



Cooperative Connections

AgritourismSD seeks to attract visitors from far and near

Education and Entertainment on the Farm

Pages 8-9

College Students Deal with Change

Pages 12-13



Safety: It's not just about you. It's about others too.



Tim McCarthy, GM/CEO

tim.mccarthy@siouxvalleyenergy.com

Safety, Safety, Safety...we talk about it A LOT here at Sioux Valley Energy and we plan to continue to talk about it! In fact, we cannot talk about it enough. This time of year, you may even see Sioux Valley Energy and Touchstone Energy Cooperative-sponsored television, radio and newspaper ads highlighting the importance of electrical safety. This is because each year during the spring we see farm equipment make contact with overhead power lines on a regular basis. It is imperative we get that message out to agricultural producers because it's incredibly dangerous. In extreme cases, it can be fatal. At a minimum, it is very costly to cooperative members.

Sioux Valley Energy is not the only electric cooperative that is focused on safety messaging—we partner and collaborate with all the other electric co-ops that are members of East River Electric. Joint advertising is a highly efficient way to spread the safety message. The partnership through East River Electric helps Sioux Valley Energy maximize its safety messaging investment and spread the word to farmers throughout the entire region. Most recently, the safety messaging developed through this

cooperative partnership teaches farmers what to do if their equipment hits an overhead line. It's a message that can save lives and we are proud to be a part of this partnership which truly embraces the cooperative principle of 'cooperation amongst cooperatives'.

Sometimes that cooperative principle is overlooked but given the significant value of it, it should not be forgotten about. Sioux Valley Energy members directly benefit from that cooperation beyond safety messaging. The perfect example of 'cooperation amongst cooperatives' was evident during past ice storms. Neighboring cooperatives have sent lineworkers, equipment, and other assistance to help us restore power more quickly to SVE members. In addition, that cooperation through the East River Electric family also helps Sioux Valley Energy take part in a federated approach with other services as well.

As you can see, the concept of 'cooperation amongst cooperatives' has great value. That same notion can be used when considering the importance of electrical safety. To demonstrate the idea, the wording can be adjusted to 'cooperation amongst cooperative members'. As a cooperative member your action or inaction can impact others—your family; your co-workers or employees; and your fellow cooperative members. Think about the potential impact on others as you head out into the field, or to your respective jobs. Spend just a few extra minutes surveying your surroundings for overhead power lines before you move large equipment. Take inventory of hazards at any job site you may encounter and be proactive in mitigating potential risks. That is the core of what 'cooperation amongst cooperatives' encompasses...thinking about the bigger picture—and outside yourself.

“Think about the potential impact on others as you head out into the field or to your respective jobs.”

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

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Vote and Go District Meetings Planned

Only three district meetings will take place this year where elections are scheduled. Members from Districts 1, 3 and 8 may come at any time between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. to their respective meeting on the date/location listed below. Details will be sent via postcard to members in those districts.

DISTRICT 3: Monday, May 10, 2021

William J. Janklow Community Center - Flandreau, SD
(802 W Community Dr, Flandreau, SD 57028)

Election for Three-Year Term - Petition for election to the board was filed by:
Dr. Leslie Heinemann

DISTRICT 1: Tuesday, May 11, 2021

Elkton Community Center - Elkton, SD
(109 Elk Street, Elkton, SD 57026)

Election for Three-Year Term - Petition for election to the board was filed by:
Don DeGreef

DISTRICT 8: Thursday, May 13, 2021

Grand Prairie Events Center- Luverne, MN
(105 S Estey Street, Luverne, MN 56156)

Election for Three-Year Term - Petition for election to the board was filed by:
Dan Leuthold

COVID Protocols for Meeting:

- Only one person per membership will be allowed in the building.
- Social distancing will be required.
- You must be a member of District 1, 3 or 8 to attend your respective meeting.
- Masks are required to enter the building.
- If you feel sick, please stay home.

Details will be sent via postcard to members in those districts. **Please bring your postcard to the meeting to register.**

Remodeling? Keep Efficiency in Mind

Sunny days are prime time for tackling remodeling projects, upgrades and repairs around your home. If you're planning a project, make a point of adding energy efficiency features along the way. Here are a few ideas:

- Add insulation around recessed lights so heated or conditioned air doesn't leak out of them and the weather can't sneak in.
- Install programmable thermostats when you add rooms to the house. While you're at it, have the thermostats in the rest of your home upgraded to programmable models.
- Your contractor will install more insulation in any new spaces you're adding than your builder did during the original construction of your home. Consider adding insulation to already-insulated areas, like the crawlspace and attic, to meet new energy efficiency standards.
- A new kitchen means shiny new appliances. Select those rated as energy efficient by ENERGY STAR®, which use less energy than unrated models.
- If your older home still has single-pane windows, consider an upgrade. Double-pane windows are more energy efficient because they better shield your home from the outdoors - and keep your conditioned air indoors.
- Replace old lightbulbs in your most-used rooms with LEDs. They last 10 years or longer and save considerable energy when compared to incandescent bulbs.
- Work with a contractor who understands how passive solar design can affect your energy bills. Rooftop solar panels, sunrooms and skylights are popular additions.
- Add or upgrade ventilation fans in bathrooms. This can improve air quality throughout the home - not just in the bathrooms - by removing moisture from the air.
- Consider having a home energy audit conducted. Audits can help you evaluate your home for energy wasters, suggest ways to remedy inefficiencies and recommend additions that will make your house more comfortable and cheaper to heat and cool.



