

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Get Out & Vote!

It's Your Civic Duty

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Upcoming Energy Projects

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Wimpy Will Gladly Pay You Tuesday



Russell Gall
Manager

When I was a kid back in the 1960s, we had a whopping three television channels to choose from. Of course, that only occurred when the weather was just right, which meant that most of the time we had one solitary station that was clear enough to watch. As you can imagine, programming was extremely limited back then with very few shows to choose from. Walter Cronkite would give the news without opinion, and Gilligan remained stuck on an island oblivious to the glamorous movie star Ginger next to him. For a special treat on Saturday

evening, we'd watch Lawrence Welk and his orchestra play all those rockin' tunes while Bobby and Sissy did their fancy footwork on the

dance floor. Ah, the good old days! After school each day, my ritual would be to tune to Captain 11 (on channel 11 ironically) and plopp my lazy butt in front of the boob tube to watch cartoons. Popeye the Sailor Man was one of my favorites as he was forever foiling Brutus and dealing with J. Wellington Wimpy - Wimpy for short. He was the lazy dude with a huge appetite and affinity for discarded cigars. More on him later. Popeye also seemed to spend a lot of time rescuing his girlfriend Olive Oyl. Now that I think of it, she was a high maintenance gal, not unlike the Kardashians. I guess the writers were way ahead of their time.

Another group of individuals who were ahead of their time were the architects of this electric cooperative. With the help of the federal government, these individuals managed to build a distribution system in Charles Mix County using the same cooperative model that effectively guides the operation of over 900 distribution systems across America. This model uses a financial structure that has kept it successful for over 80 years, as it operates at cost and not for profit. Any margins above the cost to provide electric service in a calendar year are considered patronage and are allocated to those members who purchased the electricity that generated those

profits. These margins are called Capital Credits. Capital Credits are held by the cooperative for a number of years and are usually reinvested into the distribution system, supporting maintenance or new line construction projects. This reinvestment makes each member a vested owner of his or her very own distribution system.

However, I believe the coolest part is that the founding fathers of this cooperative knew that unlike the S.S. Minnow, the CME distribution system was built to last. It has endured so long that all the original members are no longer using the system and ownership has been transferred to a new generation of members. *(continued on page 7)*

Capital Credits are the fairest way to rotate ownership of the cooperative.



Like Popeye's love for Olive Oyl, CME's commitment to serving you remains "strong to the finish." We will gladly pay you in April for your patronage in prior years.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

CHARLES MIX ELECTRIC

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CME Board of Directors
 President Don Krcil
 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.

Office Staff

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

Line Crew

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

COMMITTED BEYOND THE SWITCH

**Lineworker Appreciation Day
 April 13, 2026**

When the lights go out, lineworkers are ready to answer the call, day or night, to safely restore power and keep our communities moving forward. They take pride in powering the places we call home. Today and every day, we thank lineworkers for their service and commitment.

CALENDAR RAFFLE WINNERS - MARCH 2026

Milwaukee Cordless Shop Light - Nancy Gall, Lake Andes
Glock 22 Pistol - Travis Miller, Salem

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.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH: TIPS FOR PRIORITIZING SAFETY

At your local cooperative, Electrical Safety Month is recognized every May, but the importance of practicing safety year-round is always emphasized. From co-op crews to the consumer-members served, everyone has a part to play in prioritizing safety.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured or electrocuted as a result of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. Electricity is a necessity that powers daily life, but it can also be dangerous — something your local cooperative understands firsthand from working with it 365 days a year.

Safety is more than a catchphrase. Cooperative leadership recognizes the responsibility to keep employees safe while also helping protect members and the broader community. That's why your local cooperative hosts safety demonstrations at community events and in schools throughout the year, highlighting the dangers of electricity. These demonstrations often include emergency scenarios, such as what to do in a car accident involving a utility pole and downed power lines, along with discussions about the dangers of pad-mounted transformers and overloading circuits with too many electronic devices.

Electricity is an integral part of modern life. Given the widespread use of electrical devices, tools and appliances, here are a few practical electrical safety tips:

Watch for frayed wires. Power cords can become damaged from age, heavy use or excessive current flow. If cords become frayed or cut, replace them to avoid shock hazards.

Avoid overloading circuits. Circuits can only handle a limited amount of electricity. Running too many devices on one circuit can lead to overheating and potential fire risk.

Label circuit breakers. Understanding your home's electrical system can help prevent overloads. If your home is more than 40 years old and you plan to install large appliances, contact a qualified electrician.

Use extension cords properly. Never plug one extension cord into another. "Daisy chaining" can cause overheating and fire hazards. Do not exceed the cord's wattage, and avoid using extension cords as permanent solutions. If additional outlets are needed, consult a licensed electrician.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to talk with children

about playing it safe and smart around electricity, including staying aware of overhead power lines near outdoor play areas.

