



# Cooperative Connections

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A Mark of  
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# Rate Increase Update & Summer Safety Reminders



**Tim McCarthy, GM/CEO**

tim.mccarthy@siouxvalleyenergy.com

As I have mentioned in my last two columns, we are doing everything we can to delay the rate increase which was scheduled to begin in May. So far, we have been able to hold it off for two months and after postponing or eliminating many budgeted expenditures and reviewing the ongoing financial results, it was determined we can delay the rate increase for the month of July as well. Our goal is to hold the rate increase off until September, but we are not able to make that decision yet because it will be dependent upon electric sales and financial results over the next two months. We will keep you posted on the potential of delaying the rate increase past the month of July.

On another note, we typically see several public contacts this time of year with contractor “digs” and large farm equipment hitting overhead lines. First and foremost, this is dangerous – it puts the equipment operator and those who try to help at risk. We cannot stress enough how important it is for individuals to know what is above and below when they are working around electric lines. Anytime you dig, you need to call 811 to have underground lines located.

According to the National Safety Council and Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI), there were 160 occupational electrical fatalities and 1,560 nonfatal electrical injuries in 2018 (most recent statistics available). Between 2011 and 2017, 36 percent of all electrically related workplace fatalities were caused by overhead power lines.

That is just not acceptable. We must do better... we have to pay closer attention. It takes one second to change a life forever in an electrical accident that could have been prevented with only a few minutes of preparation and awareness.

To be very clear, safety is our number one priority! However, there is also a significant loss of productivity for our members when a public contact causes an outage. It results in an unnecessary disruption to their day whether it be at home or at work.

It is not just farmers and contractors that need to play it safe around electricity. According to the ESFI, home electrical fires account for an estimated 42,210 fires each year, nearly 500 deaths, 1,370 injuries, and \$1.4 billion in property damage.

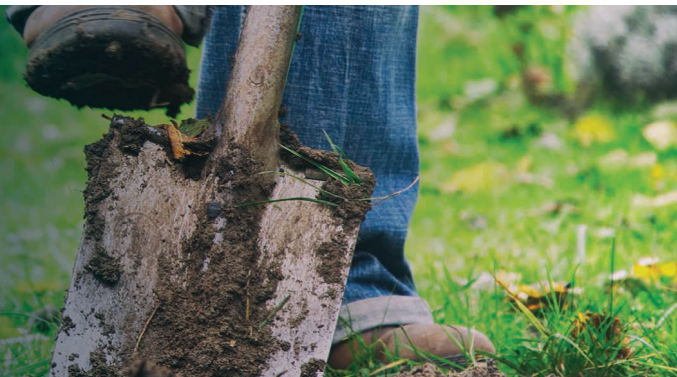
Summer-time projects around the home require care and precautions as well. I am a Do-It-Yourselfer. I don't hesitate to take on repair and remodeling jobs around my house that require minor wiring changes, flooring replacement, or new drywall. I also tackle the outdoor jobs like gutter cleaning, tree trimming, and landscaping...whatever it takes. I know very well the feeling of wanting to complete a project. Too often we are willing to cut corners thinking it will save money and accomplish the project in a timelier manner.

But as I point out above, it literally only takes a second to make a mistake that will change your life, and possibly those of your loved ones, forever. Take a few minutes to look above you. Is there an electric line near-by? If so, perhaps you need to call your electric provider and have the power temporarily shut off while you are doing any type of work that extends you, or your tools, above the roof-line. When you are attempting that wiring project--have you used all the proper safety precautions? Has it been inspected by a professional?

Cutting corners may save a few bucks but it is a bad practice and can be downright dangerous. Sioux Valley Energy is committed to the safety of its members and employees. We want everyone to be able to go home at the end of the day and enjoy their families and hobbies. Enjoy this beautiful weather we are finally getting and again, please stay safe this summer season!

**CALL <sup>OR</sup> CLICK**  
**BEFORE YOU DIG**

*Call 811 or visit call811.com at least two to three business days before digging around your home or property.*



# Sioux Valley Energy

## Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 497-440)

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## Touchstone Energy® Scholar of the Year Madison Student Wins

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives in eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota honor some of the area's most impressive high school seniors each year through the Scholar of the Week program. Every week throughout the school year, the region's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, in partnership with Dakota News Now, select a Scholar of the Week who sets an example of hard work and high academic standards. The weekly winners are featured on Dakota News Now and each student receives a \$250 award from their local electric co-op.

Each spring, the region's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives host the Scholar of the Year banquet to honor the year's weekly award recipients. At that yearly banquet, Touchstone Energy representatives draw for the winners of one \$1,000 scholarship and two \$500 scholarships from among the year's weekly award recipients.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this year's banquet was canceled. Instead, the news team at Dakota News Now drew for the three scholarship recipients on live television during the 6 p.m. broadcast on May 11.

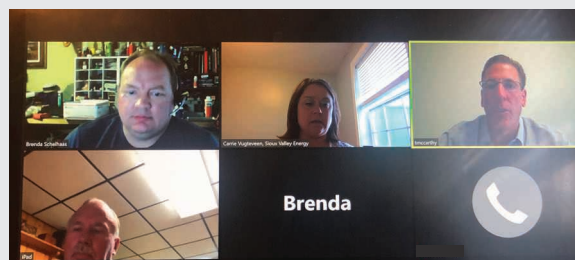
Ashlin DeBoer, a senior at Corsica-Stickney High School within Douglas Electric Cooperative's service area, was selected as the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Year and received a \$1,000 scholarship. Callie Frei, a senior at Wagner High School within Charles Mix Electric's service area, and Grace Nelson, a senior at Madison High School within Sioux Valley Energy's service area, were both selected to receive \$500 scholarships.



Grace Nelson, a Madison High School senior and Sioux Valley Energy member, won the \$500 Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Year scholarship. Grace's parents are Steve and Deb Nelson of Madison.

## Virtual Election Meetings Take Place

Due to social distancing recommendations, Sioux Valley Energy held four election meetings via conference call the week of June 1st for Districts 5, 6, 7 and 9. There were no contested elections and all incumbents including Allan Weinacht (District 5), Mark Rogen (District 6), Rodney DeMent (District 7) and Gregg Johnson (District 9) were re-elected through a unanimous voice vote. These Directors will serve a three-year term.