Generate Safely.

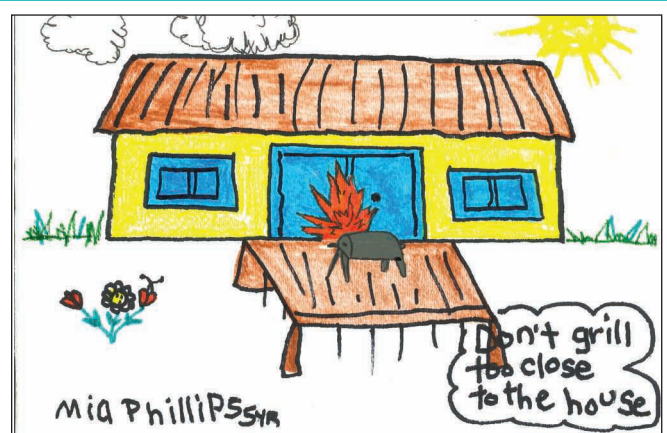
Never use a portable generator indoors.

Do not plug generators into standard electrical outlets.

Use heavy-duty extension cords to connect appliances into the generator.

Start the generator before connecting appliances.

KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



Don't Grill Too Close to the House

Mia Phillips, 5 years old

Mia is the granddaughter of Jim and Hans Moore of Rapid City. They are members of Black Hills Electric.

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.



A Craving for Casseroles

Chicken and Rice

- 1 bag Success Brown Rice
- 1/2 cup ricotta cheese
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tbsp. chopped Italian parsley
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1/3 cup chopped onions
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/2 package (4 ounces) mushrooms, sliced
- 1/4 cup white wine
- 4 cups baby spinach leaves
- 2 cups shredded, cooked chicken breast
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper

Prepare rice according to package directions. In small bowl, combine ricotta, Parmesan and parsley; reserve. In large skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Add onions and garlic; saute 2 minutes. Add mushrooms and wine to skillet. Continue cooking 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add spinach and chicken. Stir until spinach is wilted and chicken is heated through, about 2 minutes. Stir in rice, salt and pepper. Serve casserole topped with dollops of reserved cheese mixture.

SuccessRice.com

Meat Lovers Pizza Casserole

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 can (15 oz) pizza sauce
- 8 oz. elbow macaroni, cooked and drained
- 2 c. (8 oz) shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 pkg (3 1/2 oz) sliced pepperoni, quartered
- 1/2 tsp. salt

In a large skillet, cook ground beef and onion over medium heat until meat is no longer pink; drain. Stir in remaining ingredients. Transfer to a greased 2-quart baking dish. Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes or until heated through. Yields 6 servings.

Gail Lee, Brookings

Chicken Doritos Casserole

- 2 cups shredded cooked chicken
- 1 cup shredded cheese
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 can Ro-tel tomatoes, drained (canned tomatoes with jalapenos-mild)
- 1/2 packet taco seasoning (or more, to taste)
- 1 bag of regular nacho cheese Doritos

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a mixing bowl, combine all ingredients except Doritos. In a greased 2 quart baking dish, put a layer of crushed Doritos (about 2 cups), then a layer of the chicken mixture. Top with more shredded cheese, cover, and bake 30-35 minutes until bubbling hot. Enjoy!

Alana Neville, Milesville, SD

Garden Cafe Casserole

- 1 bag hash browns
- 1 onion
- 1 green pepper
- 1 box mushrooms
- 1 tomato
- 1/2 lb. deli turkey (cut in pieces)
- 1 lb. bacon (fried and cut in pieces)
- 2-3 cups cheese (Monterey Jack, Colby, Cheddar)

Place thawed hash browns in the bottom of a 9 x 13 pan. Saute onion, green pepper, and mushrooms. Place the meat and tomato on top of the potatoes. Then onion, green pepper and mushrooms. Top with cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for one hour.

Joanna Gum, Clear Lake, SD

Please send your favorite dairy 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.

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.

Event to be held at the Verne Drive-In on June 8

Annual Meeting

The Sioux Valley Energy Annual Meeting will be held on the evening of Tuesday, June 8 in Luverne, Minnesota at the Verne Drive-In.

Details will be printed in the next edition of the Sioux Valley Energy Cooperative Connections and individual postcard notifications will be sent to each member in May.



STOP THE SCAM!

