

South Dakota Electric

Your Touchstone Energy Partner 

Cooperative Connections

DECEMBER 2017 VOL. 69 NO. 12


A Joyful Sound

Concert on the Prairie Resounds in Hoven Page 8-9

TO HOVEN SD
ON THE PRAIRIE
PRESENTS
BLESSING
FILLED YEARS
IN JOY



**BASIN ELECTRIC
POWER COOPERATIVE**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Your energy starts here.

basinelectric.com

Be the light.

Electric cooperatives work to keep the lights on and their members and communities warm as winter moves in. They also light up the holidays. Many electric co-ops help their communities celebrate the season by putting up their town's decorations. They're helping to bring goodness and light to their communities.

South Dakota Electric Cooperative Connections

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Editorial

Look Out For Scams



Ed Anderson
General Manager, South Dakota
Rural Electric Association

Unfortunately, in today's world, scams are inevitable. Scammers can threaten you with everything from legal action involving the IRS to turning off power to your home.

Utility scams often involve an individual or group posing as an employee of your electric cooperative. The scammer may use threatening language in order to frighten you into offering your credit card or bank account information. Don't fall victim to these types of scams. Understand the threats posed and your best course of action:

If someone calls your home or cell phone demanding you pay your electric bill immediately, gather as much information as you can from that individual, hang-up the phone and contact the local authorities. Scammers often use threats and urgency to pressure you into giving them your bank account number or loading a pre-paid credit or debit card (such as a Green Dot card). Electric cooperatives will never ask you to offer up personal finance information over the phone. If you have any doubts about your utility bill, contact your co-op's member payment center either in person, or over the phone.

If someone comes to your home claiming to be an employee of your electric cooperative that needs to collect money or inspect parts of your property, call your co-op to verify they are, in fact, an employee. If they are not, call local authorities for assistance and do not let the individual into your home.

There are other types of scams consumers should watch out for:

Government agencies like the IRS will never call to inform you that you have unpaid taxes or other liens against you. You will always receive this type of information in the mail. If someone calls claiming to be the IRS, hang-up immediately.

If you receive an email from an unknown sender; an email riddled with spelling errors and typos; or an email threatening action unless a sum of money is paid, do not click any links provided within the email, and do not respond to the email. Simply delete the email, or send it to your spam folder.

If someone calls your home claiming to have discovered a virus on your computer, hang-up. This caller's intent is to access personal information you may be keeping on your computer.

Electric cooperatives in South Dakota and western Minnesota want to make sure you avoid any and all types of scams that could put you or your financial information in jeopardy. If you have any questions or would like more information about how you can protect yourself from scammers, call your cooperative, or visit their website.

Holiday Electrical Safety

Make Safety the First Item on Your List

The **Electrical Safety Authority** (ESA) offers the following tips to help keep you and your family safe from electrical hazards when buying and installing holiday lighting and decorations.

Light up safely over the holidays:

- Choose the right light for the job: light strings and other decorations are rated for indoor or outdoor use. Read the package instructions and never exceed the recommended wattage.
- Replace damaged electrical products (cords, plugs, ornaments).
- Avoid plugging too many lights and decorations into an outlet. Overloaded circuits can overheat and start a fire.
- Buy holiday decorations that have the mark of an accredited certification agency on the package.
- Once the package is opened, remember to check for the appropriate approval sticker appearing on the cord for products incorporating light strings.

Extension Cords/Plugs:

- Avoid overloading circuits with plugs and extension cords – this can create overheating and result in a fire. Fuses that frequently blow and circuits that trip can indicate too many items are connected to the circuit.
- Never remove the third prong on plugs – this “grounding pin” prevents shock in the event of electrical equipment failure.
- Plug outdoor electrical decorations into Ground Fault (GFCI)-protected outlets.
- Don’t run extension cords under carpets, through doorways or in places where they can be damaged by furniture
- Keep outdoor connections above-ground and out of puddles; don’t run them across driveways and/or walkways.

Installing Decorations:

- No more than three light strings can be safely connected together in most cases – read manufactures’ instructions for directions.
- Make sure bulbs don’t touch supply cords, wires, cloth, paper or any material that’s not part of the light string.
- Use the proper clips for securing lights and decorations. Staples and nails can damage electrical cords.
- Check for overhead power lines before using a ladder to put up decorations or when you’re hanging lights or decorations on trees.
- Holiday decorations aren’t designed for year-round use and can deteriorate over time. Take them down when the holidays are over.

Remember to:

- Watch that children don’t put electrical decorations or cords in their mouths.
- Keep an eye on pets that may chew or damage electrical cords.
- Turn off holiday lights and decorations when you leave the house or go to bed.

Source: esasafe.com

Kids’ Corner Safety Poster

“Don’t do it!”



Kimberly Messmer, 8 years old

Kimberly is the daughter of Perry and Mabell Messmer, Whitewood, S.D. They are members of Butte Electric Cooperative, Newell, 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.

Every Second Counts: Plan 2 Ways Out!™

How fast does fire move? Very fast. You could have less than 2 minutes to get out safely once the smoke alarm sounds.

7 steps to practicing your escape plan

- Draw a map of your home. Include all doors and windows.
- Find two ways out of every room.
- Make sure doors and windows are not blocked.
- Choose an outside meeting place in front of your home.
- Push the test button to sound the smoke alarm.
- Practice your drill with everyone in the home.
- Get outside to your meeting place.

For more information about escape planning, visit: www.usfa.fema.gov and www.nfpa.org.

For more tips on planning for disasters, go to www.bready.sd.gov.

