SIOUX VALLEY ENERGY
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

SIOUX VALLEY ENERGY
DECEMBER 2026 VOL. 27 NO. 8

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Christmas Storms

Christmas on Call
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Light of Mine Ranch
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Photo Submitted by Black Hills Electric Cooperative

2027 Rate Increase and Billing Changes Announced



Tim McCarthy
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Scan this code to learn more about the up coming 2027 rate and bill ing changes.

https://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/2027 rate change

Sioux Valley Energy members are feeling the impact of rising costs in their daily lives, and we recognize the challenges that come with that. Unfortunately, many of those same economic pressures are also increasing the cost of providing safe, reliable electric service.

As a member-owned cooperative, we exist to serve our members. The Cooperative's responsibility is to deliver electricity safely and reliably, at the flip of switch. This requires long-term planning, sound investments, and careful stewardship.

Reliable electric service does not happen by chance. It includes ongoing investment in the poles, wires, substations, meters, transformers, power supply, and transmission infrastructure needed to serve members today and in the future. While fixing problems only after they occur may seem less costly in the short term, reactive planning is not a sustainable long-term strategy for maintaining safety and reliability. It is also not the most fiscally responsible method of managing an electric system.

To reliably meet members' electrical needs, Sioux Valley Energy and its transmission and power suppliers must make strategic decisions based on what is best for the entire membership, while also balancing affordability.

RISING COSTS ACROSS THE ELECTRIC INDUSTRY

All electric utilities, including Sioux Valley Energy, must plan and pay for several major cost areas: the electric facilities needed to deliver power, the energy members use over time, and the capacity required to meet members' highest levels of electric use.

Capacity (also known as demand) can be thought of as the size of the electric system needed to serve members, especially during periods of peak demand. As electricity use continues to grow and change, the amount of capacity required to serve members reliably also increases.

Like other utilities across the country, Sioux Valley Energy is experiencing significant cost increases in these areas. The cost of wholesale power and transmission is rising as power suppliers invest in additional generation and transmission infrastructure to meet growing electrical demand for households, farms, and local businesses. Wholesale power and transmission expenses account for approximately 62% of your electric bill, which has resulted in rate impacts.

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of your electric bill, which has resulted in rate impacts.

The Cooperative is also continuing to invest in its local electric distribution system. Sioux Valley Energy replaces and upgrades approximately 125 miles of electric line each year as part of its ongoing system replacement plan. These investments have helped move Sioux Valley Energy's reliability into the top quartile nationwide and support the level of service members expect and deserve.

At the same time, other operating costs are becoming more expensive. Materials, fleet vehicles, fuel, equipment, financing, and other expenses associated with operating, maintaining, and upgrading the electric system have increased significantly. In some areas, we have seen increases of between 60% and more than 100% over the last several years.

Because of these pressures, the Sioux Valley Energy Board of Directors approved an overall rate increase of 8.1% for the Cooperative. The percentage impact will vary by rate class depending on individual usage. These changes will take effect with January 2027 usage and will be reflected on February 2027 bills.

BREAKING OUT DEMAND

In addition to the rate increase, Sioux Valley Energy will break out the cost of demand for residential, rural residential, and general service members. This means electric services that fall within those rate categories will move from two billing components to three, with demand shown as a separate charge. There is currently a demand line item on your electric bill with no associated charge but that will change as of January 2027.

Demand is not a new cost. It has always been part of the cost of providing electricity and has been included in Sioux Valley Energy's existing rates.

Demand is a significant part of the cost of serving members because the electric system must be built and maintained to meet peak needs, even if those peaks occur for only a short period of time. Breaking demand out as a separate charge more accurately reflects the cost of having enough electric system capacity available when members need it most and assigns costs more fairly to those placing the most demand on the system.

MANAGING WHAT WE CAN CONTROL

Sioux Valley Energy remains committed to controlling costs wherever possible and operating as efficiently as we can. As a cooperative, we take seriously our responsibility to be good stewards of the resources members entrust to us. Many of the factors driving this increase are outside of our control. Rising wholesale power and transmission costs, along with higher interest, account for much of the rate increase.

SERVING OUR MEMBERS. ALWAYS.

The rate and billing changes planned for 2027 reflect the rising cost of serving members and the need to continue investing in a reliable electric grid. While we can't avoid these cost increases; we can continue working efficiently with careful stewardship through strategic planning and responsible investment.

Our members remain our core priority. "Serving Our Members. Always." is more than just a phrase…it's what we do and how we live.

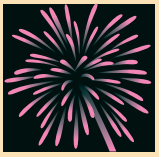
Sioux Valley Energy's offices will be closed on the following dates for the holidays:



THANKSGIVING
Thursday, Nov. 26 &
Friday, Nov. 27



CHRISTMAS
Thursday, Dec. 24 &
Friday, Dec. 25



NEW YEARS
Friday, Jan. 1

Please report outages to our 24-hour dispatch center at 800-234-1960 or through the Smart Hub® app.

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.
Subscription information: Sioux Valley Energy members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Non-member subscriptions are available for $12 annually. Periodicals Postage Paid at Colman, SD 57017 and at additional mailing offices.
POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to *Sioux Valley Energy Cooperative Connections*, PO Box 216, Colman, SD 57017; telephone 605-534-3535; toll free 800-234-1960.

