

Cooperative Connections

**SDSU Extension
Master Gardener
Program**

**Growing Master
Gardeners in SD**

Pages 8-9

**Rodeo School is
in Session**

Pages 12-13

“This is one of the best areas in the nation to raise bees.”

— Dusty Backer, Backer Bees

Environment isn't just a buzz word at Basin Electric.

Backer Bees has bees at Glenharold Mine, a reclaimed coal mine that used to supply coal to our first power plant. The reclaimed pasture has a variety of flowers—alfalfa, clover, sunflowers, wildflowers—making it one of the best areas in the nation to raise bees.

Environmental stewardship has always been a guiding principle for us. That's why we're committed to reclaiming and restoring land back to its natural state, like Glenharold Mine.



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South Dakota Electric

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Your Co-op is Ready for Storm Season - Are You?



Ed Anderson

SDREA General Manager
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Now that summer is in full swing, like many of you, I welcome more opportunities to be outdoors and enjoy the warmer weather. Summertime brings many of my favorite activities like cooking outdoors with family and friends, afternoons on the water and simply slowing down a bit to enjoy life.

But summer months also make conditions right for dangerous storms. These potential weather events can cause destruction to our electrical system, but I want you to know that your cooperative's line crews are ready and standing by to respond should power outages occur in our area.

When major storms knock out power, our line crews take all necessary precautions before they get to work on any downed lines. I would encourage you to also practice safety and preparedness to protect your family during major storms and outages. The Federal Emergency Management Agency recommends the items below as a starting point for storm and disaster preparedness, but you can visit www.ready.gov for additional resources.

- Stock your pantry with a three-day supply of non-perishable food, such as canned goods, energy bars, peanut butter, powdered milk, instant coffee, water and other essentials (i.e., diapers and toiletries).
- Confirm that you have adequate sanitation and hygiene supplies including towelettes, soap and hand sanitizer.
- Ensure your First Aid kit is stocked with pain relievers, bandages and other medical essentials, and make sure your prescriptions are current.
- Set aside basic household items you will need, including flashlights, batteries, a manual can opener and portable, battery-powered radio or TV.
- Organize emergency supplies so they are easily accessible in one location.

In the event of a prolonged power outage, turn off major appliances, TVs, computers and other sensitive electronics. This will help avert damage from a power surge, and will also help prevent overloading the circuits during power restoration. That said, do leave one light on so you will know when power is restored. If you plan to use a small generator, make sure it's rated to handle the amount of power you will need, and always review the manufacturer's instructions to operate it safely.

Listen to local news or a NOAA Weather Radio for storm and emergency information, and check your cooperative's app or website for power restoration updates.

After the storm, avoid downed power lines and walking through flooded areas where power lines could be submerged. Allow ample room for utility crews to safely perform their jobs, including on your property.

Advance planning for severe storms can reduce stress and anxiety caused by the weather event and can lessen the impact of the storm's effects. From our co-op family to yours, we hope you have a safe and wonderful summer.

Eight Tips to Help You Grow Your Garden Safely

Gardening may seem like a safe hobby - and for the most part it is. But it can potentially lead to injury. Emergency rooms treat more than 400,000 injuries each year related to outdoor garden tools, reports the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Trimming trees and tall bushes can take a deadly turn when electricity is involved. Never trim a tree that has grown into a power line. Metal and wood ladders can transmit electricity into your body if you come into contact with a live wire. Instead, ask your electric cooperative to send a professional to trim the tree.

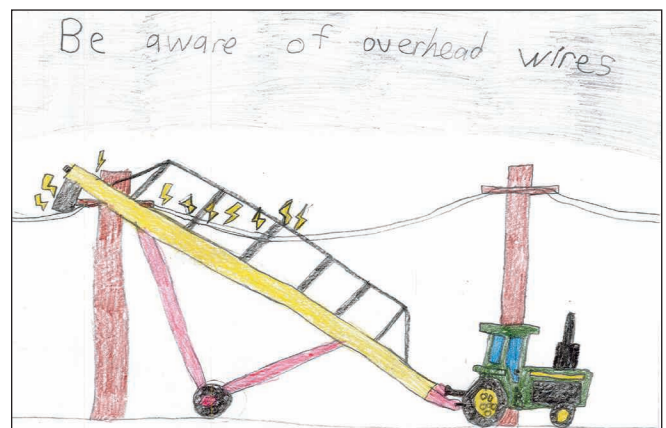
- At least three days before you begin a landscaping project that entails digging, call 811 to have underground utility lines marked.
- Never garden, trim trees or cut the lawn in bad weather. Wet and windy conditions can cause slipping and other hazards. Go inside immediately if you see lightning.
- Outlets protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters should be used for electric tools and trimmers. Never use tools outdoors when it's wet.
- Whenever possible, work in pairs so you're not using electrical equipment when nobody else is around - in case of an accident. And hire a professional if you doubt your ability to complete the job safely.
- Always wear the proper clothing and safety equipment for the task at hand. Gloves, eye and hearing protection, and dust masks can help prevent injuries and illnesses.
- Use the right tools for the job and use them safely. If you are using electric tools, watch where the cord is and unplug tools when not in use.
- Keep garden tools and equipment in proper working order. Equipment that is not maintained properly leaves the door open for potential accidents.
- Stay hydrated, use insect repellent and sunscreen (don't forget your face, neck and ears), and take breaks as needed to rest those hard-working muscles.

