

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

Separating Fact From Fiction

Energy Myths
Pages 8-9

Energy Scams
Pages 12-13



Ted Smith, vice president of engineering and operations with Sioux Valley Energy, brings more than 35 years of experience in the electric industry and helps set the record straight on common energy myths.
Photo submitted by Sioux Valley Energy.

Stepping into Spring Safely



Tim McCarthy
General Manager/
Chief Executive
Officer

Tim.McCarthy@
siouxvalleyenergy.
com

Spring is a time for renewal and growth. As the days turn warmer and we start to see green sprouts peeking out of the ground; we are reminded of the chance for new commitments. Sioux Valley Energy will soon be launching a safety commitment opportunity for our members and employees called *#CoopCares4Safety*. As we kick off *#CoopCares4Safety*, I would like to introduce

someone who is no stranger to building and maintaining a strong safety culture – Travis Denison, Sioux Valley Energy's new Manager of Safety. He brings a wealth of experience and knowledge to the Cooperative and would like to share why our Co-op cares for safety.

#CoopCares4Safety

Committed to Keeping Safety at Our Core

Safety is at the core of Sioux Valley Energy's culture because our employees and their families matter just like our members and their families. Ensuring that everyone returns home safely each day is not just a priority, it is our core value and the driving "why" behind our safety culture.

As Sioux Valley Energy's Manager of Safety, my role is to help strengthen every employee's connection with our continually improving safety culture. I do this by intentionally leading proactive hazard identification efforts, engaging employees in meaningful safety initiatives, facilitating positive and productive safety discussions, and reinforcing a strong safety-driven mindset. Above all, I am committed to ensuring that safety remains a core organizational value in everything we do.

With spring approaching, it is important that we keep safety in mind. When our crews are working in the road right-of-way, they are exposed to risks not only from the work they are performing, but also from passing traffic. Distracted or unpredictable driving can quickly create dangerous situations. We want the public to know that your safety on the road is just as important to us as the safety of our crews working alongside it. That is why we use proper work zone protection, signage, and traffic control measures to clearly communicate safe transitions around our job sites. Through clear, consistent communication, and strong safety practices, our goal is simple: that both our crews and the traveling public return home safely at the end of the day.

We know our farmers are preparing for long days and busy schedules. With that comes large equipment, tight deadlines, and a strong focus on the task at hand. One of the biggest challenges we all face is complacency. We're human. When we get focused on the job in front of us, it's easy to overlook the risk around us. But, when large farm equipment meets overhead power lines, the consequences can be devastating. Slowing down and checking clearances can help keep everyone safe.

Be on the lookout for the Sioux Valley Energy *#CoopCares4Safety* commitment...and stay safe this spring.



Travis Denison
Manager of Safety
Travis.Denison@
siouxvalleyenergy.
com



Watch The
Sioux Valley
Energy
Commitment
video
by scanning
this code.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS
SIoux VALLEY ENERGY

(USPS No. 497-440)

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Sioux Valley Energy Cooperative Connections is the monthly publication for the members of Sioux Valley Energy, PO Box 216, Colman, SD 57017. Families subscribe to *Sioux Valley Energy Cooperative Connections* as part of their electric cooperative membership. The purpose of *Sioux Valley Energy Cooperative Connections* is to provide reliable, helpful information to Sioux Valley Energy members on electric cooperative matters and better living.

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Safety Efforts Recognized



Members of Sioux Valley Energy's Safety Steering Committee showcase the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program certificate awarded by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. RESAP, NRECA's safety program, provides more than 675 cooperatives a framework to help co-ops and employees consistently engrain strong work practices into everyday work, setting a standard to enable safer workplaces.



TELL US WHO POWERS YOU!

We know our co-op community is filled with people and organizations making a difference. Let's celebrate them! Nominate a hero in your local community who goes above and beyond.

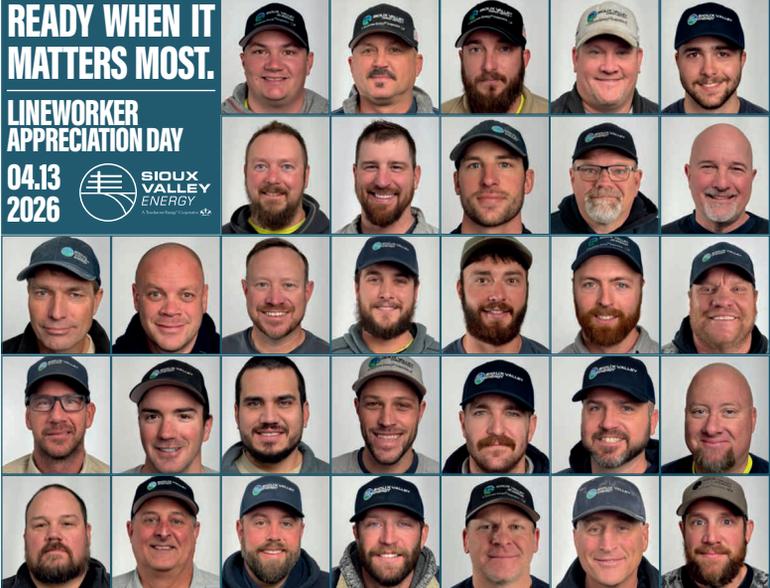
They could win up to \$3,000!

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04.13 2026

STAYING FOCUSED BEHIND THE WHEEL: A SIMPLE GUIDE TO SAFER ROADS

Distractions behind the wheel aren't just inconvenient – they're deadly. Each moment you allocate to anything other than driving increases the risk for you and everyone sharing the road. According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, distracted driving claimed 3,522 lives in the United States in 2021, underscoring how costly a split-second lapse can be. The good news is that small, deliberate habits behind the wheel can make a big difference. Here are three practical ways to stay focused.