How to contact us: Phone: 1-800-234-1960
e-mail: sve@siouxvalleyenergy.com
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Sioux Valley Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS FOR WINTER STORM READINESS

Some of the best Christmas gifts aren't the ones that get used right away.

A flashlight, emergency radio or box of freeze-dried meals may not be the most exciting thing under the tree, but when a South Dakota winter storm rolls in, practical gifts can quickly become some of the most valuable items in the house.

Winter weather can bring heavy snow, bitter cold, drifting roads and extended power outages. In rural areas, where homes may be miles from the nearest town, it can take longer for roads to reopen or help to arrive. This Christmas, consider giving something that can help friends and family stay safe, warm and prepared.

A portable radio with a weather band is a good place to start. Battery-powered or hand-crank models can provide weather alerts and emergency information even if the power is out or cellular service becomes unreliable. Many also include flashlights, USB charging ports and other emergency features. For someone who lives in a rural area or travels frequently during the winter, a weather radio can provide another way to stay informed when conditions change quickly.

Food is another important part of storm preparedness. Freeze-dried meals have a long shelf life and are easy to store, making them useful for emergency kits. Pair several meals with bottled water, shelf-stable snacks or an insulated thermos for a practical preparedness package. Canned goods, granola bars, dried fruit and other foods that do not require refrigeration can also help a household get through a period when roads are closed or travel is discouraged.

For the car, consider putting together a winter emergency kit. Useful items include a warm blanket, gloves, flashlight, jumper cables, ice scraper, first-aid supplies and nonperishable food. A compact shovel and traction aids can also come in handy if a vehicle becomes stuck in snow. Road flares or reflective warning triangles can help make a stranded vehicle more visible.

This is especially important in South Dakota and Minnesota, where a short drive can quickly turn into a long wait if snow begins to blow across rural highways. Even experienced winter drivers can find themselves dealing with whiteout conditions, stalled traffic or roads that close with little warning.



A portable power bank can help keep a cellphone charged during an outage, allowing someone to receive alerts, check road conditions or contact family and emergency services. Larger rechargeable battery packs can power multiple small devices, which may be handy in the event of an extended outage.

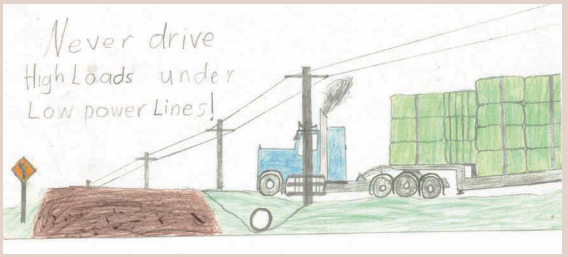
Warm clothing also makes a practical gift. Wool socks, insulated gloves, hand warmers and heavy blankets can provide extra protection from the cold at home or on the road. An insulated hat, neck gaiter or pair of winter boots can also be useful for anyone who spends time outdoors checking livestock, clearing snow or traveling between buildings.

Battery-powered lanterns and headlamps are another good option. A headlamp allows someone to keep both hands free while finding supplies or moving around a dark home. Lanterns can provide area lighting for a room without relying on candles. Consider including extra batteries – just in case.

Other practical ideas include a new carbon monoxide detector, fire extinguisher, first-aid kit or basic tool kit. As a gift for parents, grandparents and new homeowners, consider replacing their smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.

While it's difficult to prepare for every possible emergency, having supplies on hand can help you and your loved ones stay comfortable, informed and safe until the storm passes or travel becomes safe again.

"Never drive high loads under low power lines!"



Artwork by Lydell Weaver

Lydell warns readers to never climb near power lines. Thank you for sharing, Lydell! Lydell's parents are Lyndon and Gwen Weaver, members of Dakota Energy Cooperative.

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.

Rise & DINE



COLD OATMEAL MUESLI

Ingredients:

½ cup raisins
½ cup old-fashioned oatmeal
1½ cups quick oatmeal
⅓ cup brown sugar
½ tsp. cinnamon
2 cups milk

Method

Mix all ingredients together. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Serve cold. If desired, add walnuts, apples or fresh berries just before serving.

Elaine Rieck
Southeastern Electric

BREAKFAST HOT DISH

Ingredients:

14 slices bread, divided
2 cups milk
½ lb. cubed ham
½ lb. sliced cheese
5 eggs
½ tbsp. mustard
⅓ cup melted butter

Method

Place 7 bread slices on bottom of greased 9x13 pan. Spread cheese and ham over bread slices.
Mix eggs, milk, and mustard, then pour over.

Tear the remaining 7 bread slices into pieces and sprinkle over the mixture. Pour melted butter over the bread pieces.

Bake 1 hour at 350°F.

Rowena Wipf
Northern Electric

OVERNIGHT COFFEE CAKE

Ingredients:

½ cup white sugar
½ cup brown sugar
¾ cup butter
1 cup buttermilk
2 eggs, beaten
2 cups flour
½ tsp. salt
½ tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. baking powder

Topping:
½ cup brown sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon
½ tsp. nutmeg (optional)
Nuts, as desired

Method

Cream together the butter, white sugar and brown sugar. Add the beaten eggs. In a separate bowl, combine the flour, salt, baking soda and baking powder. Add the dry ingredients to the butter mixture alternately with the buttermilk.

