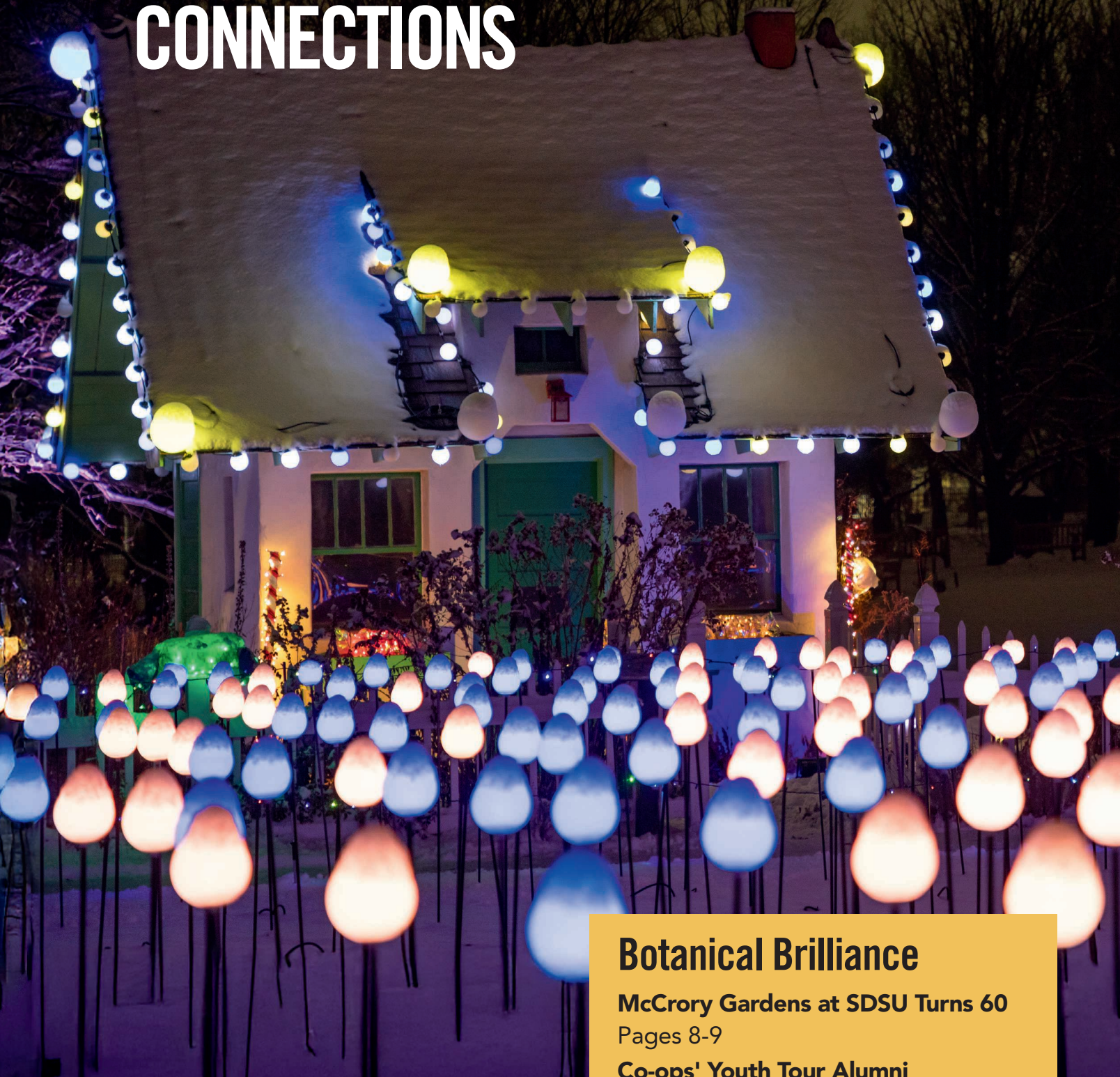


# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## **Botanical Brilliance**

**McCrary Gardens at SDSU Turns 60**

Pages 8-9

**Co-ops' Youth Tour Alumni**

Pages 12-13

The annual Garden Glow celebration at SDSU's McCrary Gardens turns the space into a winter wonderland with festive lights and decorations.

*Photo by McCrary Gardens*



# A Holiday Twist



**Russell Gall**  
Manager

Back in 1982, after my electrician job in Wyoming ended, I found myself a severely unemployed young man with a wife and baby daughter, living in my hometown of Lake Andes. Although I was working some odd jobs with my father, the economy at the time was such that there was not a lot of work happening in the electrical field. Realizing that I needed to provide for my little family, I did what I could to make ends meet, but I really had no concrete plans for the near future.

Luckily, Serendipity took an interest in my life and along came the Thanksgiving winter storm of 1982. With heavy wet snow and high winds, the storm wreaked havoc, knocking out power in much of Charles Mix County. There were many CME members in the dark over that holiday weekend. Although it's been over 40 years, I'll bet there are still a few members who remember that storm. It was a real doozy!

Shortly after the weather turned nice again that November, I received a call from Ed Ayers, the General Manager of Charles Mix Electric. He asked if I wanted to help the two-man crew in the Platte area as they cleaned up the aftermath of that storm. I obviously had nothing better to do and jumped at the opportunity to earn a little extra cash. The pay was a whopping \$6 per hour, which at the time seemed pretty decent. Driving our one and only vehicle to Platte every day, I arrived at the outpost building north of town promptly at 8 a.m., ready to tackle whatever the day had in store. The work was fairly easy;

however, as an electrician, I had zero knowledge of what line work was all about. Thankfully, the two journeymen in Platte were happy to train me to do line work and speak in lineman-isms. After a couple of weeks, I was really getting the hang of the job, speaking the lingo and basically feeling pretty comfortable with my new role.

