

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



The Days of '76 Rodeo

A Century of Grit and
Glory

Pages 8-9

Fort Meade Patriotism

Pages 12-13

What is driving the need for a residential demand charge?



Tim McCarthy
General Manager/
Chief Executive
Officer

Tim.McCarthy@
siouxvalleyenergy.
com

Nationwide there are ongoing and very public discussions regarding hyperscale data centers and the enormous electrical demand placed on the grid by these facilities. It's nearly impossible to open a social media app without seeing either a news story or an opinion post about that very topic. Given the ongoing publicity about hyperscale data centers – it's completely understandable that some members are wondering if there is a connection between data centers and the Cooperative's decision to break out a demand charge on residential and general service accounts starting in 2027.

The answer to that question or assumption is a simple – no. However, we think it's important to provide background and facts to support that truth.

1. Co-op load forecasts and associated resources do NOT include hyperscale data centers.

Sioux Valley Energy and its transmission and power suppliers are investing in additional infrastructure to support “legacy members” just like you, the residential, farm, and small businesses who use electricity. The resources being constructed include things like larger (and more) distribution and transmission lines along with a new natural gas power plant to support the growing demand placed on the grid by our members who are using more electricity and members who do things like build new homes, expand businesses, or add electric motors on the farm.

If a hyperscale data center wanted to locate within the Cooperative's service territory, it would need to pay its own way as required by Sioux Valley's wholesale power supplier's 'Large Load Commercial Program.' Under the program, hyperscale data centers would be responsible for the infrastructure costs needed to support it, helping insulate existing Cooperative members from financial risk.

2. Sioux Valley Energy has a legal obligation to serve members within its service territory.

The Cooperative doesn't get to pick and

choose which members it serves when they locate within our defined service territory. If a hyperscale data center can meet the obligations of the required 'Large Load Commercial Program,' procure the necessary transmission and power, and fulfill all local and state requirements, Sioux Valley Energy will be required to serve that data center. Even if all these qualifications are met, the timeline necessary for the entire process would be lengthy.

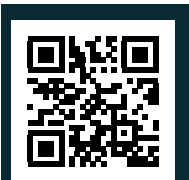
3. Demand charges are not new.

Approximately half of Sioux Valley Energy's current power bill from its suppliers stems from demand charges and depending on the time of year, 50 to 70 percent of that demand is caused by residential and general service members. Sioux Valley Energy's large power members have paid a separate demand charge for many years. The upcoming billing component change in 2027 will impact residential and general service members who are currently billed based on two components – energy (kWh) and basic service. In the past, demand was blended into the two-part rate structure. In 2027, demand will be broken out, and members will be billed based on three components: energy (kWh), demand (kW), and basic service.

4. Consumer electrical usage patterns and technology have changed over the years.

The electrical system has to be built to meet the highest demand at any given point in time. In years past the electrical use patterns of Sioux Valley Energy members were very similar – today, that is not the case. We are seeing higher and more varied electrical demand than ever before. Members who use a greater amount of electricity all at one time drive costs up, because that peak demand requires infrastructure upgrades and results in higher power bills from our suppliers. It is important that those who cause the cost, pay for the cost – covering the actual demand they use. The billing changes in

Continued on Page 3



We encourage you to scan this code to watch a video to learn more about electrical demand and how it may impact your bill.

<https://www.sioxvalleyenergy.com/electric-demand-charge>

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

SIoux VALLEY ENERGY

(USPS No. 497-440)

Board President: Dan Leuthold

Board of Directors

Dave Daniel - Vice President	Gregg Johnson
Don DeGreef - Secretary	Chris Rieff
Ann Vostad - Treasurer	Mark Rogen
Gary Fish	Lucas Roskamp
Dr. Leslie Heinemann	Allan Weinacht

CEO/General Manager: Tim McCarthy

Chief Financial Officer: Jason Maxwell

V.P. of Engineering & Operations: Ted Smith

V.P. of Human Resources

& Member Services: Kimberlee Hansen

V.P. of Public Relations: Carrie Vugteveen, Editor

V.P. of Technology: Justin Moose

Executive Assistant: Brenda Schelhaas

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
e-mail: sve@siouxvalleyenergy.com
Website: www.siouxvalleyenergy.com

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or disability. Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found on-line at https://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed complaint form or letter to USDA by:

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

**Sioux Valley Energy is an
equal opportunity provider and employer.**

Manager's Column, Continued from Page 2

2027 will result in improved cost alignment, more stable revenue recovery, reduced cross-subsidization, and more efficient system use. Technology has also played a role in Sioux Valley Energy's ability to measure individual demand with improved metering systems.

