



# Cooperative Connections



Have a Positive Attitude  
# Attitude Determines Direction

Try Your Best  
# Goals

Work Hard  
# Save the Excuses

Grade Scale  
A = 94-100  
B = 86-93  
C = 78-85  
D = 70-77  
F = 69↓

Buddy Up

**Electricity in the classroom**

Page 8-9

**People behind the power**

Pages 12-13

*Jennifer Gross has educated thousands of students about electricity through the Cooperatives in the Classroom program.*

## SVE Board of Directors Approve 2021 Work Plan and Budget

# SERVING OUR MEMBERS. ALWAYS.



**Tim McCarthy, GM/CEO**

[tim.mccarthy@siouxvalleyenergy.com](mailto:tim.mccarthy@siouxvalleyenergy.com)

Each year the Sioux Valley Energy Board of Directors spends time with the cooperative's strategic leadership team to review and consider Sioux Valley Energy's work plan and budget for the coming year. The Board met right before Christmas and approved the budget, which totals an estimated \$93.6 million in operating expenses for 2021.

This year's work plan and budget truly reflect Sioux Valley Energy's mission of "Serving our Members. Always." While the world looks different these days, and we continue to adjust, our plan is to focus on our members and the communities we serve. We will remain committed to improving our system reliability as we enter year two of our current work plan, which addresses our aging electric system. In addition, SVE plans to continue offering incentive programs and rebates to help members have more control over their energy use. At the same time, we will accelerate the exploration of opportunities and impacts presented within the Beneficial Electrification (BE) movement, including the development of a dedicated BE department here at the co-op.

Once again, our system improvement plan is a top priority in 2021 to ensure reliable electric service to meet our members' growing needs. The capital budget for 2021 is set at \$19 million. As our system and membership continue to grow, our resource needs continue to expand, resulting in additional human resource requirements.

Existing rate levels are not sufficient to meet our financial requirements at the budgeted expense levels. Even after adopting cost-cutting measures in the 2021 budget, our estimated revenues are approximately \$530,000 short. We had about \$2.5 million in deferred revenue at the end of 2020 and anticipate using a portion of that to meet the loan requirements in 2021. This means there will not be a rate increase this year, but we will need to continue to evaluate revenue requirements and rate impacts going forward.

Our 2021 Work Plan and Budget initiatives have been designed to meet Sioux Valley Energy's system replacement plans, growth, member initiatives, and challenges facing the electric cooperative industry. Through it all, we will strive to provide our members with system reliability, affordable rates, and programs and services to meet their needs.

All of us here at Sioux Valley Energy wish you the best as we move into the new year. Our pledge to you is to continue living out our mission of "Serving our Members. Always." each and every day. On a side note, please take some time to look over the updated bylaws, which are inserted into this month's magazine. The membership approved several changes and additions during the recent "Special Meeting" of the membership.

# Sioux Valley Energy

## Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 497-440)

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(3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)  
Sioux Valley Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## SVE Relaunches Community Connections Volunteer Program

Does your community need a helping hand?

Sioux Valley Energy employees are ready to help! An employee volunteer program called 'Community Connections' was designed to allow employees to *"Be the light in our community through the spirit of volunteering, community service, and helping those in need."*

To be considered for the SVE Community Connections program, contact **Chinelle** at 800-234-1960. Please answer the following questions before you call:



1. Are you a Sioux Valley Energy member?
2. What type of service project is it?
3. How does it help the community?
4. How many volunteers would you need to complete the service project?
5. How many hours would be required?
6. What is the proposed date(s) of the service project?

Examples of the SVE Community Connections program include volunteering to wrap Christmas gifts, raking leaves for those who are unable to, serving meals to seniors and much more. When employees volunteer through the Community Connections program, they are required to follow the Cooperative's pandemic response plan guidelines such as masking and social distancing when needed.

## #CommittedToCommunity

Sioux Valley Energy employees worked to spread Christmas cheer at the Children's Home Society this holiday season by raising \$1,500. The Cooperative also matched the employees' gift with a \$1,000 donation, for a total of \$2,500. Those funds were used to purchase 79 sets of pajamas and \$1,500 towards an activity fund for the kids.

According to CHS Development Director, Rick Weber, "the majority of children we serve in all our different programs are victims of abuse or neglect."

For more information on how to help, contact the Children's Home Society of Sioux Falls at (605) 334-6004 or log onto: <https://chssd.org/support>.



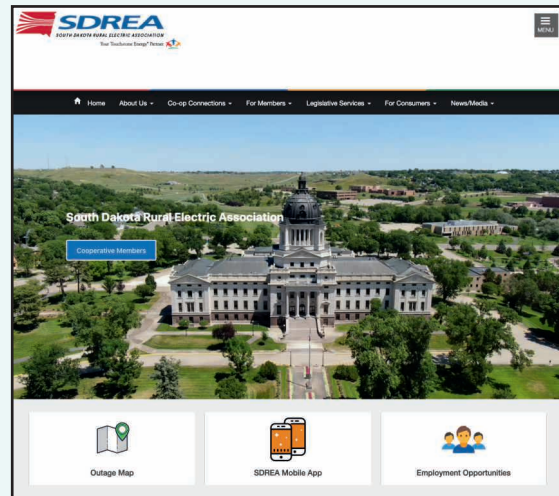
# Lighten Your Laundry Load

Laundry isn't a task that many people relish, but if the process can be tweaked to save money, conserve electricity and prolong the life of your clothes, some minor adjustments may be worth your time. Here are some suggestions from Consumer Reports.