First, minimize phone use. Store your device out of sight before starting the engine. Texting or scrolling through apps draws your eyes from the road, your hands from the wheel and your mind from the task at hand. If you must communicate, pull over safely or use hands-free features only if absolutely necessary and legal in your area. Remember, many places have laws prohibiting texting while driving, with penalties that reflect the risk. Consider enabling “do not disturb” modes that silence notifications while you drive, and set your status to indicate you're driving. This simple barrier can prevent impulsive checks and help you maintain steady attention.

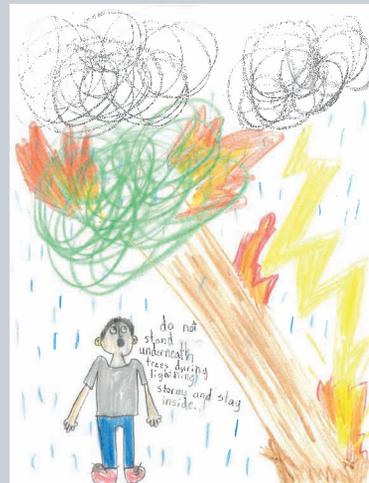
Second, plan your route before you depart. Entering a destination while driving is a dangerous distraction. Take a few minutes to review the route, check traffic conditions, and set your navigation system in advance. With your route loaded, you can keep your attention on driving rather than on-screen instructions during the journey. If possible, choose routes with fewer turns or fewer heavy-traffic segments, and be ready to adjust if conditions change. Having a mental map of the journey can also reduce the need to peek at the screen for updates.

Third, ensure you are well rested. Fatigue can dull reaction times, reduce concentration, and cause your eyes or your vehicle to drift. Prioritize a good night's sleep before long trips, and consider stopping for short breaks on extended drives to refresh your focus. Even brief pauses for stretching and deep breathing can reset your alertness and help you respond more quickly to changing road situations.

Beyond these tips, practice general safe-driving habits: obey speed limits, maintain a safe following distance and stay alert for pedestrians, cyclists, and other motorists. If you feel distracted or fatigued, it's wiser to pause and reassess rather than press on. Safe driving is about consistent, proactive choices that protect everyone on the road.



"Do not stand underneath trees during lightning storms and stay inside."



**Ramsey Faini,
Age 8**

Ramsey warns readers about the dangers of lightning storms. Thank you for sharing your picture, Ramsey! Ramsey's mom is Katie Faini from Rapid City, 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.

MAIN DISHES

HOMEMADE MAC & CHEESE

Ingredients:

16 oz. box elbow macaroni noodles
Oil
1 pkg. bacon
3 cups whole milk
1/2 cup butter (melted)
5 oz. can (about 2/3 cup) evaporated milk
16 oz. block Velveeta cheese (cut into cubes)
1 tsp. salt
Guda cheese
Parsley (to taste)
1 tsp. garlic powder
1/2 tsp. black pepper

Method

Cook noodles as directed. Drain noodles and pour a small amount of oil on them while in the strainer. Cook bacon and cut into small pieces. Add all of the ingredients into a Crock-Pot and mix. Cover and cook on low for 1.5 hours, stirring once or twice while cooking. Serve and enjoy.

Cindi Foster
Codington-Clark Electric

CHEDDAR POTATO SOUP

Ingredients:

1 medium onion, chopped
3/4 cup celery, chopped
1/4 cup butter
5 cups peeled potatoes, cubed
3 cups water
3 cups milk, divided
4 tps. chicken bouillon granules
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
1/4 cup flour
4 cups (16 oz.) cheddar cheese, shredded

Method

In large Dutch oven or kettle, saute onion and celery in butter for 5 minutes. Add potatoes and water, bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 15 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Stir in 2 cups milk, bouillon, salt and pepper. Combine flour and remaining milk until smooth, gradually stir into soup. Bring to a boil, cook and stir for 2 minutes or until thickened. Reduce heat, add cheese and stir until cheese is melted.

Sally Florey
Charles Mix Electric

CARAMELIZED HAM & SWISS SLIDERS

Ingredients:

12 Hawaiian dinner rolls, split
1/4 cup horseradish sauce (optional)
12 slices deli ham (or 24 if it's thinly sliced)
6 slices Swiss cheese, cut in fourths (so you will have 24 squares of cheese)
Sauce
1/2 cup butter
1/4 tsp. onion powder
2 tbsps. brown sugar
1 tbsp. Dijon mustard
2 tps. poppy seeds
1 1/2 tps. Worcestershire sauce
1/4 tsp. garlic powder

Method

Spray a 9x9 or 9x13 glass dish with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside. Preheat oven to 325°. Spread roll bottoms with horseradish sauce (if using). Fold up pieces of ham to fit the rolls and place them on the bottom halves of the roll. Next, place 2 squares of cheese. Replace tops and place in a single layer in the prepared pan.

Sauce

In a small skillet, heat butter over medium-high heat. Stir in remaining ingredients. Pour over rolls. Cover with foil and bake covered for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake 5 more minutes. These can also be made ahead of time. Just cover with foil and refrigerate for several hours or overnight. Bake as instructed.

Jerald & Virginia Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy

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.

Tips for Cutting Your Electric Costs



Sheila Gross
Energy Services Specialist
To learn more about efficiency programs and rates that can help you save money call SVE at 800-234-1960, visit sioux-valleyenergy.com/energy-efficiency-tools or sign up for SmartHub, our online account management tool.



Home Energy Checklist:

What contributes to your electric bill?

Energy consumption in a home is directly related to size, efficiency, occupancy, and your specific electric loads. Use the list below to learn where your account's energy consumption comes from.

Scan here to access our booklet Use Energy Wisely



- Electric Heating and Air Conditioning (including heat pumps):**

 - Largest part of electric bill.
 - Adjust thermostat by 1° for an 8-hour period to save up to 3%.
 - Improve weatherization to lower cooling and heating bills and increase comfort.
 - Consider an energy-efficient heat pump when replacing equipment.
- Electric Water Heater:** Second-largest energy user.

 - Turn thermostat down to 120° and insulate hot water pipes to cut costs.
 - Take short showers, install low-flow fixtures, and manage equipment such as a recirculating pump.
- Appliances:** Choose Energy Star® when replacing appliances.