Providing a reliable energy supply 24/7, 365 days a year is a top priority. Equally important is keeping the community safe around electricity.

Contact your local cooperative for additional electrical safety tips or to request a safety demonstration at a school or upcoming community event.



"Do not fly kites by power lines!"

Casen Yuker

Casen cautions readers not to fly kites around power lines. Thank you for sharing your picture, Casen! Casen's parents are Lance and Tarah Yuker from Aberdeen 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.

Delicious DESSERTS

RHUBARB CAKE DESSERT

Ingredients:

1 pkg. yellow cake mix
1 cup sugar
4 cups rhubarb, diced
2 cups half and half

Method

Prepare cake mix as directed on package and pour into a greased 9x13 pan. Mix sugar and rhubarb together. Spoon evenly over cake batter. Pour half and half over top of rhubarb mixture. Bake at 350° for 40-45 minutes. This is like an upside-down cake with custard on the bottom of the cake.

Marla Gilbert
Southeastern Electric

FUZZY NAVEL CAKE

Ingredients:

1 pkg. yellow cake mix
1 instant vanilla pudding (large, 5.1 oz. size)
3/4 cup peach schnapps
1/2 cup vegetable oil
1/2 cup orange juice
4 eggs

Glaze

1 cup powdered sugar
4 tbsps. orange juice
2 tbsps. peach schnapps

Method

Spray a 12-cup fluted baking pan with cooking spray, dust with flour. Mix all cake ingredients together until well blended, spread evenly in pan. Bake at 350° for 45-50 minutes until golden brown and cake springs back when lightly touched. Cool cake for 20 minutes. Run a long, sharp knife around the edges to loosen, and invert onto platter. Whisk glaze ingredients together until smooth. With wooden skewer, poke holes on top and around sides of cake. Spoon glaze over the warm cake, allowing to seep in holes, and drizzle down the sides and center. Cool completely before slicing.

Sally Florey
Charles Mix Electric

HAWAIIAN PINEAPPLE CAKE

Ingredients:

2 cups flour
2 cups sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. vanilla
Pinch salt
1 20 oz. can crushed pineapple, undrained (in natural juice, not heavy syrup)

Frosting

1/2 cup butter, softened
1 8 oz. cream cheese softened
1 tsp. vanilla
1 1/2 cups powdered sugar

Method

Mix all cake ingredients together until well blended. Bake in greased 9x13 pan at 350° for 35-40 minutes or until top is golden brown.

Combine cream cheese, butter and vanilla. Beat until smooth and creamy. Gradually add powdered sugar. Spread frosting on cake while still warm. Garnish with some toasted coconut if desired.

Sally Florey
Charles Mix 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 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.



Parker Named Finalist

Lake Andes librarian, teacher, & volunteer powers her community

Mary Jo Parker has impacted the community of Lake Andes in countless ways, from her 40+ years as an educator, her current role as City Librarian, her involvement in reducing food scarcity, and even as a former owner of a local ice cream shop and café. This selfless dedication is what earned her recognition as a Charles Mix Electric finalist in the 5th annual regional Who Powers You? Contest.

“Mrs. Parker is a pillar of our community when it comes to starting programs, earning grants, and motivating kids to learn outside of school,” wrote high school student Luke Dangel, who nominated Mary Jo for the contest. “She has taken on the challenge of making our community a better place to live.”

Who Powers You is an exciting contest being hosted by the region’s Touchstone Energy Cooperatives to highlight local figures and organizations who are making a difference in their communities.

Mary Jo spent 41 years at Andes Central School, teaching FACS (Family and Consumer Science) classes. Retiring from education did not slow her down; in fact, quite the opposite. She and her husband owned and ran “Moe’s Place”, a small ice cream shop and diner. In its years of operation, Mary Jo mentored many high school student employees, providing local youth with job opportunities and experience. She currently serves as the Head Librarian of Lake Andes Public Library, where her relentless search for grant monies has allowed the library to improve youth and adult reading programs, expand enrichment programs and services, and even to move into a newer, more modern facility.

Recognizing that hunger and access to fresh food are issues that face her community, Mary Jo has used connections forged through SDSU to create a local Food and Wellness Council, spearhead a community garden project as well as a local farmer’s market, and lead a “Preserve and Prosper” program aimed at teaching those who wish to learn to preserve their own food. Kids who visit the local library can receive one healthy snack a day. Through the Food and Wellness

Council, she works with the “Eagles Eat” program, providing backpack meals for students who may not have enough food at home.

“Food insecurity is a big part of where we live, and if I can reach out to other communities and show them that it can be done, that’s a big part of what I like to do,” said Mary Jo. “Kindness and helping other people are important to me. How can I make people’s lives better?”

Mary Jo’s story was featured on KELOLAND Living on March 18. A recap of the segment is also available on the contest’s webpage at WhoPowersYouContest.com.