5. Transparency and ongoing education are paramount as Sioux Valley Energy changes the billing structure for residential and general service members.

We are planning to continue the demand education process throughout 2026, including an online webinar and in-person learning sessions that will be held in each of the Cooperative's 10 districts. We are here to answer your questions and will continue to share information about specific rates for each of the billing components as we are able which will likely be this fall.

Your Questions Answered

Have a question about electricity or Sioux Valley Energy? Mail it to P.O. Box 216, Colman, SD 57017 or e-mail info@siouxvalleyenergy.com. Your question may be selected as the 'Question of the Month' and answered in an upcoming edition of the newsletter.

Question: *How will residential demand charges affect Time of Use (TOU) rates? Will off-peak hours be affected? We have an all-electric house and use off-peak electric.*

Answer: A Time of Use (TOU) rate will still be available as an option in 2027 when the residential demand rate is implemented. If a member has not previously selected the TOU Rate, they will stay on the Standard Rate which will include a demand component. There will be two residential and general service options:

1. The Standard Rate: This rate will include a demand component that is not dependent on time but will be based on your individual peak during the month. This rate will not be tied to the TOU off- or on-peak hours. The best way to reduce your individual peak is to spread electric use out throughout the day and avoid stacking electric use all at one time.

2. Time of Use Rate (TOU): This rate will be based on the time of day you use electricity. Members on the TOU Rate pay a high rate for electric use during 8 hours each day (7 to 10 a.m. and 4 to 9 p.m.). Electric use during the other 16 hours of the day is charged at a much lower rate. These times align closely with SVE's power supplier's peak.

BEFORE THE SMOKE: PROTECT YOUR HOME BEFORE WILDFIRE SEASON

Wildfires can move quickly, especially when dry grass, high winds and hot weather come together. In rural South Dakota, where homes, farms, shelterbelts, outbuildings and open grassland share the same landscape, preparation matters.

But there is one important point to make first: fighting a wildfire is not a job for homeowners.

If a wildfire is nearby, leave firefighting to trained professionals. Follow evacuation orders, call 911 to report a fire and stay away from downed power lines, smoke-filled areas and active fire zones. Cooperative members can do their most important work in advance, taking steps that make a property harder for fire to reach and easier for responders to protect.

One of the most effective steps is creating defensible space around the home. That does not mean clearing every tree or turning a yard into bare ground. It means reducing combustible material near houses, garages, sheds and other structures, while thinking about how fire could move from brush to trees to buildings.

Start closest to the house. Embers can collect against siding, under decks, in gutters or near steps. Remove dry leaves, dead plants, stacked lumber, cardboard and other combustible materials from next to the home. Gravel, rock, concrete, pavers and other hardscaping can be better choices near walls, decks and porches.

Gutters and roofs deserve attention, too. Leaves and needles can become dry fuel. Cleaning them before fire season can reduce the chance that embers find an easy place to ignite.

From there, look at the rest of the yard. Clear dead brush, tall grass and dried weeds, especially near structures. Keep grass mowed around homes, outbuildings, propane tanks and driveways. Trim and space shrubs and trees so fire cannot easily climb from grass to brush to tree canopies. Low branches can act like ladder fuels.

Do not overlook decks, porches and crawlspaces. Dry leaves, grass clippings and other materials can collect underneath. Cleaning those areas and using screening can help keep debris from building up.

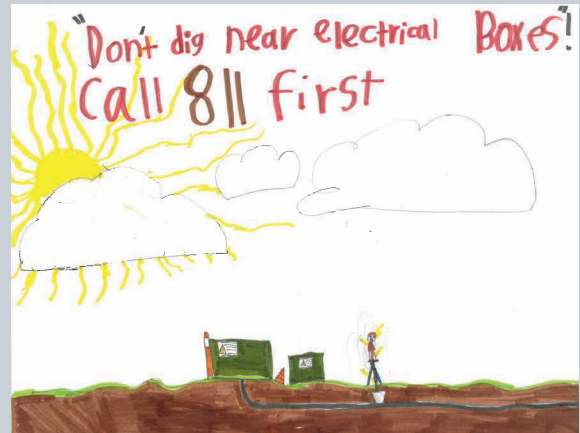
Access is part of preparation, too. Firefighters need to reach

a property quickly and safely. Keep driveways clear, make sure gates can open and trim branches that could block emergency vehicles. Clearly visible address signs can help responders find a home when visibility is poor.