## Summer Electrical Safety Tips

The summer is a season almost everyone looks forward to – after all, who doesn't love the warm temperatures that summer brings? Hanging by the pool, summer cookouts, and barbecues bring family and friends together. However, safety should still be your priority. If you don't want to ruin your summer fun due to the lack of electrical safety in your home, we've put together a list of summer electrical safety tips to follow:

- **Keep electronics away from the water** – If you've got an outdoor pool, then you might be thinking about throwing a little get together with friends and family – a pool party if you will. However, think twice about putting your new speakers or mp3 player right by the poolside. All electronics should be kept at least 10 feet away from the pool or any other water source. It doesn't matter how careful you are, accidents can and do happen.
- **Use outdoor-rated extension cords** – If you're going to set up your mp3 player or smartphone outside to play some music while you grill out, make sure that you are using the right extension cord. What is the right extension cord? One that is rated for outdoor use. There's a good chance it will be exposed to moisture outside – and an outdoor-rated extension cord will be able to handle small exposure to water.
- **Inspect your extension cords for damage** – Before using an extension cord, inspect it carefully for damage. The last thing you should do is use a damaged cord as it presents a safety risk – especially if you plan on using it outdoors. Any cracked extension cords or exposed wires should not be used outdoors.
- **Install GFCIs** – A GFCI (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter) is a device that can help improve the safety of your outlets. Outlets that are near water sources, such as outdoor outlets or bathroom outlets, should have GFCIs installed. A GFCI will shut off the power to the outlet if the circuit is compromised, such as if it gets exposed to water, a spilled drink, etc. This will help to improve the security of your electrical appliances as well as the safety of those in your home.
- **Trim your tree branches** – If the branches on your property are growing a little too close to any power lines, have them trimmed to prevent any downed power lines during high winds or thunderstorms.
- **Don't fly kites or drones near power lines** – If you have power lines that are located relatively close to your home, instruct your children (if you have any) not to fly their kites or model drones in this area. These types of airborne toys should be reserved for flight in wide open spaces, like the park.
- **Know where your breaker box is** – If there's an electrical emergency in your home, then you'll need to know where the breaker box is so that you can shut off the power in a hurry.

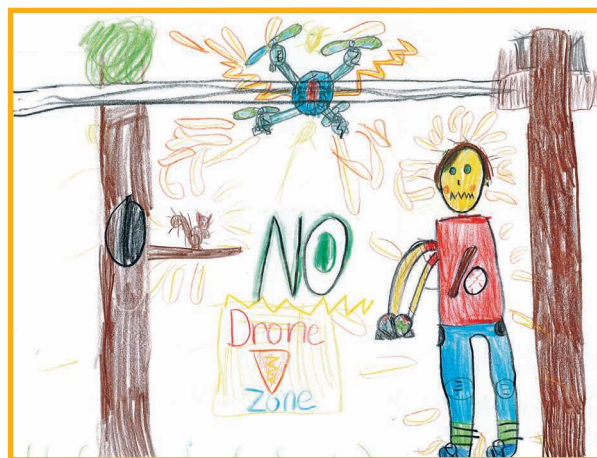
Source: [www.jaffeelectric.com](http://www.jaffeelectric.com)

## Four common culprits of electrical fires

There are 24,000 electrical fires per year across the country. To reduce your risk for damage, check the following areas of your home:

- **Electrical outlets:** Faulty outlets are a leading cause of home fires. As outlets age, so do the wires behind them. Any loose, damaged or warm-to-the-touch outlets should be repaired or replaced.
- **Electrical wiring:** Outdated wiring is another common cause of electrical fires. Frequently tripped breakers, flickering lights and burning smells are warning signs. If your home is more than 20 years old, it may not be able to handle today's increased power load. If you suspect your home's wiring is outdated, contact a qualified electrician.
- **Overloaded cords and outlets:** Extension cords are not permanent solutions. If your big-screen TV, home theater system and other electronics are plugged into extension cords, it's time to have additional outlets installed.
- **Old appliances:** Older appliances are more likely to have loose or damaged wiring, which means they're more likely to catch fire. Check older appliances for damage and determine if it's time to upgrade or replace. Also check to ensure you're using appliance-grade outlets.

## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"No drone zone."**

**Alli Bares, 9 years old**

Alli is the daughter of Tony and Angie Bares, Sioux Falls, S.D. They are members of Sioux Valley Energy, Colman, 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.

# Delectable Desserts

## Aloha Cake

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 pkg. (2-layer size) yellow cake mix                                 | instant pudding mix                                |
| 4 tsp. McCormick® Coconut Extract with Other Natural Flavors, divided | 1 (20 oz.) can crushed pineapple, drained          |
| 1 pkg. (4-serving size) vanilla                                       | 1 (8 oz.) container frozen whipped topping, thawed |

Prepare cake mix as directed on package, stirring in 3 tsp. of the coconut flavor. Pour into greased and floured 13x9-inch baking pan. Bake at 350°F. for 30 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool completely in pan. Prepare pudding mix as directed on package, stirring in remaining 1 tsp. coconut flavor. Spread pineapple and pudding over cake. Frost with whipped topping. Refrigerate 1 hour or until ready to serve. Makes 24 servings.

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 188, Total Fat 8g, Cholesterol 28mg, Sodium 221mg, Carbohydrates 27g, Fiber 0g, Protein 2g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Buster Bar Dessert

- |                                     |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1/2 cup butter                      | 1/2 gallon vanilla ice cream         |
| 2/3 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips  | 1-1/2 cups Spanish peanuts, optional |
| 2 cups powdered sugar               | <b>Crust:</b>                        |
| 1-1/2 cups evaporated milk, divided | 1 lb. Oreo cookies                   |
| 1 tsp. vanilla                      | 1/4 cup melted butter                |

Melt butter in heavy saucepan. Add chocolate chips, stirring constantly. Put powdered sugar in mixing bowl; add 1/2 cup evaporated milk, stirring well. Add remaining evaporated milk. Pour mixture into melted butter and chocolate chips, stirring constantly. Bring to a boil, turn heat to medium and boil 8 minutes, stirring often. Remove from heat; add 1 vanilla. Cool completely. **For crust:** Crush Oreo cookies; add butter, mixing well. Press into a 9x13-inch pan. Put pan into freezer. When frozen, quickly spread ice cream over cookie crust. Sprinkle peanuts over crust, if desired, before adding ice cream. Freeze for at least 2 hours. When ice cream layer is completely frozen, quickly pour cooled chocolate layer on top; return to freezer. Can be prepared several days ahead of time.

