

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## From Cows to Canvas

**Michelle Weber Captures  
Rural Life in Art**

Pages 8-9

**Sacred Hoops: Shooting  
for Success**

Pages 12-13

# Make Plans to Attend Your District Meeting Scheduled for February & March



**Tim McCarthy**  
General Manager/  
Chief Executive  
Officer

Tim.McCarthy@  
siouxvalleyenergy.  
com

District Meetings will begin on February 22 and will run through the month of March. You can find the schedule below.

The reason why we dedicate time to these District Meetings is twofold. First, every three years, you elect a director to represent you. This year, elections will take place in Districts 1, 3, and 8. All incumbent directors will be on the ballot. Director elections are an extremely important part of the Cooperative's governance. It means YOU have say in how the Cooperative is run through the election process. That's part of the cooperative difference. The strategic vision and direction of this organization is determined by the individuals you elect, and they have done a great job.

The second reason we hold these meetings is to provide you with a face-to-face update from

your director and from your leadership here at Sioux Valley Energy. At this year's meetings we plan to discuss the upcoming rate adjustment, provide information about the impact of regional transmission organizations on the Cooperative, and highlight Sioux Valley Energy's commitment to community. I am sure we will have several questions regarding the upcoming rate increase and so (as we do each year) we will allow for a time during the meeting where members can submit questions for me to answer. A complimentary meal will be provided, along with a registration gift of a \$25 bill credit.

We hope to see you at this year's District Meetings - they are an important part of the Cooperative's governance so make plans to attend!

**REMEMBER TO  
BRING YOUR  
REGISTRATION  
CARD TO  
RECEIVE A  
\$25 BILL  
CREDIT AT THE  
CONCLUSION  
OF THE  
MEETING.**

Sioux Valley Energy  
District Meetings

SERVING OUR MEMBERS.  
*Always.*

Date	District	Director	Location
Thursday, February 22	4	Daniel	Dakota Prairie Playhouse, Madison, SD
Monday, February 26*	3	Heinemann*	William J. Janklow Community Center Flandreau, SD
Tuesday, February 27	5	Weinacht	Taopi Hall, Colton, SD
Thursday, February 29	10	Roskamp	Edgerton Public School, Edgerton, MN
Monday, March 11	6	Fish & Rogen	Brandon Valley High School, Brandon, SD
Tuesday, March 12	7	DeMent	West Central School, Hartford, SD
Thursday, March 14	9	Johnson	Pipestone Area High School, Pipestone, MN
Thursday, March 21	2	Vostad	Sioux Valley School, Volga, SD
Monday, March 25*	1	DeGreef*	Elkton Community Center, Elkton, SD
Tuesday, March 26*	8	Leuthold*	Generations (Grand Prairie Event Center) Luverne, MN

\* Denotes Election Meeting

SIoux VALLEY  
ENERGY

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Complimentary Meal: 5:30-7 p.m.  
Meeting: 7 p.m.

Sioux Valley Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### SIoux VALLEY ENERGY

(USPS No. 497-440)

**Board President:** Gary Fish

**Board of Directors**

Dan Leuthold - Vice President	Gregg Johnson
Don DeGreef - Secretary	Mark Rogen
Dave Daniel - Treasurer	Lucas Roskamp
Rodney DeMent	Ann Vostad
Dr. Leslie Heinemann	Allan Weinacht

**CEO/General Manager:** Tim McCarthy

**Chief Financial Officer:** Jason Maxwell

**V.P. of Engineering & Operations:** Ted Smith

**V.P. of Human Resources**

**& Member Services:** Kimberlee Hansen

**V.P. of Public Relations:** Carrie Vugteveen, Editor

**V.P. of Technology:** Justin Moose

**Executive Assistant:** Brenda Schelhaas

*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  
Website: www.siouxvalleyenergy.com

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or disability. Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found on-line at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed complaint form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

**Sioux Valley Energy is an  
equal opportunity provider and employer.**

# SCHOLAR OF THE WEEK

Grace Anderson, a student at Hills Beaver Creek High School, has been chosen as a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 'Scholar of the Week' for the week of January 28 through February 3. Anderson was recognized with a scholarship by Sioux Valley Energy and was featured on *Dakota News Now* for her accomplishments. She is the daughter of Andy and Kate Anderson of Beaver Creek, Minn.

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, like Sioux Valley Energy, have joined together with *Dakota News Now* to recognize the achievements of high school seniors throughout the region. Recipients are highly motivated high school seniors who excel in the classroom and community. This program was founded on the four pillars of Touchstone Energy: Integrity, Accountability, Innovation, and a Commitment to Community.

"Grace is a well-rounded young leader that is very deserving of the Scholar of the Week recognition. Her academic and extra-curricular achievements are impressive," said Tim McCarthy, Sioux Valley Energy General Manager/CEO.

