

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Gardening Greats

**Master Gardeners
Cultivating Community
Growth**

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Bridging History
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Photo courtesy of SDSU Extension.

Beginner's Guide to the Electric Grid



Kent Larson
Manager

Electricity plays an essential role in everyday life. It powers our homes, offices, hospitals and schools. We depend on it to keep us warm in the winter (and cool in the summer), charge our phones and binge our favorite TV shows. If the power goes out, even briefly, our lives can be disrupted.

The system that delivers your electricity is often described as the most complex machine in the world, and it's known as the electric grid.

What makes it so complex? We all use different amounts of electricity throughout the day, so the supply and demand for electricity is constantly changing. For example, we typically use more electricity in the mornings when we're starting our day, and in the evenings when we're cooking dinner and using appliances. Severe weather and other factors also impact how much electricity we need.

The challenge for electric providers is to plan for, produce and purchase enough electricity so it's available exactly when we need it. Too much or too little electricity in one place can cause problems. So, to make sure the whole system stays balanced, the electric grid must adjust in real time to changes and unforeseen events.

At its core, the electric grid is a network of power lines, transformers, substations and other infrastructure that span the entire country. But it's not just a singular system. It's divided into three major interconnected grids: the Eastern Interconnection, the Western Interconnection and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. These grids operate independently but are linked to allow electricity to be transferred between regions when backup support is required.

Within the three regions, seven balancing authorities known as independent system operators (ISOs) or regional transmission organizations (RTOs) monitor the grid, signaling to power plants when more electricity is needed to maintain a balanced electrical flow. ISOs and RTOs are like traffic controllers for electricity.

The journey of electricity begins at power plants.

Power plants can be thought of as factories that make electricity using various energy sources, like natural gas, solar, wind and nuclear energy. Across the U.S., more than 11,000 power plants deliver electricity to the grid.

Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative receives power from our generation and transmission (G&T) co-ops, Rushmore Electric and Basin Electric. We work closely with Basin to provide electricity at the lowest cost possible. Being part of a G&T benefits members like you by placing ownership and control in the hands of your co-op, prioritizing affordability and reliability, supporting local economic development and fostering a sense of community.

To get the electricity from power plants to you, we need a transportation system.

High-voltage transmission lines act as the highways for electricity, transporting power over long distances. These lines are supported by massive towers and travel through vast landscapes, connecting power plants to electric substations.

Substations are like pit stops along the highway, where the voltage of electricity is adjusted. They play a crucial role in managing power flow and ensuring that electricity is safe for use in homes and businesses. PO BOX 1438 Eagle Butte, SD 57625

Once the electricity is reduced to the proper voltage, it travels through distribution power lines, like the ones you typically see on the side of the road. Distribution lines carry electricity from substations to homes, schools and businesses. Distribution transformers, which look like metal buckets on the tops of power poles or large green boxes on the ground, further reduce the voltage to levels suitable for household appliances and electronic devices.

After traveling through transformers, electricity reaches you – to power everyday life.

For some size perspective, Moreau-Grand Electric owns and operates 210 miles of transmission line, 3,643 miles of distribution line, along with 15 substations to serve the members in all of Dewey, Corson, and Ziebach counties.

We're proud to be your local, trusted energy provider. From the time it's created to the time it's used, electricity travels great distances to be available at the flip of a switch. That's what makes the electric grid our nation's most complex machine – and one of our nation's greatest achievements.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

MOREAU-GRAND ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 018-951)

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and IT Director

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Design assistance by SDREA

March 18, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes and January 2025 Financial Information

The March 18, 2025, board of directors' meeting was held at the Timber Lake office with the following directors present: Bartlett, Clark, Hahne, Keckler, Lawrence, Maher, McLellan, Schweitzer, Walker and Wall, and others present: Manager Larson and Finance Officer Lemburg (Delegated Recorder of Minutes).

The Large Power Users monthly report was given by Stephanie Bartlett, which included large power usage and payments.

The Member Services report was given by JJ Martin, which included scholarship updates, Beulah youth tour update, advertising campaign update, website updates in progress, new telephone system update, and it was the consensus of the board not to donate to the Timber Lake Booster Club.

The Operations report was given by Josh Lemburg, which included obtaining equipment costs for the Touch the Cloud project, Eagle Butte to Dupree line conversion project update, SD Highway 63 road move easement update, line patrol and meter reading updates, new service update, Grand River Casino road move update, outage updates, and fire updates.

