



Cooperative Connections

The Annual Buffalo Round Up at Custer State Park is one of many activities of interest for visitors to South Dakota

**SD Tourism
continues
steady pace**

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**Anglers in hot
pursuit of cold
fish**

Pages 12-13



SVE Continues to Support Strong Co-op Network



Tim McCarthy, GM/CEO

tim.mccarthy@siouxvalleyenergy.com

When electric cooperatives were created to bring power to the rural areas in our region, the members of Sioux Valley Energy wanted to control their own destiny when it came to long-term power supply. Sioux Valley Energy was a founding member of East River Electric Power Cooperative and, like others in our region, signed

long-term power contracts with East River. Those power contracts make it possible to secure long-term generation assets with co-op wholesale power provider, Basin Electric Power Cooperative. That strong relationship among cooperatives still exists today, but there's a concerning issue that has arisen that could have a negative impact on your cooperative network.

I want to direct your attention to an insert in this month's magazine that explains what's happening at another electric cooperative in South Dakota. Dakota Energy Cooperative, based in Huron, has filed a legal complaint against East River Electric in an attempt to break a longstanding contract to purchase wholesale power. As one of the owners of East River Electric, Sioux Valley Energy is strongly opposed to this action. Dakota Energy has made its intention known that if it is able to break its contract with East River, they will buy wholesale power from Guzman Energy. Guzman Energy, a for-profit energy broker with offices in Denver and Coral Gables, Florida, has made no investments in electric infrastructure in South Dakota. In contrast, Basin Electric and East River Electric have invested hundreds of millions of dollars in generation plants, transmission lines, and substations within the state of South Dakota on behalf of electric cooperatives, including Sioux Valley Energy.

Basin Electric owns three generation stations in South Dakota, owns and operates a large wind farm, and purchases electricity from several other South Dakota-based wind farms. Basin Electric invested \$232.8 million in the Prairie Winds South Dakota wind farm near White Lake to build (at the time) the largest cooperatively-owned wind farm in the country. Basin Electric invested \$28.2 million in a generation unit called Spirit Mound Station located near Vermillion. The Groton Station is a natural gas generator in which Basin invested \$133.4 million to construct. And the Deer Creek Station is a natural gas plant located near White, S.D., that Basin Electric built at a cost of \$392.9 million. Just the generation plants alone total \$787.3 million in infrastructure investment in South Dakota. That doesn't include the significant investment in transmission lines and other infrastructure Basin Electric has built in the state. East River Electric has also invested \$250 million in infrastructure over the last ten years to serve its members.

We think a wholesale power supply cooperative that we started, and continue to own, can better serve cooperative members than an unproven out-of-state private equity investment company like Guzman. We stand with East River Electric because we ARE East River Electric. East River only exists because the member cooperatives created it, own it and have a voice in how it operates. Sioux Valley Energy members are represented on the East River Electric board by one of our own board members. We help set our own wholesale power rates. And because East River Electric is a co-op, it returns excess revenue to its membership. In fact, Sioux Valley Energy has received over \$13 million back in the form of capital credits from its co-op power suppliers.

Please take a look at the special insert to learn more and if you have friends or family who are served by Dakota Energy, please let them know what is happening at their cooperative and ask them to get involved and stand by our cooperative family.

Sioux Valley Energy

Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 497-440)

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Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov
Sioux Valley Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Brandon Recognizes Sioux Valley Energy

Commitment to community is a foundational principle cooperatives like Sioux Valley Energy were built upon. That commitment was recently recognized by the Brandon Development Foundation for Sioux Valley Energy's investment in the Corson Development Partnership approximately 20 years ago.

That long history of economic development investment continues today. Each year Sioux Valley Energy dedicates both funding and time to promote the growth and development of communities within its service territory. The cooperative is actively involved in local and regional economic development organizations.



SVE President, Allan Weinacht, accepts a plaque from the Brandon Development Foundation recognizing Sioux Valley Energy for its role in supporting economic development.

Bares Receives Gift for Featured Safety Poster

Good afternoon,

I am writing to say thank you for the gift pack I received for getting my picture published. I love it so much!

Thanks again, Alli Bares

Editor's Note: Alli is the daughter of Sioux Valley Energy members Tony and Angie Bares of Sioux Falls. Her safety drawing, "No Drone Zone," appeared in the July issue of Sioux Valley Energy Cooperative Connections. If you want to submit your safety artwork, please mail to:

Sioux Valley Energy
P.O. Box 216
Colman, SD 57017



Alli Bares received an art set and other items for having her safety poster published in the July issue of *Sioux Valley Energy Cooperative Connections*.