Anderson is involved in volleyball, Knowledge Bowl, Math League, Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO), is a High Honor student, and was selected as homecoming queen.



## SOUTH DAKOTA FREEDOM HUNTS BENEFITS FROM OPERATION ROUND UP FUNDS

Operation Round Up funds were used to help provide hunting opportunities for disabled and underprivileged hunters.

Learn more about South Dakota Freedom Hunts at <https://siouxriverwildlife.com/index.php/south-dakota-freedom-hunts/>.  
Learn more about Operation Round Up at <https://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/operation-round-up>.



## Make Fall Safety a Top Priority

It may come as a surprise that the second leading cause of unintentional injury-related death is falls. In 2021, 44,686 people died in falls at home and at work, according to Injury Facts®. For working adults, depending on the industry, falls can be the leading cause of death.

### Falls are 100% Preventable

March is Ladder Safety Month. Whether working from a ladder, roof or scaffolding, it's important to plan ahead, assess the risk and use the right equipment. First, determine if working from a height is absolutely necessary or if there is another way to do the task safely.

- Discuss the task with coworkers and determine what safety equipment is needed
- Make sure you are properly trained on how to use the equipment
- Scan the work area for potential hazards before starting the job
- Make sure you have level ground to set up the equipment
- If working outside, check the weather forecast; never work in inclement weather
- Use the correct tool for the job, and use it as intended
- Ensure stepladders have a locking device to hold the front and back open
- Always keep two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand on the ladder
- Place the ladder on a solid surface and never lean it against an unstable surface
- A straight or extension ladder should be one foot away from the surface it rests on for every four feet of height and extend at least three feet over the top edge
- Securely fasten straight and extension ladders to an upper support
- Wear slip-resistant shoes and don't stand higher than the third rung from the top
- Don't lean or reach while on a ladder, and have someone support the bottom
- Never use old or damaged equipment; check thoroughly before use

### Fall Hazards at Home

Are you a weekend warrior or do-it-yourselfer? If you take on home improvement or other weekend projects, it's important to prepare yourself for physical exertion, especially if you've been sedentary through the winter months, and take extra precautions to prevent falls.

Risky projects, like installing siding, gutters or roofs, are best left to professionals. Saving money isn't worth risking a debilitating or fatal fall.

At home or at work, many of the same rules apply. When taking on a project:

- Practice all of the ladder safety tips mentioned above
- Keep the work area clear of hazards and immediately clean up spills
- Read all instructions and safety precautions on your equipment
- Don't wear loose clothing that can get caught in equipment

We tend to think we're always safe on flat ground, but the thousands of injuries each year tell us otherwise.

- Falls are the #1 cause of death for older adults; fall-proof your home
- Keep floors and surfaces clear of clutter
- Keep file cabinets and desk drawers closed
- Keep electrical and phone cords out of traffic areas
- Install handrails on stairways
- Wear sensible footwear
- Never stand on chairs, tables or any surface with wheels
- Properly arrange furniture to create open pathways
- Maintain good lighting indoors and out

More than 6.9 million people were treated in emergency rooms for fall-related injuries in 2021. A fall can end in death or disability in a split second, but with a few simple precautions, you'll be sure stay safe at home and at work.

*Source: National Safety Council*



### Trim Your Trees

#### Brace Tapio, Age 8

Brace Tapio cautions readers to trim their trees to prevent power line damage. Brace's parents are Nate and Elsa Tapio from Armour, S.D., members of Douglas Electric 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.

# SEAFOOD SPECIALS

## CAJUN SHRIMP

### Ingredients:

- 1 lb. large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 2-3 tsps. cajun seasoning
- 2 tbsps. butter

### Method

Coat shrimp with seasoning. Melt butter in large skillet on medium heat. Add shrimp; cook and stir three minutes or just until shrimp turn pink. Serve over cooked rice, if desired.

[McCormick.com](http://McCormick.com)

## CRAB SALAD SPREAD

### Ingredients:

- 8 12 oz. imitation crab meat, flake style, tear into small pieces
- 1 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 cup (approx.) shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1 small can black olives, sliced
- Mayo (must be Mayo), to get correct texture, less is better than too much
- 1/4 to 1/2 pepper, cracked

### Method

Mix by hand. Serve with Club or Ritz crackers.

Linda Hubbard  
Rapid City, S.D.

## CREAMY SHRIMP LINGUINE

### Ingredients:

- 8 oz. linguine
- 1 tbsp. butter
- 1 lb. large shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 package garlic butter shrimp scampi
- 2 tbsps. white wine

### Method

Cook pasta as directed on package. Drain well.

