



# Cooperative Connections



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# Rate Increase Delayed Again



**Tim McCarthy, GM/CEO**

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Things are not 'business as usual' here at Sioux Valley Energy and they likely will not be for quite some time. As we watch the world change around us, there is uncertainty caused by COVID-19. Economic conditions are becoming dire for many of our members, some are dealing with health issues related to the virus and others are experiencing a variety of social issues made worse during this time. Unfortunately, many of those issues are beyond what Sioux Valley Energy can control. However, there are things that we can control, which we hope will be helpful to our members. A rate increase was originally scheduled to take effect in May. I announced last month that we would be delaying that increase for a minimum of one month, with the hope that we could extend the delay even further. I am happy to announce that we indeed can extend the delay for at least another month. This is something that we will need to re-evaluate each month as we review the Cooperative's financials.

If you recall, we have been communicating that a rate increase was needed because of an anticipated \$4-million revenue shortfall this year. Last year we had an approximate \$2.6-million shortfall, but we were able to use deferred revenue and internal efficiencies to delay the need for a rate increase until May of 2020. Unfortunately, there is not enough deferred revenue to do that this year. In order to continue delaying the rate increase beyond May, we will need to cut more than \$400,000 each month from the budget.

As I said in my opening paragraph, there is a lot we cannot control so we need to focus on what we can control and that is eliminating, reducing or postponing expenses where we can. Our senior leadership team has literally gone through the budget line by line to do just that. Our Board of Directors has gone through the same exercise as well. We have also been working closely with our financial lenders and our power suppliers to see if there are other ways to reduce rate impacts.

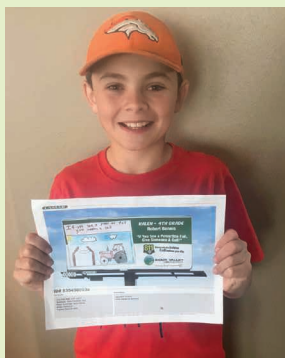
The rate increase will be needed eventually because that revenue shortfall will not go away—in fact, it may actually get worse as many commercial and industrial companies have reduced their electric use. We talked extensively about the reasons for the rate increase in the newsletter which came out in March. Those reasons include several years of increased capital expenditures to replace an aging distribution and transmission system along with the fact that SVE absorbed much of a 13 percent wholesale power increase three years ago.

In addition to delaying the rate increase, we are also trying to work with individual members if they are struggling to pay their electric bill. Our goal is to help members avoid disconnection of electric service, but the key is communication. Members need to call us prior to being disconnected so can we direct them to assistance agencies and work together to develop an acceptable payment plan.

During these uncertain times, you can have certainty that Sioux Valley Energy will be there to deliver reliable and safe electricity to your homes and businesses. "Serving Our Members. Always." It's what we do. It's who we are. It's how we will move forward.

## Safety Poster Winners

Congratulations to area fourth graders--Kalen, Lily and Olivia--for winning the Sioux Valley Energy Safety Poster Contest! The contest winners will have their safety poster displayed on billboards throughout the month of May. Kalen is from Brandon, SD. Lily is from Hills, MN and Olivia is from Jasper, MN. Thanks to these young artists for helping us spread the safety message!



# Sioux Valley Energy Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 497-440)

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- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

Sioux Valley Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## District 5, 6, 7 & 9

# Election Meetings Set

Sioux Valley Energy (SVE) will conduct the District 5, 6, 7 and 9 election meetings in June via conference call. Most of the regularly scheduled district meetings originally set to take place in March and April were canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Board terms for District 5, 6, 7 and 9 Directors expire on July 1. All four elections are uncontested. Members will receive a notification letter with the information needed to call in to their respective election meeting.

- **District 5 Meeting: Tuesday, June 2 @ 7:00 p.m.**
- **District 6 Meeting: Tuesday, June 2 @ 7:45 p.m.**
- **District 7 Meeting: Thursday, June 4 @ 7:00 p.m.**
- **District 9 Meeting: Thursday June 4 @ 7:45 p.m.**

Please consider calling into the meeting as it is imperative there are (at minimum) 25 members in attendance. Look for a letter with the call-in information that will be sent the week of May 18th.

# Annual Meeting Canceled

The 2020 Sioux Valley Energy Annual Meeting, scheduled for June 2, has been canceled and will not be rescheduled in 2020.

## Technical Requirements Updated

# Distributed Generation

In compliance with Minnesota Statute 216B.1611, Sioux Valley Energy is updating the technical requirements for distributed energy resource (DER) interconnections. The existing technical requirement document will be replaced with the Technical Interconnection and Interoperability Requirements (TIIR) and Technical Specification Manual (TSM). These new documents can be found after June 1, 2020, on [www.siouxvalleyenergy.com](http://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com) under the 'My Electricity' and 'DG Interconnection Information' tabs. These requirements become effective July 1, 2020 and all new DER systems and DER system additions applied for interconnection after July 1st will be required to meet these updated requirements.

## Stay Safe at Home

Each year, electrical malfunctions account for thousands of home fires, injuries, death and property damage. The average American home was built in 1977, and many existing homes simply can't handle the demands of today's electrical appliances and devices. Keep safety in mind with these helpful tips from the Electrical Safety Foundation International.

### Learn the warning signs of an overloaded electrical system:

- Frequent tripping of circuit breakers or blowing of fuses
- Dimming of lights when other devices are tuned on
- Buzzing sound from switches or outlets
- Discolored outlets
- Appliances that seem underpowered

### How to avoid overloading circuits:

- Label your circuit breakers to understand the different circuits in your home.
- Have your home inspected by a qualified electrician if older than 40 years or if you've had a major appliance installed.
- Have a qualified electrician install new circuits for high energy use devices.
- Reduce your electrical load by using energy efficient appliances and lighting.