 - The list of appliances add up: refrigerator, freezer, oven, washer, dryer, dishwasher, microwave, coffee maker, toaster, air fryer, pizza oven, sump pump, dehumidifier, humidifier, space heater, water softener, etc.
 - Unplug unused refrigerators and freezers.
 - Use energy-saver settings, run full dishwasher loads, and wash clothes in cold water.
- Electronics:** Unplug unnecessary items and use power strips/smart plugs.

 - Phantom loads can add up to 10% to your bill. Devices like TVs, home office equipment, phone chargers, gaming stations, smart automation technology, etc., use power even when they are turned off.
- Lighting:** Switch to LEDs and turn lights off in unoccupied rooms.
- Beyond the Home:** Take note of any outside sources that may draw additional electric consumption at your account, including garages or outbuildings.

 - Consider items such as well pumps, hot tubs, pool pumps, heated animal waterers, welders, motors, fans, grain dryers, heat lamps, trickle chargers, heat tapes, electric vehicles, battery-operated tools, equipment, etc.
 - Install timers on equipment to limit runtime and help you take advantage of Sioux Valley Energy's Time of Use rate program.

Sioux Valley Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Filling the Tanks

Holland Community Fire Department Receives Operation Round Up® Grant for equipment to fill fire fighters' air tanks

A Sioux Valley Energy Operation Round Up® (ORU) Grant of \$4,000 helped the Holland, Minnesota, fire department purchase a system that fills firefighters self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA). The overall cost of the equipment was more than \$40,000 and the ORU grant helped the department receive a larger matching-funds grant from the Taylor Family Farms Foundation.

The high-pressure air compressor uses 4,500 psi air pumped into the SCBA tanks in three stages. While the SCBA is not used at every fire, it does need to be refilled when it is used.

“Having this equipment here will be more convenient, especially after late-night fires,” said HCFD member Ryan LaBrune. Before the equipment’s purchase, the department would need to coordinate with a neighboring volunteer fire department to get the tanks refilled.

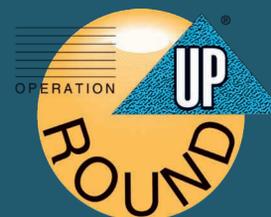
The new equipment will be used primarily for the 18-member Holland Fire Department but can also be used by neighboring fire departments. The Holland Community Fire Department serves about 700 people in a 70-mile area around the western Minnesota community.



Above: Merle Zeinstra explains where the tanks are placed in the new equipment. **Left:** Ryan LaBrune holds a firefighter’s SCBA equipment that can now be refilled in Holland. **Top:** Sioux Valley Energy Director Gregg Johnson, SVE Vice President of Public Relations Carrie Vugteveen and Operation Round Up® Board member Julie Stevens

present a check to members of the Holland Community Fire Department: Jason Borman, Ryan LaBrune, Merle Zeinstra, and Holdan Surat.

Operation Round Up® is administered by a non-profit trust, the Sioux Valley Energy Customers’ Trust, which was initiated in the fall of 2000. The purpose of the trust is to acquire, accumulate and disburse funds for charitable and educational purposes as permitted by Section 501 (c) (3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code. Your community, your school, and/or your nonprofit organization may be eligible for funding. Each quarter, the Board of Directors, volunteer representatives of each county, meet to review grant applications and make awards based on criteria guidelines of the Trust. Not all proposals are funded, and not all applications are funded at the full funding request.





From left, in the Sioux Valley Energy shop: Ted Smith, vice president of engineering and operations; Chad Williams, manager of operations; journey lineworker Jager Rus; and journey lineworker Paul Schamber. Photo submitted by Sioux Valley Energy

BUSTING ENERGY MYTHS

with Ted Smith of Sioux Valley Energy

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Electricity powers nearly every part of daily life, yet most people only think about it when the lights flicker or a bill arrives. Because the system works quietly in the background, assumptions about how it operates tend to fill the gaps.

To sort through several common misconceptions, Cooperative Connections spoke with Ted Smith, vice president of engineering and operations at Sioux Valley Energy, the cooperative serving South Dakota counties of Brookings, Lake, Moody, Kingsbury, and Minnehaha and Minnesota counties of Rock and Pipestone. Smith has worked in the electric industry for 35 years, including 20 years at Sioux Valley, where he

oversees engineering, line crews and dispatch.

Here are several claims he regularly hears from members and how he responds.

Myth: If the lights go out, it must be a local problem.
Smith: That's definitely a myth.

An outage can begin anywhere from inside your home all the way back to a generating station two states away. The electric grid is highly interconnected. A disruption in one area can ripple outward across transmission lines that serve multiple utilities.

There have been large historical outages, especially in the eastern United States, where a single event such as a tree contacting a transmission line triggered a cascading failure across multiple states. Entire cities lost power

because one initiating fault spread across the network.

Closer to home, severe weather in one region can affect transmission lines feeding a much broader footprint. If a major transmission line trips offline, and another line is already out for maintenance, service interruptions can extend far beyond the original storm area.

“Just because your lights go out doesn't mean the problem started down the road, close to home” Smith said. “It could be much farther upstream.”

Myth: The grid can be powered entirely by renewable energy.
Smith: At times, yes. Around the clock, no.

Smith pointed to hydroelectric dams along the Missouri River as renewable generation that run continuously, but other renewable resources, such as wind and solar, simply aren't reliable sources of energy and only contribute

significantly when conditions allow.

“Although sometimes it seems like it, the wind doesn’t always blow in South Dakota,” Smith said. “And solar only produces during daylight hours.”

Although battery storage has improved in recent years, Smith says storing enough energy to power the grid around the clock is prohibitively expensive at this point in time.

For now, maintaining reliability requires a mix of generation resources so supply remains available regardless of weather or time of day.

Myth: If my neighbor has power and I do not after a storm, the cooperative skipped me.

Smith: That’s not how it works.

