



Cooperative Connections

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Legislative Proposal Provides Framework for Compromise Co-ops Support Summer Study Recommendation



Tim McCarthy, GM/CEO

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Sioux Valley Energy has been working with legislators and electric cooperatives across the state to protect electric service territory boundaries in South Dakota and bring long-needed improvements to state law. We believe the framework of a compromise that was recently adopted by a legislative committee in November is a step in the right direction.

Throughout the summer, the state's electric cooperatives (including Sioux Valley Energy) have been actively engaged in the discussions surrounding the South Dakota Legislature's Electric Services in an Annexed Area Interim Committee. This legislative 'summer study' committee of nine lawmakers was formed during the 2019 legislative session. The main task of the committee has been to examine an exception in state law that gives municipally owned electric systems the option to take service territory from incumbent utilities when a city annexes new property.

First, a little background knowledge on the issue. There are three distinct electric utility business models in South Dakota.

- Investor-owned utilities serve most cities and densely populated urban areas of the state. These utilities are owned by shareholders.
- Electric cooperatives serve mostly rural areas of the state. Co-ops are owned by the members they serve and are governed by democratically elected co-op board members.
- South Dakota has 310 municipalities but only 35 have municipal electric systems. These systems are owned and operated by city government.

State law establishes territory boundaries for all electric utilities to protect consumers, facilitate efficient long-term planning of the electric grid and to avoid costly duplication of service and infrastructure. However, there are exceptions to this state law. The focus of the legislative summer study has been on the exception that gives the 35 municipal electric systems the option to take over service territory of an investor-owned utility or co-op in newly annexed areas.

South Dakota electric cooperatives have been telling lawmakers since 2018 that it is fundamentally unfair for municipal electric systems to have this option. The proposal adopted by the legislative committee in November provides a path forward to solve this problem.

The framework of the compromise that was adopted on an 8-1 vote would require regular meetings and good faith negotiations between all utilities involved in electric service territory boundaries in newly annexed areas. The compromise framework further states that if the utilities cannot negotiate an agreement as to who will serve the newly annexed areas the Public Utilities Commission would settle the dispute.

Electric co-ops are private corporations owned and governed by the members we serve. Electric co-op members are the farmers, ranchers, families, and business owners that are the heartbeat of the South Dakota economy. Electric co-ops have come to the table throughout the past year to find a workable compromise to protect co-op members, electric service territory boundaries and improve state law.

You will hear more about this issue as we approach the 2020 South Dakota Legislative Session. Please, know that your local electric cooperative continues to work to protect its members. We will continue to keep you informed as this issue evolves.

Thank You
FOR SUPPORTING CO-OPS & SERVICE TERRITORY FAIRNESS

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Your "Teach us our Energy" Partner

Sioux Valley Energy

Cooperative Connections

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- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

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SVE Develops Community Connections Volunteer Program

Does your community need a helping hand? Sioux Valley Energy employees are ready to help! A new 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?



The most recent example of the SVE Community Connections program was the ‘Rake the Town’ service project in the communities of Colton, Hills and Chester. A total of 17 employees volunteered their time to rake leaves for people who could not do it themselves. More than 15 lawns were raked over the course of two days.



Electrical Safety Tips for the Holidays

The holiday season is here and Christmas is just weeks away. While it's certainly the best time of the year to spend time with family and friends before the New Year, it's also important that you think about keeping your friends and family safe around all the electricity you'll likely be using. Here are a few essential electrical safety tips for the holidays.

- Before you use any electrical decorations, you should inspect them for damage. Look for damaged sockets, cracked sockets, loose connections and bare or loose wires. All of these things could cause a fire or a serious shock.
- Once you've confirmed that all your electrical decorations aren't damaged, you should count how many outlets you have in your home and where they're located. You should plan out your displays based on the number of outlets and their location. When putting up the displays, be sure to follow the care and manufacturer's use instructions that came with the electrical decorations. Be sure to use the extension cords with the right amperage rating to match the amperage needs of your electrical products.
- When you're installing outdoor decorations, you should be very careful when you're decorating near any power lines. You and your equipment should be at least 10 feet from any power lines.
- Don't overload your home's electrical outlets. Every year, many homeowners end up overloading the electrical outlets in their home because they go overboard when it comes to decorating. Faulty wires and overloaded electrical outlets are the most common causes of fire during the holidays. You should only plug a single high-wattage appliance into every outlet. This will help you prevent overloading the outlets in your home.
- You should never connect more than three strands of incandescent lights. Connecting more than three strings can cause a fire or trip circuit breakers. You should think about buying LED lights, which are cooler than incandescent lights and use less energy. Be sure that the spotlights that you use to illuminate decorations are far from flammable items, protected from weather, and are well-ventilated. Make sure that you always unplug your decorations before you replace the fuses or bulbs. Turn off the outdoor and indoor electrical decorations before you go to sleep or leave home.
- Be sure that any electrical decorations and extension cords were made to be useable outdoors. Keep all light strings and extension cords away from water and snow. When decorating outdoors, you should use fiberglass or wooden ladders rather than metal ladders. You should plug outdoor decorations and electric lights into circuits protected by circuit interrupters. You should buy portable outdoor GFCIs if the circuits aren't GFCI protected.