Utility scams are on the rise. Scammers intimidate, threaten and manipulate their victims. Be aware of the following red flags:

A call demanding immediate payment over the phone. Sioux Valley Energy will never demand immediate payment. Members will have significant advance notice if their electric bill is past due. Never give your bank account or credit card information over the phone. If the caller asks you to pay with a pre-paid debit card or wire them money, HANG UP IMMEDIATELY and call Sioux Valley Energy directly at 800-234-1960.

A call asking for personal banking information to process a refund. If you overpay on your electric bill, it will be posted as a credit for use on future electric bills. Sioux Valley Energy will never call and ask for banking information to process a refund.

An unexpected visit from someone in an unmarked vehicle. Sioux Valley Energy's vehicles that are used for operations or member services are all clearly marked. Sioux Valley Energy employees will also have easily identifiable clothing with the Cooperative logo displayed. A new scam involves people going door to door claiming to be a "representative" of your electric utility selling products or services that are not associated with the Cooperative.



SIoux VALLEY ENERGY
A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

www.siouxvalleyenergy.com 800-234-1960

Call 811 before any digging project - big or small. The call for locates needs to be made two to three days ahead of time.

Call 811 Before You Dig Need Your Lines Located?

By Sharla Haugen, Manager of Dispatch

sharla.haugen@siouxvalleyenergy.com



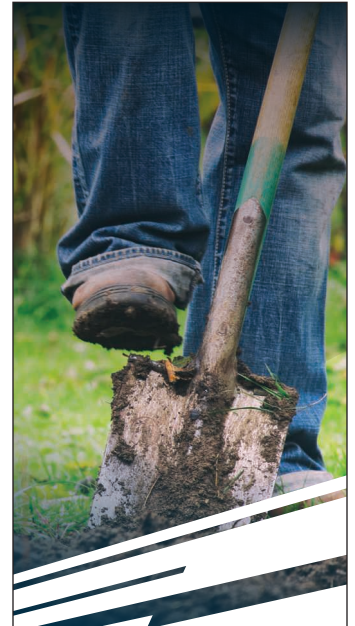
Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

Dial 811 before you Dig! 811 will put you in touch with a One Call center for the state which you are calling from or you can submit your locate request online at one of the websites below.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU CALL 811 or GO ONLINE AND SUBMIT YOUR LOCATE REQUEST?

1. You will submit detailed information regarding your location of the dig area, including the address and/or street intersection with driving directions to the site. You will also enter specific instructions on what area at the site needs to be located. (**WHERE DO YOU PLAN TO DIG**)
2. Once the information is gathered and the request is submitted – you will receive a **TICKET NUMBER** – it's important to keep this number until your dig job is completed so you have contact information for utility companies. A **TICKET NUMBER** is required in order to process your request.
3. Once you have received your ticket number, the One Call center and the utility company takes over the locate request. Utilities have 48 business hours to complete the locate.
4. If Sioux Valley Energy (SVE) does not own underground cable within 200 feet of your dig site, SVE will be cleared at the One Call center and will not be notified or receive an electronic ticket.
5. If SVE owns underground cable within a 200 foot area of the dig site, the One Call center sends an electronic version of your ticket request to the SVE Dispatch Center. Dispatch will screen that ticket and determine the location of the cable according to the Cooperative's records.
6. If a locate is necessary, SVE dispatchers will forward that ticket to contract cable locators. The cable locators will then physically respond and paint/flag SVE facilities within your dig site.

SVE Facilities vs. Private, Member-Owned facilities: SVE is responsible for locating any of our electric underground facilities (WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE DIG AREA ON THE TICKET) up to the metering point, at no cost to the member. Any facilities beyond the metering point (from the meter to the members buildings, waterer, silo, wind turbine, etc.) are owned by the member and considered private facilities. SVE is not responsible for the location of private facilities. However, if our contract cable locators are dispatched to locate SVE-owned facilities, we ask them to locate the member-owned lines as well. The member-owned lines must be within the scope of the dig area according to the original ticket to be eligible for locating. If SVE receives a ticket from the One Call center, our dispatchers will review it. If SVE dispatchers clear the ticket, members are responsible for locating their private facilities at their own expense and will need to coordinate with their electrician.



CALL OR CLICK BEFORE YOU DIG

Call 811 or visit call811.com at least two to three business days before you start digging. Professional locators will mark underground utility lines so you can work safely—and save you from possible injury or property damage.

Together we're
**RE-ENERGIZING
SAFETY**



**SIoux VALLEY
ENERGY**

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SD: www.sd811.com | MN: www.gopherstateonecall.org



The AgritourismSD program blends the state's top two economic drivers: agriculture and tourism. Photos provided by SD Tourism.

AGRITOURISM

New Program Blends South Dakota's Top Two Economic Drivers

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Amy Kruse already had a baby before she actually became a mother. That baby was proudly named Circle View Guest Ranch. That's the bed and breakfast establishment in Interior run by Amy and her husband, Philip.

