


COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Christmas at the Capitol

Capitol Christmas
event turns 40
Pages 8-9

The wonders of
winter stargazing
Pages 12-13



Thousands of visitors are
expected to view the nearly
100 Christmas trees on
display in Pierre during the
Christmas season.

SVE Continues Aggressive Construction Plan



Tim McCarthy
General Manager/
Chief Executive
Officer

Just over five years ago, Sioux Valley Energy embarked on an unprecedented construction workplan goal of replacing/building 125 miles of line. Each year since that time, we have worked towards that same ambitious goal, helping to ensure the future reliability of the electric system. This work is not possible without our dedicated employees, and they deserve a big THANK YOU!

Sioux Valley Energy (like most other utilities) has an aging overhead system with thousands of miles of line—some of which is

“We do anticipate continuing the aggressive replacement work for many years to come. This is imperative to managing the future reliability of the electric system.”

50 years or older. We are at a point where it needs to be replaced, and the aggressive work plan allows us to do that. We wanted to give you an idea of what type of work we've been doing in 2021 so far.

Through September 2021 we have spent approximately \$14.5 million of the capital budget with the following major items:

- \$8 million – Rebuilding old lines and constructing new lines
- \$2.6 million – New transformer and meter purchases
- \$1.3 million – New services
- \$800,000 – Underground cable replacement
- \$550,000 – Service upgrades
- \$1.2 million – Other

The work has not been limited to one area of the Cooperative's service territory. Here's an overview of some of the areas where our lineworkers have been spending considerable time replacing overhead and underground line:

- Minnehaha County, SD – 42 miles
- Brookings County, SD – 36 miles
- Rock County, MN – 14 miles
- Lake County, SD – 13.5 miles
- Moody County, SD – 13 miles
- Pipestone County, MN – 5.5 miles
- Kingsbury County, SD – 1 mile

Within these counties, specific three-phase projects include:

- South Brookings/Ward – 13 miles
- Grand Meadow/Humboldt – 6.5 miles
- White – 6 miles
- Hardwick/Edgerton, MN – 6 miles
- Colton/Hartford – 5.5 miles
- Steen, MN – 5 miles
- Hartford – 3.5 miles
- West Sioux Falls – 2 miles

Approximately 60 percent of Sioux Valley Energy's 6,100 miles of line is underground. Over the last 20 years, we have made great strides replacing the underground system; however, there is still work to be done. This year we were able to replace approximately 11 miles of underground line throughout the service territory.

We do anticipate continuing the aggressive replacement work for many years to come. This is imperative to managing the future reliability of the electric system. So please be mindful of our lineworkers and contractors who are doing that work—slow down and be aware of your surroundings to help keep them safe! Thanks again to all employees who made this impressive work plan possible and thank you to our members for supporting our efforts to keep the lights on!

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

SIoux VALLEY ENERGY

(USPS No. 497-440)

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- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
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Sioux Valley Energy Cooperative Connections is the monthly publication for the members of Sioux Valley Energy, PO Box 216, Colman, SD 57017. Families subscribe to *Sioux Valley Energy Cooperative Connections* as part of their electric cooperative membership. The purpose of *Sioux Valley Energy Cooperative Connections* is to provide reliable, helpful information to Sioux Valley Energy members on electric cooperative matters and better living.

Subscription information: Sioux Valley Energy members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Non-member subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. Periodicals Postage Paid at Colman, SD 57017 and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to *Sioux Valley Energy Cooperative Connections*, PO Box 216, Colman, SD 57017; telephone 605-534-3535; toll free 800-234-1960.

How to contact us: Phone: 1-800-234-1960
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Website: www.siouxvalleyenergy.com

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Sioux Valley Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

2022 DISTRICT MEETINGS SET

The Sioux Valley Energy Board of Directors approved the 2022 District Meeting schedule during their September meeting. Three elections will take place in Districts 4, 6 and 10. In District 6, only one at large seat (Fish) is up for election this year.

Members interested in running for the Board must submit a Director Petition, Conflict of Interest Statement and Qualification Certification 60 days prior to the meeting date. Petitions must be delivered to a Sioux Valley Energy office location or postmarked by the petition deadline. Sioux Valley Energy encourages members to gather extra member signatures and to deliver or mail completed petitions in advance of the petition deadline to ensure time for member verification.



Petition deadlines are as follows:

- District 6 – Sunday, January 16, 2022
- District 10 –Friday, January 28, 2022
- District 4 – Sunday, January 30, 2022

Petitions can be obtained at www.siouxvalleyenergy.com or by calling 800-234-1960. The Cooperative Bylaws state the qualifications needed to be a director. Interested members are encouraged to contact Brenda Schelhaas, Executive Assistant. All Board seats elected in 2022 will serve three-year terms.