### Working from home?

Follow these electrical safety tips to keep you and your home safe from electrical hazards.

- 1) Avoid overloading outlets.
- 2) Unplug appliances when not in use to save energy and minimize the risk of shock or fire.
- 3) Regularly inspect electrical cords and extension cords for damage. Extension cords should only be used on a temporary basis.
- 4) Never plug a space heater or fan into an extension cord or power strip.
- 5) Never run cords under rugs, carpets, doors or windows.
- 6) Make sure cords do not become tripping hazards.
- 7) Keep papers and other potential combustibles at least three feet away from heat sources.
- 8) Make sure you use proper wattage for lamps and lighting.
- 9) Make sure your home has smoke alarms. Test them monthly, change batteries annually and replace the unit every 10 years.

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International

## The Secret Ingredient

Electric cooperative members know that the recipes published in their local electric cooperative magazine are time-tested by their neighbors. The recipes feature ingredients that are readily available in the region (there may be a few somewhat exotic components). For the most part, if you have a can of cream of something soup, a pound of ground beef, some flour, eggs and a little salt and pepper, you probably have the basis of many a recipe found here. We raise our mixing spoons to the hundreds of co-op members who have sent in their recipes over the years.

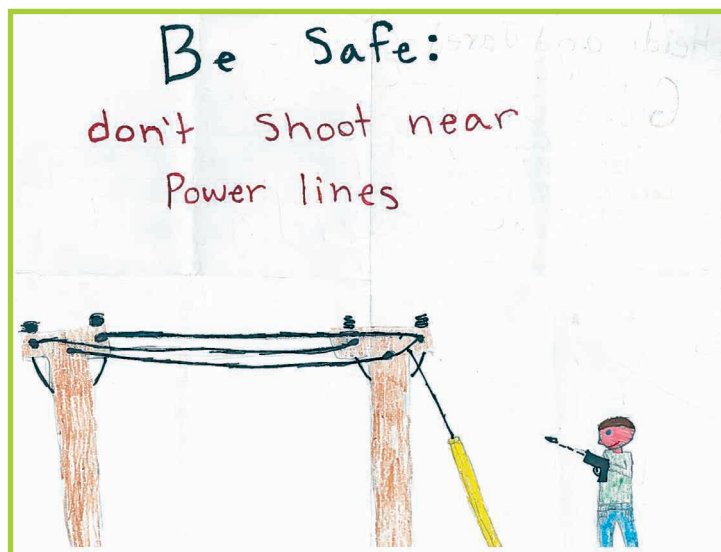


Dawn Trapp

And, we applaud the work of Dawn Trapp who has reviewed the recipes, compiled them for print and made sure our South Dakota, Minnesota and Nebraska cooks shine for their neighbors. Trapp is retiring after a 30-plus year career with South Dakota's electric cooperatives. Since 2000, she has compiled the recipes featured in this magazine. She previously compiled recipes for the *South Dakota High Liner Magazine* and edited *Home Cooking: 50th anniversary commemorative cookbook of the South Dakota High Liner Magazine* in 1998.

For a .PDF compilation of the first 20 years of recipes found in your local *Cooperative Connections* publication, contact your local electric cooperative.

## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"Be safe: Don't shoot near power lines."**

**Gwen Smith, 10 years old**

Gwen is the daughter of Jared and Heidi Smith, Lake Norden, S.D. They are members of H-D Electric Cooperative, Clear Lake, 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.



# Dairy Delicious



## Chicken Lasagna

- |                              |                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 can cream of chicken soup  | 1 cup Parmesan cheese          |
| 1 can cream of mushroom soup | 3 cups diced chicken           |
| 1/2 cup milk                 | 3 cups shredded Cheddar cheese |
| 1 cup sour cream             | Lasagna noodles, cooked        |

Mix together soups and milk. In a separate bowl, combine sour cream, Parmesan cheese, diced chicken and cheese. Spread a thin layer of the soup mixture in the bottom of a 9x13-inch glass baking dish. Make a layer of cooked lasagna noodles. Spread an even layer of the chicken mixture. Top with another layer of soup. Repeat layers until gone. Bake at 325°F. for 1 hour.

Mary Hunt, Gary, S.D.

## Pineapple-Pretzel Salad

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 2 cups crushed pretzels       | 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened     |
| 1 stick butter, melted        |   |
| 1 cup sugar, divided          | 1 (20 oz.) can crushed pineapple, drained |
| 1 (8 oz.) container Cool Whip |   |

Combine pretzels, butter and 1/2 cup sugar. Spread on a 9x13-inch pan. Bake at 400°F. for 7 minutes; cool. Break into pieces; set aside. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese and remaining sugar. Add Cool Whip and pineapple. Mix well; refrigerate overnight. Just before serving, add pretzel pieces.

Linda Rauscher, Aberdeen, S.D.

## Cheesy Garlic Bread

- |                              |                      |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 cup Miracle Whip           | 1/4 tsp. garlic salt |
| 1/2 cup sour cream           | 1 cup chopped onion  |
| 1 cup shredded yellow cheese | 1 loaf French bread  |

Combine salad dressing, sour cream, shredded cheese, garlic salt and onion. Cut the French bread length-wise. Cover both sides, cut-side up, with mixture. Sprinkle with parsley and paprika, if desired. Bake at 400°F. for 8 to 10 minutes. Cut diagonally for a pretty presentation.

Jane Ham, Rapid City, S.D.