"Before I had three kids, this was my baby," Kruse said on a recent Thursday afternoon while taking a break from getting the nearly 3,000-acre ranch spiffed up for weekend visitors and the busy travel season. "I got out of college and we got married and we came here 18 years ago. It's a lot of work to operate the ranch and make things run to give our guests a memorable experience, but it's worth it to see them enjoy themselves and have a great time in South Dakota."

While Kruse has long been engaged in her own form of what's called agritourism, she's an enthusiastic supporter of a new initiative designed to promote the accelerated growth of more agritourism enterprises across the state.

In 2017, the South Dakota Agritourism Work Group was formed to create an intensive program aimed at providing education, training and various support services to agribusiness owners interested in expanding their operations to include recreational, entertainment, educational, hospitality, cultural, on-farm sales and other activities for the general public. As tourism and agriculture are the two most significant business sectors in the state, organizers felt it only made sense to combine the two.

Spearheaded by South Dakota State University Extension and the state Office of Tourism, other local, state and federal agencies and entities joined in the effort. A partial list of participating organizations includes the Bed and Breakfast Innkeepers of South

Dakota, Experience Sioux Falls, Southeast Technical Institute, the South Dakota Specialty Producers Association, the South Dakota Value Added Ag Development Center and others.

According to Program Coordinator Stacy Hadrack of SDSU, AgritourismSD kicks off this month and consists of eight two-day, in-person workshops taking place over the course of 24 months where instructors provide the basic skills and tools that have been demonstrated to help increase the chances of success. The curriculum includes field visits to venues that already have a sustained track record of running thriving agritourism businesses.

The Circle View Guest Ranch, a member of West River Electric Association, is one of those venues. During the program's second year, the facility is slated to serve as a case study on how to launch and grow an agritourism operation and participants can have direct personal conversations with operators who will offer solid advice on every aspect of their business. Kruse said she looks forward to sharing some of the approaches and strategies that she and Philip have used to keep visitors coming to the ranch. The program, which kicks off this month, is designed to educate and train those associated with the ag industry on how to start, manage and operate an agritourism enterprise.

"This is such an excellent time to do something like this because things are opening up and people are ready to travel and escape the cities, get off the interstate and explore the back roads and see the tremendous beauty of our state," Kruse said. "They're craving an authentic experience after being shut down for so long."

Kruse added that she is eager to coach and encourage the group, but she also plans to shoot straight. That means giving the partici-



pants a healthy dose of unvarnished reality so they'll have a clear understanding of the commitment required.

"I think it's a wonderful program for our state. We're going to show them how we make things work with the overnight facilities and with the animals and their interactions with our guests," she said. "The business pretty much runs our lives for seven to eight months out of the year, and if you do it right it's all-consuming. But it's also extremely rewarding to see families have a terrific time bonding with each other, bonding with the natural landscape and the animals. It can be extremely rewarding for our guests and for our family as we're always making new friends. But you have to be committed."

Amy and her husband operate 12 guest rooms and three cabins with an average of 30 guests at any given time from April through September. She explained the cattle ranch and the bed-and-breakfast are separate businesses all set on 2,800 acres of land that includes prairie terrain in addition to Badlands formations, a river valley, rock beds, rolling hills, grazing pastures and tree groves.

For more effective statewide coordination, the AgritourismSD program organizers have developed a hub system, selecting the communities of Wall, Faulkton and Timber Lake to serve as regional organization centers. Participating business owners work through these hubs and meet six times over two years to share ideas and

discuss strategies for attracting visitors to their communities.

Robin Bickel is the hub coach for the Timber Lake area. A member of Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative, Bickel runs a Red Angus cattle ranch in Firesteel that has been in the family for four generations. She said her interest in getting involved was to pursue potential economic growth not only for her ranch but for the entire area as well. She also sees agritourism as an incentive to both keep and attract young families to rural communities.

"If working ranches can find ways to expand and diversify their businesses, it may present opportunities for those young people who have left to come back to the family farm and be able to generate enough revenue to sustain multiple families on one place," she said.

Aside from the potential for added revenue, Bickel said she is eager to share with the rest of the world the wonders of rural life and the rural lifestyle she experiences each day.

"I think there's an increased interest people have about where their food and fiber come from, and we need to find a way to make that connection between the producer and consumer," she said. "We have such a rich history and so many natural resources to share. It's insane how many people can't see the sky full of stars at night where they live and can't see the prairie grass waving in the wind and



rolling across a hillside. There are people interested in things we take for granted. There are people in Nebraska that have a prairie chicken dance tour where people actually pay to see the chickens. I think there are many opportunities for our state if we commit ourselves and do it right."

For more information on the program, contact Jacey Ellsworth, Industry Outreach and Development Representative, at 605-773-3301 or Jacey.Ellsworth@TravelSouthDakota.com.



SVE CEO/General Manager Tim McCarthy (far left) and MFD firefighter Kelly Dybdahl (far right) showcase the new and old helmets while SVE Operation Round Up Trust board member Greg Benda presents a check to MFD Chief Randy Minnaert.