As you can see, there are many things that you can do to keep your family and friends safe during the holidays.

Source: www.protectamerica.com



KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"Don't drive on power lines."

Anna Engelbrecht, 9 years old

Anna is the grand-daughter of Alan and JoAnn Engelbrecht, Brandon, S.D. They are members of Sioux Valley Energy, Colman, S.D.

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

Holiday Favorites

Fanny Farmer Fudge

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 4-1/2 cups sugar | 1 cup butter (use butter, not margarine) |
| 1 (12 oz.) can evaporated milk | 2 tsp. vanilla |
| 2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips | 1-1/2 cups chopped walnuts (optional) |
| 2 cups milk chocolate chips | |

Mix sugar and milk together; bring to rolling boil. Boil for 6 minutes. Remove from heat; add chocolate chips and butter. Beat with electric mixer until very creamy. Add vanilla and stir well. Add nuts if desired. Pour into a 9x13-inch pan (glass works best) sprayed with cooking spray. Refrigerate at least 4 hours before cutting. Store in airtight container. Will keep for months in refrigerator and still be smooth and creamy.

Nancy Stenson, Fort Pierre, SD

Andes Mint Cookies

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 2-1/2 cups flour | 2 large eggs |
| 3/4 cup cocoa powder | 1 tsp. vanilla extract |
| 1 tsp. baking soda | 1 tsp. peppermint extract |
| 2 sticks and 2 T. butter, softened | 1 cup chocolate chips |
| 1 cup granulated sugar | 1 cup mint chips or chopped Andes mints |
| 1 cup brown sugar | |

Sift flour, cocoa powder and baking soda in a medium bowl and set aside. Using a hand mixer, cream together butter and both sugars until fluffy. Add eggs, vanilla and peppermint extracts, mixing well. Add dry mixture to butter mixture and mix well. Stir in chocolate and mint chips. Roll dough into 1-1/2-inch balls. Place on prepared baking sheet and with 2 fingers, press down to about 1-inch thick. Bake at 350°F. for 15 to 18 minutes or until no longer glossy.

Cortney Reedy, Tea, SD

Vanilla Pecan Pie

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 refrigerated pie crust | Vanilla Extract, divided |
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened | 1/2 cup light corn syrup |
| 3 eggs, divided | 3 T. butter, melted |
| 3/4 cup sugar, divided | 1/4 tsp. salt |
| 4 tsp. McCormick® Pure | 2 cups pecan pieces, toasted |

Prepare crust as directed on package for one-crust pie using 9-inch deep dish pie plate. Beat cream cheese, 1 egg, 1/4 cup sugar and 2 tsp. vanilla in large bowl with electric mixer on medium speed until well blended and smooth. Spread evenly on bottom of crust. Bake at 350°F. for 15 minutes. Beat remaining 2 eggs and sugar in large bowl with wire whisk until smooth. Add corn syrup, butter, remaining vanilla and salt; stir until well blended. Sprinkle pecans evenly over cream cheese layer. Slowly pour corn syrup mixture over nuts. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until just set in center. Makes 10 servings.

Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 506, Total Fat 34g, Fiber 2g, Protein 7g, Cholesterol 96mg, Sodium 307mg, Carbohydrates 43g

Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Filled Graham Crackers

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 lb. box honey graham crackers | 1/3 cup milk |
| 1 cup brown sugar | 1 egg, beaten |
| 1/2 cup butter or margarine | 1 tsp. vanilla |

Line up 22 (unbroken) graham crackers on a sheet of waxed paper. Place remaining crackers in a zip-lock bag and crush fine with a rolling pin. Combine brown sugar, butter, milk and egg. Bring to a boil then cook an additional 7 minutes. Remove from heat; add crushed crackers and vanilla. When mixture has cooled a little, spread filling on 11 of the crackers and top with the other 11. Leave uncovered to keep them crisp or cover for softer crackers.