- Opt for cold water. Hot water is only needed for laundering oily stains, cloth diapers and sheets and towels used by a family member who has been sick.
- Use high-efficiency detergent for front-loaders, high-efficiency top-loaders and where otherwise recommended by the machine's manufacturer. Conventional detergents create more suds, which can cause the washer to repeatedly rinse laundry, wasting water and time.
- Increase the spin speed to extract more water from your laundry, reducing dryer time. Shake clothes out before transferring them from the washer to the dryer to avoid wrinkles.
- Clean the dryer's lint screen before every load. This improves air circulation and prevents fires. Dryer sheets can leave a film on the filter, so if you use them, scrub the filter with a brush monthly.
- Clean the dryer duct regularly to increase airflow, which dries your clothes faster and prevents fires.
- Clean the dryer's moisture sensors. Dryer sheets can leave residue on the sensors that affects their ability to gauge how dry laundry is. Check the owner's manual for instructions on how to clean them.
- Dry similar items together. Don't mix heavy cottons with lightweight fabrics. Wash and dry towels and sheets separately, for example.
- Use the automatic cycle instead of timed drying. If the moisture sensors are working properly, the automatic cycle avoids over-drying, which shortens the life span of clothes and can shrink them.
- And for the least expensive, most efficient method, dry your laundry on a clothesline or use a drying rack indoors. This approach takes a bit more time but is gentler on your clothing, keeping it nicer looking for longer - a savings in itself.

## 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](http://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



**"The Electric Fence is Unsafe!"**

**Gabbie Eichmann, 11 years old**

Gabbie is a resident of rural Canistota. She is the child of Jeremy and Melanie Eichmann, members of Southeastern 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.

# Recipes to Power Up Your Day

## Bacon and Egg Lasagna

12 uncooked lasagna noodles	or crumbled
1/3 c. bacon drippings (or oil)	1 lb. bacon/turkey bacon/sausage, cut up
1/3 flour	1 c. chopped onions
1/4 t. pepper	1/2 t. salt
2 c. Swiss cheese	4 c. milk
2 T. parsley	1/2 c. grated Parmesan cheese
12 eggs, hard cooked, sliced	

Cook lasagna noodles per directions on package. In large skillet cook bacon until crisp (or cook other meat of choice). Reserve 1/3 c. bacon drippings (or use oil) and cook the onion until tender. Add the flour, salt and pepper. Stir until smooth and bubbly. Gradually add the milk, cook until mixture boils and thickens. Stir continuously. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 9x13 pan. Spoon a small amount of the sauce onto the bottom of the pan. Layer the noodles, sauce, cheese and bacon (or other meat). Pour the remainder of the sauce over the last layer and sprinkle with the Parmesan cheese. Bake for 25-30 minutes or until thoroughly heated.

**Kristine Shaffer, Lennox, SD**

## Apple Cranberry Muffins

1-3/4 c. brown sugar	1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 c. vegetable oil	2 eggs
2 c. flour	1 tsp. vanilla
1 tsp. baking soda	2 c. thinly sliced apples
1 tsp. cinnamon	1/2 lb. cranberries, halved
1 tsp. nutmeg	1/2 c. nuts, chopped

Cream oil and sugar; add eggs and vanilla and beat well. Sift flour, baking soda and salt together and add to mixture. Add spices next. Stir in apples, nuts and cranberries. For Streusel: 1/2 c. flour; 1/3 c. brown sugar; 3 tbsp. butter. Cut butter into flour and sugar until crumbly. Pour into muffin tins and sprinkle with Streusel. Bake at 400 degrees for 20-25 minutes.

**Ruth E. Schilberg, Viborg, SD**

## Breakfast Bread Pudding

Butter	1/2 teaspoon salt
2/3 cup creamy peanut butter, divided	4 cups cubed brioche or challah bread, cut into 3/4-inch cubes
2 eggs	2/3 cup pure maple syrup
1/2 cup granulated sugar	1/3 cup crushed peanuts
2/3 cup milk	Powdered sugar, for garnish
1-1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract	

Heat oven to 350 F. Butter four 4-ounce ramekins. In bowl, mix 1/3 cup peanut butter, eggs, sugar, milk, vanilla and salt. Toss bread cubes in mixture until thoroughly coated. Divide evenly among prepared dishes. Bake until custard is set in middle and tops are golden, about 35-40 minutes. If tops of bread brown too quickly, cover ramekins loosely with aluminum foil. In small saucepan over low heat, combine remaining peanut butter and maple syrup until thoroughly warmed. To serve, drizzle ramekins with maple-peanut sauce and garnish with chopped peanuts and powdered sugar. Substitution: Whole wheat rolls may be used in place of brioche or challah bread.

**culinary.net**

## Baked Eggs

Line muffin pans with 2 wafer thin slices of chicken, beef or pork. Break an egg into each cup. Add a 3/4 tsp. half-and-half and a bit of butter. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake at 400 degrees for about 15 minutes, or until eggs are cooked to desired firmness.

**Elaine Rowitt, Sturgis, SD**

Please send your favorite seafood 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.

# Heat Pumps: Efficient, Smart, Green



**Sheila Gross**

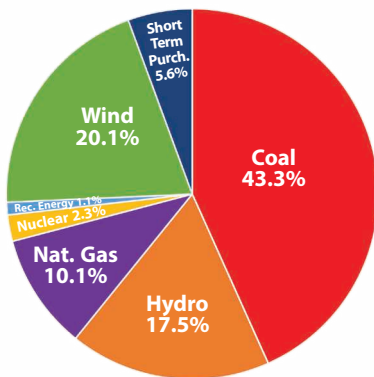
Energy Services Specialist

Heating and cooling use the largest chunk of your home energy dollars. When you choose electric heat, you know it's clean, reliable, safe – and it can also be very efficient. It's tough to beat the efficiency of an electric heat pump that not only cools your home in the summer but also heats it in the winter.

An air-source heat pump uses air from outside the home to heat or cool inside. Your heat pump will replace the central

air conditioning equipment and, depending upon the efficiency of the unit selected, will heat your home when the outside temperature gets as low as zero degrees F. Your heating system has a back-up heat source that will be utilized when temperatures get below your heat pump's capability. It is still efficient because it's easier to pull heat out of the air than make heat. A geothermal heat pump offers even greater efficiencies since it uses the consistent temperature of the soil below the frost line. It uses fluid-filled coils installed underground to move heat. In the summer, the system pulls heat from the home and transfers it to the soil.

About 38% of the electricity generated in our region comes from renewable energy, and that number is growing.



