

Cooperative Connections



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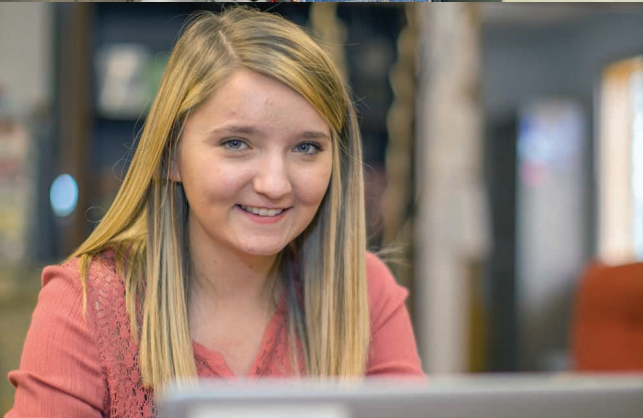
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Tough
training.
Safe &
reliable
power.



Linemen play a critical role in our mission to provide reliable, affordable electricity. Tough training and a focus on safety is behind everything they do. Simulated field operations and emergency-response training are ways Basin Electric invests in their safety and in providing reliable power to you.



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POWER COOPERATIVE**

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South Dakota Electric Cooperative Connections

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Co-ops Support Summer Study Recommendation



Ed Anderson

General Manager

Electric cooperatives across the state have been working with legislators to protect electric service territory boundaries in South Dakota and bring long-needed improvements to state law. We believe the framework of a compromise that was recently adopted by a legislative committee in November is a step in the right direction.

Throughout the summer, the state's electric cooperatives have been actively engaged in the discussions surrounding the South Dakota Legislature's Electric Services in an Annexed Area Interim Committee. This legislative 'summer study' committee of nine lawmakers was formed during the 2019 legislative session. The main task of the committee has been to examine an exception in state law that gives municipally owned electric systems the option to take service territory from incumbent utilities when a city annexes new property.

First, a little background knowledge on the issue. There are three distinct electric utility business models in South Dakota.

- Investor-owned utilities serve most cities and densely populated urban areas of the state. These utilities are owned by shareholders.
- Electric cooperatives serve mostly rural areas of the state. Co-ops are owned by the members they serve and are governed by democratically elected co-op board members.
- South Dakota has 310 municipalities but only 35 have municipal electric systems. These systems are owned and operated by city government.

State law establishes territory boundaries for all electric utilities to protect consumers, facilitate efficient long-term planning of the electric grid and to avoid costly duplication of service and infrastructure. However, there are exceptions to this state law. The focus of the legislative summer study has been on the exception that gives the 35 municipal electric systems the option to take over service territory of an investor-owned utility or electric co-op in newly annexed areas.

South Dakota electric cooperatives have been telling lawmakers since 2018 that it is fundamentally unfair for municipal electric systems to have this option. The proposal adopted by the Legislative Committee in November provides a path forward to solve this problem.

The framework of the compromise that was adopted on an 8-1 vote would require regular meetings and good faith negotiations between all utilities involved in electric service territory boundaries in newly annexed areas. The compromise framework further states that if the utilities cannot negotiate an agreement as to who will serve the newly annexed areas, the Public Utilities Commission would settle the dispute.

Electric co-ops are private corporations owned and governed by the members we serve. Most electric co-op members are the farmers, ranchers, families and small business owners that are the heartbeat of the South Dakota economy. Electric co-ops have come to the table throughout the past year to find a workable compromise to protect co-op members, electric service territory boundaries and improve state law.

You will hear more about this issue as we approach the 2020 South Dakota Legislative Session. Please, know that your local electric cooperative continues to work to protect its members. We would be happy to have more detailed discussions with you about this issue as it develops.

Electrical Safety Tips for the Holidays

The holiday season is here and Christmas is just weeks away. While it's certainly the best time of the year to spend time with family and friends before the New Year, it's also important that you think about keeping your friends and family safe around all the electricity you'll likely be using. Here are a few essential electrical safety tips for the holidays.