Melt butter in large skillet on medium-high heat. Add shrimp; cook and stir 2 minutes or just until shrimp turn pink. Add cooked pasta, Seaoning Mix, cream and wine. Reduce heat to medium; cook 1 to 2 minutes or until heated through, stirring occasionally. Serve with grated Parmesan cheese.

[McCormick.com](http://McCormick.com)

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2024. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

# Updating Your HVAC? Think Heat Pumps



**Sheila Gross**  
Energy Services  
Specialist

**Contact Sheila Gross** at [sheila.gross@siouxvalleyenergy.com](mailto:sheila.gross@siouxvalleyenergy.com) to learn more. Check out our rebates and incentives here:



Our Beneficial Electrification department receives many calls from members looking to replace their existing HVAC equipment. We have put together some things to consider as you work with your contractor.

It's important to understand the terminologies you'll come across. **Single-stage/speed systems** are the most basic systems – they will have the lowest upfront cost but will be the most expensive to operate. They have two settings – on or off – operating at 100% capacity or not at all. A **two-stage/speed system** is an upgrade that offers a middle-ground solution for cost and provides higher comfort and efficiency. They will run on low or high settings based on heating needs – typically from 65% capacity to 100%. **Variable-stage/speed systems** are the most efficient and provide the best comfort, operating from 25% to 100% capacity. These advanced systems have the most expensive upfront cost of the three options. Because they can operate at lower speeds, they consume less power, making operating less costly over time.

The first step in retrofitting an existing home with a modern HVAC system is to assess your home. This involves evaluating the current system and comfort of different areas of your home, ductwork, insulation levels, and the overall home layout. Retrofitting an older home can also provide an opportunity to improve insulation levels and address air leaks. Today's modern equipment does not necessarily work correctly with outdated or inadequate ductwork. You may need to update the ductwork to accommodate the new system and reap the benefits of saving money in operating costs and improving the efficiency of the equipment and the overall comfort level of your home. Proper sizing of the HVAC system is critical to the system working as intended. If it's sized too small, it won't keep up in extreme hot or cold weather. On the other hand, if it's too big, it may short-cycle making the space less comfortable and lead to uneven temperature control throughout the house. Your contractor should do a load calculation of your home to properly size the equipment.

Choosing the right HVAC system for your home involves many aspects, such as home constraints, upfront costs, energy savings, comfort level, and long-term flexibility. Air-source heat pumps, including ductless mini-split systems, can

be an easy alternative to central air conditioners in retrofitting a home. There is a higher upfront cost of approximately \$1,500 to \$2,000 to purchase a heat pump over a similar rated central air conditioner, but lower energy costs help make up the difference. Not only do heat pumps provide efficient cooling, but they also deliver efficient heating. Heat pumps offer you the flexibility to pair them with the backup heating fuel source of your choice – electric, propane, or natural gas. For comparison, if you have a 96% high-efficient propane or natural gas furnace, you will need to purchase propane at \$.65/gallon or natural gas at \$.71/therm to be a cheaper energy choice than utilizing a base model heat pump that receives SVE's electric heat rate.

The Cooperative offers rebates (for equipment 2-ton and larger) to make choosing a heat pump an even greater value – **\$600 rebate** for an air-source heat pump with non-electric backup or **\$1,200 for an all-electric application** as well as geothermal heat pumps. A **rebate of \$300 per structure** is available for a ductless mini-split heat pump system. Qualified energy-efficiency upgrades to an existing home, including weatherization projects and heat pump technologies, may be eligible for a **tax credit of up to \$3,200 annually** through 2032. Talk to your HVAC contractor and tax preparer for more information and eligibility guidelines or visit [https://www.energystar.gov/ABOUT/FEDERAL\\_TAX\\_CREDITS](https://www.energystar.gov/ABOUT/FEDERAL_TAX_CREDITS). Search for eligible heat pump models and paired systems at <https://www.ahrinet.org/certification/cee-directory>.

Integrating smart thermostats can further enhance the efficiency and convenience of an HVAC system. They can also help you utilize the Cooperative's Time of Use Rate (TOU). Smart thermostats allow homeowners to remotely control and schedule temperature settings, optimize energy usage, and monitor their system's performance. If you have a heat pump, visit with your contractor about the balance point setting to optimize the savings a heat pump can give in the fall and winter months. This setting is the outdoor temperature at which your system switches from the heat pump to the backup system.

Contact SVE at 800-234-1960 for more information on our heat pump rebates, electric heat rate, TOU rate option, and energy audits.

# How a Community Built Partnerships to Add Three Child Care Centers

The City of Hills, Minnesota, had a tax-forfeited building it could not sell but instead had to use for community betterment.

There were ideas – a fitness center and other concepts – but a “daycare kept coming up, because we knew it was a problem in our town,” Hills Mayor Keith Elbers said.