Manager Larson gave the Manager's report, which included Federated Insurance visit, no worker's compensation claims in the past five years, worker's compensation experience modification factor, update on the demolition of the old headquarter facility, member complaint, new RUS GFR Shawnn Balstad, RUS loan drawdown, update on purchasing Lot 1, Block 18, in Timber Lake, pole inspection updates, a review of CCD courses that need to be completed by some directors, upcoming Rushmore Electric Managers' meeting, and cancelled MGEC's membership to the South

Dakota Association of Rural Water Systems.

Manager Larson and Director Hahne gave the NRECA annual meeting report, which included sessions on AI, wildland fire and mitigation, power grid and nuclear energy, Tony Anderson speech, and Director Hahne enjoyed being MGEC's voting delegate.

Director Bartlett noted that the board approved no longer offering a USDA zero-interest loan until the current loan is repaid and expressed concern about losing the ability to offer these USDA loans. Manager Larson assured her MGEC will not lose the ability to offer these loans.

Manager Larson presented a letter from Sitting Bull College requesting a donation for its annual scholarship endowment campaign. It was the consensus of the board not to donate to this campaign.

Director McLellan gave the Rushmore Electric Board meeting report, which included a counterfeit check issue, federal government changes are affecting WAPA, transmission line update, financial update, potential large loads, and nuclear energy discussions.

President Maher gave a legislative update, which included legislative session has ended, approval of the eminent domain bill, and property tax changes.

Board approved the following: the agenda, the minutes from the February meeting, the minutes from the Policy Committee meeting, new members, refunds, line extensions, financial statistics, disbursements, safety report, policy changes proposed by the Policy Committee, and not to donate to the Mitchell Technical College Foundation.

The next board meeting was scheduled for April 22, 2025, at 8:30 a.m., in the Timber Lake office.

JANUARY 2025 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

	JAN '25	JAN '24	YTD 2025
Operating Revenues	\$1,549,179	\$1,500,789	\$1,549,179
Cost Of Power	\$796,777	\$790,688	\$796,777
Cost Of Electric Service	\$1,426,274	\$1,435,517	\$1,426,274
Margins	\$124,564	\$80,291	\$124,564
Kwh Purchased	13,055,116	13,182,581	13,055,116
Kwh Sold	12,056,490	12,796,503	12,056,490

Power Life Safely

May is Electrical Safety Month

Every May, Electrical Safety Month serves as a vital reminder of the importance of preventing electrical hazards at home. Electricity powers nearly every aspect of modern life, but if handled improperly, it can pose serious risks, including injuries and property damage.

Your electric cooperative understands the risks associated with improper electricity use, which is why we're committed to reminding you to stay vigilant and practice electrical safety not only in May, but year-round.

By following key safety practices, you can reduce the risk of electrical hazards and ensure your family stays protected. Here are five essential tips for powering up safely at home.

1. **Be vigilant.** Regularly inspect your home's electrical system for any signs of damage or outdated components and replace any frayed electrical wires or cords. The Electrical Safety Foundation International estimates roughly 3,300 home fires originate from extension cords every year, either from overloading, overheating or fraying. If you're relying on extension cords as permanent power solutions, consider contacting a qualified electrician to install additional outlets where you need them.
2. **Use Surge Protectors.** Safeguard your sensitive electronics and appliances from surges with surge protectors. These handy devices help divert excess voltage away from your electronics, reducing the risk of damage or electrical fires. Not all power strips include surge protection, so read the product label carefully. Additionally, surge protectors can lose effectiveness over time and should be replaced when damaged or outdated.
3. **Practice Safe Power Strip Use.** Avoid overloading electrical outlets with power strips that exceed the outlet's capacity. High-energy devices, like heaters, microwaves and hairdryers should be distributed across multiple outlets. Overloading an outlet with a "busy" power strip can lead to overheating and create a fire hazard, so be sure to check the power strip's wattage rating before plugging in items.

4. **Water and Electricity Don't Mix.** It may seem obvious, but accidents involving water contact with electrical items happen. Always keep electrical appliances and devices away from water sources, like sinks, bathtubs or swimming pools. Make sure your hands are dry before touching any electrical switches or appliances – never handle electrical devices with wet hands. Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) should be installed in areas where water and electricity are typically in close proximity, including kitchens, bathrooms and outdoor outlets.
5. **Educate Family Members.** One of the best ways to ensure the safety of everyone in your household is to talk about electrical safety. Teach children not to play with electrical outlets or appliances and ensure they understand the potential dangers of electricity. Create and practice a home fire escape plan that includes electrical safety precautions in case of emergencies.

Practicing electrical safety at home is essential for protecting your family, property and peace of mind. Remember, electrical safety isn't just a one-time effort – it's a year-round responsibility. Taking these steps can help ensure a safer, more secure home for you and your loved ones.



"Don't plant trees near power lines."