Did You Know?

- All thunderstorms produce lightning.
- Lightning often strikes outside the area of heavy rain and can strike as far as 10 miles from any rainfall.
- If you hear thunder, you're in the danger zone.

#StormSafety

KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



Be Aware of Overhead Wires

Carter Intveld, 11 years old

Carter is the child of Glenn and Darci Intveld of Sioux Falls. They are members of Sioux Valley Energy.

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.



Dig in to These Dairy Recipes

Tuna Cheesettes

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| ½ c. American cheese | 2 tbsp. chopped dill pickles |
| 2-3 hard boiled eggs, chopped | ½ c. salad dressing |
| 1 can (7 oz.) tuna | ½ tsp. salt |
| 2 tbsp. chopped onion | ¼ tsp. pepper |

Preheat oven to 350. Mix ingredients and pile on ½ of a hamburger bun to make an open-faced sandwich. Bake for 30 min. Serve warm.

Ruth Schilberg, Viborg

Crustless Cheddar Mini Quiches

- | | |
|--|--|
| Non-stick cooking spray | 1 egg |
| 1/2 teaspoon olive oil | 1/3 cup sun-dried tomatoes, plus additional tomatoes for garnish |
| 1 leek, cleaned and finely chopped (about 1 cup) | 1/2 teaspoon fresh or dried thyme |
| 1 cup reduced-fat shredded Cheddar cheese, divided | |
| 1 cup fat-free milk | |

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Lightly spray a 12-cup muffin pan* with non-stick cooking spray. Heat oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Cook leeks until softened, stirring frequently, about 5 minutes. Divide leeks among muffin cups and top with 2/3 cup of Cheddar cheese. Blend milk, egg, sun-dried tomatoes and thyme in a blender or food processor for about 20 seconds or until tomato is minced. Pour milk mixture over cheese in muffin cups and top each with remaining cheese. Bake 30 minutes or until tops and edges are browned. Cool in pan for 3 minutes; serve warm or cold. Top with additional pieces of sun-dried tomato, if desired.

*May substitute with aluminum muffin cups or individual custard cups, if desired.

usdairy.com

Scalloped Eggs and Bacon

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1/4 cup chopped onion | 6 hard boiled eggs, sliced |
| 2 tablespoons butter | 1/4 teaspoon pepper |
| 2 tablespoons flour | 1/4 teaspoon salt |
| 1 1/2 cups milk | 1 1/2 cups crushed potato chips |
| 1 cup shredded American cheese | 12 bacon strips |
| 1/2 teaspoon dry mustard | |

Cut bacon strips into 1 inch pieces and fry until crisp. Sauté onion in butter until tender. Stir in flour, gradually add milk and cook, stirring until thickened. Add cheese and mustard stirring until cheese melts. Place half of the egg slices in a greased 10 X 6 baking dish. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cover with half of the cheese sauce, potato chips and bacon. Repeat layering. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes. Tips: Prepare eggs and bacon the night before and put together the next morning to save time. May also use ham cubes instead of bacon. Double the recipe and use a 9 X 13 baking dish.

Mary Jo Semmier, Chancellor

Very Berry Ice Cream

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 2 lbs frozen berries (raspberries, blueberries, strawberries or blackberries) | 1/2 cup sweetened condensed milk |
| 1 tablespoon honey | 1/2 teaspoon salt |

In blender, pulse berries, condensed milk, honey and salt until smooth, scraping down sides. Pour mixture into 5-by-9-inch loaf pan. Freeze uncovered 4 hours, or until set.

Culinary.net

Please send your favorite dairy recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Four Efficient Cordless Tools for Dad



Pat Keegan

Collaborative Efficiency

Quality cordless tools are usually less expensive if you buy them as part of a set instead of one tool at a time.

Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency write on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape. For additional energy tips and information on Collaborative Efficiency visit: www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips.

Dear Pat and Brad: With Father's Day approaching, the kids and I are thinking of getting my husband some rechargeable power tools. Do you have any recommendations? When is the extra cost of cordless worth the investment? – Jesse

Dear Jesse: Great idea! If your husband enjoys tackling home projects, rechargeable tools are an excellent gift idea.

Rechargeable cordless tools are worth the investment when the corded version is the least convenient option. For example, a power drill is something you usually move around with and often use outside, so a cordless drill is much more convenient and a worthy investment. On the other hand, a table saw is usually not the first choice of cordless tools because it doesn't need to be moved repeatedly during a home project.

Quality cordless tools are usually less expensive if you buy them as part of a set instead of one tool at a time. And since each line of tools uses a unique battery, you can't mix and match between brands. So, it may cost less in the long run to buy a cordless starter kit with a few helpful tools and a battery, then add tools to the set as needed.

Here are a few cordless tools that the father in your family should love!