Holiday Favorites



Can't Fail Caramels

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2 cups sugar | 1 cup milk |
| 1 cup firmly packed brown sugar | 1 cup butter or margarine |
| 1 cup light corn syrup | 4 tsp. vanilla |
| 1 cup heavy cream | |

Combine first 6 ingredients. Cook slowly, stirring constantly to 248°F. or when small quantity dropped in cold water forms a firm ball; remove from heat. Add vanilla. Pour into a greased 8x8x2-inch pan; cool. When firm, place on board and cut into squares. Wrap each square in waxed paper.

Judy Jensen, Langford

Church Window Cookies

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 (12 oz.) pkg. chocolate chips | 1 stick butter |
| 1 pkg. colored miniature marshmallows | 1 small pkg. chopped walnuts |
| | Coconut |

Melt together chocolate chips and butter; let cool until barely warm. In a large bowl, mix together marshmallows and walnuts. Add chocolate mixture and stir. Pour half of mixture onto a piece of foil sprinkled with coconut. Shape into log by rolling in coconut. Wrap and refrigerate until set. Repeat with other half of mixture. Unwrap to slice.

Donna Holland, Sioux Falls

Krazy Corn

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 bag hullless puff corn | 1/2 tsp. salt |
| 1/2 cup butter | 1/2 tsp. vanilla |
| 1 cup brown sugar | 1/2 tsp. baking soda |
| 1/2 cup corn syrup | |

Place puff corn in a large roaster pan. Bring to a boil butter, brown sugar, corn syrup and salt. Boil on low 5 minutes without stirring; remove from heat. Stir in vanilla and baking soda. Pour over puff corn. Bake at 250°F. for 1 hour, stirring every 15 minutes. Spread out onto wax paper to cool.

Alana Neville, Milesville

Cowboy Christmas Biscuits

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| 4 cups Bisquick | 1 cup 7-Up |
| 1 cup cultured sour cream | 1/2 cup butter |

Gently stir together the first 3 ingredients just enough to moisten. Melt butter in bottom of a 9x13-inch pan. Pat dough out in pan. Before baking, cut into 12 to 15 biscuit squares. Bake at 425°F. for 15 to 20 minutes. Serve warm.

Jane Ham, Rapid City

Chocolate Fudge

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. semi-sweet baking chocolate | 3 cups confectioners' sugar |
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened | 1 T. McCormick® Pure Vanilla Extract |
| | 1/2 cup toasted chopped walnuts |

Line an 8-inch square pan with foil, allowing foil to extend over sides of pan. Spray with no stick cooking spray. Melt chocolate as directed on package. Beat cream cheese in large bowl with electric mixer until smooth. Gradually beat in sugar on low speed until well blended. Add melted chocolate and vanilla; mix well. Stir in chopped nuts. Spread evenly in prepared pan. Refrigerate at least 1 hour or until firm. Use foil to lift out of pan onto cutting board. Cut into 25 squares or triangles. Store in refrigerator.

Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 155, Total Fat 7g, Sodium 29mg, Cholesterol 10mg, Carbohydrates 21g, Dietary Fiber 1g, Protein 2g

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Mystery Bars

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 40 soda crackers | 1 cup packed brown sugar |
| 1 cup butter or margarine | 2 cups milk chocolate chips |

Line a 15-in. x 10-in. x 1-in. baking pan with foil and coat with cooking spray. Place crackers in rows on foil. In a saucepan, melt butter; add brown sugar and bring to a boil. Boil for 3 minutes. Pour over crackers and spread until completely covered. Bake at 350°F. for 5 minutes or until crackers float and bubble. Spread chocolate chips over hot bars. Let set for a minute. Spread the chocolate evenly. Cut while still warm.

Verna Nelson, Wakonda

Indoor S'mores

- | | |
|---|--|
| 2/3 cup light corn syrup | 1 (10 oz.) pkg. Golden Grahams cereal (about 8 cups) |
| 2 T. butter | 3 cups miniature marshmallows |
| 1 (12 oz.) pkg. real milk chocolate chips | |
| 1 tsp. vanilla | |

Butter a 9x13-inch baking pan. In a 3-quart saucepan, heat corn syrup, butter and chocolate chips just to boiling, stirring constantly; remove from heat. Stir in vanilla. Pour over cereal in large mixing bowl; toss quickly until completely coated with chocolate. Fold in marshmallows, 1 cup at a time. Press mixture evenly in pan with back of buttered spoon. Let stand until firm, at least 1 hour. Cut into 1-1/2 inch squares – makes approximately 48 squares.

Carlene Barber, Pierre

Please send your favorite soup, brunch and seafood 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 2018. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

How Smart Should You Get When Purchasing a New Thermostat?



Patrick Keegan
Collaborative Efficiency

Dear Pat: We have an old dial thermostat. There seem to be a lot of choices for thermostats nowadays, but are the pricier, more tech-focused options worth the additional cost? – Ted

Dear Ted: Today, many thermostats offer great new technologies and can do things thermostats of the past simply could not do. That said, it's certainly worth asking if these new thermostats

can save enough money to justify the extra cost.

Let's start by looking at the three main options for thermostats: manual, programmable and smart.

The main benefits of a manual thermostat like yours are that it's simple to operate and there are no batteries to wear out and replace. You just have to remember to raise and lower the temperature setting in the morning and evening, and whenever you leave the house.

The second option is the programmable thermostat. Typically, this type of thermostat allows settings for four different periods each day. Some models can even handle a different schedule for each day of the week¹. You control the settings so they will suit your climate, schedule and temperature preferences. You can easily override your program settings anytime.