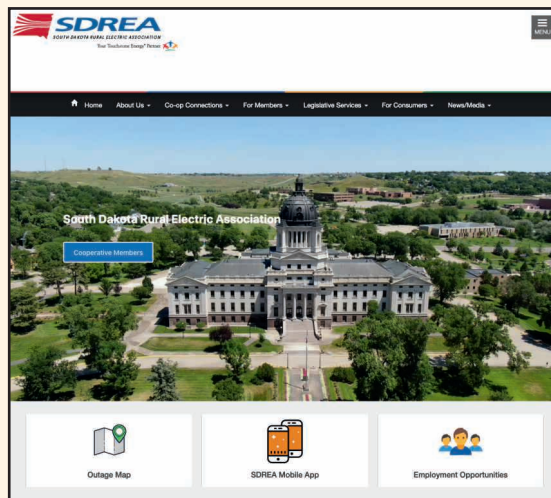
National Cut Your Energy Costs Day

If you resolved to spend less and save more in 2021, cutting back on a few regular expenses is a good place to start. Sunday, Jan. 10, is National Cut Your Energy Costs Day, so we've rounded up a few tips to help you trim your utility bills without making major lifestyle changes.

- **Cut heating and cooling costs.** We spend a great deal of energy heating our homes in the winter and keeping them cool in the summer, but are we really doing our best to minimize the cost of our comfort? A programmable thermostat can allow you to adjust the temperature when you're out of the house or sleeping. There's no reason to blast the heat when everyone is at work, and it's doubtful you need to sleep with the hot air on high. So program your schedule into your thermostat, and it'll do all the work for you.
- **Watch out for energy draining appliances.** Big appliances like refrigerators, washers and dryers consume a lot of energy, so the next time you replace one of these appliances, upgrade to an energy-efficient Energy Star-certified model. These are designed to use much less energy than their older counterparts and often end up paying for themselves in savings over time. Keep these appliances clean and well maintained to ensure optimal performance and efficiency.
- **Pull the plug.** As we continue to be more and more "plugged in," it should come as no surprise that a greater proportion of our energy goes toward keeping our devices charged. To keep costs reasonable, plug electronics into a power strip and turn it off when they're not in use. This cuts off "phantom" usage and can save you a bundle. Some newer power strips even include an automatic shut-off feature.
- **Hit the lights.** As always, turn off the lights when leaving a room. You can also swap out light bulbs to increase your home's energy efficiency. Replace incandescent bulbs with LED versions for an easy and affordable way to save on electricity. Not only do LEDs last significantly longer, they also require much less energy.
- **Start with a simple home assessment.** Interested to know how your home's energy use compares to similar homes? Check out Energy Star's Home Energy Yardstick at energystar.gov to learn how much of your home's energy use is related to heating and cooling versus other appliance use, lighting and hot water.

Visit the new SDREA.coop

Want to know more about South Dakota's rural electric cooperative system? Check out our newly redesigned website at www.sdrea.coop. You'll find lots of useful information about our generation, transmission and distribution systems, energy efficiency ideas, legislative issues that impact electric rates, a statewide outage map and much more.



KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"Watch Out for Downed Power Lines!"

Gracie Richter, 9 years old

Gracie is a resident of Buffalo, S.D., and is the daughter of Jody Richter. They are members of Grand Electric Cooperative.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.

Warm and Cozy Soups

Tomato-Tortellini Soup

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 2 - 14 ounce cans
reduced-sodium chicken
broth | cheese spread with chive
and onion |
| 1 - 9 ounce package of
refrigerated tortellini | 1 - can tomato soup |
| 1 - 8 ounce tub cream | Fresh chives (optional) |

In a medium sauce pan bring broth to a boil. Add tortellini then reduce heat to simmer uncovered for 5 minutes. In a bowl whisk 1/3 cup of hot broth into the cream cheese spread. Whisk until smooth. Pour contents into sauce pan. Stir in tomato soup and heat through. Serve with fresh chives, if desired.

Family Features/Better Homes and Gardens

Slow Cooker Split Pea Soup

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1 lb. dried green split peas
(rinsed) | 2 cloves garlic, minced |
| 1 cup sliced carrots | 1 bay leaf |
| 2 stalks celery, diced, plus
leaves | 1/4 cup chopped parsley |
| 2 cups chopped onion | 6 cups chicken broth |
| | salt and pepper, to taste |

Layer ingredients in slow cooker in order given, adding broth last. DO NOT stir ingredients. Cover and cook on high for 4-5 hours or low for 8-10 hours until peas are very soft.

Gail Lyngstad, Pierre, SD

Baked Potato Soup

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2/3 cup butter | 6 slices of bacon, cooked
and crumbled |
| 2/3 cup flour | 1-1/2 cups shredded sharp
cheddar cheese |
| 7 cups milk | 1 cup sour cream |
| 4 to 6 baked potatoes,
peeled and cooled | 3/4 teaspoon salt |
| 4 green onions chopped | 1/2 teaspoon pepper |

Melt butter, add flour and stir until smooth. Add milk and stir. Add potatoes and onion. Cook until mixture comes to a boil. Turn to low heat immediately and add bacon, cheese, sour cream, salt and pepper. Stir well. Makes 1 crockpot full.