In some cases, the cooperative may not yet know a member is without service. Reporting outages remains important.

Another possibility is that the issue is on the member side of the meter. Crews may restore cooperative equipment and determine that the damage is within the member’s own service.

“When crews see it’s a problem on the member side of the meter, they will call dispatch and have them contact the member,” Smith said.

He also emphasized the importance of keeping current phone numbers on file. Fewer households rely on landlines today, which makes updated cell phone numbers critical during storm response.

Myth: Burying all power lines would eliminate outages.

Smith: No.

Underground lines are not exposed to wind and ice, but they are not immune to failure. Over time, underground conductors deteriorate. Rodents such as gophers can damage them. Excavation damage is also common when individuals dig without confirming where utilities are buried.

Before digging, members should always contact 811, the national call-before-you-dig number. That service

notifies utility providers so buried lines can be located and marked before excavation begins. Failing to call 811 can be dangerous and increase the risk of damaging underground infrastructure, causing outages.

And even when damage occurs naturally, locating the fault underground can take time.

“With overhead lines, crews can usually see the damage,” Smith said. “Underground, it takes troubleshooting to figure out exactly where the fault is, sometimes leading to longer outage durations.”

He recalled one outage that proved especially difficult to diagnose.

“One time we had an outage that we just could not narrow down,” he said. “When we finally found the damage, we saw that a gopher had chewed the bottom of the wire. You could not see it from the top. We had to dig up about 20 feet of cable and turn it over before we could see the damage.”

Underground systems can reduce certain types of outages, but they do not eliminate them, and repairs often require more time and labor.

Myth: Wind and solar power are free once installed.

Smith: The fuel is free, but that’s the only thing that’s free.

Wind turbines require ongoing maintenance, including mechanical components that need to be regularly serviced. Solar power relies on inverters and other equipment that must be maintained and eventually replaced.

There are construction costs, financing costs and transmission costs involved in delivering electricity from generation sites to homes and businesses. Those transmission and maintenance assets are accounted for over time and included in the overall cost of electricity.

Free fuel lowers one portion of cost. It does not remove the need to build, maintain and replace infrastructure.

Myth: Electric cooperatives raise rates to increase profits.

Smith: No. Cooperatives are not-for-profit.

Electric cooperatives are member owned, not investor owned. That means there are no outside shareholders expecting earnings. Instead, cooperatives operate on margins, collecting enough revenue to pay expenses, maintain infrastructure and meet financial obligations.

“The only place we get money is from the people at the end of the line,” Smith said. “We don’t have a printing press in the basement.”

In fact, if revenue exceeds expenses in a given year, a portion of those margins are allocated back to members as capital credits when the board determines it’s financially appropriate. Capital credits represent a member’s share of the cooperative’s financial performance during the years they received service.

However, in recent years, equipment costs have risen significantly. Smith cited bucket trucks that once cost around \$220,000 have since more than doubled in price, and major system components have seen similar increases. Usually, the cost of wholesale power from the cooperative’s power suppliers makes up the largest share of the budget and those costs have been increasing as well.

Rate adjustments reflect those rising operational costs and the need to maintain reliable service, not profit distribution.

Electricity may seem simple at the flip of a switch, but as Smith makes clear, the system behind it involves infrastructure, coordination and constant evaluation. Understanding how it works helps members separate assumption from reality and better appreciate the network that serves them every day.

Capital Credits

Each year when Sioux Valley Energy mails capital credit checks to former members, some are returned

Jody Lebahn, Manager of Accounting | jody.lebahn@siouxvalleyenergy.com

These checks were sent in November 2025 to members from 2001, 2002 and 2024. If you know anyone on this list, please tell them to contact Sioux Valley Energy at 800-234-1960 or email capitalcredits@siouxvalleyenergy.com to claim their capital credit check.

ARIZONA TO KENTUCKY

Brunz, Michelle.....Gilbert, AZ
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 McKettrick, Donna L... Sun City, AZ
 Jarding, Larry Fort Collins, CO
 Reynolds,
 Sharon V. Bridgeport, CT
 Watson, KristieJacksonville, FL
 Walters, Charles R. Lake Placid, FL
 Christoph, Thomas....Leesburg, FL
 Lane, LoisSt. Augustine, FL
 Jackson, Connie.....Covington, GA
 Becht, LyleNewnan, GA
 Heeb, MattAmes, IA
 Achterhof, Mike..... Boyden, IA
 Pick, Lisa Carroll, IA
 Schuldes, Michael H. .Dubuque, IA
 Gulker, Brad..... Inwood, IA

Sorenson, Ross..W Des Moines, IA
 Kyes, Dave.....Grayslake, IL
 Leathers, Brian.....Erlanger, KY

MINNESOTA

Sundby, Scott.....Alexandria, MN
 Brown, David W ... Barnesville, MN
 Winrich, Jeremy....Butterfield, MN
 Rice Lake
 Properties LLC Cohasset, MN
 Cunningham,
 FloydEden Prairie, MN
 Klein, Leslie Ellsworth, MN
 Thompson, Arville..... Frazee, MN
 Kruger, Chad.....Hardwick, MN
 Colby, Juanita.....Hillman, MN
 Voges, JohnHinckley, MN
 Lee, NeilJasper, MN
 Mane Street Stylist...Lewiston, MN
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 Madsen, Sherri..... Luverne, MN
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 Watts, Ralph..... Luverne, MN
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 Moen, MelissaMcGregor, MN
 Zeig, JamesOsage, MN
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 Thill, Vincent G.Owatonna, MN
 Barron, Larry Pipestone, MN
 Binnewies, Fred..... Pipestone, MN
 E & V Construction Pipestone, MN
 Fritz, Linda..... Pipestone, MN
 Nelson, Steven M... Pipestone, MN
 Richell, Hank Pipestone, MN
 Ries, Gloria Pipestone, MN
 Sumption, Leon..... Pipestone, MN
 Alley, Suzanne Plymouth, MN
 Miller, Allen Richmond, MN

