostat. It allows you to automatically run the blower for any length of time when no heating or cooling is needed.

The following companies offer whole-house air cleaners: Aprilaire, 800-334-6011, www.aprilaire.com; Dust Free, 800-441-1107, www.dustfree.com; Lakeair, 800-558-9436, www.lakeair.com; Pure Air Systems, 800-869-8025 www.pureairsystems.com; and Trane, 888-232-5290, www.trane.com.

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

## Legislatively Speaking

**How do I contact my legislator?** How do I let a Representative or Senator know how I feel about an issue?

One way is to call your legislator while in Pierre. You can leave a message at 605-773-3251. E-mail is a second method. E-mail is most effective if it is not a blanket mailing to all members, but a specific mail message to your representative or senator. When sending an e-mail, remember to include your name, postal address and phone number. (You can send e-mails to South Dakota Senators and Representatives at <http://legis.state.sd.us/email/LegislatorEmail.aspx>.) The best way to get a legislator's attention is with a short, well-reasoned letter. Here are a few do's and don'ts on how to write an effective letter to your representative:

### Do ...

- Be brief; never write more than one page.
- Make your letter neat and easy to read (type or print).
- Make sure you understand the legislative process.
- Identify the issue at the top of the letter and cover only one issue per letter. If you have more than one issue that needs to be addressed, write separate letters for each issue.
  - Remember; you're the expert; make your letter informative.
  - Identify yourself and the reason for your expertise.
  - Get right to the point. For example, you may wish to begin your letter like this: "I hope you will support (oppose) HB or SB \_\_\_\_." Give your reasons for supporting or opposing the measure. Tell your legislator why you think the bill, if it becomes law, will help or hurt you, your children, your business or your community. Explain what it means to you.
    - Use terms they will understand and avoid using abbreviations.
    - Offer to be of assistance. Offer to testify if there is a hearing regarding the issue with which you're concerned.
    - Ask for a reply if you want one. However, keep in mind how many meetings and hearings your legislator must attend. They will call or write to you as soon as they are able.
    - Be polite and reasonable. Lawmakers can't please everyone. They may disagree with you. Try to respect their views. Don't lose your temper, even on paper. Tell your legislator what you think and why, but be polite.
    - And finally, be sure to say "thanks."

### Don't ...

- Don't use form letters or post cards. Use your own words. Use personal or business stationery or a plain sheet of paper.
- Don't threaten legislators. Legislators say, "Some folks don't know how you stand on an issue, but they'll attack you right off the bat. They'll say, 'Vote for HB \_\_\_\_ or else,' and you may already think it's a wonderful idea. Or they'll write, 'Why aren't you supporting this bill, you fool?' and you're the sponsor of the bill. Threats and insults don't work."
  - Don't address a legislator as "Congressman."

## Forums on Next Generation of Livestock Production Set

**The South Dakota** Department of Agriculture and South Dakota State University Extension will hold forums across the state to discuss South Dakota's vision for livestock production through March.

"South Dakota has progressive, forward-thinking entrepreneurs who understand the exciting potential of today's agri-business marketplace," said S.D. Secretary of Agriculture Walt Bones. "We're starting the conversation about the challenges and advantages South Dakota has to increase the number of livestock in our state."

All forums are scheduled to begin at 6:30 p.m. local time but are subject to change.

For more information, contact Sarah Caslin, SDDA livestock development specialist, at 605-773-3649 or visit <http://sdda.sd.gov>

Upcoming dates and places are:

- Jan. 21 – Fort Pierre Livestock
- Jan. 22 – Herried Livestock
- Jan. 23 – Martin Livestock
- Jan. 24 – Philip Livestock
- Feb. 4 – Hub City Livestock
- Feb. 6 – Bales Continental
- Feb. 8 – Glacial Lakes Livestock
- Feb. 25 – Platte Livestock
- Feb. 26 – Magness Livestock
- Feb. 27 – Madison Livestock
- Feb. 28 – Kimball Livestock
- March 5 – Mitchell Livestock
- March 6 – Yankton Livestock
- March 7 – Sioux Falls Regional
- March 11 – Belle Fourche Livestock
- March 12 – St. Onge Livestock
- March 13 – Faith Livestock
- March 14 – Lemmon Livestock
- March 18 – Miller Livestock
- March 19 – Presho Livestock
- March 20 – Winner Livestock
- March 21 – Chamberlain Livestock

## Financing S.D. Agriculture

**The South Dakota Department** of Agriculture has financial programs available for agricultural producers and agricultural-related businesses.