Spread the batter in a 9x13-inch baking pan. Combine the topping ingredients and sprinkle over the batter. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

In the morning, bake at 350°F for 35 minutes or until done.

Rowena Wipf
Northern Electric

RECIPE CORRECTION: SWEDISH PANCAKES

Ingredients:

1½ cups flour
3 tbsp. sugar
½ tsp. salt
3 eggs
2 cups milk
2 tbsp. melted butter

Lois J. Larson
Clay-Union Electric

Method

Sift together the flour, sugar and salt. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs until thick and softly mounded. Add the milk and melted butter to the eggs, then add the flour mixture.

Lightly grease a griddle with butter. Spoon 1 tablespoon of batter onto the griddle for each pancake. Cook over medium heat until lightly browned on both sides.

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 2027. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Decorating for a Safe Holiday



Travis Denison
Safety Manager
Travis.Denison@siouxvalleyenergy.com

Thousands of people will be putting up holiday decorations in the coming weeks, my family included.

As you pull the totes out of storage and hurry to hang lights before the weather turns, keep the safety of yourself and your family in mind.

LADDERS:

- Inspect ladders for damage and discard any that are broken.
- Do not use a chair in place of a ladder or step stool.
- Select the correct ladder for the job and place it on level and firm ground.

LIGHTS:

- Inspect light strands for damage. Broken bulbs, frayed or cut wiring, and other signs of damage mean it's time to fix or replace the lights.
- Don't overload outlets or circuits with too many light strings.
- Make sure holiday lights have been tested by a recognized lab such as UL or ETL.
- Don't use electric lights on a metallic tree.
- Use the right lights in the right place. Any lights used outdoors should be labeled for such use.
- If using an extension cord, make sure it is the right one for the job. (Some cords should never be used outdoors.)



TREES

- Keep fresh trees away from fireplaces, space heaters, and lit candles.
- When selecting a fresh tree, choose a green one with needles that are hard to pull way from the branches.

OTHER TIPS

- Keep candles away from other decorations and wrapping paper.
- Make sure your home has working smoke alarms. Have one on every floor of the home and in every bedroom; test them every month and change the batteries every year.
- Add a fire extinguisher and fire blanket to your gift list. Being prepared for an emergency is a great family gift.

Sources: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Kids in Kanaranzi, Minn., Get New Playground

Sioux Valley Energy employee volunteers joined Rock County, Minnesota workers to build playground equipment at a park in Kanaranzi, Minnesota, in late October.

The park in Kanaranzi is one of two county parks operated by Rock County, Minnesota. Part of the funding for the equipment came from an Operation Round Up® grant.







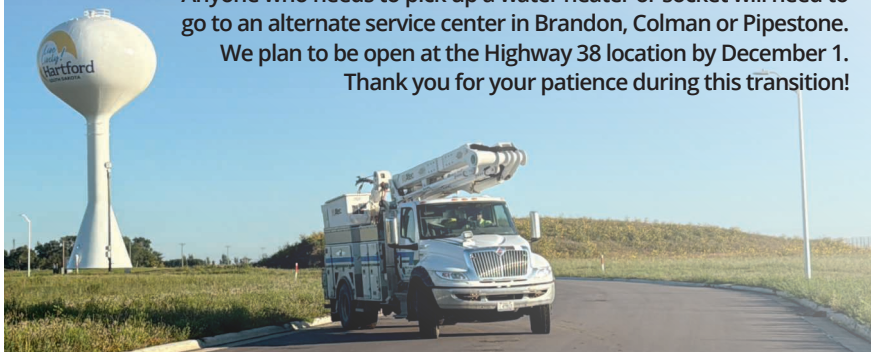
Your Questions Answered

Question: ***Why is there a lower electric heat rate, and will it continue?***
Answer: The reduced electric heat rate comes from our power supplier, Basin Electric. This rate dates back several decades to when there was excess power generated on the cooperative system. Although that excess power is no longer available in the same way, the rate has been beneficial to our members. The electric heat rate has been increasing each year because of power supply pressures. The structure of the electric heat rate is expected to be reviewed as part of a larger rate study over the next 24 months. Electric heat places demand on the system and will be part of your individual monthly demand which you will be billed for starting in 2027.

Have a question about electricity or Sioux Valley Energy?
Mail it to P.O. Box 216, Colman, SD 57017 or e-mail info@siouxvalleyenergy.com. Your question may be selected as the 'Question of the Month' and answered in an upcoming edition of the newsletter.

SVE Hartford Office is Moving!

We're moving! Sioux Valley Energy's Hartford office on Ruud Trail closed Nov. 10 as we prepared to move to our new location at 304 West S.D. Hwy 38, Suite 114. Anyone who needs to pick up a water heater or socket will need to go to an alternate service center in Brandon, Colman or Pipestone. We plan to be open at the Highway 38 location by December 1. Thank you for your patience during this transition!