PENNY POWER

Operation Round Up® Funds Help Purchase Fire Department Helmets



Firefighters with the City of Madison, South Dakota, Fire Department are getting new helmets with improved personal protective equipment thanks in part to a \$5,000 grant from Sioux

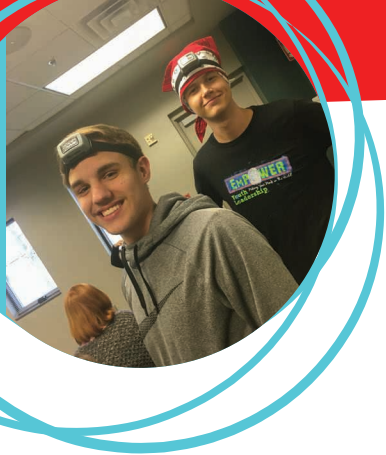
Valley Energy's Operation Round Up® (ORU) program. The grant covers about one-third of the total costs of the 29 helmets. In addition to the city of Madison, the MFD covers 10 of 16 townships in Lake County, totaling 350 square miles.

Sioux Valley Energy co-op members contribute to ORU by having their electric bill rounded up to the next highest dollar and that money is collected for ORU. Many Sioux Valley Energy employees also help by deducting a small amount from their paychecks. Learn more about Sioux Valley Energy's Operation Round Up program at <https://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-community/operation-roundup>.

The next application deadline is May 20.

2021 First Quarter Recipients

- **Sioux Valley Energy** – scholarships
- **Boys & Girls Club of Moody County** – funding to purchase three smart TVs with carts
- **Brookings County Youth Mentoring Program** – funding to be used to create additional training to train mentors on how best to work with and support struggling teens
- **Crooks Flag Football League** – funding to build a storage shed to store equipment
- **Cyclone 16U White Softball Team** – funding to be used for uniforms, tournament entry fees, equipment & practice facilities
- **Dynamic Booster Club** – funding for upcoming dance events this season
- **Game Plan 4 Hope** – funding for cupboards and counter tops, conference table, chairs, handicap accessible bathroom counter top/sink, paint and flooring
- **Habitat for Humanity for Greater Sioux Falls** – funding to purchase construction material to help build a Habitat for Humanity home
- **Ihlen Eden Senior Citizens** – funding for the yearly rent payment
- **Madison Fire Department** – funding to purchase new helmets for volunteer firefighters
- **McCrossan Boys Ranch** – funding for the McCrossan school addition and renovation project
- **National Inventors Hall of Fame** – funding to underwrite participation fees for as many as ten underserved elementary-age children to experience Camp Intervention
- **South Dakota FFA Foundation, Inc.** – funding to purchase FFA jackets and to provide leadership retreat scholarships
- **Trent Community Association** – funding to establish a park with camper hook-ups, add playground equipment, build a path and gazebo and add fish to the pond
- **Madison Veterans Honor Park** – funding to build a Veterans Honor Park in Madison, SD
- **West Central Education Foundation** – funding to be used for supplies requested by teachers
- **West Sioux II 4-H Club** – funding to be used for 4-H members to construct electrical projects



EMPOWER

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

STEP UP AND STAND OUT!

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

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



Have a chance at:
SCHOLARSHIPS!
TRIPS!

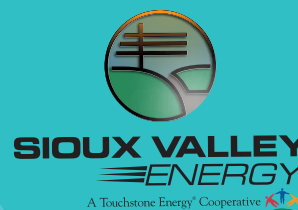
FOUR FUN-FILLED, PEER-ADVISED PROGRAM DAYS FOCUS ON:

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

TO APPLY:

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

Brought to you by



Rural POWER

Leadership Program Aimed at Boosting Co-op Leadership

Intentional listening is a skill Billie Sutton has honed over the course of his adult life. And as he leaned into recent conversations with electric cooperative leaders across the state, the former legislator from Burke started noticing a trend.

He picked up on a common refrain: cooperatives are having a hard time finding qualified candidates to run for positions on their governing boards.

As not-for-profit organizations, electric cooperatives don't have pockets deep enough to dangle large compensation packages in front of potential board candidates. This reality tends to narrow the field of interested parties.

After hearing this a few too many times, Sutton decided to take action and do something about it. He began working to develop a leadership program through his non-profit Billie Sutton Leadership Institute to encourage and inspire rural co-op members to consider campaigning for a board position.

The new year-long leadership development program is called "Rural POWER: Powering Opportunities While Energizing Rural." It will be held alongside the third leadership class offered by the Institute. The first program in 2019 attracted more than 100 applicants to fill 12 spots. Last year's class drew roughly 70 applicants but was hampered by the impact of the pandemic.

Sutton surmised that the high interest level in the Institute's first two programs stems from a desire to return to a more community-focused style of leadership and steer away from a brand of politics that appears to be growing more openly hostile.