Queue Serendipity's daughter, Destiny, in the form of the Christmas storm of 1982! This storm was a real holiday twist as it was just as bad, if not worse, than the Thanksgiving storm that had occurred just weeks earlier. Once again, the weather really socked it to the CME distribution

system, making the wires dance and the poles twist until they snapped off. Even with zero experience on power outages, I was called in to help on that Christmas Eve. When I got to the shop, I was paired up with Leonard Dvorak - the saltiest lineman to ever grace the halls of CME - and sent out to do what linemen do. Leonard and I went from one place to another all night long, working on whatever we could find to restore power. In reality, Leonard worked while I stood there like a bundled-up slab of meat with mittens, unsure of what I was doing out in this storm at 4 am.

*(continued on page 11)*



## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### CHARLES MIX ELECTRIC

(ISSN) No. 1531-0922  
MANAGER Russell A. Gall  
cme@cme.coop

CME Board of Directors  
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Vice-President Sam Schuman  
Secretary/Treasurer Ron Samuelson  
Directors: Brice Bultje, Tiphany Dvorak, Todd Link, Denise Soukup,

**Regular meetings of the board of directors of this cooperative are held on the third Thursday of each month.**

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Member Services Michael Dangel  
Acctg/Work Orders Carol Dvorak  
Secretary/Cashier Sally Florey  
Line Supt Chad Loeffler

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Website: <http://www.cme.coop>



## THE COUNTRY COOKIN' cookbook

### RECIPES NEEDED

Help us create another great cookbook by submitting your favorite recipes.



Submit recipes to [graphics@eastriver.coop](mailto:graphics@eastriver.coop) or contact your local co-op for more information.

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE DECEMBER 15TH, 2025**

*Submit to be entered into a drawing for 1 of 2 \$100 Visa gift cards*

### CALENDAR RAFFLE WINNERS - SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2025

**Green Mountain Grill - Lisa Howell, Milwaukee, WI**  
**Ninja Pro Cookware Set - Rhonda Tuscherer, FEM Electric, Ipswich, SD**  
**Stoeger 12 ga. Shotgun - Ryan Scharnott, Hermantown, MN**  
**Makita Cordless Chainsaw - Tyler Fisher, Grand Electric, Bison SD**

**Open 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**

**Open 7:00 a.m. Memorial Day through Labor Day**

**Closed weekends/holidays**

**Call 1-800-208-8587 for outages or emergencies.**

**Your meter is read on the 1st of each month. Payments are due by the 20th of each month. \$2 fee for late payments.**

# So, a Power Line Fell On Your Car...

Driving accidents can happen quickly and easily in the winter months with slick, inconspicuous coatings of black ice, reduced visibility and other weather-related safety hazards.

The important thing is that you know what to do if you find yourself in a collision with a utility pole – because what you don't know can seriously injure or kill you.

### If a power line falls on or near your vehicle and there is no fire...

Call 911 and remain in your vehicle until help arrives — this is where you are safest. Your vehicle may be insulating you from the electrical current. Once you leave the vehicle and place your foot on the ground, the electricity may take a path through your body and shock you.

Never go off looks; a downed power line may not be sparking or showing obvious signs of being live, but it may still be energized.

If someone attempts to assist you, warn them to stay back until the utility can de-energize the line.

### If a power line falls on or near your vehicle and there is a fire...

If your vehicle has caught fire, you must proceed with extreme caution. Again, even if a line isn't sparking, it may still be energized.

To make your escape, jump from your vehicle to the ground, making sure your body is not touching the ground and vehicle simultaneously. Making contact with both would make your body a direct conduit, and you would be electrocuted.

For that same reason, do not assist anyone else exiting the vehicle or accept help exiting the vehicle.

Once you're on the ground, keep your feet together and hop or shuffle away from the scene, at least 40 feet away. As you move, your goal is for there to not be a voltage difference between your feet. You do not want one foot off of the ground while the other foot is making contact with the ground.

Call 911 and warn others to stay away from the scene.

### If you come across downed power lines...

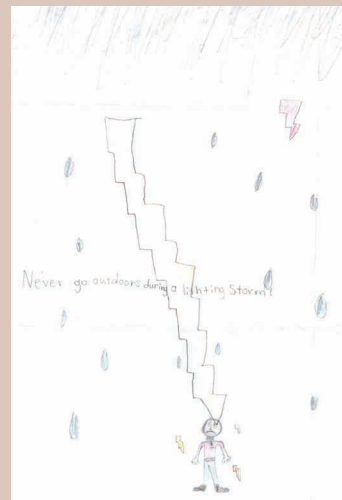
Stay no less than 40 feet away, as the ground can become energized. Never drive over downed power lines – not only do you risk electrocution and damage to your vehicle, but the added tension could pull down surrounding utility poles and create additional hazards.

### If you're a first responder at the scene...

Always assume lines are energized. Contact the utility and wait for them to de-energize the lines and give you the all-clear.



## "Never go outside during a lightning storm!"



**Josiah Krcil,  
Age 9**

Josiah cautions readers on the dangers of going outside during a lightning storm. Great picture, Josiah! Josiah's parents are Andrew and Andrea Krcil from Dante, 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.



# Specialty SOUPS

## CHEESEBURGER VEGETABLE SOUP

### Ingredients:

1 lb. ground beef  
2 lbs. block Velveeta cheese  
(2) 12 oz. cans evaporated milk  
(3) 10.5 oz. cans cream of mushroom soup  
10.5 oz. can cream of celery soup  
1 can French style green beans  
1 can mixed vegetables  
1 can diced potatoes

### Method

Brown ground beef. Cut Velveeta into cubes. Put all ingredients into slow cooker. Cook on low six to eight hours, stirring halfway through or cook on high two hours, and then on low another two hours, stirring halfway through.