Jeremiah Barlow

Jeremiah cautions readers not to plant trees near power lines. Thank you for your picture, Jeremiah! Jeremiah's parents are Mosiah and Cristine Barlow, members of West River Electric Association.

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.



Delicious CHICKEN

CHICKEN BREAST SUPREME

Ingredients:

4 chicken breasts
(boned and halved)
8 strips bacon
2 pkgs. chipped beef
8 oz. sour cream
1 can cream of chicken soup
6 oz. evaporated milk

Method

Wrap each half of chicken breast in a piece of bacon. Place in a baking dish lined with two layers of chipped beef.

Blend sour cream, soup, and milk. Pour over chicken.

Bake uncovered at 300°F for three hours. Serve over rice.

*Makes 8 servings.

Sharon Houchin
Central Electric Member

CHICKEN ROLLUPS

Ingredients:

8 oz. tube crescent rolls
4 boneless chicken breasts
(cooked shredded and seasoned to taste)
8 oz. cheddar cheese
(finely shredded, divided)
10 1/2 oz. can cream of chicken soup
1 packet chicken gravy mix
1 cup water

Method

In a bowl, mix the shredded chicken and 1/3 of the cheese. Take a scoop of the mixture and roll it into a crescent roll then place in a greased 9" x 13" pan. Bake at 350°F until the crescent rolls look browned on top. Mix the soup, gravy mix, 1/3 of the cheese, and enough water to make the mixture pourable. Pour over the crescent rolls. Sprinkle the remaining 1/3 of the cheese on top and bake again until the cheese melts and starts to brown.

Nicole Einrem
B-Y Electric Member

SMOKY CHICKEN TACOS

Ingredients:

1 tbsp. oil
1 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breast, cut into thin strips
1/4 cup Flavor Maker Taco Night Topping Seasoning
1/2 cup water
12 (6-inch) flour or corn tortillas, warmed

Method

Heat oil in large skillet on medium-high heat. Add chicken; cook and stir just until browned.

Stir in Flavor Maker Seasoning and water. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes or until sauce has thickened and chicken is cooked through, stirring occasionally.

Spoon chicken into warm tortillas. Serve with desired toppings, such as shredded lettuce, shredded cheese, sour cream, guac or salsa.

McCormick.com

Please send your favorite 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 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Tips to Beat the Energy Peak



Miranda Boutelle
Efficiency Services
Group

Q: What does “beat the peak” mean, and why should I care about it?

A: When your electric cooperative talks about “beat the peak,” it is a call to action for energy consumers to reduce electricity use during periods of highest demand. Using less energy during peak times can ease the strain on the electric grid, benefit your cooperative and sometimes lower your electric bill.

Electricity generation and energy supply must match consumption in real time to ensure safe, reliable power. Every moment of every day, an entire workforce monitors energy use, adjusting power plant production up or down as needed to keep the grid balanced.

As energy demand grows, all of us can do our part to use less. To put this in perspective, peak electricity demand is expected to increase by 38 gigawatts over the next four years, according to the Energy Information Administration. That’s like adding another California to our nation’s power grid.

Peak time varies for each electric utility but typically occurs in the morning when people get ready for the day and in the evening when they return home from work and school. During these times, we turn on lights, cook, adjust the thermostat, run

the dishwasher and do laundry – to name just a few energy-consuming activities.

Typically, the price of power increases when demand is higher. Reducing your electric use during peak times can help lower market prices for everyone and lessen stress on the electric grid.

Electric cooperatives set electric rates to cover costs. Some utilities have time-of-use rates that reflect higher costs during peak demand periods. Whether you have time-of-use rates or not, these tips can help keep costs down for your utility and establish off-peak energy habits.

As a general rule, I try to spread out my use of equipment and appliances. For example, I avoid washing dishes and clothes, and cooking all at the same time. Running a lot of hot water will cause your water heater to use more energy, too.

Increasing the energy efficiency of your home can lower its impact on the grid. Weatherize windows and doors and add insulation to improve the comfort of your home. You can also consider upgrading to energy efficient appliances or using energy-saving features on your existing appliances.

If you haven’t already, switch your incandescent lighting to LEDs, which use at least 75% less electricity and last up to 25 times longer, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. There are many affordable options on the market.

Schedule your dishwasher run time. My dishwasher, which is several years old, has a “delay start” button. This is also handy if your dishwasher is loud. Setting it to start after you go to bed shifts that energy consumption to off-peak hours, and you don’t have to hear it.

Running your washing machine and dryer during off-peak hours can help, too. If you’re in the market for a new washer or dryer, look for a model with a high Integrated Modified Energy Factor and a low Integrated Water Factor to save water and energy.