Sioux Valley Energy to Award more than $28,000 in Scholarships

Sioux Valley Energy's annual scholarship program seeks graduating high school seniors to apply for scholarships totaling $28,500. The majority of funding comes from Operation Round Up® and the Co op's power suppliers. Applicants must be a child or dependent of a Sioux Valley Energy member and meet minimum GPA requirements.

Applications **must** be filled out **online** and completed by **January 15, 2027**. SVE will not accept paper applications. To apply, visit www.siouxvalleyenergy.com.



CHRISTMAS ON CALL

Sometimes The Holidays Have to Wait

The 2016 Christmas Storm Europa left 23,000 members without power and hundreds of broken poles across the state. *Photo Submitted by East River Electric Power Cooperative*

Frank Turner
frank.turner@sdrea.coop

On Christmas evening in 2016, West Central Electric Cooperative Foreman Dustin Vollmer, then a lineman, headed north from Midland to investigate outages as a blizzard swept across western South Dakota. They made it about 12 miles.

"You couldn't even see the reflectors on the side of the road," Vollmer recalled. "We ended up pulling over and sat there till about 4 in the morning."

When conditions improved enough to turn around, the trucks had made their own snow drifts, and Vollmer's truck overheated twice on the trip back to Midland. More work awaited.

The 2016 Winter Storm Europa brought blizzard conditions, freezing rain and powerful winds across South Dakota on Christmas Day, damaging hundreds of utility poles. According to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, more than 23,000 members of at least 20 electric cooperatives statewide were without power by Christmas evening. Restoration work would stretch into the new year.

Vollmer joined West Central Electric in 1999 after graduating from line school at Mitchell Technical College. Even in high school, he understood that linemen sometimes worked holidays. "I realized it could be any time, just whenever the lights go out," Vollmer said.

When Winter Storm Europa caused widespread outages across West Central Electric's service territory, neighboring cooperatives sent crews and equipment to help restore power. Vollmer remembers working alongside linemen from nearby West River Electric Association, one of several cooperatives that came to their aid. Nine years later, Vollmer was able to return the favor when a storm struck Black Hills Electric's service territory in the days leading up to Christmas.



Dustin Vollmer and other West Central Linemen get the power back on during the holidays. *Photo Submitted by West Central Electric Cooperative*

A Return To The Black Hills

On Dec. 18, 2025, winds exceeding 100 mph swept across western South Dakota, uprooting trees, breaking utility poles and leaving more than 11,000 Black Hills Electric Cooperative meters without power. More than 96% of the co-op's electrical system was affected, making it the largest outage event in Black Hills Electric's history.

With damage spread throughout its service territory, Black Hills Electric requested assistance from neighboring cooperatives. Crews and equipment arrived from across western South Dakota, including Vollmer's crew from West Central Electric.

Vollmer was back to work over the Christmas holiday, honoring the cooperative spirit. He said getting around was easier than it had been during the 2016 blizzard, but widespread tree damage made restoration difficult in the Black Hills' rugged terrain. Crews worked to clear fallen trees, replace poles and repair damaged lines throughout the service territory.

Altogether, 55 additional linemen from six neighboring cooperatives and a local contractor assisted Black Hills Electric. Crews worked 12- to 16-hour shifts, prepared to remain through Christmas if the power wasn't restored in time.

"All the outside crews said they weren't leaving," recalled Bill Brisk, manager of operations at Black Hills Electric. "They stayed to help us finish."

By Christmas Eve, nearly all of Black Hills Electric's members had power again, allowing the visiting crews to head home. Black Hills Electric employees continued limited restoration work through Christmas, while Vollmer made it home to Midland late Christmas Eve.

The Families Behind The Work

Vollmer was fortunate to spend much of Christmas with his family following both storms, but not every lineman made it home for the holidays. During the 2016 storm, some employees were called back from trips while others spent days repairing power lines.

Ken Schlimgen, former general manager of Central Electric Cooperative, also acknowledged the sacrifices made by employees' families.

"The individuals who receive the least amount of credit for their role are the spouses and family members," Schlimgen wrote in his 2017 Cooperative Connections column following the Europa storm.

When the first call comes, linemen rarely know whether they'll find a small repair or widespread damage. Families have to plan around that uncertainty. Vollmer's family understands the demands.

"They know what it is," Vollmer said. "People out of power, you gotta go."

Vollmer said West Central Electric supports employees when personal or medical circumstances arise, an understanding that works both ways. When a major storm hits, employees know their coworkers and members are depending on them.

Even cooperative members often return that commitment. Vollmer said members offer assistance when a truck gets stuck or crews need help reaching damaged equipment.

"We got real good consumers," he said. "You could usually find somebody. They'll drop everything and come help."

That willingness to help extends across cooperative service territories, where crews regularly assist neighboring cooperatives during major outages. For Vollmer, it's an expectation shared by the people who have worked alongside him throughout his career.

"When stuff gets bad, you're expected to come help," Vollmer said. "You're part of the team."