SDDA partners with lenders across the state to provide ag borrowers with lower interest financing. Programs are available for livestock purchases, facility expansions, grain storage and value added projects just to name a few.

"We have seen a lot of interest across the state in livestock development lately and our financial programs can assist in these projects," said S.D. Secretary of Agriculture Walt Bones. "What a great way to diversify your farming operation or allow for a son or daughter to come back to the farm."

SDDA staff will be available at the Black Hills Stock Show in Rapid City, S.D., for anyone wanting to discuss livestock development and financing options.

For additional information on any of the financial programs offered through SDDA, call 605-773-5436. All program summaries and application forms are available at <http://sdda.sd.gov>

Agriculture is South Dakota's No. 1 industry, generating nearly \$21 billion in annual economic activity and employing more than 80,000 South Dakotans.

The South Dakota Department of Agriculture's mission is to promote, protect, preserve and improve this industry for today and tomorrow. Visit them online at <http://sdda.sd.gov> or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

# Lineworkers of the Future

**“You have to have the heart for it.”**

by Brenda Kleinjan

**I**T'S A JOB THAT PROVIDES A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW of the world.

And, with an aging workforce, the career opportunities are looking bright for the next generation of young men and women looking to become line workers at electric cooperatives nationwide.

Some skills needed by today's line worker seem to be pretty obvious: a respect – not fear – of heights; the ability to do hard manual labor; and the understanding that with the stunning vistas created by a pole-top work space come harsh weather conditions: from triple-digit heat to body-numbing wind chills coupled with wind, ice and snow. And then there's the inherent challenges of working with

electricity. The work being done comes with a certain element of danger as the voltages can be lethal, so line workers need to be mindful of safety at all times.

“You have to have a little bit of gumption in you to climb a pole when it's raining or lightning or the wind's blowing,” explains Tim Chance, operations manager at Southeastern Electric Cooperative in Marion, S.D. Chance is a member of an advisory committee of electric co-op professionals who provide input into line worker training programs in the state.

“You have to have the heart for it. It's nothing easy. You're out in the weather, sometimes its good and sometimes its bad. It's an outside job,” said Chance.

The ability to deal with the elements is an





important one, notes Chance's counterpart at Lake Andes, S.D.-based Charles Mix Electric Association.

"They definitely have to like being outside. If you're not that type of person, shouldn't be in this field," said John Brooks, CMEA's Line Superintendent.

Another aspect of a line worker's trade is the physical hard work of it.

"I think a lot of young guys go to school not realizing that there's a lot of hard work involved," said Brooks.

"A lineman does everything from mechanic work to farm work; you're fixing fences, repairing a truck and you might even do a bit of gardening," Brooks said with a chuckle, noting that in getting into work areas, line workers sometimes encounter land-owner obstacles such as fences and landscaping that need to be put to rights after work is done in an area.

And, increasingly, technology and computer skills are becoming more important for line workers as well.

At Mitchell Technical Institute in Mitchell, S.D., instructors are working to train the next generation of line workers, knowing that they'll need not only the traditional skills historically needed by line workers, but also new technology skills as well.

The program at MTI has implemented a certification-training module in cooperation with ElectricU, an online training system of the Midwest Energy Association. Students will complete 20 online training modules with exams that support the current curriculum and hands-on training.

The school also has developed a set of core competencies that are accepted nationwide as skills expected in an entry level energy worker program. The course teaches all the big-picture concepts of energy, including all forms of energy production, transmission and distribution.

Since the fall of 2009, students enrolled at the program have been able to take advantage of the Energy Training Center, which is the state's only indoor training facility for line workers. In the center, students are able to participate in training exercises regardless of the weather. The center is close to an outdoor training field, which allows students to train on overhead and underground utilities.

The school has also started an Electrical Utilities and Substation Technology program designed to provide students with an extensive hands-on educational experience that integrates the knowledge, skills and competencies that the electrical power utility industry needs. Graduates learn to install, inspect, test, repair and maintain electrical equipment in substations and other 'smart' equipment on the power grid.