Beneficial electrification is a concept that considers these factors: creating a more robust resilient grid; improving product quality and consumer quality of life; saving consumers money over time, benefiting the environment, and reducing emissions. Beneficial electrification encourages

choosing equipment powered by electricity that has historically been powered by fossil fuels. When this occurs, members benefit from reduced exposure to emissions or fumes, no open flames, quieter operation, and more efficient appliances. As electric utilities incorporate more renewable resources into their generation portfolios and make existing generation technologies cleaner, less fossil fuels are used to generate electricity. Heat pump technologies are continuing to get more efficient, and the electric grid will get greener, unlike the propane and natural gas industry. Sioux Valley Energy's incentives for 2021, along with our special electric heat rate, make choosing a heat pump a great value!

## 2021 Heat Pump Comparisons

Compare SVE's electric heat rate 6.35 cents/kWh given October through April billing cycles for an air-source heat pump:

- 96% propane furnace – you would have to purchase propane at 68 cents/gallon to be equivalent
- 96% natural gas furnace – you would have to purchase natural gas at 74 cents/therm to be equivalent  
*(comparisons based on air-source heat pump standard rating of 8.2 HSPF and utilized most during October, November, March, April)*

Compare SVE's electric heat rate 6.35 cents/kWh given October through April billing cycles for a geothermal heat pump:

- 96% propane furnace – purchase propane at 43 cents/gallon to be equivalent
- 96% natural gas furnace – purchase natural gas at 47 cents/therm to be equivalent  
*(comparisons based on geothermal heat pump standard COP rating of 3.8)*

*Whole home air-to-air and geothermal heat pumps must be a minimum of 2 ton to qualify for rebates. Rebate eligibility is once every 10 years per account. Rebate cannot exceed the cost of equipment. Former Alliant Energy customers/territory are eligible for heat pump rebates but not the electric heat rate.*

## Tell Me More!

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

**Please contact me about the topics listed to the left.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

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

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



Volunteers In Mercy Coordinator Luann Bosma stands in front of the group's thrift store on Main Street in Pipestone, Minnesota. Volunteers in Mercy uses funds generated from their thrift store, donations from other groups and Operation Round Up® grants to assist those in need in Pipestone, Rock, Nobles and Murray counties in Minnesota and Brookings and Moody counties in South Dakota.

## Group Uses Operation Round Up® Funds to Help Those in Need

# PROVIDING MERCIFUL SERVICE

Volunteers in Mercy, which serves those in need throughout Pipestone, Rock, Nobles and Murray counties in Minnesota and Brookings and Moody counties in South Dakota, was recently awarded a Sioux Valley Energy Operation Round Up grant.

The organization's goal is to help low-income residents as well as those impacted by family crises, abuse, health, and other issues. More than 40 social agencies, healthcare facilities, and schools refer individuals to Volunteers in Mercy.

Luann Bosma, coordinator for the Pipestone, Minnesota-based group, works to connect those in need, ranging from expectant mothers and newborns to seniors, with necessary resources.

Individuals assisted by Volunteers in Mercy may find themselves going through abuse, divorce, family death, health issues, job loss, depression or addiction, and a variety of challenges in between, said Bosma.

Volunteers in Mercy counts on people from various faith communities to help meet the referral needs of individuals. Often, this includes transportation to medical appointments and recovery residences.

Administrative expenses and salaries for Volunteers in Mercy are paid by the Christian Reformed Church Classis Minnkota. This allows donation dollars to go directly to those in need.

The group uses funds generated from its thrift store on Pipestone's Main Street and donations from other groups to provide services.

For more information on the Volunteers in Mercy program or services they provide, call 507-215-0155.

Volunteers in Mercy was one of several organizations to receive a donation through the Sioux Valley Energy Operation Round Up

program last year. In total, more than \$116,000 was awarded to 71 organizations in 2020 through Operation Round Up.

Applications for funding are reviewed quarterly (March, June, September and December) by the Operation Round Up Board of Trustees. All applications received by the 20th of the month preceding a Board meeting will be considered at the next meeting. For example, an application received at the Sioux Valley Energy office by February 20 will be reviewed for funding at the March Board meeting.

## Operation Round Up®

The circle of giving — you give and you receive. That is the philosophy behind Sioux Valley Energy's Operation Round Up program. Since the year 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. Many Sioux Valley Energy employees also help by deducting a small amount from their paychecks.



Download an application for the program at <https://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-community/operation-roundup>.



Jennifer Gross teaches the fundamentals of electricity to students at Warner Elementary. Photo by Ben Dunsmoor.

## ENLIGHTENING STUDENTS

### Teachers, Co-ops Take Energy Education to the Classroom

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@srea.coop

Jennifer Gross doesn't know it for a fact, but she has a sneaking suspicion she has saved someone's life. Maybe more than once.

Gross is not a nurse, or a doctor, or a firefighter or an emergency medical technician. She serves as the education and outreach coordinator at Madison-based East River Electric and oversees the organization's Co-ops in the Classroom program. In that role over the past five years, Gross has instructed thousands of students on the importance of electric safety.

She goes into the classroom and covers a wide range of concepts in less than an hour, including how electricity is generated, how it can be conserved and how potentially dangerous it can be. She's been accused of speaking at the speed of light because there's so much for the students to grasp.

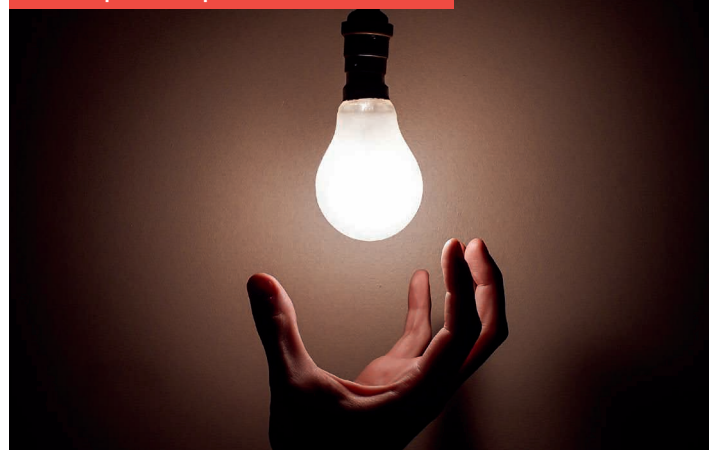
"Our follow-up evaluations sometimes show that I talk too quickly," Gross said with a chuckle. "But there's a lot to cover, so many things they need to know that could keep them safe and free from harm. These are things they're going to learn and use for the rest of their lives. It's a lot to pack into an hour, but it's important information."