His supposition comes from the comments he heard not only during his six years serving in the state senate but also from voters during his gubernatorial campaign three years ago in which he received more than 167,000 votes while losing the race to Gov. Kristi Noem.



Billie Sutton and his wife, Kelsea (foreground) are shown with the Institute's inaugural class of rural leaders.

"I think people were excited about a new style of leadership I brought to the table that's focused on service, finding common ground, overcoming adversity and getting things done on behalf of the people. I think people are tired of politics as usual," he said.

For the Institute's inaugural class, applicants ranged in age from 18 to 60 and represented a plethora of professional backgrounds: health care, teaching, education administration, local elected officials, ranchers and more. Sutton said he hopes the new program will also attract interest from a diverse set of applicants.

Rural POWER will kick off this summer and is sponsored by the South Dakota Farmers Union. Participants will engage in educational leadership training opportunities emphasizing community building and

Participants will engage in educational leadership training opportunities emphasizing community building and serving neighbors, while learning from cooperative leaders.

serving neighbors, while learning from cooperative leaders who have demonstrated their commitment to rural development. They will gain the knowledge and enthusiasm to re-imagine and re-energize rural South Dakota, Sutton said.



Rural POWER aims to provide leadership training that will help re-invent and re-energize rural South Dakota.

The program has an advocate in Melissa Maher, general manager at Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber Lake. Maher notes that while most of the state's electric co-ops qualify as "rural," that doesn't mean they are merely small-time mom-and-pop operations. For instance, Moreau-Grand Electric is a member-owned business with more than \$47 million in assets.

Maher said it's important that electric co-ops be run by managers and board members dedicated to the task at hand. Board directors are democratically elected by the members in their respective districts and charged with the responsibility of developing the policies that guide the future of the co-op. They also have certain legal, fiduciary and industry-related issues they must deal with during the course of carrying out their duties.

"These are positions of responsibility and leadership, and you need qualified people because they're making big decisions," Maher said, adding that serving on a co-op board requires considerable time and attention. "If someone is interested in being nominated, you have to be up front and honest about that fact. That's one of the first things people ask, and the honest answer is that it's a commitment."

Those who succeed in meeting their board responsibilities recognize and appreciate the fact they're contributing to the advancement of their entire service area by providing an essential commodity. Maher said it also takes a certain type of personality and temperament to be a successful board member.

"They have to learn protocol and there can be situations like dealing with personnel issues where they have to be discreet. They have to be the type of person who can agree to disagree and walk away and not let it get to them," Maher said. "They have to study up on the issues. We send out information a week ahead of time so that the board members can brush up on things and we can have a productive conversation. They need to care enough to be engaged and prepared."

Suzie Jones Pranger serves as executive director of the Institute. Today, Jones Pranger is an attorney living in rural Hartford, but she grew up on her family's farm in Burke and remembers her grandfather's involvement in her local co-op, Rosebud Electric.

"Even as a kid, I knew our power came from the local co-op, and I knew my family had a legacy of service to the co-op and our neighbors through my Grandpa's longtime position on the board," she said. "But what I never considered growing up is the need for subsequent generations to become active and continue to power our rural communities and our South Dakota way of life. Rural POWER will help build a pipeline of rural leaders ready to step up and take on leadership positions."

Kevin Mikkelsen, general manager of Rosebud Electric, is also supportive of the program and believes there is a lot of potential in the leadership program, especially when it comes to drawing some younger participants.

"I'm hoping the program sheds some light



on how cooperatives function and how they work on behalf of all the member-owners," he said. "All around the state, we really need to see some younger folks get involved and provide a new perspective and help us discover new and more effective ways to carry out our mission as co-ops, whether it's electric co-ops or ag-based co-ops."

Visit suttonleadership.org/rural-power to learn more about the program or to apply.

Charge Up Your Lawn Care



Sheila Gross

Energy Services Specialist

Temperatures are finally warming up and the attention of many home owners is turning to their yards and outdoor spaces.

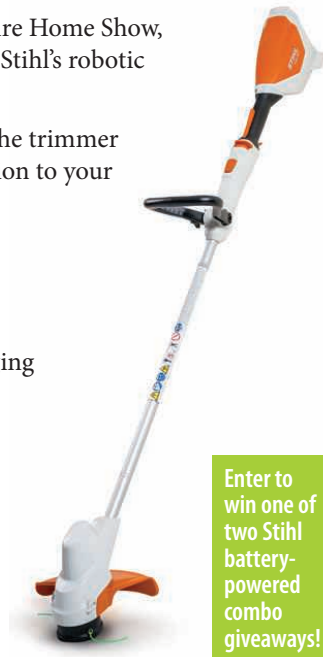
Efficient battery-powered tools can aid in lawn care maintenance. We are giving away two Stihl battery-powered trimmer/leaf blower combos for our first Energy Makeover Solutions Contest of 2021. The interchangeable battery pack has a longer charge and can work with either device. We've upgraded the standard battery packages to longer-lasting batteries, doubling the devices' run times.