The third option is a smart, or "learning" thermostat. A smart thermostat connects to your home's Wi-Fi network. After installation, you input the basics of your schedule and temperature. Over time, as you change the settings, it learns your schedule and adjusts to minimize energy use. Smart thermostats can also detect when no one is home. You can also control it remotely by using an app on your smart phone or tablet.

If your electric co-op has a demand response program that offers discounts for using less power during peak energy use hours, a smart thermostat can provide additional savings on your monthly power bill.

The move to smart technology is a significant investment. Units can cost up to \$400, although one manufacturer has a new model for about \$170. It's also important to note not all homes have the proper wiring in place to accommodate smart thermostats, so you may need to hire a professional to handle

the installation.

Back to your initial question: Are newer, more expensive thermostats worth the extra cost? How much a thermostat can save depends on how much you spend on heating and cooling your house.

You can estimate your heating and cooling expenses by examining your electric bills (and other utility bills) related to heating your home. Compare the bills for winter and summer to those for spring and fall. Most of the difference is likely due to heating and cooling. If that amount is more than \$900 per year, which is the national average², you have a better chance of a good return on your investment.

The second factor that will determine how much you can save is how you are operating your old thermostat. If you are conscientious about adjusting the temperature to save energy when you're leaving the house or going to bed, the new thermostat may not reduce your bills that much, even if you program it correctly or if it learns your behavior.

Whichever direction you go, remember there are other ways you can use your thermostat more efficiently:

Don't adjust the thermostat temperature drastically in the hopes of making it heat or cool your home more quickly.

For the greatest savings during winter months, keep the temperature at or below 68 degrees Fahrenheit while you are home during the day, and cooler during the night; during summer months, keep it at or above 78 degrees Fahrenheit while you are home³.

You can save up to 10 percent off your monthly heating and cooling bill by turning back your thermostat by 7 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit for eight hours a day⁴.

The thermostat is just one piece of the energy efficiency puzzle. You might be able to save more by adding insulation or sealing air leaks. A professional energy audit is always the best way to identify your home's energy weaknesses.

As you make your decision, don't forget to look to your electric co-op's website for advice, ratings and maybe even rebates.

¹Source: https://www.energystar.gov/products/heating_cooling/programmable_thermostats

²Source: https://www.energystar.gov/products/heating_cooling/smart_thermostats

³Source: <https://energy.gov/energysaver/thermostats>

⁴Source: <https://energy.gov/energysaver/thermostats>

Basin Electric Supports EPA's Decision to Rescind Clean Power Plan

"Administrator Pruitt's announcement is a welcomed boost to our efforts to seek time and flexibility when it comes to developing a carbon management plan," said Basin Electric CEO and General Manager Paul Sukut.

Basin Electric CEO and General Manager Paul Sukut issued the following statement Oct. 10, following U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Scott Pruitt's announcement of the EPA's decision to rescind the Clean Power Plan.

"Administrator Pruitt's announcement today is a welcomed boost to our efforts to seek time and flexibility when it comes to developing a carbon management plan.

"As written, EPA's Clean Power Plan would've had significant impacts on Basin Electric and our membership. Of the 13 states that were projected to be hit the hardest by this rule,

eight are in Basin Electric's service territory. Financially, Basin Electric would have to spend billions of dollars to comply – costs that would have been unfairly borne by our membership.

"While a step in the right direction, the EPA's decision does not affect Basin Electric's efforts to seek a viable path forward in a carbon-constrained future. We are actively seeking solutions that reduce our carbon footprint while keeping coal as part of our energy portfolio, preserving both the reliability and cost competitiveness of our members' energy supply.

"Moving forward, it is Basin Electric's stance that any new approach to regulating carbon dioxide be within the authority of the Clean Air Act; be based on demonstrated, cost-effective controls; provide electric co-ops long-term flexibility and certainty; and most importantly, maintain energy reliability and affordability for consumers at the end of the line."

Basin Electric Joins Other Utilities To Talk Tax Reform In D.C.

Basin Electric staff joined several utility representatives Nov. 1, in Washington, D.C., to discuss tax credit extension for reducing carbon dioxide (CO2) and other emissions from coal plants under Section 45 of the U.S. Tax Code, and possible long-term funding for research and development projects using coal.

Dale Niezwaag, Basin Electric vice president of government relations, and Tyler Hamman, Basin Electric senior legislative representative, joined staff from Great River Energy and Minnkota Power Cooperative in meetings with the U.S. Department of Energy, a special assistant to the President, and a policy adviser for U.S. Rep. David B. McKinley, R-W.Va., who chairs the Congressional Coal Caucus.

According to Niezwaag, topics of discussion included the possible extension of the refined coal tax credit; passage of 45Q carbon dioxide tax credit legislation sponsored by U.S. Sens. John Hoeven, R-N.D., and Heidi Heitkamp, D-N.D., and U.S. Rep. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D.; funding for research and development of large-scale demonstration projects; and the DOE/Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's proposed rule on grid pricing and resiliency.

"We're grateful to Congressman Cramer for helping set up the meetings to discuss these critical matters," Niezwaag said. "It's going to take close collaboration between government and



Dale Niezwaag, Basin Electric vice president of government relations, far left, visits with Dan Brouillette, U.S. Department of Energy deputy secretary, far right and U.S. Rep. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., second from right.

the utility industry to promote innovation, and further Basin Electric's mission of providing reliable and affordable electricity to our member-owners in a carbon-constrained environment."