**Wendy Thorson**  
Northern Electric

## DUMPLING SOUP

### Ingredients:

1 tbsp. vegetable oil  
2 tsps. sesame oil  
1 cup carrots, shredded  
5 green onions, thinly sliced (whites and greens separated)  
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped  
1/4 tsp. ground ginger  
1/4 cup white miso paste  
6 cups chicken vegetable broth, divided  
1 lb. frozen mini dumplings  
3 cups baby spinach  
3 tsps. soy sauce (plus more to serve)  
Hot sauce or chili oil to serve

### Method

In a large pot, heat the vegetable oil and sesame oil over medium heat. Add the carrots, green onion whites, garlic, and ginger. Cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables begin to soften, two to three minutes. In a small bowl, combine the miso paste with 1/2 cup broth, whisking until the miso is dissolved. Add the miso mixture and remaining broth to the pot and bring to a boil.

Add the dumplings and bring to a simmer. Heat until the dumplings are heated through, three to five minutes. Stir in the spinach, cooking until the greens are wilted, one to two minutes. Add the soy sauce and green onion greens.

Serve hot with hot sauce or chili oil, and extra soy sauce.

**Susan Forma**  
Union County Electric

## PHEASANT CHOWDER

### Ingredients:

2 pheasants (thighs and breasts: or only breasts if preferred)  
4 celery stalks, sliced  
1/2 lb. bacon strips, sliced  
1 large yellow onion, diced  
4 cups chicken broth  
4 medium size Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cubed  
3 cloves garlic, diced  
5 tsps. flour  
2 cups half-and-half  
1 cup parmesan cheese  
Salt and Pepper

### Method

Put cubed potatoes in a separate pot, cover with the chicken broth, and bring to a boil. Cook the potatoes until they are soft.

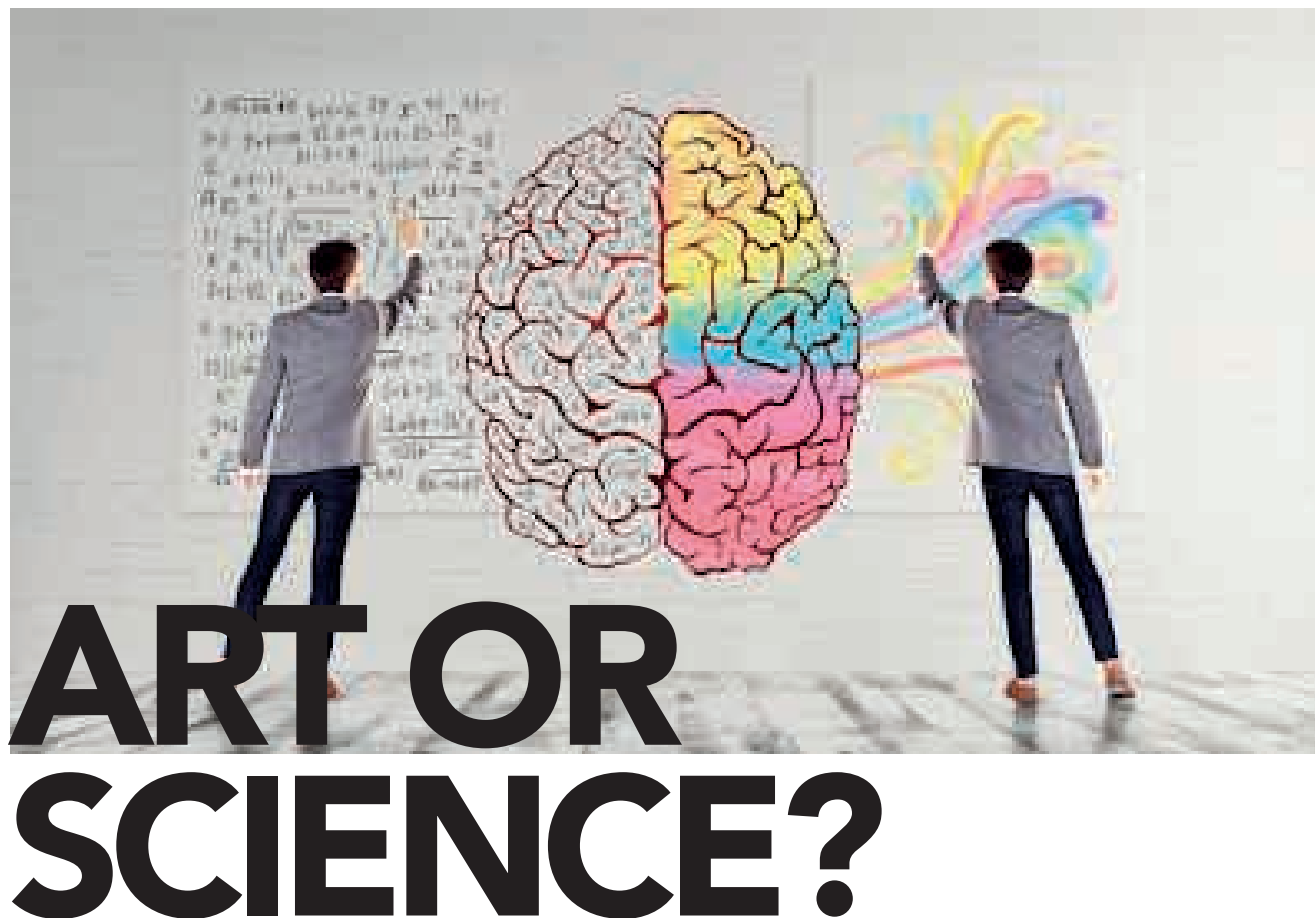
Slice the pheasant meat, across grain into 1/4 to 1/2 inch strips.

Cut bacon slices into small pieces and put in a Dutch oven on medium heat. Add diced celery and onion and cook until the bacon and celery are cooked through and onions are transparent. Add the garlic and pheasant. The meat should cook quickly because of the small sized pieces. Once meat is cooked, add the flour one tablespoon at a time while stirring the mixture, thoroughly coating the vegetables and meat.