Gross is one of many cooperative employees across the state who teach students the importance of understanding the benefits and potential dangers of electricity and how to use it wisely. In fact, member and community education is one of the Seven Cooperative Principles that guide South Dakota's electric cooperatives.

The classroom program that Gross delivers includes how electrical power is generated, how it's transmitted, how it's conserved and how use it safely. The program also includes information that distinguishes electric cooperatives from investor-owned and municipal electric utilities. And one of those differences is a commitment to education and youth leadership development.

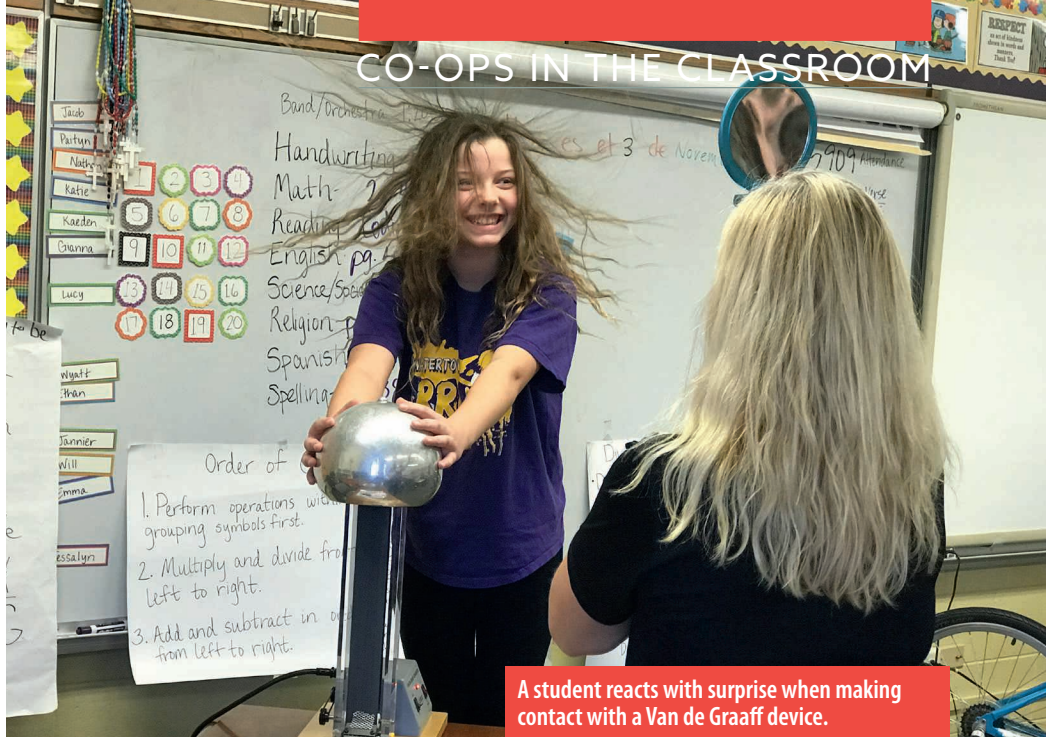
"We teach them that there are all kinds of cooperative businesses out there – food co-ops, clothing co-ops, housing co-ops, marketing co-ops and others – and we're here to do more than

Students learn incandescent light bulbs cost more to operate compared to LEDs.





**“These are things they’re going to learn and use for the rest of their lives. It’s a lot to pack into an hour, but it’s important information.”**  
 - Jennifer Gross



A student reacts with surprise when making contact with a Van de Graaff device.

just provide electrical power. We’re here to deliver this information because we care about the welfare and well-being of our members, and we’re always here for them if they have questions about electricity.”

Gross was a social worker before she joined East River as support staff in the engineering department more than 10 years ago. Since taking over the Co-ops in the Schools program, she has interacted with many primary and secondary educators who also see the need to teach the fundamentals of electricity.

One of those is Jami Heinrich, a fifth-grade teacher at Warner Elementary School where Gross recently delivered her presentation. She has seen how students respond to discussions about electricity and see the direct application to their everyday lives.

“It’s something that’s always around them and they deal with all the time,” Heinrich

said. “It’s good to get them the information they need to make better choices. When Jennifer was talking about insulators, one of my students brought up that his grandparents’ cell phone chargers were worn out and you could see the wires. He said, ‘So, this is a bad idea.’ It brought up a good discussion in the classroom. Safety around electricity is definitely a priority, and teaching children about it will lead them to make safer choices.”

South Dakota’s electric cooperatives extend their education outreach well beyond elementary school classrooms. The cooperatives have invested in an electrical safety demonstration trailer that makes its way around the state not only to instruct linemen but also to attend public events and show the various components of a grid-based power delivery system. During the demonstration, facilitators send an electrical current through a hotdog, grapefruit and tree branch to show how much destruction unhar- nessed and mishandled electricity can do.

To view a video of the safety demonstration trailer, visit [youtube.com/watch?v=FBzB1b-BYsH0&t=55s](https://youtube.com/watch?v=FBzB1b-BYsH0&t=55s).

Cooperatives have also supported programs such as the Washington D.C. Youth Tour and the Youth Excursion

that teach high school students not only about electricity but also some of the political considerations surrounding the electric utility industry and the history of the country’s rural electric cooperative movement.

Many elementary and secondary school educators throughout the state – including Gross – have attended the annual teacher education seminar sponsored by the Lignite Energy Council, which attracts 130 participants from Minnesota, Montana, South Dakota and North Dakota. The four-day program takes place at Bismarck State College and offers professional development credits for attendees.

The seminar focuses on how lignite is mined and used to produce electricity for homes, farms and businesses. In addition, the seminar covers lignite’s economic impact on the region, as well as important environmental issues affecting the lignite industry. Since 1986, more than 3,400 teachers have attended the seminar.