Sing a New Song

Christmas on the Prairie Brings Melodies to December Event

Brenda Kleinjan

FOR ONE AFTERNOON EACH DECEMBER, THE POPULATION of Hoven, S.D., (population 408) swells as upwards of 1,000 people gather for the Christmas on the Prairie Concert.

Attendees listen to the soaring high notes and the trembling low tones that reverberate throughout the 96-year-old building as the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra joins with choirs and soloists for a memorable musical journey.

The concert has been held since 2003 at Hoven's St. Anthony of Padua Church, which is also known as the Cathedral on the Prairie.

According to a South Dakota Department of Tourism press release about the landmark, Saint

Anthony's 'Cathedral of the Prairie,' located in Hoven, S.D., was completed in 1921 at a cost of \$250,000. The value of the church was estimated at \$20 million in 2011. The church, believed to be patterned after churches typically found in Bavaria, boasts an intricate and ornate design that rivals any church for miles.

The nave seats more than 1,000 people, and the church is listed on the National Register of Historic Places under the original parish name of St. Bernard's.

One can see the church's spires from miles away in north central South Dakota. (The town of Hoven lies on the border of Potter and Walworth



counties, northeast of Gettysburg and south-east of Selby.)

The 2017 concert will be the 14th annual pre-Christmas concert and will be held at 3 p.m. on Dec. 3. This year's offering is titled 'Hope is Born Emmanuel' with narration based on Dickens' "A Christmas Carol."

The performance will feature the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra conducted by Thomas Fortner and two choirs: the Regional All-Faiths Festival Choir directed by Michael Coyne and Northern State University's Chamber Singers directed by Dr. Timothy Woods.

Musical performances will include professional soloist Juan Ahumada along with guest soloist Lilly Karrer. The entire program will be narrated by Darrel Fickbohm.

Ahumada is a tenor originally from Sioux City who will be singing with the Metropolitan Opera in January. Karrer, from Saint Louis, Mo., has ties to the area as her grandparents live in Hoven.

Proceeds from the concert help with the maintenance of the church building, said choral coordinator Mary Lou Keller.

"It's a constant thing. There is one section that needs to be repaired. It's a big job to keep it up," Keller said, noting that about 250 families are affiliated with the church.

Keller noted that the church was restored in the 1980s with 20,000 volunteer hours spent washing and restenciling the church.

"Without the volunteers, it would have cost us millions," she said.

That volunteer spirit helps keep the Christmas concert going.

"There are a lot of volunteers in Hoven," Keller noted. From the members of the choir, to the community members serving the post concert gala at the Legion Hall, many in the community get involved.

The concert has been held annually since 2003, with the exception of 2008 when a geothermal heating and cooling system was

being installed.

"We skipped 2008 because of the installation. It was a blessing, because there was a blizzard that year," Keller said, noting that favorable weather has graced the concert in the other years.

The 60-member All-Faiths Choir began rehearsing for their role in the concert in October. While not all members are able to attend every practice, they all come together for the concert.

"The choir represents 17 communities and they all love to sing. It's good camaraderie. The music is good for the body and the soul," Keller said.

Rehearsals are led by Coyne, a former Hoven High School band and vocal teacher. The choir will perform three selections with the NSU Chamber Singers.

But, Keller noted, all the components of the concert don't come together until just before the performance.

"The symphony orchestra comes the day of the concert and we all practice at 1 p.m. The doors open at 2:30 p.m. and concert is at 3 p.m.," Keller said.

"It always goes off well, but there is an extra adrenalin rush that gives it that success," she said.

"It's been a blessing that we've done it. It's evolved as an event," Keller said.

"The festival chorus becomes a family. There's something about the ethos of music that draws people. This is what I call good music. We're honored and pleased that we're able to do it," said Keller.

She does have one plea for that first Sunday in Advent, though:

"We pray for good weather!"

For more information, visit the event's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/events/158024474696708/> or go online to www.hovensd.com.



Christmas at the Cathedral

Enjoy great architecture and music with the 21st annual Christmas at the Cathedral Dec. 14 to 17 at the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Sioux Falls.

Proceeds from the event will go toward the Bishop Dudley Hospitality House and the ongoing care and maintenance of one of South Dakota's most significant civic and sacred landmarks — the Cathedral of St. Joseph.

Performance Dates:
Thursday, Dec. 14, 2017
7:30 p.m.

Friday, Dec. 15, 2017
7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 16, 2017
1 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, Dec. 17, 2017
2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

About the St. Joseph Cathedral

Construction on the cathedral began in the summer of 1915. The primary architect's death in 1917 along with the start of the first World War slowed construction somewhat.

The cathedral was completed and dedicated on May 7, 1919.

Source: <http://www.stjosephcathedral.net/about-us/history-of-the-cathedral/>

Dec. 3 Christmas on the Prairie Ticket Information

General \$35 ~ Patron \$125

Premium Pews \$1,650 (seats 12) ~ Regular Pews \$1,100 (seats 12)

(Includes Gala Reception for Patron and Pew ticket holders)

Call 605-948-2451 for Visa or Mastercard orders

Or mail checks to St. Anthony's Church,, PO Box 98, Hoven, SD 57450

Built to Serve

Theme Highlights Basin Electric Annual Meeting

BASIN ELECTRIC'S 2017 ANNUAL MEETING OF ITS membership brought in more than 1,000 member co-op employees, directors, public officials, and utility representatives.

As a cooperative, Basin Electric's focus is and always has been serving its member-owners, so this year's Annual Meeting theme, Built to Serve was a natural fit.