Before making major landscaping changes, building fences, planting trees or adding new water lines, call 811. Underground electric, gas, water and communication lines may be closer than expected. A free locate request helps protect homeowners, utility crews and infrastructure.

Cooperative members can also make a plan. Know two ways out of the property or neighborhood. Keep important documents, medications and emergency supplies ready to go. Take photos or videos of buildings, equipment and belongings for insurance records.

Wildfire preparation is a seasonal habit, much like cleaning gutters, changing filters or preparing equipment for winter. The goal is not to fight the fire. That job belongs to firefighters and emergency responders. The goal is to give the home, property and responders a better chance before the fire ever starts.



**"Don't dig near electrical boxes!
Call 811 first."**

Caleb Blake, age 9

Caleb urges members to not dig near a pad-mounted transformer. Thank you for sharing your picture, Caleb! Caleb's parents are Peter and Stephanie Blake – members of West River 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.

Sweet on RHUBARB

RHUBARB CHEESE CAKE

Ingredients:

Rhubarb Filling

9" pie shell, unbaked
2 1/2 cups rhubarb, chopped
1/2 cup sugar
1 tbsp. flour

Cheese Cake Filling

8 oz. cream cheese
2 eggs, added one at a time
1/2 cup sugar

Topping

3/4 cup sour cream
2 tbsps. sugar
1 tsp. vanilla

Method

Stir rhubarb with flour and sugar. Put in the unbaked pie shell and bake at 425° for 15 minutes. Remove from oven and lower temperature to 350° degrees.

Beat cream cheese, add 2 eggs one at a time, then add the sugar. Mix well and pour over hot rhubarb layer. Bake 30 minutes at 350° degrees.

Mix the topping of sour cream, sugar and vanilla well and spread over hot pie. Cool 3 hours or more before serving. The flavors blend better the longer it cools. Refrigerate leftovers.

Charles Lebeda
Sioux Valley Energy

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

RHUBARB SALAD

Ingredients:

2 cups rhubarb, chopped
4 tbsps. water
1/2 cup sugar
3 oz. red jello
3/4 cup cold water
1 apple, diced
1 banana, sliced

Method

Combine rhubarb, water and sugar. Stir and cook until mushy. Add jello and stir until dissolved. Add 3/4 cup cold water. Cool until it begins to set. Stir in diced apple and sliced banana. Chill and serve.

Leanne Eich
Central Electric

RHUBARB CAKE

Ingredients:

White cake mix
4 cups rhubarb, diced
1 cup white sugar
2 cups heavy whipping cream

Method

Mix white cake as directed on the box. Pour in a greased 9x12 pan. Place 4 cups of diced rhubarb over the top. Pour 1 cup of white sugar over the rhubarb. Pour 2 cups of heavy whipping cream over the top. Bake at 350° for 40 minutes.

Jeanette Kleinsasser
Dakota Energy

Picture by Sokor Space and Shutterstock.

Stay Cool with Summer Savings



Sheila Gross

Energy Services Specialist

To learn more about efficiency programs and rates that can help you save money call SVE at 800-234-1960, visit sioux-valleyenergy.com/energy-efficiency-tools or sign up for SmartHub, our online account management tool.



Summer is one of my favorite seasons. I enjoy the longer days, backyard cookouts, and having my grandkids out of school. While summer brings plenty of fun, it can also lead to higher utility bills. Keeping your home cool and managing a busier household can increase energy use. The good news is there are some simple efficiency tips that can help you save money.

Cooling your home is one of the biggest contributors to summer electric bills. Raising your thermostat just a few degrees can make a difference in energy savings. You can save up to 3% for every degree you raise your thermostat over an eight-hour period. Adjusting the temperature while you are away from home is an easy way to reduce costs, and a programmable or smart thermostat can make those adjustments automatic.