- Before you use any electrical decorations, you should inspect them for damage. Look for damaged sockets, cracked sockets, loose connections and bare or loose wires. All of these things could cause a fire or a serious shock.
- Once you've confirmed that all your electrical decorations aren't damaged, you should count how many outlets you have in your home and where they're located. You should plan out your displays based on the number of outlets and their location. When putting up the displays, be sure to follow the care and manufacturer's use instructions that came with the electrical decorations. Be sure to use the extension cords with the right amperage rating to match the amperage needs of your electrical products.
- When you're installing outdoor decorations, you should be very careful when you're decorating near any power lines. You and your equipment should be at least 10 feet from any power lines.
- Don't overload your home's electrical outlets. Every year, many homeowners end up overloading the electrical outlets in their home because they go overboard when it comes to decorating. Faulty wires and overloaded electrical outlets are the most common causes of fire during the holidays. You should only plug a single high-wattage appliance into every outlet. This will help you prevent overloading the outlets in your home.
- You should never connect more than three strands of incandescent lights. Connecting more than three strings can cause a fire or trip circuit breakers. You should think about buying LED lights, which are cooler than incandescent lights and use less energy. Be sure that the spotlights that you use to illuminate decorations are far from flammable items, protected from weather, and are well-ventilated. Make sure that you always unplug your decorations before you replace the fuses or bulbs. Turn off the outdoor and indoor electrical decorations before you go to sleep or leave home.
- Be sure that any electrical decorations and extension cords were made to be useable outdoors. Keep all light strings and extension cords away from water and snow. When decorating outdoors, you should use fiberglass or wooden ladders rather than metal ladders. You should plug outdoor decorations and electric lights into circuits protected by circuit interrupters. You should buy portable outdoor GFCIs if the circuits aren't GFCI protected.

As you can see, there are many things that you can do to keep your family and friends safe during the holidays.

Source: www.protectamerica.com



KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"Don't drive on power lines."

Anna Engelbrecht, 9 years old

Anna is the grand-daughter of Alan and JoAnn Engelbrecht, Brandon, S.D. They are members of Sioux Valley Energy, Colman, S.D.

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

Holiday Favorites

Fanny Farmer Fudge

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 4-1/2 cups sugar | 1 cup butter (use butter, not margarine) |
| 1 (12 oz.) can evaporated milk | 2 tsp. vanilla |
| 2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips | 1-1/2 cups chopped walnuts (optional) |
| 2 cups milk chocolate chips | |

Mix sugar and milk together; bring to rolling boil. Boil for 6 minutes. Remove from heat; add chocolate chips and butter. Beat with electric mixer until very creamy. Add vanilla and stir well. Add nuts if desired. Pour into a 9x13-inch pan (glass works best) sprayed with cooking spray. Refrigerate at least 4 hours before cutting. Store in airtight container. Will keep for months in refrigerator and still be smooth and creamy.

Nancy Stenson, Fort Pierre, SD

Andes Mint Cookies

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 2-1/2 cups flour | 2 large eggs |
| 3/4 cup cocoa powder | 1 tsp. vanilla extract |
| 1 tsp. baking soda | 1 tsp. peppermint extract |
| 2 sticks and 2 T. butter, softened | 1 cup chocolate chips |
| 1 cup granulated sugar | 1 cup mint chips or chopped Andes mints |
| 1 cup brown sugar | |

Sift flour, cocoa powder and baking soda in a medium bowl and set aside. Using a hand mixer, cream together butter and both sugars until fluffy. Add eggs, vanilla and peppermint extracts, mixing well. Add dry mixture to butter mixture and mix well. Stir in chocolate and mint chips. Roll dough into 1-1/2-inch balls. Place on prepared baking sheet and with 2 fingers, press down to about 1-inch thick. Bake at 350°F. for 15 to 18 minutes or until no longer glossy.

Cortney Reedy, Tea, SD

Vanilla Pecan Pie

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 refrigerated pie crust | Vanilla Extract, divided |
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened | 1/2 cup light corn syrup |
| 3 eggs, divided | 3 T. butter, melted |
| 3/4 cup sugar, divided | 1/4 tsp. salt |
| 4 tsp. McCormick® Pure | 2 cups pecan pieces, toasted |

Prepare crust as directed on package for one-crust pie using 9-inch deep dish pie plate. Beat cream cheese, 1 egg, 1/4 cup sugar and 2 tsp. vanilla in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended and smooth. Spread evenly on bottom of crust. Bake at 350°F. for 15 minutes. Beat remaining 2 eggs and sugar in large bowl with wire whisk until smooth. Add corn syrup, butter, remaining vanilla and salt; stir until well blended. Sprinkle pecans evenly over cream cheese layer. Slowly pour corn syrup mixture over nuts. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until just set in center. Makes 10 servings.

Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 506, Total Fat 34g, Fiber 2g, Protein 7g, Cholesterol 96mg, Sodium 307mg, Carbohydrates 43g

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Filled Graham Crackers

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 lb. box honey graham crackers | 1/3 cup milk |
| 1 cup brown sugar | 1 egg, beaten |
| 1/2 cup butter or margarine | 1 tsp. vanilla |

Line up 22 (unbroken) graham crackers on a sheet of waxed paper. Place remaining crackers in a zip-lock bag and crush fine with a rolling pin. Combine brown sugar, butter, milk and egg. Bring to a boil then cook an additional 7 minutes. Remove from heat; add crushed crackers and vanilla. When mixture has cooled a little, spread filling on 11 of the crackers and top with the other 11. Leave uncovered to keep them crisp or cover for softer crackers.

Mardelle Brown, Redfield, SD

Please send your favorite soup, brunch or 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 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

Bright Ideas for Smart Home Lighting



Pat Keegan

Collaborative Efficiency

Smart lighting can do more than just turn on and off at the right time.

Dear Pat and Brad: I've heard a lot about smart lighting for the home. What is it and will it save energy? – Julian

Dear Julian: It seems like every device is getting smarter these days. Since smart-home lighting is so new, many of us could use a little introduction.

At its heart, smart lighting covers a range of bulbs, controls and lighting systems that are programmable through an app on a mobile device, computer or smart speaker. Smart lighting can do more than just turn on and off at the right time. Some smart lighting systems can dim at various times. Some can be connected to a sensor or motion detector so that a light goes on when a door is opened or someone enters a room. Some smart lighting systems can change color so you can set up a holiday light show indoors or outdoors. It can also be practical, providing lighting that matches sunlight during the day and is more relaxing in the evening. You may even be able to play music directly from the bulb!

In most cases, you control smart lighting through your home Wi-Fi. You can communicate to individual smart bulbs or to a hub that, in turn, controls individual bulbs. In some cases, you can use Bluetooth® on your phone to control smart lighting, but you'll need to be within range of the bulb or hub. Smart lighting can also be used outdoors, but the range of your control device could limit this approach.

If the smart bulbs are the type that connect through a hub or connect directly to your Wi-Fi network, you should be able to control them via smart speakers like Google Home, Amazon Echo or Apple HomePod and remotely through the internet or smartphone. While a hub-based system is more expensive, it allows lights to be grouped by floor or room and also uses less bandwidth on your network than running many separate bulbs. Some hub kits also allow you to use regular bulbs instead of requiring more-expensive smart bulbs, which could save you money.

Will smart lighting save energy? That depends on how you light your home and control your lighting now and on how you would control the smart lighting you install in the future. If you use smart lighting to turn lights off when they aren't needed, like when rooms are empty or no one's home, or to reduce the wattage, you will save energy.

How much energy can you save? Lighting accounts for about 6 percent of electricity use in the average home, which means your total cost for all the lighting in your home might only be \$100 per year. If you have some high wattage bulbs that are on for long periods of time every day, your lighting use could be significantly higher than average.

Investments in smart lighting are not likely to pay back as quickly as some energy efficiency measures that control heating or air conditioning. Smart bulbs are more expensive than typical LED bulbs, ranging from \$15 to \$80, and a hub can cost of up to \$125, so it could take a long time to make your money back. Chances are, you're better off investing in smart lighting for the features than the energy savings.

One alternative to smart lighting is smart wall outlets or wall switches. For example, you can plug a lamp with a standard bulb into a smart wall outlet or you can have several lights wired to one smart switch. The downside to smart switches and outlets is that installation could be more challenging and you may not have as many options and features that come with smart lighting.

Another strategy for smart lighting that has been around for a long time and is reasonably priced is to use occupancy sensors, motion sensors or timers as control devices.

The wide number of options and costs makes it difficult to select the best smart lighting for your situation.



Photos, posters, memorabilia and vintage electric appliances are all part of the Power to the People exhibit.

Power to the People

Electrifying Rural South Dakota Exhibit Opens at Museum

The South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum in Brookings opened its “Power to the People: Electrifying Rural South Dakota” exhibit in October.

The exhibit explores how electricity changed life on the farm, especially for dairies and hatcheries. It displays how farms used wind turbines to produce electricity and the history of rural electric cooperatives. The museum’s farmhouse kitchen is open for the public to explore a 1949 kitchen. It also shows how electric washing machines changed how we do laundry.