Terri Halstead, Sioux Falls, SD

Clam Chowder

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 4 slices thick bacon cut and
fried | 4 cans 6.5 oz. minced clams
(save juice) |
| 1 onion | 1 15-oz. can chicken broth |
| 1 cup celery | 2 potatoes |
| 1/3 cup flour | 2 cups cream |
| 1 tsp. pepper | 1 bay leaf |

Cut and fry bacon. Add diced onion and celery and cook about five minutes. Stir in 1/3 cup flour using the drained clam juice until slightly thick. Add 1 teaspoon pepper, one can broth, 4 cans clams, 2 diced potatoes and one bay leaf. Cook until potatoes are tender, about 10 minutes. Add cream. Enjoy!

Sharon Waltner, Freeman, SD

My Mother's Tomato Soup

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 2 cups tomato juice or
pureed canned tomatoes | 1 qt. milk |
| 1/2 tsp. soda | salt to taste |
| | 1 tbsp. butter |

Combine tomatoes or juice with soda in a saucepan. Let froth up. Add milk, salt and butter. Heat and serve.

Doris Ekberg, Hamill, SD

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.



The deadline to apply for \$17,500 in scholarships is 4:30 p.m. Jan. 15, 2021.

Jan. 15 Deadline for \$17,500 in Scholarships

Sioux Valley Energy is offering \$17,500 worth of scholarships to eligible graduating high school seniors or first time attendees at an institution of higher education. Those scholarship funds also include a designated scholarship to an individual attending power line school. Applications that are hand delivered must be in one of the SVE drop boxes no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 15, 2021. Mailed applications must be postmarked by Jan. 15, 2021. ACT or SAT test scores will not be required this year due to COVID-19.

Applications will be judged on the basis of grades, work experience, school activities, volunteer community service and an essay question.

The majority of the scholarship funding comes from Operation Round Up® funds, with additional monies from Basin Electric Power Cooperative and L&O Power Cooperative.

To be eligible you must:

- Be a graduating high school senior or first-time attendee at an institution of higher education.
- Plan to be a full-time student in an accredited college or vocational-technical school this fall.
- Be a child of a Sioux Valley Energy member.
- Have a 3.0 or higher cumulative GPA.
- Provide a written recommendation from a teacher, administrator or counselor.
- One winner per family/per year.

Applications are available from your school counselor, or by calling Sioux Valley Energy at 800-234-1960 and on the web at:

<https://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-community/scholarship-program>.

Bills More Than You Can Handle? Area Agencies May Offer Help

Some members find it difficult to pay their utility bills in the winter. Organizations in both South Dakota and southwestern Minnesota may be able to provide assistance. Below is the contact information for some of these groups.

South Dakota	
Statewide in South Dakota	
LIEAP, Low Income Energy Assistance Program	1-800-233-8503
First Call for Help	211
Brookings County	
Brookings County Welfare Office	605-696-8260
Brookings County Community Action	605-692-6391
Salvation Army of Brookings County	605-692-8863
My Neighbor	605-691-3225
Kingsbury County	
Interlakes Community Action	605-854-3701
Lake County	
Interlakes Community Action	605-256-6518
Lake County Welfare	605-256-7619
Minnehaha County	
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
Moody County	
Interlakes Community Action	605-997-2824
Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribal Office	605-997-3891
Southwestern Minnesota	
Southwestern MN Opportunity Council	1-800-658-2444
Southwest Health & Human Services	1-888-837-6713
The Salvation Army Heat Share	800-842-7279
MN Department of Energy Services	800-657-3710
First Call for Help	211
Pipestone County	
Pipestone County Veterans Administration	507-825-1171
United Community Action Partnership (UCAP)	507-537-1416
Rock County	
Rock County Veterans Administration	507-283-5061
United Community Action Partnership (UCAP)	507-727-1401



South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources awarded a total of \$406,250 for electric vehicle charging stations.

Sioux Valley Energy Awarded Electric Vehicle Charging Station Rebate Funds

The South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) announced on Dec. 3 that Sioux Valley Energy, along with five other electric utilities, will receive rebate funds from the Volkswagen (VW) Mitigation Trust to help purchase and install both DC fast charging and Level 2 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations throughout the state. The charging stations will be located along the I-29 and I-90 corridors. West River Electric Association, West Central Electric Cooperative, Watertown Municipal Utilities, Brookings Municipal Utilities, and NorthWestern Energy will also receive rebates.

“This is a very exciting time for EVs in South Dakota. Sioux Valley Energy recognizes the importance of developing fast charging infrastructure throughout the state, which is why we reached out to other utilities beyond electric cooperatives, such as investor-owned utilities and municipals, to put together a coalition. This alliance of electric utilities will begin the process of building an EV charging network along I-29 and I-90,” said Ben Pierson, Sioux Valley Energy Manager of Beneficial Electrification.