Chance noted that at his co-op south of Sioux Falls, more switch gear and automation is making the line worker's job more technical.

Another skill that hasn't changed with time is the line workers need to be able to get along with others – whether it be fellow crew members or co-op members ranging from farmers to business people.

Brooks and Chance agree that a career as a line worker is one that can be very rewarding for the right person.

"The good you feel after getting somebody's power back on – there's nothing better," said Brooks. "If you're out working in the dark or bad weather and someone has been out of power for a long time and you're the crew that gets them back on, it's a great sense of accomplishment."

For more about careers at electric cooperatives, visit [careers.touchstoneenergy.coop](http://careers.touchstoneenergy.coop).



**Opposite page:** Students practice pole-climbing techniques in Mitchell Technical Institute's Energy Training Center. **Above:** In MTI's outdoor training field, students practice setting a pole.

*Photo Courtesy Mitchell Technical Institute.*

# The Power of Grassroots

*Electric co-op consumer-members can help shape rules and laws that keep electricity reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible*

By Magen Howard

**I**N THE MONTHS LEADING UP TO THE NOVEMBER 2012 election, electric co-ops and a multitude of other organizations in Michigan campaigned against Proposal 3, which would have amended the state's constitution to require that 25 percent of the state's electricity be generated by in-state renewable sources by 2025. The electric co-ops were joined by the Michigan Farm Bureau, chambers of commerce, churches, labor unions and newspapers across the Great Lakes State.

The proposal drew criticism for a host of reasons – from politicians saying the state constitution was not the place for enacting energy policy, to reminders that the state already had passed a renewable portfolio standard that required electric utilities and

competitive electric generation suppliers to have 10 percent renewables in their generation mix by 2015. The estimated \$12 billion price tag for fulfilling the constitutional mandate didn't help matters, either.

The grassroots groundwork paid off for Michiganders who wanted renewable energy but in a more responsible manner. On Election Day, Proposal 3 was rejected by 63 percent of the voters.

Michigan's Proposal 3 is just one recent example of the electric cooperative network working with its grassroots base to ensure an affordable, reliable and environmentally responsible energy future and improved rural quality of life. Nationwide, electric co-ops boast one of the largest potential grassroots bases, with 42 million people spread across 75 per-



cent of the U.S. receiving electric service.

“We at the statewide association do our part to work with lawmakers on policies that are fair to electric co-op consumer-members,” says Ed Anderson, general manager of the South Dakota Rural Electric Association in Pierre, S.D. “But our consumer-members provide the real legislative muscle, and we need them to flex it now more than ever.”

What exactly does it mean to be part of a grassroots movement? It can be as simple as sending an e-mail on an important issue to a state legislator or member of Congress. Electric co-ops often ask their consumer-members to get involved when it comes to laws and regulations that will affect the affordability or reliability of electric service.

### Mobilizing Consumer-members

It’s easy to see why electric co-op consumer-members should be involved, says Randy Dwyer, director of grassroots at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) in Arlington, Va., the trade organization that represents more than 900 not-for-profit, member-owned electric co-ops in the U.S.

“Electric co-ops should include their members in the political process because members provide the real voice,” Dwyer stresses. “The co-op looks out for them, but if they’re going to speak on behalf of their members, members must be engaged in the process.”

To that end, electric cooperative statewide associations are working with their member co-ops to create political action plans. The Indiana Statewide Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, based in Indianapolis, Ind., has launched a grassroots initiative that’s based in education.

“We want consumer-members to get used to receiving political information from their local co-op, so they’re familiar with the issues when it’s time to take action,” explains Tina Bowman, assistant manager, government & cooperative relations for the Indiana statewide.

As a result, Hoosier State electric co-op consumers will see regular policy-related articles in their member co-op newsletters, in addition to advertisements, bill inserts and social media posts. When necessary, they’ll see a call to action.

“Our consumer-members can make a difference,” Bowman stresses. “They can help shape the laws and rules that affect their electric service and their wallets.”