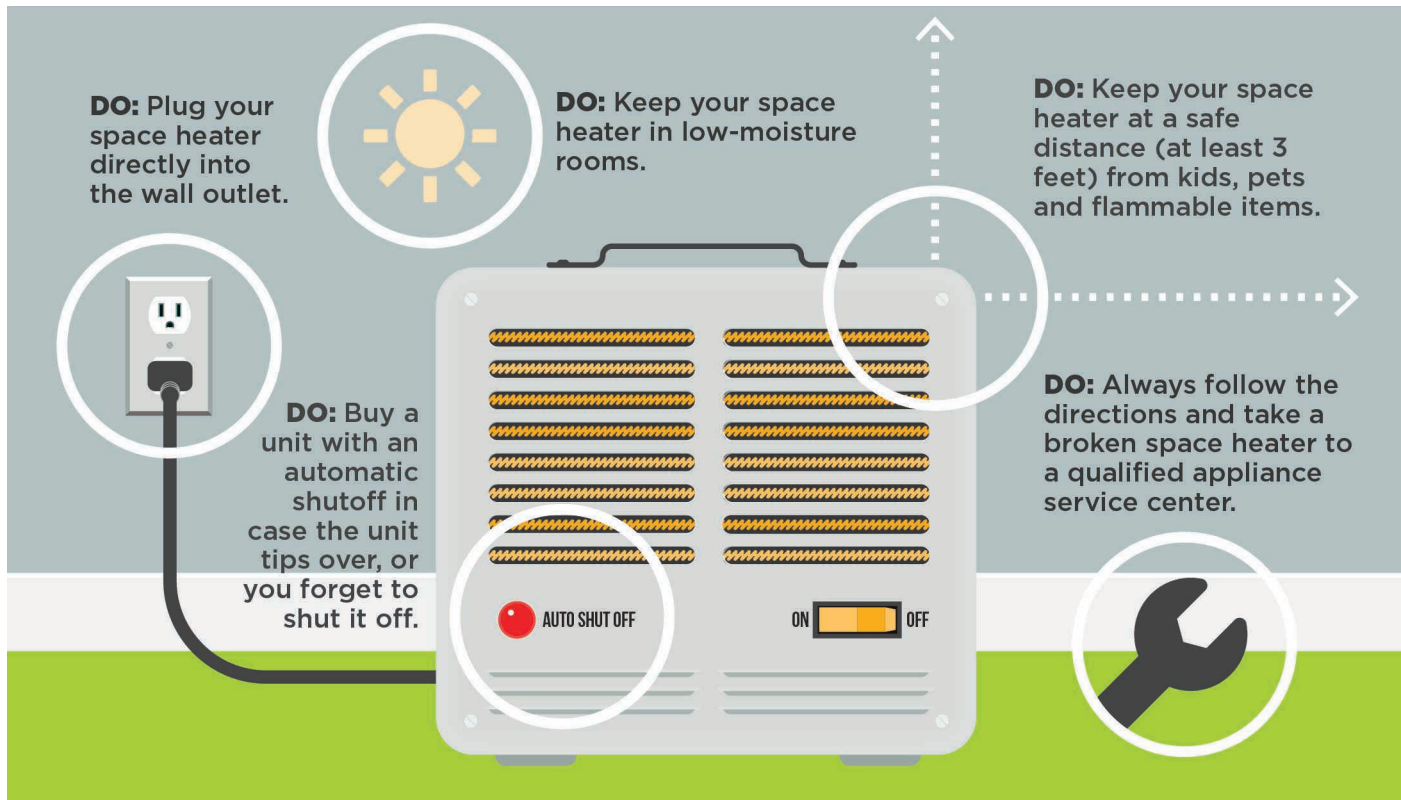
Roger Lawien, director of member services at Moreau-Grand Electric in Timber Lake, underscores the importance of electric education: “Member education is a vital part of what we do as co-ops. We have a program we call ‘Neon Leon,’ and one day after a safety demonstration a woman came up with her two boys and said, ‘I just wanted to thank you for what you do here. Because of what you taught my boys at last year’s demonstration, my husband is alive.’ That really shows how important it is.”



Science is at the center of learning about how electricity is generated and used.

# Space Heater Safety Tips

If you plan to use a space heater this winter, make sure to follow safety guidelines. Use the tips below to keep your home safe.