Brett, DaveRoseau, MN
 Smith, Scott M. Saint Paul, MN
 Clark, Mark W. Stewartville, MN
 Boeve, Ervin Tyler, MN
 Kallemeyn, DavidVerdi, MN
 Aafedt, Michael Willmar, MN

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Even, Ricci..... Camdenton, MO
 Limberg, Tracy.....Rayville, MO
 Gaters, William D. Sheridan, MT
 Merkel, Brad Bismarck, ND
 SD Rapid City
 Mission Office..... Bismarck, ND
 Quail, Dave..... Devils Lake, ND
 Muntefering, Scott..... Fargo, ND
 Stoterau, Mike Fargo, ND
 Iverson, Jerald.....Horace, ND
 Garnaa, Paul West Fargo, ND
 Potter, Rebecca .. Grand Island, NE
 Schnee Chassis Inc Lincoln, NE
 Miller, Dustin Lincoln, NE
 Ambur, Aaron B. Sidney, NE
 Buriak, Bill Clinton, NJ
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 Randy R. Albuquerque, NM
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 Schultz, Charles A.
North Las Vegas, NV
 Miles, John..... Grove City, OH

SOUTH DAKOTA

AGAR

Keiser, Roger J

ARLINGTON

Mortinsen, Betty Ann
 Nemitz, Grace
 Paulsen, Joe

AVON

Ripperda, Sarah

BALTIC

Brouillette, Paul
 Haag, Brandon
 Koch, Jodi

BRANDON

Agee, Richard
 Anderson, Paul
 Bentine, Brandy
 Construction
 Management LLC
 Gas and Goodies
 Haafke, Mary
 Hagen, Shawn
 Harry, Nathan
 Heitman, Bonnie
 Kirkpatrick, Lindy
 Klutman, Scott
 Lofswold, Jack

Morrison, Raymond
 Nygaard, Steve
 O'Neill, Magge
 Quam, Gary
 Tuschen, Mike
 Smykle, Troy
 Schutt, Vincent
 Woodward, Jennifer R.

BRIDGEWATER

Longbreak, Deana

BROOKINGS

Bingham, Chris
 Bohlke, Robert
 Carver, Marcia
 Cendant Mobility
 Fejfar, Jeff
 Fulton, Shirelle
 Gronli, Robin
 Gunderson, Chris
 Hoff, Rick
 Hoffman, Stacy
 Jensen, James A.
 Knutson, Harold
 Matson, Nels
 Mehegan, Jean W.
 Mehlenbacher, Mike
 Millman, Lillette

Moe, Jerome O.
 Moore, Todd
 Nelson, Linda
 Prime Land
 Peskey, Candy
 Petersen, Jack
 Rasmussen, Robb
 Robertson, Frank
 Scott, Christle
 Sipprell, James
 Wieber, Dwain
 Reese, Kristen
 Schumann, Larry
 St. John, Mary A.
 Straw, Rocky
 Stroup, Seth
 Swenson, Tod
 Telkamp, Roger E.

BRUCE

Intveld, Magdalena
 Mattke, Jared
 Smith, Terra

CANISTOTA

Willems, Jennifer

CHAMBERLAIN

Lindquist, Judd

CHANCELLOR

Schmidt, Jeff

CHESTER

Albers, Lynn

COLMAN

Drong, Bobbi

COLTON

Stroschein, Corey
 Community Housing

CROOKS

Daws, Travis

CUSTER

Maxwell, Sheila

DEADWOOD

Bernards, Roger

DELL RAPIDS

Hawthorne, Jamie
 Stoterau, Jane
 Thompson, Paul
 Viereck, Marge
 Woods, Larry

ELKTON

Howie, Britni

ESTELLINE

Gutormson, Erik

FLANDREAU

Christensen, Daryl A.
 Christensen, Donna
 Guinther, Jackie
 Hagedorn, Thelma
 Peterson, Mick
 Roy, Miles
 Serrano, Marcus
 Seward, Carol
 Taylor, Betty J.

GARRETSON

Arndt, Brian
 Cox, Cheryl
 Peiper, Robert
 Roemen, Dean

HARRISBURG

Becker, Kelly
 Freese, Dan
 Lorenz, Stan

HARTFORD

Abrahamson, Bill
 Biala, Brad
 Dafoe, Brett
 Davis, Vernon E.

Krier, Bruce
 Norman, Audrey
 Fitt, Doris
 Gardner, Ryan
 Haas, Lisa
 Mound, Richard
 Munce, Lynn M.
 Swanson, Robin
 Vesh, Roni

HUMBOLDT

Driscoll, Dan

LEAD

Hander, Donald F.

LENNOX

Thoreson, Patsy

LYONS

Kee, Kenneth

MADISON

Blackwelder, Matt
 Dachtler, Tina
 Drew, Dustin
 Johnson, James P.
 Johnson, RC
 Lambright, Dan
 Limmer, John
 Meehan, Danial