### Why Co-ops Care

Electric co-ops have members, not customers, and they are not-for-profit – which means your electric co-op isn’t interested in creating excess revenue for far-away investors. All the money stays local and when revenues exceed operating costs, members receive retired capital credits allocations. The cooperative business model also requires co-ops to enhance the quality of life in

the communities they serve. That mission naturally extends to statehouses and to Washington, D.C.

Lobbying – aka “advocacy” – involves citizens talking directly with legislators. It’s one of the five freedoms enshrined by the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: Congress shall make no law abridging the right of the people to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

SDREA works with both the South Dakota legislature and elected officials in Washington, D.C. NRECA is headquartered in Arlington, Va., – just across the Potomac River from the nation’s capitol – and maintains a staff of lobbyists that spend most of their time on Capitol Hill and dealing with various agencies.

NRECA was formed in 1942 specifically to overcome World War II shortages of electric construction materials, to obtain insurance coverage for the relative new electric cooperatives and to mitigate wholesale power supply problems. Since those early days, NRECA has been an advocate for consumer-owned cooperatives on energy and operational issues as well as community and economic development.

Today, these lobbyists actively deal with two-thirds of U.S. House and Senate committees and subcommittees. Each year, hundreds of bills are introduced that could directly affect electric co-ops – issues ranging from energy and climate change policy and disaster relief to endangered species protection and railroad reform.

NRECA lobbyists get their “marching orders” from your electric co-op’s board of directors, who are elected by you and your neighbors. Each year, representative from electric co-ops get together and vote on resolutions that direct NRECA’s policy agenda.

### Where You Come In

Dwyer echoes Anderson in that co-ops can’t go it alone. “CEOs and co-op boards are doing everything they can to keep electric costs affordable. And they do a great job of it. But there are things outside their control, like rules and regulations, that affect prices and electric service. By having a strong political action plan, a dedicated workforce and an engaged membership, each co-op can help drive these concerns home. And when lawmakers hear from the folks – voters – back home, they listen.”

The national platform for electric co-op consumers to voice their concerns to Congress is the Our Energy, Our Future® campaign, which engages consumer-members in a conversation with elected officials about how their electric co-ops meet legislative goals while keeping electricity reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible. To learn more about the issues facing your electric cooperative, visit [OurEnergy.coop](http://OurEnergy.coop).

Source: NRECA

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

**NRECA CEO Glenn English meets with the 2012-2013 Youth Leadership Council, aka the “Red Shirts,” during their leadership summit in July 2012. The YLC is composed of one Youth Tour participant from each state and the group learns about grassroots advocacy and the role of electric cooperatives in communities across the country. Source: Derrill Holly/NRECA**

# Rural Electric Youth

## *Where are they now?*

**I**N 1963, 31 SOUTH DAKOTA TEENAGERS FROM 18 electric cooperatives blazed a trail.

They embarked on an adventure that would take them from the Rushmore State to the nation's capitol for what would be come the annual Rural Electric Youth Tour.

Since then, more than 1,300 South Dakota students and an even greater number of Minnesota students have taken part in the experience.

The trip makes lasting impressions. For many, it is their first experience traveling to the nation's capitol.

In early years, students travelled by bus and were gone for 11 days. In recent years, travel has been by plane and the experience shortened to seven days.

Erik Engelmeyer took part in the 2004 tour.

It was the third trip to Washington for the Alexandria, S.D.,-teen, but the first time he flew there.

"It's a great experience – everyone should do it," said Engelmeyer, who is now the engineer at H-D Electric Cooperative in Clear Lake, S.D.

Looking back on the experience, Engelmeyer sees even more value in the trip.

"Not being able to vote then made a difference.

If I had that opportunity today, I'd do it in a heartbeat," Engelmeyer said, pointing out the value of meeting with the state's senators and representative.

Engelmeyer's experience also played a role in his looking for a career at electric cooperatives after graduating from the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology with a degree in electrical engineering.

"Co-ops showed an interest in all the communities they serve. That stuck with me from seeing co-ops involved in Achievement Days and the Youth Tour," said Engelmeyer.

A fellow participant on that trip in 2004 – Tucker Halverson – has also found his footing in South Dakota after the trip.

Halverson works as a geographic information systems analyst for South Dakota's Lincoln County. Located just south of Sioux Falls, S.D., it is one of the 10 fastest-growing counties in the nation.