Add the potatoes and broth from the separate pot. Once incorporated, stir in the half-and-half, then stir in the parmesan cheese. Salt and pepper to taste. This chowder is ready to eat once heated through, or you can let it simmer on low heat. Flavors should continue to meld.

**Nick Kvernevig**  
Lake Region Electric

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.

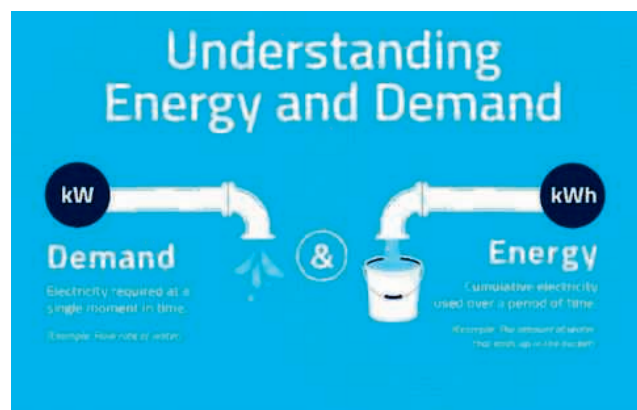


As CME prepares to implement an increase in electricity prices in January, 2026, we would like to explain the thought process involved in rate-setting. Designing electric rates is more of an art than a science. Every utility has its own way or philosophy of collecting the revenue needed to cover its expenses. Why is that? It's because each utility is different. No two utilities have the exact same operating costs or distribution system investments. For example, depending on the utility, they may have a different power supplier; are required to meet specific state regulations with associated costs; or may have made more/fewer upgrades to their distribution system.

The one thing every electric utility has in common is the components within the electric rate that need to be paid for which include energy, demand, and electrical facilities. For CME customers the electrical facilities cost is broken into two different components – service charge and capacity charge.

### DEMAND

Demand is measured in kilowatts (kW) and represents the rate at which electricity is being used. In other words, it's the amount of power required in an instant to satisfy the needs of all your connected appliances,







Above is a simplified look at the rate design process used at Charles Mix Electric. The process takes several months of diligent research and discussion on all levels before a new rate is announced to the members and put into use.

lighting, heating, and anything else in your home requiring electricity at the exact same time.

Charles Mix Electric residential members have a coincidental demand charge posted on their bill each month. This charge covers the cost incurred by the cooperative based on the members contribution to the region-wide coincidental demand peak. This peak occurs once a month for one thirty minute period, determined only after the month has ended. The Cooperative's wholesale power supplier charges Charles Mix Electric for coincidental demand too. In fact, half of the Co-op's nearly \$5 million dollar yearly power bill is based on demand during just six hours throughout the entire year!

### ENERGY

Energy is the total amount of electricity consumed over a certain time-period and is measured in kilowatt hours (kWh). Charles Mix Electric must pay for all of the energy its members use.

An easy way to think of energy and demand is through a water

bucket analogy. (See the graphic on page 6.) In this example, demand represents the speed of the water flow at any single moment in time and energy corresponds to the total amount of water that ends up in the bucket.

### FACILITIES

Electric facilities and the associated maintenance are paid for through the Service Charge and Capacity Charge on your bill. Every wire, cable, transformer, and switch costs money. This equipment is necessary so you can have the power you need at your home or business. That basic system equipment must be there regardless whether you use it or not, so electricity is available 24/7 when you turn on a light or start a load of laundry. Providing this fundamental system is covered by the Service Charge.

The Capacity Charge is an extension of the Facilities and is there to cover the cost related to the size of the equipment needed at each service. Every member location has equipment properly sized to provide power to your home, shop or grain

drying facility. The Capacity charge is meant to cover that cost related to the size of equipment needed.

Each rate class has different Service Charges based on the average amount of infrastructure it takes to get electricity to your home or business. For example, commercial members pay a higher Service Charge than the residential members because there are more transformers and distribution costs as part of the facilities charges.

### RATE DESIGN

Rate design is a multi-step process at Charles Mix Electric. The thorough process helps ensure that rates recover actual costs and are financially adequate; are fair and equitable; and are paid for by the 'cost causers' meaning costs are paid by the members who are responsible for incurring them.

As the Cooperative works through the rate design process, please know the CME management team, Board of Directors, and employees are all focused on you, our member. That focus is based on our organizational commitment.



During the annual Garden Glow event, McCrory Gardens in Brookings is transformed into a winter wonderland.  
Photo submitted by  
McCrory Gardens

# NATURE GROWS & GLOWS AT MCCRORY GARDENS

**Jacob Boyko**

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Tucked among the towering pines at the busy corner of 6th Street and 22nd Avenue in Brookings, S.D., you'll find a little plot of botanical paradise.

For 60 years, South Dakota State University's McCrory Gardens has not only served as a mecca for horticulture enthusiasts, but also a versatile, community-focused space for weddings, workshops and other seasonal festivities.

"Here, our mission is connecting people and plants through education, research, discovery and enjoyment of the natural and built landscape," said Lisa Marotz, director of McCrory Gardens.

Working toward that mission, Marotz and staff keep a schedule full of activities for SDSU students and community members with a variety of seasonal events: a spring-time syrup-making workshop where participants are taught to tap trees; the summer-time TuliPalooza where more than 15,000 tulip bulbs are planted in a colorful display; and the family-focused fall festival during Hobo Day weekend featuring horse-drawn hay rides and food trucks.

"There really is always something to see — just maybe not always what you expect," said Kathryn Bowar, an SDSU ag science

student and McCrory Gardens intern from Hoven, S.D.

Bowar says the space is increasingly popular for students looking to take a break from busy campus life to study, hang out with friends, or just enjoy time alone in a tranquil, outdoor environment surrounded by nature.