If you stopped by our booth at the Sioux Empire Home Show, you likely saw the Stihl leaf blower along with Stihl's robotic lawn mower.

While we're not giving away the lawnmower, the trimmer and leaf blower combo would be a great addition to your lawn care toolbox.

Register to win by May 21 by sending in the form below or registering online at www.siouxvalleyenergy.com.

And, if your outdoor projects will involve digging of any kind, remember to call 8-1-1 to have underground utilities located at least two to three days before your project begins.



Enter to win one of two Stihl battery-powered combo giveaways!

Register me to Win! (Also please contact me about the topics below.)

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, ZIP: _____
 Account #: _____ Phone #: _____
 Email: _____

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

I would like more information on:

- Heat Pump Rebate
- Electric Heat Rate
- Energy Audit
- Loan Program
- Electric Vehicle Program
- Time of Use Rate
- Third-Party 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

Lawn Care Electrification

Spring will soon arrive and if you're in the market to upgrade your lawn care equipment, you may want to consider electric (or battery-powered) options. Electric lawn care equipment options are becoming more popular than ever, offering consumers faster charging times, longer battery life and quieter, greener products compared to their gas-powered counterparts. Here are three ways you can electrify your lawn care this spring.

Electric Lawn Mowers

Electric lawn mowers have come a long way over the last few years. Early models required corded connections, which were tricky to manage – but the cord has been cut. Newer cordless electric mowers are certainly more expensive than gas-powered mowers, but much of the upfront cost can be recovered since electricity is a less expensive fuel than gasoline, and electric engines generally require less maintenance than gasoline engines. Cordless electric mowers typically range from \$200 to \$500.

Electric mowers are suitable for most lawn care needs, with batteries that typically require about one to two hours to fully charge, and most batteries can run for a full hour. That said, if you have a large yard (half an acre or larger), a gasoline-powered option may be best to suit your needs.

Electric Trimmers

Cordless electric string trimmers are a great option for most lawns. New versions of electric trimmers are improving and are now considered worthy competitors of gasoline-powered models.

Cordless electric trimmers are much quieter and easier to use, but most batteries only last about 30 to 45 minutes. So, if you have a lot of space to trim, you may want to consider a back-up battery or plan to work in short bursts. If you're interested in purchasing an electric trimmer, the main factors to consider are the battery's life, charge time and power. Costs can vary depending on your needs, but you can find a quality version for about \$100.

Electric Leaf Blowers

Cordless electric leaf blowers are lightweight and easy to maneuver, but they don't offer quite as much power as gasoline-powered and corded blowers. If your leaf blowing and clearing needs are minimal, a cordless electric leaf blower can get the job done. Costs for a cordless electric blower vary depending on power and battery quality, but you can purchase a dependable model for about \$150 and up.

A Deadly Mistake

Family Shares Grief to Teach Others

Shayla Ebsen

sebsen@eastriver.coop

June 7, 2016, is a day that will be forever imprinted in Greg McCann's mind. It began as a normal June day on his farm in southeastern South Dakota. The crops had been planted and, like every year in June, they were needing to be sprayed. Greg's 35-year-old son, Grant, helped out on the farm and planned to spray the fields that day.

"He went and got the sprayer filled and ready. After he got the sprayer ready and conditions were right, well, then, he went to spray," said Greg. "He called me to see if I could move an irrigator for him and that was the last time I talked to him. He entered the field and the driveway to the field went under a power line."

Unfortunately, Grant didn't drive far enough into the field.

He stopped at an angle close to the power lines. As he began unfolding the 90-foot sprayer booms, they touched the energized power line, which instantly electrified the tractor.

"He tried to call Wayne, the young man who runs my farm, but he wasn't able to get through because there was so much static, so we don't know what happened after that," said Greg.

The sprayer was caught in a Bon Homme Yankton Electric Cooperative distribution power line. Co-op Electrician Kevin Meyer was just a few miles away when he and his apprentice received an outage call.

"A radio call came across that another neighbor farmer was out of power as it started out as an individual outage," said Meyer. "We packed up our tools and stuff and left the yard. As we were leaving the yard, I received another call from a supervisor saying that we got a call that there's a sprayer that looks like it might have made contact with a line that's probably the first place to go and it's looking like we have more consumers out."

Meyer and his apprentice didn't know what they might discover but knew they had to move fast.

"As we're rolling up on scene, one neighbor was there sitting on the road on his four wheeler and he just said someone is down in front of the tractor," said Meyer. "It was very tough to see other than you could see someone was there but didn't know who it was and at that particular time, I knew that it could be Greg, Grant or my cousin, Wayne. So, in all that, you're mentally preparing yourself for what you're about to discover."

What they would discover is that Grant made a mistake that would end his life. Rather than staying in the cab and waiting for help, he had stepped out of the sprayer.