- **Power drill** – As one of the most-used power tools, a drill should be everyone's first cordless tool. Using a corded drill can mean constantly moving the cord around furniture, other tools or your own feet, which can be dangerous. Cordless drills are so easy to use, and the technology has improved so they have more power and hold a charge longer. Light-duty drills are smaller and less powerful but easy to use for smaller projects.



- **String trimmer** – A string trimmer is a quick way to trim weeds and grass near walls, bricks and rocks. If your family uses an old gas trimmer around the yard, it's time for a change. Two-stroke engines pollute the air and require regular maintenance. Electric trimmers are more energy efficient and quieter. You can find a variety of models between \$50 and \$150, and it's worth paying a little more to get a highly rated model that will last longer.

- **Leaf blower** – If the father in your family uses a gas-powered leaf blower, you can do him (and your neighbors!) a favor by giving him a cordless leaf blower, which is more energy efficient, much quieter and less polluting.

- **Flashlight** – LED technology is amazing — today's LED flashlights can produce 20 times as much light as the old incandescent ones. And they come in a variety of options, from tiny key chain lights to headlamps to waterproof spotlights. A flashlight can usually give better light than a cell phone, especially if you're working in a tight space like under a sink. A flashlight often comes as part of a cordless tool set, or you can buy a single unit that recharges using a USB port on a charger, a USB wall socket or a mobile phone battery.

Batteries make cordless tools possible. Lithium-ion batteries are more expensive, but they're gaining popularity because they hold a charge longer. They also have a longer life, but they still degrade over time and may need to be replaced in about three years. It's worth buying a reputable brand of cordless tool so you can be confident you will be able to find a replacement battery.

It goes without saying, but these cordless tool gift ideas aren't just for dads. All DIY enthusiasts would enjoy any of these gifts and hopefully put them to good use!

Heikes Family Farm Rides Wave of New Interest in Community Supported Agriculture

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

After enduring the rigors of running an organically-grown farm for several years, Heidi Heikes was ready to let the place go to seed.

But then the pandemic that pummeled so many industries last year proved to be a boon for the Heikes Family Farm operation. The Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project was overwhelmed by consumers who suddenly became interested in locally grown produce.

“I was about ready to just pack it in. It takes a lot of work to run a small organically-grown farm,” Heikes recalled. “But then my phone just blew up. I was getting 10 to 15 new shares a day.”

The Heikes Family Farm CSA works on a shareholder arrangement where individuals buy into the farming operation and receive a share of the resulting crop. They also share the risk if the crop doesn’t bring the anticipated yield.



Sam Heikes said he believes Community Supported Agriculture is a trend that’s here to stay.

Following closely behind the new wave of shareholders came a “corporate share” commitment from a local hospital to supply fresh food for both the hospital and the affiliated nursing home. Then the farm was really riding high, feeding 500-600 people through nearly 100 shareholders.

Heidi’s father, Sam, said he believes the trend of community supported agriculture was bound to make its way to South Dakota in a matter of time.

“South Dakota is just catching up with the buy fresh, buy local, farm-to-table movement,” he said. “There’s been a dramatic increase in demand. I think the pandemic made people realize they want to go back to the past. They don’t want GMOs, pesticides and chemicals in the food that they feed their families.”

Sam Heikes spent his career as a production agronomist building up central South Dakota as the nation’s foremost sunflower producer. He returned to the family farm in Vermillion 10 years ago and decided to try establishing a CSA operation. He was in agreement with his daughter that maybe the demand

for organic produce wasn’t as robust as they both wanted to believe.

“I lost money for many years and we were ready to give it up,” he said. “Now we have more shareholders than we could have dreamed of. I think it’s a trend that’s here to stay. It’s great food at a great value. Once people get a taste of what organically-grown produce tastes like, they don’t want to go back to food that’s grown in another region and trucked in from hundreds of miles away.”

Mondays and Fridays are frenetic at the farm. Food distribution typically begins in May and consumers arrive to pick up their produce on Wednesdays from 4 to 7 p.m. and on Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

For her part, Heidi is happy to have more activity on the farm. She describes herself as a “people person” and noted that the place was getting a bit isolated and lonely. She welcomes the new relationships that have developed since more consumers have discovered the farm. Many volunteers are medical students and athletes from the local university campus who want to make sure they consume healthy diets.

“I love meeting people and eating healthy food,” she said.

Heidi invites more curious consumers to visit www.heikesfamilyfarms.com.



Heidi Heikes was ready to give up efforts to provide organically-grown produce when the pandemic generated new interest in the CSA model.



SDSU Extension Master Gardener Ruth Smith prepares for a local spring plant sale. Photos by Billy Gibson.

MASTER GARDENERS

Extension Program Seeks to Spread the Love of Gardening

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Sorry, Walt Disney. The happiest place on earth for Ruth Smith isn't located in Florida or California. It's found in the serene confines of her garden in Pierre, S.D.

A retired educator, Smith experiences relaxation and contentment while growing herbs, vegetables and florals in her terraced backyard garden. After spending a career in public education and dedicating herself to the development and guidance of local students, Smith now finds her bliss by focusing her efforts on cultivating fresh produce and plants.