Like many places, southwest Minnesota lacks enough options for childcare. Hills, located just east of Valley Springs, South Dakota, south of Interstate 90, became the site of an innovative approach: the Hills Childcare Project.

It started with renovating the tax-forfeited property on Main Avenue, which now will house up to three independently run childcare centers. A donation from Sioux Valley Energy’s REVIVE 2030 program, along with a grant from the Cooperative’s Operation Round Up® program, plus a commitment from New Vision Co-op will help purchase playground equipment. The facility features a shared green space donated by Alliance Communications, which will house the playground equipment.

“We all have seen the need for daycare providers, and an opportunity was brought before us, so we thought we would address the need for childcare. It has been a process way more than I could have imagined, but with the help of a committed city council and staff and unbelievable assistance from many partners, we are proud to offer a new facility to address the childcare need for the City of Hills and surrounding area,” said Keith Elbers, Hills Mayor.

Sioux Valley Energy, through its REVIVE 2030 program, has been partnering with communities throughout the region, like Hills, to help them identify needs, secure resources, create partnerships, and develop community plans. Sioux Valley Energy’s Economic Development & Community Relations Executive Brandon Lane said his job is to bring people together.

“Each community is unique, and they all stand at the



intersection of possibility and progress...that just looks different to each location. Economic development is not just a concept; it’s a collective endeavor. Each one of us plays a vital role in shaping the future of our communities. The Cooperative’s efforts through our REVIVE 2030 program will hopefully help communities view challenges as opportunities, leverage the power of collaboration, and work together to build resilient, thriving economies,” said Lane.

Lane works with several communities throughout the Cooperative’s entire service territory. He says many smaller communities are not able to employ a full-time economic development professional, which is where Sioux Valley Energy or one of its partner organizations can help. As the REVIVE 2030 program expands, available programming may include the following, or Sioux Valley Energy may work with partner organizations to offer:

Grant Writing Assistance, Community Planning Assistance, Strategic Planning Services, Education and Networking Opportunities, Community Marketing Assistance, and Event Planning Assistance.

For more information regarding REVIVE 2030 program, contact Brandon Lane at [brandon.lane@siouxvalleyenergy.com](mailto:brandon.lane@siouxvalleyenergy.com).

## APRIL IS NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH

Historically, Sioux Valley Energy employees have been active volunteers for various community organizations. However, it wasn’t until 2019 that a group of employees, taking part in an internal leadership program, recommended a change in employee volunteerism efforts. Their recommendation included connecting employees with area communities to better meet the needs of residents. That’s when the Community Connections program was born.

Throughout the year employees volunteer hundreds of hours to assist with various non-profit organizations and communities. Examples include: Sleep in Heavenly Peace, Prairie Village, Colman Veterans Park, Madison Baseball, Feeding South Dakota, Project Joy, Children’s Home Society, Rake the Town events, Lights at the Lodge (Pipestone), Brandon Fire Department, Rock Ranch, The Foster Network, and Meals on Wheels. To be considered for the SVE Community Connections program, contact Chinelle at 800-234-1960.





Rural Artist Michelle Weber has illustrated 11 children books in addition to showcasing her art nationwide and internationally.

## Michelle Weber Captures Rural Life in Art

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

During her upbringing in Windom, Minn., Michelle Weber discovered her passion for art at a young age. She was the kid who was always doodling, often paying more attention to her drawings than to the class. Holding on to her passion, Weber took her first art class in high school with her art

teacher, Mark Nass. Although the class had a rocky start, Nass recognized her potential and helped fuel a passion that would ultimately lead Weber to becoming a prominent rural artist.

“I was a junior in high school when I enrolled in my first real art class, and to be honest, I kind of hated it,” said Weber. “That first week, I was mortified that I wasn’t any good.”

Initially contemplating dropping the class, Weber sought a signature from her art teacher to change her art class to a study hall instead. Despite her request, Nass refused to let her drop the class and encouraged her to try give the class another chance.

“After a few weeks, everything just clicked,” said Weber. “I fell in love with painting and began living in the school’s art room.”

In less than a year, Weber made substantial progress in her artistic abilities. Enough so, that her teacher encouraged her to apply for the Congressional Art Competition. She applied,



and her painting not only won in her district but also earned a spot in the U.S. Capitol building in Washington D.C., where it was showcased for an entire year.

Weber's success in the Congressional Art Competition foreshadowed what was to come. Drawing inspiration from her upbringing on a farm and involvement in 4-H, Weber began primarily painting livestock. In 2011, Weber's friend from Mitchell, S.D., Amanda Radke, approached her with a request to illustrate a children's book featuring livestock and rural agriculture, a perfect fit for Weber's artwork. This opportunity led to the creation of "A World With Cows," marking Weber's first foray into a full-time career as an artist.