**Betty Leuthold, Magnolia, MN**

## Summer Peach Dessert

- |                                    |                        |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 14 graham crackers, finely crushed | 24 large marshmallows  |
| 1/2 cup sugar                      | 1/2 cup milk           |
| 1/4 cup melted butter              | 2 cups whipped topping |
|                                    | 3 cups chopped peaches |

Mix graham cracker crumbs, sugar and butter until well blended; reserving a few crumbs for top. Press mixture into a 9x9-inch pan. Heat marshmallows and milk until melted; cool. Fold in whipped topping and peaches. Spread over crust, sprinkling reserved crumbs over all. Chill.

**Elaine Rowett, Sturgis, SD**

## Raspberry Delight

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 2-1/4 cups flour                      | 1/4 tsp. salt                                  |
| 2 T. sugar                            | 2 cups Cool Whip                               |
| 3/4 cup butter, softened              | Topping:                                       |
| <b>Filling:</b>                       | 1 (6 oz.) pkg. raspberry gelatin               |
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened | 2 cups boiling water                           |
| 1 cup powdered sugar                  | 2 (10 oz.) pkgs. sweetened, frozen raspberries |
| 1 tsp. vanilla                        |  |

In a bowl, combine flour and sugar; blend in butter with wooden spoon until smooth. Press into an ungreased 9x13-inch pan. Bake at 300°F. for 20 to 25 minutes or until set (crust will not brown). Cool. In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese, powdered sugar, vanilla and salt until smooth. Fold in Cool Whip. Spread over crust. For topping, dissolve gelatin in boiling water; stir in raspberries. Chill for 20 minutes or until mixture begins to thicken. Spoon over filling. Refrigerate until set. Cut into squares; garnish with additional Cool Whip, if desired. Makes 12 to 16 servings.

**Becki Hauser, Tripp, SD**

Please send your favorite vegetarian, garden produce and pasta 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.



# Sioux Valley Energy Solar Demonstration Project Hits Five Year Milestone

The Sioux Valley Energy Solar array, located at the Cooperative's Brandon facility, is now five years old. It has provided the Cooperative valuable information on installation and production which, in turn, has assisted members when contemplating the installation of their own renewable solar generation.

The 24.8 kW (DC Rating) array is oriented to the south, west and southwest. Typically, solar arrays are oriented to the south for maximum production. However, SVE wanted to test the production from other directions to see how it would match up with the electric system's peak during the summer months. After five years there is evidence that while the south facing panels had the most production in total, the panels facing southwest and west actually provided more value because they produced more kilowatt-hours (kWh) during the Cooperative's electrical peak.

SVE's data shows that the west facing panels produced 50 percent more kWh during peak times than the south facing panels, while the southwest panels contributed 41% more than the south. However, in total, the west facing panels produced 20% less kWh's overall than the south facing panels while the southwest panels production dropped by just over 5%.

The average capacity factor for each of the orientations was 15.2% for the south, 14.3% for the southwest and 12.3% for the west. Capacity factor is how the output of a power generating system is measured. It is a ratio between the actual output of the solar (or another power generating source) and its full potential production (if it was able to produce at full capacity 24 hours a day, seven days a week). The production from this array provides the equivalent of the entire electrical needs for two average homes.

The price of solar has dropped significantly over the past several decades. Just 15 years ago, solar was being installed for over \$8 per Watt. Today, that number is less than \$3 per Watt in both South Dakota and Minnesota.

Currently 30 SVE members have solar installed in their homes or businesses, totaling 325 kW. SVE has seen the trend for small renewable energy lean to solar as 16 of the last 17 renewable energy installations on the SVE system have been solar.

In addition to the educational benefit to the membership, employees have also gained experience on the installation of solar as the entire array was constructed, built, and wired by SVE employees.





## 2020 Operation Round Up® Recipients

The Sioux Valley Energy Customers' Trust Operation Round Up® board of directors met June 3 to make the second round of awards for 2020. In the first half of 2020, \$73,000 in funds have been made available to the following:

- Sioux Valley Energy scholarships
- Ag Women's Day
- American Legion Edgar Herrick Post #42
- Arts & Mentoring Project
- Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center
- The Banquet
- Boys & Girls Club of Moody County
- The Breadbasket
- Brookings Backpack Project
- Brookings County K9 Search & Rescue
- Calumet Players
- Crooks Flag Football League
- DakotAbilities
- Dakota State University Foundation
- Furniture Mission of South Dakota
- Habitat for Humanity
- Hartford Sparx 16U Softball Team
- McCrossan Boys Ranch
- National Inventors Hall of Fame
- Pipestone County Historical Society
- Rural Sioux Empire Coalition for Youth
- The Salvation Army Northern Division
- South Dakota B.A.S.S. Nation
- South Dakota FFA Foundation, Inc
- Volunteers of America, Dakotas
- West Central Educational Foundation
- Boys & Girls Club of Brookings
- Brookings County 4-H Leaders
- Buffalo Ridge Drug Task Force
- Christ Lutheran Church Daycare
- Civil Air Patrol, Pipestone Senior Squadron
- Colman Fire & Rescue Department
- Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership (ICAP)
- Luverne Elementary
- Pipestone County Farm Bureau
- Pipestone Senior Center
- Rock County Oral Health Task Force
- The Salvation Army of Brookings County
- Sioux Council, Boys Scouts of America
- Split Rock Township Volunteer Fire Department
- South Dakota Youth Foundation, Inc
- Tri-Valley School-Special Education Department
- Volga Christian School
- Volunteers in Mercy



Operation Round Up® funds will help The Breadbasket in Flandreau purchase a freezer, repair the front of the building and replace two exterior doors.