"I grew up as a ranch kid and adjusting to city life was overwhelming at times," Bowar added. "Coming to McCrory Gardens was a breath of fresh air and helped me recenter in the beauty of nature."

The garden's hallmark event is the regionally renowned Garden Glow, which transforms the dormant grounds into a winter wonderland with bright and festive Christmas lights and decorations.

"Garden Glow is a way that we are able to bring thousands of people to a botanical garden in South Dakota in December," Marotz said with a laugh. "We started out in 2015 when about 51 people came. Last year we were up to about 13,000, so it's grown a lot in popularity."

At the upcoming Garden Glow, visitors will meander through the reindeer meadow, travel across the life-size "Candy Land" board, warm up with a stop at the hot cocoa hut and peek inside Santa's summer-time home while exploring all the garden has to offer.

And there's been a lot of change over the garden's 60-year history, from new flowerbeds and gardens to patios and memorials.

But despite that, Marotz says she and her staff work to ensure the original vision of the garden and the contributions of those who worked before her are preserved.

Rather than tearing out and replacing sections of the gardens, the staff update and add to the space, with each parcel of the 25-acre garden bearing the fingerprints of past enthusiasts who cultivated, researched and appreciated the flora that make the Midwest beautiful.

"We have visitors comment that they now know what heaven looks like," Marotz said. "That's what people feel here: sanctuary and peace."



Lisa Marotz – McCrory Gardens Director since 2016 – with intern Kathryn Bowar, who is beginning her third fall working at the garden.  
Photo by Jacob Boyko



With bright, blooming flowers, McCrory Gardens is the perfect stop for migrating butterflies and other helpful pollinators.  
*Photo by Jacob Boyko*



Many area visitors recognize this cottage as the 1928 Lawson Gas Station in Lake Preston, which was moved to McCrory Gardens in 1996 and renovated in 2024.  
*Photo by Jacob Boyko*



Each cactus in the cacti garden is dug up each fall and moved into a greenhouse on campus before being replanted in the spring.  
*Photo by Jacob Boyko*



The 1991 Sioux Quartzite rock garden and 2013 waterfall are a favorite fixture in the garden — and the site of numerous summertime marriage proposals.  
*Photo by Jacob Boyko*



A labyrinth of pathways and trails lined with mature trees and vines give garden visitors a sense of exploration — even though they're right in the middle of Brookings.  
*Photo by Jacob Boyko*



During the Garden Glow event, the East Terrace Lawn and Gazebo becomes The Enchanted Forest. Marotz notes this was the site of the first Garden Glow in 2015 — miniscule compared to today's expansive decorating.

**This winter, Garden Glow is open 5-9 p.m. from Dec. 6, 2025 through Jan. 6, 2026.**

*Photo submitted by McCrory Gardens*

# 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY THE MCCRORY STORY

*Photos submitted by  
McCrory Gardens*

## 1964

The S.D. Legislature approves funds to construct Bailey Rotunda and Wagner Hall on the site of SDSU's Horticulture-Forestry Gardens. Samuel A. McCrory, head of the horticulture department at SDSU, advocated for a research garden filled with S.D. flora that would also serve as a learning center for students. McCrory passed away March 10, 1964.



## 1966

The new horticulture garden is formally dedicated "McCrory Gardens" to honor the late department head.



## 1977

McCrory Gardens receives the prestigious All-American Display Garden Award. The Garden is now designated to receive and showcase winning plant selections each year.



## 1979

McCrory Gardens is named on a list of the top 10 small gardens in the U.S. by ARCO Travel Club Magazine.



## 1988

The first annual Garden Party is held to fund the maintenance and operating costs of the garden.



## 1994

The late Gov. George Mickelson is honored in the newly-constructed Mickelson Grove.



## 2012

The new Education & Visitor Center is dedicated.



## 2025

**McCrory Gardens celebrates its 60th anniversary!**



# 2026 Fundraiser Calendars Available

## 3rd annual effort to benefit Line Patrol charity fund

What began in 2023 as a project to complement the rural electric charity ride hosted by CME has now become an annual project. The 2026 “Raffle Calendars” are available for sale. This year’s calendar offers 22 chances to win prizes ranging from gift cards to guns to weekend getaways and more.

Proceeds from the fundraising effort benefit the SD Rural Electric “Line Patrol” charity, a fund which assists rural electric employees who are facing a hardship due to severe illness or injury or have suffered a life-altering-catastrophic event. The annual Line Patrol Charity Ride is a project that was born 23 years ago by a group of co-op employees. The ride itself is the primary fundraising effort, with supplemental funds coming from co-op hosted events ranging from bowling and golf

tournament to raffles and silent auctions, and of course the calendar sales. Over the past 23 years, the fund has helped over 650 families in their time of need.

Calendars can be purchased for \$25, and can be mailed for a small extra fee. Payment can be made via cash, check or money order, card payment, or Venmo. Once you’ve got your calendar, be sure to follow CME on Facebook, where monthly drawings are broadcast live.



Charles Mix Electric Assoc, Inc.  
@Charles-MixElectric



### List of Prizes

#### 2026 Calendar Prizes

January	- Runnings Gift Card \$400 / Henry .22 Rifle
February	- Wine Package / Party Speaker
March	- Milwaukee Cordless Shop Light / Glock 22
April	- Ruger 10/22 / Custom Line Patrol Fire Pit
May	- Nebraska Husker's vs Ohio (September 5th) 4 Tickets / \$500 Hotel & Gas Card
June	- Kayak / Blackstone Grill
July	- 9MM Pistol / Drone
August	- Apple iPad / \$250 Meat Bundle & Cooler
September	- Patio Heater / Crossbow
October	- Over-Under Shotgun / Cordless Chainsaw
November	- Rolling Tool Chest / Rifle-Scope Package
December	- Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo Package \$1000 Value

#### NOTES:

Meat Bundle will be from winner's **MEAT LOCKER** of choice  
Raffle prizes may be modified or substituted if needed

Left: The Venmo information and QR code can be used for calendar purchases.