"The consequences of that mistake took my only son," said Greg. "He was my friend, my partner, my confidant. Now every day I remember that terrible morning and I see Grant lying dead on the

 Touchstone Energy[®] Cooperatives
PoweringYourSafety.com
 KNOW WHAT TO DO IF YOU HIT A POWER LINE

STAY PUT	JUMP CLEAR	STAY AWAY
 <p>If your equipment contacts a power line, stay inside. DO NOT EXIT. Call 911.</p>	 <p>If you must exit due to a fire, jump from the equipment so that no part of your body touches the equipment and ground at the same time. Hop or shuffle with your feet together at least 40 feet away.</p>	 <p>When you are clear of the area, call for help and keep others away. DO NOT approach your vehicle again until utility crews and emergency responders tell you it is safe.</p>

ABOVE: Know these steps if your vehicle is involved in an accident with a power line. RIGHT: Grant McCann was 35 when he was killed in a 2016 electrical accident.



ground. There's no fix. There's no second chances."

No one can know what was going through Grant's head at the moment he left the cab.

But Greg wants others to learn from that mistake, so it doesn't happen to anyone else.

"If Grant would've stayed in the tractor and not touched anything, I think he'd be here today. But he didn't," said Greg. "I don't want anyone to have to experience the sadness and the emptiness that I and Grant's family and friends are experiencing and will be experiencing for a long, long time."

Do you know what to do if a vehicle you're in contacts a power line? First, stay in the vehicle and call 911 for help. If you must exit the vehicle because of a fire, tuck your arms across your body and jump clear of any wires with your feet together, never touching the equipment and ground at the same time. Then shuffle or hop at least 40 feet away with your feet together. Stay away from the equipment until the authorities tell you it is safe.

"People get in a hurry and they don't regard the risk as a risk and one mistake and it's too late," said Greg. "The consequences are so grim and terrible, that there's no good reason not to be really careful and be aware of where you're at and the machinery you're using and where it's located. Once it's done, there's no turning back."

Letting distractions take your mind away from work in the fields significantly increases the likelihood of farming accidents. Minimize distractions and stay focused in the fields. If you notice your mind wandering at any point, bring it back to the task at hand.

As we enter this year's planting and spraying seasons, remain aware of where electrical equipment is located when you're working on the farm and remember the steps to take if your equipment contacts a power line. You could save your life, or the life of someone you love. Visit poweringyoursafety.com to learn more.

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

April 22-May 2

Beauty & the Beast, Sioux Empire Community Theatre, Sioux Falls, SD
605-367-6000

April 23-24

Junkin' Market Days, W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Building, Sioux Falls, SD
605-941-4958

April 24

Party for the Planet, Great Plains Zoo, Sioux Falls, SD
605-367-7003

April 30-May 2, May 6-8

Radium Girls, Pierre Players Community Theatre, Pierre, SD
605-224-7826

May 2

Opening Day, Prairie Village, Madison, SD
605-256-3644

May 8

Virtual Cinco de Mayo Fiesta, Facebook, Sioux Falls, SD
605-271-0468

May 8

Wells Fargo Cinco de Mayo Fiesta, Falls Park, Sioux Falls, SD
605-271-0468

May 8 NEW DATE

Winefest Renaissance, Boys & Girls Club of Aberdeen Area, Aberdeen, SD
605-225-8714

May 9

Mother's Day Tours, Historic Adams House & Days of '76 Museum, Deadwood, SD
605-578-37241



State Parks Open House & Free Fishing Weekend, May 21-23, 2021

May 13

Vermilion-Area Farmers Market - Plant Sale, High & Cherry Streets, Vermilion, SD
605-659-3399

May 15

Red Dirt Music Festival featuring Casey Donahew, Ian Munsick and Randy Burghardt Mountain Grand, Deadwood, SD
605-559-0386

May 21-23

Annual Sound of Silence Tesla Rally, Downtown, Custer, SD
605-673-2244

May 21-23

State Parks Open House & Free Fishing Weekend, All State Parks & Recreation Areas, SD
605-773-3391

May 22

Frühlingsfest & Spring Market, Main Street, Rapid City, SD
605-716-7979

May 31

PPQG 25th Annual Quilt Show, Harding County REC Center, Buffalo, SD
605-641-5591

June 4-5

State BBQ Championships, South Dakota State Fairgrounds, Huron, SD
605-353-7354

June 5-6

18th Annual Wessington Springs Foothills Rodeo, Wessington Springs Rodeo Grounds, Wessington Springs, SD
605-770-5720

June 5-6

Siouxland Renaissance Festival, W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD
866-489-9241

June 6

Miss Prairie Village & Miss Prairie Princess Pageant, Prairie Village, Madison, SD
605-256-3644

June 11-13

Regional Qualifying High School Rodeo, Multiple Locations, SD
605-529-5868

June 15-19

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

June 17-19

Hartford Jamboree Days, City Park, Hartford, SD
605-941-0809

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.