**DO:** Plug your space heater directly into the wall outlet.

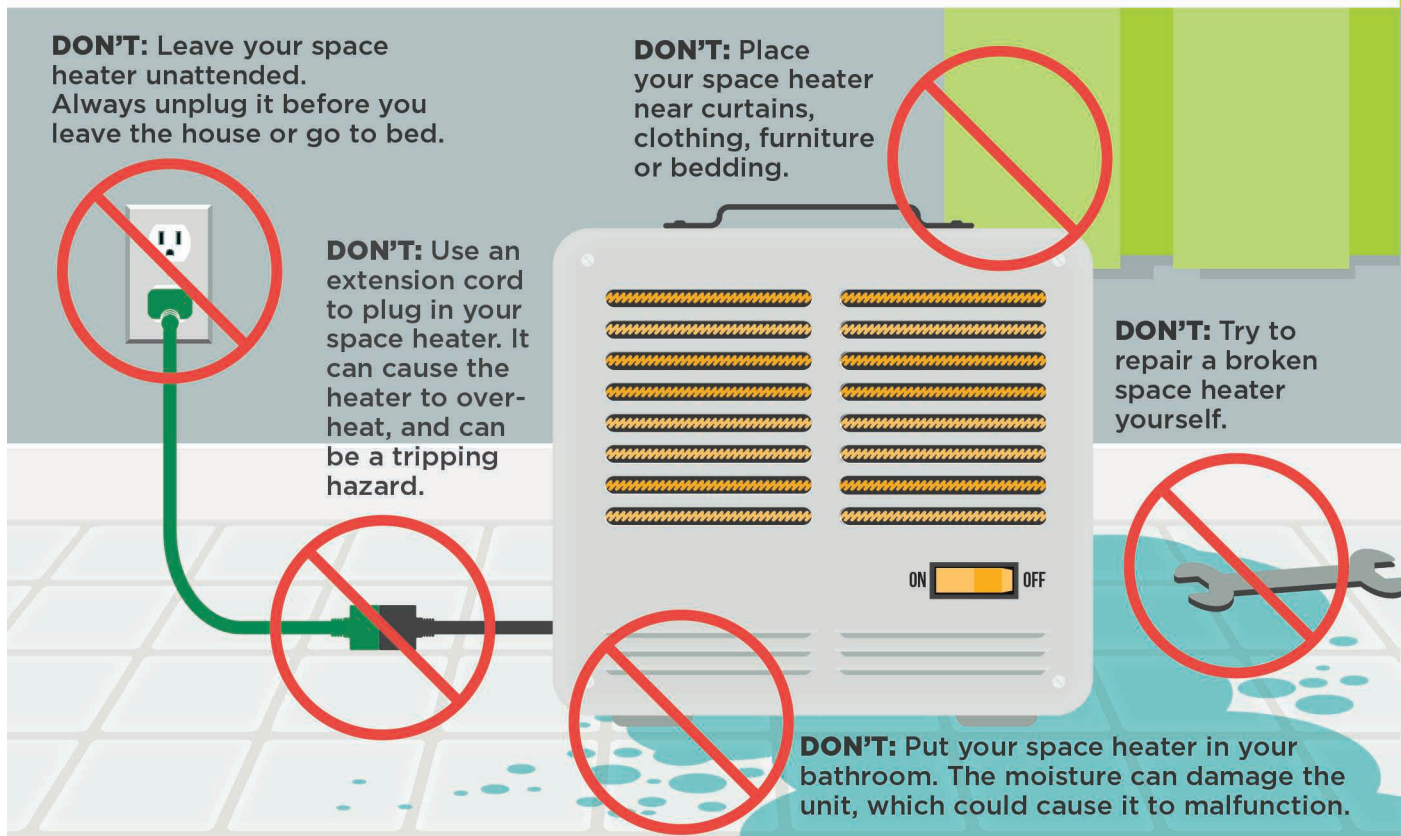
**DO:** Buy a unit with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over, or you forget to shut it off.

**DO:** Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms.

**DO:** Keep your space heater at a safe distance (at least 3 feet) from kids, pets and flammable items.

**DO:** Always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center.

**Labels on heater:** AUTO SHUT OFF, ON, OFF



**DON'T:** Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.

**DON'T:** Use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to over-heat, and can be a tripping hazard.

**DON'T:** Place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.

**DON'T:** Try to repair a broken space heater yourself.

**DON'T:** Put your space heater in your bathroom. The moisture can damage the unit, which could cause it to malfunction.

**Labels on heater:** ON, OFF

# Sioux Valley Energy Employees Recognized for Years of Service

The Cooperative recently recognized 22 employees for their years of service milestone.

General Manager/CEO, Tim McCarthy, thanked them for their dedication and commitment to Sioux Valley Energy. “These

employees not only embrace the Cooperative’s mission of “Serving Our Members. Always”; they live it everyday. We are so grateful for their service and for their hard work to ensure our members receive exceptional service.”



**Joan Wangberg**  
35 Years



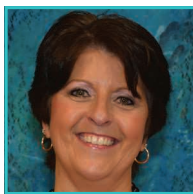
**Paul Anderson**  
30 Years



**Tony Remund**  
25 Years



**Terry Ebright**  
20 years



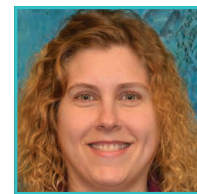
**Dana Foster**  
20 years



**Reggie Gassman**  
20 years



**Gwen Larsen**  
20 years



**Eliza Barrón**  
15 years



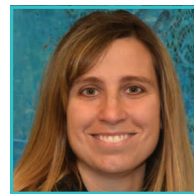
**Shawn Bruns**  
15 years



**Steve Dvergsten**  
15 years



**Jake Dybedahl**  
15 years



**Amy Voelker**  
15 years



**Michele Wanner**  
15 years



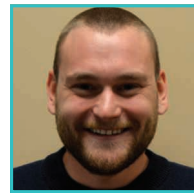
**Cody Fritz**  
10 years



**Paul Schamber**  
10 years



**Tim Durst**  
5 years



**Brian Meyer**  
5 years



**Michael Oines**  
5 years



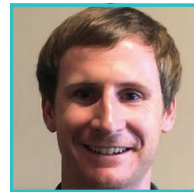
**Jager Rus**  
5 years



**Nick Smith**  
5 years



**Parker Kuchta**  
1 year



**Jordan Long**  
1 year



Antelope Valley Station control room operator J.D. Wolf sits at the control center where he monitors the facility operations.

# The People Behind the Power

## Power Providers Take Pragmatic Approach to Fuel Use

### Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

With every change in presidential administrations, there comes a predictable shift in policy positions surrounding coal and the fossil fuels used to generate the electricity that drives the country's economic engine and allows for the conveniences of modern life.

The Obama Administration, for instance, waged what many described as a “war on coal.” It pursued an agenda that focused on imposing stringent regulations designed to push the power generation market toward renewable resources and eliminate fossil fuels. It was an effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and accelerate an emerging renewable industry.

The next administration followed with President Donald Trump declaring an end to the “war on coal” during his first State of the Union address. President Trump signed executive orders revoking various rules regarding carbon emissions enacted by his predecessor. He vowed to revive the coal mining industry and “put those miners back to work.”

And with yet another change in political

power, President Joe Biden has started the pendulum swinging back in the other direction. His energy approach, which he dubs the “Clean Energy Revolution and Environmental Justice Plan” involves reinstating many of the Obama-era policies including restrictions on oil and gas leases and investing \$400 billion in clean energy technology and innovation over the next 10 years. It also includes pushing the ag sector toward net-zero emissions.

While these policies play out in the political arena, those who bear the responsibility of actually generating the power the country needs have their own perspective. Working diligently and silently in the background of the high-profile political battles pitting climate change activists against climate change deniers are thousands who see these issues as a lot less political and much more practical. Pundits and ideologues suit up each day to argue over policy. Power generators suit up every day to keep the lights on 24/7 at rates people can afford.