The contest recognizes co-op members, organizations, employees, and residents who live or work within the service territory of the region’s Touchstone Energy Cooperatives. Three final winners will be selected by a panel of judges based on the impact that they have on the community. Weekly finalists will be announced and featured on KELOLAND Living and the three contest winners will be announced on May 28, 2026. The Who Powers You contest grand prize winner will receive a \$3,000 prize. A second place winner will receive \$1,500 and the contest’s third place winner will receive \$500.

Manager's Column

continued from page 2

To financially rotate this ownership, the new members who use the system today pay to refund that patronage back to the previous members. This refund is built into the budget each year, and it is included as part of the electric bill. The amount is determined by taking the total accumulated patronage times five percent. This roughly works out to a 20-year rotation. And unlike Wimpy's "I will gladly pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today", the present-day members of the co-op are providing a return of the investment to the previous members on a timely basis. This ingenious process has been ongoing from CME's inception back in the 1940s through today, as it was determined early-on to be the fairest way to rotate ownership of the cooperative.

In April 2026, shortly after the annual meeting, checks were sent to current and previous members totalling over \$480,000. Some of that refund was from our power suppliers as they too allocate and refund patronage over time. Charles Mix Electric currently has just over \$10,500,000 in patronage on the books which calculates out to a \$251,000 refund of local patronage in 2026. Although margins in 2024 were nonexistent and in 2025 they were very slim, I am proud to state that CME is still strong enough to continue making this financial rotation to our members on an annual basis. On a final note, I would like to commend the Charles Mix Electric Board of Directors

on their diligence and commitment to keeping this cooperative strong. Like Lawrence Welk's orchestra, they study the score and work hard to ensure that the performance of the cooperative is on time and in tune. After all, it's how Popeye would want it.

Until next month, take care and God Bless you!



Unlike the S.S. Minnow, CME's distribution system was built, and is maintained, to last.

WAIT!

DON'T PLUG THAT IN



DON'T PLUG THESE 15 THINGS INTO A POWER STRIP

It is fine to plug in some things into a power strip, such as computers, lamps, phones and other light-load electronics.

However, appliances that require a lot of power should not be plugged into a power strip. Do not use a power strip with the following appliances:

<p>IN THE KITCHEN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Refrigerators ✗ Microwave ovens ✗ Toasters ✗ Coffee makers ✗ Blenders ✗ Slow cookers ✗ Rice cookers <p>IN THE BATHROOM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Hair dryers ✗ Curling irons ✗ Other hairstyling tools 	<p>IN THE LAUNDRY ROOM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Washing machines ✗ Dryers <p>ANYWHERE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Sump pumps ✗ Space heaters ✗ Portable air conditioners
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 Do not overload power strips by plugging in appliances that consume more watts than the cord can handle. This can cause the power strip to overheat or start a fire.

 Learn more at: [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.safeelectricity.org)

ONE VOTE MAKES A DIFFERENCE



Chuck Sloan • Piedmont, S.D.

Board Treasurer, West River Electric Association

U.S. Air Force 1983-2003

Chuck Sloan has spent much of his life serving his nation.

Sloan enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1983 and served 21 years on active duty before retiring as a master sergeant in 2004. In that time, he was stationed at bases all around the world, including Oman, South Korea, Turkey, and the Pacific. Since 2004, Sloan has worked as a civilian at Ellsworth Air Force Base, where today he is Chief of Operations Compliance.

Serving in the military, Sloan observed firsthand how seriously service members took absentee voting and civic participation, despite being thousands of miles from American soil. Their passion helped ignite Sloan's own admiration for America's democratic system of government.

"If I found somebody a little laissez-faire about voting, saying, 'my vote probably won't count,' I would give them a spiel," Sloan explained. "Yes, your vote does count, and you'll want to be able to say that you made that vote."

He continued, "If you don't choose to exercise that responsibility, then later on if you're displeased, you really can't

complain about it because you didn't make a choice – If anything, vote and give yourself the opportunity to legitimately complain!"

Sloan said people should never underestimate the importance of showing up and making their voices heard, because in close races, one vote can tip the scale.

"There are many instances when one vote may have been a determining factor," Sloan said. "It may not be a general election, but how about in a state or local election where one vote can be the deciding factor? That happens more often than one would think. Your vote matters, no matter what you do."

Sloan brought that civic-mindedness along with him to West River Electric Association, where he serves on the Board of Directors and helps make decisions in the interest of his neighbors and communities he represents.

Sloan said it all just comes back to civic responsibility and staying involved.

"From the time I turned 18, I've never missed a vote," Sloan said. "It's second nature. It's too important to not do."



VOTING STRENGTHENS COMMUNITIES



Evan Buckmiller • De Smet, S.D.

General Manager, Kingsbury Electric Cooperative

De Smet School District Board

For Kingsbury Electric Cooperative General Manager Evan Buckmiller, his call to public service came after a mid-term resignation on the De Smet School District

Board left a vacancy that needed to be filled.