Also, consider switching your charging habits for all devices to off-peak hours. If you have an electric vehicle, use the scheduled charge settings. You’ll plug in your vehicle when you get home, and it will start charging automatically during the off-peak hours you choose.

Small changes at home can make a big difference to the energy grid. Incorporate these energy-wise habits into your daily routine.



When the Lights Came On

Darrell Kirby Reflects on the Arrival of Electricity and How Co-ops Powered His Career

Erica Fitzhugh

Southeastern Electric Cooperative

Growing up on a farm northwest of Salem, Darrell Kirby was the second oldest of five children in his family. Their farm had dairy cows, hogs and chickens and they grew corn, oats and beans. “Before we had electricity, the memory that sticks in my mind is doing schoolwork with an old kerosene lamp with a wick, set in the middle of the table for light,” shared Kirby. “After that we switched to a gas light with two mantels. It was much brighter and more dependable. But when we got electricity...that was out of this world.”

The Kirby family was one of the original members of McCook Electric, now Southeastern Electric. Kirby remembers that his home was energized by the cooperative around the time he was a fifth grader. “My uncle came out to wire our house,” said Kirby. “It was really something to be able to turn on a switch and have all that light!” Before electricity, Kirby and his siblings would carry a lantern from their house to the barn. A long wire was strung the length of the ceiling - they would hang the lantern from the wire and as they moved down the aisle milking cows by hand, they would slide the lantern down to light their way. Using a hand cranked milk separator, they would remove the cream from the

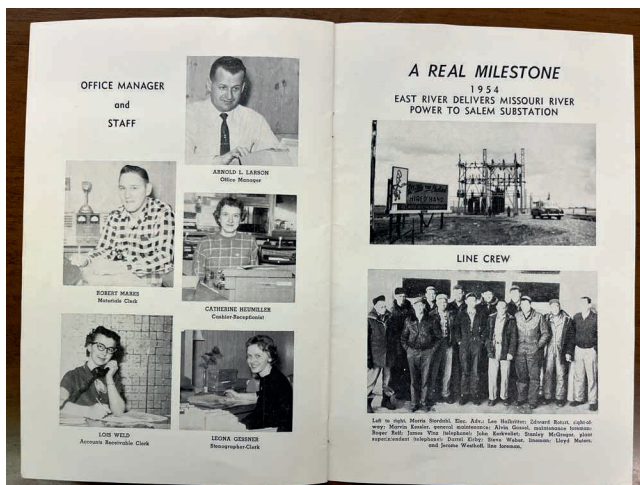


Photo by Erica Fitzhugh

milk. The milk would be fed to the hogs, and the cream would be kept in cream cans until it could be taken to town, usually twice a week, to trade for groceries and other goods at the K&K Store. “Electricity changed our lives,” Kirby exclaimed. “The yard light and lights in the barn, the milking machine, a cream separator with a motor instead of a crank, a refrigerator – the changes to our farming operation were remarkable.”

As Kirby finished high school, he had his mind set on farming. However, life had other plans for him. “I worked as a farmhand in the summer and as a mechanic in the winter. The next summer, McCook Electric bought property to build on and was looking for people to help with the construction. I assisted with the construction for a few months before I had to take a break due to a health issue,” said Kirby. He knew from that interaction with McCook Electric that he wanted to work for the electric cooperative. After Kirby recovered, he returned to McCook Electric and asked for a job as a lineman. He started in the spring of 1958 and spent the next 40 years powering the lives of his neighbors through his career at the co-op. “I was not scared of heights and liked working outdoors. I borrowed a set of hooks and belts and with no formal training or previous experience, I started my career as a lineman,” laughed Kirby.

Kirby held positions as a lineman, line superintendent and eventually as the general manager. He recalled experiencing ice and windstorms, working at annual meetings and witnessing several changes to the electric utility industry. “My fondest memories of working at the co-op included the people – our employees and our members. I got to know almost everyone because we were so small. I enjoyed visiting with and working for our members, helping them in any way I could,” smiled Kirby. “The co-op was so good to me and my family. I still miss the people after all these years.”



History is remembered in the 1959 McCook Electric Cooperative Annual Report, Years of Progress. It focused on the cooperative's growth from 1949-1959. Photo submitted by Erica Fitzhugh.

GARDENING GREATS

Missouri Valley Master Gardeners remove invasive bellflower and other non-desirable plants at the Dorothy Jenks Memorial Garden in Yankton.
Photo courtesy of SDSU Extension.

How Master Gardeners are Cultivating Community Growth

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdua.coop

After years of tending to her garden, Codington-Clark Electric member Dianne Rider of Hazel can confidently say she is an expert in horticulture. However, her extensive experience of working with the earth isn't the only reason she is considered a soil savant.