## S'mores Pie

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Graham Cracker Crust:</b>        | 2 tsp. ground cinnamon                             |
| 1-1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs    | 1 T. plus 1 tsp. vanilla extract, divided          |
| 7 T. butter, melted                 | 1 (7 oz.) jar marshmallow creme                    |
| 1/3 cup sugar                       | 1 (4 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened              |
| <b>Filling:</b>                     | 1 (8 oz.) container frozen whipped topping, thawed |
| 3/4 cup heavy cream                 |  |
| 6 oz. semi-sweet chocolate, chopped |  |

For the crust, mix all ingredients in medium bowl. Press into bottom and up sides of 9-inch pie plate. Set aside. For the filling, bring cream just to boil in small saucepan. Pour over chocolate in medium heatproof bowl. Let stand 1 minute then stir until smooth. Stir in cinnamon and 1 tsp. of the vanilla. Pour into prepared crust. Refrigerate 30 minutes or until chocolate is firm. (Freeze 15 minutes for faster chilling.) Beat marshmallow creme, cream cheese and remaining 1 T. vanilla in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended. Gently stir in whipped topping until well blended. Spread evenly over chocolate layer in crust. Refrigerate at least 2 hours or until ready to serve. Garnish with chocolate curls or toasted marshmallows, if desired. Makes 8 servings

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 600, Total Fat 36g, Cholesterol 75mg, Sodium 267mg, Carbohydrates 65g, Fiber 2g, Protein 4g*

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

## Taco Cheese Dip

- |                                       |                                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened | 1 (8 oz.) container sour cream |
| 1 pkg. taco seasoning                 | Shredded Cheddar cheese        |

Blend cream cheese, taco seasoning and sour cream well in serving dish. Spread shredded Cheddar cheese on top. Serve with chips.

Mary Ellen Luikens, Scotland, S.D.

Please send your favorite dessert, vegetarian or garden produce 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 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

# Financial Hardships During COVID-19

## Members Must call 1-800-234-1960 to Develop a Plan to Avoid Disconnect

Sioux Valley Energy is committed to helping its members through this difficult time. The Cooperative is working closely with those who are financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and will do everything it can to avoid disconnecting electric service. It is imperative, however, that members call SVE to work out an acceptable payment plan. There are many utility assistance resources available (listed below) which can support individuals during times of crisis. If you have fallen behind on your electric bill, please call SVE immediately at 800-234-1960 so a Customer Service Representative can help you develop a plan to continue uninterrupted electric service.



**SIoux VALLEY ENERGY**  
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

## Utility Assistance Programs

If you are having trouble paying your electric bill, the following assistance programs may be able to help. Members need to call the agencies directly to apply for assistance.

Sioux Valley Energy's goal is to help you avoid disconnection of electric service, so please call us at **1-800-234-1960** so we can work together to develop an acceptable payment plan.

### Minnehaha County

LIEAP, Low Income Energy Assistance Program  
1-800-233-8503

Minnehaha County Human Services  
605-367-4217

Minnehaha Community Outreach  
605-331-3935

Minnehaha County Salvation Army  
605-332-2331

Sioux Falls Interlakes Community Action  
605-334-2808

First Call for Help  
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### Lake County

LIEAP, Low Income Energy Assistance Program  
1-800-233-8503

Interlakes Community Action  
605-256-6518

Lake County Welfare  
605-256-7619

First Call for Help  
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### Pipestone County

Southwestern MN Opportunity Council  
1-800-658-2444

Southwest Health & Human Services  
1-888-837-6713

The Salvation Army Heat Share  
800-842-7279

Pipestone County Veterans Administration  
507-825-1171

MN Department of Energy Services  
800-657-3710

First Call for Help  
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### Brookings County

LIEAP, Low Income Energy Assistance Program  
1-800-233-8503

Brookings County Welfare Office  
605-696-8260

Brookings County Community Action  
605-692-6391

My Neighbor  
605-691-3225

First Call for Help  
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### Moody County

LIEAP, Low Income Energy Assistance Program  
1-800-233-8503

Interlakes Community Action  
605-997-2824

Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribal Office  
605-997-3891

First Call for Help  
211

### Rock County

Southwestern MN Opportunity Council  
1-800-658-2444

Southwest Health & Human Services  
1-888-837-6713

The Salvation Army Heat Share  
800-842-7279

Rock County Veterans Administration  
507-283-5061

MN Department of Energy Services  
800-657-3710

First Call for Help  
211



## Operation Round Up Provides Grant to Avera Farm and Rural Stress Hotline Helps Rural Areas

Farmers and ranchers in the Northern Plains have faced one difficulty after another. From record flooding and low prices to reduced market access and livestock processing issues, the agricultural sector has been hit hard.

“Farmers are expected to be tough, but that ‘pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps’ mentality is so unfair to them,” said Matthew Stanley, DO, Clinical Vice President for the Avera Behavioral Health Service Line. “Mental health care in our rural population is what we specialize in and we want our agricultural friends to know that we are here for them.”

To help address the special needs of farmers and ranchers during times of stress, Avera Health created the Farm and Rural Stress Hotline (1-800-691-4336). The hotline is staffed by trained assessment counselors who put callers in touch with local mental health resources.

Sioux Valley Energy’s Operation Round Up program recently awarded Avera Health a \$2,000 grant to assist with the costs of counseling sessions and medications which may be prescribed after a call to the hotline.

“We want to thank Sioux Valley Energy for their generous gift. Mental health is just as important as physical health. Many people deal with ongoing conditions that need attention – even during a pandemic. Now is not the time to ignore your mental health,” said Stanley.

If you feel overwhelmed or need help navigating the possible signs of depression, anxiety or other issues, call the 24/7 Farm and Rural Stress Hotline at 1-800-691-4336.

Since the year 2000, more than \$1.8-Million in Operation Round Up grants have been donated to worthy causes throughout the Sioux Valley Energy service territory. The concept is easy--participating SVE members agree to have their electric bill rounded up to the next highest dollar and those funds are collected for Operation Round Up. Some Sioux Valley Energy employees also help by deducting a small amount from their paychecks. More than 85 percent of members and employees take part. Log on to <https://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-community/operation-roundup> to learn more.