Basin Electric's 2017 annual meeting of its membership brought in more than 1,000 member co-op employees, directors, public officials, and utility representatives, and featured several updates on complex issues and developments, but the focus was that Basin Electric was built to serve them.

Basin Electric board president Wayne Peltier, representing District 9 of Minnesota Valley Cooperative Light and Power, Montevideo, Minn., stressed that cooperatives tackle every challenge they face together. "From the very beginning, through thick and thin, the membership has been there for each

other," he said. "As we continue to be good stewards of the membership's assets, you must remember that this is your co-op. Basin Electric was built by you."

This past year challenged the cooperative on several fronts. "Basin Electric and the membership face some challenges," said Basin Electric General Manager and CEO Paul Sukut. "For example, coal as a fuel source. Coal is forced to compete with wind in the market on a daily basis. We want to tease the entire economic life out of our coal assets, assets that you, the membership, built many years ago.

"We need time and flexibility in a new Clean Power Plan rule to tease the entire economic life out of our coal plants, and we need time to allow us to innovate and show that we can, and will, reduce carbon dioxide emissions as we move forward," Sukut said "We've had the opportunity to visit with EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt this year, and now we need to work to put a new rule in place."

**By Basin Electric
staff writers**

**Basin Electric General
Manager and CEO
Paul Sukut addresses
the co-op's annual
meeting attendees.**



Highlights:

Basin Electric hosted a social at its new Headquarters addition on Nov. 7.

Senior staff provided reports and spoke during panel discussions regarding operational excellence, supporting membership growth, financials and government relations. They addressed how Basin Electric continues its history of pivotal decisions and triumph over daunting challenges, as well as continued efforts to build and maintain infrastructure for a continually growing membership, financial successes in a challenging year and regulatory/legislative updates. The panel discussions included question and answer sessions with the members.

Nick Brown, president and CEO of the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) provided the keynote address. Brown stressed the power of relationships. "Never, ever underestimate the value of relationships," he said before telling the audience about the history of SPP, its key focuses, and why it's nearly impossible to look into the future of the electric industry because it is so volatile.

The membership also heard from U.S. Sens. John Hoeven, R-N.D., and Heidi Heitkamp, D-N.D., Rep. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., and North Dakota Lt Gov. Brent Sanford.

During the banquet on Nov. 8, Basin Electric presented the Cornerstone Award, the highest award given by the cooperative, to Bob Harris, the recently retired Upper Great Plains regional manager for the Western Area Power Administration.



Nick Brown, president and CEO of the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) was the keynote speaker at Basin Electric's 2017 Annual Meeting.

SPP's Brown: Relationships Are Important

Nick Brown, president and CEO of the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) was the keynote speaker at Basin Electric's 2017 Annual Meeting.

He stressed the power of relationships. "Never, ever underestimate the value of relationships," he said before telling the more than 1,000 attendees about the history of SPP.

He said it was the relationships of 11 regional power companies that formed SPP in 1941 as part of the war effort. With the need for aluminum to support the national defense needs and the demand for electricity exceeding what was available, these companies banded together and pooled their resources to build high-voltage transmission lines to provide around-the-clock power to an aluminum factory in Arkansas.

Today, SPP is a nonprofit organization that ensures the reliable supply of power, transmission, and competitive wholesale electricity prices for a 546,000-square-mile region including more than 60,000 miles of high-voltage transmission lines. SPP has members in 14 states. Basin Electric joined SPP in 2015.

Brown said SPP's main service is to be "reliability coordinator," likening this to the responsibilities of an air-traffic controller. "It is our function to make sure everything runs the way it should."

Because SPP is a nonprofit organization, it never charges its members more than what it actually costs to provide its services. Brown said SPP's cost/benefit ratio is 11 to 1, which is a "conservative calculation." He says if costs increase, it's because its value has increased.

SPP recently set a wind penetration record, or the total load served by wind at a given time, of more than 52 percent. "If someone would have asked me 10 years ago if that was possible, I would have laughed," he said.

Brown said it can be a challenge to try to look into the future of the electric industry because it is so volatile. "If I would have told people 10 years ago how low natural gas prices would be in 2017, they would have thought I was insane," he said. "Or if anyone on my board in 2007 would have said that we would have 18,000 megawatts of wind in 10 years, he would have been laughed out of the room."

He said while cybersecurity does worry him, a "battle of the currents" doesn't. "I believe that the bulk electrical grid can work with microgrids not in competition with them," he said. And that distributed generation is a "tremendous opportunity," allowing consumers to make decisions they were never able to make before. "I truly believe that consumers will depend on utilities to guide the electrification of their homes."

Brown commended Basin Electric on the construction of its new Headquarters addition, having toured it the day before, saying "you will definitely reap the benefits of that building when it comes to employee efficiency and collaboration." He also praised Basin Electric Senior Vice President of Transmission Mike Risan, saying he is "very highly respected among SPP's members committee" and that he represents Basin Electric's interests very well.

All Aboard!

Santa's Coming to Town

IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME AGAIN!

Colorful lights, hot chocolate, candy canes, Christmas music, Santa Claus and the wonderful feeling that tradition brings is part of the season. And many have made visiting the North Pole part of their Christmas tradition.

In the Black Hills, the 1880 Train in Hill City, S.D., has turned into the Holiday Express. This is a holiday train that takes families on a one-hour tour to visit the North Pole. Travelers will ride on the historical train route and hear a special Christmas story unique to the experience. They will also

receive hot chocolate and treats as well as a small gift for each child and a visit from Santa.