### Operation Round Up® Spotlight: The Breadbasket Feeds Those in Need

Blessings, love and need are common words when Becky Fricke, manager of The Breadbasket, a Moody County food pantry located in Flandreau, talks about the organization's work.

"I want those kids to be able to open up the food and have it fill up their bodies with nutrition," said Fricke, as she talks about the more than 100 families receiving food each Thursday from the group's building at 202 E. Second Ave.

A \$1,500 grant from the Sioux Valley Energy Customers' Trust Operation Round Up® program helped The Breadbasket install a deep-freezer. The grant, coupled with donated electric services from Patriot Electric, increased the organization's storage capacity for serving people in need in Moody County and the Elkton, S.D., area. Additional freezer space allows the pantry to obtain more frozen foods through the Feeding South Dakota program.

"It's been a huge blessing," Fricke said of the freezer.

The grant will also be applied toward repairs to the front of the organization's building and for the replacement of two exterior doors. Any remaining funds will be applied to purchasing groceries for the program.

"Every Thursday, we are open from 1:30 p.m. to 5 p.m. – based on family size, we give about a week's worth of supplemental food to each family," she said. In 2019, The Breadbasket served more than 3,300 people. Donations, especially financial ones, are accepted Fridays from 9 a.m. to noon. The pantry is also in need of nutritious canned foods such as fruit, vegetables and meat. Paper products, including toilet paper, are also items on the pantry's wish list.

Find income eligibility guidelines and more information on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TheBreadbasketMoodyCounty/> or call 605-573-0935 for more information.

**About Operation Round Up®** Now in its 20th year, the Sioux Valley Energy Operation Round Up program provides funding to local non-profits and communities. Since 2000, members and employees have awarded more than \$1.8 million to worthwhile causes throughout the cooperative's service territory. The concept is easy... participating members agree to have their electric bill rounded up to the next highest dollar and that money is collected for Operation Round Up®.



The Sioux Valley Energy Customers' Trust Board of Directors meets quarterly during the months of March, June, September and December to approve applications. Applications can be found on the Sioux Valley Energy website at: <https://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-community/operation-roundup>. Email completed applications to [Debra.Biever@siouxvalleyenergy.com](mailto:Debra.Biever@siouxvalleyenergy.com) or FAX it to 605-256-1693. To mail the application, please send it to: Sioux Valley Energy Customer's Trust, PO Box 216, Colman, SD 57017.



The Old Fort Meade Museum details the history of Fort Meade, its residents, life as a cavalry officer and military history throughout the 66-year history of the fort.

# FORT MEADE

## Historic Outpost Has Varied Past

Susan Smith

Contributing Writer

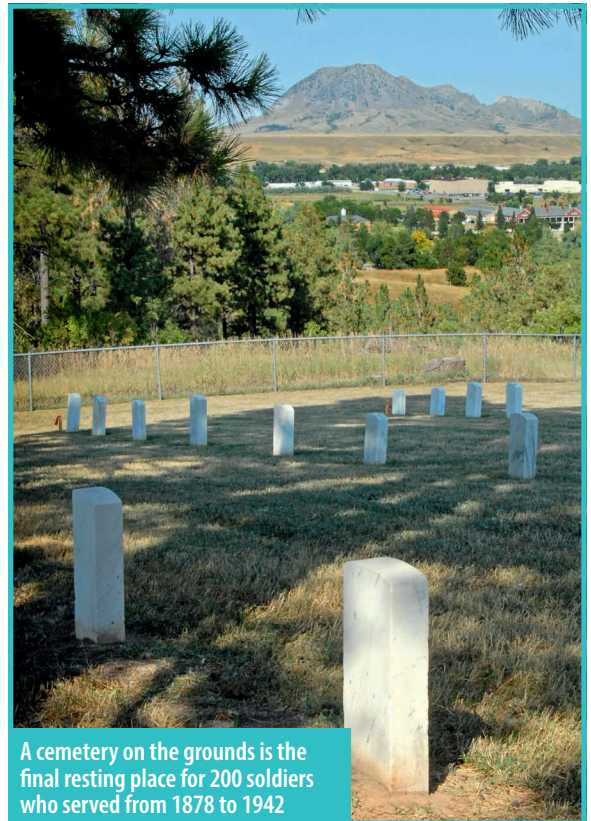
Named for Civil War Gen. George Meade, Fort Meade was built as a peacekeeping military outpost in 1878, two years after the infamous Battle of the Little Bighorn.

The fort provided an early customer base to the town of Sturgis, named for 7th Cavalry commander Col. Samuel Sturgis. According to fortmeademuseum.org, General Phil Sheridan, a Civil War Cavalry leader, selected the location after riding around the then-envisioned mile-square grounds and pointing to the location of future buildings with his saber.

“The fort was established to provide protection for the stage lines and freight routes that came in here as well as the miners and the settlers that came into the area for the many gold locations in the Black Hills and the Deadwood area,” said Robert Kusser, current president of the Fort Meade Museum Board.

Many of the buildings on the grounds of Fort Meade are from the 1900s. One building remains from 1878 and stables that were there from the beginning were rebuilt from wood to stone. Kusser said cannon wheels that are rimmed in steel but have wooden spokes were refurbished and ready for the coming tourist season. Artist Len McCann created figurines of soldiers that are on display in the museum. An exhibit of the U.S. Constitution is also on display. Unfortunately, COVID-19 sidelined many plans for the 2020 season, Kusser said. The museum will be opening for the summer 2020 as soon as possible.

Unlike most forts of the era, where hardly anything of significance remains, Fort Meade is still involved with military training with the South Dakota Army National Guard, which holds officer candidate training each summer. When the fort was officially deactivated in 1944, the Veterans Administration was approached to take over the post hospital, the VA Black Hills Health Care System, which cares for veterans in a 200-mile radius and also maintains the complex. A cemetery overlooking the fort is the final resting place for 200-plus



A cemetery on the grounds is the final resting place for 200 soldiers who served from 1878 to 1942

**Fort Meade is still attached to the South Dakota National Guard, which holds officer candidate training at the fort each summer.**



## Co-ops and the Old Nut Box

soldiers, family members and employees who served from 1878 to 1942, Kusser said. Streets that pass around the original parade field and buildings are still occupied and historically maintained.