### FARM & RURAL STRESS HOTLINE

Even those with toughened hands and hearts need someone to talk to. Extreme weather conditions, machinery breakdowns, a volatile ag environment, long hours that prevent time with family, and lowered income all cause frustration.

Avera is a 60-year regional leader in behavioral health services. We offer the Farm & Rural Stress Hotline for symptoms of sadness, anxiety, hopelessness, overwhelming feelings, and more. It's free, confidential and available 24/7.

Call today at 1-800-691-4336.

**Avera** 

#### Warning Signs for Depression

- Talking about suicide or wanting to die
- Talking about feelings of hopelessness or having no purpose
- Talking about feeling trapped or being in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing use of alcohol or drugs
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Extreme mood swings
- Difficulty sleeping or changes in appetite, changes in concentration or focus, finding little joy in activities
- Loss of pleasure in things you used to find enjoyable



# BIG (Little) GARDENS

## Growing Vegetables in Limited Spaces

L.A. Jackson

Contributing Writer and Photographer

Spring has arrived! So, if thoughts of producing oodles of fresh, homegrown edibles have you ready to dig in the dirt, it's time to roll up those sleeves and start a vegetable garden!

While the physics of time and space dictate that big harvests naturally come from big gardens, for backyard growers who prefer to pass on the challenges of tending mega-plots through the long, hot summer or who simply don't have an abundance of planting areas, there are alternative ways to raise impressive passels of veggies – it is simply a matter of making make less do more.

### Go to bed

First, for maximum production from limited growing areas, go with beds, not rows – in other words, place young plants or seeds according to their recommended spacing per plant and forget about distances between rows. Rows of plants looking like tidy lines of soldiers are better for large gardens in order to have paths to walk around, but this isn't necessary in small beds. Accessibility is, of course, still important, so, while you can stretch 'em as long as Texas, try not make beds over 4 feet wide – this shortens your reach into the plants and greatly minimizes embarrassing face-flops in the dirt.

### Small wonders

Size isn't everything in gardening, especially when it comes to growing backyard edibles. There are many vegetable selections – often tagged with such labels as “Bush,” “Dwarf” or “Patio,” – that are modest in height and girth, but still quite capable of producing impressive crops.

The most common big veggie that can be found in smaller sizes is the tomato. There are a ton of cultivars available, but, for starters, give “Tiny Tim,” “Bush Beefsteak” or “Early Wonder” a look. Keep in mind, however, that a majority of these slight-in-stature tomato selections are determinate, meaning they produce all the 'maters they are going to yield in a matter of weeks. Standard vine tomatoes, if kept healthy, typically crank out fruit continually over the long growing season.

Want a wider range of veggies in your small garden? Squash, watermelons, pumpkins, cucumbers, cantaloupes and green beans – all champs at chewing up space in a planting bed – can also be found in compact forms, either as young plants or seeds, at local garden shops in the spring.

### Grow up

Don't think you have to stick to Munchkin-sized plants. Typical strong growers such as tomatoes, green beans, cucumbers and squash can't be allowed to crawl across small growing spaces, but they can be trellised, staked or caged to grow up rather than out.

Even the long, rangy vines of watermelons, pumpkins and cantaloupes can be trained upwards on vertical supports, but to avoid the dreaded drop-and-splat factor, it's not a bad idea to cradle the developing fruits in supporting burlap, nylon or cloth slings.

Small watermelons such as “Sugar Baby” can be trained to grow up, not outwards, in a garden.  
COVER: A (literal) bed of cabbage taking center stage in a flower garden.  
OPPOSITE PAGE: Harvest eggplants when their skins are shiny, not dull.  
Photos By L.A. Jackson



Suspension weight and size problems with standard pumpkins are obvious, but there are many cultivars, including “Spookie,” “Jack O’ Lantern” and “Sugar Pie,” that yield smaller, more manageable 6- to 7-pound fruits. Ditto for big ol’ watermelons, but with so-called “icebox” varieties like the popular “Sugar Baby” and its 8- to 10-pound melons available, it is possible to hang ‘em high, too.

Growing vine crops on erect supports has other advantages besides saving space, starting with making harvesting easier. Also, vertical gardening improves fruit shape and, since beneficial air circulates through the foliage easier, can promote healthier plants.

## Beyond the veggie patch

Looking for even more growing ground? Limited-space gardening with edibles doesn’t need to be confined to small vegetable plots – in other words, anywhere you have dirt in your yard is a potential planting site. And many veggies can be easily inter-planted in the landscape as complements, rather than complications, to existing ornamentals.

One popular vegetable that bears the double standard of being both productive and pretty is the pepper. While blocky bell peppers might look a bit clunky in flower beds, there is a wide range of hot peppers that show off long-lasting fruits in many sizes, shapes and sizzling colors on relatively compact plants.

Like bell peppers, common pudgy eggplants probably won’t qualify as eye candy in an ornamental garden, but there are vibrantly colored fruits of cultivars such as “Fairy Tale,” “Prosperosa” and “Neon” that can also add extra visual sass to sunny flower borders.

And okra, which is closely related to the lovely hibiscus, stays true to its family ties with fancy foliage and delicate, hibiscus-like flowers. One particular standout beauty is “Red Burgundy,” an heirloom selection that has been a veggie garden favorite for many years because its gorgeous (and tasty) scarlet pods never fail to turn heads.