Holli Edwards, business development manager for the 1880 Train, said travelers are given the opportunity to relax in a heated car onboard the train while viewing the scenic hills and listening to a unique holiday story. She further described how holiday makers are afforded a view of the North Pole before Santa boards the train on the way back to the station in Hill City. At this time, Santa hands out goodies to the kids and poses for pictures.

When asked what makes the Holiday Express

Jocelyn Romey





Above: 1880 Train staff prepare the “Santa Express” for an evening run.
Left: The No. 7 engine sports a festive wreath during the holidays.
Below: Santa makes a visit to passengers aboard the train.



Opposite Page: Santa and his elves pose for a photo with the train conductor.

special and unique, Edwards said, “It’s seeing the memories that are being created. Most of the people we see come year after year...creating memories generation after generation. They create a tradition during the holiday season.”

Edwards said about 9,500 people will ride on the Holiday Express this year – each trip accommodating 350 people. In all, 27 separate holiday trips will be made. Since this Christmas experience is popular for many families and tourists, she recommends travelers reserve tickets in advance in order to ensure a seat on the train.

After the last trip on Dec. 23, the 1880 Train closes until May 7, 2018, when it will re-open for its regular, 20-mile round trip route from Hill City to Keystone. This train follows a portion of the historical route created in the late 1880s to service mines and mills located throughout the hills. The 1880 Train operates two steam and one diesel engine throughout the season. It is owned by the Black Hills Central Railroad, created by stockholders interested in continuing steam railroading.

Along with the Holiday Express celebrating

Christmas, other special events are celebrated throughout the year on the 1880 Train. These special trips are made on holidays such as Mother’s Day, Father’s Day and July 4th.

Other special trips include Rails and Ales, Wine Express, Old West Shootouts, Oktoberfest Express and more.

Ticket reservations and information regarding the 1880 Train and its special event trips can be found through the main website – <https://www.1880train.com/>.

Co-op Mascots

Energize Co-op Presence for People of All Ages

FROM SPORTS TEAMS TO CEREAL BRANDS, MASCOTS provide an entertaining way of connecting people with products and services.

And your local electric cooperative has a team of mascots, thanks to national and regional partnerships.

"They are the physical manifestation of what we as Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives are," said Ruben Musca, Creative Director for Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives. "The mascots get out as much as our staff does. Having those mascots out there is great."

CFL Charlie, with his corkscrew-like head, debuted about 10 years ago. At the time, compact fluorescent light bulbs were the best and most affordable of the efficient lighting options available. Charlie helped cooperatives promote the technology

as a more energy-efficient alternative to standard incandescent bulbs.

As light-emitting diode (LED) bulb technology became more affordable and accessible, LED Lucy joined Charlie as the brand's mascot. The two worked hand in hand for several years until Charlie's retirement.

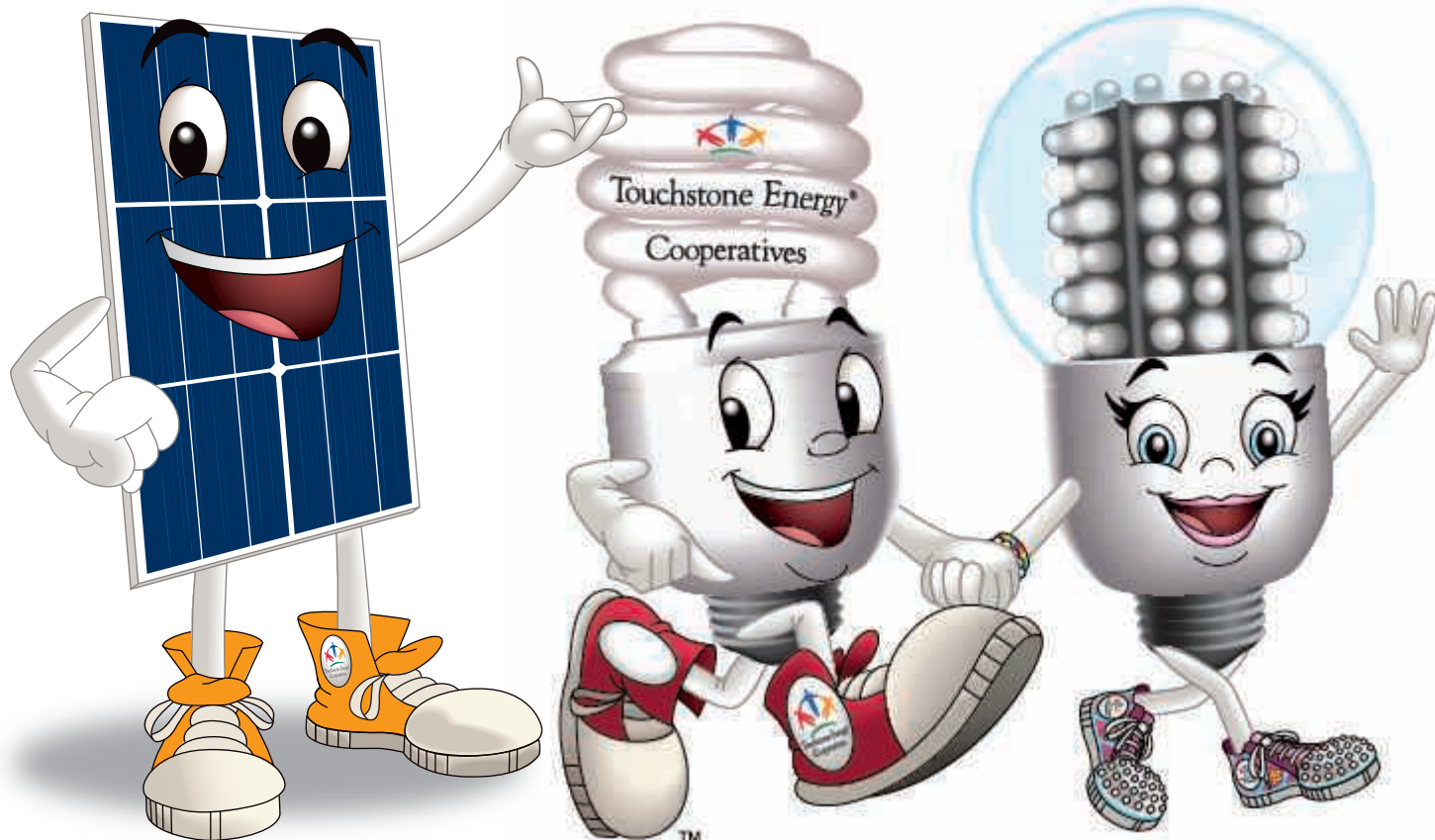
In 2016, Solar Sam came on the scene to work with LED Lucy. While LED Lucy promotes affordable and efficient lighting options, Solar Sam talks about efficiency from a production side.