Ceiling fans may help you stay comfortable while using less electricity than an air conditioner. Remember to turn fans off when rooms are empty since fans cool people, not rooms. You can maximize savings by raising your thermostat a few degrees while using ceiling fans. During the summer, fan blades should rotate counterclockwise to push cool air downward.

Another smart strategy is to stop heat before it enters your home. Closing blinds during the hottest part of the afternoon can help reduce indoor temperatures. Sealing air leaks around doors and windows prevents cool air from escaping. It is also a good idea to check insulation levels in your attic and make sure the attic hatch is properly insulated.

Limiting extra heat inside the home can

help reduce cooling costs. Using the oven during hot weather can heat the house and force the air conditioner to run longer. Consider alternatives such as grilling outdoors or using a microwave, air fryer, or slow cooker.

Lighting can impact energy use. Replacing older incandescent or fluorescent lighting with LEDs in frequently used areas can reduce energy costs. LEDs are more efficient, produce less heat, and last longer. Turning off lights in unoccupied rooms reduces unnecessary energy use.

Using less hot water, such as taking shorter showers, washing clothes in cold water, and setting your water heater thermostat to 120 degrees can help lower utility costs.

Gaming consoles and electronics can be energy wasters. Not only do they generate heat, but many devices continue using electricity while in standby mode. Unplug unnecessary devices or use smart plugs or power strips to cut power at the source. Avoid leaving multiple televisions running in rooms where no one is watching.

Watching the clock to lock in energy savings 16 hours of every day allows you to put the power to save money in your hands! Members enrolled in Sioux Valley Energy's Time of Use (TOU) Rate can take advantage of reduced off-peak rates from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and again from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. Contact 877-511-8062 to sign up for a three-month risk-free trial.

By making a few simple changes around the house, you can stay comfortable all summer long while keeping energy costs under control.



Watch the Clock

to lock in Energy Savings 16 hours of every day with the Time of Use Rate!

Call 1-877-511-8062 to sign up for a three-month risk-free trial!

You must call to enroll.



\$10,750 in Scholarships Awarded

Thirteen participants of Sioux Valley Energy's EmPOWER Youth Leadership Program were awarded scholarships at the Cooperative's June 9 Annual Meeting. Additionally, Sarah Schoolmeester, daughter of Staking

Engineer Tim Schoolmeester and Jenny Schoolmeester, received a \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative scholarship designated for dependents of employees of Basin Electric-member cooperatives.



Meg Bebensee
Brandon Valley HS - \$1,000



Briana Hoff
West Central HS \$1,000



Brody Johnson
West Central HS \$1,000



Samantha Stokesbary
Pipestone Area HS - \$1,000



Hannah Anawski
Brandon Valley HS - \$750



Ariana Baartman
Brandon Valley HS - \$750



Luke Carlson
Brandon Valley HS - \$750



Lydian Gilkerson
Oldham-Ramona-Rutland HS \$750



Brielle Smetana
Brandon Valley HS \$750



Hannah Brown
Howard HS \$500



Ayva Lane
Brandon Valley HS \$500



Claire McMahon
Elkton HS \$500

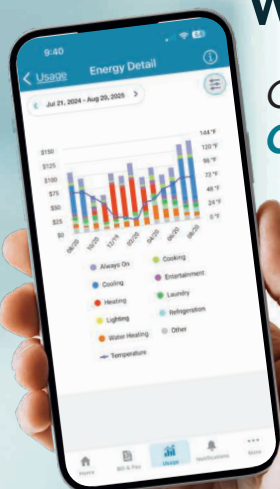


Jordyn Reagle
Oldham-Ramona-Rutland HS \$500



Sarah Schoolmeester
Dell Rapids HS \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship

Want more information on your electricity use?



Check out Sioux Valley Energy's **Consumer Analytics** option on SmartHub!

- 💡 Insights into energy usage
- 💡 Energy savings tips
- 💡 Build a home profile for greater accuracy



www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/download-app



A CENTURY OF GRIT AND GLORY

The Days of '76 Rodeo

Photos by KSchurr Photography

Jocelyn Johnson

jocelyn.johnson@sdrea.coop

In the historic gulch of Deadwood, S.D., the past isn't tucked away in books – it rides out of old wooden chutes every July at the Days of '76 Rodeo.