"Visiting Washington, D.C., was great," said Halverson, who grew up at Kennebec, S.D. "I have always been interested in politics in general. Doing that trip really pushed me to working in government and maybe down the road considering a run for office."

By Brenda Kleinjan



# Tour Alumni:



**Top:** The first Youth Tour group from South Dakota was featured in this newspaper clipping from a co-op publication in 1963. The cutline erroneously lists Abraham Lincoln as the nation's 17th president. He was the 16th. **Bottom:** Erik Engelmeyer participated in the 2004 Youth Tour. Today, he works at H-D Electric Cooperative in Clear Lake, S.D. **Opposite Page:** Participants on the 2004 Youth Tour pause for a photo by the U.S. Capitol. Both Tucker Halverson (left, in suit and tie) and Engelmeyer (third person to the right of Halverson) can be seen in the back row.



Wessington, S.D.,-native Janelle (Krause) Toman represented Huron-based Beadle Electric Cooperative (now known as Dakota Energy Cooperative) on the 1973 tour.

After studying journalism in college, Toman went on to work for a daily newspaper, cover politics for a press bureau and was press secretary for Gov. George S. Mickelson.

Now, Toman plays a role in shaping South Dakota's future at the South Dakota Board of Regents as communications director.

Arguably, the Youth Tour may have had the most lasting impact on the lives of two of Toman's companions on that 1973 trip.

"The rural electric cooperative has had a long-term effect on our lives," wrote 1973 Youth Tour participant Roberta (Johnson) Stoebner when she sent in her last electric bill to the cooperative she had been a member of for more than 30 years.

"In March 1973, Doug Stoebner and I met at Turner-Hutchinson Electric in Marion when we were being interviewed for the REA trip to Washington, D.C. As a result, Doug was selected to represent Hutchinson County and I was selected to represent Turner County," Stoebner continued.

While attending South Dakota State University the following fall, the duo began dating and married in 1976. They began farming in 1977 until Doug's health declined and they moved to town.

"It's wonderful to see the sights. You read about it in your

text book, but to actually see them in person was very much fun," said Stoebner who was able to return to Washington in 1974 but has not been back since.

But still, the experiences are some that she draws upon when teaching U.S. History as a middle school social studies teacher in the Menno, S.D., school district where she also teaches family and consumer sciences.

The Youth Tour also played a role for Mitchell High School language arts teacher Ron Grimsley, who represented Colman, S.D.-based Sioux Valley Empire Electric (now Sioux Valley Energy) on the 1984 tour.

"The trip to Washington brought history to life for me," said Grimsley, who grew up at Brookings, S.D. "I was able to see numerous historical sites and to make a real connection between what I had learned in school and the actual historical sites. I also met many leaders, and made great memories with the other students on the trip."

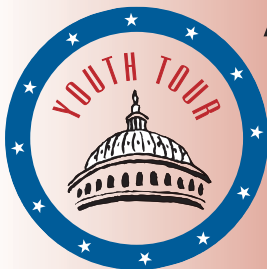
Last summer, the Youth Tour experience came full circle for 1993 alum Ches (Haggart) Hegge who represented Grand Electric Cooperative of Bison, S.D., on the tour. Her daughter, Emily Fero, went on the 2012 trip representing Butte Electric Cooperative in Newell, S.D. Hegge works in the medical field in Spearfish, S.D.

A fellow 1993 alum, Adam Healy, represented Bon Homme Yankton Electric Association in Tabor, S.D., on the trip. Now a Washington, D.C., resident, Healy has worked on Capitol Hill since college. He currently is a staff member for the U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs chaired by Sen. Tim Johnson, D-S.D.

Also finding her footing in national politics is Andi Fouberg who is Sen. John Thune's communications director. Fouberg represented Mitchell, S.D.-based Intercounty Electric (now Central Electric Cooperative) on the tour in 1994.

Co-ops are gearing up for the 2013 Youth Tour which will be held June 14-20. A record-number of co-ops are participating in this year's tour. Contact your local electric cooperative to find out if it is participating and what its selection guidelines are.

For more on the Youth Tour, visit [youthtour.coop](http://youthtour.coop).