According to the SD DENR, “of the \$8,125,000 allotted to the

state of South Dakota, currently, \$406,250 can be used for EVCS (EV Charging Station) rebates. The Department will use VW funds from Category 9 (Light duty Zero Emissions Vehicle supply equipment) as rebates for the program. The program provides rebates to help purchase and install electric vehicle charging stations. The South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources administers the programs in South Dakota. The rebate will be up to 80 percent of the charging station project.”

EVCS rebates for the following locations were awarded to:

- Sioux Valley Energy – Sioux Falls – \$58,035
- West River Electric Association – Wall – \$58,035
- West Central Electric Cooperative – Murdo – \$58,035
- Brookings Municipal Utilities – Brookings – \$58,035
- Watertown Municipal Utilities – Watertown – \$58,035
- NorthWestern Energy – Mitchell – \$58,035
- NorthWestern Energy – Chamberlain – \$58,035



Tourism in South Dakota has remained robust despite the impact of the global pandemic. Photos courtesy of the SD Tourism Department.

SD TOURISM GOING STRONG

Tired of Being Shut In: Visitors Flock to South Dakota

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Probably the last time a member of the Husted family was worried about going broke, it was back in the 1930s.

Ted and Dorothy Husted had just purchased a small drug store in Wall and were having a hard time getting the business to grow in the middle of a severe drought and the Great Depression.

The business that went on to become known as Wall Drug has been named one of the busiest tourist attractions in the northern part of the country. The prospects of the Husteds going broke have been very slim since the store hit its stride.

That is until last March.

Third-generation owner Rick Husted won't lie: he was downright worried that Wall Drug might bite the dust when COVID-19 prompted lockdowns and travel restrictions.

The entire operation – the stores, the restaurants, the galleries and even the free ice water – came grinding to a stop for 71 days just as the travel season was about to kick into gear.

“I was afraid we might go broke and we might not make it. They're projecting that half of the restaurants out there are going to close down permanently,” Husted said. “We were closed that whole time and had to cut back on our employees because we felt that trying to ‘flatten the curve’ was the right thing to do.”

The business reported losses through the summer, but returned to the black in August due in part to traffic from the Sturgis motorcycle rally. Husted reported that September and October also showed considerable increases over 2019 numbers.

“People just got tired of being shut in and they got in their cars and on their motorcycles and their RVs and came to South Dakota,” he said, noting that even President Trump made his way to Mount Rushmore for a Fourth of July gathering.



The annual Buffalo Round Up at Custer State Park continues to attract visitors from throughout the country.

The Thing I Love Most about Living in South Dakota is...

What do you love most about living in South Dakota? Share your thoughts with us (200 words or less) and you could win a \$25 gift card!

Send your response to editor@srea.coop by Jan. 4, and don't forget to include your contact information.



South Dakota's outdoor attractions have continued to draw visitors looking to avoid lockdowns in other states.

Hustead said he took public safety measures such as installing Plexiglas barriers, posting hand-sanitizer stations and requiring that employees wear masks. He said no employees have been known to contract the coronavirus. The bottom line also received a boost from some federal relief money.

Once the financial fog lifted, Hustead called his mother Marjorie – who is in a care facility in Rapid City but is “still involved in the business” – and told her he felt Wall Drug was going to make it through the crisis after all.

“I told her, ‘Mom, I think we’re going to make it.’ And that made her happy,” Hustead said.

He was quick to heap praise on the South Dakota Office of Tourism and leader Jim Hagen.

In assessing the state of tourism in South Dakota, officials paint a picture similar to Hustead. While many annual events have been canceled or postponed to a later date, outdoor events and activities such as Sturgis, walleye fishing, pheasant hunting and the many outdoor tourist attractions have led to a healthy industry performance and outlook.

Hagen's office has also taken the initiative to develop innovative programs to ensure that South Dakota stays top-of-mind when people throughout the region and nation make their travel plans.

The department recently launched an on-line learning program for children and their families to learn more about South Dakota and experience the attractions of the state from the comfort of their homes or in a classroom setting. There are eight virtual pages that allow site visitors to learn more about the icons, wildlife, people and history of the state, each featuring games and activities for the entire family to explore.

“These online lessons provide an opportunity to educate children and adults alike about our state's Great Faces and Great Places,” said Gov. Kristi Noem. “We hope that they are used as a tool to engage families

and inspire them to explore our great state.”

The department also partnered with Badlands National Park to promote its virtual Junior Ranger program. Once the virtual exploration is complete, kids can become official Badlands National Park Junior Rangers.

Last summer, the department teamed up with tourism officials in Wyoming to develop a program called “Black to Yellow” to entice travelers to explore scenic routes that wind from the Badlands National Park to Wyoming's iconic Yellowstone National Park.

To help travelers plan their trip, the states put together itineraries that explore their most well-known attractions and lesser-known gems. From taking in roadside stops, like Wall Drug and Wyoming's Devils Tower, to exploring the scenery of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area and Badlands National Park, travelers were encouraged to explore the beauty of the states' wide open spaces, unparalleled wildlife and the freedom of the open road.