- Muth, Todd
Pagel, Anne
Pederson, Scottie
Peterson, Kurt
Phelps, Richard
Roling, Robert
Schoeberl, Mike
Sonen, Melissa
Waldner, Tammi
- MCCLAUGHLIN**
Frederick, Patrick
- MARION**
Bailey, Jonathan
Laible, Amy
- MITCHELL**
DeGeest, Nathan
- OLIVET**
Winne, Kristeen
- PARKER**
Malde, Carri
- PIERRE**
Samuelson, Brad
- RAPID CITY**
Baldwin, Dan
Isakson, Dean
- SALEM**
Hodne, Pearl
Nordlund, Laura
Stiefvater, Brad
- SHERMAN**
Jensen, Kris
- SIoux FALLS**
Adams, Brad
Anderson, Bryce
Anderson, Scott
Anfinson, Marty
Automotive Machine
& Repair
Barnes, Tamera
Bartels, Brent
Beaumont, Dale
Beberrniss, Marie
Bellander, Kathy
Betts, Tom
Bierle, Brad
Black, Brande
Bowar, Jan
Brands, Jeffrey
Bruce, Corey
Campbell, Craig
Canter, David
Carda, Gary
Carlson, John
Christensen, Amy
Cline, Bret
Durch, Betty J.
Dvorak, Gene
Elite Auto Sales
Engdahl, Ken
Engen, Earl M.
Engles, Mike
Erickson, Gordon H.
Fawbush, Steve
Fick, Melissa
Flemming, Jamie
Gabert, Jerry
- GF Electric
Groom, Joe L.
Haar, John
Haugen-Rogers, Jan
Hector, Tammy
Heeren, Wynette
Heidinger, David
Heidzig, Joan
Hermanson, Larry
Hockhalter, Don
Hoefert, Chet
Hoffmann, Gordon R.
Hook, Jodi
Hovdestad, Daralle
Jacobs, Donald
Jamison, Michelle
Jensen, Sophie L.
Johnson, Michael L.
Jundt, Larue
Just-Coomer, Mary
Kapperman, Jerome
Kipp, Kristi
Knutson, David
Kohlmeyer's Station
Larson, Dale
Leshner, Warren
LKT Inc.
Long, Ronald
McClaren, Roselyn
McHan, James
McKenzie, Terry
Marquardt, Gordon
Martin, John
Mattes, Shelli
Meier, Kelly
- Mensch, Charles
Metzger, John
Meyer, Kelly S.
Minor, Mindy
Mortinsen, Alan
Moss, Edward J.
Moulton, Duane
Myers, Terry
Nedved, Holly
Nelson, Ronald N.
Notestine, Susan
Noyes, Larry
Oehler, Craig
Ouch, Sem
Overweg, David
Payton, Dianne
Peck, Melody
Pyle, Mark
Rausch, Bill
Reynolds, Lisa
Reynolds, James R.
Ritzman, Julie
Rollag, Lottie
Sanford, Scott
Schellpfeffer, Donald
Schenemann,
Barbara
Scholl, Angela
Schultz, Kelly
Scott, Marianne
Searl, Myrna
Security Mortgage
Sheppard, Benjamin
Short, Greg
Skovlund, Mike
- Snaza, Trent
Sorensen, Jon
Spars, Wayne
Stamp, Sandra A.
Stasica, Daniel A.
Sulzle, Derik
Swalve, Kari
Swenson, Frances
Swenson, Roger M.
Tapio, Neal
Tellinghuisen,
Doreen J.
Timothy, Sara
Todd, Robert
Wagner, Randall
Walth, Frank
Ward, Abdul
Wardlow, Greg
Waugh, Kelly
Westall, Ben
Wittstruck, Shantel
Wood, Kelli
Zeig, Jerry
- SPENCER**
Decker, Kip
- TEA**
McIntyre, Stacy
Scarlett, Ann
Texley, Aaron
Tschetter, Marvin
Wallum, Jeff
- TYNDALL**
Anttila, Faith
- UTICA**
Delperdang, Steve
- VALLEY SPRINGS**
Gibson, Geneva B.
- VIBORG**
Garvey, Dewey
- VOLGA**
Murray, Lucas
Umstead, Mike
- WATERTOWN**
Gaikowski, Susan
Halverson, Richard
K & G Rentals
McClanahan, Nancy
Peterson, Gene R.
Reed, James R.
- WENTWORTH**
RG Jensen
Construction
Rederth, Mavis
Roe, Joe
- WESSINGTON**
Wood, Judith
- WORTHING**
Herrmann, Becky
- YANKTON**
Pearson, Brian
Evans, Christina
Schneekloth, Melinda
Smith, Terry A.
- ZELL**
Geuke, Brian
- TENNESSEE TO WYOMING
Flanagan, Cadott, WI
Drew, Jason Columbia, TN Chris..... Lewis McChord, WA
CSD of Camp LakodiaAustin, TX Wahl, Chad.....Tukwila, WA
Kenneth G.Cambridge, WI
Vitek, Donald J.Mission, TX Iseli, Brent Vancouver, WA
Miller, Herley LMadison, WI
Gaidl, Chad.....Sun Prairie, WI
Culp, Rick L.....Gillette, WY
Kopplin, ChadWheatland, WY

If you know any of the people on this list, please tell them to contact Sioux Valley Energy at 800-234-1960 or email capitalcredits@siouxvalleyenergy.com to claim their capital credit check.

Directors Recognized for Training Achievements

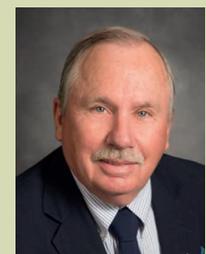
Congratulations to Sioux Valley Energy Directors Ann Vostad, Allan Weinacht, and Don DeGreef for completing training as part of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's NRECA director education program. Certificate programs for directors offer the opportunity to build on their community and industry knowledge. Vostad received the Director BLC Credential, while Weinacht and DeGreef both received the Director Gold Credential. Board President Dan Leuthold presented the directors their certificates at the February board meeting.



Ann Vostad
Board Treasurer
District 2 Director
Board Leadership
Certificate



Don DeGreef
Board Secretary
District 1 Director
Board Leadership
Certificate-Gold



Allan Weinacht
District 5 Director
Board Leadership
Certificate-Gold

ON THE LOOKOUT FOR ENERGY SCAMS

Photo by Frank Turner

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

It's no April Fools' joke. Consumers with an electricity connection have long been targets for scams. In today's digital world, those schemes have evolved. As more daily business is conducted online, scammers have shifted their tactics to match. They now use phone calls, texts and emails to create urgency, confusion and fear, hoping consumers will act before taking time to verify the claim.

For victims, these scams can lead to financial loss and identity theft, but understanding how the most common schemes work and what they typically look like is one of the best defenses to staying safe.

The "Past Due" Disconnection Threat

One of the most common tactics that scammers use is the disconnection threat. They use a fake message claiming a bill is past due and that service will be disconnected immediately unless payment is made on the spot.