“We’re fortunate to still be able to maintain a visual presence of history,” Kusser said.

The 4th Cavalry, one of the units stationed longest, and two separate times at Fort Meade, provided security when President Calvin Coolidge was at the game lodge in Custer State Park, a summer White House in the Black Hills, in 1927. The cavalry unit was deployed to the European theater in World War II.

Kusser said beginning in June 1945, 113 POWs were housed at the fort. That number grew to 600 by 1946. They worked in the



Belle Fourche region in agriculture, mainly to help with beet farming. They also did community work and helped convert the fort from an active military post to a veteran’s hospital by doing stonework and creating sidewalks.

After his retirement from state government, Kusser was director of the Fort Meade Museum for several years. The three-story building he still oversees as board president houses numerous artifacts commemorating the history of the fort and recreating what life was like as a cavalry soldier.

The museum is organized around the 66-year history of the fort, with most of that information on the main floor, Kusser said. The lower level includes more military displays and the top floor features a ballroom and views of Bear Butte, the parade field and a view of the prairie. The museum also contains information about the early days of the town of Sturgis.

The Old Fort Meade Museum is located in the historic headquarters building 55, Sheridan Street on Fort Meade, one mile east of Sturgis on Hwy. 34.

There are few things more satisfying for a pack rat than to find just the right thingamajig at the bottom of a growing pile of doodads.

I know a guy who has so much stuff stashed in his storeroom, it’s like walking through a dense jungle forest. You never know when you might need a backup buggy whip. Or the crusty motherboard of a Commodore C64. Or a clutch release bearing for a 1956 Farmall tractor.

Every now and again, I’ll put him to the test...

“I was looking for a book of Green Stamps from June of 1975. Can you sort through all that clutter and see if you can find one for me?”

Or, “Hey, I need a 26-inch inner tube for a 1962 Huffy Aerowind bicycle. Can you help me out with that?”

He hasn’t managed to fulfill any of my quirky requests so far, but he’ll spend all day and half the night searching.

While my own garage is only mildly untidy, I did have one of those pack rat discovery moments recently when I was working on my son’s 2000 Honda 80R. Not that I’m much of a motorcycle mechanic, but I had to crack the carburetor open to clean out the pilot jet and discovered I needed a replacement bolt.

I contemplated a trip to my local Hanks Hardware, but then I remembered what my Dad used to call “the nut box.” Not a very descriptive name, to be sure, but this nut box has some unique characteristics. First of all, it’s not really a box. It’s a round container made of heavy metal that my father had back when he was a young man and a pretty decent mechanic.

And like any good pack rat, I’ve been hanging onto that thing through every change in address and spring cleaning session for decades.

Another unique quality of the nut box is that over the years it has been repainted many times and many colors with the kind of paint that would trigger a code-red biohazard alert by today’s standards.

But the nut box has been around so long even that super industrial strength paint is peeling off. Though I tried to mitigate the damage, a chunk of dime-thick paint flew off when I wedged open the top of the container.

Clawing through a thousand nuts, bolts, screws and some stray nails, I lucked up and grabbed just the size I was looking for. Small victories, I know.

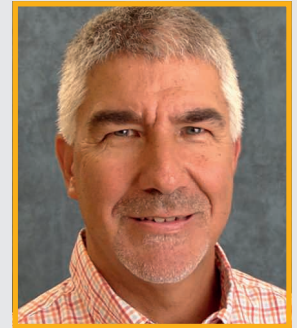
That dip into the nut box came to mind when I received a package from a faithful Cooperative Connections reader. The note inside stated: “I’ve enclosed an ad from a 1961 newspaper you might be interested in. My mom kept some old newspapers in her boxes and I found it there.”

The focal point of this gentle reader’s curiosity was a full-page spread featuring a caricature image of the sun wearing a pair of sunglasses, displaying a wide smile and sporting an incandescent light bulb for a nose.

The headline read: “Casting light on what rural electric cooperatives really mean to South Dakota.” The page was filled with information about what rural electric co-ops are, what they aren’t, and why they’re good for the state.

When it comes to the mission of rural electric co-ops, not much has changed through the decades. Our co-ops are still firmly committed to serving our members as they were on the day they were founded.

Serving homes and businesses the safe, affordable, reliable power they need is what we’ve done and will continue to do. That’s a responsibility and a purpose that will be around even longer than that trusty old nut box.



**Billy Gibson**

editor@sdrea.coop

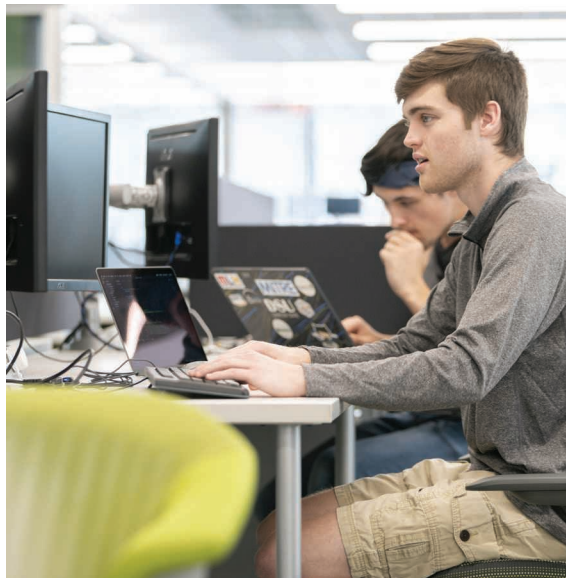


# Electric Co-ops Partner with Dakota State University 'Connected Home' Research

Whether it's using your cell phone to see who's at your front door, or having your refrigerator create your grocery list, smart home technologies provide a convenient way to manage your household. However, there is very little coordination between those various technologies. A research project which partners electric cooperatives and Dakota State University (DSU) in Madison, SD, is trying to develop a solution to fix that issue.

One of Sioux Valley Energy's power suppliers, East River Electric Power Cooperative, is working with DSU on various strategies and an interface technology to connect "smart" home devices. The 'Connected Home' framework being developed by DSU researchers will allow currently disjointed smart home technologies to communicate with each other and with the home's utility. Researchers are also working on strategies that will allow Sioux Valley Energy, and other electric cooperatives, to play an integral role in helping co-op members optimize their energy use.