"The book was a huge stepping stone for both of us," said Weber.

The children's book marked not only the beginning of a career but also established Weber's niche – capturing the focal point of rural life on canvas: livestock, horses, buffalo, and more. Weber has since illustrated 10 additional children's books and successfully sold her artwork both nationwide and internationally.

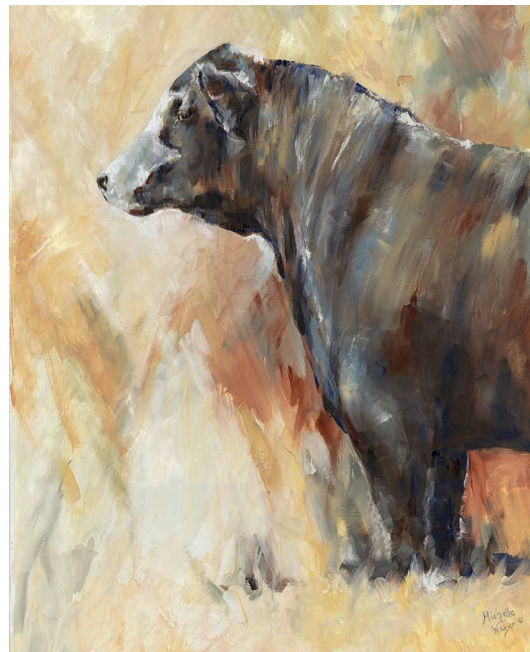
Traditionally, her oil paintings have been rooted in a realism, capturing every detail of the depicted animals. More recently, Weber has expanded her art to include a more whimsical and abstract representation of the rural lifestyle.

"My niche market is the producer, so it's important that my art reflects an authentic rural lifestyle," said Weber. "I want these paintings to have a touch of who I am, but also have the integrity of this lifestyle retained on canvas too."

Today, Weber resides just outside Lake Benton, Minn., a town just outside the South Dakota border. From her small town, Michelle Weber also maintains a website, [michelleweberstudio.com](http://michelleweberstudio.com), where she showcases a wide range of products

featuring her artwork, including prints, notecards, children's books, and even cake pans. In addition to her website, Weber recently opened a studio named, "The Studio by Michelle Weber" in the center Lake Benton.

"The Studio is a space located right in the heart of Lake Benton," said Weber. "Some people look at Lake Benton with a population of less than 700 or less and ask, 'Why would you open your studio there?' But I stand behind supporting these small. They are the heartbeat of this country, so it only seemed fitting to bring it home."



A Weber painting, titled "Side Eye."



Weber is widely known for her oil paintings that capture the essence of an authentic rural lifestyle on canvas.

Account Number: 123456789 Service Address: 123 COOPERATIVE AVE Map Location: 999-9-999-99

Meter #	Rate Description	Billing Period		Readings		Diff	Meter Mult	Energy (kWh)	Demand (kW)
		From	To	Previous	Present				
999999	RURAL RESIDENT SERVICE	12/01/2023	01/01/2024	45149	46472	1,323	1	1,323	8.380

<b>Account Activity</b>	
Payment(s) Received	-\$70.00
Previous Balance	\$70.00
<b>Account Balance Before Current Charges</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Current Charges</b>	
Energy Charge	1,323 kWh @ 0.10550 \$139.58
Demand Charge	8.380 kW @ 0.000 \$0.00
Basic Service	\$65.00
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$204.58</b>
Taxes	\$14.06
Operation Roundup	\$0.36
<b>Total Current Charges Due</b>	<b>\$219.00</b>
<b>Total Amount Due</b>	<b>\$219.00</b>

*Accounts past due 10 days after the due date are subject to a late fee of \$5.00 or 1.5%, whichever is greater. A \$30.00 fee will be assessed for all returned checks. A security deposit may be applied to accounts not in good standing.*

# BASIC SERVICE CHARGE EXPLAINED

## Fixed Costs Paid for Through the Basic Service Charge

One of the most common billing questions we get is regarding the basic service charge you see on your bill.

The questions and comments range from: Why do I have this extra charge on my bill? Is this a new charge? Why am I paying for “nothing”?

First, it’s important to understand there are two components on a residential or rural residential electric bill—an energy charge which is the amount you pay for each kilowatt hour of electricity. The other component is a basic service charge which helps pay for fixed costs that are necessary to bring electricity to your home or business. Sioux Valley Energy began billing a basic service charge 17 years ago. Large power and general service also have a demand charge.

Every wire, cable, transformer, and switch costs money. This equipment is necessary so you can have the power you need at your home or business 24/7, 365 days a year. That equipment has to be there regardless of how much or how little you use it, so electricity is available each time you turn on a light or start a load of laundry.