"As it became more common to see solar panels we created Sam to teach about solar power," said Musca.

While the mascots' original audience was children, their reach has expanded.

"A lot of adults get a kick out of Lucy and Sam,"

Brenda Kleinjan



said Musca.

"They are great at co-op events, at the office and in parades. They are just fun characters to bring out and help talk about how co-ops help people save money and save energy," said Musca.

"The mascots are very fun," Musca continued, noting that they are booked solid for appearances across the country through 2018.

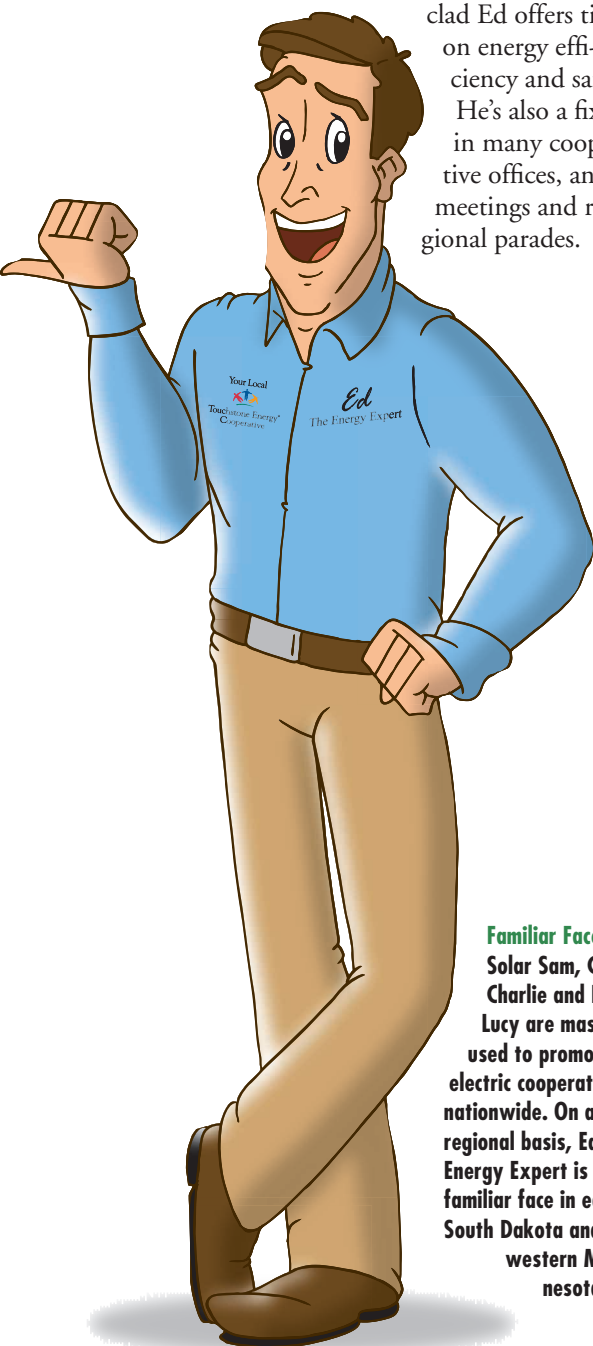
"As times change we have to make sure we keep everything updated, too," Musca said.

Another familiar mascot in the Dakotas and Minnesota is Ed the Energy Expert. The chambray

shirt and khaki pant

clad Ed offers tips on energy efficiency and safety.

He's also a fixture in many cooperative offices, annual meetings and regional parades.



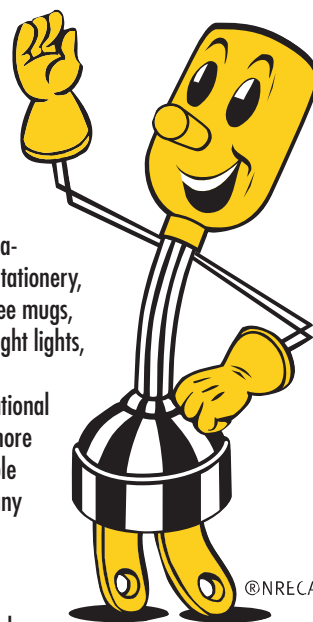
Familiar Faces: Solar Sam, CFL Charlie and LED Lucy are mascots used to promote electric cooperatives nationwide. On a regional basis, Ed the Energy Expert is a familiar face in eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota.