Mardelle Brown, Redfield, SD

Please send your favorite soup, brunch or 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 June 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

QUARTERLY CHALLENGE

Save and Win

Changes in technology and the increased desire to become greener have contributed to the transformation of renewable energy technology, gadgets and costs. **Enter by December 31st for a chance to win this quarter's Energy Makeover Contest solar bundle including a Yeti Goal Zero portable power station, light and life portable light, 50-watt solar panel and 10 pack LED solar pathway lights (valued at \$500).**

Electric cooperatives across the country, including SVE, are exploring different ways to offer beneficial electrification products and services to enhance efficiency and savings to members while being environmentally responsible. This commitment is why we constructed the solar array project at the Brandon service center and purchased "EVie", an all-electric Nissan Leaf vehicle.

Sioux Valley Energy constructed a 24.8 kW solar project (enough to power two average homes without electric heat) in May of 2015. The SVE wiring department installed and maintains the system to gain more hands-on insight for the co-op. The 80 panels are on low profile racking and face south, southwest and west. This will help SVE learn how panel placement aligns with demand and weather patterns in the Midwest. An inverter monitoring system allows SVE to track each panel. The design did not include battery storage technology, however, it may be considered in the future. SVE installed the array for about \$3 per watt which included a REAP grant for 25% of the costs. The solar panels have a life expectancy of 30-50 years while the inverters may need to be replaced within 10 years. The projected return on investment is estimated at 16-20 years. As of October 2019, the solar system has produced a total of 143,144 kWhs which calculates to a revenue of \$15,571. The demand offset savings is 26% and the current lifetime capacity factor is 15.3%.

The average annual production of the SVE solar system would help power 90,000 miles per year on the co-ops electric vehicle. Battery storage is currently being researched to determine how it can work with solar technologies. Members can monitor the solar production of the SVE system by logging on to www.siouxvalleyenergy.com. Look under My Programs → SVE Solar Project.

EnLIGHTening Technology

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Account Number: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

I would like more information on:

- Heat Pump Rebate Electric Heat Rebate
 Marathon/Westinghouse Water Heaters Energy Audit
 Weatherization Program Electric Vehicle Program
 Time of Use Rate SmartHub Program Yard Light Rebate
 Commercial/Ag LED Program Irrigation Rebate Renewable Energy Credit Energy Saving Tips

CHALLENGE - FOURTH QUARTER

"EnLIGHTening Technology"

- 1) **Make your existing home/business more energy efficient before buying a solar system. Adding insulation and sealing air leaks can cut your energy costs immediately and you may be able to reduce the size of the solar system required. SVE offers an energy audit/ weatherization program.**
- 2) **Research before investing in a solar system. The payback period for solar can range from fewer than 10 years to more than 20 years, depending on the system cost, amount of electricity produced at the peak times you utilize it, energy cost, and available incentives. Sign up for SmartHub, our free account management tool, to view your usage and compare how it may line up with typical solar production. Contact Reggie Gassman, Manager of Customer Electrical Services, for assistance in calculating paybacks for your scenario. If you operate a privately owned, for-profit small business/farm you may be eligible up to 25% of your project costs through the USDA Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). Small solar energy systems are eligible for a 30% federal tax credit through 2019. The tax credit decreases to 26% in 2020 and 22% in 2021. It will expire after 2021 for residential applications but will continue at 10% for commercial applications.**
- 3) **Understand how a solar system meshes with the cooperative's system. Most solar systems are designed to provide you with a portion of the electricity needed, but it won't provide 100% of your needs. That means you'll still need to be connected to SVE's grid. Contact SVE regarding the interconnection policy, essential safety precautions, and rate structure for purchasing excess energy from your system.**
- 4) **Choose a reputable contractor/installer. As with any major improvement project, purchasing solar panels from the right installer/contractor at a fair price is as important as the product you're purchasing. Sioux Valley Energy is a resource to consult with about your project.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL SIOUX VALLEY ENERGY AT 800-234-1960.