The 2025 Black Hills Christmas Storm not only left 11,000 members without power, but also uprooted trees in the area, damaging lines as they fell.
Photo Submitted by Black Hills Electric Cooperative

SIOUX VALLEY ENERGY
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

RATE ADJUSTMENT & BILLING STRUCTURE CHANGE for Residential, Rural Residential, and General Service

TWO BILLING CHANGES WILL TAKE PLACE IN 2027: The Sioux Valley Energy Board of Directors approved an overall rate increase of 8.1% for the Cooperative. Rate increase percentages within each rate class will vary depending on usage. The Cooperative will also break out demand as a separate charge on electric bills for farm and rural residential, residential, and general service members. These changes will take effect starting with your January 2027 usage, and will be reflected on your February 2027 bill.

1 Electric Rate Increase

Why are my electric rates increasing?

- Continued cost increases for wholesale power and transmission
  Sioux Valley Energy's power suppliers are investing in additional electric generation and transmission infrastructure to meet the growing demand for electricity from residential, farm, and small business members. These investments are increasing wholesale power and transmission costs which account for approximately 62% of your electric bill.
- Ongoing investment in the Cooperative's electric distribution system
  The Cooperative is replacing aging infrastructure and upgrading its system to meet growing demand and maintain reliable service. This includes building and upgrading approximately 125 miles of electric line each year. These investments help support our membership and maintain top-quartile reliability.
- Rising costs for operating expenses
  The cost of operating and maintaining the electric system continues to increase. Materials, fleet vehicles, fuel, equipment, and financing, etc. are among the many expenses that have risen significantly.

2 Breaking Out Demand

What is changing?

Beginning in January 2027, residential, rural residential, and general service bills will move from two billing components to three, **with demand becoming a separate charge**.

Three billing components that will be charged for starting in 2027:

1. Basic Service – *helps cover the fixed costs of providing electric service to your home, including meters, transformers, power lines, billing, and other equipment needed to safely deliver electricity.*
2. Energy (kWh) – *is the total amount of electricity you use over time. This is what powers your lights, appliances, electronics, and other electrical devices throughout the month.*
3. Demand (kW) – *measures the amount of power required in an instant to satisfy the needs of all your connected appliances, lighting, air conditioning, etc.*

Learn more about
Rate and billing changes

Checkout our website for these online tools
https://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/2027-rate-change

Calculator
See how your usage and demand can affect your bill

Videos
- What is energy & demand
- Demand & energy analogy
- How to reduce demand

Understanding Electric Demand
Get the basics & why it matters

FAQs
Quick answers to common questions

Demand 101
A simple guide to how electric demand works

Manager's Message
Insights into what's driving demand

SmartHub
Monitor your energy and demand online



BILLING CHANGES IN 2027

New Rates		
Farm and Rural Residential		
Rate Component	**Old Rate**	**New Rate**
Single-Phase Basic Service Charge	$65/month	$65/month
Three-Phase Basic Service Charge	$120/month	$120/month
Energy Charge	$0.1281/kWh	$0.1095/kWh
Demand Charge		$5/kW
Residential		
Rate Component	**Old Rate**	**New Rate**
Basic Service Charge	$30/month	$30/month
Energy Charge	$0.1281/kWh	$0.1095/kWh
Demand Charge		$5/kW
General Service		
Rate Component	**Old Rate**	**New Rate**
Single-Phase Basic Service Charge	$75/month	$75/month
Three-Phase Basic Service Charge	$120/month	$120/month
Energy Charge	$0.1281/kWh	$0.1060/kWh
Demand Charge		$6.50/kW
Electric Heating (EH)		
Energy Charge	$0.0745/kWh	$0.0745/kWh

Why does demand matter?

Demand has always been part of the cost of providing electricity to you and has been built into existing electric rates. Separating demand into its own charge helps rates more accurately reflect the cost of serving members and allocates those costs to the members who drive them.

The electric system must be designed and built to handle periods of peak electricity use—not just the total amount of energy consumed over a month. By accounting for demand separately, the Cooperative can better align its rates with the true cost of providing reliable electricity.

Rate Changes for Time of Use and Large Power

Both Time of Use (TOU) Rate members and Large Power members will see an increase to their electric rates. The TOU Rate (at right) does not include a demand component because it is built into the rate through higher on-peak energy (kWh) charges.

Sioux Valley Energy's Large Power rates saw an increase in both its demand charge and energy charge as seen below.

New Rates		
Large Power		
Rate Component	**Old Rate**	**New Rate**
Basic Service Charge	$1.50/kVa	$1.50/kVa
Demand Charge	$19.50/kW	$20/kW
Energy Charge	$0.0442/kWh	$0.0500/kWh

New Rates		
Residential TOU		
Rate Component	**Old Rate**	**New Rate**
Basic Service Charge	$30/month	$30/month
On-Peak Energy Charge	$0.2096/kWh	$0.25/kWh
Off-Peak Energy Charge	$0.0716/kWh	$0.0699/kWh
Farm and Rural Residential TOU		
Rate Component	**Old Rate**	**New Rate**
Single-Phase Basic Service Charge	$65/month	$65/month
Three-Phase Basic Service Charge	$120/month	$120/month
On-Peak Energy Charge	$0.2096/kWh	$0.25/kWh
Off-Peak Energy Charge	$0.0716/kWh	$0.0699/kWh
General Service TOU		
Rate Component	**Old Rate**	**New Rate**
Single-Phase Basic Service Charge	$75/month	$75/month
Three-Phase Basic Service Charge	$120/month	$120/month
On-Peak Energy Charge	$0.2096/kWh	$0.25/kWh
Off-Peak Energy Charge	$0.0716/kWh	$0.0699/kWh
Electric Heating (EH)		
Energy Charge	$0.0745/kWh	$0.0745/kWh