## YOUTH TOUR

Join students from across South Dakota for a free, once-in-a-lifetime trip to Washington, D.C., sponsored by your electric cooperative

Contact your electric cooperative for more details and application information!

**Study Packets will be available in local schools after December 1st. Testing will occur mid-January, 2026. Two winners to be chosen!**

Right: A few photos from Russell's early days as a CME lineman and as the Member Services Advisor.

## Manager's Column

*continued from page 2*

My career prospects changed after that second storm, and it was the reason that I ended up with a permanent job at CME. You see, the storm damage left a great deal of work to be done, and Ed realized that two Platte lineman, no matter how talented, could not repair their part of the system in a timely manner without some help. Since I had kept my nose clean, Ed offered me a permanent position starting in April of 1983.

As we approach the 43rd anniversary of those two storms and with the holiday season now upon us, I couldn't help but reminisce about a time in my life when I was so blessed by circumstances. I am filled with thankfulness that I am a part of such a great organization serving the good people of this scenic area.

I am also thankful for all the employees who mentored me throughout the years, and I am grateful for the educational opportunities, life experiences, and promotions that placed me in this position today. Am I ready to celebrate with another couple of holiday storms? Oh, heck no!

As I end this trip of gratitude, I just want to thank the employees, the Board of Directors, and the members of this cooperative for making this a great place to work, and I fully appreciate all of you. Along with all the people I have come to know in the electric industry, I am especially thankful for my family, including my wife, kids and my eight crazy grandchildren who make my life chaotic, yet enjoyable.

Take care and treasure the blessings over the upcoming holidays and please be safe as we head into the winter months. God bless everyone.







The 2006 Youth Tour group takes a photo on the Albert Einstein Memorial in Washington, D.C.  
Photo by Brenda Kleinjan

# YOUTH TODAY. LEADERS TOMORROW.

## South Dakota's Youth Tour Continues to Inspire Leadership Years Later

**Frank Turner**

[frank.turner@sdsrea.coop](mailto:frank.turner@sdsrea.coop)

Each summer, a new group of South Dakota teens will board a plane for Washington, D.C., full of excitement for the trip of a lifetime. They're part of the South Dakota Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, a weeklong experience that connects rural students to the people, places and ideas that shape our country.

The Youth Tour began after a 1957 speech by former Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson, who encouraged electric cooperatives to send young people to the Capitol so they could "see what the flag stands for." Since South Dakota sent

its first group in 1963, more than 1,300 students have made the trip.

During the trip, students visit landmarks like Ford's Theater, the National Archives and the U.S. Capitol. They meet members of Congress, make friends from across the country and see firsthand how decisions made in Washington affect people back home.

For many, the most meaningful part of the trip happens long after they return. The experience lights a spark that shapes how they view their communities and their roles within them.

Two of those alumni, Kevin Larsen and Andi Fouberg, still carry lessons from their Youth Tour experiences today.

### Kevin Larsen

Kevin Larsen remembers applying for Youth Tour in 2006 as a junior from Howard High School to represent Central Electric Cooperative.

"I've always been a history nut," he said. "My parents, like a lot of farmers, weren't made of money. This was a chance to go see the nation's capital, and I figured, why not apply?"

Once he decided to apply, he approached his high school English teacher, who helped him polish his essay, which landed on the desk of longtime Central Electric Cooperative General Manager Ken Schlimgen. "Lo and behold, the legendary Ken Schlimgen gives me a call," Larsen said. "And the rest is history."

Larsen now serves as the public information officer for the South Dakota State Historical Society in Pierre. He is also active in local organizations and community leadership roles, serving as president of the Pierre Kiwanis Club, incoming exalted ruler for the Pierre Elks Lodge, and in 2025



he ran for a position on the Pierre City Commission, only to come short by a handful of votes.

“These types of trips instill a passion for civics, and I think they mean a lot more for rural South Dakota kids,” Larsen said. “I’m from the middle of nowhere, Canova, South Dakota – a lot of people don’t even know where that is. The nearest town from our farm was six miles away, and that town is 100 people if everybody’s home. I think the opportunity to travel means more coming from somebody that was raised on a farm.”

He laughs when he thinks back to the trip. He keeps in touch with one of his roommates from that week. “You build connections you don’t expect,” he said. “One of the guys I roomed with ended up being a friend of my wife’s, and years later he attended our wedding.”

Larsen also credits his former Youth Tour Director, Brenda Kleinjan, for making the trip a success. “She was so passionate about the places we visited,” he said. “We weren’t just seeing historic monuments; we were learning what they meant.”

For Larsen, that week in D.C. helped set him on a lifelong path of leadership. “That trip really instilled that leadership ability and finding that inner voice to apply for something you might not think would ever happen,” he said. “When I sent off the essay in high school, I would have never imagined in my wildest dreams that I’d get an all-expenses-paid trip to D.C. We even ate well, too.”

## Andi Fouberg

When Andi Fouberg applied for the Youth Tour, she was a high school student from Letcher. “I’m pretty sure my best



**Kevin Larsen**  
2006 Youth Tour Alum  
*Submitted Photo*



**Andi Fouberg**  
1994 Youth Tour Alum  
*Submitted Photo*

friend went the year before, and I thought that seemed pretty cool,” she said.

Also representing Central Electric Cooperative, she joined the 1994 Youth Tour, a year she remembers vividly for an unusual reason.

“The night before we left was when O.J. Simpson went on the white Ford Bronco run through Los Angeles,” she said with a laugh. “We watched it on TV in the hotel in Sioux Falls because we met there and stayed the night before we all flew out together.”

The trip instilled an early passion for civic life in Fouberg. After college, she moved to Washington, D.C., and spent 10 years as Sen. John Thune’s communications director.