**Are you a Youth Tour alum?**

We'd love to hear from you! Contact your co-op (info is on Page 3) or like us on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/pages/South-Dakota-Rural-Electric-Youth-Tour>

[www.facebook.com/pages/South-Dakota-Rural-Electric-Youth-Tour](http://www.facebook.com/pages/South-Dakota-Rural-Electric-Youth-Tour)

# Co-ops Investing in the Future with Scholarships

**A**S SPRING APPROACHES, MANY OF THE 10,000 OR so high school seniors enrolled at high schools in South Dakota and western Minnesota will be sharpening the proverbial pencil in a quest to secure scholarships and other financing to fund their higher education dreams.

And, given the cost of higher education, that quest is becoming ever more important. According to information from the South Dakota Board of Regents, which oversees that state's six public universities – Black Hills State University in Spearfish, Dakota State University in Madison, Northern State University in Aberdeen, South Dakota School of Mines and Technology in Rapid City, South Dakota State University in Brookings and the University of South Dakota in Vermillion – tuition, fees, room and board at the state colleges ran a full-time undergraduate student more than \$13,000 a year in 2011-2012. The cost in Minnesota, according

to the SDBOR study, was more than \$16,000 annually.

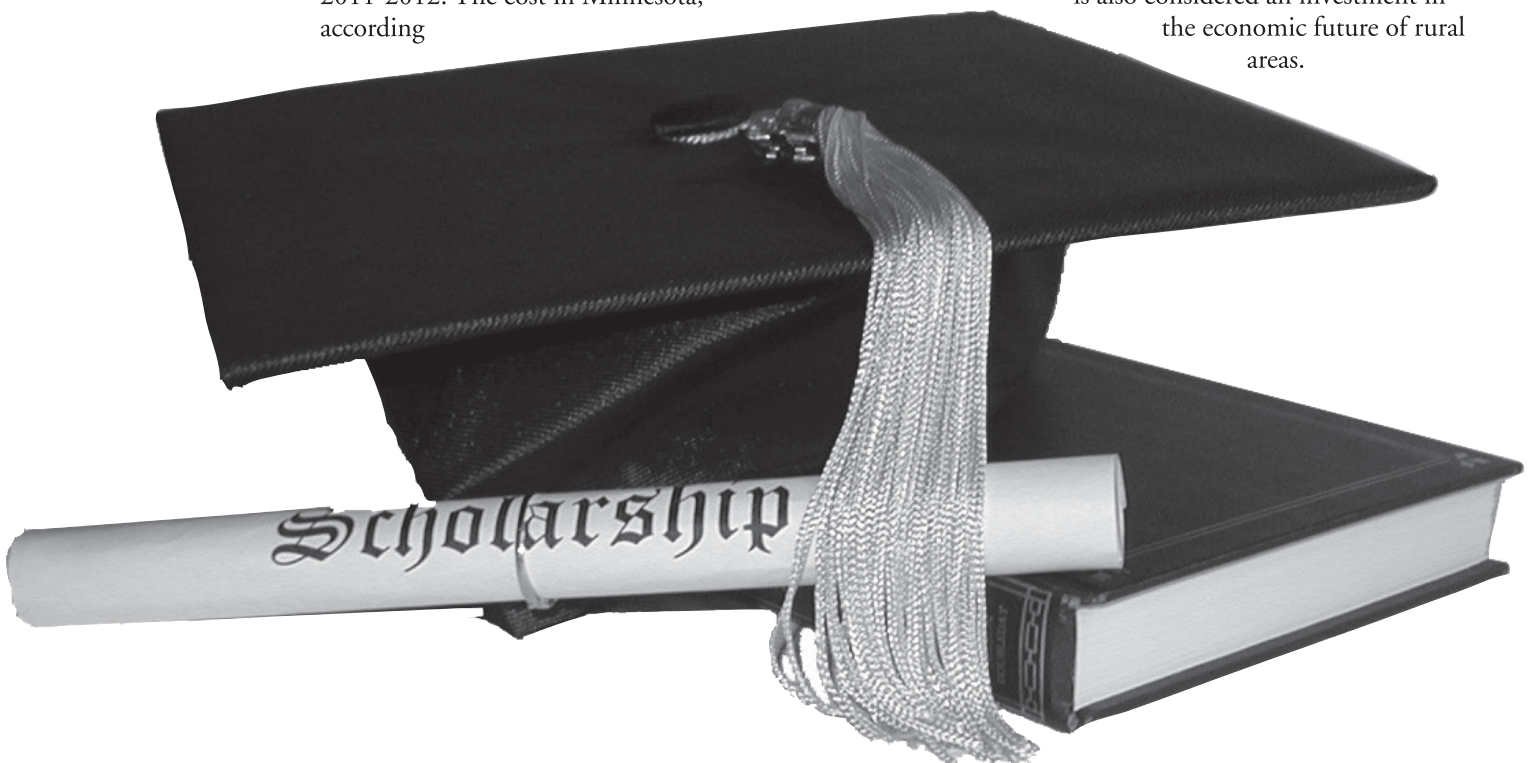
The region's electric cooperatives are doing their best to help students with higher education expenses.