“Today, our society is very dependent on electricity, but imagine turning on the lights for the very first time. Many people in South Dakota can remember that day because a vast number of farms did not have access to electricity until the 1950s. We hope visitors of all generations walk away with a better understanding that wind energy in South Dakota is not new and how much electricity not only brought new technology but better sanitary conditions for families and livestock,” stated Gwen McCausland, director of the Agricultural Heritage Museum.

This exhibit teaches the science of electricity with an interactive circuit board and a pedal-powered light meter sponsored by Basin Electric Power Cooperative in Bismarck, N.D., East River Electric Power Cooperative in Madison, S.D., Sioux Valley Energy in Colman, S.D., and H-D Electric Cooperative in Clear Lake, S.D.

This exhibit was sponsored in part by Coral Bonnemann, a long supporter of the Agricultural Heritage Museum along with Basin Electric, East River Electric, Sioux Valley Energy, and H-D Electric. This exhibit would not have been possible without the private collection of photographs and artifacts from the South Dakota Rural Electric Association in Pierre, S.D., and William Lee of Colman, S.D.

Power to the People: Electrifying Rural South Dakota will be on display for 18 months.

Joseph J. Bonnemann and Coral (Coffey) Bonnemann are natives of Huron, S.D. Joe started college at South Dakota State University in Brookings and then spent time in the Army in the late 1940s, before returning to school. After earning a B.S. degree in agronomy (now plant science) in 1951, Joe was employed at the USDA-ARS experiment station near Newell, S.D. He returned to the SDSU campus in 1961 to supervise the Crop Performance Testing program. Joe retired in 1992. He also completed work for his M.S. in agronomy in 1964, a summer-school graduate of the first graduating class of “SDSU.” Joe passed away in 2014. Coral Ellen Coffey Bonnemann earned a B.S. degree in medical technology from SDSU in 1953. She served on the board of directors of the Brookings Hospital and Brookview Manor, 1972-89, including terms both as secretary and president. She was active in matters of hospital governance on the state and national levels for over 10 years during that time. The Bonnemanns have three children.

The South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum’s mission is to inspire a passion for the diverse history, culture and science of agriculture in South Dakota. It is the official state museum for preserving the history of agriculture and rural life of South Dakota. It is a department of South Dakota State University. It is located in the historic Stock Judging Pavilion on the SDSU campus at 977 11th Street, Brookings, S.D. The museum is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call 605-688-6226 or visit www.agmuseum.com.



A pedal-powered light meter allows hands-on learning for visitors.



OH, CHRISTMAS TREE

Cut-Your-Own Tree Opportunities

Brenda Kleinjan

editor@sdrea.coop

Traditions can be an important part of the holidays and for many, nothing matches the aroma and feel of a fresh-cut Christmas tree.

Many have taken advantage of the cut-your-own tradition at the Black Hills National Forest. But for those not wanting to trek across the Rushmore State to the Black Hills, Christmas tree farms closer to home have been part of holidays.

In eastern South Dakota, families have been cutting their own trees at the Riverview Christmas Tree Farm at Canton, S.D., since 1989.

The tree farm is a family business that was opened in 1989 by Bill and Darlene Keizer. The business is now operated by the Todd and Shari Gannon family.

Families search the acres of trees looking for the perfect tree for their family. Five tree varieties ranging in sizes from six to 10 feet provide families several options. The tree farm provides the saw for cutting the tree and a tractor/trailer brings the family and their tree back to the farm's lodge to enjoy hot drinks and holiday treats.

The farm is open four weekends in November and December. In 2019, the farm will be open Saturdays (Nov. 23, Nov. 30, Dec. 7 and Dec. 14) from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays (Nov. 24, Dec. 1, Dec. 8 and Dec. 15) from Noon to 5 p.m. as well as Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 28 (2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.) and Black Friday, Nov. 29 (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.)



Photo by SD Tourism

Visitors to the tree farm can enjoy the beautiful scenery, shopping for holiday crafts and Christmas wreaths. They can also pet the animals in the pen and see Santa!

Riverview Christmas Tree Farm Tree Varieties

- Fraser Fir
- Balsam Fir
- Canaan Fir
- White Pine
- Black Hills Spruce

Riverview Christmas Tree Farm features cut-your-own trees, ranging from six to nine feet tall, sell for \$9 to \$11 per foot, depending on the variety. Pre-cut trees, ranging from six to 10 feet tall sell for \$7 to \$8 per foot.