In 2016, Rider earned the prodigious title of Master Gardener through the South Dakota State University Extension's Master Gardener Volunteer Program. This program provides in-depth horticultural training – covering topics like plant science, soil management and sustainable gardening practices – so enthusiasts like Rider can share their extensive gardening knowledge with their communities.

Becoming an Extension Master Gardener volunteer is a commitment. Applicants must complete horticulture classes, pass the course test and contribute 40 hours of volunteer service

during the first year of involvement. Despite the challenges, Rider had aspired to this achievement for decades, but it wasn't until she retired from her teaching career that she was able to dedicate herself fully and earn her place as a Master Gardener.

Reflecting the adage, “once a teacher, always a teacher,” Rider continues to educate and influence those around her, even after retirement, through gardening.

“Becoming a Master Gardener has always been on my bucket list since they organized,” Rider said. “I’ve always been a teacher, so finding a way to help others through gardening is probably what’s most rewarding.”

As a Master Gardener, Rider plays a key role in organizing annual gardening events for SDSU Extension, including the Master Gardener Annual Update Conference at Joy Ranch near Watertown. This event, attended by more than 125 Master Gardeners, serves as a thriving forum for gardening clubs to exchange ideas on the latest and greatest

projects they are tackling.

“The event is a lot of fun, because when you get 125 Master Gardeners in one room – let me tell you, the conversations are riveting,” Rider laughed.

Master gardeners also help SDSU Extension achieve its broader goal: to make cutting-edge research easily accessible to the people who can benefit from the findings. Master Gardeners have regular continuing education opportunities with experts from the SDSU Horticulture team, such as Professor John Ball, a SDSU Extension Forestry Specialist and South Dakota Department of Agriculture Forest Health Specialist. Once equipped with this information, volunteers can share the most significant takeaways from research being conducted across the state through the university, providing a bridge between research and practical application.

“Dr. John Ball’s presentation on how to trim a tree after planting it is one of the best things that I’ve learned that I can now share with others,” said Rider. “He says that raising a tree is just like raising a kid: you have to shape your tree when

they are young, otherwise they turn into ugly adults.”

Master Gardener Field Specialist Prairey Walkling emphasizes that the connection between research-based information and enthusiasts is what the Master Gardener Volunteer Program thrives on. And the research goes far beyond just trees. SDSU’s horticulture research also extends into innovative mulching techniques, soil care and even studies on the growth and quality of four popular zinnia varieties.

“SDSU Extension wants to empower individuals to reach their gardening goals through providing science-based information. Each person has different pieces of land, resources and goals for their gardens and landscapes,” she said. “We strive to provide them with trusted, research-based information to help them make decisions.”

Walkling said the impact of these volunteers cannot be understated. According to Walkling, there are more than 400 Master Gardeners across the state and 14 Master Gardener clubs. In 2024, these vital volunteers hosted 153 gardening events, including farmers market booths, gardening workshops and demonstrations, reaching nearly 10,000 South Dakotans. Regardless of the event or what is being discussed, Walkling said Master Gardeners carry an infectious love of digging in the dirt.

“These volunteers help get people excited about gardening,” she said. “There are so many volunteer opportunities – teaching youth, teaching adults, maintaining demonstration gardens, answering questions, organizing events, engaging in horticultural research, writing horticulture articles – the sky is the limit.”



SDSU Extension Master Gardeners host an educational booth at the SD State Fair. From left: Lael Abelmann, Sharelle Meyer and Nancy Kadous.



Coteau Prairie Master Gardener Club (Watertown area) hosted the 2024 state conference at Joy Ranch. | Photos courtesy of SDSU Extension.

Spring Has Sprung



JJ Martin

Member Services
and IT Director

Springtime is my favorite time of year. Ever since I was a kid, spring meant getting out of school and baseball season. Growing up in Rapid City, I was happy to toil the summer away at a ballpark, play

outside with the few kids who lived in my neighborhood, and play video games way too late into the night. Spring was often characterized by the excitement for the coming summer full of activity. Nowadays, summer looks quite a bit different.

Track season is kicking into full gear at area schools, meaning we aren't far off from some thrilling 4x400s to end a full day at a track meet. Ranchers and farmers are gearing up for a busy summer, and our communities have already started planning and preparing for celebrations and other events this June, July, and August. People are chomping at the bit to start their lawn care routine or get their gardens ready.

Your cooperative is also ramping up for a busy summer. Crews will be busy working on several projects that have been planned for a while. That said, if you plan to apply for another service, or you want to upgrade your current service, call the office at 605-865-3511



Don't let a small project cause a **BIG** problem!