She even confesses a proud affinity for something that most people absolutely abhor – weeding.

"I actually like weeding. I like tending to the plants and bringing them up with some tender loving care," Smith said. "I always tell people this is my happy place. Some people like to take a boat out on the river or go hunting. This is what we like to do."

The "we" Smith refers to includes her husband, Mark. Both enjoy gardening and both have been through the Master Gardener program administered by South Dakota State University Extension.

As current president of the Prairie Potters Master Gardeners Club based in Pierre, Smith is an enthusiastic proponent of serving as an ambassador for horticulture education both locally and throughout the state. She and Mark completed the training

and course work required to become Master Gardeners about 10 years ago, although Mark is currently on "inactive" status.

The goal of the program is to turn gardening enthusiasts into expert volunteers who share their research-based knowledge with community members across the state.

Since the program's inception in 1985, more than 400 Master Gardeners have logged nearly 80,000 hours of volunteer service answering questions from the public and hosting community programs.

It's that public interaction that interests Smith. She enjoys attending local farmer markets, plant sales, workshops, school programs and other community events.

"The fun part is getting out among people and helping them solve



Mark Smith repairs a retaining wall in front of his home in Pierre.

Master Gardener Clubs in SD

Club Name	Area
Brookings Area Master Gardeners	Brookings
Coteau Prairie Master Gardeners	Watertown
Custer County Master Gardeners	Custer
Dakota Prairie Master Gardeners	Miller
Fall River Master Gardeners	Hot Springs
Garden Gate Master Gardeners	Winner
Harding County Master Gardeners	Buffalo
Huron Area Master Gardeners	Huron
Minnehaha Co.	Sioux Falls
Missouri Valley Master Gardeners	Yankton
Northern Hills Master Gardeners	Spearfish
Pennington County Master Gardeners	Rapid City
Perkins County Master Gardeners	Bison
Prairie Partners Master Gardeners	Aberdeen
Prairie Potters Master Gardeners	Pierre
South Central Master Gardeners	White River

any problems they're encountering and giving them suggestions on how they can get better results for their efforts," she said. "We love to have conversations with people and we're not afraid to say we don't know something. We can always find out the answers and get back with them."

So, what's the question she gets asked the most? "Hmmm. It's probably, 'Something is wrong with my tomato plants. What should I do?'"

Rhoda Burrows is a horticulture specialist with SDSU Extension and works frequently with Master Gardeners. She said interest in the program has grown since the pandemic struck in March of 2020. While participants weren't allowed to attend in-person events as representatives of the program through most of last year, online teleconferences were held with many new prospects joining in.

"It's just such a fun group to work with," she said. "They're so enthusiastic and they have a deep hunger for knowledge and a heart for helping out each other in their communities. After the pandemic when people were restricting their movements, they discovered that gardening can be a good, wholesome family activity. Gardening is a source of fresh produce and more people are appreciating the benefits of healthy eating."

More information about the Master Gardeners program can be found by visiting www.extension.sdstate.edu. Those interested in becoming part of the program can contact SDSU's Extension Master Gardener Coordinator Aimee House Ladonski at 605-782-3290.

McCrory Gardens is an Inspiration for Horticulture Hobbyists

Gardeners are typically passionate self-starters and don't require much outside motivation. But McCrory Gardens is an ideal place to go for those gardeners looking for an ounce of inspiration over the summer months.

Created in 2012 on the Brookings campus of South Dakota State University, McCrory Gardens features a 25-acre garden and 45-acre arboretum along with a 9,300-square-foot Education and Visitor Center.

While visitation was down in 2020, McCrory Gardens is expecting a busy summer and welcomes gardening enthusiasts to see the ever-changing display of flowers, vegetables, herbs and more.

New to the facility this summer is a Native American medicinal garden area, a "three-sisters" garden with beans, corn and squash, as well as a pollinator garden designed to attract bees and butterflies. Professors and instructors from the Native American studies department collaborated as consultants on the project.



McCrory Gardens is open to visitors on Wednesday through Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

"There is always something new that's growing and blooming, and we have numerous annual beds that are planted each year," said Director Lisa Marotz.

What is expected to be a spectacular summer will culminate in the annual Garden Party held each year on the first Friday in August. While plans are still being finalized, past events have included food vendors, live music, games and free admission for the day.

"Pretty much everything we have is in bloom at that time. We want to invite everyone to come out and see what we have to offer," Marotz said.

McCrory Gardens is a privately-funded \$4.2-million facility that was the vision of founder and SDSU professor S.A. McCrory.

Last August, McCrory Gardens was named as a benefactor of an endowment from the estate of Frank and Mildred Denholm. A gift of more than \$422,000 went to the gardens while an additional gift of the same amount went to The South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum, which is hosting an exhibit entitled, "Electrifying Rural South Dakota," through Sept. 1.

Electric cooperatives across the country must plan for many types of disasters, including floods, hurricanes, ice storms and wildfires.

Taming the Growing Threat of Wildfires

How Co-ops Tailor Wildfire Mitigation Plans

Paul Wesslund

Reports of wildfires in South Dakota and elsewhere in the United States might strike you as yet another sad story in the news or a terrifyingly real threat to your home and family. It depends on where you live.