"If Samsung makes a fridge or a washer or anything else, an appliance...we can know that that product will connect with our technology and work with the infrastructure and the electrical company," says Hunter DeMeyer a Computer Science major involved in the program.



"We're going to have this device in our house, these devices talk to one another," explains Tom Halverson, Computer Science professor at DSU. "We want to have some control over how devices interact and what happens at certain times."

The "smart" technology intercommunication is then able to provide instant feedback regarding energy usage to the member. Current demand response programs only allow for one-way communication to appliances such as water heaters and A/C units.

The end goal of any technology developed by the research project is to provide electric cooperatives with a modern solution for helping their members be more energy efficient and save money.

The program not only benefits electrical cooperatives and their members, but also benefits the students involved in the research.

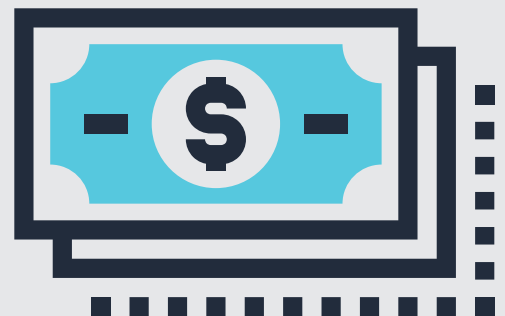
This year's researchers graduated and a new group of DSU students will be taking over the project this fall. That new group will continue developing the interface that this year's students created. The next phase of the project will include a more intensive testing process of the interface in the 2020-2021 school year.

East River Electric is the wholesale power supplier to 24 distribution cooperatives, like Sioux Valley Energy, and one municipal electric system across eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota.

## Billing Options Is Budget Billing for you?

People often like to plan for their electric expenses so they don't experience monthly fluctuations. Budget billing allows you to avoid those monthly ups and downs of a typical electric bill. By utilizing budget billing, Sioux Valley Energy will 'average' your actual usage/bill for the previous twelve months. That average is what you will pay each month.

**So what if you overpay or underpay?** Budget amounts are recalculated each year in June to reflect your actual usage. To enroll and remain on the program, Sioux Valley Energy must have a year of billing history and your account must have a current payment status. For more information, contact our customer service department at 800-234-1960.





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**SMARTHUB.**



## ON THE GO AND IN CONTROL.

### MANAGE

your account

### REPORT

service issues

### VIEW AND PAY

your bill

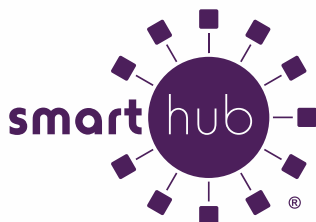
### RECEIVE

key notices

### MONITOR

usage 24/7

...all in the palm of  
your hand and  
online.



# Dive On In to Energy Savings



**Sheila Gross**

Energy Services Specialist

If you installed a pool to keep the kids occupied this summer, you may see an increase on your monthly electric use.

The motors on pool filters and heaters may be out of sight and out of mind, until the electric bill comes.

If you're installing a pool heater, make sure to look at its long-term operating costs and invest in a pool cover. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, using a pool cover in this region could save \$400 to \$800 a summer, depending on the desired water temperature. (Heating your pool to 78 degrees will cost less than heating it to 82 degrees. The energy consumption for each degree rise in temperature will cost 10 percent to 30 percent more in energy costs, depending on your

location. In warmer climates, this percentage is higher because of the relatively low cost of heating a pool at 78°F.)

A Sioux Falls-based pool company notes on its website that solar pool covers can range from \$139 to \$1,300. Solar pool covers not only use sunlight to keep the water at a comfortable temperature, but they can also keep out bugs, leaves and more.

Solar blankets, which float on the pool surface, are the cheapest way to add 5° to 10° to the pool, and also help retain heat put into the pool by other means. Solar rings or squares work the same way, but are less effective than using one contiguous solar cover.

Smart landscaping around your family's pool may also help with energy savings. Evaporation is one of the main ways a pool loses energy. The pool's temperature, the air temperature, humidity and the wind speed at the pool surface can all affect the evaporation rate. Higher pool temperatures and wind speeds coupled with lower humidity increase the evaporation rate. A windbreak made of trees, shrubs or a fence, can help reduce evaporation in windy areas. But, there's a balancing act: the windbreak needs to be sufficiently high and close to the pool so it doesn't create turbulence over the pool. Turbulence will increase evaporation. The windbreaks must also be placed so that it doesn't shade the pool from the sun's heating effect.

For more information on energy efficiency in pools, visit <https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/managing-swimming-pool-temperature-energy-efficiency>

For more ways to save energy, visit [www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-community/energy-efficiency](http://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-community/energy-efficiency)

## Tell Me More!

- Heat Pump Rebate
- Electric Heat Rate
- Marathon/Westinghouse Water Heaters
- Energy Audit
- Loan Program
- Electric Vehicle program
- Time of Use Rate
- SmartHub Account Tool
- Smart Thermostat Rebate
- Commercial/Ag LED Program
- Commercial Heat Rebates
- Irrigation Rebate
- Renewable Energy Credit
- Energy Saving Tips
- Interlock Kit/Generator

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about the topics above.