The Foster Care Shop offers free toys and essentials to local foster families in Black Hawk, S.D.
Photo courtesy of Light of Mine Ranch

FOSTER CARE
THE COMMUNITY'S KIDS

Light of Mine Ranch Helps Black Hills Foster Families Find the Supplies and Support They Need

Frank Turner
frank.turner@sdrea.coop

When children visiting the Foster Care Shop in Black Hawk, S.D., ask Jordan Combs how much something costs, he gets to give them good news. Everything is free.

Combs said children's eyes light up when they hear the news. They tell their foster parents, then make another trip around the shop.

"I'm the yes guy," Combs said. "If you ask me if you can have it, I'm going to say yes."

Combs and his wife, Mallory, founded Light of Mine Ranch, which provides clothing, baby equipment and household supplies at no cost to foster families.

The inspiration for the Foster Care Shop began when Jordan and Mallory Combs started fostering in 2016.

The couple had been considering international adoption when they attended a community dinner. Local agencies described the need for foster parents, and that's the moment they decided to foster.

"We just felt like God put it on our heart," Combs said.

Since then, the couple has provided long-term foster care for 10 children. When including emergency placements and short stays, Combs estimates that number exceeds 40. Today, the couple has five children, including two daughters they adopted.

As they cared for children and got to know other foster parents, they saw how stretched families could become. Everyday chores like grocery shopping became more complicated. Eating out became more expensive, and they wanted to help ease those burdens.

In 2020, the couple began building a nonprofit. They envisioned homes for foster families on a ranch, giving parents the space and support to focus on children. When housing prices did



Jordan and Mallory Combs have five children, including two they adopted.
Photo courtesy of Light of Mine Ranch

not cooperate with their vision, they put their dream on hold and began helping families on a smaller scale.

"We started looking at what impact can we make now," Combs said.

Light of Mine Ranch helped pay sports fees, purchase equipment and provide bicycles and bunk beds. As community members learned about the work, donations began filling the Combs family's garage.

At the same time, Combs noticed a recurring problem. Someone would offer a crib on Facebook when no family needed one. A few weeks later, a foster family would ask for a crib.

The couple decided to create a shop where donated supplies could be stored until a family needed them.

The Combs family opened the Foster Care Shop in June 2025, giving families a central place to find everything from strollers and shoes to meals and school supplies.

"We're trying to be your first stop to get all the supplies that you need," Combs said.

The shop also serves kinship families, including grandparents, aunts and uncles caring for relatives' children. Relatives often have little time to prepare, Combs said. A grandparent whose own children are grown may suddenly need a crib, a car seat and clothing for an infant.

The organization also assists some families referred by the South Dakota Department of Social Services.

Combs remembers one family relieved to avoid spending an afternoon driving between stores to gather everything they needed.

"They were happy that they didn't have to spend the whole afternoon shopping around town," Combs said.

Combs recalled another girl who had not started school by mid-October because of her family's circumstances.

"She was able to come here and get all her school supplies to get started for school," Combs said.

Since its grand opening, community donations have filled the shop faster than Combs expected. The same moment toys run low after an event, a donor always seems to arrive with boxes of puzzles, toys and dollhouses. When a family picks up a crib, Combs said another donation seems to take its place.

While the shop helps foster families with everyday expenses, the couple is still working toward a place for families and children to stay.

"It'd be a six-bedroom home," Combs said. The organization has identified a prospective site south of Rapid City, but Combs said there is no construction timeline.

The home would provide temporary accommodations for children awaiting placement. Combs said it could also provide space for foster families to rest and take a break. Having several bedrooms would help accommodate sibling groups and children of different ages.

Whether a child stays with a foster family for a weekend or a year, Combs believes the time spent together matters.

"You can make it meaningful to them for that time," he said.

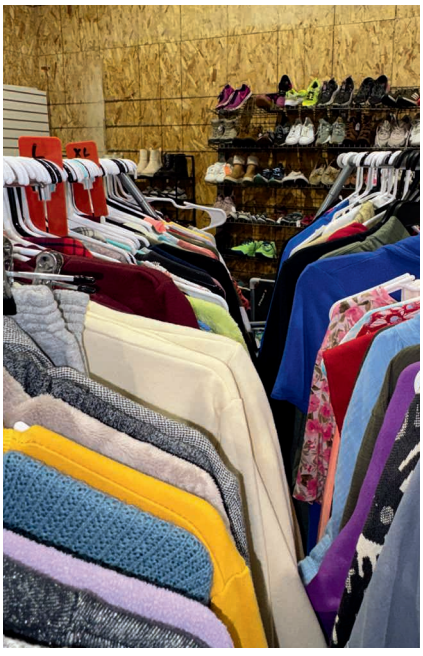
Private donations fund the organization's work and local volunteerism keeps it running, Combs said. They are always looking for more volunteers to sort donations and organize supplies.