Electric cooperatives also react to wildfires based on geography, with one huge difference - they need to protect a far-flung electrical system that keeps your lights on, and at the same time, watch out for the safety of the crews that keep that system running.

Every year, wildfires kill dozens of Americans – residents as well as firefighters. Sometimes they're ignited by lightning strikes, but humans start most of them. Leading causes include campfires and burning debris getting out of control, malfunctioning equipment, smoking and arson. One study found that the most common day for human-caused fires to start was the Fourth of July.

About 70,000 wildfires burn in the U.S. each year, a number that's actually been trending downward in recent years according to the National Interagency Fire Center. But their intensity and damage has jumped dramatically. About 7 million acres burn each year, more than double the number in the 1990s. The costs for the

federal government to fight fires has risen from an annual of just over \$400 million 30 years ago to more than \$1.5 billion today. Estimates of total wildfire damage is reaching \$20 billion a year.

Warmer and drier weather is often cited for the increased fierceness of the fires. Another factor raising the stakes is something called the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) - areas where homes and other development sit next to unoccupied land. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security reports 46 million residences in 70,000 communities are at risk of fire in WUI areas, which are growing by 2 million acres a year.

Co-ops and other electric utilities pay special attention to wildfire threats because a key to controlling the flames is already a priority for them - keeping the rights of way near power lines clear of trees, brush and other fire fuel.

Falling power lines and other utility-related events are also among the causes of wildfires. In response, some utility planning includes strengthening poles, and even shutting off power to some areas during times of extremely high fire risk.

Electric co-ops also are calling for public policy changes, like standardizing access to different types of land, both government



Roughly 70,000 wildfires burn in the U.S. each year.

and private, to make it easier for brush-clearing and other fire control measures. Even changes in insurance coverage are being proposed - as wildfire costs increase, there will be more questions about who pays for wildfire control.

As wildfire threats have increased, so have electric co-op preparations. You can even help by keeping areas around power lines clear and by supporting co-op tree-trimming work. And with the Fourth of July approaching, a day that sees twice the number of wildfires, make sure you have a safe and happy Independence Day.

Soap Suds and Energy Savings

Abby Berry

Your clothes washer and dryer account for a significant portion of energy consumption from major appliances, and let's face it – laundry is no one's favorite chore. Make the most of your laundry energy use! There are several easy ways you can save energy (and money) in the laundry room. The Department of Energy recommends the following tips for saving on suds:

- Wash with cold water. Switching from warm water to cold water can cut one load's energy use by more than half, and by using a cold-water detergent, you can still achieve that brilliant clean you'd normally get from washing in warm water.
- Wash full loads when possible. Your washing machine will use the same amount of energy no matter the size of the clothes load, so fill it up if you can.
- Use the high-speed or extended spin cycle in the washer. This setting will remove more moisture before drying, reducing your drying time and the extra wear on clothing.
- Dry heavier cottons separately. Loads will dry faster and more evenly if you separate heavier cottons like linens and towels from your lightweight clothing.
- Make use of the "cool down" cycle. If your dryer has this cycle option, you can save energy because the clothes will finish drying with the remaining heat in the dryer.
- Use lower heat settings to dry clothing.



Regardless of drying time, you'll still use less energy.

- Use dryer balls. Dryer balls, usually wool or rubber, will help keep clothes separated for faster drying, and they can help reduce static, so you can eliminate dryer sheets.
- Switch loads while the dryer is warm. This allows you to take advantage of the remaining heat from the previous cycle.
- Clean the lint filter after each drying cycle. If you use dryer sheets,

remember to scrub the filter once a month with a toothbrush to remove excess buildup.

- Purchase ENERGY STAR®-rated washers and dryers. When it's time to purchase a new washer or dryer, look for the ENERGY STAR® label. New washers and dryers that receive the ENERGY STAR® rating use about 20% less energy than conventional models.

To learn more ways you can save energy at home, visit the Department of Energy's home efficiency page, www.energy.gov/energysaver.

Visit Co-op Connections Plus

Take a moment to visit our new online companion to *Cooperative Connections*. Co-op Connections Plus is a YouTube channel that features a more in-depth treatment of stories appearing in this publication as well as other subjects of interest to rural South Dakotans.

Search for "Co-op Connections Plus" and you'll find videos on human trafficking, support programs for veterans, grain bin safety, the Co-ops Vote campaign and more. Be sure to "like" and "subscribe."





A student at the Korkow Rodeo School learns the "lift, charge and stay back" method of saddle bronc riding under the watchful eye of former champion Chad Ferley. Photos by Billy Gibson

Class is in Session

Rodeo School Teaches Youngsters the Basics of the Sport

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Jeff Reis saw that his son was in big trouble, so he quickly hurled himself over the heavy metal railing and sprinted across the rodeo arena toward the bucking chute.

That's where Casey, a high school senior bull rider and student at the Korkow Rodeo School, was getting set for his final run of the day. But things weren't proceeding as planned. While Casey was going through his preparations, the agitated bull began climbing up the railing and turning toward the unwelcomed antagonist straddling his back.