"The board had to appoint someone to fill the seat," Buckmiller said. "Initially when I was asked, I didn't know if I wanted to do it, but I also knew that my wife and I have two young kids in the school system, so I agreed to fill the spot until the next election."

Buckmiller wasn't expecting to develop a passion for civic-service, but six years and two election cycles later, he's still representing the De Smet community on the school board.

"It's for my kids, to make sure they have the best education opportunities possible to prepare them for their future," Buckmiller added.

He said that while serving on the school board has been a

rewarding endeavor, there are also moments that are discouraging; some people will sit out elections, but are also vocal about board decisions they disagree with.

"I receive phone calls about how we are doing everything wrong, but they don't want to step up to be a part of change," Buckmiller explained.

His advice is simple: show up.

"Public participation at the monthly school board meetings is always encouraged," Buckmiller said. "When a community is engaged, there is more diverse input and you get to see the needs of everyone. The needs for one person might not be the same as another, and when you are sitting on a board you want to hear the needs of everyone so you can make the best decision possible for everyone."

Buckmiller said when more people get involved and exercise their civic duties, the communities like his are better for it.

"Being active in the community makes the community stronger and allows different opinions to be heard," Buckmiller said.

"When you show up to meetings and vote, you are giving the board direction so they can make decisions that are in the best interest of everyone."

STICK UP FOR YOURSELF & VOTE



Don Schurdevin • Elk Point, S.D.
Board President, Union County Electric Cooperative
U.S. Navy 1962-1968

Serving on the Union County Electric Cooperative board for more than 25 years, Don Schurdevin has built a reputation for steady leadership and a strong commitment

to the cooperative and its members. But before serving his neighbors and community on the co-op board, Schurdevin first served in a different way. He served not just his Union County neighbors, but his entire country in the U.S. Navy. Schurdevin enrolled during his junior year of high school in 1962, serving active duty in Vietnam from 1963 to 1965, some of that time aboard the USS Midway. The experience helped shape his views on patriotism, civic duty and personal responsibility.

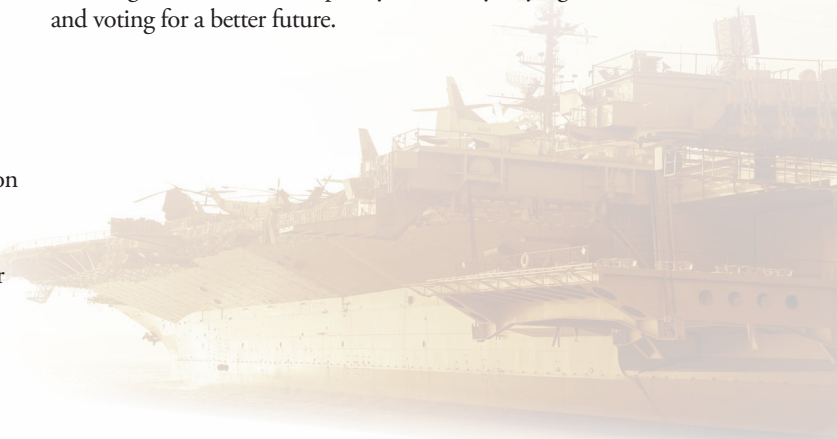
“In the navy, you learn to get along with people, but you learn to also stick up for yourself, because nobody else – is so you better take care of your own business,” he said.

That’s the attitude that Schurdevin brings to his civic participation. He said serving in the military gave him a deeper appreciation for the freedoms Americans enjoy, including voting.

Schurdevin believes participating in elections is one of the most important ways citizens can stay involved in their communities and help shape the future of their community, state and country.

“I think I voted in every election since I could,” Schurdevin recalled. “School board election, county, state – if I was able to vote I was voting.”

That sense of duty carried into his years of cooperative service. As a director, Schurdevin remains focused on serving members and ensuring the co-op continues to meet local needs. Schurdevin encourages others to “stick up for yourself” by staying informed and voting for a better future.



LEADERS DEPEND ON YOU SPEAKING UP



Chris Rahn • Mission, S.D.
Member Services Manager, Cherry-Todd Electric Cooperative
Todd County School District Board, Rosebud Sioux Tribe

Chris Rahn was not always interested in his local government. In fact, up until just several years ago, he sat many elections out.

But through his work at Cherry-Todd Electric Cooperative and the commitment to community that came with it, Rahn gained a new perspective on civic participation, realizing that change only happens when peoples’ voices are heard.

“I believe everybody who has an opinion should come out and vote,” Rahn said. “One vote matters. One vote can change an entire election.”

Rahn’s indifference to voting began to change as he was asked to take on more responsibilities with the co-op. Cherry-Todd Electric General Manager Tim Grablander nominated Rahn to the Rushmore Electric Federal Credit Union Board of Directors, where Rahn now serves as president.