Learn more about Riverview Christmas Tree Farm at <http://www.riverviewtreefarm.com/>

Tips for Trees Cut at Black Hills National Forest

Cutting Guidelines

- The maximum tree height is 20 feet.
- Cut the stump within six inches of the ground.
- Cut and scatter the limbs and other unused parts of the tree so they lie within a foot of the ground.

Setting Up Your Tree

- Keep your tree as fresh as possible.
- Store your tree upright in a bucket of water in the garage or basement until you are ready to move it indoors.
- In the house, keep the tree well watered at all times.
- Keep the tree away from fireplaces, stoves or heating vents.

Kinds of trees available:

- **Ponderosa pine** is noted for its full shape and long graceful needles. It grows almost everywhere in the Black Hills.
- **Spruce** is very popular as a holiday tree. It grows at higher elevations and on wetter, north-facing slopes and drainage bottoms. Spruce has a classic tapered form and its short needles allow for easy stringing of lights and ornaments.
- **Juniper** is a shorter tree found at lower elevations in the southern and western parts of the Black Hills. Many people like its full shape and bluish-green coloring.

Cut Your Own Fresh Christmas Tree This Year From the Black Hills National Forest

Christmas tree tags will be available Nov. 12 to Dec. 24, 2019, at Forest Service offices in western South Dakota and northeast Wyoming.

The Black Hills National Forest will also continue the Fourth-Grade Free Christmas Tree Program again this holiday season.

Fourth-graders are eligible for a FREE Christmas tree permit through the Every Kid Outdoors initiative. Every Kid Outdoors is a nationwide call to action to build the next generation of conservationists. All fourth graders are eligible to receive a fourth-grade pass that allows free access to federal lands and waters across the country for a full year.

In order for students to receive a free Christmas tree permit, they must present a valid fourth grade pass or paper voucher printed from the Every Kid Outdoors website: <https://everykidoutdoors.gov>. To obtain the voucher, visit the website, click on the "Get your pass" button and follow the instructions. Print out the paper voucher and bring it with you to a district office or the supervisor's office on the Black Hills National Forest.

White spruce, ponderosa pine and western juniper are available and can be cut in many parts of the National Forest.

Each permit is accompanied by a handout with guidance about appropriate tree removal. Trees may not be cut in developed recreation sites, Forest Service administrative sites, active timber sales, the Black Hills Experimental Forest near Rochford, the Black Elk Wilderness, the Beaver Park area near Sturgis or within Spearfish Canyon.

Individual permits cost \$10, up to a maximum of five permits are allowed per individual and the maximum allowable height of cut trees is 20 feet. Permits require that you cut the entire tree, leaving no more than six inches of stump and that you cut unused branches so they lay flat on the ground.

The adhesive permit tag must be attached before a tree is removed from the cutting area; a citation can be issued for possession of a cut-but-untagged tree, even if a tag is available in person or in your vehicle.

Trees should be placed in water as soon as possible to help keep needles fresh. Once indoors, trees should be placed away from stoves, heaters or heating ducts. After Christmas, used trees should be disposed of properly as yard waste. Do not dump used trees on national forest land.

There are no refunds for uncut trees or unused permits. Please note that Forest Service offices will be closed on Thanksgiving Day. Dec. 24 is the last day permits will be sold at Forest Service offices. Private vendors may sell tags until Dec. 24.

Tags are available by mail from the Forest Supervisor's Office, 1019 North 5th Street, Custer, SD, 57730. Enclose a check or money order in the amount of \$10 for each tree permit, up to a maximum of five trees per individual as well as a self-addressed stamped envelope. The Forest Service will mail tags and cutting instructions.



Keynote speaker Robert "RJ" Johnson talked about uncertainties in the oil and gas industry.

POWERING TOGETHER

Basin Electric Holds Annual Meeting

Joan Dietz

jdietz@bepc.com

Basin Electric's 2019 annual meeting of the membership brought in close to 900 member cooperative employees, directors, public officials and utility representatives and featured several updates on complex issues and developments.

This year's theme, Powering Together, was chosen to represent the diversity and unity of its members which makes the cooperative stronger. Basin Electric's focus is providing low cost energy for its member-owners. The presentations shared how Basin Electric is evolving to meet members' energy needs in the ever-changing energy industry.