Combs hopes the community will also rally together to help make foster families feel less alone. Taking children into a home is a family's decision, he said, but helping care for them is something the wider community can share.

"These are the community's kids," Combs said.



The Foster Care Shop has everything a foster family might need - everything from toys and strollers to racks of clothes. *Photos courtesy of Light of Mine Ranch*



Help or get involved

Families seeking assistance and people interested in helping can visit lightofmineranch.com for information. Combs recommends checking current hours and donation needs before bringing items to the shop.

2027 DISTRICT MEETINGS SET

The Sioux Valley Energy Board of Directors approved the 2027 District Meeting schedule during their September meeting. Three elections will take place in Districts 1, 3, and 8.

Members interested in running for the Board must submit a Director Petition, Conflict of Interest Statement, and Qualification Certification 60 days prior to the meeting date. Petitions must be delivered to a Sioux Valley Energy office location or postmarked by the petition deadline. Sioux Valley Energy encourages members to gather extra member signatures and to deliver or mail completed petitions in advance of the petition deadline to ensure time for member verification.

PETITION DEADLINES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- **District 8 – Sunday, December 27, 2026**
- **District 3 – Friday, January 8, 2027**
- **District 1 – Thursday, January 14, 2027**

Petitions can be obtained at www.siouxvalleyenergy.com or by calling 800-234-1960. The Cooperative Bylaws state the qualifications needed to be a director and are available on the website or by request. Interested members are encouraged to contact Brenda Schelhaas, Executive Assistant.

All Board seats elected in 2027 will serve three-year terms. Election meetings are noted at right.

SIOUX VALLEY ENERGY A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

2027 District Meeting Schedule

DISTRICT 1 Director Election	**WHITE, SD** McKnight Community Center MONDAY **MARCH 15**
DISTRICT 2	**VOLGA, SD** Sioux Valley High School MONDAY **MARCH 22**
DISTRICT 3 Director Election	**FLANDREAU, SD** William J. Janklow Center TUESDAY **MARCH 9**
DISTRICT 4	**MADISON, SD** Dakota Prairie Playhouse TUESDAY **MARCH 30**
DISTRICT 5	**COLTON, SD** Tri-Valley High School TUESDAY **MARCH 16**
DISTRICT 6	**BRANDON, SD** Brandon Valley High School MONDAY **MARCH 1**
DISTRICT 7	**HARTFORD, SD** West Central High School THURSDAY **MARCH 25**
DISTRICT 8 Director Election	**LUVERNE, MN** Generations Event Center THURSDAY **FEBRUARY 25**
DISTRICT 9	**PIPESTONE, MN** Pipestone Area School THURSDAY **MARCH 11**
DISTRICT 10	**EDGERTON, MN** Edgerton Public School THURSDAY **FEBRUARY 18**

Earn $500 for your community group!





Sioux Valley Energy is looking for groups to serve food at its 2027 district meetings in February and March. (The dates are listed above). Groups need about 10 volunteers each to serve the catered meal. Contact amy.voelker@siouxvalleyenergy.com to register your group by December 15.



Babies to Benefit from Tree of Giving Hope Donation Drive

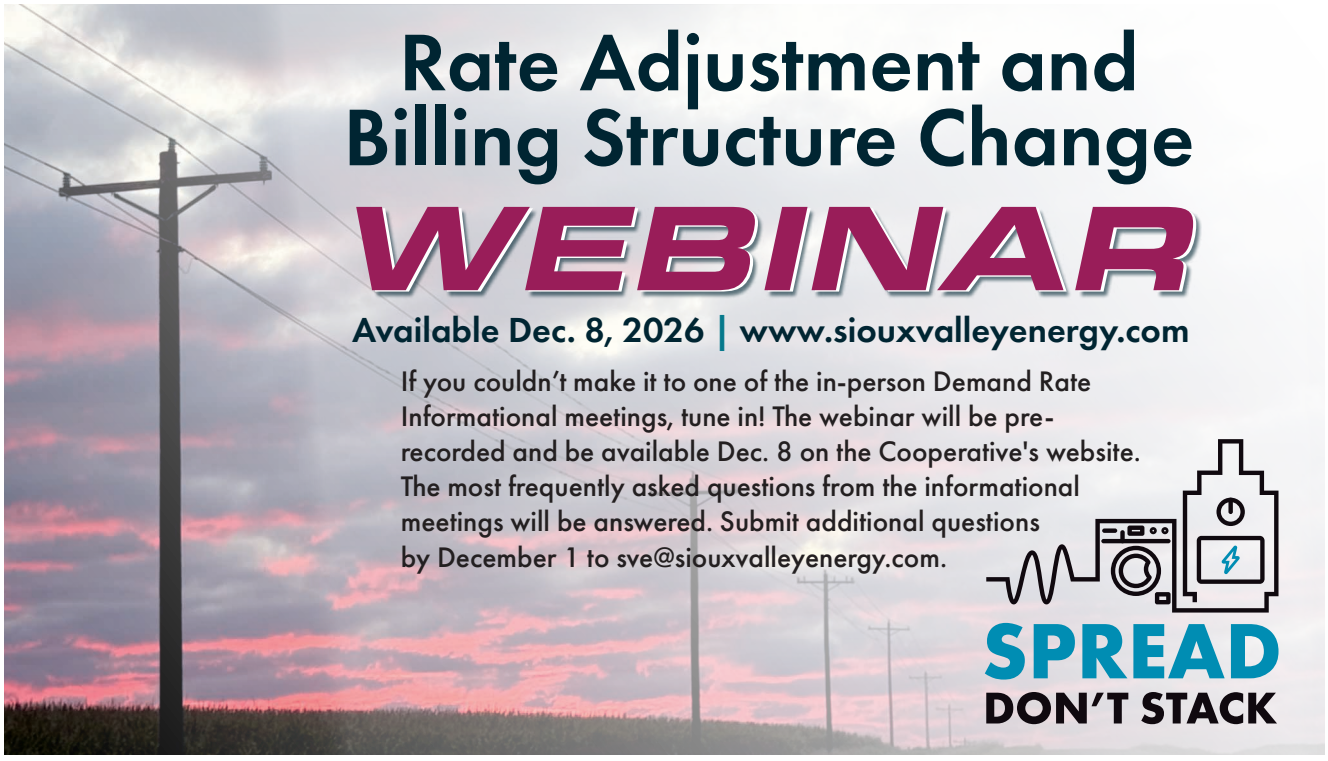
Sioux Valley Energy members can help be a light for others this holiday season through its annual Tree of Giving Hope drive. This year's donation drive will benefit organizations in need of diapers and other items for infants and toddlers in the Cooperative's service area.