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Account #: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail this form to:

Sioux Valley Energy,  
PO Box 216, Colman, SD 57017





# A MATTER OF TRUST AND SAFETY

The UL symbol marks safety of products for consumers across the globe

**Brenda Kleinjan**

Contributing Writer

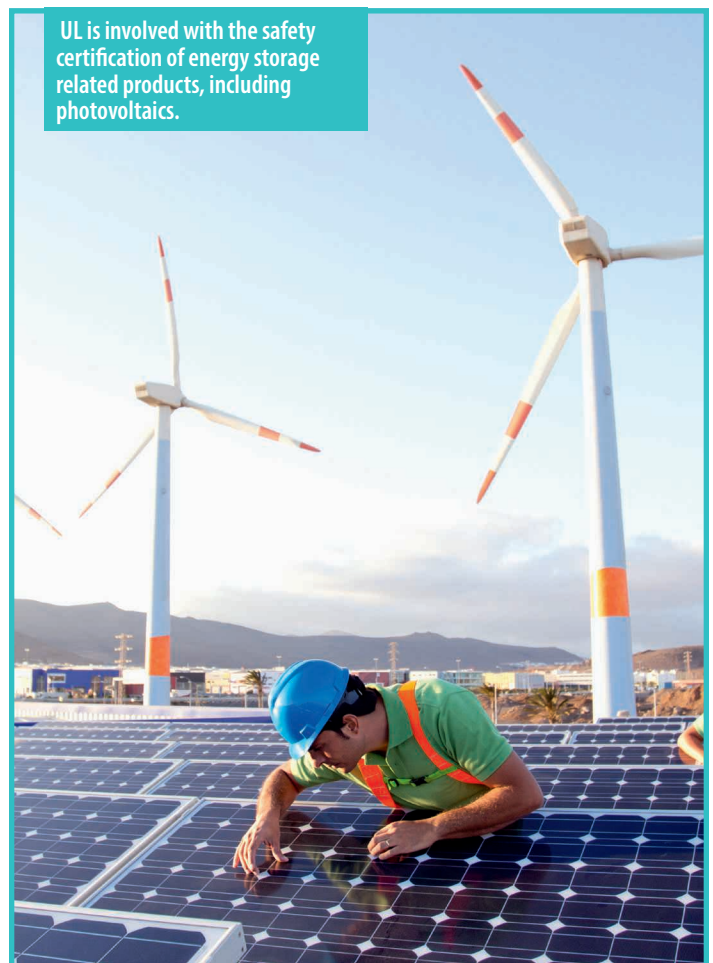
Have you ever examined the hairdryer you use each morning? How about the coffee pot or the cords of your cell phone charger? Chances are they bear a circle with an “UL” inside. If not, they probably should.

That UL symbol is not a talisman but rather an indicator that the product used has been tested and is designed to operate as intended safely.

“When people see that UL mark on the product when they’re shopping – when they see that mark of safety – they know they can trust it has been certified by a third-party organization as safe,” said Jonette Herman, a Standards Engineer/Project Manager for Underwriters Laboratories Inc., based in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

Herman, a South Dakota native, develops safety standards. UL maintains more than 1,600 safety standard documents that define how they test and certify that a product is safe.

As an organization, Underwriters Laboratories is dedicated to fostering safe living and working conditions to people throughout the world.





“We do that through science and hazard-based safety engineering,” said Herman. Simplified, Herman says they look at an object and determine where the hazards might be.

“I grew up in Pierre. In high school, I always thought I’d be good at making sure that things work the way they should,” said Herman. That led her to the University of Minnesota where she pursued a degree in electrical engineering.

“I remember looking at my hairdryer and seeing that UL mark and wondering what it was about. After college, I moved out to North Carolina and found that UL was located there,” Herman said.

That was 27 years ago. Since then Herman has worked on making products from chainsaws to appliances to motors and batteries safer.

“Several years ago, I worked on the chainsaw standards. We were finding a lot of those injuries were due to fatigue and the operators not wearing personal protective equipment (PPE). That’s when accidents were occurring,” Herman said.

UL continued to analyze the equipment.

“Instruction manuals include important information that people should read,” Herman said. But, knowing that many people don’t read the manuals, UL seeks to ensure that “safety is built into the product as much as possible.”

“That’s part of that safety-based hazard approach. We

look at the product and how it’s used,” Herman said.

Worldwide, UL has more than 14,000 employees. In the non-profit portion of UL which Herman works, there are more than 200 people dedicated to research and education.

Today, Herman’s work focuses on wire positioning devices, motors and generators and energy storage, and energy distribution, among other areas.

“We’re constantly seeing new technologies introduced. All this innovation inherently creates risk.”



## Underwriters Laboratories

More than 400 panels and committees work with UL in developing the standards for various products. The panels and committees are comprised of an array of stakeholders including producers of the products, regulators and consumers.

“It’s important for consumers to educate themselves. How do they know a new product is safe? Looking for that certification on the product is helpful to the consumers.”



**Jonette Herman**  
Standards  
Engineer/Project  
Manager  
Underwriters  
Laboratories, Inc.



UL is working to make lithium ion battery storage safer. Herman cautioned that excessive damage to a product with a lithium ion battery, such as caused by repeated dropping, could cause it to go into thermal runaway, causing it to overheat and potentially catch fire.





Human trafficking in South Dakota is showing signs of growing due in part to the coronavirus pandemic. This crime impacts individuals across the demographic and geographic spectrum.

## PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE

### Coronavirus emboldens trafficking predators

By Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Becky Rasmussen is clear in her contention that her vocation is a clarion call coming straight from her Creator.

In her heart and in her soul, Rasmussen carries a deep concern for those who find themselves victimized by human trafficking - whether it comes in the form of labor or sexual exploitation.

Rasmussen, executive director of Call to Freedom in Sioux Falls, traces the path that led her from a partially satisfying professional position to running a program dedicated to steering victims clear of their perpetrators and helping survivors rebuild their lives.

The journey began when she received what she describes as a direct and unambiguous message from a higher power.

At the time, she was signed on as a volunteer for the program that later became the present-day Call to Freedom non-profit organization. When one of the program leaders appealed to her to take the reins, Rasmussen listened carefully for that still small voice.

“I’m a prayer girl. I’m the type who steps out in faith and sees what kind of plan God has in store for me,” she said. “I was prompted by prayer to get involved.”

Rasmussen led the program’s transition to full non-profit status, attained in January of 2016, and managed to hold down two jobs along the way. Today, Call to Freedom boasts a contingent of 18 staff members - including eight case managers - who facilitate a wide range of services such as victim identification, safety assessment, housing, transportation, medical care, counseling trauma/addiction, education/employment and legal advocacy.

It’s a prescribed glide path to freedom that includes the following key components: victim referral, emergency assistance, intake

Youth of all ages can become a target.



and assessment, implementation and referrals, long-term care and self-sufficiency.

### Marissa’s Housing Project

It was during a trip to the Sturgis Rally the previous year that Rasmussen discovered her true calling. When speaking to civic groups, she often recounts the story of a young woman named Marissa to illustrate the plight of those who fall prey to trafficking and find themselves in the clutches of an oppressor.