Other decorative edibles with strong, distinctive profiles such as curly spinach, cabbage, loose-leaf lettuce (especially red-tinted varieties like “Red Sails” and “Lolla Rossa”), kale and Swiss chard (look for “Ruby Red” or “Bright Lights”) are low-growing and, for vegetable plants, actually rather good looking. Any of these can be successfully incorporated as accent plants for perennial beds or flower gardens. In addition, root vegetables such as carrots, onions and radishes hide their crops below ground but freely flaunt flowing foliage that can be used to fill in the fronts of border plantings.

Many herbs are also great “double-duty” plants. Need examples? Rosemary’s spiky leaves and delightful (as well as edible) bluish-purple flowers make it an appealing addition to any landscape setting. Bronze fennel’s smoky look is a nice touch for container planters, while the rich, dark foliage of purple basil is a horticultural fashion statement waiting to happen. And curly parsley, with its deep emerald leaves, is an ideal alt-ornamental to line the front of a flower bed.

One word of caution about interplanting vegetables or herbs with other plants: If you spray any pesticides on neighboring ornamentals, make sure the chemicals are cleared for safe use on edible plants as well.

*L.A. Jackson is the former editor of Carolina Gardener magazine.*

# Harvest Time Tips

## When are veggies table-ready?

With proper care, spring vegetable plantings will grow up big, strong and productive to add plenty of homegrown edibles to the dinner table. But, while waiting for these crops to mature, now is not too soon to start mentally registering harvest tips to be ready when the bountiful times arrive. Such pointers can also be helpful to folks who don’t have gardens but go to pick-your-own farms. In addition, frequenters to farmers’ markets will probably find a few of these tips useful to help select produce at their freshest and tastiest.

**Bell peppers.** The typical bell pepper can be picked when it is either green or red. A red bell pepper is just riper than a green one and tastes slightly sweeter. If you prefer to use a size-o-meter, harvest these peppers when they are about 3 inches in diameter.

**Carrots.** Carrots are normally ready when their orange crowns poke out above the soil line. For better storage, cut off all but about 2 inches of the fern tops after you pull carrots from the ground.

**Cucumbers.** Although they come in all sizes, standard cukes will, of course, be a deep green when mature. However, if a cucumber starts to show a yellow tint, it is past ripe.

**Eggplant.** Common varieties, such as “Black Beauty” and “Classic,” should have a shiny, dark purple color and be about 4 inches in diameter. Any eggplant that has been on the plant too long will lose its shine – this also applies to the newer, fancy-colored varieties such as “Neon” and “Ping Tung.”



**Okra.** The better tasting (and least slimy) okra pods are snipped off at about 3 inches long. *Chef’s Tip: For little or no slime, when boiling okra, leave the pods whole.*

**Green Beans.** These beans are at their best when they are about 3 to 6 inches long. At these sizes, the seeds haven’t started to swell yet, and the pods are tender enough to snap easily.

**Leaf Lettuce.** Wait until the plants are about 5 inches tall and starting to fully fill out with foliage. Then, begin your picking. Use scissors and only take outer leaves so the plants will continue growing strongly in order to extend the harvest season. This method works well for romaine lettuce and spinach, too.

**Summer Squash.** Tasty crook, straight-neck and zucchini squash will be had when they are picked at about 6 inches long. Round patty pan varieties are in their prime around 4 to 5 inches in diameter.

**Tomatoes.** Come on – everybody knows what a ripe tomato looks like! Sometimes, however, ‘maters are picked with a bit of green still showing. To turn the green to red (and make fruits fully ripe) simply place them in a cozy area indoors. A sunny windowsill won’t do because the sun’s direct rays could redden the skin but not ripen the inside of the tomato. Moderate warmth, not strong light, is the key to properly maturing a tomato.

# SVE Announces Scholarship Recipients

More than \$19,000 in scholarships were given to 34 individuals bound for college or technical school. The majority of scholarship funds came from Sioux Valley Energy's Operation Roundup® program, with additional funds from Basin Electric Power Cooperative, L&O Power Cooperative, and the Rodney Park Memorial Scholarship.

More than 75 young people applied for the scholarships. Applications were judged on the basis of grades, ACT or SAT test scores, work experience, school activities, volunteer community service and an essay question.



Allison Olson



Annabelle Klosterman



Annabell Oberg



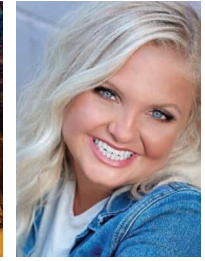
Anthony Peters



Elizabeth Boomsma



Elizabeth Selman



Elli Richardson



Grace Johanson



Grace Nelson



Grant Gunderson



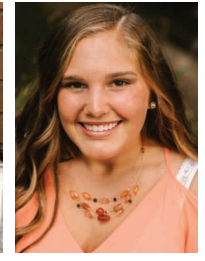
Hannah LeMair



Harry Heiberger



Isabel Smeins



Jayden Clark



Jennifer Hotchkiss



Jessie Kuiken



Kate Livingston



Katie Vest



Kelsi Van Santen



Kestlyn Willert



Kiley Klein



Liberty Thompson



Lillian Kenton



Makayla Nelson



Mara Land



Mason Avery



Olivia Stelzer



Riley Spilde



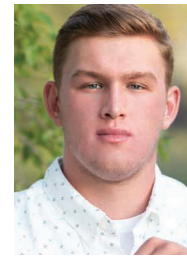
Riley Van Den Top



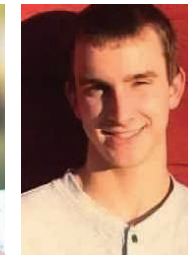
Spencer Lutz



Taylor Dunn



Thomas Scholten



Trevor Woodall



Truman Dick



# SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

## \$325 Scholarships

Truman Dick- West Central High School  
 Harry Heiberger- Brandon Valley High School  
 Hannah LeMair- Madison High School  
 Kate Livingston- Brandon Valley High School  
 Grace Nelson- Madison High School  
 Anthony Peters- Madison High School  
 Elli Richardson- O’Gorman High School  
 Thomas Scholten- Brandon Valley High School  
 Isabel Smeins- Luverne High School  
 Riley Spilde- Oldham-Ramona High School  
 Olivia Stelzer- Dell Rapids High School  
 Katie Vest- Brandon Valley High School