“Youth Tour was what prompted me to want to be in D.C. at some point,” Fouberg said.

While working for Sen. Thune, Fouberg would regularly meet new Youth Tour students visiting the Capitol every year in June.

“I’d see these students walking the same halls I once toured, wide-eyed and curious, and I’d think, that was me,” she said.

Now, Fouberg leads the South Dakota State University Alumni Association as its president and CEO. She credits that early trip with showing her what public service and connection can look like.

“The trip had an impact on me wanting to be out there and be part of that environment,” she said. “It made me want to be part of the process and feel like you are part of the government machine, but in a way that helps people.”

Reflecting on it now, she believes the experience gives students from small towns something they might not otherwise see.

“Growing up in Letcher or any small community in South Dakota, I don’t know that civic engagement is something you naturally imagine yourself doing without exposure from something like Youth Tour,” she said. “Without exposure to Washington D.C. through something like that, I probably would not have pursued that path. It all had its roots in Youth Tour.”



Kevin Larsen (left) takes a photo with Youth Tour friends at the FDR Memorial in 2006.  
*Photo by Brenda Kleinjan*

# When Will the Peak Happen?

## High-Demand times shift with colder weather

As we slip into the month of November, the sweltering, humid days of summer are behind us for another year. We’ve been blessed with a beautiful fall season; at the time of this writing, temps were still reaching the mid-60s during the day, and as yet without a killing frost overnight.

However, as it always does, winter weather will soon come our way, prompting all of us to crank up those furnaces, plug in those tractors, take those long, hot showers and baths, and other activities that can lead to increased electrical usage.

The moment in time when CME as a system reaches its maximum, or peak, use of electricity is shown on each billing statement, and the amount of power being drawn through your meter at that time is reflected in your billing statement as “coincidental demand”. This summer, members learned to curb their usage during mid-day through evening, the hours of the day in which the demand for power was likely to spike.

As winter approaches, the time of day when the system is likely to hit the peak begins to shift somewhat. Trends show that during colder weather, a peak is most likely to occur in the early morning hours, as people awaken and nudge up the thermostat a bit, or in the early evening, as the temperature drops. The chart below can be a helpful

guide in determining when it may be a good idea to reduce your usage or shift your electrical workload to different times, in order to keep your coincidental demand charge lower.

Does this mean we’re instructing everyone to turn off their heat and layer on three sweaters and two pairs of long johns for up to ten hours a day? Not at all. This is where the peak demand notification system can be a big help. That window of time when a peak “might” happen can be narrowed considerably. In fact, the first two peak alert periods for October lasted only 1.5 to two hours, from approximately 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

If you aren’t already receiving these helpful notices, get signed up at [www.cme.coop/notification](http://www.cme.coop/notification).

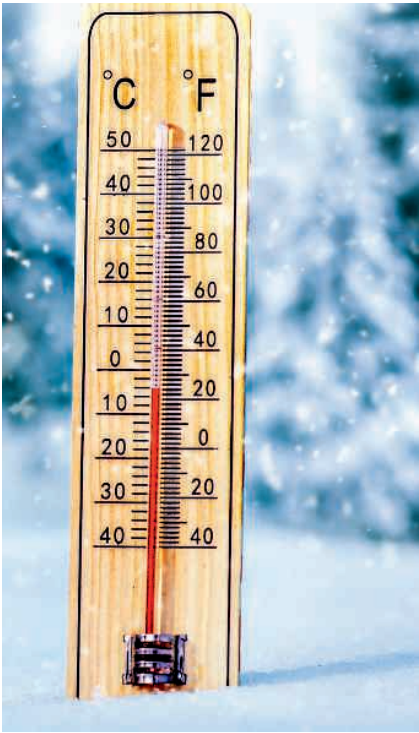


With the new demand rates that began on April 1st, members may have concerns about when the coincidental demand peak period will occur each month. Especially since the time when you use electricity will become as important as how much you use.

The chart below is an easy way to pay less for electricity by avoiding the times of the day shown in white on the chart, when the peak demand periods are most likely to occur. By simply moving your big electricity-using jobs, such as laundry or cooking, earlier or later to the shaded times of day, you can avoid the coincidental peak demand and the charges that go with it. Also, sign up to receive text notifications alerting you to coincidental peak demand conditions. Visit [www.cme.coop/notification](http://www.cme.coop/notification) to enroll.

No Coincidental Demand periods will occur during the shaded times of the days.																								
Summer Months: June, July, August, September																								
Winter Months: January, February, March, April, May, October, November, December																								
Hour	12 AM	1 AM	2 AM	3 AM	4 AM	5 AM	6 AM	7 AM	8 AM	9 AM	10 AM	11 AM	12 PM	1 PM	2 PM	3 PM	4 PM	5 PM	6 PM	7 PM	8 PM	9 PM	10 PM	11 PM
Summer													-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Winter													-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Coincidental Demand does not apply to All Electric Heating system demand and will not affect the billing.																								

Coincidental Demand does not apply to All Electric Heating system demand and will not affect the billing.