State tourism leaders will meet in Pierre on Jan. 20-21 for the 2021 Governor's Conference on Tourism. There will be limited in-person engagement as well as an online attendance option. The theme for this year's meeting is, “Onward!” While 2020 could have been worse, leaders are hoping that travel will continue to be a significant economic driver in the state.



Wall Drug shut down for 71 days last spring but rebounded to have a successful 2020.

Ring In the New Year Efficiently



Sheila Gross

Energy Services Specialist

This month, as ‘Cut Your Energy Costs’ day (Jan. 10) approaches, I wanted to focus on three programs we offer that can cut your use as well as the money you spend on electricity.

Heating, cooling, water heating, and appliances account for more than two-thirds of a typical single-family home’s energy use.

Heating and Cooling

Heating and cooling alone account for 42 percent of a home’s energy use, so let’s start there.

Our electric heat rate is offered from October to April if you install a submeter. The submeter is free for heat pumps two tons and larger and also electric resistance heat over 5kW. Otherwise, an installation fee is charged. When you choose electric heat, you know it’s clean, reliable, and safe – and it can also be very efficient. It’s tough to beat the efficiency of a heat pump that not only cools your house in the summer but also heats it in the winter. If you are in the market for a new heating and cooling system, contact us about our heat pump rebate and loan program.

Purchase a new smart thermostat and sign up for the Time of Use rate to receive a \$50 rebate. The Time of Use rate was developed for members who seek opportunities to directly impact their electric bill through their conservation efforts and daily usage habits. Small changes of shifting chores like laundry and dishwashing to off-peak times can help you save on your electric bill.

Water Heating

Water heating accounts for 13 percent of a home’s energy use.

SVE offers special pricing on two lifetime tank warranted water heaters: Marathon and Westinghouse. Choose from a variety of sizes for your home, business, or agricultural application. The water heaters are available at our service centers for \$400 plus applicable tax with participation in the co-op’s load management program. (The special upfront pricing is in lieu of a load management billing credit.) Contact SVE if you would like to purchase one.

Energy Audit and Weatherization Loans

An energy audit is a great tool to help you find energy leaks in your home. A third-party certified audit is available for \$100 plus tax.

The audit includes inspections of insulation, windows, doors, and other areas that may require air sealing measures. The use of infrared camera imaging and blower door testing is also included – those devices provide the most beneficial information during the months of November through March. An energy audit report of the recommended weatherization and energy-saving techniques will be provided to the member.

Loans for weatherization improvement projects are available upon credit approval. Loan funds can be issued up to \$10,000 at a 5 percent interest rate and seven-year repayment plan.

To learn more about these programs, contact Energy Services Specialist Sheila Gross at 800-234-1960 or visit our website, www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-programs/hvac-programs

*Former Alliant Energy customers are not eligible for the heat rate or AC credit.

Congrats

Austin Hoiland of Brandon was the winner of the Green Mountain Grills Davy Crocket pellet smoker with WiFi that we gave away as part of our November Energy Makeover Solutions contest.

Tell Me More!

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

Please contact me about the topics at left.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Account #: _____

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

Mail this form to: Sioux Valley Energy, PO Box 216, Colman, SD 57017



Sioux Valley Energy Board President Allan Weinacht, right, and CEO Tim McCarthy, left, lead a Nov. 12 Special Meeting of the Membership via Zoom.