## \$350 Scholarship

Liberty Thompson- Brookings High School

## \$500 Scholarships

Mason Avery- Madison High School  
 Elizabeth Boomsma- Brandon Valley High School  
 Grant Gunderson- Brandon Valley High School  
 Mara Land- Baltic High School  
 Makayla Nelson- Arlington High School  
 Annabell Oberg- Tri-Valley High School  
 Allison Olson- Colman-Egan High School

## \$750 Scholarships

Jayden Clark- Garretson High School  
 Lillian Kenton- Chester High School  
 Grace Johanson- Flandreau High School  
 Kiley Klein- Madison High School  
 Jessie Kuiken- West Central High School  
 Elizabeth Selman- Chester High School  
 Riley Van Den Top- Sioux Falls Christian High School  
 Kelsi Van Santen- Southwest MN Christian High School  
 Kestlyn Willert- Brookings High School

## \$1000 Scholarships

Taylor Dunn- Southwest MN Christian High School  
 Jennifer Hotchkiss- Tri-Valley High School  
 Annabelle Klosterman- Lighthouse Academy  
 Spencer Lutz- Estelline High School  
 Trevor Woodall- Rodney Park Memorial Scholarship

# Kreul Named Scholar of the Week

Donovan Kreul, a student at Brookings High School, has been chosen as a Touchstone Energy Cooperative ‘Scholar of the Week’. Donovan was recognized with a cash award by Sioux Valley Energy and was featured on Dakota News Now for his accomplishments. He is the son of Kyle & Melanie Kreul of Brookings.

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, like Sioux Valley Energy, and Dakota News Now have joined together 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.

“Donovan is an extraordinary young individual. He has an extensive list of accomplishments both in and out of the classroom. He is an example of what we need in our future leaders and we are proud that he was chosen as a Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week,” said Tim McCarthy, Sioux Valley Energy General Manager/CEO.



# Outdoor Fever

## Celebrating South Dakota's Outdoor Spaces

Brenda Kleinjan

editor@sdrea.coop

**People are really rediscovering the outdoors again.**

South Dakota's state parks and wide-open spaces can be a beacon to those who have spent the winter and spring months cooped up at home.

"Parks are very good places to go outdoors and get out of the house," said Al Nedved, deputy director of parks for the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

Nedved said that in April 2020, the parks had seen an increase in use over 2019, due in part to better weather than the previous year and also to the COVID-19 restrictions.

"People are really rediscovering the outdoors again," said Nedved. "Our parks are open. We are strongly advising people to follow social distancing guidelines set by CDC (Center for Disease Control) and the state department of health."

In addition to the social distancing, the parks are encouraging people to be as self-sufficient as possible by using their own facilities. State park visitors are also asked to plan ahead and use the reservation website to purchase licenses and make reservations ahead of time to limit interaction at the parks as much as possible.

And as Americans head outdoors celebrating June as both National Camping Month and Nation Great Outdoors Month, thousands of South Dakotans will



Biking in South Dakota campgrounds is a popular family activity.  
Photo Credit: South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks

be discovering and rediscovering the Rushmore state's park system.

The state's parks, established in 1919 with the creation of Custer State Park in western South Dakota, saw considerable growth in the post World War II era. The newest park, Good Earth State Park, was established in 2013 southeast of Sioux Falls.

"It's a very unique archaeological and historical site," said Nedved, noting the area was a vast trading center for Native Americans going back several hundred years.

The South Dakota State Park system includes 13 state parks, 43 recreation areas, five nature areas, one historic prairie, 69 lakeside use areas and 10 marina/resorts. In addition, the Division of Parks and Recreation manages the



Hiking trails are offered in many South Dakota state parks.  
Photo Credit: South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks





Access to water-based activities, such as this one found at Farm Island in central South Dakota, is a draw for South Dakota state parks.  
Photo Credit: South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks

114-mile Mickelson Trail, South Dakota's Snowmobile Trail Program, and maintains 240 public water access areas.

"I always tell people the best-kept secret is the place you have not been yet. You never know where there is a site that will become a favorite spot," said Nedved. "Each park is unique; it's great to experience them all. Each is rich with natural, historical and cultural resources."

Custer State Park is the largest of the parks at 71,000 acres, while Fort Sisseton in northeastern South Dakota is one of the smallest.

Palisades State park has geological structures that are really unique," Nedved said.

"The Missouri River Parks offer incomparable opportunities for fishing and water recreation," said Nedved, noting that parks on the river extend from Pollock in the north-central part of the state to the Adams Nature Area and Preserve by North Sioux City which features a well-preserved farmstead and a trail system.

"They are a great place to make memories and be together," Nedved said.

The parks offer a variety of activities: camping and fishing are popular as well as other water-based recreation. Hiking, biking and trail-related activities are a draw

as are leisure sport activities like disc golf, volleyball and horseshoes.

"The biggest one is the ability to come out and enjoy the outdoors and have a really good experience," said Nedved. "I like to tell people to think of parks as a really great place for your emotional and physical health. There's no greater place to go and exercise than the great outdoors."

Those intending to camp should do a little research and have a basic knowledge of the outdoors. In addition to packing bug spray, appropriate clothing and sunscreen, campers in the 2020 season should also plan on bringing masks and hand sanitizer.

Also on the list should be a NOAA weather radio or other device to track severe weather.