Date	District	Director	Location
February 22	5	Weinacht	Taopi Hall, Colton, SD
February 24	8	Leuthold	Grand Prairie Event Center, Luverne, MN
February 28	1	DeGreef	Elkton Community Center, Elkton, SD
March 10	9	Johnson	Pipestone Area High School, Pipestone, MN
March 17*	6	Fish* & Rogen	Brandon Valley High School, Brandon, SD
March 22	3	Heinemann	William J Janklow Comm. Center, Flandreau, SD
March 24	7	DeMent	West Central School, Hartford, SD
March 28	2	Vostad	Sioux Valley School, Volga, SD
March 29*	10	Roskamp	Edgerton Public School, Edgerton, MN
March 31*	4	Daniel	Dakota Prairie Playhouse, Madison, SD

* Denotes election meetings.

Ready your home for a winter break during the holidays

If you're planning to be out of town for an extended period of time during the holidays, take heed of the following recommendations to save some energy and keep your home safe while you're away.

- Set your home's thermostat to 50 degrees. This temperature is a happy midpoint that avoids wasting energy to warm an empty house while still preventing damage to your pipes and plants. If sub-20-degree days are forecast during the time you are away, drip faucets.
- Turn off your electric water heater at the breaker or set it to the lowest temperature possible.
- To avoid a potential fire hazard, unplug the washer and dryer before you leave your home. Disconnect the hoses leading to the washer to prevent them from freezing.
- Unplug all of your small appliances. You'll reduce the risk of a house fire and save a bit on your electric bill.
- Don't broadcast your travel plans on social media. Instead, share photos from your trip after you return.
- If you set a timer for your outdoor or indoor lights, make sure to switch up the times over the days you'll be gone so it's not obvious to any onlookers that the house is empty when lights go on at 6 p.m. every day like clockwork. If possible, stagger several timers that control different lights to approximate the natural movement of someone through a house.
- Close blinds and curtains. Don't advertise your belongings to any would-be house burglars.
- Be strategic about putting out post-holiday recycling and trash. If there are a lot of boxes from new gadgets or other expensive electronics, wait until you get back to put them out so they're not sitting outside in full view for days. Or have a trusted neighbor set them by the curb on the appropriate day.
- Place a hold on all mail and newspaper deliveries, and ask a neighbor or a friend to pick up any packages from your porch.

DID YOU KNOW?



On Christmas Eve 1923, President Calvin Coolidge began the country's celebration of Christmas by lighting the first National Christmas Tree decorated with electric lights.



Don't cut down trees by power lines

Milo Thompson

Milo reminds electric cooperative members that cutting down trees located near power lines can be hazardous. Milo is the child of Kurt and Rebecca Thompson of Hayti. They are members of H-D 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.

HOLIDAY DESSERTS

CRANBERRY CAKE

Ingredients:

- 3 Tbsp. butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup milk
- 3 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 2-3 cups raw cranberries

Butter Sauce

- 1 cup sugar

- 1/2 cup butter
- 1/2 cup evaporated milk or cream
- 1 Tbsp. flour
- 1 tsp. vanilla

METHOD

Grease and flour a bundt pan or 9 x 13 inch pan. Cream butter, sugar and egg. Beat in flour, milk, baking powder and salt. Fold in cranberries. Spread batter in pan. Bake at 350 degrees about 45 minutes. Bundt pan may need one hour. Serve with butter sauce. For butter sauce, mix flour and sugar. Place all ingredients except vanilla in saucepan. Heat, beating well over high heat until hot and bubbly. Add vanilla. Serve warm over cranberry cake.

Mary Jessen, Holabird

BAKED RICE PUDDING

Ingredients:

- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup water
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 3 Tbsp. rice
- 1 Tbsp. butter
- 1/4 cup raisins
- Pinch of salt

Topping

- Sugar
- Cinnamon
- Milk

METHOD

In a 2-qt. baking dish, add milk, water, sugar and rice. Stir together. Add a pinch of salt and raisins. Bake at 350 degrees for one hour. Take out of oven and add butter. Let sit while you eat main meal. Dish up in bowls, sprinkle with sugar, cinnamon and add milk.