Shortly after, he was encouraged by local community leaders to apply for a board seat with the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. The tribal

council voted to seat Rahn on the judiciary committee, leading to his first real experience with public service. Like flipping a switch, Rahn’s enthusiasm led to his appointment to other tribal boards, including the Tribal Utilities Commission, Tribal Tax Commission, and the Rosebud Energy Services Company.

Rahn said serving in tribal government opened his mind to the impact he can have on his community. That realization inspired Rahn to run for his first publicly-elected position as a school board member for the Todd County School District.

“I wanted to be more involved in my daughter’s education and just listen to the community’s input,” Rahn said, restating the importance of community members actively engaging with elected officials and sharing feedback.

He continued: “I feel like I’ve been able to bridge the gap between the people I represent and the administration and other public leaders.”

As Rahn looks ahead to years of future public service to work for a better community, he encourages others to step up as well — and all it takes is a vote.

“If you speak up, your voice is heard,” he continued. “When everyone’s voice is heard, we can make better decisions for the community as a whole.”

Photos by Shutterstock

“Watt” Do Your Appliances Demand?

When reading the monthly electric bill, most people understand the concept of kilowatt-hour, or kWh, usage. This is simply the total amount of electricity used to power all of the electricity-using appliances and devices in your home. But what is this kW reading, and how does it determine the capacity demand portion of your bill?

Simply put, the capacity demand is the customer’s highest electricity use during any given 15-minute period during the month. The more electric appliances and devices that run simultaneously, the more you are “demanding” of your system to provide enough power to run all of those things. Demand is measured in kW. The wattage of your appliance, divided by 1,000, gives you the kW. For example, a small space heater, most commonly 1,500 watts, demands 1.5 kW of power.

This chart, showing average appliance kW based on 15 minutes of operation, can be helpful in estimating demand charges. Add up all of the electric appliances you would have running at once and multiply by the current monthly demand rate (\$4.70).

The coincident demand shown on your statement is a similar concept, but differs in the fact that it is a reflection of the amount of power being used at the time of CME’s system peak. For example, in February, CME’s highest need for power occurred at 7:30 a.m. on February 23rd. Your meter tells us how much power your system is “demanding” at that particular point in time. Since on-peak power is more expensive for CME to purchase and sell to its members, it follows that it is more expensive for you to use. This is why controlling your load during certain times becomes so important.

Appliance	Watts	kW
KITCHEN		
Blender	500	0.50
Coffee Maker	1000	1.00
Dishwasher	1200-1500	1.20-1.50
Freezer	200	0.20
Fridge	600	0.60
Air Fryer	1500	1.50
Microwave	1000	1.00
Oven - Electric	3000	3.00
Toaster	850	0.85
Toaster Oven	1200	1.20
Stove Top	1500	1.50
HEATING & COOLING		
Box Fan	200	0.20
Ceiling Fan	120	0.12
Central A/C - 24,000 BTU NA	3800	3.80
Central A/C - 10,000 BTU NA	3250	3.25
Furnace Fan Blower	800	0.80
Space Heater NA	1500	1.50
Tankless Water Heater - Electric	18000	18.00
Water Heater - Electric	4500	4.50
Window AC 10,000 BTU NA	900	0.90
Window AC 12,000 BTU NA	3250	3.25
Well Pump - 1 HP	1000	1.00
Garage Heater 17,000 BTU	5000	5.00
LAUNDRY		
Clothes Dryer - Electric	3000	3.00
Clothes Dryer - Gas	800	0.80
Clothes Washer	800	0.80
Iron	1200	1.20
HOME ENTERTAINMENT		
TV - LCD	150	0.15
TV - Plasma	200	0.20

Appliance	Watts	kW
FARM EQUIPMENT		
Air Compressor	5750	5.75
Block Heater	1500	1.50
Cattle Waterer	1000	1.00
Grain Bin Fan Motor 7.5HP	7500	7.50
Grain Bin Fan Motor 10HP	10000	10.00
Grain Bin Fan Motor 15HP	15000	15.00
LED Security Light	73	0.07
On Demand Water Heater	20000	20.00
Welder	9000-12000	9.00-12.00
OFFICE EQUIPMENT		
Desktop Computer (standard)	200	0.20
Desktop Computer (gaming)	500	0.50
Laptop Computer	100	0.10
LCD Monitor	100	0.10
Modem	7	0.01
Paper Shredder	150	0.15
Printer	100	0.10
Router	7	0.01
Smart Phone - Recharge	6	0.01
Tablet - Recharge	8	0.01
MISCELLANEOUS HOUSEHOLD		
Clock Radio	7	0.01
Electric Shaver	15	0.02
Electric Blanket	200	0.20
Hair Dryer	1500	1.50
Hot Tub	4800-12000	4.80-12.00
Vacuum	1000	1.00
ELECTRIC CHARGING - TIME FOR 60 MILES		
12 hrs, Single Phase 120 V AC	1500	1.50
2-3 hrs, Single Phase 230 V AC	10000	10.00

Are You On the List?