Another question we receive from members is why the basic service charge is so high. The basic service charge is based on

the average cost of service for each rate class. For example, urban residential members pay less than the rural residential members because there are more members per mile of line in congested areas to help recover the cost of those facilities.

The basic service charge does not pay for the full cost of the equipment and maintenance it takes to bring electricity to your home or business. The average facility investment per meter is currently \$12,500. Changes to the basic service charge help get each class of service closer to its true cost and as the Co-op continues to invest in and maintain the system, that cost increases over time.

One way or the other, members need to pay for the facilities it takes to provide service. Some utilities embed that into their energy charge, but that’s not the most equitable way to bill for electric service. If the basic service charge were to be embedded in the energy charge and your neighbor uses less energy than you, you would actually be helping to pay for their electric use.

If you would like more information about your electric bill, contact the Sioux Valley Energy Member Service Department at 877-511-8062.

# Rate Adjustment Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. WHY DO WE HAVE RATE INCREASES EVERY YEAR?

The last time Sioux Valley Energy raised rates was in 2020. Sioux Valley Energy has worked to hold off a rate increase for nearly four years during a time of skyrocketing inflation. SVE was able to do that through system growth, the use of deferred revenue, careful budgeting, management of spending, and the temporary scaling back of line construction.

We have now gotten to a point where we are not able to absorb the increased cost of materials/equipment and we need to bring our line construction schedule back to normal to ensure that we are able to provide reliable service to our members.

## 2. WHAT IS THE RATE IMPACT OF THE SVE BRANDON FACILITY ADDITION?

There is a cost to the Brandon building addition. However, the rate impact is minimal because this is a capitalized asset and the expense is spread out over a time period of approximately 50 years, so both existing and future members pay for it. This expansion is necessary to prepare the Cooperative to serve members into the future.

On an average \$120 electric bill, approximately **60 cents** will go towards the Brandon building expansion. That is just one half of one percent (0.5%) of your electric bill.

## 3. HOW CAN I SAVE ON MY ELECTRIC BILL AND IS THERE ANY ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE TO HELP ME PAY?

**Sioux Valley Energy has several programs and special rates that may help you save.**

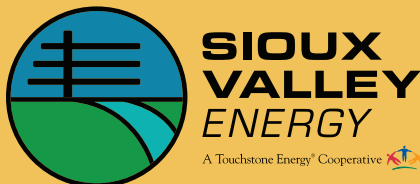
Learn more at: <https://siouxvalleyenergy.com/energy-solutions-catalog>

**Want to make your home or business more efficient?**

Check out these resources on our website at: <https://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/energy-efficiency-tools-0>

**Struggling to pay your electric bill?**

There are many assistance agencies available for members. You can find the agency listing on our website as well at: <https://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-billing#assistance>



## Planned Rate Adjustments April 2024

For other rate class adjustments or to learn how the new rates will impact your electric bill, call our Member Services Department at 877-511-8062.

SCAN THIS CODE TO LEARN MORE AND TO CALCULATE YOUR RATE



Farm and Rural Residential		
Rate Component	Old Rate	New Rate
Single-Phase Basic Service Charge	\$55	\$65
3-Phase Basic Service Charge	\$100	\$120
Energy Charge	\$.1026	\$.1055
Residential		
Rate Component	Old Rate	New Rate
Basic Service Charge	\$20	\$30
Energy Charge	\$.1026	\$.1055
General Service		
Rate Component	Old Rate	New Rate
Single-Phase Basic Service Charge	\$55	\$75
3-Phase Basic Service Charge	\$100	\$120
Energy Charge	\$.1026	\$.1055
Large Power		
Rate Component	Old Rate	New Rate
Basic Service Charge	\$1.20/kVa	\$1.50 /kVA
Demand Charge	\$16.50/kW	\$17.00 /kW
Energy Charge	\$0.03650/kwh	\$0.03760 /kWh



Sacred Hoops Coach Tuffy Morrison is just one of many volunteer coaches who make Sacred Hoops Basketball a reality for rural athletes.

# SHOOTING FOR SUCCESS

## Sacred Hoops Basketball Scores Big with Rural Youth

**Frank Turner**

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

Sacred Hoops Basketball, a nonprofit organization unique to South Dakota, has been changing the game for youth basketball across the state for more than six years. Using basketball as a tool for youth development, the program organizes teams, trains coaches, and hosts tournaments and workshops for young individuals in all communities – both big and small.

Since the program's conception, the emphasis has centered on rural engagement. Allan Bertram, the owner and operator of Sacred Hoops, co-founded the program alongside Jordan Long and a few other movers and shakers as a way to bring quality basketball instruction to students who would otherwise need to travel hundreds of miles to participate. Their goal was to make basketball accessible to all athletes across the state, not only improving their basketball skills but

also their life skills.