Deanna Dean, Artesian

FANCY CHRISTMAS CAKES

Ingredients:

Cakes

- 1 pkg. (2-layer size) white cake mix
- 1 Tbsp. McCormick® Red Food Color
- 1 tsp. McCormick® All Natural Pure Vanilla Extract
- 1 Tbsp. McCormick® Green Food Color
- 1 pkg. (16 oz.) chocolate candy coating, such as CANDIQUIK®

Buttercream

- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened
- 1 tsp. McCormick® All Natural Pure Vanilla Extract
- 1 pkg. (16 oz.) confectioners' sugar, sifted
- 2 Tbsp. milk
- Pinch of salt

METHOD

Preheat oven and prepare batter as directed. Divide batter evenly into 2 bowls (about 1-1/2 cups of batter each). Stir red food color and vanilla into first bowl. Stir green color into second bowl. Pour red and green batter into greased 13 x 9-inch baking pans. Gently tap on counter to remove any air bubbles. (If you do not have 2 13 x 9-inch pans, bake one color cake first, then reuse the pan to bake the second.) Bake 6 minutes. Remove pans from oven and tap on counter to remove any air bubbles. Return pans to oven and bake 6-9 minutes longer. Cool in pans 10 minutes. Invert cakes onto wire rack. Cool completely. Refrigerate cakes until ready to assemble. For buttercream, beat butter in large bowl with electric mixer until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add vanilla and mix. Gradually beat in confectioners' sugar on low speed, scraping sides and bottom of bowl after each addition. Add milk and salt; beat on medium-high until light and fluffy, at least 3 minutes. If frosting is too thick, beat in additional milk.

www.mccormick.com

Please send your favorite soup 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, phone number and cooperative name.

HEAT PUMPS SAVE MEMBERS MONEY



Sheila Gross
Energy Services
Specialist

As the days start to get a little chilly, we are reminded that winter is just around the corner. Now's the time to check your heating equipment to make sure it's ready for operation.

Is it time to replace your HVAC system? If your unit is 15 to 20 years old or has continual service issues, it may be time to consider installing a new one. Should you replace all of your HVAC equipment at the same time? Your existing HVAC equipment in your home may not be compatible with a newer generation heat pump due to the changes, design and functionality of newer generation heat pump units. You should consult with your HVAC contractor regarding compatibility as it is very important that all components of your new HVAC system are designed to work together properly. A mismatched system can lead to poor performance and will not deliver the comfort and efficiency that you expect. In a typical home, heating and cooling is the largest portion of your monthly energy dollars.

We are in unprecedented times with impacts to materials and supplies and trends of increasing rates for fossil fuels such as natural gas and propane. SVE's Energy Services department has been getting quite a few inquiries asking for a comparison of operating costs between electric heat and fossil fuels. The chart below will provide you some comparison data, but you can also contact us at 800-234-1960 to talk about your personal scenario and equipment comparisons. It's hard 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. Heat pumps—geothermal

or air-to-air including mini-split ductless solutions—are designed for any application, including new construction, a remodeling project/addition or replacing existing equipment. Air-source heat pumps are the most popular systems installed in our area due to cost, although geothermal heat pumps are another great choice. Even utilizing an air-source heat pump for heating mainly during the fall and spring edge months (October, November, March, April) can save you money on your heating bills. Plus, you get the benefit of efficient cooling in the summer.

Our incentives and special heat rates make choosing a heat pump an even better choice! Our 2021 program offers builders/homeowners a rebate of \$600 for an air-to-air heat pump (2 ton and larger) paired with a propane/natural gas furnace, or \$1,200 for a geo system or an air to air heat pump paired with an electric furnace. We also offer a rebate of \$100/ton for mini-split heat pumps. Tax credits are also available—26% tax credit for a geothermal heat pump and up to 10% of the cost up to \$500 for an ENERGY STAR® qualified air-source heat pump. Contact SVE for more information on programs and incentives and how choosing a heat pump can save you money!

Contact Sheila Gross at sheila.gross@siouxvalleyenergy.com to learn more.

2021 HEAT PUMP COMPARISONS					
SVE's 6.35¢ heat rate <i>(October-April billing cycles)</i>		96% efficient propane furnace	96% efficient natural gas furnace	90% efficient propane furnace	90% efficient natural gas furnace
Air-Source Heat Pump <i>(Based on rating of 8.2 HSPF, utilized most in October, November, March & April)</i>	EQUIVALENT TO:	68¢/gallon	74¢/therm	64¢/gallon	70¢/therm
Geothermal Heat Pump <i>(Based on COP rating of 3.8)</i>		43¢/gallon	47¢/therm	40¢/gallon	43¢/therm
Electric Resistance <i>(Based on 100% efficient)</i>		\$1.63/gallon	\$1.79/therm	\$1.53/gallon	\$1.67/therm

Former Alliant Energy customers are eligible for rebates and upon request can move to the SVE legacy rate programs.

TELL ME MORE! PLEASE CONTACT ME about this topic (write in subject): _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Account #: _____ Phone #: _____ Email: _____

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

UTILITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

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

Sioux Valley Energy's goal is to help you avoid disconnection of electric service, so please call our Member Services Department at 1-877-511-8062 if you have additional questions about your electric bill.