Help us **FILL** the **TREE...**



SIoux VALLEY
ENERGY
A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Cooperative Christmas



It's cold outside, so please help us warm some hearts with the donation of **hats and mittens** for kids! Drop off a **new** set of winter gear at any Sioux Valley Energy office from **Monday, December 2nd** through **Monday, December 16th** from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and you will be entered into a drawing for a **\$250 bill credit!**

Drop off locations

Colman: 47092 SD Hwy 34 Colman, SD 57017
Brandon: 108 N. Heritage Rd. Brandon, SD 57005
Pipestone: 1102 7th St. SE Pipestone, MN 56164

If you can't stop by during those times, bring your donated items to the SVE Christmas Celebration on Tuesday, **December 10th** from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. All three of our service centers will be open that evening. **Holiday treats will be available.**

All hats and mittens will be donated to local children in need. We will only be accepting new items.



Riverview Christmas Tree Farm is located near Canton, S.D., near the Big Sioux River.

OH, CHRISTMAS TREE

Cut-Your-Own Tree Opportunities

Brenda Kleinjan

editor@sdrea.coop

Traditions can be an important part of the holidays and for many, nothing matches the aroma and feel of a fresh-cut Christmas tree.

Many have taken advantage of the cut-your-own tradition at the Black Hills National Forest. But for those not wanting to trek across the Rushmore State to the Black Hills, Christmas tree farms closer to home have been part of holidays.

In eastern South Dakota, families have been cutting their own trees at the Riverview Christmas Tree Farm at Canton, S.D., since 1989.

The tree farm is a family business that was opened in 1989 by Bill and Darlene Keizer. The business is now operated by the Todd and Shari Gannon family.

Families search the acres of trees looking for the perfect tree for their family. Five tree varieties ranging in sizes from six to 10 feet provide families several options. The tree farm provides the saw for cutting the tree and a tractor/trailer brings the family and their tree back to the farm's lodge to enjoy hot drinks and holiday treats.

The farm is open four weekends in November and December. In 2019, the farm will be open Saturdays (Nov. 23, Nov. 30, Dec. 7 and Dec. 14) from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays (Nov. 24, Dec. 1, Dec. 8 and Dec. 15) from Noon to 5 p.m. as well as Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 28 (2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.) and Black Friday, Nov. 29 (10 a.m. to 5 p.m.)



Photo by SD Tourism

Visitors to the tree farm can enjoy the beautiful scenery, shopping for holiday crafts and Christmas wreaths. They can also pet the animals in the pen and see Santa!

Riverview Christmas Tree Farm Tree Varieties

- Fraser Fir
- Balsam Fir
- Canaan Fir
- White Pine
- Black Hills Spruce

Riverview Christmas Tree Farm features cut-your-own trees, ranging from six to nine feet tall, sell for \$9 to \$11 per foot, depending on the variety. Pre-cut trees, ranging from six to 10 feet tall sell for \$7 to \$8 per foot.

Learn more about Riverview Christmas Tree Farm at <http://www.riverviewtreefarm.com/>

Tips for Trees Cut at Black Hills National Forest

Cutting Guidelines

- The maximum tree height is 20 feet.
- Cut the stump within six inches of the ground.
- Cut and scatter the limbs and other unused parts of the tree so they lie within a foot of the ground.

Setting Up Your Tree

- Keep your tree as fresh as possible.
- Store your tree upright in a bucket of water in the garage or basement until you are ready to move it indoors.
- In the house, keep the tree well watered at all times.
- Keep the tree away from fireplaces, stoves or heating vents.

Kinds of trees available:

- **Ponderosa pine** is noted for its full shape and long graceful needles. It grows almost everywhere in the Black Hills.
- **Spruce** is very popular as a holiday tree. It grows at higher elevations and on wetter, north-facing slopes and drainage bottoms. Spruce has a classic tapered form and its short needles allow for easy stringing of lights and ornaments.
- **Juniper** is a shorter tree found at lower elevations in the southern and western parts of the Black Hills. Many people like its full shape and bluish-green coloring.

Cut Your Own Fresh Christmas Tree This Year From the Black Hills National Forest

Christmas tree tags will be available Nov. 12 to Dec. 24, 2019, at Forest Service offices in western South Dakota and northeast Wyoming.

The Black Hills National Forest will also continue the Fourth-Grade Free Christmas Tree Program again this holiday season.

Fourth-graders are eligible for a FREE Christmas tree permit through the Every Kid Outdoors initiative. Every Kid Outdoors is a nationwide call to action to build the next generation of conservationists. All fourth graders are eligible to receive a fourth-grade pass that allows free access to federal lands and waters across the country for a full year.

In order for students to receive a free Christmas tree permit, they must present a valid fourth grade pass or paper voucher printed from the Every Kid Outdoors website: <https://everykidoutdoors.gov>. To obtain the voucher, visit the website, click on the "Get your pass" button and follow the instructions. Print out the paper voucher and bring it with you to a district office or the supervisor's office on the Black Hills National Forest.