Casey was able to get a grip on the top rail of the chute and the spotters eventually pulled him free, but not before his father had gotten halfway across the arena floor.

"Bulls have done this before, but I haven't seen one get that high or be able to turn the way this one did," Jeff recalled. "When it spun and belly rolled and started pulling Casey away from the spotters, I panicked because I thought something truly catastrophic was about to happen."

Thanks to the spotters and handlers and his own quick reflexes as a multi-sport

athlete, Casey escaped the few seconds of terror injury-free. The recalcitrant animal got everyone's attention and made a big scene, but it did nothing to diminish Casey's grit and determination. Even his father was a bit surprised at what happened next.

Casey made it clear he wasn't nearly finished with that bull.

"I couldn't believe his mentality after that," Jeff said. "He was shook up, but he went out and got a new spur strap that had broken off, fixed all of his equipment, got his rope back on and rode that same bull."

Lots of lessons were learned during that dust-up, but then that's the purpose of the Korkow Rodeo School. Having completed its 36th year in April, the school is one of the oldest and most established of several similar schools operating across the state that offer instruction to hundreds of eager young riders and future champions.

Jim Korkow, owner of the Anchor K Ranch east of Pierre, said the school tends to separate those who are genuinely interested in rodeo from those who "might want to go looking for a set of golf clubs."



Jeff Willert preps a saddle bronc student for the youngster's first ride.

Though last year's school was canceled, dozens of students of various ages and skill levels returned to the Anchor K this time around to learn the basics of saddle bronc, bareback and bull riding, and also ways to stay safe.

Korkow's son T.J. runs the annual three-day school, which is led by a team of skilled riders and instructors as well as a physical trainer and other highly-experienced support staff. Each year the school attracts dozens of riders from several different states.

Instructor Chad Ferley is a two-time PRCA World Champion saddle bronc rider and five-time NFR qualifier from Oelrichs who has participated in the event

SD HS Rodeo Assn. Regional Qualifying Rodeos:

June 4-6 - Huron,
Highmore, Buffalo, Wall
June 11-13 - Watertown,
Winner, Dupree, Sturgis

State HS Finals Rodeo:

June 15-19 - Ft. Pierre, SD

National HS Finals Rodeo:

July 18-24 - Lincoln, NE

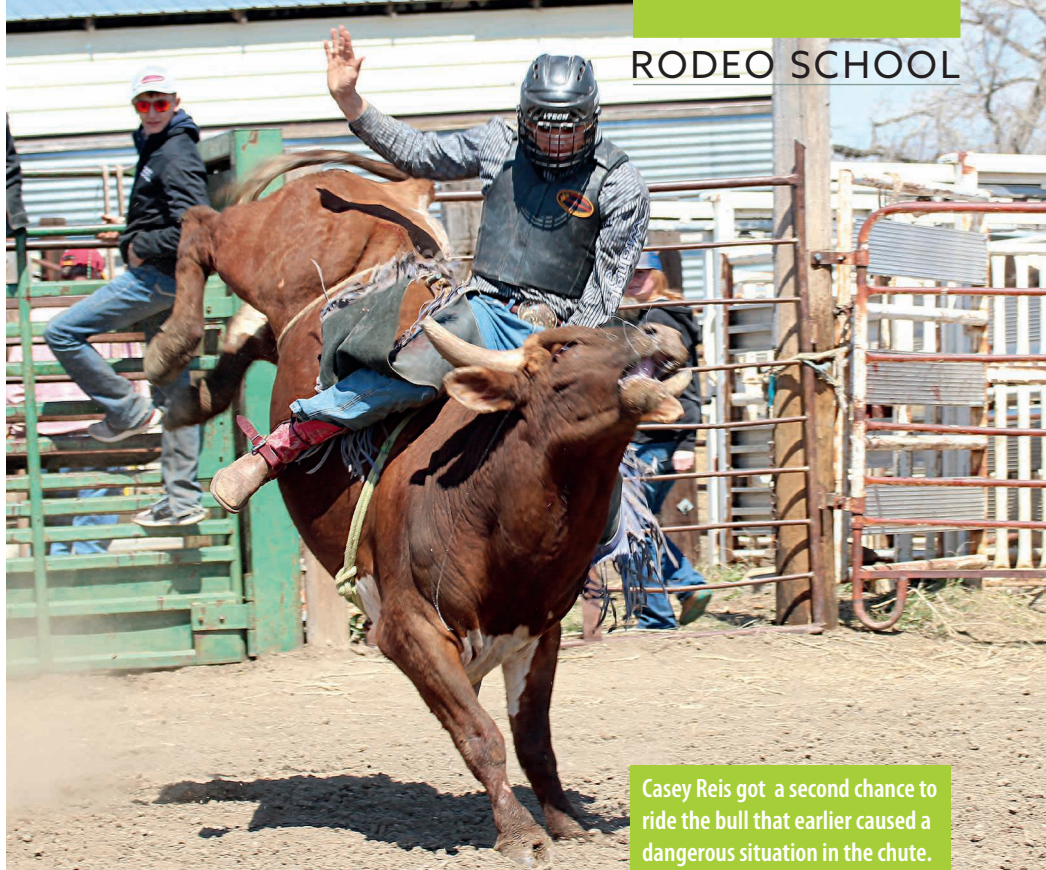
for the past 12 years. Ferley, a member of Black Hills Electric Cooperative in Custer, said students don't leave the school ready for the pro circuit but are there to learn the basics... at least after the initial shock wears off from that maiden voyage that takes the young rider from zero to 90 in a split second.