MEMBERS APPROVE BYLAW CHANGES

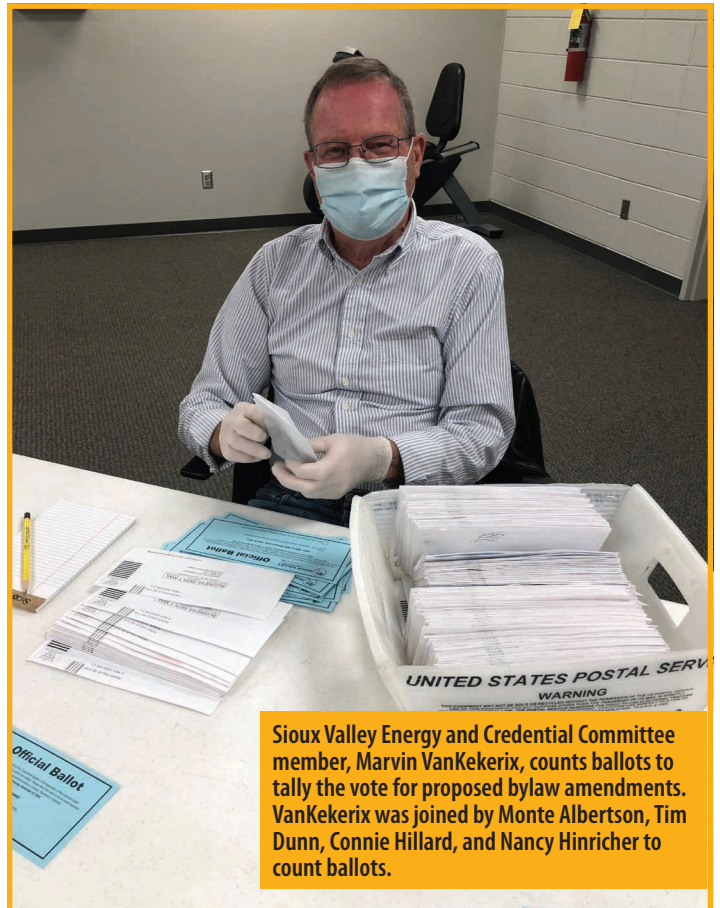
3,122 Ballots Counted

Carrie Vugteveen

Vice President of Public Relations

In October, the Sioux Valley Energy Board of Directors recommended a package of bylaw amendments dealing with issues that came to light during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic. After a special meeting and vote, the proposed bylaw amendments passed with 2,937 'yes' votes and 185 'no' votes. The bylaw amendments will address several cursory changes, along with the following issues:

- Allow SVE to postpone director elections during times of emergency or public health risk until it is safe to meet in person.
- Ensure that each district has representation if a director election is not able to be held in case of emergency or public health risk.
- Provide future flexibility for the Cooperative to conduct director elections via mail in accordance with state law.
- Allow greater use of electronic means of communication, notices, signatures, voting and nominating petitions.
- Allow members' spousal signatures to be considered valid for nominating petitions.
- Expressly confirm that remote or electronic meetings of the membership may be held.
- Adjust the required quorum for a special or annual meeting in compliance with state law.



Sioux Valley Energy and Credential Committee member, Marvin VanKekerix, counts ballots to tally the vote for proposed bylaw amendments. VanKekerix was joined by Monte Albertson, Tim Dunn, Connie Hillard, and Nancy Hinricher to count ballots.



Ice fishing is a pursuit that's enjoyed each winter by South Dakotans of every stripe.

Guys, Gals and Castles on Ice

South Dakotans Stay in Hot Pursuit of Cold Fish

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

What happens if you hold an ice fishing tournament and it turns out there's no ice?

You improvise.

That's what organizers of the annual Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament had to do 10 years ago when Mother Nature refused to cooperate and left them scrambling to come up with a Plan B.

At that time, the tournament was just gaining traction as a main winter attraction for Mobridge. No one dreamed that what started as just a handful of anglers vying to win an ice auger has grown into a field that's capped at 525 two-person teams arriving from 16 different states.

Jeff Jackson is owner of the Wrangler Inn in Mobridge and one of the founders of the tournament marking its 20th anniversary this year. He remembers a bit of panic setting in when hundreds of fishermen were scheduled to descend on Mobridge and the ice on the Missouri River wasn't thick enough to ensure the safety of competitors. Fortunately, the organizing committee had scheduled enough attractions and activities around the one-day tournament that there was plenty for the eager visitors to do.

"We got the word out that the competition was canceled, but 420 out of the 450 teams that were registered showed up anyway," Jackson recalls. "They wanted to come and have a good time."

Those non-angling activities included raffles and prize drawings, an expo featuring all the latest fishing gear, gizmos and gadgets, and according to Jackson, lots of libations.

"People keep coming back year after year," Jackson said, noting that the town's population doubles in the second week of each January. "We've had to limit the number of participants so we have an Ebay auction for three spots that can go as high as \$3,000, and we have another lottery drawing for 26 spots where we usually have up to 800 names."

Instead of a simple ice auger as a grand prize, today the tournament gives away roughly \$225,000 in prizes, including Ice



Hundreds were in attendance at the Dakota Anglers Fishing Expo in Sioux Falls. Photo provided by Dakota Angler.



Castles, four-wheelers, a Polaris Ranger, \$5,000 worth of Scheel's gear, \$3,000 in Runnings gear, clam shacks and more.

The tournament is a boon for Mobridge, bringing an economic impact of \$500,000. According to Jesse Konold, chairman of the town's tourism committee, over the past four years proceeds paid for South Dakota's first climate-controlled indoor fish cleaning station, ADA compliant bathrooms, improvements to the town's rodeo grounds and more than \$100,000 in donations to local non-profits. This year's tournament will be held Jan. 7-9 at the Sherr-Howe Center in Mobridge.

Not Everyone is Hooked

Among the state's population of electric cooperative linemen, there are many who look forward to chasing walleye in winter. In Josh Lemburg's case, the term "chasing" walleye would be close to accurate.

Lemburg, operations foreman at Moreau-Grand Electric who lives in Timber Lake, prefers to stay on the move when he fishes on the ice. Eschewing the "ice castle" approach that calls for staking out a spot and staying put for the weekend, Lemburg uses a portable flip-over shack and keeps his auger close at hand.

"Ice castles are fun, but I'm not afraid to move around and dig holes," he said. "If I'm not catching fish in an hour, I'll 'run-and-gun' til I find them."

Even with his "move-and-groove" approach, Lemburg has failed to get his entire family sold on the merits of ice fishing. Even hooking a lunker walleye didn't

convince his son to swear a life-long oath to ice fishing.