811 is your first step to safety for all digging projects, regardless of the size.

Keep yourself, your community and underground utilities safe this summer and all year round by calling 811 or going online to 811beforeyoudig.com before putting a shovel in the ground.



and talk to Staking Foreman Hunter Smith. Projects tend to stack up pretty quickly, and by fall, Hunter is scheduled out into the winter. Make sure you aren't sitting with a completed project minus electricity by reaching out sooner than later.

This is a good time to remind all

members of the dangers of digging underground. Before you start moving dirt, be sure to call 811. Anybody with underground infrastructure in the area will come to locate any lines in your area, protecting you and ensuring uninterrupted services to the membership.

LOCATE YOUR ACCOUNT ADDRESS

If you locate your address on any of the inside pages of the Moreau-Grand Electric's Cooperative Connections, notify us and you will receive a \$25 bill credit.

Eligible addresses will not be on the front or back cover.

Annual Audit Performed

Elijah and Jordan from auditing firm Ketel Thorstenson, LLP, of Rapid City, S.D., completed the annual audit of Moreau-Grand Electric's records. The annual audit provides management and the board of directors with an independent opinion as to the accuracy and accounting compliance of the cooperative's financial statements. It is a check of the co-op's system of internal controls and compliance with the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) regulations. The audit includes checking member electric account billings, inventory of material and supplies, board minutes, policies and review of other accounting transactions. RUS requires an annual audit of the electric cooperative's books by an approved accounting firm with a final report being sent to RUS, the Cooperative Finance Corporation, CoBank, and to the Moreau-Grand Electric Board of Directors.

Elijah (left) and Jordan (right) have six and five years of auditing experience, respectively. They perform between 20 and 30 audits a year, seven of which are cooperatives. They both enjoy the opportunity to see different types of businesses and how uniquely they operate.



Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Moreau-Grand Electric Scholarship Winners

Now in its 34th year, the scholarship program recognizes and encourages academic and community achievements of students that are dependents of our members. It is considered an investment in the economic future of America.

Applications from across the Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative Service area were received. The applications were mailed to Basin Electric Power Cooperative in Bismarck, N.D., where a Scholarship Committee selected the winner.

Selection was based on ACT or SAT scores, grade point average, high school/college honors, community and

school activities, employment history, future career goals, and references.



Jordan Jones

In the member category, the \$1,000 scholarship provided by Moreau-Grand Electric and Basin Electric has been awarded to Timber Lake senior Jordan Jones! She is the daughter of Dylan and Tricia Jones of Trail City, S.D., and she plans to attend BHSU to pursue a degree in Special Education.

Second place applications from co-ops in the Rushmore group (MGE and seven others) are sent to Rushmore



Jessa Pederson

Electric Power Cooperative. Rushmore Electric then chooses two out of that pool to award a \$500 scholarship.

Jessa Pederson, who has been awarded the MGE Directors' Scholarship, was chosen by Rushmore Electric! Congrats again, Jessa!



Local, state and federal officials celebrate the ribbon-cutting of the new Lieutenant Commander John C. Waldron Memorial Bridge, March 25, 2025. Photo by Marcy Anderson, Courtesy of the Pierre Area Chamber of Commerce.

BRIDGING HISTORY

The Demolition of the Waldron Memorial Bridge

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Tons of concrete and steel came crashing down in a planned demolition of the Lt. Cmdr. John C. Waldron Memorial Bridge that connected Pierre and Fort Pierre over a half mile stretch of river. The planned explosion marked a significant historic moment for not only Pierre and Fort Pierre, but also eastern and western South Dakota.

The demolition of the bridge unfolded in seconds. A plume of black smoke erupted from the detonating cord placed at key points in the bridge, quickly followed by a bone-rattling shock wave. Paul Nelson, a recently retired employee of the South Dakota Department of Transportation, witnessed the end of the bridge's 63-year lifespan. Nelson, a member of Oahe Elec-

tric, spent over 40 years with the SDDOT, serving most of that time as the regional bridge engineer. In this role, he was responsible for the maintenance, inspection and upkeep of the very bridge that he saw demolished.

As legacy bridge engineer, this was not Nelson's first experience with such a demolition. "I had actually witnessed the 1986 demolition of the old truss bridge that was just downstream of the current railroad bridge – so I have been around something of this magnitude before," he explained.

Even still, Nelson laughed that the modern demolition had a "pretty good report when it went off."

Although the bridge has been decommissioned, its history endures. In 2002, the bridge was dedicated to Lt. Cmdr. John C.