White spruce, ponderosa pine and western juniper are available and can be cut in many parts of the National Forest.

Each permit is accompanied by a handout with guidance about appropriate tree removal. Trees may not be cut in developed recreation sites, Forest Service administrative sites, active timber sales, the Black Hills Experimental Forest near Rochford, the Black Elk Wilderness, the Beaver Park area near Sturgis or within Spearfish Canyon.

Individual permits cost \$10, up to a maximum of five permits are allowed per individual and the maximum allowable height of cut trees is 20 feet. Permits require that you cut the entire tree, leaving no more than six inches of stump and that you cut unused branches so they lay flat on the ground.

The adhesive permit tag must be attached before a tree is removed from the cutting area; a citation can be issued for possession of a cut-but-untagged tree, even if a tag is available in person or in your vehicle.

Trees should be placed in water as soon as possible to help keep needles fresh. Once indoors, trees should be placed away from stoves, heaters or heating ducts. After Christmas, used trees should be disposed of properly as yard waste. Do not dump used trees on national forest land.

There are no refunds for uncut trees or unused permits. Please note that Forest Service offices will be closed on Thanksgiving Day. Dec. 24 is the last day permits will be sold at Forest Service offices. Private vendors may sell tags until Dec. 24.

Tags are available by mail from the Forest Supervisor's Office, 1019 North 5th Street, Custer, SD, 57730. Enclose a check or money order in the amount of \$10 for each tree permit, up to a maximum of five trees per individual as well as a self-addressed stamped envelope. The Forest Service will mail tags and cutting instructions.

Sweet Treats Remind Farmers to Stay Safe

Sioux Valley Energy employees visited approximately 20 elevators this harvest season to remind farmers to look up and around while moving farm equipment. “Donut Days” allowed the co-op to deliver donut holes with a safety message to area farmers. Each year, during the fall season, farm equipment tears down overhead lines and other electrical facilities. These accidents are not only inconvenient, they are also dangerous.



SD Ag Heritage Museum Features REA History

The SD Agricultural Heritage Museum on the campus of South Dakota State University opened the “Power to the People: Electrifying Rural South Dakota” exhibit in October. The new display highlights the significance of Rural Electric Cooperatives lighting up rural America. Rural electric artifacts are on display, including several from Sioux Valley Energy. There are interactive displays for all ages. Combined, Sioux Valley Energy, HD Electric, East River Electric and Basin Electric donated more than \$13,000 to the museum exhibit.



Carrie Vugteveen, Sioux Valley Energy and Chris Studer, East River Electric present a donation to the SD Agricultural Heritage Museum. Accepting for the Museum is Gwen McCausland, Museum Director. The Museum is open Monday - Saturday 10 AM - 5 PM.

Rock Ranch Awarded Operation Round Up Funds

Rock Ranch strives to make a difference in the lives of others through therapeutic horsemanship, riding lessons, senior programming and mental health counseling.

“Rock Ranch provides opportunities for persons to improve themselves physically, cognitively, socially and psychologically while learning the art and skills of horsemanship in a Christ-filled setting,” said Dan and Marie LaRock, founders of Rock Ranch.

The ranch, located near Hills, Minn., continues to grow and is working to provide programming year round. They are currently raising funds for the construction of a new facility in 2020. Details on the construction process can be found here: <http://www.riderockranch.org/rock-ranch-arena>

A total of \$2,000 was provided to Rock Ranch in the last two years. A \$1,000 grant helped provide



scholarships to allow children to take part in programming regardless of their ability to pay. They also received another \$1,000 from SVEs Operation Round Up fund for a program that focuses on senior citizens.

“We strive to provide heavily discounted opportunities for area residents of assisted living centers to come to Rock Ranch and enjoy time with our horses and rural acreage. We have hosted several centers this summer and nearly 50 residents. This is a program we will see used in increasing numbers in 2020,” said Dan and Marie LaRock.

For more information on Rock Ranch, its programs and services, log on to: www.riderockranch.org.

Since the year 2000, more than \$1.7-Million in Operation Round Up grants has been donated to worthy causes throughout the Sioux Valley Energy service territory. The concept is easy, participating SVE members agree to have their electric bill rounded up to the next highest dollar and those funds are collected for Operation Round Up. Some Sioux Valley Energy employees also help by deducting a small amount from their paychecks. More than 85 percent of members and employees take part. Log on to <https://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-community/operation-roundup> to learn more.