Following is a list of capital credit refund checks that were uncashed or returned as “undeliverable” for one reason or another in the years 2020 through 2025. Names listed may have one or several unclaimed checks from this time period.

If you receive a capital credit check, please make an effort to cash it as soon as possible, even if it's for a small amount. For members of CME who are planning on moving from the area, it's always a good idea to inform us of your forwarding address, so future refund checks can be delivered to you. Also, for those dealing with the loss of a family member who was “on REA” at any time, it's possible that you may be able to file for a lump-sum refund for their estate. Check with CME to find out.

Robert Abdo
Amber Archambeau
Juliann Archambeau
James Arrow

Darleen Bakken
William Beavers
Beeson Dairy Farm LLC
Kevin Begnoche
John Bieranowski
David Blaha
Henrietta Bruguier
John Bruguier

Central Dakota Animal Clinic
Don Christensen
Stephanie Cournoyer
Diane Crawford
Eldoth Crawford

Anthony DeHaan
Jill Denker
Lewis Dillon
Kenny Dilts

Katherine Eddy

William Flood
Fred Haar Co. Inc.

GenCel Management
Norman Gibson
GJW Inc.
Anton Glass
Goose Lake Mgmt LLC
Roy Gray
Arlene Gullikson

Happy Campers
Eugene Hare
Juanita Hare
Basil Heth
Claudette Holiday
Victoria Holiday
Daniel Hoops
Margaret Horned Eagle
Diane Houseman
Rick Huber

Prairie Irving

Dana Kantner
Bonnie Kazena
KC Inc DBA Dock 44
Loretta Kezena
Dennis Koupal

George Lebeda
Virginia Luke

Charles Merkwani
Jim Meyer
Don Meyerink
Roger Miller
James Monfore
Ernie Myears

Clarence Nedved
Nels Nelson
Nepodal & Sons
Mildred Niehus
Northern Prairie Express

Robert Orvis
John Packard
Dorothy Patterson
Platte Parts Store
Pegge Pranger
Harold Provost

Mildred Ramsdell
Arlene Rezac
Robert Robbins
Elizabeth Rolston
Paul Rouse

Troy Scarborough
Dudley Schroeder
Beata Schunk
Brad Sik
Wilbur Slaba
Jack Soulek
Lorena Soulek
Kenneth Steele
Sun Prairie
Stanley Swatek

Betty Taylor
Lynn Taylor
Charles Thaler
The Sanctuary
Lois Tiger
Scott Turnbaugh

Wagner Dairy
Audrey Walker
Brien Weddell
Michelle Weeks
Western Wireless

Beverly Zephier
Sherwyn Zephier
Marionette Zylstra

Simplify Your Estate Planning



Transfer On Death

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BUILDING FOR WHAT COMES NEXT

Basin Electric's Pioneer Generation Station, located near Williston, N.D.
Photo Submitted by Basin Electric

Basin Electric Expands Generation Capacity to Meet Growing Demand

Frank Turner

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Although the flick of a switch can seem close at hand, the electricity that powers our world is often generated many miles away.

For rural cooperative members, electricity often comes from North Dakota, where Basin Electric Power Cooperative operates a fleet of power plants to serve rural communities across nine states. As demand continues to build across that system, the infrastructure behind it is growing right alongside it.

This steady growth has shaped the work now underway across Basin Electric's service territory. In response, the cooperative has kept up with demand by expanding existing generation facilities, building a new power plant and supporting the system with additional transmission projects in just a few short years.

"We're seeing load growth across our system, and it's coming from a combination of residential, agricultural, commercial and energy development," said Gavin McCollam, Basin Electric's senior vice president and chief operating officer. "When you step back and look at it as a whole, it becomes clear that we need to continue building to keep pace with that growth."



New transmission lines in western North Dakota support Basin Electric's newest generation assets.
Photo Submitted by Basin Electric

Pioneer Generation Station

To maintain reliability and keep the lights on for their members, Basin Electric recently expanded its generation capacity through new development to Pioneer Generation Station near Williston, N.D.

Originally developed in the early 2010s, the facility grew in phases over time. Those additions turned Pioneer Generation Station into one of Basin Electric's most important generation assets, but within a decade, the pace of that growth had begun to change.

"Coming out of COVID, not just us but everybody

was seeing rapid increases in loads,” McCollam said. “At that point, we were asking what we could do the quickest to add capacity.”

To meet the need, Basin Electric moved forward with Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV. The cooperative completed the project in 2025, adding about 580 megawatts of generation and bringing the site’s total capacity to 822 megawatts, enough to power roughly 400,000 homes.