Waldron, a naval aviator from Fort Pierre who led a torpedo squadron during the Battle of Midway in World War II. His actions proved pivotal in the battle, but led to death of himself and most of his squadron. Of the 30 men who served under his command, only one survived the Battle of Midway.

Waldron's legacy is still commemorated through the new Pierre-Fort Pierre Bridge, which had its ribbon-cutting ceremony last month.

Construction of the new bridge began in 2020, just yards from the old bridge's location. In total, the bridge cost nearly \$50 million and is designed to last a century.

"This bridge is going to be a beautiful and wonderful enhancement to the communities and something that will last more than a hundred years," South Dakota Governor Larry Rhoden said at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new bridge that now connects the two halves of the state.

BRIDGE DEMOLITION



The Lt. Cmdr. John C. Waldron Memorial Bridge comes crashing down at 9:03 a.m., on March 13.
Photos by Frank Turner.





Photo courtesy of the Belle Fourche Police Dept.

PROTECT AND SERVE

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy proclaimed May 15 as National Police Officers Memorial Day and the week as National Police Week.

As we pay special recognition to our law enforcement officers, we want to spotlight some of the selfless work police officers do to better serve communities and make positive impacts in people's lives.

Jacob Boyko

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In Belle Fourche, it's fun to hang out with the cops.

That's the consensus among fifth graders in the Kids-n-Cops programs when officers from the Belle Fourche Police Department arrive at kids' homes early in the morning to pick them up for an unforgettable Christmas shopping spree.

"We pick up the kids from their houses, drive them around for about a half hour and let them activate the lights and sirens, then we bring them to Runnings and go on a shopping spree for their family," explained Police Chief Ryan Cherveney. "They can buy shopping cart loads of gifts for everyone in their house, and then still buy some gifts for themselves."

The outing continues with games, gift wrapping and a pizza party. At the end of the day, officers drop the kids off at their

homes, leaving behind not only presents but a lasting friendship.

The police department works with the school to target children who may be going through something at home or could otherwise benefit from a friendly acquaintance with some of Belle Fourche's finest.

The program is supported by donations from community – last year, the community sponsored \$500 shopping limits for 16 kids.

Cherveney, who's headed the program for more than a decade, says it's as big of a hit with his officers as it is with the fifth graders.

"It's one of the things every year the officers look forward to," Cherveney explained. "We never have to ask for volunteers because just about everybody volunteers. Even the guys working the overnights come in, do the event, and then

go home and try to get the last two hours of sleep before they come back to work."

Knowing the community members they serve and making a difference in the life of a kid boosts officers' mental health "tremendously," he added.

"It helps keep the officers grounded – they know the people that they're serving and that they're there to protect. [Knowing community members] can help alleviate a really stressful situation into a much more manageable one where we're able to work with people to resolve things."

He continued, "Our main focus is just being out there in the community, helping kids recognize that when we show up to their houses during negative events, we're there because we have a job – it's less scary for the children and they see we're people they can always come to when they need somebody"

The success of the program and the outpouring of community support has led the department to expand their community involvement beyond Christmas shopping, according to Police Administrative Technician Mardi Reeves. The police force also distributed grocery

cards, gift bags, food and blankets to families in need. Reeves estimates a community-wide impact of nearly 200 people in 2024.

Police officers and other first responders also coach little league sports, with plans to soon offer registration fee and equipment “scholarships” so any kid can get involved.

“There are a lot of under-privileged children who can’t be in sports that end up wandering around town with nothing to do and trouble tends to find them,” Reeves said. “Having them participate in a sport really helps with that.”

Chervený says he is grateful for the continued community support that not only makes the Kids-n-Cops program possible, but also creates lasting friendships and memories for kids and their families.

“We had a kid that went shopping with us, and he ended up buying a popcorn popper, oil, butter, cheese, and the different popcorn toppings along with gifts for his other siblings,” Chervený remembered. “The family had never been able to go to a movie – the parents worked rough schedules – so this was the opportunity. The kid bought some movies and a Blu-ray player and the whole purpose was so that they could sit down and watch movies as a family.”

Gregory Police Chief Ryan Cook also believes in the merits of community

involvement. In Gregory, he spearheads multiple community initiatives including the popular bike rodeo.

A partnership between the police department, Avera Health and Gregory’s volunteer ambulance and fire services, the bike rodeo teaches kids – and anyone else interested – the rules of the road for kids on bicycles as well as other safety tips.

“We have volunteers at different stations and the kids go around to each station and participate in whatever event that is,” Cook explained. “One of the stations is helmet sizing and we hand out free helmets, other stations make sure the bicycle chain is lubed up and tight and the different parts are working correctly, and so on.”