MINNEHAHA COUNTY

- LIEAP, Low Income Energy Assistance Program 1-800-233-8503
- Minnehaha County Human Services 605-367-4217
- Minnehaha Community Outreach 605-331-3935
- Minnehaha County Salvation Army 605-332-2331
- Sioux Falls Interlakes Community Action 605-334-2808
- First Call for Help 211

BROOKINGS COUNTY

- LIEAP, Low Income Energy Assistance Program 1-800-233-8503
- Brookings County Welfare Office 605-696-8260
- Brookings County Community Action 605-692-6391
- Brookings County Salvation Army 605-692-8863
- My Neighbor 605-691-3225
- First Call for Help 211

KINGSBURY COUNTY

- LIEAP, Low Income Energy Assistance Program 1-800-233-8503
- Interlakes Community Action 1-605-854-3701
- First Call for Help 211

LAKE COUNTY

- LIEAP, Low Income Energy Assistance Program 1-800-233-8503
- Interlakes Community Action 605-256-6518
- Lake County Welfare 605-256-7619
- First Call for Help 211

MOODY COUNTY

- LIEAP, Low Income Energy Assistance Program 1-800-233-8503
- Interlakes Community Action 605-997-2824
- Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribal Office 605-997-3891
- First Call for Help 211

PIPESTONE COUNTY

- Southwestern MN Opportunity Council 1-800-658-2444
- Southwest Health & Human Services 1-888-837-6713
- The Salvation Army Heat Share 800-842-7279
- Pipestone County Veterans Administration 507-825-1171
- MN Department of Energy Services 800-657-3710
- First Call for Help 211

ROCK COUNTY

- Southwestern MN Opportunity Council 1-800-658-2444
- Southwest Health & Human Services 1-888-837-6713
- The Salvation Army Heat Share 800-842-7279
- Rock County Veterans Administration 507-283-5061
- MN Department of Energy Services 800-657-3710
- First Call for Help 211



CHRISTMAS AT THE CAPITOL

Each year, musicians and other entertainers from across the state perform for the tens of thousands of visitors who travel to Pierre to see the “Christmas at the Capitol” displays and decorations. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Christmas at the Capitol: Celebrating 40 years of yuletide splendor and dazzling displays

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

With all of its spectacular lights, familiar carols and colorful decorations, Christmas at the Capitol inspires thousands to become awash in the spirit of the season.

It’s an especially magical and meaningful event for Moriah Gross, founder and director of the Pierre Youth Orchestra. Over the past decade, Gross and her students have performed in the Capitol Rotunda and added to the yuletide ambiance that more than 20,000 visitors travel from far and near to experience.

Gross is one of many performers slated to appear in the Rotunda as Christmas at the Capitol takes place from Nov. 23 through Dec. 26. Visitors to this year’s celebration can expect to see brilliant hues of ruby, pink and pearl in recognition of the event’s 40th anniversary.

“Winter Wishes” is the theme for 2021 as nearly 100 decorated trees will line the halls and fill the

historic structure. Local businesses and government agencies, non-profit organizations and other community groups from across the state will once again put their decorating skills to the test and give the Capitol and its environs a South Dakota Christmas flair.

This year’s official lighting ceremony will take place on Tuesday, Nov. 23, at 7:30 p.m. The popular Pie Day is set for Saturday, Dec. 4, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., when complimentary slices of pie, cookies, coffee and ice cream will be offered along with live musical entertainment sure to spark the Christmas spirit.

Gross said she and her students look forward to the event each year, but one memory stands out for her among the rest. Two years ago, she accompanied a guest performer who sang the traditional carol Silent Night in the language of the Lakota Sioux.

“It was so spectacular and moving to be able to have that experience there inside the State Capitol and honoring the Lakota people and

culture, and also to have our students experience that as well,” said Gross, a member of Oahe Electric Cooperative outside of Pierre.

A native of Kansas and accomplished string instrumentalist, Gross relocated to Pierre 10 years ago and soon realized there was no educational string program for public school students. So, she started the Pierre Youth Orchestra, which has nearly 40 students who are set to perform at the Capitol on Sunday, Dec. 19, at 5 p.m.

THIS YEAR’S OFFICIAL LIGHTING CEREMONY WILL TAKE PLACE TUESDAY, NOV. 23, AT 7:30 P.M. THE POPULAR PIE DAY IS SET FOR SATURDAY, DEC. 4, FROM 11 A.M. TO 3 P.M.

Gross said while she calls the Capitol “one of my favorite places to perform,” the experience is also beneficial for her music students in many ways.

“It’s just the opportunity to play for

DECKING THE CAPITOL HALLS



Nearly 100 trees are decorated by clubs, associations, non-profits and government agencies. *Photo by Travel South Dakota.*

an audience in this kind of setting. It's very intimate and not like playing on a stage in a large theater where the audience is sitting at a distance away from you," she said. "In the Rotunda, there are people all around, sometimes standing room only, and they're very close and intimate. It's an emotional time of year and you get to really connect with the audience. At the same time, they have to be disciplined and focused on what they're doing. It's a unique experience that a lot of students don't always get to have."