The call may sound official. The message may include account numbers

or appear to come from your local cooperative's phone number due to caller ID spoofing. The scammer's goal is simple: create panic so you pay first and question later.

In reality, cooperatives follow clear procedures and provide advance notice before any disconnection. A demand for instant payment, especially with threats attached, is a major red flag.

The "You Overpaid" Refund Scam

Who would not want a refund? Scammers take advantage of that instinct.

In this scheme, a text, call or email claims a member overpaid an electric bill and is owed money. The message often includes instructions to click a link or provide banking information so the refund can be "processed."

The message can sound especially convincing to cooperative members because electric cooperatives do return margins to members in the form of capital credits. Capital credits represent a member's share of the cooperative's annual margins and are returned over time.

However, capital credits are distributed through established,

official processes. They are not issued through unsolicited texts, surprise phone calls or links requesting personal banking information. When your local cooperative retires capital credits, members are notified through official channels such as billing statements, newsletters, verified mailings or even through Cooperative Connections.

An unexpected refund message that asks for sensitive information is a red flag. When in doubt, pause and contact your local cooperative directly using trusted contact information.

Gift Card and Cryptocurrency Demands

Scammers often insist on unusual payment methods such as gift cards, prepaid debit cards or cryptocurrency. They may provide detailed instructions on how to purchase gift cards and read the numbers over the phone.

This is a clear warning sign. Legitimate cooperatives do not request payment in gift cards or cryptocurrency. These forms of payment are nearly impossible to trace or recover, which makes them attractive to criminals.

Spotting a Scam

Regardless of the method, every scam has similar warning signs that members can watch for:

- High-pressure tactics that demand immediate payment
- Requests for payment through gift cards, prepaid debit cards or cryptocurrency
- Emails or text messages with poor grammar, spelling errors or unfamiliar web addresses

Scammers rely on urgency. Taking a few extra minutes to verify a message can prevent lasting financial consequences.

What Your Local Cooperative Will and Will Not Do

Your local cooperative will not demand immediate payment without prior notice. Cooperatives follow

established procedures and provide advance communication before any service interruption.

Your local cooperative will not ask for Social Security numbers, banking details or other sensitive information through unsolicited phone calls, emails or text messages.

Members have secure payment options available through official cooperative channels, including the cooperative's verified website and approved payment systems. When in doubt, independently locate the cooperative's official contact information rather than using links or phone numbers included in a message.

Text alerts are only sent to members who have enrolled in official notification programs, such as outage updates.

Avoiding Energy Scams

If you receive a suspicious call, text or email claiming to be from your local cooperative, do not use the contact information provided in that message. Instead, use the phone number printed on your billing statement or listed on the cooperative's verified website.

Also, reporting suspected scams helps protect fellow members. By alerting your local cooperative to fraudulent activity, members help strengthen the community's defense against energy scams and ensure the cooperative network remains secure for everyone.

Have a question about whether something is real or not? Reach out to your local cooperative. Electric cooperatives are owned by the members they serve and powered by the communities around them.

SIGNS OF AN

ENERGY SCAM

High-Pressure Tactics

Scammers will pressure you, creating a sense of urgency. Claims that your power will be disconnected without immediate payment are common with utility scams.

Sketchy Payment Methods

Scammers may ask for unusual payment methods like gift cards or cryptocurrency. In these cases, it's likely a scam.

Dodgy Communication

Whether an email, text message or letter, utility scams typically include poor grammar, spelling errors or unusual email addresses. These are common warning signs of a scam.



SEEDLING TREE GIVE AWAY

Celebrate Earth Day 2026 by picking up a duo of small bare-root seedling trees (Black Hills Spruce) at Sioux Valley Energy. In recognition of Sioux Valley Energy's commitment to community and caring for the environment objectives, the Cooperative will be providing 525 sets of bare root tree seedlings for members to plant. Members are eligible for two trees in total for as long as the trees last.

The give-away event (which is dependent upon weather, shipment dates, and availability) will take place at each of the Co-op's service centers in Colman, Brandon, Hartford, and Pipestone.

Members can stop by one of the offices on Thursday, April 16 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. If there are any extra trees available after the Thursday give-away, those trees will be available Friday, April 17, during the hours of 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

Trees will be given out on a "first-come, first-served" basis. So once the trees are gone; they are gone!

Check Facebook and www.siouxvalleyenergy.com for updates or call 800-234-1960 before you come to ensure there are still trees available!



2026 DISTRICT MEETINGS BEGIN

The first of Sioux Valley Energy's 2026 meetings was held March 3 in Luverne, Minnesota. The meetings continue through the month of March and April.

Four elections will take place in Districts 5, 6, 7, and 9. Incumbent directors in Districts 5, 6, and 9 ran unopposed. The incumbent director in District 7 did not seek re-election. Two members, Jacob "Jake" Droge and Chris Rieff, filed petitions to run for this board seat. Their biographies can be found on Page 15. Their election will be held on April 30 in Hartford and the winning candidate will be seated for a three-year term.

Members attending the meeting can sign up to win space on the 2026 Basin Electric Bus Tour, register to win an automotive safety kit at the safety booth and register for a home automation kit at the beneficial electrification booth.

This year's meeting menu consists of a pulled pork sandwich, green beans, mac-n-cheese, and a cookie. Serving begins at 5:30 p.m. and the meeting starts at 7 p.m. Members must stay to the end of the meeting to receive their \$25 bill credit.