Basin Electric Board President Wayne Peltier,



Basin Electric CEO Paul Sukut updated members about the cooperative.

representing District 9 and Minnesota Valley Cooperative Light and Power, Montevideo, Minn., talked about the strong culture of the cooperative family. "When you're a member of a co-op, you have a voice," he said. "Each member is either represented by their elected board member or by their vote. Democratic member control is a cooperative principle and one that we take very seriously."

Basin Electric General Manager and CEO Paul Sukut spoke in depth about the rate decrease and how it has positively affected Basin Electric's members. "Our distribution members have told us they are under tremendous rate pressure. We want to help our members with the rate pressure they're feeling because that's important to us and that's our job. That's why we've decided to decrease rates by one mill starting in 2020. This results in a \$30 million decrease in cost to our members," Sukut said. In addition, Sukut said that earlier this week, the board approved \$31.7 million patronage.

Sukut also discussed opportunities Basin Electric has to partner with companies in the Bakken, or western North Dakota and eastern Montana. "This spring, Barr Engineering and the State of North Dakota did a study of the Bakken forecast. The study confirmed our forecasted load growth, so we're expecting 400 megawatts (MW) of growth in western North Dakota with significantly more to come. With load growth comes a need for resources and we have a load growth to fulfill for our membership," he said.

Highlights:

- Basin Electric staff provided reports and served on panels regarding operations; marketing; financials; and government relations. They addressed how Basin Electric will respond to a load growth increase; how a reduction in workforce fostered greater collaboration; continued efforts to build and maintain infrastructure for a continually growing membership; financial successes in a challenging year; energy diversification; and regulatory/legislative updates. The panel discussions included Q&A sessions with the members.
- The keynote speaker was Robert "RJ" Johnston, executive advisor and managing director of Global Energy and Natural Resources for the Eurasia Group. He works closely with corporate and institutional investor clients in the oil and gas, mining, electric power, and clean tech sectors. Johnston's message focused on implications for U.S. trade and energy. He shared some uncertainties about the stability of the oil and gas industry. "Do we consider the U.S. oil and gas sector politically stable? With President Trump mostly pro-oil and gas and Elizabeth Warren mostly anti [oil and gas], my concern is a stalemate. Investors struggle with funding projects because they are looking for strong, clear direction one way," Johnston said. "There's a lot of action in the energy sector in the states and in the courts. It's getting harder to get an idea of where the U.S. is headed."
- The membership also heard from North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum. "One of the things that's driving this energy revolution is the technology and the private sector companies that are investing in the Bakken here in North Dakota," Burgum said. "We know there's demand load across the entire Basin Electric portfolio. That's driven by population increases or enhanced value-added agricultural efforts that are going on. In the Bakken, the recent report that came out from our transmission authority said that there's an expectation that we're going to need 1,000 MW in North Dakota over the next 10 years."
- Burgum also talked about innovation in North Dakota's energy industry. "In North Dakota we have invested over \$96 million in energy research and development (R&D) where we're partnering with state R & D dollars to partner with a private sector. This includes a number of exciting projects, whether it's enhanced oil recovery, underground storage of produced natural gas, different approaches for remediation and carbon capture, utilization, and storage," Burgum said. "I believe that with innovation and investment in R & D, we can be in a position where carbon can be a value-added input. And we can do that through research and investing in innovation."
- The event featured business and cooperative booths including three electric vehicles: Lignite Energy Council's Tesla; Basin Electric's Chevy Bolt; and Capital Electric's Prowler ATV. The vehicles were purchased to help the co-ops better understand the technology.



Keeping Good Cheer

Holiday Safety and Crime Protection

National Neighborhood Watch

<https://nnw.org/holiday-safety>

The jolly man in red is the only visitor that's supposed to be entering homes stealthily this Christmas, shimmying down chimneys and stealing bites of cookies washed down with gulps of milk.

But, for too many, St. Nick isn't the only unexpected holiday visitor. Porch pirates are stealing holiday joy and other criminals are itching to find untended digital portals into homes.

A 2017 study titled "Package Theft Report: Porch Pirates, Purchase Habits and privacy" by Schorr.com found that nearly 1 in 3 Americans say they have experienced package theft. A separate study by www.insurancequotes.com found that around 25.9 million Americans have had a package delivered during the holiday shopping season stolen, up from 23.5 million reported porch thefts in 2015.