Several years ago, Lemburg took his dad and his elementary-age kids, Landon and Kendal, out on the ice. His dad and daughter were in one shack and he and Landon were in the other. After a few hours, just as Landon was getting bored and ready to call it a day, a walleye snatched his bait.

"Landon had his line in the water and I saw a big mark on my Vexilar," Lemburg recalls. "I told him he had a big fish on the line but he just gave me his pole and said he wasn't interested. I kept trying to get him to reel it in, but he kept giving me the pole back. Finally, I got the fish to the surface I looked in the hole and there was nothing but fish. My dad reached down in the water to his armpits and it was a 12-pound walleye."

Brent Reilley is an electrician at Selby-based Cam Wal Electric, which serves the Mobridge area. Over the past 20 years, he has only missed the tournament twice - once when he had to decide between ice fishing and a week in Cancun.

He and his wife, Tandy, have actually both claimed titles at the prestigious Mobridge tournament. One particular year the husband-and-wife duo were on separate teams. Brent was on the first-place team and Tandy and her partner placed second. But Tandy believes she has her



Above, hundreds attend the Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament each year. Below, "ice castles" bring comfort and convenience to the sport.



husband beat: her second-place finish was clinched by reeling in a 25-inch walleye while she was six months pregnant.

The two have always had pretty good luck with the raffles and random prize drawings as well. Tandy won a side-by-side one year and a family friend has won two four-wheelers.

"We just love being outdoors in the winter when there's nothing else to do," Reilley said. "You can get outside and enjoy the fresh air. It gets cold, but it beats sitting inside and it's something great to do with the family. My son is addicted. He'd love it if all he could do is fish all day."

SVE Hosts Legislative Forum

Sioux Valley Energy hosted a virtual legislative forum Dec. 2 in conjunction with Southeastern Electric Cooperative.

About a dozen legislators attended the meeting. Also participating in the forum were representatives of Southeastern Electric Cooperative in Marion, S.D., East River Electric Power Cooperative in Madison, S.D., and the South Dakota Rural Electric Association in Pierre.

Presenters provided an overview of the electric co-op network; offered information about the co-op's energy portfolio, including beneficial electrification efforts and renewable energy; explained the role of system planning and electric infrastructure investment in economic and community development; and highlighted a few major electric system projects in various legislative districts.

The South Dakota legislative session begins at noon on Jan. 12 in Pierre and the Minnesota Legislature convenes Jan. 5 in Saint Paul.

Area South Dakota Legislators

Dist.	Senator	Representatives	
4	John Wiik, Big Stone City John.Wiik@sdlegislature.gov	Fred Deutsch, Florence Fred.Deutsch@sdlegislature.gov	John Mills, Volga John.Mills@sdlegislature.gov
7	V.J. Smith, Brookings VJ.Smith@sdlegislature.gov	Tim Reed, Brookings Tim.Reed@sdlegislature.gov	Larry Tidemann, Brookings Larry.Tidemann@sdlegislature.gov
8	Casey Crabtree, Madison Casey.Crabtree@sdlegislature.gov	Randy Gross, Elkton Randy.Gross@sdlegislature.gov	Marli Wiese, Madison Marli.Wiese@sdlegislature.gov
9	Wayne Steinhauer, Hartford Wayne.Steinhauer@sdlegislature.gov	Rhonda Milstead, Hartford Rhonda.Milstead@sdlegislature.gov	Bethany Soye, Sioux Falls Bethany.Soye@sdlegislature.gov
10	Margaret Sutton, Sioux Falls Margaret.Sutton@sdlegislature.gov	Doug Barthel, Sioux Falls Doug.Barthel@sdlegislature.gov	Steven Haugaard, Sioux Falls Steven.Haugaard@sdlegislature.gov
11	Jim Stalzer, Sioux Falls Jim.Stalzer@sdlegislature.gov	Chris Karr, Sioux Falls Chris.Karr@sdlegislature.gov	Mark Willadsen, Sioux Falls Mark.Willadsen@sdlegislature.gov
12	R. Blake Curd, Sioux Falls Blake.Curd@sdlegislature.gov	Arch Beal, Sioux Falls Arch.Beal@sdlegislature.gov	Greg Jamison, Sioux Falls Greg.Jamison@sdlegislature.gov
13	Jack Kolbeck, Sioux Falls Jack.Kolbeck@sdlegislature.gov	Sue Peterson, Sioux Falls Sue.Peterson@sdlegislature.gov	Richard Thomason, Sioux Falls Richard.Thomason@sdlegislature.gov
14	Larry Zikmund, Sioux Falls Larry.Zikmund@sdlegislature.gov	Erin Healy, Sioux Falls Erin.Healy@sdlegislature.gov	Taylor Rehfeldt, Sioux Falls Taylor.Rehfeldt@sdlegislature.gov
15	Reynold Nesiba, Sioux Falls Reynold.Nesiba@sdlegislature.gov	Linda K. Duba, Sioux Falls Linda.Duba@sdlegislature.gov	Jamie Smith, Sioux Falls Jamie.Smith@sdlegislature.gov
25	Marsha Symens, Dell Rapids Marsha.Symens@sdlegislature.gov	Jon Hansen, Dell Rapids Jon.Hansen@sdlegislature.gov	Tom Pischke, Dell Rapids Tom.Pischke@sdlegislature.gov

Area Minnesota Legislators

District 22 Senator	District 22A Representative
Bill Weber, Luverne sen.bill.weber@senate.mn	Joe Schomacker, Luverne rep.joe.schomacker@house.mn

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Did You Know?