The Golden Boy: Willie Wiredhand

Willie Wiredhand, the little guy with a light-socket head, push-button nose and an electrical plug for his bottom and legs, celebrated 50 years as co-op spokes-character and mascot in 2001. He's still the friendly and inspirational golden boy who symbolizes dependable, local, consumer-owned electricity. He's appeared in just about every type of cooperative publication and promotional item: signage, stationery, newsletters, annual reports and advertising, coffee mugs, watches, shirts, baseball jerseys, beach towels, night lights, bobbleheads and more.

Though his presence on both the local and national stage has diminished in recent years in light of more advanced co-op marketing, Willie remains a viable and valuable conduit of information between many co-ops and their consumers.

"Willie is one of a long line of distinguished industrial spokes-characters that have been used to identify and personalize industrial products and services," said Margaret F. Callcott, who has extensively researched and written about these gesturing little pluggers of the advertising world. "Many marketers of products and services would love to have a symbol as recognizable as Willie to distinguish them in the current marketplace. Those lucky enough to have these consumer icons at their disposal will do well to figure out how to leverage them in the new century."



Of 'loyal servants' and gods

Willie's actual birthdate is traced to Oct. 30, 1950. He was the creation of Andrew McLay, a free-lance artist for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in Washington, D.C.

"We were toying with ideas for a rural electrification symbol," recalled William S. Roberts in a tribute to McLay, who died of cancer at age 52 in 1974. Roberts was editor of Rural Electrification magazine, NRECA's trade publication, in the 1950s. "I had tossed out the idea that the symbol ought somehow to portray rural electric service as the farmer's hired hand, which in those days was almost the entire PR story we had to get across. Drew picked up both the idea and a sketch-pad one night at our home after a couple of beers."

Sprawled out on Roberts' living room floor, McLay gave birth to "Willie the Wired Hand." NRECA's membership selected Willie as their animated ambassador at their national meeting in February 1951. Willie's name was soon shortened to "Willie Wiredhand."

In the grand order of the spokes-character cosmos, Willie falls under the "product personification." "These characters," Callcott said, "were usually cast as 'loyal servants' of the consumer, deriving credibility from a message of dependability and devoted service."

Though Willie symbolized co-op friendliness, he also embodied co-op spunk, willing to stand up for what was right in the face of impossible odds. "He's small, but he's 'wirey'" became part of Willie's trademark which was granted by the U.S. Patent Office later in 1957. The registration allowed Willie to become the beloved character he remains today.

Editor's Note: This excerpt is from "Willie Wiredhand's life story: Perky mascot Willie Wiredhand keeps plugging away for electric co-ops and consumers" written by Richard Biever of the Indiana Electric Consumer. Find the full story, go to <http://www.electric-consumer.org/golden-boy/>

Regional Dateline

November 24-December 23

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

November 25

Holiday Celebration and
Winter Market, Rapid City, SD
605-716-7979

December 1

HOT 93.1 Ugly Sweater
Skate Party, Main Street
Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

December 1-2

Festival of Trees, Lead, SD
605-584-2067

December 1-2, 7-9, 14-16

Strawbale Winery Twilight
Flights, Renner, SD
605-543-5071

December 2

Christmas Stroll and
Holidazzle Parade
Spearfish, SD, 605-717-9294

December 2

Christmas Parade, Custer, SD
605-673-2244

December 2-3

Living Christmas Tree
Aberdeen, SD, 605-229-6349

December 3

Christmas on the Prairie
St. Anthony of Padua Catholic
Church, Hoven, SD
605-948-2451

December 11

Holiday Jam with the Hegg
Brothers, Pierre, SD
605-224-8699, holidayjam.com



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHAD COPPES, S.D. TOURISM

To have your event listed on this page, send complete information, including date, event, place and contact to your local electric cooperative. Include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Information must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to your event. Please call ahead to confirm date, time and location of event.

Events of Special Note

November 21-December 25

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

December 15

Jazz Sessions: A Green Dolphin
Jazzy Christmas Concert
Spearfish, SD, 605-642-7973

December 9

Frontier Christmas
Lake City, SD, 605-448-5474

December 9

Black Hills Cowboy Christmas
Lead, SD, 605-584-2067

December 15

HOT 93.1 Lights on the Ice Teen
Night, Main Street
Rapid City, SD 605-716-7979

December 15-17

Sioux Empire Wacipi
Sioux Falls, SD
310-922-1886

December 15-March 31

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

December 23

Skates and a Movie, Main
Street, Rapid City, SD
605-716-7979

December 31

HOT 93.1 Downtown
Countdown, Main Street
Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

December 31

Make-A-Wish New Year's Eve
Dance, Ramkota Hotel and
Convention Center
Aberdeen, SD, 605-370-4588

January 1

Portland Cello Project Concert
Spearfish, SD, 605-642-7973

January 19-20

ISOC Deadwood SnoCross
Showdown, Deadwood, SD
605-578-1876

January 26-February 4

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

February 6-10

Winter Farm Show
Watertown, SD, 605-886-5814

February 9-10

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

February 15-17

Sno Jam Comedy Festival
Sioux Falls, SD
siouxfallssnojamcomedyfest@
gmail.com

February 16-18

2018 National Pheasant Fest
and Quail Classic
Sioux Falls, SD, 651-209-4933

February 24

Annual Outhouse Races and
Chili Cook-off Contest
Nemo, SD, 605-578-2708

March 3-6

Summit League Basketball
Championship, Sioux Falls, SD
605-367-7288

March 16-17, 23-24

60th Annual Schmeckfest
Freeman, SD, 605-925-4237