What began more than a century ago as a short weekend celebration has grown into a week-long rodeo and parade tradition that draws contestants and visitors from across the country. Yet, amid the growth and national recognition, the Days of '76 remains rooted in family, heritage and a deep sense of place.

Pat Roberts, longtime board member of the Days of '76 Rodeo planning committee, said, "It started in 1924, and it actually wasn't a rodeo then. It was a celebration of Deadwood and its establishment in 1876 – hence where the name came from. It was started by the community just to promote the founding."

Those early celebrations featured parades, horses, fireworks and the kind of small-town pageantry that fits a frontier

community proud of its past. The full-fledged rodeo format came a few years later in the late 1920s, but the heart of the event hasn't changed: honoring Deadwood's origins and the Western way of life that built it.

Today, the Days of '76 Rodeo is marking its 104th year alongside other milestones – the 150th anniversary of Deadwood and the nation's 250th anniversary.

The rodeo boasts a total payout of roughly \$350,000 and typically draws 700 to 800 contestants, including top names like Rocker Steiner, Lisa Lockhart and rising stars such as Emily Beisel. During a week of performances, 25,000 to 30,000 spectators pack the grandstands, turning the arena into a sea of cowboy hats and hometown pride.

The events remain classic: bareback riding, steer wrestling, calf roping, team roping, barrel racing, saddle bronc riding, bull riding and breakaway roping. No frills, no gimmicks – just the timeless contests of skill and grit that define rodeo.

"We just keep it traditional," Pat said. "Just welcome everybody to Deadwood to enjoy the best cowboys and the best bucking stock that we can get."

For a town of about 1,200 people, the Days of '76 Rodeo has earned outsized recognition.

In 2011, the Days of '76 was inducted into the Pro Rodeo Hall of Fame, a distinction the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) had not extended to a rodeo in many years.

Chris Roberts, son of Pat Roberts and fellow board member on the Days of '76 Rodeo planning committee, said, "We won the PRCA Rodeo of the Year every single year that we were in the medium category until we surpassed into large. We've been nominated many times in the large category and won it once. To our knowledge, we're the only rodeo that's won Rodeo of the Year in each and every category."

In Deadwood, legacy still rides out of wooden chutes, year after year, drawing generational athletes. Rodeo here is a family affair. The Roberts family has been involved continuously since the event began.

"There's been a Roberts at every Days of '76 celebration since it started," said Pat.

Pat attended his first Days of '76 Rodeo when he was four days old and serves on the board with his son, Chris.

"I'm fourth generation," Chris said. "My great-granddad was there from year one, and we never missed a single year. Then his son – my granddad – followed in his footsteps, my dad and now me."

A fifth generation is already helping behind the scenes, continuing a family legacy that mirrors the rodeo's own endurance through the decades.

That kind of continuity isn't unique to the Roberts alone. Many contestants

arrive with stories of parents and grandparents who once competed in Deadwood.

"From a contestant perspective, I'd be willing to bet that no matter where you grew up, if you are a rodeo family, Deadwood was one that was always on the map," Chris said. "I hear it every single year – contestants talking about how grandpa or great-grandpa, grandma or great-grandma competed in Deadwood, and they've always wanted to be here. In the rodeo world, everybody knows Deadwood."

Mackenzi Gatzke, secretary of the board of directors, says her family story is similar. She currently serves on the Days of '76 board alongside both of her parents and noted two other families who have long served on the board promoting the event.

"Our board is all made up of people who were or still are locals to Deadwood, and we're all volunteers," she said. "We really do it because we love Deadwood, and we love the Days of '76 and the tradition behind it. We actually have four different families with multiple generations on our board, and we all just work together like one big family that just loves the community."

That focus on authenticity extends beyond the arena. The Days of '76 Museum houses the largest working



collection of horse-drawn wagons in the country, along with memorabilia from across the Black Hills dating back to 1876. During rodeo week, many of those wagons leave their resting place to roll through downtown Deadwood in historic parades – matching the sight of a 19th-century streetscape.

For Pat Roberts, rodeo's relevance in modern life is still significant and comes down to identity.

"It's tradition – it's the cowboy way," he said. "These cowboys and cowgirls are athletes...and the horses are too. They're bred to buck. We're not hurting anything by doing it – that's what they want to do. Just think of Deadwood and the West. Rodeo fits right in."





How to Control Your Demand

Spread. Don't Stack. The best way to lower your electrical demand is simple: Don't run everything at once.