Sioux Valley Energy has retired (paid) \$39.7 million to members since 1939 – \$2.2 million in 2019 alone. Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues (called margins) are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.

\$39.7 MILLION SINCE 1939

\$2.2 MILLION IN 2019

Hartford Named 'Small Community of the Year'

The Town of Hartford was recently selected by the state of South Dakota as the 2020 "Small Community of the Year." Historically, the award is presented during the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) annual conference in the spring, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference was canceled. Sioux Valley Energy is the power provider and a community partner to Hartford and the surrounding area.

"The Hartford community has a lot to be proud of," said SD Governor Kristi Noem. "Hartford has revitalized their downtown, laid plans for a new wastewater treatment facility, and made other strides in economic development and quality of life. Hartford's recognition as 'Small Community of the Year' is well-earned and well-deserved."

"It is an absolute honor that Hartford has been chosen as the Small Community of the Year for 2020 in the great state of South Dakota," said Hartford Mayor, Jeremy Menning. "Our citizens, our stakeholders, and our community leaders have worked exceptionally hard to make Hartford the very best it can be. The undeniable spirit of a 'can do' attitude thrives in our community and this award belongs to everyone here. We can all be proud of the impact we've made on building a wonderful community with a rich history and lofty aspirations for the future. As long as we continue to work together, support each other, and celebrate each other's successes, I am confident we will continue to do amazing things in Hartford."



Hartford was named the South Dakota 'Small Community of the Year' by the Governor's Office of Economic Development.

Capital Credit Retirement Notice

When you signed up to receive electric service from Sioux Valley Energy, you became a member of an electric cooperative. While investor-owned utilities return a portion of any profits back to their investors, electric cooperatives allocate excess revenue to members as capital credits, and retire – or pay – them when the co-op's financial condition permits.

The Sioux Valley Energy Board of Directors has approved a **\$1.98 million general capital credit retirement**. The cooperative will be retiring the balance of the **1995** capital credits along with a portion of the **1996** and **2019** allocations. Individuals and organizations who were members of SVE in those years will be receiving a portion of their capital credits. The amount of each allocation and retirement is based on how much individual members paid the co-op for electric service during that period. Your capital credit has been applied to this month's bill as a credit.

If you have questions about your capital credit retirement, contact our Member Services Department at 1-800-234-1960.



MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

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

November 27-December 27

Trees and Trains at the South Dakota Railroad Museum, Weekends, Contact the Museum for Days and Times. Hill City, SD
605-574-9000

December 4-25

Fort Sisseton Drive Thru Christmas Light Display, Fort Sisseton Historic State Park, Lake City, SD
605-448-5474

December 5-January 1

Custer State Park Festival of Trees, Custer, SD
605-255-4515

December 5-January 6

Garden Glow, McCrory Gardens Education & Visitor Center, Evenings From 5-8 p.m., Brookings, SD
605-688-6707

December 16-19

Lakota Nation Invitational, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

December 17-20, 27

Twilight Flights, Strawbale Winery, Renner, SD,
605-543-5071

December 19

Cirque Dream Story, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

January 9

Dakota Ridgetop Toy Show, Codington County Extension Complex, Watertown, SD
712-261-0316



Black Hills Stock Show and Rodeo, Jan. 29-Feb. 6, 2021

January 14-17, 21-24

Elf The Musical, Area Community Theatre, Mitchell, SD
605-996-9137

January 15-17

BH Rapid Winter Classic Indoor Soccer Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

January 16

Annual Burning Beetle Festival, 5 p.m., Pageant Hill, Custer, SD
605-673-2244

January 18-25

Chinook Days, Spearfish, SD
605-717-9294

January 29-February 6

Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
605-335-3861

January 29-30

Pro Snocross Races, Days of '76 Rodeo Grounds, Deadwood, SD
605-578-1976

January 29-31

Winterfest, Lead, SD
605-335-3861

February 5-6

Mardi Gras Weekend, Main Street, Deadwood, SD
605-578-1976

February 10-13

Watertown Winter Farm Show, Codington County Extension Complex, Watertown, SD
605-886-5814

February 18-25

Twelfth Annual Black Hills Film Festival, Virtual,
605-574-9454

February 20-27

SD State High School Wrestling Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD

March 13-14

Philip Area Annual 2021 Gun Show, American Legion Hall, Philip, SD
605-859-2280

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.