The expansion moved quickly in part because Basin Electric built on what it already had.

“We had the site and the people that worked there, so we could add onto it a lot quicker than we could analyze and research new sites,” McCollam said.

Bison Generation Station

Still, Basin Electric continued building for traditional member load growth, beyond Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV, turning to a new project: Bison Generation Station.

Located near Epping, N.D., the natural gas-fueled generation project is being built from the ground up as a large-scale, natural gas facility designed to meet future demand. Once completed, the combined-cycle power plant will produce approximately 1,490

megawatts of electricity, making it the largest power plant solely owned by Basin Electric – almost double the capacity of Pioneer Generation Station. The plant is expected to come online in two phases, with the first unit operating in 2029 and the second in 2030.

Unlike Pioneer Generation Station, which expanded over time, Bison Generation Station is being built as a single, large project.

“We had a history of building small units, piecemealing them in as quickly as we could. That worked for a long time, but eventually we reached a point where we needed to think about building differently,” McCollam said. “There was a point where we recognized that continuing to add smaller pieces wasn’t going to be the most effective approach. We needed to build something at a scale that would allow us to stay ahead of that growth.”

Serendipitously, the transition from Pioneer Generation Station to Bison Generation Station happened on the same day. Basin Electric finished construction at Pioneer and turned the facility over to operations, then received the permits to begin construction on Bison.

“I’m kind of a nerd,” McCollam

said, laughing. “I’m nerdy enough to think this wasn’t a coincidence, and the power plant gods were smiling on us.”

Once complete, it will become a central part of Basin Electric’s generation portfolio.

“It’s going to be the flagship of our gas fleet,” McCollam said. “It’s being designed with the understanding that the system we’re serving today is going to continue to grow.”

Looking Ahead

According to McCollam, these new generation assets are a response to the organic growth Basin Electric is seeing across its traditional membership, including residential demand, agriculture, commercial activity and energy production.

“We support that growth where it happens, and we make sure the system can deliver power where it’s needed,” he said.

For Basin Electric, the work underway now is part of a longer process to ensure reliability in a time of growing energy demand.

“The entire purpose of Basin Electric is to provide reliable service to our membership,” McCollam said. “As that system grows, we have to continue building to keep up with it.”



FROM FIELD TO FUEL

A new multi-seed crush processing facility, served by Central Electric Cooperative, is now operational after two years of construction near Mitchell. Photo submitted by High Plains Processing

New High Plains Processing Seed-Crush Facility Opens Near Mitchell, S.D.

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A new multi-seed crush processing facility is now operational after nearly two years of construction, and its impact is taking shape across the region.

Located two miles south of Mitchell, the High Plains Processing plant is a large-scale seed crush and refining facility, powered by Central Electric Cooperative in the heart of South Dakota's soybean country.

The facility is backed by South Dakota Soybean Processors, the majority owner and operator, which also operates soybean crush facilities in Volga and Miller, along with a large group of local investors.

"There's a lot of local influence in this plant," said Pat Gathman, general manager of the facility. "Many of the investors originally invested in South Dakota Soybean Processors in Volga, and others invested directly into this project here in Mitchell."

That local investment shows up not

just in ownership, but in how the facility fits into the broader agricultural system. For local producers, it means more of what they grow can be processed closer to the farm.

"Instead of having the soybeans go to an elevator to be processed someplace else, they're being processed right here in Mitchell," Gathman said. "It gives farmers a better opportunity from a market standpoint."

For Central Electric Cooperative members, the plant represents one of three industrial loads being served by the cooperative. In addition to strengthening the local economy, large industrial loads like the multi-seed crush facility provide a consistent demand for electricity and help justify new investments in local infrastructure.

"The soybean plant brings new revenues to Central Electric Cooperative, which helps minimize rates for the entire cooperative membership," said Central Electric Cooperative General Manager Ken Schlimgen.

As part of the proposal process and selection as the electric provider, East River Electric Power Cooperative built a new substation and made additional system upgrades to serve the facility. Central Electric Cooperative also completed system improvements to support the load.

"The work was completed over a two-year window," Schlimgen said. "The project was on time and under budget during the worst of the supply chain delays."

Inside the facility, energy from the electric cooperative is used to turn familiar crops into multiple usable products, with the primary goal of separating oil from soybeans, sunflowers and camelina and preparing it for a range of markets. Currently, the plant is only accepting soybeans.

"We go through the preparation area where we crack the beans, heat them up, separate the hulls from the soybean itself, flake it, and then send it over to the extraction area," Gathman said.

The process separates oil from the soybean. The oil is refined and prepared for a range of uses, including renewable

fuels and food products, while the remaining material becomes soybean meal, a high-protein livestock feed.

“We bring it into our oil refinery where we refine it, bleach it, deodorize it and send it to storage,” Gathman said. “From there, it can go out by truck or rail to be turned into renewable fuels.”