She said many students will return after they've graduated from the program and sit in on the performance and have their photos taken with the current crop of students at the Capitol.

Observing Christmas at the Capitol from behind the scenes, Gross noted the many individuals and volunteers who help make the event a success each year.

"I can't say enough about all the committees, greeters, volunteers, organizers and others around the

Approximate number
of annual visitors

20,000

to the Christmas at
the Capitol event.

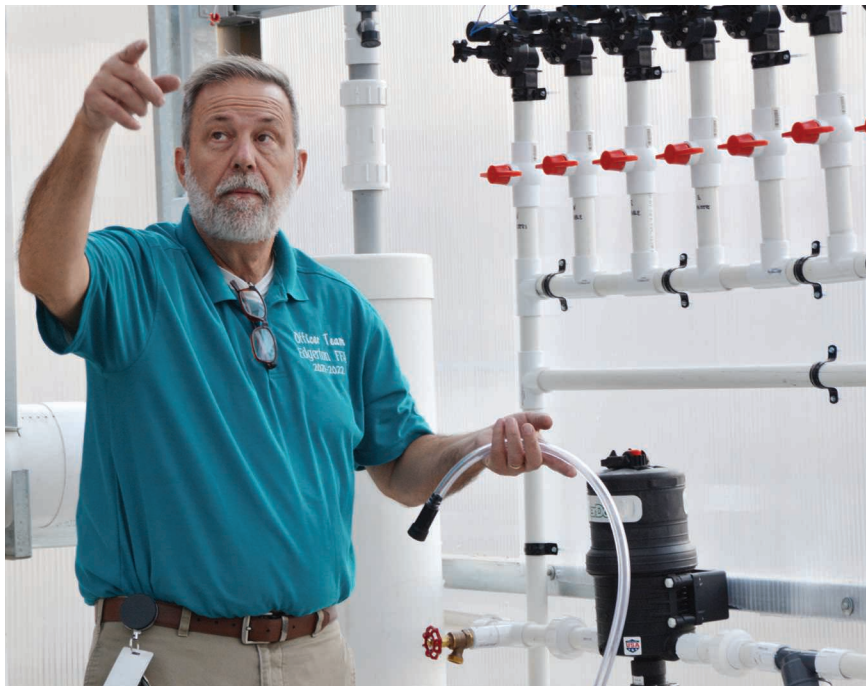
community who make this possible for people coming in from all over the country and the world. You have the sights and sounds and scents of the pine trees, and it all adds up to a wonderful holiday experience," she said. "There are so many people who all work together to make this something special."

The annual holiday event started back in 1981 with a dozen decorated trees and has grown in popularity through the past 40 years. Visitors can look for some of the more popular recurring displays such as a set of hand-painted porcelain ornaments from the China Painters Organization and an old wooden nativity scene that the local Knights of Columbus group sets up on the second floor of the Capitol each year.

Those interested in serving as a volunteer for the event can contact rick.augusztin@state.sd.us.



The State Capitol grounds are also decorated to evoke the spirit of Christmas. *Photo by Travel South Dakota.*



Thompson put together an advisory board. The group began discussing the possibility of a greenhouse in 2017 and started touring similar facilities the next year. In 2020, the school board gave Thompson the green light to solicit funds for the project. Within just three months, he was able to secure \$60,000 worth of funding from the generosity of local businesses.

MEMBERS MAKE OPERATION ROUND UP POSSIBLE

Operation Round Up started in the year 2000. Since that time, nearly \$2 million has been awarded to worthy causes throughout the Cooperative’s service territory.

Sioux Valley Energy members contribute to Operation Round Up by having their electric bill rounded up to the next highest dollar. 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 www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-community/operation-roundup.

The next application deadline for Operation Round Up is Feb. 20.

GROWING EDUCATION

Edgerton Public Ag Ed Department Builds Greenhouse with help from Operation Round Up Funds

Carrie Vugteveen
Vice President of Public Relations

Hands-on agricultural education is now a reality at Edgerton Public High School.

The school’s agricultural education and FFA program recently unveiled its newly constructed greenhouse and adjacent classroom facility at a special event.

Agriculture education instructor and FFA advisor, Nathan Thompson, says the facility was built by volunteers who included area construction workers, agricultural producers, and students. Close to 60 local businesses helped support the

project through donations as well.

Sioux Valley Energy’s Operation Round Up program provided a \$1,500 grant to help support the construction of the greenhouse.

“With Sioux Valley’s support and backing behind education and kids, especially hands-on activities like we are talking about here, is just tremendous,” said Thompson.