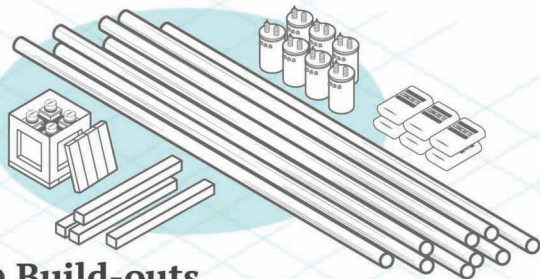


# Infrastructure Costs

The past five years have been a period of exploding costs for the electric utility industry and for broadband providers, pushed by soaring demand, supply chain challenges, raw materials shortages, increased labor costs and tariffs. The impact has been rapid increases in the cost of producing power, longer and more unpredictable project timelines and the need for more financing, all of which have driven electric rates up for residences, businesses and other end-users. Here's a look at what's contributing to the trend. **Percent increase since 2020:**

## Infrastructure

Utility poles (wood, steel, composite)	+25–40%
Crossarms & braces (steel/wood)	+20–35%
Conductor wire (aluminum/copper)	+30–50%
Transformers	+70–100%
Grain-oriented electrical steel	+80–100%
Oil/dielectric fluids	+25–40%
Copper wiring	+50%
Concrete	+25–35%
Smart meters	+20–35%
Pad-mounted switchgear	+25–40%
Circuit breakers/reclosers	+20–35%



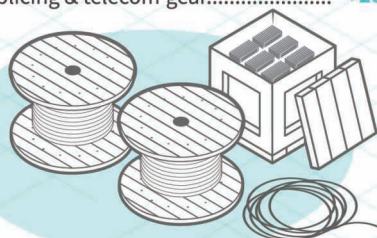
## Build-outs

Utility construction labor	+20–40%
Freight/logistics	+30–60%



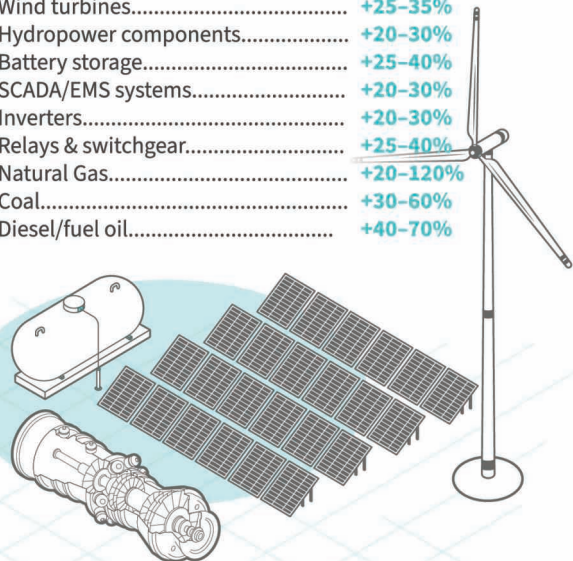
## Broadband

Fiber-optic cable	+25–40%
Splicing & telecom gear	+20–30%



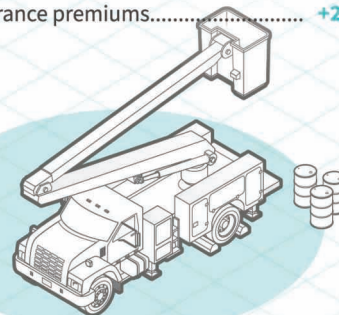
## Generation

Diesel gensets	+20–40%
Gas turbines	+20–30%
Solar PV systems	+25–35%
Wind turbines	+25–35%
Hydropower components	+20–30%
Battery storage	+25–40%
SCADA/EMS systems	+20–30%
Inverters	+20–30%
Relays & switchgear	+25–40%
Natural Gas	+20–120%
Coal	+30–60%
Diesel/fuel oil	+40–70%



## Fleets

Light trucks	+25–40%
Bucket trucks, digger derricks	+20–50%
Fuel costs (especially diesel)	+20–30%
Maintenance	+15–25%
Insurance premiums	+20%



Sources: BLS; energynews.com; Reuters; Wood Mackenzie; NREL; IEA

## REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at the Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Your E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**NOV. 25-DEC. 26**  
**Christmas at the Capitol**  
8 a.m.-10 p.m. (holidays included)  
Pierre, SD  
605-773-3178  
[christmasatthecapitol.sd.gov](http://christmasatthecapitol.sd.gov)

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.

**NOV. 28**  
**Parade of Lights**  
7 p.m.  
Main Street  
Chamberlain, SD

**NOV. 29**  
**Gregory Mid-Winter Fair**  
9 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Gregory, SD  
605-830-9778

**NOV. 30**  
**Pepperberries Christmas Market**  
11 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
141 N. 3rd St.  
Emery, SD

**DEC. 4**  
**Parade of Lights**  
6-7 p.m.  
Vermillion, SD  
605-624-5571

**DEC. 5**  
**Hometown Christmas**  
Downtown  
Plankinton, SD

**DEC. 5**  
**Hometown Holiday**  
Main Street  
Kimball, SD

**DEC. 5-7, 12-14**  
**Mighty Corson Players Humbug**  
Dec. 5-6, 12-13: 7:30 p.m.  
Dec. 7, 14: 2:30 p.m.  
Corson, SD  
[www.mightycorson.com](http://www.mightycorson.com)

**DEC. 6**  
**Parade of Lights**  
Main Street  
Howard, SD

**DEC. 6**  
**KJAM Parade of Lights**  
5:30 p.m.  
Madison, SD

**DEC. 7**  
**KCBA Hometown Christmas**  
10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
Kadoka City Auditorium  
Kadoka, SD  
605-488-0151

**DEC. 13-14**  
**Alexandria Winterfest**  
Downtown  
Alexandria, SD

**DEC. 14**  
**Lake Campbell Lutheran Cookie Walk**  
9 a.m.  
46610 219th St.  
Volga, SD  
605-864-9907

**DEC. 14**  
**A Poker Alice Christmas**  
2 p.m.  
Gayville Music Hall  
Gayville, SD  
605-760-5799

**DEC. 14**  
**Canova Firemen's Pancake Feed**  
Legion Hall  
Canova, SD

**DEC. 15**  
**Holiday Jam with the Hegg Brothers**  
7-9 p.m.  
H.S. Performing Arts Center  
Mitchell, SD

**DEC. 21**  
**Bethlehem in Brule County**  
5 p.m.  
Ag Building  
Pukwana, SD  
605-730-0553

**DEC. 30**  
**Phil Baker Music & Movement**  
10 a.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m.  
401 Create  
Mitchell, SD  
605-990-7919

**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.**