For South Dakota's electric cooperative members, that responsibility falls on the staff, management and board members of Basin Electric Power Cooperative (Basin Electric). Owned by the members it serves, Basin Electric generates electricity

for 140 transmission and distribution co-ops in nine states. The massive power co-op has professionals in place to deal with the political considerations of power production, but most are concerned with keeping the ions flowing toward three million homes, businesses, farms and ranches across the region.

For those individuals, policy decisions have real consequences in terms of how they carry out their work. For example, while some lawmakers roll out plans intended to push the industry in the direction of net-zero emissions, engineers, rate designers, operators, financial experts and others are dealing with the realities of making that happen.

According to Andrew Buntrock, Basin Electric's director of strategic planning, so often it comes down to a delicate balance – a three-legged stool – between on-demand accessibility, zero emissions and low rates. It's practically impossible to achieve all three at optimal levels simultaneously.

“Someone explained it like this: Let's say a rancher wants a vehicle that's affordable, cheap to operate and has zero carbon emissions,” said Buntrock. “But he's not going to be able to pull his loaded cattle trailer with a Prius. He needs the power

of an F-350 to do what he needs to do, to make a living, to bring his product to market and contribute to the economy. Sometimes we want to have it all, but that's not always possible."

He explained that power generators experience constant pressure to curb greenhouse gas emissions and eliminate fossil fuels in favor of renewable power while staying in compliance with governmental and regulatory agencies. To many vocal environmentalists, no realistic timeline to make the country completely energy independent is fast enough.

Basin Electric, Buntrock explained, has long been working to reduce emissions. For instance, in 2000 roughly 85 percent of the cooperative's power was generated with coal as the primary fuel source. Today that percentage is around 44 percent, with nearly \$2 billion spent on environmental emissions control technology. The co-op also has renewable power projects underway including the Wild Springs,



Tom White serves as a mechanic technician at Basin Electric's Deer Creek Station.

from a podium or street protest is often difficult to carry out in the trenches.

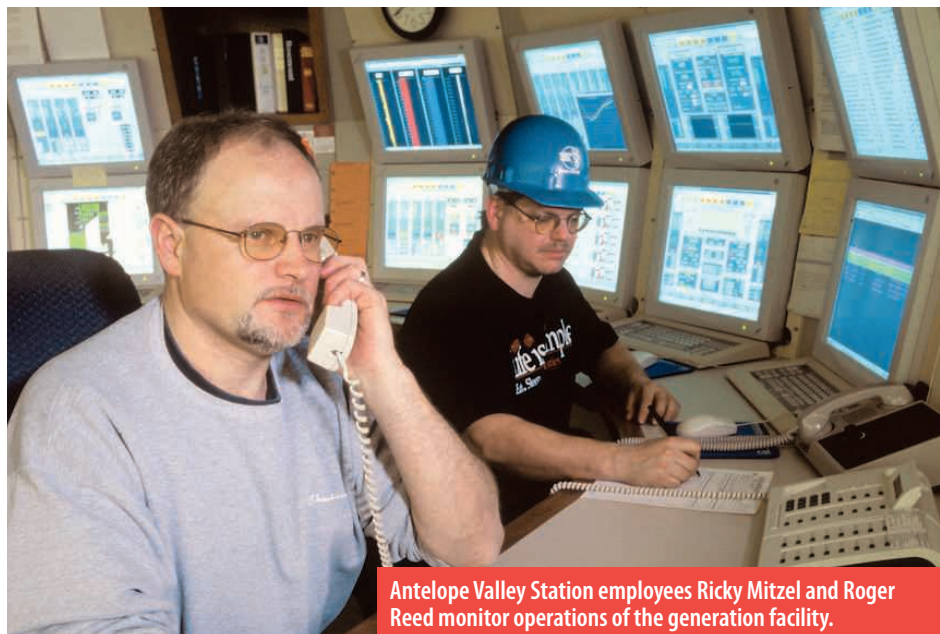
"We've been working on this for 20 years and we've been making strides. We're proud of our efforts to accomplish the thing that we all want: a clean environment. But we also want affordable, accessible power and for now and the foreseeable future, that's going to include

noted that price is even more of a priority since the pandemic struck a blow to the economy.

"Our approach and our strategy is 'all of the above.' We can't put all of our eggs in one basket," Buntrock said. "We're mindful of the concerns expressed by environmentalists because we share those concerns. But we think we're moving in the right direction. We just want our members and the public to understand that a plan or a goal may be easy to formulate, but actually making it happen often entails complex challenges that most people aren't aware of. The story behind the switch isn't one that people hear very often."

Even if fossil fuels could be eliminated altogether and baseload demand could be met entirely with renewable sources, the transition would still leave power producers – and consumers – in a financial lurch.

"It's like having two cars. You have one that you're still paying for. But then you want another model and you can't just dump the first one. You end up having two car notes, but you can only drive one to work," Buntrock said.



Antelope Valley Station employees Ricky Mitzel and Roger Reed monitor operations of the generation facility.

West River and Cabin Creek solar farms and Northern Divide Wind Project. There is also a division dedicated to conducting research on renewable energy sources and applying the most cost-effective implementation.

Buntrock said most power providers welcome and embrace efforts to reduce emissions, but the timetables should be realistic and take into account the fact that formulating a plan that sounds attractive

fossil fuels because it's the best source for being able to control the power production process. You can't always depend on the wind blowing and the sun shining."

Basin recently conducted an extensive survey of its members in an effort to identify their top priorities. The list of responses was led by price, followed by reliability, the two factors necessary for providing power that people can afford and they can access on demand. Buntrock

As the rest of the country watches the Biden Administration and congress negotiate on policy, Buntrock said Basin Electric will continue to produce on-demand power for its members.

"We know we're moving in the right direction and we know our members are confident that we're doing our best to look out for their interests, deliver the power they need and strive to be a good and trusted partner."