The agricultural education program was started in 2016 when Mr.



Edgerton Public agricultural education students, Chloe K. and Cesar G., gave SVE Operation Round Up Director, Connie Hillard, a tour of the newly constructed greenhouse. **Top left:** Ag-Ed/FFA advisor, Nathan Thompson, shows tour attendees how the watering system works in the greenhouse.

SCHOLARSHIPS OFFERED

Application deadline is January 14

Sioux Valley Energy is offering \$16,000 worth of scholarships to eligible graduating high school seniors or first time attendees at an institution of higher education. Those scholarship funds also include a designated scholarship to an individual attending power line school. Applications that are hand delivered must be in one of the SVE offices no later than 4:30 p.m. on

Friday, Jan. 14, 2022. Mailed applications must be postmarked by Jan. 14, 2022.

Applicants must be a child or dependent of a Sioux Valley Energy member. Applications will be judged on the basis of grades, work experience, school activities, volunteer community service and an essay question.

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

Scholarship submittal requirements are listed on the forms. Applications are available at local schools' guidance offices or online at: <https://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-community/scholarship-program>



50 YEARS SERVING CO-OP MEMBERS

Lead Accountant Nepp Dedicated to Serving Our Members. Always.

Kathy Nepp walked into Southwestern Minnesota Cooperative Electric (SMCE) on Nov. 1, 1971, to start her new job as billing clerk at the cooperative based in Pipestone, Minnesota. She would stay with SMCE through its 1996 merger with neighboring Sioux Valley Empire Electric Association in Colman, South Dakota, and, on Nov. 1, 2021, marked 50 years with Sioux Valley Energy.



Kathy Nepp
Lead Accountant

“If I didn’t enjoy it, I would have been gone a long time ago,” said Nepp who is now a lead accountant for Sioux Valley Energy. Her day-to-day responsibilities involve capital credits, vehicle licensing and taxes.

Technology changes over the years have been one of the biggest game-changers during Nepp’s career.

“The Excel spreadsheet has been amazing. Everything was done by hand before – all the bills were figured by hand, members self-read their meters,” Nepp said, reflecting on the early days of her career. Capital credits were calculated on a rotary calculator, typed onto a sheet, and then manually entered onto each individual member’s ledger card.

Other changes she has seen during her 50 year tenure is the way members pay their electric bills. She says while paying bills on line and through automated payments is more convenient, Nepp noted it has changed the interaction with members.

“We used to see some of our members every month at the office,” Nepp said.

Nepp and her husband, Harlan, live in Pipestone and have two grown sons and six grandchildren.

6

of General Managers Nepp has worked for.
(also the number of grandchildren she has.)

5

different office spaces she has worked in.
(also the number of decades as a co-op employee.)

2

locations worked – 25 yrs. at Pipestone; 25 yrs. at Colman
(also the number of children she has.)

SEARCHING FOR THE STARS

Badlands Observatory photographer Teresa Hofer captured this image of The Pleiades, also known as the Seven Sisters.

Badlands Observatory welcomes stargazers, researchers and others interested in pursuing the field of astronomy

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

For centuries, astronomers have sought to find a scientific explanation for the Star of Bethlehem, which is described in the Gospel of Matthew as the celestial sign that led the Magi into the presence of the Christ child.

Some have speculated that the object high in the night sky could have been a supernova, a comet or possibly a conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Venus.

Accomplished astronomer Ron Dyvig has views of his own. As a researcher who adheres to scientific methods, he's a bit hesitant to plow into topics where science and faith may collide.

But when pressed to offer an educated opinion on the Christmas Star, he replies, "There are several elements that make it challenging to address from a scientific standpoint and there are a

half-dozen theories beyond what's there in the Biblical accounts. But I think it could have been a nova or the planet Venus. Venus can be remarkably bright after sunset when it appears to descend in the west for several weeks. That may have been what the Magi saw and would be something they could follow. But a lot of people have strong religious beliefs about it, and if you believe it was a miracle, then science can't really explain it adequately."

Dyvig is founder of the Badlands Observatory, which he opened for his own private viewing and independent research in 2000. Two years ago, he began renovating the facility located in the small community of Quinn just north of I-90, with the goal of one day welcoming members of the public interested in astronomy.

While the renovation project is not fully complete and a grand opening is set for next spring, Badlands

Observatory is now welcoming visitors by reservation only.

"Since we got settled into this facility, there has just been so much public interest in it that we decided to go public. It's as simple as that," Dyvig said. "Right now we're taking it slow with small groups. During the winter months our activities will be curtailed a bit, then we'll expect a busy spring."