Keeping Good Cheer

Holiday Safety and Crime Protection

National Neighborhood Watch

<https://nnw.org/holiday-safety>

The jolly man in red is the only visitor that's supposed to be entering homes stealthily this Christmas, shimmying down chimneys and stealing bites of cookies washed down with gulps of milk.

But, for too many, St. Nick isn't the only unexpected holiday visitor. Porch pirates are stealing holiday joy and other criminals are itching to find untended digital portals into homes.

A 2017 study titled "Package Theft Report: Porch Pirates, Purchase Habits and privacy" by Schorr.com found that nearly 1 in 3 Americans say they have experienced package theft. A separate study by www.insurancequotes.com found that around 25.9 million Americans have had a package delivered during the holiday shopping season stolen, up from 23.5 million reported porch thefts in 2015.

General Holiday Safety and Crime Prevention Tips

Courtesy of the Knoxville, Tenn., Police Department

At Home

- Make sure all doors and windows have secondary locks (window pins, deadbolts, dowels, etc.) and use them!
- Don't hide spare keys in mailboxes or planters or under doormats.
- Ensure that dark areas and entrances have outdoor lights that are turned on after dark or are activated by sensors.
- Keep trees and shrubbery trimmed so they do not conceal doors and windows. Remember, overgrown foliage can provide a hiding place for criminals.
- Place gifts where they can't be seen from the outside.



Packages left on doorsteps can attract holiday thieves.

- Consider safe deposit boxes for coin and stamp collections, seldom-worn jewelry, stock bonds, etc.
- Be sure to mail cards, checks or gift certificates from the Post Office or at a blue U.S. Postal Service collection box.
- Lock your vehicle and remove all the valuables. Yes, even in your driveway.

Strangers at Your Door

- Use caution anytime there is a stranger at your door.
- Be suspicious of unexpected sales calls or deliveries. Ask for identification.
- Be aware of scams that criminals commit to take advantage of people's generosity during the holidays.

Avoid Porch Theft:

Five tips to Protect Your Packages

- Network with Neighbors
- Have Packages Delivered to Work
- Leave Specific Drop-off Instructions
- Use a Smart Lock
- Install Security Cameras

Keeping Your Devices Secure

- **Use Security Software.** Install anti-virus software, anti-spyware software and a firewall. Set your preference to update these protections often. Installing these types of programs will help protect against intrusions and infections that can compromise your computer files and passwords. These programs install security patches for your operating system and other software programs.
- **Avoid Phishing Emails.** Don't open files, click on links or download programs sent by strangers. Opening a file from someone you don't know could expose your system to a computer virus or spyware that captures your passwords or other information you type.
- **Be Wise about Wi-Fi.** Before you send personal information over your laptop or smartphone on a public wireless network in a coffee shop, library, airport, hotel or other public place, see if your information will be protected. If you use an encrypted website, it protects only the information you send to and from that site. If you use a secure wireless network, all the information you send on that network is protected.
- **Lock Up Your Laptop.** Keep financial information on your laptop only when necessary. Don't use an automatic login feature that saves your user name and password and always log off when you're finished. That way, if your laptop is stolen, it will be harder for a thief to get at your personal information.
- **Read Privacy Policies.** Yes, they can be long and complex, but they tell you how the site maintains accuracy, access, security and control of the personal information it collects; how it uses the information and whether it provides information to third parties. If you don't see or understand a site's privacy policy, consider doing business elsewhere.



Outdoor decorations can also be targets of holiday grinch.

- Investigate charities before making donations. Ask how the funds will be used.

Leaving for the Holidays

- Ask a trusted friend, neighbor or Neighborhood Watch member to watch your home.
- Use timers for lights and radios while you're away.
- Remember to make arrangements for mail and newspapers.

After the Holidays

- Don't advertise expensive toys, electronics or other gifts received by the boxes left for garbage collections. Compress large boxes and place them in black garbage bags for pick-up.
- Add new items to your home inventory. Take photos or video of all items of value in your home and list each item's make, model, serial number and other information.
- Engrave new items to help identify them in the event they are stolen.

What to do if you've become a victim of a porch pirate

- Check with your delivery company to make sure your package was actually delivered.
- Know exactly what's in the missing box.
- If you see the thief, pay attention to

Six Ways to Grinch-Proof Your Holiday Light Displays

- **Shut down at night**
- **Set up surveillance**
- **Crime-proof your yard**
- **Consider bringing in valuable items at night**
- **Stay connected**
- **Report, report, report**

what his or her vehicle looks like and its license plate number. Second to that, get the thief's physical description – gender, approximate height and weight and what they're wearing – so you can tell an officer.