## Statement of Nondiscrimination

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

## Annual Co-Generation Notification to the Membership



In compliance with Sioux Valley Energy's adopted rules relating to Co-Generation and Small Power Production, Sioux Valley Energy is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from co-generators and small power producers whom satisfy the conditions of a qualifying facility. Sioux Valley Energy is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members upon request regarding rates and interconnection requirements. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any dispute over interconnections, sales and purchases are subject to resolution by the Cooperative. Interested members should contact Sioux Valley Energy, PO Box 216, Colman, SD 57017 or call 800-234-1960.



# SMART PAYMENTS

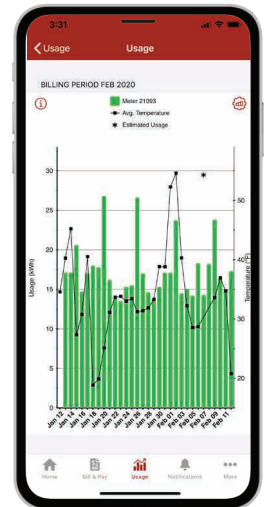
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SMART LIFE. SMARTHUB.

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**Monitor your electric use.**



With SmartHub, you'll be notified when your bill is due and can pay securely online or in the app, anytime, anywhere.

Sign up for auto payments, set up your secure preferred payment method and let account management go into autopilot.

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

To sign up for SmartHub, log on to:  
<https://siouxvalleyenergy.smarthub.coop>



"Green boxes" are a critical part of the power delivery system used by your co-op.  
Photo by Journey Lineworker Mike Oines

# What Are Those Green Boxes?

## Transformers Help Get Power to Your Homes

Tom Tate

Contributing Writer

If we were to ask you to describe Sioux Valley Energy's electric system, you might say, "Poles, wires and those green boxes." Green boxes? That is often the description given for transformers, the pieces of equipment crucial in converting electricity to a voltage that is safe for use in homes and businesses. So, how do they work?

First off, transformers are nothing like those creations of the silver screen. They don't transform from vehicles to incredible combat robots. Instead, they transform the voltage of the electricity that passes through them. Time for a little electric system 101.

Electricity loses voltage as it is transmitted due to the resistance in wires and other components. As a result, higher voltages are used to offset these "line losses," as we call them. It all starts at the power plant. There, generators produce electricity at very high voltages and use transformers to step up this voltage, often up to 345,000 volts. Since the power plants are far away, these voltages are necessary to survive the trip over the system to where it is needed.

Transmission lines connect to substations brimming with transformers and other control gear. Here is where the transformers step down the voltage to safer, more manageable levels. Depending upon the distance involved to the furthest member and the amount of load served, distribution voltages can range from 7,200 to 24,900 volts. A couple more step-downs and the electricity arrives at your home at 240 volts. This is quite different from the original voltage.

Regardless of the shape and size of the transformer, they all work

in the same manner. Transformers have two sides, a high-voltage side and a low-voltage side. In normal operation, electricity flows into the transformer on the high-voltage side, where it goes into a coil of wire usually wound around an iron core. As the electricity flows through this coil, it creates a magnetic field that "induces" a voltage in the other coil. Here is where the magic (aka physics) of transformation takes place. Each coil has a different number of turns. The greater the number of turns, the higher the voltage. The coil on the high side will have more turns than the one on the low side. As a result, the voltage induced on the low side is less. Then transformation occurs.

Transformers aren't just limited to utility use. They can be found everywhere in our daily lives, even if not so obvious as those on Sioux Valley Energy's system. The best example is the charger that all cell phones and many other electrical devices come with. These small cousins of utility transformers basically perform the same function. Charging your cell phone with 120 volts will fry it instantly. So, the charger converts the voltage to a more tolerable 5 volts or so. Take a moment to look around your home and see just how many of these miniature transformers you have. You might be surprised!

It is important to note that transformers work in both directions. Electricity flowing in on the low side is stepped up to the voltage of the high side. This is why Sioux Valley Energy educates members on proper connection of home generators. A generator feeding 240 volts into a residential transformer will produce whatever voltage the transformer is rated for on the other side, creating a deadly risk for our line crews and your neighbors. So please, connect your generators according to the manufacturer's recommendations. Or give us a call at 800-234-1960 for advice. It's always best to be safe.

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

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**January 18-25**

Chinook Days, Spearfish, SD  
605-717-9294

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**January 21-24**

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

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**January 23**

Treasured Lives Presents:  
Bazzel Baz, Rushmore Plaza  
Civic Center, Rapid City, SD  
1-800-468-6463

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**January 29-30**

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

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**January 29-February 6**

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

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**January 29-31**

Winterfest, Lead, SD  
605-335-3861

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**February 5-6**

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

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**February 10-13**

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

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**February 12-13**

SD High School State  
Gymnastics Meet, Watertown  
Civic Arena, Watertown, SD



Pro Snocross Races, Jan. 29-30, 2021

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**February 18**

The Q's High Line to  
Deadwood – A 130-year  
Retrospective, Homestake  
Adams Research and Cultural  
Center, Deadwood, SD  
605-722-4800

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**February 18-25**

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

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**February 20-27**

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

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**February 25**

Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood  
Live: Neighbor Day,  
Washington Pavilion, Sioux  
Falls, SD  
605-367-6000

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**March 5-6**

SD High School State Debate  
& IE Tournament, Central  
High School, Aberdeen, SD

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**March 12-13**

St. Patrick's Day Weekend,  
Main Street, Deadwood, SD  
605-578-1976

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**March 13**

28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride  
and Tour, Spearfish Canyon  
Lodge, Lead, SD  
605-641-4963

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**March 13**

St. Patrick's Day Celebration,  
Knights of Columbus Hall,  
Watertown, SD  
605-886-5814

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**March 13-14**

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

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**March 19-20**

Annual Schmeckfest,  
Freeman Academy,  
Freeman, SD  
605-925-4237

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**March 23-24**

Shen Yun, Rushmore Plaza  
Civic Center Fine Arts  
Theatre, Rapid City, SD  
605-394-4115

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**March 25**

A Lakota View of the Dead  
Hills, Homestake Adams  
Research and Cultural Center,  
Deadwood, SD  
605-722-4800

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.