The Co-op is seeking diapers, baby wipes, diaper rash ointment, baby shampoo, and other items for infants and toddlers. New containers of unexpired and unopened formula will also be collected.

SVE members can bring donations to one of SVE's offices during business hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Hartford closes at 4 p.m.) through Dec. 31, 2026, and receive a small gift in return.

DONATION LOCATIONS:

- **Colman Main Office:** 23491 271st Avenue
- **Brandon Service Center:** 108 N Heritage Drive
- **Hartford Service Center:** 304 West S.D. Hwy 38, Suite 114 (after Dec. 1)
- **Pipestone Service Center:** 1102 7th St SE





NOV. 24-DEC. 26
Christmas at the Capitol
Pierre, SD
christmasatthecapitol.sd.gov

Photo courtesy of Travel South Dakota

To have your event listed on this page, send complete information, including date, event, place and contact to your local electric cooperative. Include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Information must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to your event. Please call ahead to confirm date, time and location of event.

NOV. 20-JAN. 3
Winter Wonderland
5 p.m.-12 a.m.
Falls Park
Sioux Falls, SD
605-275-6060

NOV. 25-JAN. 2
1880 Holiday Express
222 Railroad Ave.
Hill City, SD
605-574-2222

NOV. 27-DEC. 31
Hall of Trees
Sat.-Thurs.: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Fri.: 10 a.m.-8 p.m.
Mead Museum
Yankton, SD

NOV. 27-DEC. 27
Christmas Nights of Light
5:30-8:30 p.m.
Storybook Island
1301 Sheridan Lake Rd.
Rapid City, SD
605-342-6357

DEC. 3
City of Yankton Holiday Festival of Lights
4 p.m. Family Activities
6 p.m. Lighted Parade
Yankton, SD
605-665-5234

DEC. 4
'Twas the Night Before Christmas Soup & Sandwich Lunch
11 a.m.-1 p.m.
St. Pius X Catholic Church
Onida, SD
605-765-4841

DEC. 4-5
Christmas in the Hills
Mueller Civic Center
Hot Springs, SD
951-591-2335

DEC. 5
KJAM Parade of Lights
5:30 p.m.
Madison, SD
AmazingMadison.com

DEC. 5
Christmas in the Valley
2-9 p.m.
Irene, SD

DEC. 5-JAN. 6
Garden Glow at McCrory Gardens
5-9 p.m.
Closed Dec. 24-25, Jan. 1
Brookings, SD
605-688-6707

DEC. 5
Holiday Jam with the Hegg Brothers
4 p.m.
Summit Activities Center
Yankton, SD
605-665-5234

DEC. 6
KCBA Hometown Christmas
10 a.m.-4 p.m. (MST)
Kadoka City Auditorium
Kadoka, SD
605-488-0151

DEC. 6
Christmas on the Prairie Concert
St. Anthony's Catholic Church
Hoven, SD
605-948-2451

DEC. 10-13
Christmas at the Cathedral
Thurs. & Fri.: 7:30 p.m.
Sat.: 1 p.m., 7:30 p.m.
Sun. 2 p.m., 7:30 p.m.
Cathedral of St. Joseph
Sioux Falls, SD
Tickets: 605-988-3765

DEC. 12
Lake Campbell Lutheran Church Cookie Walk
9 a.m.
46610 219th St.
Volga, SD
605-864-9907

DEC. 12
Frontier Christmas
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Fort Sisseton State Park
Lake City, SD
605-448-5474

DEC. 12
American Legion Chili Cookoff
11 a.m.
The Alliance; 1600 W. Russell St.
Sioux Falls, SD

DEC. 20
Bethlehem in Brule County
5 p.m.
Ag Building
Pukwana, SD
605-730-0553

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.