In 2012, electric cooperatives in South Dakota and western Minnesota were able to help more than 140 students realize their higher education dreams by awarding more than \$90,000 in scholarships.

Funding for about one-third of the electric cooperative scholarships awarded comes from the Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship program which awards 179 \$1,000 scholarships at cooperatives in a nine-state region, including cooperatives in South Dakota and western Minnesota.

Now in its 23rd year, the scholarship program recognizes and encourages academic and community achievements of students in the region. It is also considered an investment in the economic future of rural areas.

By Brenda  
Kleinjan



The students receiving electric co-op scholarships used the monies to continue their educations at two- and four-year colleges and universities and technical schools. A majority of the recipients indicated they were going to a school in South Dakota, Minnesota or a surrounding state.

And that may be good news down the road.

A SDBOR study released in December found that more South Dakota public university graduates than ever before end up staying in the state for work or further education.

Data confirm that 73 percent of South Dakota resident students will remain here after college graduation to either work or to pursue additional postsecondary education. Looking at the outcomes for all students who graduate from South Dakota public universities, the percentage employed in state or enrolled somewhere for further education is 66 percent, the BOR study continued.

While the Basin Electric scholarships provide a stable base to the efforts of electric cooperatives in providing scholarships, co-ops draw on other resources as well.

Several co-ops provide for scholarship money in their budgets. Other co-ops use money contributed by members participating in Operation Round Up® programs to award scholarships.

A couple of cooperatives have memorial scholarships named for past employees or attorneys.

And, while most of the scholarships awarded are for general fields of study, some scholarships are targeted to specifically encourage students to seek a career as a line worker. Each year the South Dakota Rural Electric Line Superintendents Association awards scholarships to students studying to be line workers.

Co-ops in South Dakota and western Minnesota are on track to award even more scholarship money for the 2013-2014 school year. Many of the cooperatives' application deadlines for the scholarships is mid-February.



## Making the Right Money Moves To Help Pay for College

By Dianna Troyer

**While college is expensive, it still can be affordable with grants, loans and scholarships.** A comprehensive guide to help students prepare and pay for college is Peterson's StudentEdge at [www.studentedge.com](http://www.studentedge.com).

"You can register for free and it also provides seasonal activities, depending on your grade level in high school, to prepare you for college, from taking practice ACT and SAT tests to providing financial aid and scholarship information," said Chad Billmyer, StudentEdge managing director.

Mark Kantrowitz, an author and national expert who has testified before Congress about financial aid issues, offers tips on paying for college, being financially self-supportive during college and repaying loans after college.

"When you begin to apply for financial aid, be prepared to learn a new language and an alphabet soup of acronyms," he said.

The first step in applying for financial aid is to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, which can be found on the Internet at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) and to talk to a financial aid officer.

"The greatest asset in saving for college is time," said Kantrowitz. "The earlier the better." Parents can contribute to a 529 College Savings Plan or Coverdell Education Savings Account, which provide tax-deferred earnings to pay for college.

### Scholarships are available

To supplement a parental contribution and personal savings, Kantrowitz advises students to apply for scholarships.

"When applying for scholarships, you must be persistent, thorough and organized," emphasized Kantrowitz, who publishes two websites, [www.finaid.com](http://www.finaid.com) and [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com), which maintain a large scholarship database and answer financial aid questions.

He suggests keeping information in folders or a notebook, knowing the deadlines and focusing on the detailed requirements of each scholarship.