- Call 911 and ask for an officer to come to your home.
- If you have a security camera on your home, get a copy of the video to police. Ask your neighbors if their cameras captured the thief in action.

Source: National Neighborhood Watch, A Division of the National Sheriffs' Association

District Meetings Set

Four Elections to Take Place in 2020

Sioux Valley Energy District Meeting dates have been approved by the Board of Directors. Four elections will take place in districts 5, 6, 7 and 9. *In district 6, only one at large seat (Rogen) is up for election this year. All incumbent directors have indicated they plan to run for the Board again in 2020.

Members who are interested in running for a Board seat must submit a nominating petition at least 60 days prior to the meeting in their respective district. The deadline for submitting petitions for the vacancies can be found below. The Cooperative

Bylaws state the qualifications needed to be a director and can be found below this article. Interested members are encouraged to contact Amy Voelker, Executive Assistant, at 1-800-234-1960. All Board seats elected in 2020 will serve three-year terms.

Petitions are available at any Sioux Valley Energy office or at www.siouxvalleyenergy.com.

Each district meeting will include a complimentary meal and a short informational program.

SECTION 5. Qualifications. Any member shall be eligible to be nominated or elected or to remain a Director, provided that: (a) They are a natural person receiving electric service from the Cooperative at their primary residence or meet the qualifications for corporate representation; (b) They have the capacity to enter legally binding contracts; (c) They have been and shall remain a resident of the district for which they are or were nominated or elected for at least one (1) year prior to nomination, and continue to reside therein during their entire term as Director; (d) While a Director and during the five (5) years immediately prior to becoming a Director, they have not been convicted of a felony; (e) They or their spouse are not employed by, materially affiliated with or have a material financial interest in any individual or entity which either is: (i) Directly and substantially competing with the Cooperative, or any of its subsidiaries; or (ii) Selling goods and services in substantial quantity to the Cooperative or its subsidiaries; or having sold goods or services in substantial quantity to the Cooperative or its subsidiaries within three (3) years of seeking nomination. (iii) Possessing a substantial conflict of interest with the Cooperative or any of its subsidiaries; or (iv) They are not in any way employed by the Cooperative or any of its subsidiaries nor have they been employed by the Cooperative or its subsidiaries within three (3) years of the directors nomination, and (v) They are not a close relative of any existing Director or existing employee of the Cooperative or its subsidiaries. For the purpose of this section only "close relative" shall mean a person who is either a child, grandchild, stepchild, parent, grandparent, stepparent, brother or sister, by blood or in-law, of the principal. (f) A designated representative of any non-human member such as a corporation, shall, notwithstanding that he or she does not receive service from the Cooperative at their primary residential abode, be eligible to become a Director, if: 1) He or she is an officer of said non-human member; and 2) He or she is in substantial permanent occupancy, direction or use of the premises served by the Cooperative; and 3) He or she is a permanent year round resident within the district for which the Corporation or non-human member is receiving service, and 4) Otherwise meets the qualifications set forth herein, provided, however, that no more than one (1) such person as the designated representative may serve on the Board at the same time and in the event that he or she should resign or is unwilling to so act, the directorship shall become vacant.

2020 District Meeting Schedule

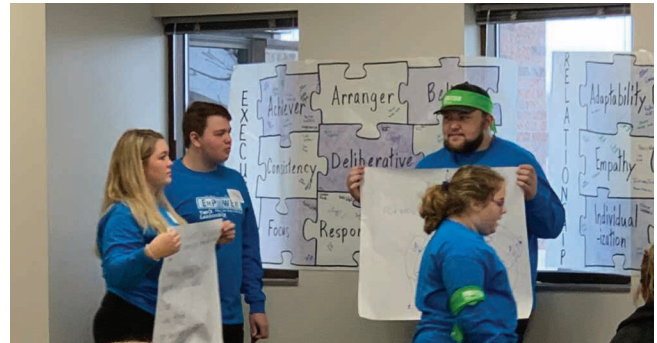
Meeting Date	Director/District	Town	Location	Petition Deadline
Thursday, March 5	Leuthold (8)	Luverne MN	Grand Prairie Event Center	
Monday, March 9	DeGreef (1)	White SD	McKnight Hall	
Thursday, March 12	Martison (3)	Flandreau, SD	William J Janklow Community Center	
Thursday, March 19	Roskamp (10)	Edgerton MN	Edgerton Public School	
Monday, March 23	Fish (6) Rogen (6)*	Brandon SD	Brandon Valley High School	January 23, 2020 (3 yr. term)
Tuesday, March 24	DeMent (7)	Hartford SD	West Central School	January 24, 2020 (3 yr. term)
Thursday, March 26	Kooima (2)	Volga SD	Sioux Valley School	
Monday, March 30	Johnson (9)	Pipestone MN	Pipestone Area High School	January 30, 2020 (3 yr. term)
Tuesday, March 31	Daniel (4)	Madison SD	Dakota Prairie Playhouse	
Thursday, April 2	Weinacht (5)	Colton, SD	Taopi Hall	February 2, 2020 (3 yr. term)