It's the number one thing a Sioux Valley Energy member can do to reduce their individual electrical demand on the grid. Laundry has to be done, showers need to be taken, and cooking is required – but they don't all have to happen at the same time. Members who spread their electrical use throughout the day instead of running appliances and electric devices all at once will reduce their individual demand on the system.

- **How does high demand impact the electric system?**
As demand increases and stresses the system, Sioux Valley Energy and its transmission and power suppliers have to upgrade and build new electrical infrastructure to support the maximum amount of electricity that could possibly be used at one time. That investment costs money...and in turn increases rates for Co-op members.

Start Monitoring Your Demand Today. Each electrical device and appliance in your home puts a certain amount of demand on the system. While there currently is no rate

connected to demand on residential and general service accounts, the line item is listed on electric bills. An even better way to monitor is to sign up for the Cooperative's online energy management system, SmartHub, at siouxvalleyenergy.smarthub.coop.

Sioux Valley Energy won't start charging residential and general service members for demand until January of 2027, so now is a great time to start monitoring it. Consider making adjustments in your electric use and see how that impacts your demand over the next several months prior to the billing change.



Tips to Reduce Your Demand

1. Spread. Don't Stack.

Demand increases when electric appliances and devices run at the same time. Try to space out activities that use a lot of electricity. Check out Sioux Valley Energy's demand calculator to determine how much demand is placed on the system by various appliances: siouxvalleyenergy.com/demand-calculator.

Simple Changes:

- Run the dryer after dinner.
- Charge your EV or other chargeable devices overnight.
- Avoid running the dishwasher, dryer, and oven at the same time.



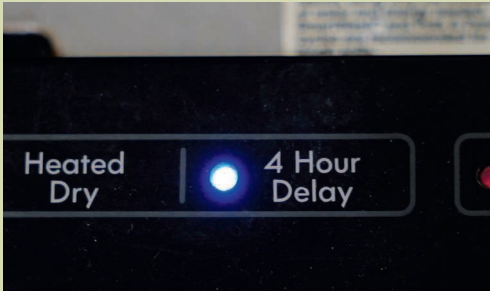
2. Be Smart About Hot Water

Water heaters often reheat after showers, laundry, or dishwashing. If other large appliances are running at the same time, demand can increase quickly. On-demand water heaters spike demand much more than tank water heaters.

Simple Changes:

- Wait to start a load of laundry after showers are finished.
- Run the dishwasher later in the evening or overnight.
- Spread out hot-water activities when possible.





3. Use Delay Start Features

Many of today's appliances can be scheduled to run when you are using less electricity. Push that delay button and help reduce your demand.

Simple Changes:

- Load the dishwasher after dinner and set it to run overnight.
- Schedule EV and battery-based electric device charging for late-night hours.
- Use delayed laundry cycles when convenient.



4. Take The Heat Outside

During the summer months heat can build up in your home, making your HVAC system work harder and longer.

Simple Changes:

- Consider using an outdoor grill to prepare your evening meals during the summer – that oven and cooktop can heat up your home in a hurry.
- The sunshine feels great but can result in solar heat gain through your windows during the summer – consider window shades or covering for a natural cooling effect.

Looking for a different option? There is an optional rate available for members called the Time of Use (TOU) rate which is based on the time of day you use electricity with a lower rate during off-peak hours and a higher rate during on-peak hours. For more information, log on to <https://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/news/time-use-rate>.



Photo courtesy SBS Inspections, Inc.

Pole Inspections to Start in Minnesota

Starting in mid-July, SBS Inspections, Inc., – a contractor for Sioux Valley Energy – will be testing and treating approximately 5,000 poles in Minnesota. The testing will take between four and six weeks, with SBS crews working from dawn to dusk and some work will be done on meter poles in members' yards. The testing and treatment process involves digging around the base of the poles and inspecting the poles visually. Sound and bore tests are also done to inspect for rot. Poles that fail inspection are scheduled for replacement. This proactive approach maintains your Cooperative's system reliability.

#CoopCares4Safety

SLOW DOWN

Around Work Sites



Learn more by scanning this code or going to www.CoopCares4Safety.com



Sioux Valley Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

FORT MEADE & THE STAR SPANGLED BANNER

How South Dakota Set the Stage for a National Anthem

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdreaa.coop

This month – July of 2026 – the United States of America celebrates the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, when the Founding Fathers declared the end of Great Britain’s role as their colonial overseer.