A native of Deadwood, the 79-year old Dyvig took a keen interest in astronomy at an early age when he was



Teresa Hofer and Ron Dyvig are long-time collaborators who have opened the Badlands Observatory to public access.

introduced to the discipline by his local Boy Scout troop leader. He created his first observatory as a youngster when he made a concrete pad and a cylinder to hold his telescope in place in the middle of a rancher's field. During his high school and college years, he spent late nights scanning the skies, marveling at the vastness of the universe and hoping to discover new heavenly bodies.

As a college student, Dyvig learned and taught the art of telescope-making and became president of the Black Hills Astronomical Society. He later designed and fabricated the optics for the Hidden Valley Observatory in Rapid City.

Dyvig spent time honing his craft as a research assistant at the University of Arizona where he worked under several mentors and utilized the advanced facilities at Kitt Peak National Observatory. He was chosen to help design and test image intensifier camera systems for Steward Observatory.

While through the decades he kept day jobs to support his avocation, his evenings were spent star gazing and pursuing new discoveries. His passion and dedication to astronomy paid off when he discovered - and aptly dubbed - Asteroid 26715 South Dakota just a year after opening the Badlands Observatory. It's just one of the 25



Photographer Bob Rossiter and Ron Dyvig are shown with the 26-inch Newtonian Reflector telescope at Badlands Observatory.

discoveries credited to Dyvig during the course of his astronomy work.

Building the observatory was no small task. First, he found and converted an old medical building in Quinn to house the facility. Then he personally designed and fabricated all of the optics, including grinding and polishing the mirror for the 26-inch f/4.8 Newtonian Reflector telescope. West River Electric

Cooperative worked with Dyvig and the town of Quinn to install hoods over surrounding street lights to reduce "light pollution" and enhance the ability to scan the night sky.

Dyvig describes himself as fortunate to find a partner in Teresa Hofer, a career accountant who shares his passion for all things celestial.

There's always something to be done

at the observatory, Hofer said. Ongoing duties include maintaining and upgrading the optical and drive systems, control systems for the telescope and dome, facility management, designing and implementing new educational programs for visitors, website updates and keeping up-to-date on developments in the field of astronomy.

"There's plenty to do, especially since we decided to make the facility public after we figured people might like to see what we do," she said. "We had to make sure everything was comfortable for the public and do a lot of renovating and painting and upgrading."

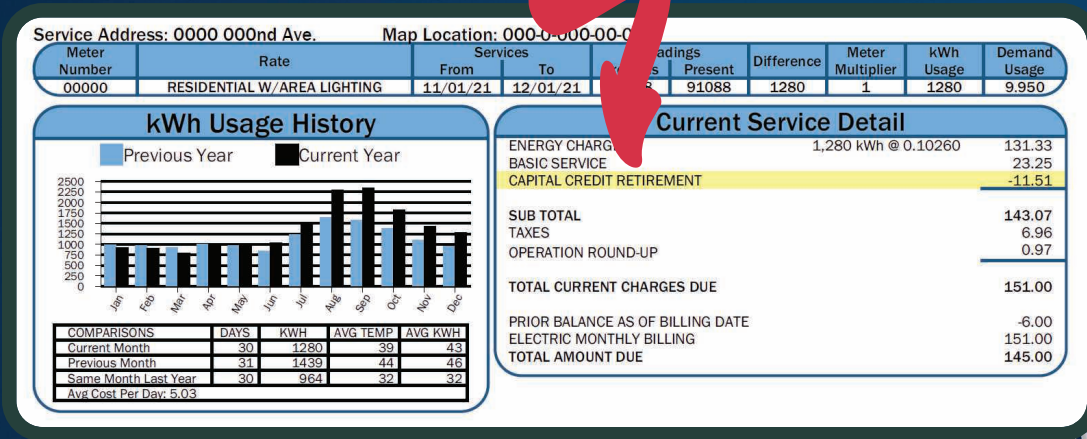
Hofer said she is starting to promote the observatory as a destination for astronomy enthusiasts who might be interested in touring the facility and peering through one of seven telescopes on the observation deck. Dyvig is in the process of also building a radio telescope to add to his collection.

Those interested in experiencing the Badlands Observatory can call 605-381-1521 to set up a viewing time or visit www.badlandsobservatory.com.



The Orion Nebula has long captured the imaginations of star watchers as it has been associated with the Greek myth of a huntsman placed among the stars by Zeus.

WHAT'S THIS CREDIT ON MY BILL?



The Cooperative Difference means YOU get the credit!

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

The Sioux Valley Energy Board of Directors has approved a **\$2.082 million general capital**

credit retirement. The Cooperative will be retiring the balance of the **1996, 1997 and 1998** capital credits along with a portion of the **1999** and **2020** allocations.

Individuals and organizations who were members of SVE in those years will be receiving a portion of their capital credits. The amount of each allocation and retirement is based on how much individual members paid the Co-op for electric service during that period. Your capital credit has been applied to the December bill as a credit.