"After their first ride, they always say it was a whole lot faster than they thought it was going to be," Ferley said. "At first, most of them just black out. We're here to give them the basics, talk to them after each ride and tell them what they did wrong and what they did right, and give them the information they can apply and practice on down the line as they ride more horses."

Fellow instructor Jeff Willert is a PRCA World Champion saddle bronc competitor, five-time NFR qualifier and member of West Central Electric Cooperative. He said he enjoys passing on to youngsters all the tips and tricks that he learned throughout his successful rodeo career.

"With bronc riding, we tell them to lift, charge and stay back," he said. "But things happen so fast, and it's hard for them to pay attention because as soon as that chute opens, they lose their train of thought. You just try to drill things into their head and they eventually get it. It's trial and error. The more you ride, the more you learn."

Ken Korkow said throughout more than three decades of operating the school, one particular student stands out among all the others. An uninitiated 42-year-old gentleman from Alaska came to the ranch



Casey Reis got a second chance to ride the bull that earlier caused a dangerous situation in the chute.

with the intention of checking off an item from his bucket list of things he'd never done before, Korkow recalled. Organizers always make a point to match the stock with the rider's level of experience, so the instructor set up the non-traditional student with a black angus pasture bull.

"He managed to stay on it for longer than I thought he would," Korkow said. "The instructor blew the horn at six seconds when he saw the guy was about to come off, but he blew it early just so he'd think he made it the whole eight seconds. But all the kids who were around got excited for him and went out there and cheered for

him and gave him high-fives. It was quite a moment I'll always remember."

While some express concern about the future of rodeo in the age of youngsters getting more involved in technology, Willert said he doesn't share that concern.

"It can be rewarding from many stand-points," he said. "There are still a lot of kids who don't spend all day playing video games. They see the value of hard work and the farming and ranching lifestyle and they respect the culture. They understand that while some things may be difficult, it's all worth it when you can walk away knowing that you've stood up to the test."



A young rider hangs on just before getting thrown to the ground.

Video games can have a negative impact on teenagers but the technology can also help students learn valuable, marketable skills.

Experts See Potential for Both Good and Bad with Video Games, but Suggest Moderation

Billy Gibson

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Many parents who have a teenager and a video game console under the same roof have asked themselves the same question: What kind of effect is video gaming having on my child?

When video games made their way out of the arcades and into the living rooms and bedrooms of millions of American households, there was great concern that the games were growing more violent and all of that virtual gore was warping teenage minds.

It seemed every real-world episode of violent behavior exhibited by minors could somehow be traced back to the influence of the gaming culture. But after decades of academic studies, observations and rapidly changing technology, a more evolved and nuanced understanding of recreational video game activity – and its potential impact on developing minds – has emerged.

The landscape has changed so significantly, in fact, that the World Health Organization

– the same group that once alerted parents to the more sinister aspects of pathological video gaming and declared that “gaming disorder” exists – has announced its endorsement of gaming as a useful way for families to face the COVID-19 lockdown. That endorsement came with one important caveat, however: all things in moderation.

Lesley Atkins is a member of the family therapist team at Rising Hope 605 in Burke and also a member of Rosebud Electric in nearby Gregory. Atkins has three children of her own, including a 15-year-old and a 10-year-old, and has worked with many parents and teens to help them gain control over their use of electronics and their total daily exposure to screens of all kinds.

Her best advice to concerned parents is first to recognize that more studies are confirming that video gaming can in fact be addictive and to watch for signs indicating the teen is having trouble pulling away from video screens, smart phones, tablets and other electronic devices.

She also advises that it's imperative for parents to practice what they preach as



Therapist Lesley Holmes recommends moderating screen time for all family members.

teens tend to model the behaviors of the adults around them.

“I see this on a regular basis, where I have to remind the parents that if you want your



child to cut back on screen time, you're going to have to cut back too," Atkins said. "You may tell your teen to get off Instagram or TikTok, but then you stay up watching Netflix all night and you find yourself sleepwalking all through the next day. If you expect them to get out a board game and be content to play with that, then you have to be willing to do the same."

Atkins said it's also essential that parents hold their teens accountable, monitor their screen time, and make sure there are consequences for violating the rules that have been explained to them. Teens can also be empowered by giving them choices, such as telling them how much screen time they will be allowed, but then leaving it up to them whether they spend that time watching TV, playing video games or scrolling through social media account.

Parents, or even grandparents, may not be happy with the fact that youngsters are being raised in an increasingly virtual environment that grows more inescapable and threatens to further tighten its grip on modern society, but Atkins suggests the best response is not to fight it, but to manage it effectively.