Red Indicates Election Meetings

Feb. 2 is a Sunday and SVE offices are not open that day. Please mail prior to the deadline, deliver to a SVE office early during the work week or drop it off in one of our drop box locations.

EmPOWER off to Powerful Start

The first session of the 2019-2020 EmPOWER Youth Leadership program was held on October 14 in Colman with a second session taking place in Brandon on November 11. The first session included a presentation by motivational speaker, VJ Smith and the students also learned about the cooperative business model and engaged in teamwork activities. The second session offered EmPOWER attendees the chance to explore their strengths and they also met with 21 professionals from various locations to explore career options.



\$16,000 in Scholarships

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. The application deadline is 4:30 p.m. on Friday, January 17, 2020.

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

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

To be eligible you must:

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

Applications are available from your school counselor, from any Sioux Valley Energy service center (in Colman, Pipestone and Brandon), on the web at: <https://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-community/scholarship-program>.



October 19-January 5

Pheasant Hunting Season, Statewide, Pierre, SD, 605-223-7660

November 15-December 18

Black Hills Christmas Tree Permit Season, Custer, SD, 605-673-9200

November 22-23

Holiday Arts Christmas Craft Show, Masonic Hall, Mitchell, SD, 605-359-2049

November 22-January 5

Winter Wonderland, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-275-6060

November 23-24

Winterfest: A Winter Arts Festival, Aberdeen, SD, 605-226-1557

November 26-December 26

Christmas at the Capitol, Pierre, SD, 605-773-3178

November 29

Annual Holiday Open House, Cultural Heritage Center, Pierre, SD, 605-773-3458

November 30

Holiday Celebration and Winter Market, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

December 1

Home Town Christmas, Free Will Breakfast, 12 to 4 p.m. Vendor show, Lunch, Inflatables, Snow globe pictures, Community supper, Parade of lights, Mr. and Mrs. Claus photos, Fireworks, Ginger bread houses, Hartford, SD, 605-201-7136, See Hartford Hometown Christmas Facebook page for locations and details

December 14: Frontier Christmas, Lake City, SD, 605-448-5474

Photo courtesy: travelouthakota.com

December 6-7, 12-14, 19-21

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

December 7

Christmas in the Village Craft Fair, Community Center, Oacoma, SD, Contact Leslie at 605-730-1076

December 7

Holidazzle Light Parade, Spearfish, SD, 605-717-9294

December 7

Rapid City Garden Club's 58th Annual Wreath & Centerpiece Sale, Canyon Lake Activity Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-343-0710

December 7-8

Living Christmas Tree, Civic Arena, Aberdeen, SD, 605-229-6349

December 7-8, 14-15, 21-24 and 27-28

1880 Train Holiday Express, Hill City, SD, 605-574-2222

December 14-15

Black Hills Cowboy Christmas, Lead, SD, 605-584-2067

December 15-March 31

South Dakota snowmobile trails season, Lead, SD, 605-584-3896

December 18

Annual Legislative Night with Legislators hosted by 29 - 90 Sportsman's Club, GF&P Outdoor Classroom and Office, 6:30 p.m., Sertoma Park, Oxbow Ave., Sioux Falls, SD, 605-362-9827, Public is welcome to attend

December 31

Make-A-Wish New Year's Eve Benefit and Dance, Ramkota Hotel & Convention Center, Doors Open at 7 p.m., Aberdeen, SD, 605-370-4588

January 7-9

Dakota Farm Show, Vermillion, SD, 800-873-1411

January 16-17

Media One Funski, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-339-0000

January 24-25

Pro Snocross Races, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

January 25

31st Annual Living History Fair 2020, A trade fair with historic arts, crafts, displays, museums and clubs representing times of A.D. 1000 to A.D.1890, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Lake Area Technical Institute, Watertown SD, 605-693-4589

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.