"We wanted to bridge the gap for kids in rural areas, particularly our athletes in low socio-economic areas who may not have been able to play basketball otherwise," said Bertram. "We want to ensure that every kid who wants to play can."

Beyond hosting tournaments and teams, Bertram and the organization's other volunteers have found other ways to make changes on and off the basketball court. In addition to hosting more than 120 high school instruction programs across the state, Sacred Hoops Basketball annually distributes more than \$70,000 in scholarships that aid athletes from low-income families to play ball. The organization was also the driving force behind a recent initiative that placed 2,000 new pairs of shoes in the hands of children from select, rural



Sacred Hoops Director and Coach Ted Standing Soldier draws up a play for the the Sacred Hoops West River Youth Team.

elementary schools in South Dakota. “We’ve seen so many kids grow and fulfill their passion,” said Bertram. “In today’s world, our youth sometimes don’t understand what their purpose or passion is, and that’s why so many of our youth are struggling. It doesn’t matter what a kid is passionate about – it could be music, sports, gaming, or whatever – but it’s our job to help feed that passion because that is what gives those kids a purpose.”

Today, the program has expanded to encompass more than 50 dedicated volunteers and 600 athletes across 60 teams in their summer season, with athletes spanning from third grade to high school. These numbers, said Bertram, have added up to a real impact for athletes across the state. Within Sacred Hoops Basketball, more than 75 athletes have gone on to play college-level basketball.

“It gives us a great sense of pride because those kids are not only getting a post-secondary degree but also get to continue their passion by playing at the next level,” said Bertram. “Many of these kids come from rural areas or

locations.”

Sacred Hoops Basketball Director and Coach Ted Standing Soldier also emphasized the impact that the nonprofit has had on West River athletes. Standing Soldier regularly works with athletes from several rural

West River communities, including Pine Ridge, Belle Fourche, Kadoka, and more.

“We have athletes from all over come to play on one team, and it’s changing the game for these kids. We have seen several of our athletes start making junior varsity and varsity teams as middle schoolers,” said Standing Soldier. “These are kids we want to help reach their full potential, both on and off the court.”

Reflecting on his upbringing, Standing Soldier said that basketball played a significant role in his early life, ultimately leading to college scholarships that allowed him to play basketball for Platte Community College in Nebraska and later the University of Mary in North Dakota. Those opportunities, he said, are ones that he wants to share with other youth in South Dakota.

“Basketball has been a part of my entire life,” he said. “I developed a love for the game. God has used it to impact my entire life, and now I’m using it to impact others.”



The Sacred Hoops Basketball AAU West Coast National Championship Team.



Forty three area teens participated in the 2023-24 EmPOWER Youth Leadership program.

# PLUGGED IN TEEN LEADERS

## Cooperative Leadership Program EmPOWERS the Next Generation

For the past decade, Sioux Valley Energy's EmPOWER Youth Leadership Program has been connecting up-and-coming leaders.

"EmPOWER is a program designed to teach today's youth about the cooperative business model, along with growing and developing them as a future leader," said Chinelle Christensen, Sioux Valley Energy's Culture and Training Development Strategist who leads the EmPOWER program.

Launched in 2014, the EmPOWER Youth Leadership Program helps area teens build leadership skills and develop a comprehensive understanding of cooperatives.

The program is offered over four interactive sessions held on state holidays in October, November, January, and February. However, weather impacted the 2023-24



sessions, causing the third and fourth sessions to be adjusted. Each session builds upon skills learned

in the previous session and extends into exploring career opportunities, networking with other students and business leaders, and learning more about the cooperative business model. Students are also eligible for scholarships and additional learning opportunities through travel to Washington, D.C., and cooperative facilities in North Dakota.

"We have made far more of an impact on who these students are than I ever imagined," Christensen said. "The students who participate in the EmPOWER program gain confidence, leadership skills, and take a deep dive into understanding who they are or want to be, why a cooperative matters, and what the cooperative difference is."

The first session brings the students together, where they explore cooperatives and engage in character development activities with a regional trainer.

Session two delves into exploring individual strengths and the role those strengths play in team interactions. The session also covers electrical safety and CPR training.

The third and fourth sessions explore a concept called Breakthrough Leadership and challenges students to look at factors that can hold them back. The final motivational speaker focuses on overcoming obstacles.

**APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2024-25 SESSIONS WILL BE DUE MAY 10, 2024.**



# EMPOWER

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

## STEP UP AND STAND OUT!

Leadership, learning, friendships and challenges. Energize your potential through the EmPOWER Youth Leadership Program!