"South Dakota weather can be unpredictable at times. You need to plan ahead and be prepared for wind, hail and lightning," said Nedved.

"We encourage everyone to enjoy the outdoors this summer and do it responsibly," Nedved said.

Before you go, be sure to check the GF&P website at [gpf.sd.gov/parks](http://gpf.sd.gov/parks) for updates and current information.

**They are a great place to make memories and be together.**

## By the Number

A look at South Dakota's state park system

- 16 Welcome Centers
- 9 Regional Offices
- 3 Fish Hatcheries
- 2 Outdoor Campuses
- 83 Dams
- 4,417 Campsites
- 223 Camping Cabins
- 2 Modern Cabins
- 7 Lodges
- 153 Picnic Shelters
- 93 Playgrounds
- 121 Comfort Stations
- 49 Fishing Docks
- 50 Fish Cleaning Stations
- 347 Boat Ramps
- 50 Beaches
- 349 Miles of Trails
- 328 Miles of Roads
- 155-Mile Canoe/Kayak Trail
- 1,518 Miles of Snowmobile Trails

# Beautify Your Yard, Not Utility Equipment

Green utility boxes, known as pad-mounted or padmount transformers, are part of the supply chain that helps provide power to your home or business. Those boxes sit on an easement, which allows us access to them.

What are the green boxes for? Their job is to step down high-voltage electricity to a lower voltage needed for the underground wires supplying power to the lights and appliances in homes.

Please do not paint, enhance, block or otherwise obstruct padmount transformers. By respecting all utility equipment, including meters and transformers, you can help keep the power on and your local utility workers safe.

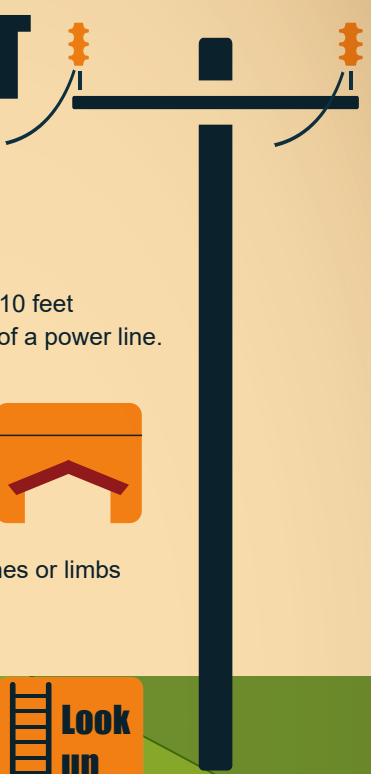
As you beautify your yard this spring and summer, Sioux Valley Energy and Safe Electricity remind you of these safety tips:

- Do not plant shrubs and trees close to green box transformers or other utility equipment. Limiting or restricting us access to the box in your yard could delay restoration work during an outage and create a serious safety hazard. We need at least 10 feet of clearance in front of the transformer (the side that is padlocked), as well as four feet of clearance on the other three sides.
- Contact us with questions about landscaping around or installing fencing near a padmount transformer (or any other changes) to learn what is allowable.
- Contact us if the transformer becomes unlocked or if it or any other type of utility equipment appears to be damaged.
- Call 811 prior to digging around a transformer and respect the clearance requirements noted above. If you dig near a transformer (even if it is beyond the clearance requirements), you could inadvertently hit a live underground cable. Always call 811 prior to any digging.
- Keep a clear path to the transformer. Even though the transformer seems like it is in "your yard," it is technically on an easement, and our workers need clear access to it to maintain equipment and keep power running smoothly.

Contact Sioux Valley Energy with any questions or concerns about the safety of padmount transformers. Always teach children that they should not sit on, open, or play around the green boxes.

## LOOK OUT

### FOR POWER SOURCES



10'

Do not get within 10 feet (in any direction) of a power line.

Be aware of power lines when working on the roof.



Do not trim branches or limbs near power lines.




Be careful when carrying long or tall objects such as ladders or poles.

Look up


Before you dig, call 811 to have underground utilities marked.



Do not dig near padmount transformers or other utility equipment.









# Smart Thermostat Options

By Maura Giles

Heating and cooling costs account for around half of a user's energy bill according to the U.S. Department of Energy. So when it comes to reducing energy use and cutting home energy costs, the most impact can be made by programming the thermostat. The right thermostat settings could yield energy savings of 8-15%, and new technology is making it easier than ever to achieve those settings.

Smart thermostats are Wi-Fi enabled and may be controlled remotely through a tablet, smartphone or voice control. Some models use multiple sensors to monitor temperatures in various parts of the home for more balanced heating or cooling, track user temperature preferences and use the data to optimize your heating and cooling schedule, and some are designed for complex multi-stage systems that will control heating, cooling, dehumidifier and ventilation systems.

If you're interested in controlling your thermostat with your voice or an app, or in being hands-off and letting it learn your habits, you should consider a smart thermostat. To narrow your choices, factor in smart features, price and attributes that matter most to you, such as color, size or style, and make sure the chosen product supports your HVAC system.

The Nest 3rd Generation Learning Thermostat and Ecobee4 are the most popular and sophisticated devices in this category. Both devices are usually priced around \$250, but consumers can easily recoup their money in energy cost savings.

There are many similarities between the two thermostats. Both can be adjusted via computer, tablet, smartphone, Google Assistant or Amazon Alexa device (the Ecobee4 even has a built-in Alexa-enabled speaker). And both thermostats can interact with other smart devices and utilize geofencing—using your phone's GPS to determine if you're home, then automatically adjusting the temperature. Nest's geofencing works with multiple phones, while Ecobee supports just one phone. Ecobee makes up for this with its more sophisticated sensors.