The department is involved in other ways, too. For example, the officers work with the post office to ensure children’s letters to Santa Claus are delivered to the North Pole and receive a response.

The involvement is a necessity, explained Cook, because police can’t do their jobs and serve their communities without building relationships first.

“You need to be someone the community trusts,” he said. “You want folks to be comfortable approaching you, knowing there’s an open door, knowing they’re welcome to make the phone call or stop in. And obviously, when our officers are active and out doing stuff, it’s that much easier.”



Officer Allan Guinard helps local children with their Christmas shopping.
Photo courtesy of the Belle Fourche Police Dept.



The Annual Bike Rodeo. Photo courtesy of the Gregory Police Dept.

Women in Law Enforcement



Metzger

Public service knows no gender, and neither does a career in law enforcement. That’s the message South Dakota Highway Patrol

deputy Emily Metzger wants to send to young girls with a passion for public service.

Originally from Kansas, Metzger attended the University of South Dakota in Vermillion to study criminal justice and public administration.

“I wanted to be in law enforcement since I was very young,” Metzger explained. My grandfather was in law enforcement, and in college I worked for the fire department and ambulance and really decided being a first responder was something I wanted to do.”

After college, she attended the police academy training in Pierre, where for 13 weeks she studied everything ranging from traffic stops to defensive tactics to interrogation. Then, another 10 weeks of highway patrol academy and another 10 weeks of field training.

“In South Dakota, the Highway Patrol offers a lot of different things,” Metzger said. “All of our education and training is 100% paid for and they pay your salary while you’re there.”

While the Highway Patrol isn’t exactly brimming with female troopers, Metzger said she’s on the scene to help just like anyone else.

“I have the same expectations as any trooper highway patrol – there’s no special treatment,” she said.

Metzger encourages young women interested in applying to reach out to a local law enforcement officer for more information.



MAY 31, JUNE 28, JULY 26
Fort Sisseton Lantern Tour
 Lake City, SD
 605-910-4465

*Photo courtesy of
 Travel South Dakota*

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.

APRIL 27
Country Roads
 2 p.m. Matinee
 Gayville Music Hall
 Gayville, SD
 605-760-5799

MAY 2-3
SD Spring Square Dance Festival
 Fri. 7:30-10:30 p.m.
 Sat. 9:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m.
 Faith Lutheran Church
 601 N. Cliff Ave.
 Sioux Falls, SD
 Call for events & times
 605-360-2524

MAY 3-4
Prairie Village Events
 Sat. Consignment Auction
 Sun. Season Opening
 Madison, SD
www.prairievillage.org

MAY 3
West River Pheasants Forever Banquet
 5 p.m. Central Time
 Draper Auditorium
 Draper, SD
 605-516-0143

MAY 3
American Legion Post 15
Just Because It's Time to Dance
 6-10:30 p.m.
 El Riad Shrine
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-336-3470

MAY 3
Rummage & Bake Sale
 8 a.m.-12 p.m.
 5103 Longview Rd.
 Rapid City, SD

MAY 6-7
7th Annual Energize!
Exploring Innovative Rural Communities Conference
 Hosted by SDSU Extension
 Community Vitality
 Platte, SD
 605-626-2870

MAY 10
Cinco De Mayo Falls Park Fiesta
 11 a.m.-7 p.m.
 Sioux Falls, SD

MAY 17
Norwegian Independence Day
 Vivian, SD
 605-222-3296

MAY 17
Annual Plant Sale
 9 a.m.-11 a.m.
 Codington Co. Extension Complex
 Watertown, SD
 830-534-5359

MAY 23-25
Brandon's Big Car Show
 Carnival & Car Show
 Fri. 6-11 p.m.
 Sat. 1-11 p.m., Car Show 1-4 p.m.
 Sun. 12-5 p.m.
 815 McHardy Rd
 Brandon, SD

MAY 31
Auto Parts Swap Meet & Car Show
 8 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Brown County Fairgrounds
 Aberdeen, SD

MAY 31
Miss Prairie Village Pageant
 6:30 p.m.
 Lawrence Welk Opera House
 Madison, SD
www.prairievillage.org

MAY 31
Hay Country Jamboree
 7 p.m.
 Gayville Music Hall
 Gayville, SD
 605-760-5799

JUNE 5
Danish Constitution Day Celebration
 6:15 p.m.-9 p.m.
 Danish Folk Dancing & Music
 Daneville Heritage Museum
 Viborg, SD
 605-766-1312
danevilleheritage.com

JUNE 11
Agricultural Women's Day
 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Agar-Blunt-Onida School
 Onida, SD
 605-769-0013

JUNE 13
Jesse James Days
 Garretson, SD
visitgarretsonsd.com

Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.