General Holiday Safety and Crime Prevention Tips

Courtesy of the Knoxville, Tenn., Police Department

At Home

- Make sure all doors and windows have secondary locks (window pins, deadbolts, dowels, etc.) and use them!
- Don't hide spare keys in mailboxes or planters or under doormats.
- Ensure that dark areas and entrances have outdoor lights that are turned on after dark or are activated by sensors.
- Keep trees and shrubbery trimmed so they do not conceal doors and windows. Remember, overgrown foliage can provide a hiding place for criminals.
- Place gifts where they can't be seen from the outside.



Packages left on doorsteps can attract holiday thieves.

- Consider safe deposit boxes for coin and stamp collections, seldom-worn jewelry, stock bonds, etc.
- Be sure to mail cards, checks or gift certificates from the Post Office or at a blue U.S. Postal Service collection box.
- Lock your vehicle and remove all the valuables. Yes, even in your driveway.

Strangers at Your Door

- Use caution anytime there is a stranger at your door.
- Be suspicious of unexpected sales calls or deliveries. Ask for identification.
- Be aware of scams that criminals commit to take advantage of people's generosity during the holidays.

Avoid Porch Theft:

Five tips to Protect Your Packages

- Network with Neighbors
- Have Packages Delivered to Work
- Leave Specific Drop-off Instructions
- Use a Smart Lock
- Install Security Cameras



Outdoor decorations can also be targets of holiday grinch.

- Investigate charities before making donations. Ask how the funds will be used.

Leaving for the Holidays

- Ask a trusted friend, neighbor or Neighborhood Watch member to watch your home.
- Use timers for lights and radios while you're away.
- Remember to make arrangements for mail and newspapers.

After the Holidays

- Don't advertise expensive toys, electronics or other gifts received by the boxes left for garbage collections. Compress large boxes and place them in black garbage bags for pick-up.
- Add new items to your home inventory. Take photos or video of all items of value in your home and list each item's make, model, serial number and other information.
- Engrave new items to help identify them in the event they are stolen.

What to do if you've become a victim of a porch pirate

- Check with your delivery company to make sure your package was actually delivered.
- Know exactly what's in the missing box.
- If you see the thief, pay attention to

Six Ways to Grinch-Proof Your Holiday Light Displays

- **Shut down at night**
- **Set up surveillance**
- **Crime-proof your yard**
- **Consider bringing in valuable items at night**
- **Stay connected**
- **Report, report, report**

what his or her vehicle looks like and its license plate number. Second to that, get the thief's physical description – gender, approximate height and weight and what they're wearing – so you can tell an officer.

- Call 911 and ask for an officer to come to your home.
- If you have a security camera on your home, get a copy of the video to police. Ask your neighbors if their cameras captured the thief in action.

Source: *National Neighborhood Watch, A Division of the National Sheriffs' Association*

Keeping Your Devices Secure

- **Use Security Software.** Install anti-virus software, anti-spyware software and a firewall. Set your preference to update these protections often. Installing these types of programs will help protect against intrusions and infections that can compromise your computer files and passwords. These programs install security patches for your operating system and other software programs.
- **Avoid Phishing Emails.** Don't open files, click on links or download programs sent by strangers. Opening a file from someone you don't know could expose your system to a computer virus or spyware that captures your passwords or other information you type.
- **Be Wise about Wi-Fi.** Before you send personal information over your laptop or smartphone on a public wireless network in a coffee shop, library, airport, hotel or other public place, see if your information will be protected. If you use an encrypted website, it protects only the information you send to and from that site. If you use a secure wireless network, all the information you send on that network is protected.
- **Lock Up Your Laptop.** Keep financial information on your laptop only when necessary. Don't use an automatic login feature that saves your user name and password and always log off when you're finished. That way, if your laptop is stolen, it will be harder for a thief to get at your personal information.
- **Read Privacy Policies.** Yes, they can be long and complex, but they tell you how the site maintains accuracy, access, security and control of the personal information it collects; how it uses the information and whether it provides information to third parties. If you don't see or understand a site's privacy policy, consider doing business elsewhere.



Wall Elementary students eat their lunch, complete with locally raised beef.

BEEF: IT'S FOR LUNCH

Beef to School Program Launched

Jocelyn Romey

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Local beef is on the lunchtime menu for Wall, S.D., students, thanks to the efforts – and donations – of local producers and businesses.

“We consider this a must-do for the kids and our community,” said Ken Charfauros, owner of Wall Meats Processing, who with others, spearheaded the Beef to School program in the school in January 2019.