The Nest and Ecobee offer for purchase, remote sensors that allow the thermostat to take readings from any room throughout your home and adjust the temperature accordingly. This can be an advantage if your thermostat is located near a draft or in direct sunlight. The Ecobee's sensors go one step further with occupancy sensing, which notices if there is movement in the house, in order to override geofencing if the primary phone user leaves the house and someone is still there.

While many of the features are similar, there are a few that are notably different and can help you determine which is right for you. Nest, powered by a rechargeable battery, is a learning thermostat and automatically learns your schedule. When you begin using

Nest, it makes a few assumptions and creates a baseline for its schedule. As you adjust the temperature up or down, Nest records it, and after a week, learns your schedule and the temperature settings you prefer. From then, it continues to learn and respond to your adjustments. Nest also records 10 days of energy use data that shows you a visual of the times your system turned on and off during those 10 days. Nest also sends a monthly email report that includes a summary of your energy use compared to previous months and other Nest users.



Ecobee must be hardwire installed, utilizes a touchscreen and can analyze HVAC data for 18 months. All temperature and motion data from the thermostat and sensors is recorded, and can be accessed online by the owner to help you monitor total energy use, how the weather influences your use, and how your home efficiency compares to other users in your area. The two thermostats also can connect with various energy devices in your home. Ecobee recognizes dehumidifiers and ventilators, and Next recognizes heat pumps and auxiliary heat.

For those looking for a smart thermostat with fewer bells and whistles, the Honeywell Lyric T5+ is one of the market's most popular, priced around \$135. While it can't sense your presence or learn your schedule, it does have the geofencing feature and can interact with other smart-home devices, such as turning on lights when you arrive or leave home.

*Sioux Valley Energy offers a \$50 rebate for the purchase of a new smart thermostat when members take part in the Time of Use rate program. Contact Sheila Gross at 800-234-1960 for more information.*

## Energy Makeover Contest Winner Announced

Gregg and Jennifer Tiehen of Hartford were the winners of the generator interlock kit installation for the first quarter Energy Makeover contest. If you would like more information on the installation of an interlock kit for a portable generator connection or Kohler standby generators, please contact SVE at 800-234-1960.



# DATELINE

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

## June 5

Northern Bull Riding Club, Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 800-693-3644, [www.prairievillage.org](http://www.prairievillage.org)

## June 5-7

Regional Qualifying High School Rodeos:

- Rodeo Grounds, Wall, SD, 605-529-5868
- Rodeo Grounds, Highmore, SD, 605-529-5868
- Tipperary Arena, Buffalo, SD, 605-529-5868
- Heartland Arena, Huron, SD, 605-529-5868

## June 7

Miss Prairie Village/Miss Prairie Princess Pageant, Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 800-693-3644, [www.prairievillage.org](http://www.prairievillage.org)

## June 12-14

Regional Qualifying High School Rodeos:

- Tripp County Fairgrounds, Winner, SD, 605-529-5868
- Rodeo Grounds, Sturgis, SD, 605-529-5868
- Rodeo Grounds, Dupree, SD, 605-529-5868
- Derby Downs Arena, Watertown, SD, 605-529-5868

## June 19, 26 and July 3, 10

River City Friday Nights, 6 to 10 p.m., Live music, beer garden, vendors, food trucks, games and activities for the entire family, Main Street, Chamberlain, SD, 605-683-9051

## June 20

Divas Gone Country concert, Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 800-693-3644



## June 16-21:

South Dakota State High School Finals Rodeo, Stanley County Fairgrounds, Fort Pierre, SD, 605-529-5868

## June 20-21

Men's Club Fishing Tournament, Pollock, SD, Contact Brent Odde at 605-848-1967

## June 24-27

Crystal Springs Rodeo, Extreme Bulls June 24, Rodeo June 25-27, Clear Lake, SD, 605-874-2996

## June 27

Railroad Day, Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 800-693-3644

## June 28

Variety Show, Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 800-693-3644

## July 11

6th Annual Auto Value Car Show, Hav-A-Rest, Campground, Redfield, SD, 605-450-0332

## July 14

Rock Nobles Cattlemen 2020 Summer Beef Tour, Nobles County Fairgrounds, Register Before June 1: \$20, After June 1: \$40, Worthington, MN, 507-967-2380, [www.mnsca.org](http://www.mnsca.org)

## July 21-25

98th Annual Days of '76 PRCA Rodeo, Arena, Deadwood, SD, 1-888-838-BULL, [www.DAYSOF76.com](http://www.DAYSOF76.com)

## July 23-24

Jr. Miss Rodeo South Dakota Pageant, The Lodge and Days of '76 Rodeo, Deadwood, SD, 605-641-8604, [jrmissrsd@gmail.com](mailto:jrmissrsd@gmail.com)

## July 24-26

Catfish Derby Days, Franklin, MN, 507-557-2259

## July 25

17th Annual Make-A-Wish 'On the Road to Wishes' Poker Run, Registration 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., C&S Motorsports, Aberdeen, SD, 605-225-4533

## August 8-9

Threshing Show, Twin Brooks, SD, [www.threshingshow.com](http://www.threshingshow.com)

## August 8-10

Red Power Round Up, Fairgrounds, Huron, SD, 605-460-0197 [redpowerroundup2020.com](http://redpowerroundup2020.com)

## August 22

World of Outlaw Sprint Car Races plus Wissota MWM, Dakota State Fair Speedway, Huron, SD, 605-352-4848

## September 7

Hidewood Valley Steam Threshing Show, 1 p.m., 47326 183rd Ave., Clear Lake, SD, 605-881-8405

## September 12-13

Fall Harvest Festival, Delmont, SD, 605-928-3792, [www.twinriversoldiron.org](http://www.twinriversoldiron.org)

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.