"Don't become discouraged, either," he said. "It's a numbers game, and you're often competing against equally qualified peers, so the more often you apply, the greater your chances of winning a scholarship."

"Some students pooh-poo the smaller scholarships, but if you win several, they add up. Other kids shy away from scholarships that require an essay. Writing an essay is probably the best investment of time you can make. You can reuse the essays and tailor them to fit each scholarship application."

### Go with federal loans

When it comes to loans, Kantrowitz suggests borrowing from federal loan programs because the terms are better than private loans.

To earn money during college, he suggests part-time work-study, 15 hours a week or less, to pay out-of-pocket expenses. Summer internships sometimes provide a salary and can lead to a full-time job after graduation.

Most students graduating with a four-year bachelor's degree have accumulated more than \$20,000 in debt, Kantrowitz said.

Lenders provide a repayment schedule and advise graduates who have trouble paying off a loan to contact them to discuss a deferment or relief program.

Here are five more Websites that offer financial aid advice: [www.savingforcollege.com](http://www.savingforcollege.com), [www.studentloanborrowerassistance.org](http://www.studentloanborrowerassistance.org), [www.projectonstudentdebt.org](http://www.projectonstudentdebt.org), [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) and [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov).

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**January 17-18**

Women in Blue Jeans  
 Conference, Highland  
 Conference Center  
 Mitchell, SD, 605-996-9010

**January 18-19**

Winter Show, Sisseton, SD  
 605-698-7627

**January 18-19**

Day County Farm  
 Home & Sport Show  
 Webster, SD, 605-345-4668

**January 19**

Model Railroad Open House  
 Aberdeen, SD, 605-226-2139

**January 22-26**

Sioux Empire Farm Show  
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-373-2016

**January 23-25**

Sioux Falls Farm Show  
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-373-2016

**January 25-26**

Media One Funski  
 Great Bear Ski Valley  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-339-0000

**January 25-February 3**

Black Hills Stock Show  
 Rapid City, SD  
 605-355-3861

**January 27**

Eureka Hymns Annual Concert  
 Eureka, SD, 605-284-2136

**January 28**

Ag Fest, Ramkota Hotel  
 Pierre, SD, 605-945-2548



PHOTO COURTESY OF S.D. TOURISM

**Events of Special Note**

**January 26**

Ice Fish Fest  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-330-0700

**February 1-2**

Winter Fishing Weekend  
 Tournament, Pierre, SD  
 605-945-3841

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.

**February 5-9**

Winter Farm Show  
 Watertown, SD  
 605-886-5814

**February 16**

Model Railroad Open House  
 Aberdeen, SD, 605-226-2139

**March 9-10**

Annual Home Builders  
 Home Show, Aberdeen, SD  
 605-225-2055

**February 8**

Auction Amore  
 6 to 9:30 p.m.  
 Holiday Inn Express  
 Brandon, SD, 605-582-7400

**February 18**

Farm and Home Show  
 Wessington Springs, SD  
 605-539-1929

**March 10-11**

2013 Gun Show, American  
 Legion Hall, Philip, SD  
 605-859-2635, 605-859-2280  
 or 605-859-2892

**February 8-10**

Winterfest of Wheels  
 Convention Center  
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-231-3100

**February 20-21**

Ag Expo, Aberdeen, SD  
 605-725-5551

**March 15-16, 22-23**

Schmeckfest, Freeman, SD  
 605-925-4542

**February 9**

Tour de Chocolate  
 Hill City, SD, 605-574-2368

**February 23**

Memorial Day weekend  
 reservations open for S.D.  
 state parks, Pierre, SD  
 605-773-3391

**March 15-17**

Annual South Dakota Horse  
 Fair Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-370-1607

**March 4**

Kids Voting-South Dakota  
 Liberty Ball Game, S.D. House  
 of Representatives vs. S.D.  
 Senate, 5:30 p.m. Tacos with  
 Top Dogs, 7 p.m. Game Time  
 Pierre Riggs Gymnasium  
 Pierre, SD, Contact Wes Brown  
 at 605-341-4311

**March 16**

Model Railroad Open House  
 Aberdeen, SD, 605-226-2139

**March 28-30**

Yelduz Shrine Circus  
 Aberdeen, SD, 605-225-4841