If you have questions about your capital credit retirement, take a look at some of our frequently asked questions on the next page or contact our Member Services Department at **877-511-8062**.

How does the process work for capital credits?



HAVE QUESTIONS? WE HAVE ANSWERS!

HOW ARE CAPITAL CREDITS CALCULATED?

The amount of capital credits you earn in a given year is based on the amount of capital you contribute to the Cooperative through payment of your monthly electric bills and the amount of operating margins realized by the Cooperative.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ALLOCATED AND RETIRED CAPITAL CREDITS?

Allocated capital credits appear as an entry on the permanent financial records of the Cooperative and reflect your investment in SVE. When capital credits are retired, a bill credit is issued to you, and your ownership in the Cooperative is reduced. After reviewing the Cooperative's finances, the Board of Directors determines the method, basis, priority, and timing of all capital credits retirements.

CAN I RECEIVE MY DISTRIBUTION AS A CHECK INSTEAD OF A BILL CREDIT?

No, all current members are receiving their distributions as bill credits. SVE is committed to pursuing the most cost-effective business practices. The Cooperative saves a considerable amount of money by distributing capital credits as bill credits as opposed to the expense of printing and mailing checks to more than 27,000 current members.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY CAPITAL CREDITS IF I PASS AWAY BEFORE THEY ARE ELIGIBLE FOR DISTRIBUTION?

When SVE receives proper documentation to settle the estate of a current or former member who has passed away, the Co-op will distribute capital credits in accordance with our Capital Credits Policy. SVE discounts the value of these credits using the present value of each year's distribution compared to the expected payout of 25 years from when the capital credits were accumulated.



SIoux VALLEY
ENERGY

A Touchstone Energy Cooperative



**Christmas Day
December 25, 2021**

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.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

**NOVEMBER 26
Annual Sioux Falls Parade of Lights**
Phillips Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-338-4009

**NOVEMBER 26
Sioux Falls Izaak Walton League Black Friday Trap Shoot**
5000 N Oakview Place, Sioux Falls, SD, 11 o'clock start, lunch available, 605-332-9527

**NOVEMBER 26-28
Beautiful – The Carole King Musical**
Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, visit <https://www.washingtonpavilion.org/> for more info and tickets

**NOVEMBER 27
Lights at the Lodge/Lighted Trail Walk**
Hiawatha Pageant Park, Pipestone, MN, 507-825-3316

**DECEMBER 2
Christmas on the Prairie**
526 North Broadway Avenue, Miller, SD, 605-853-3098

**DECEMBER 2
Yankton Holiday Festival of Lights**
Downtown, Yankton, SD, 605-668-5231

**DECEMBER 3
Handel's Messiah**
First Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

**DECEMBER 3-4
Christmas in The Hills – "Visions of Sugar Plums"**
Various Locations, Hot Springs, SD, 605-890-0519

**DECEMBER 3-5
Annual Christmas Tree Lighting & Cowboy Christmas**
Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center, Fort Pierre, SD, 605-223-7690

**DECEMBER 4
Rapid City Garden Club's Wreath & Centerpiece Sale**
Central States Fairgrounds, Rapid City, SD, 605-343-0710

**DECEMBER 5
Magical Medora Christmas**
Homestake Opera House, Rapid City, SD, visit <https://www.homestakeoperahouse.org/> for more info and tickets

**DECEMBER 10
for KING & COUNTRY – A Drummer Boy Christmas Tour**
Denny Sanford Premier Center, Sioux Falls, SD, tickets available at <https://smarturl.it/DBSiouxFallsSD>

**DECEMBER 11
Breakfast with Santa**
Bramble Park Zoo, Watertown, SD, tickets go on sale after Thanksgiving, 605-882-6269

**DECEMBER 11
Frontier Christmas**
Fort Sisseton Historic State Park, Lake City, SD, 605-448-5474

**DECEMBER 11-12
Christmas with the Symphony: 'Tis the Season**
Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, tickets available at <https://www.bhsymphony.org/>

**DECEMBER 11-12, 18-19
Christmas Tours of the Historic Adams House**
22 Van Buren Street, Deadwood, SD, 605-722-4800

**DECEMBER 15-18
Lakota Nation Invitational 45th Anniversary**
The Monument, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

**DECEMBER 16-19
25th Annual Christmas at the Cathedral**
Cathedral of Saint Joseph, Sioux Falls, SD, visit <https://ccfesd.org/events/christmas-at-the-cathedral/>

**DECEMBER 18
Vendor and Craft Market**
Watertown Mall, Watertown, SD, 605-882-1734

**DECEMBER 31
New Year's Eve with The Davis Sisters**
601 Columbus Street, Rapid City, SD, tickets available at <https://www.bhsymphony.org/>

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