The program has grown from that first 90-pounds of locally raised beef eaten by more than 200 students in the school. It is now a sustainable program in Wall and serves as an example to area schools that value the educational and financial benefits of serving up beef from local ranches. Other South Dakota schools currently in the pilot phase of implementing this program are in Custer, Edgemont, Faith, New Underwood and Philip.

In 2018, Wall Meats Processing partnered with the school, Wall FFA and the Ag Committee of Wall Economic Development Corporation to plan and implement the project. Three months later, ranchers began donating the beef and Wall Meat Processing contributed the cost of processing and delivering. This community partnership has grown more effective and continues to provide



U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson joined Wall students for lunch to learn about the district's Beef to School program.

local beef to the school district.

Wall Economic Development believes that the purpose of this project is to provide an educational opportunity and help develop the local economy. Students receive an education on what they eat and where it comes from. They are also able to actively learn about beef nutrition through outreach conversations.

“This program is a good educational piece for FFA students and a good project for future farmers,” said Charfauros.

But it's not just the students who are learning. Charfauros said his staff and those involved in developing this program are also learning how to effectively cut healthy meat selections that fit every schools' requirements. The Wall School District requires meat that has a 90 percent lean to 10 percent fat ratio. However, other schools who are in the pilot phase of the program may require different ratios. How the meat is cut and delivered is determined by local schools as well as federal and state regulations.

Another purpose of this program is to benefit the community. Charfauros commented that the local economy profits when local people buy local things and



that money is saved when the school district does not have to pay federal fees for meat being delivered from out of state.

“The major thing about local food is that it helps your local economy. That money goes back to the community and gets spent several times,” said local rancher Josh Geigle, who participated in the Wall Beef to School program.

Due to the current success of the Beef to School program, South Dakota's leadership is taking notice. State Rep. Johnson

and Sens. Thune and Rounds along with the South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development reached out to Charfauros to discuss the programs achievements. From Charfauros' outreach, more school districts are showing interest in adopting the program and promoting beef nutrition, student education and local economic development.

“This is an outreach program to our communities, our producers and our kids,” Charfauros said.



Members of the Wall FFA Chapter along with area beef producers, the Wall Economic Development Corporation and Wall Meats Processing partnered with the Wall School District to implement the Wall Beef to School program in 2018.

October 19-January 5

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

November 15-December 18

Black Hills Christmas Tree
Permit Season, Custer, SD,
605-673-9200

November 22-23

Holiday Arts Christmas Craft
Show, Masonic Hall, Mitchell,
SD, 605-359-2049

November 22-January 5

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

November 23-24

Winterfest: A Winter Arts
Festival, Aberdeen, SD,
605-226-1557

November 26-December 26

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

November 29

Annual Holiday Open House,
Cultural Heritage Center,
Pierre, SD, 605-773-3458

November 29-30

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

November 30

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

December 6-7, 12-14, 19-21

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

December 7

Christmas in the Village Craft
Fair, Community Center,
Oacoma, SD, Contact Leslie
at 605-730-1076

December 14: Frontier Christmas, Lake City, SD, 605-448-5474



Photo courtesy: travelouthakota.com

December 7

Holidazzle Light Parade,
Spearfish, SD, 605-717-9294

December 7

Rapid City Garden Club's 58th
Annual Wreath & Centerpiece
Sale, Canyon Lake Activity
Center, Rapid City, SD,
605-343-0710

December 7-8

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

December 7-8, 14-15, 21-24 and 27-28

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

December 14-15

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

December 15-March 31

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

December 31

Make-A-Wish New Year's Eve
Benefit and Dance, Ramkota
Hotel & Convention Center,
Doors Open at 7 p.m.,
Aberdeen, SD, 605-370-4588

January 7-9

Dakota Farm Show,
Vermillion, SD, 800-873-1411

January 16-17

Media One Funski, Sioux Falls,
SD, 605-339-0000

January 24-25

Pro Snocross Races,
Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

January 25

31st Annual Living History
Fair 2020, A trade fair with
historic arts, crafts, displays,
museums and clubs
representing times of A.D.
1000 to A.D.1890, 9 a.m. to
5 p.m., Lake Area Technical
Institute, Watertown SD,
605-693-4589 or christy@
cchsmuseum.org

January 31-February 9

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

March 14

28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride
and Tour, Lead, SD,
605-641-4963

March 20-21, 27-28

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

March 28

Annual Ag Day at the
Washington Pavilion,
Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

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.