2026 District Meeting Schedule

DISTRICT 1	THURSDAY APRIL 23	ELKTON, SD Community Center
DISTRICT 2	THURSDAY APRIL 16	VOLGA, SD Sioux Valley High School
DISTRICT 3	THURSDAY APRIL 9	COLMAN, SD <i>New Site</i> Colman-Egan High School
DISTRICT 4	TUESDAY APRIL 14	MADISON, SD Dakota Prairie Playhouse
DISTRICT 5	TUESDAY APRIL 21	COLTON, SD <i>New Site</i> Tri-Valley High School
DISTRICT 6	TUESDAY MARCH 31	BRANDON, SD Brandon Valley High School
DISTRICT 7	THURSDAY APRIL 30	HARTFORD, SD West Central High School
DISTRICT 8	TUESDAY MARCH 3	LUVERNE, MN Generations Event Center
DISTRICT 9	TUESDAY MARCH 24	PIPESTONE, MN Pipestone Area School
DISTRICT 10	THURSDAY MARCH 26	EDGERTON, MN Edgerton Public School

Director Election Meetings indicated in Green

DISTRICT 7 DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

Jacob “Jake” Droge

Work History: Service has shaped much of my life. After enlisting in the United States Army, I served as a combat medic – an experience that taught me discipline, responsibility, and the importance of staying calm when others depend on you. I continued my service in the South Dakota Army National Guard and remain active in the American Legion. I am proud to have worn the uniform, and I carry the lessons of integrity and accountability with me every day. Today, I serve our community as a Certified Reverse Mortgage Professional. My work centers on helping individuals and families make informed, thoughtful decisions about their financial future. Listening carefully and putting people first is not just part of my job – it is a responsibility I take seriously.

Why do you want to be a SVE Director? I have been a member of Sioux Valley Energy for many years and have served on the Member Advisory Committee since 2012. Through that role, I have gained valuable insight into how our cooperative operates and how important reliable, affordable energy is to our farms, homes, and local businesses. I have seen the care and effort that go into ensuring our members are served efficiently and responsibly. I am seeking the opportunity to serve as a Sioux Valley Energy Director because I believe in the cooperative model and in leadership that reflects the voice of its members. I am not running to advance my own interests, but to represent yours.

What skills/assets would you bring to the Board of Directors? I bring a steady approach, a problem-solving mindset, and a commitment to thoughtful decision-making. Most importantly, I listen. Rather than telling people what I know of my certifications and awards, I think it is important for people to know I care and put their needs before my own.

Additional Information: I am the proud father of three children, active in my church, and involved in volunteer efforts in our community. Some may also know me as “Flagman,” as I am working toward completing a half-marathon in all 50 states while carrying the American flag – a personal reminder of the freedoms and responsibilities we share. It would be an honor to serve you and represent our community on the Sioux Valley Energy Board.



Jake Droge
Humboldt, S.D.
District 7
Candidate

Chris Rieff

Work History: I have worked in the construction industry my entire life, starting as a grunt to becoming a business owner. Through that experience, I’ve learned the value of hard work, dedication, and making careful, well-thought-out decisions. Running a business has also taught me how to solve problems, manage people, and stay focused on long-term success. I would bring a practical, common-sense perspective to the Board and a desire to work with others to make decisions that help Sioux Valley Energy grow and succeed.

Why do you want to be a SVE Director? I want to serve as a Sioux Valley Energy Director because I care about the future of our community. Reliable, affordable electricity is vital to our families, farms, and businesses that depend on Sioux Valley Energy every day. As a member-owner of the cooperative, it’s important to listen to our members, represent their interests, and make thoughtful decisions for our long-term sustainability. Ensuring that Sioux Valley Energy remains financially strong, innovative, and committed to providing safe, dependable power are goals that are important to me. I would bring a practical perspective, strong work ethic, and a willingness to work with others to help the organization continue to grow and serve its members.

What skills/assets would you bring to the Board of Directors? My ability to analyze information, ask constructive questions, and consider multiple perspectives, allows me to make the best decision. I would bring a strong work ethic, good communication skills, and a willingness to listen and learn. I believe in working as a team and making thoughtful decisions that support Sioux Valley Energy’s goals and long-term success.

Additional Information: I would be honored to serve on the Board of Directors and help continue the success and future growth of our organization.



Chris Rieff
Hartford, S.D.
District 7
Candidate



APRIL 9-11
Annual Schmeckfest
 German Festival of
 Tasting
 Freeman, SD
 605-925-4237
 www.schmeckfest.com

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.

MARCH 27-APRIL 4
The Passion and the Cross
 Orpheum Theatre
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-6000
 www.ThePassionMusical.com

APRIL 3
**Bachelors of Broadway:
 Gentlemen of the Theatre**
 7 p.m.
 Johnson Fine Arts Center
 Aberdeen, SD

APRIL 5
Easter Sunrise Service
 7 a.m.
 Mount Rushmore

APRIL 9
**McCrossan Wildest Banquet
 Auction in the Midwest**
 Jimmy Buffett Tribute
 Polynesian Paradise Dancers
 Sioux Falls, SD
 www.mccrossan.org

APRIL 9-11
Annual Schmeckfest
 German Heritage Celebration
 Freeman, SD
 605-925-4237
 www.schmeckfest.com

APRIL 11
Women VetsConnect Retreat
 A Wellness Retreat for
 Women Veterans and Military
 Spouses
 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Our Savior's Lutheran Church
 909 W. 33rd St.
 Sioux Falls, SD

APRIL 11
**Minnehaha County Pheasants
 Forever Annual Banquet**
 5:30 p.m.-10 p.m.
 Blue Haven Atrium
 46594 268th St.
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-214-1415

APRIL 11-12
The Black Market
 Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Bldg.
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-332-6004

APRIL 18
Brookings Quilt Show XII
 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Admission: \$10
 Dakota Bank Center
 Brookings, SD
 605-690-3246

APRIL 18
**Tri-Valley Chorus
 75th Annual Show**
 4 p.m.
 Centerville, SD
 605-201-9398

APRIL 20
The Bronx Wanderers
 7 p.m.
 Johnson Fine Arts Center
 Aberdeen, SD

APRIL 25
**Screams by Night
 Halfway to Halloween Con**
 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
 The Social
 Sioux Falls, SD

APRIL 28
American Legion Bingo
 5-6 p.m. Social
 6-6:30 p.m. Meal
 6:45 p.m. Bingo
 American Legion Post 15
 1600 W. Russell
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-682-1222

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

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

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

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.