This inspiring, interactive program will help you discover personal strengths, build & improve leadership skills, link up with peers & professionals, and explore career paths.

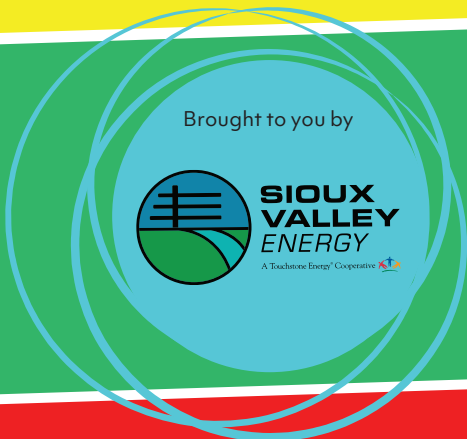


## FOUR FUN-FILLED, PEER-ADVISED PROGRAM DAYS FOCUS ON:

- Leadership Skills
- Cooperatives
- Personal Strengths
- Communication Skills
- Team Building
- Health & Wellness
- Electrical Safety/CPR
- Networking
- Career Options

## TO APPLY:

The 12-month program is open to upcoming juniors who are ready to commit to fully EmPOWER themselves with fun, positive, open minds. Applications are available from your school counselor or on the Sioux Valley Energy website. Submit via email to [Chinelle.Christensen@siouxvalleyenergy.com](mailto:Chinelle.Christensen@siouxvalleyenergy.com).



[EMPOWERYOUTHLEADERSHIP.COM](http://EMPOWERYOUTHLEADERSHIP.COM)

**Apply By May 10, 2024.**



**MARCH 1-3, 2024**  
**National Pheasant**  
**Fest & Quail Classic**  
 1201 N West Ave.  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**FEB. 15 - MARCH 15**  
**Chamberlain-Oacoma**  
**Burger Battle**  
 Facebook.com/chamberlainoacoma  
 Chamberlain-Oacoma, SD

**FEB. 19**  
**Wessington Springs Farm,**  
**Home & Health Show**  
 10 a.m.- 3 p.m.  
 W. S. Elementary Gymnasiums  
 Wessington Springs, SD

**FEB. 24**  
**Plankinton Fire &**  
**Ambulance Fundraiser**  
 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.  
 Plankinton Ag Building  
 Plankinton, SD

**MARCH 3**  
**Sioux Falls American Legion**  
**Pancake Breakfast**  
 8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.  
 South Dakota Military  
 Heritage Alliance Building  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**MARCH 9**  
**French Toast/Pancake Feed**  
**& Health Fair**  
 8:30 a.m.  
 Tea Community Building  
 Tea, SD

**MARCH 9**  
**Epiphany Sausage Sale**  
 605-425-2600  
 Epiphany Catholic Church  
 Epiphany, SD

**MARCH 15**  
**East Dakota Chapter NWFT**  
**31st Annual Banquet**  
 Ramkota Exhibit Hall  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**MARCH 23**  
**Tyndall VFW Vegas Night**  
 7:30 p.m.  
 Tyndall Community Center  
 Tyndall, SD

**MARCH 23**  
**Brown County Fair**  
**Foundation Hall of Fame**  
**Banquet and Auction**  
 6 p.m.  
 Yelduz Shrine  
 Aberdeen, SD

**MARCH 29**  
**NDFC Tracy Byrd Concert**  
 6 p.m.  
 Holum Expo Building on the  
 Brown County Fairgrounds  
 Aberdeen, SD

**APRIL 2**  
**Clay-Union Electric**  
**Ribbon Cutting & Open**  
**House**  
 3 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.  
 31321 SD Hwy. 19  
 Vermillion, SD

**APRIL 4**  
**McCrossan Wildest Banquet**  
**Auction in the Midwest**  
 5:30 p.m.  
 \$100 per Ticket  
 Sioux Falls Arena  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**APRIL 5-7**  
**71st Annual Hayes Play:**  
**Under a Cowboy Moon**  
 7 p.m.  
 Hayes Community Hall  
 Hayes, SD

**APRIL 19**  
**American Legion Post 15**  
**Dance**  
 6 p.m.- 10:30 p.m.  
 El Riad Shrine  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**APRIL 27**  
**Henry's Run 5k Run/Walk**  
 9 a.m.  
 Register online  
 sandfordhealthfoundation.org  
 Falls Park  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**MAY 4-5**  
**Flea Market**  
 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
 605-770-2411  
 Rustic Designs & More  
 Ethan, SD

**MAY 4-12**  
**Spring Show**  
 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
 605-770-2411  
 Rustic Designs & More  
 Ethan, SD

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.

**Note: Please make sure to call ahead to verify the event is still being held.**