Amid all the frenetic fervor of the 75th anniversary of Sturgis, she noticed a young girl who wore a certain disturbing look on her face. Rasmussen immediately recognized it as the terrified, distance gaze of teenager who had unwillingly slipped under the power of a dark and sinister force.

There was a quick and strong connection.

“Something just prompted me to go up to her and introduce myself,” she recalled. “In two minutes she was crying and was scared and was looking around. She said she couldn’t talk and she

said I had no idea of how horrible her day had been.”

Working in conjunction with the program Free International, Rasmussen tapped into a database later that day and discovered Marissa was one of 117 girls in the region between the ages of 12 and 18 who were identified as victims. In fact, the teen was reported by family members as missing on two separate occasions, once in October of 2014 and then in May of 2015.

Rasmussen pointed out that the fact Marissa had been reported as missing twice is part of a known cycle of reverting back into victimhood and is a result of traffickers who use a variety of techniques designed to keep their subjects under their control. Some of those nefarious tactics include depriving the victim of housing and financial resources, separating them from their families and devising ways to push them into a legal morass with the judicial system.

The day after finding out more information about Marissa’s background, Rasmussen felt convicted to find her and offer to help. She waded into the massive crowds at Sturgis and went on a determined quest to find the troubled teen.

As Rasmussen describes it, locating Marissa once again set the wheels in motion for the formation of the Call to Freedom non-profit and also the creation of the Marissa Housing Project.

The Marissa Housing Project is a seven-unit apartment complex that provides a safe haven for victims who receive the support, stability and separation from their perpetrators necessary to achieve

**“It’s a problem that’s proliferating.”**  
Becky Rasmussen



long-term success and integration back into society.

## Coronavirus Impact

Like many other areas in the post-Covid world, the pandemic has changed the dynamic when it comes to human trafficking. And not in a positive way.

In fact, Rasmussen noted, the impact of the pandemic is creating a situation that has even more traffickers crouching low in the weeds, just waiting for a prime opportunity to pounce.

The financial stress and economic hardship that comes as a consequence of a locked down community only compounds problems for those already susceptible to captivity and emboldens those set on exploiting others.

As the unemployment rolls expand, fraudulent offers of modeling contracts, high-wage processing plant positions and other means of employment look more enticing to those facing financial ruin.

Adding to the problem is the fact that at the same time the potential for trafficking is increasing, services have been more scant. There is a statewide network of safe places where victims can receive assistance in Mobridge, Pierre, Rapid City, Pine Ridge Reservation, Sioux Falls, Watertown, Winner and Yankton.

However, most of those services are currently operating with limited resources

and are working to build back up to full strength when possible.

“It’s a problem that’s proliferating as we see our shelter numbers declining and resources designed to help are struggling,” Rasmussen lamented. “It’s important, especially now, that if a recruiter comes up to you and offers a job opportunity that sounds too good to be true, stay away. Be aware of those tactics.”

She pointed out that pornographers are blatantly attempting to capitalize on the pandemic - and consequently creating more victims - by offering “free 30-day memberships” on pornography websites.

One of the more popular websites, Porn Hub, has seen a 12 percent increase in activity over the past few months.

“We see that where there is pornography, especially child pornography, there is human trafficking,” she said.

## How to Help

Recognizing the signs of trafficking can go a long way toward addressing the problem, Rasmussen said. Because human trafficking impacts all levels of society across

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PLEASE ASK FOR HELP.**

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Call 24 hours a day,  
7 days a week.  
Confidential.

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233733 (BeFree)

Open 2pm-10pm CST

**CALL 911 if you are in an emergency.**

every demographic and geographic profile, many subtle indications can go unnoticed.

“We see problems in farming communities as well as population centers throughout the state,” she said. “It happens to the poor and the middle-class alike. Everyone needs to stay on the lookout for the signs.”

Those interested in supporting Call to Freedom’s mission can contribute in a number of ways, including purchasing a Freedom Candle, direct monetary donations, in-kind donations of hygiene and household products and volunteering.

Visit [www.calltofreedom.org](http://www.calltofreedom.org) to find out more about the organization’s mission.



Trafficking victims suffer the pain of separation and despair.



## Register to Win!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Your E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

### August 4-6

Minnesota Farmfest  
28269 Hwy 67, Polk, MN  
800-881-1007  
www.idealgroup.com/  
farmfest

### September 3-5

South Dakota State Fair:  
Perfect Vision of Fun,  
1060 3rd St. SW, Huron, SD  
800-529-0900  
www.sdstatefair.com

### July 3, 18, 25 and August 1, 22

The Murder of Miss Kitty  
Comedy Mystery Dinner  
Theater, Holiday Inn Express  
& Suites, Deadwood, SD,  
605-580-5799

### 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, Main  
Street, Chamberlain, SD,  
605-683-9051

### June 27

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

### June 28

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

### July 18-19

Charles Mix Saddle Club  
Fourth Annual SDRA Rodeo,  
Geddes, SD, 605-680-1580

### July 18-21

Senior Games, Rapid City,  
SD, Contact Eric Holmes at  
605-394-4175



### July 3:

Independence Day celebrations at  
Mount Rushmore National Memorial  
[www.nps.gov/moru/planyourvisit/  
independence-day-events.htm](http://www.nps.gov/moru/planyourvisit/independence-day-events.htm)

### July 21-25

98th Annual Days of '76 PRCA  
Rodeo, Arena, Deadwood,  
SD, 1-888-838-BULL,  
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

### July 24-25

Senior Games, Brookings,  
SD, Contact Traci Saugstad at  
605-692-4492

### July 26

15th Annual Car Show  
Langford, SD, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.  
605-493-6597

### July 31-August 1

Senior Games, Yankton,  
SD, Contact Kristi Hauer at  
605-665-4685

### July 31-August 1

Plein Air & Arts in the Garden,  
Wessington Springs, SD,  
605-354-3826

### August 1

Rockin' Ribfest BBQ  
Competition, Wessington  
Springs, SD, 605-505-1135

### August 1

Foothills Classic, Wessington  
Springs, SD, 605-350-1687

### 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

### 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.