"You can't really think about taking technology away, you just have to manage it. From a teenager's point of view, if you try to take it away, you're taking them away from a large part of their social interaction with their friends, their peer groups and their social standing," Atkins said. "Like it or not, in today's world trying to disengage with technology puts you at a disadvantage, and we all want our kids to have an opportunity to succeed in life. These days,

if you don't have a social media presence, it's almost like you're hiding something, like there's something wrong with you. The key is setting healthy limits on it and managing it well."

Not all video games focus on brutal acts of violence and mayhem, Atkins noted. One of the reasons the World Health Organization has altered its position on video games is because many developers have found creative ways to use video games to improve useful skills that can help teens prepare themselves for various careers. Atkins points out that many medical procedures are done with the use of robotics and require good hand-eye coordination. There are also many types of training simulators that allow tech students, for example, to learn how to control and operate heavy machinery or farming equipment before actually getting behind the real controls. If they prefer, they can compete against their peers to keep interest level high.

Young people interested in agriculture, for instance, can bale hay, apply fertilizers and harvest crops by using virtual farming programs. While these simulators may not have the high-speed action as Grand Theft Auto or Call of Duty, they're effective in transferring certain manual skill sets from a recreational to a practical application and improving overall cognition. Teachers and instructors are finding plenty of use for these virtual training programs as the video series called Farming Simulator has sold more than four million copies and the market continues to expand at a rapid pace.

The time to call for help, Atkins said, is when a teenager – or an adult – starts

The Positives and Negatives of Video Games

Researchers are discovering there can be both positive and negative effects of video gaming:

POSITIVES

- Uplifts mood, strengthens social skills
- Boosts creativity
- Develops problem-solving skills
- Improves attention, situational awareness and working memory performance
- Enhances hand-eye dexterity
- Develops strategic planning and management of resources

NEGATIVES

- Over-stimulation of the sensory system
- Aggressive behavior
- Association with negative values
- Poor social development
- Mental and physical health risks
- Academic concerns

having a difficult time pulling away from the screen, or starts exhibiting real-time anti-social behavior. Other signs to look for include lower academic performance, increased physical ailments such as carpal tunnel syndrome or a stiff neck and poor appetite and poor hygiene.

"If someone starts fighting and getting very emotional when they don't get their screen time, it's probably a good idea to seek help before the situation gets out of control," Atkins said.

Note: Please make sure to call ahead to verify the event is still being held.

May 21-23

Annual Sound of Silence Tesla Rally, Downtown, Custer, SD
605-673-2244

May 21-23

State Parks Open House and Free Fishing Weekend, All State Parks and Recreation Areas, SD
605-773-3391

May 22

Frühlingsfest and Spring Market, Main Street, Rapid City, SD
605-716-7979

May 22

La Framboise Island Bike Race, Steamboat Park, Pierre, SD
605-224-7054

May 31

PPQG 25th Annual Quilt Show, Harding County REC Center, Buffalo, SD
605-641-5591

June 3-5

Annual Black Hills Quilt Show and Sale, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

June 3-6

Wheel Jam, South Dakota State Fairgrounds, Huron, SD
605-353-7340

June 4-5

State BBQ Championships, South Dakota State Fairgrounds, Huron, SD
605-353-7354

June 4-6

Black Hills Blues Stomp and Swamp Romp, Rush No More RV Resort and Campground, Sturgis, SD
605-347-2916



Czech Days, June 18-19, 2021 (Photo by Travel South Dakota)

June 4-6

Lake Andes Fish Days, City-wide, Lake Andes, SD
605-487-7694

June 5-6

18th Annual Wessington Springs Foothills Rodeo, Wessington Springs Rodeo Grounds, Wessington Springs, SD
605-770-5720

June 5-6

Siouxland Renaissance Festival, W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD
866-489-9241

June 12

Yankton Ribfest, Downtown 3rd Street, Yankton, SD
866-260-2134

June 18-19

Czech Days, Lidice Street, Tabor, SD
605-463-2478

June 17-20

South Dakota Shakespeare Festival, Prentis Park, Vermillion, SD
605-622-0423

June 18, 25

River City Friday Nights, Downtown, Chamberlain, SD
605-234-4416

June 18-19

Oahe Arts and Music Festival, Steamboat Park, Pierre, SD
oahedaysinfo@gmail.com

June 18-19

Wild Bill Days, Main Street, Deadwood, SD
605-578-1876

June 19

605 Summer Classic Beer and Music Festival, Cherapa Place, Sioux Falls, SD
605-274-1999

June 19

South Dakota Cattlemen's Foundation Prime Time Gala, Denny Sanford PREMIER Center, Sioux Falls, SD
605-945-2333

June 19-20

Aberdeen Arts in the Park, Melgaard Park, Aberdeen, SD
605-226-1557

June 30-July 4

Annual Black Hills Roundup, 300 Roundup Street, Belle Fourche, SD
605-723-2010

July 2-4

Sitting Bull Stampede Rodeo, Various Locations, Mobridge, SD
605-845-2387

July 10-11

50th Annual Brookings Summer Arts Festival, West Highway 14 and 1st Avenue, Brookings, SD
605-692-2787

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.