The Mitchell location was selected in part because it brings together several key pieces of infrastructure needed to support a facility of this scale. Rail access, utilities and proximity to soybean production all played a role in the decision.

“We’ve looked at Mitchell for many, many years,” said Tom Kersting, CEO of South Dakota Soybean Processors. “You’re on a mainline railroad, it’s good soybean ground, and there’s a strong production history in that area. As we look at other seeds like sunflowers or camelina, you don’t have to go very far west of Mitchell before that becomes even more suitable.”

He added that finding a location with the right infrastructure is becoming increasingly difficult.

“There’s just not a lot of good sites left if you want to be on rail, next to a natural gas line, have a good electrical source and access to wastewater,” Kersting said. “There are a lot of infrastructure needs for a large facility like this, and it’s tough to find all of that in one place.”

That infrastructure includes electric service, which was a key part of the project from the beginning.

“Central Electric has been great to work with,” Kersting said. “They built a large substation not just for this plant, but to expand service throughout the area. It’s been a great partnership, and they’ve been very accommodating and easy to work with.”

Since becoming operational, the plant has already made an impact on the local community. The facility employs about 80 people, with the majority coming from the surrounding area.

“We’ve got some outstanding employees here that are really a part of things,” Gathman added.

For Gathman, the experience of moving to Mitchell has stood out just as

much as the work itself.

“The community has been outstanding,” he said. “Not just from the neighbors that we live around, but the community as a whole. It’s been very welcoming and very inviting.”

After moving multiple times throughout his career, including time spent outside the country, the difference was noticeable.

“My wife and I have moved 12 times, mostly around the U.S., and we did a stint in Brazil,” Gathman said. “I grew up in Fargo, and I love Fargo, but it was nothing compared to the reception we got when we came here.”


That sense of connection is something he hopes to carry forward.

“I can’t say enough about it,” he said. “I really want to help pay that back in the long term.”

As High Plains Processing continues to ramp up, its presence is expected to grow alongside it. The facility adds new demand for infrastructure, new options for producers and a new step in how agricultural products move through the region.



High Plains Processing celebrates the groundbreaking of its seed-crush facility in 2023.
Photo submitted by High Plains Processing



MAY 18
Voter Registration
Deadline for Primary
Election
5 p.m.
(South Dakota)

JUNE 1
Last Day to Request
Absentee Ballot.
5 p.m.
(South Dakota)

JUNE 2
Primary Election
7 a.m.-7 p.m.
(South Dakota)

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MAY 2-10
Rustic Designs & More Spring
Show, Flea Market
41450 264th St.
Ethan, SD
605-770-2411

MAY 2
Consignment Auction
7 a.m. Gates Open
10 a.m. Auction
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

MAY 2
Cinco de Mayo Fiesta
2-8 p.m.
Milbank, SD
605-432-6656

MAY 3
Prairie Village Opening Day
2 p.m. Train Ride
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

MAY 6-7
Energize! Exploring Innovative
Rural Communities Conference
Hosted by SDSU Extension
Community Vitality
Community Center
Wall, SD
extension.sdstate.edu/energize

MAY 9
1880 Train Opens
Hill City, SD

MAY 15-17
Open House Weekend
Free Entrance
Custer State Park
Custer, SD

MAY 16
2nd Annual Bird Bash
8 a.m.-1 p.m.
Bear Butte State Park
Sturgis, SD
605-390-2901
valleyhummingbird@yahoo.com

MAY 23
Free Christian Men's Event
8 a.m.-2 p.m.
The Barn at Aspen Acres
Spearfish, SD
Register: RiseUpMen.com

MAY 30
Familyfest Fun Cruise
& SDSC Safety Fair
9 a.m.-2 p.m.
Bucket Trucks, Safety & More
Sioux Falls, SD
thehoodmagazine.com/ff-faqs/

MAY 30
Frühlingsfest
Spring Street Market
1-5 p.m.
Main Street Square
Rapid City, SD
605-718-8484

MAY 30
Miss Prairie Village/Miss
Prairie Princess Pageant
6:30 p.m.
Lawrence Welk Opera House
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

JUNE 4-6
Black Hills Quilt Show
Thurs. 5-8 p.m.
Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sat. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Rushmore Hall
at the Monument
Rapid City, SD

JUNE 13
Journey Into Historic Pickstown
9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Ft. Randall Town & Museum
Pickstown, SD
605-487-7299

JUNE 13
Luce Pioneer Day
10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Rope & Candle Making, Butter
Churning, Dutch Oven Cooking
Lake Herman State Park
Madison, SD
605-880-5077

JUNE 19-20
77th Annual Czech Days
Tabor, SD
www.taborczechdays.com

JUNE 24-27
Crystal Springs Rodeo
Clear Lake, SD
605-874-2996

JUNE 26-27
Buckhorn Rodeo
Britton, SD
605-880-5077

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.

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.