No patriotic song captures the sacrifice and resilience of the American experiment quite like the national anthem, “The Star-Spangled Banner.” However, the anthem is not from the American Revolution, nor was it immediately adopted as the nation’s official song. Its story unfolded over more than a century, from a British bombardment in Baltimore to a flag-lowering ceremony on the plains of western South Dakota.

The War of 1812

The year is 1814. The United States of America is in the midst of its second war with Great Britain – The War of 1812 – and the nation is reeling from a recent attack on Washington, D.C., where British troops torched the Capitol and White House.

A Maryland lawyer, Francis Scott Key, had just boarded a British naval vessel. He was sent there on behalf of the U.S. government to negotiate the release of an American prisoner, and while his negotiation was successful, Key was not allowed to return ashore until the British forces completed their bombardment on nearby Fort McHenry for fear that Key had overheard military plans while on board.

Detained aboard the enemy ship, Key looked ashore to Baltimore as the American forces fended off the invasion. As dusk settled over the harbor, it became harder for Key to track the battle, his only illumination being the occasional glow of British rockets and exploding shells. Key watched through the night, not sure who was winning the drawn-out fight. At dawn, there was just enough illumination for Key to make out the American flag still flying over the fort. The Americans had held



Visitors to Fort Meade (1 mile west of Sturgis, S.D.) will see the very same flag pole used by Col. Caleb Carlton during the flag retirements. These once-a-day evening ceremonies were the first instance of the Star Spangled Banner serving as the United States’ unofficial national anthem.

Photo submitted by Randy Bender

the fort and fended off the British from Baltimore.

Key’s experience that night inspired him to write a poem he titled “The Defence of Fort M’Henry.” Later, it was put to song and became known as “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

Fort Meade

Fast forward to 1892, thousands of miles west on the American frontier.

Col. Caleb Carlton is the new commander of the Eighth U.S. Cavalry at Fort Meade, a U.S. Army post in the young state of South Dakota. About a mile west, the bustling town of Sturgis is growing along with the fort, serving as an important stop along numerous trails heading toward gold country in the streams of the Black Hills.

“Fort Meade was put in place in about 1878 to help maintain the peace in the Black Hills region between the native tribes and the settlers coming in,” explained Randy Bender, a lifelong resident of Sturgis and second-generation Fort Meade Museum board member.

Carlton was eager to make his mark – not through a battle, but patriotism. He and his wife discussed how they could better instill respect for the American flag among their troops stationed at the fort. The Carltons’ idea was to have the band play an official song during the evening retreat, when the flag is retired for the night.

“Carlton issued orders that all within hearing distance were to stand at attention, and all men not under arms were to remove their hats as a sign of respect to the flag,” Bender said.

That song, chosen at the urging of Mrs. Carlton, was the Star Spangled Banner.

“We selected the Star Spangled Banner as it was written under very unusual circumstances,” Carlton later wrote in a 1914 letter.

Carlton’s daughter, Mabel, recalled the first ceremony in her journal.

“As the final notes of the song faded away, the flag landed gently in the arms of the waiting troops,” she wrote. “If it had been practiced, it could not have been done more perfectly.”

From Fort Meade, the practice began to spread as other officers and government officials visited and observed the ceremony.

“The New York Times referred to the fact that (I) was trying to establish a national anthem,” Carlton wrote. “This attracted the attention of Col. Cook in command of the recruiting depot at David’s Island, who wrote me that he was having recruits taught to sing our national air. I suggested he concentrate his instruction on the Star Spangled Banner.”

Carlton also wrote that later, during a meeting in Harrisburg with Pennsylvania Gov. Daniel H. Hastings, that the governor promised he would initiate the playing of the Star Spangled Banner among the state’s militia.

The most decisive support came during a meeting between Carlton and Secretary of War Daniel Lamont, with the two speaking about the custom. Before long,



Above: Officers of the 8th Cavalry in Fort Meade, S.D. in 1892. Photo courtesy of the South Dakota State Historical Society



Right: A photograph of Fort Meade with Bear Butte in the distance. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress.

Lamont ordered that the Star Spangled Banner be played during evening retreats across the nation.

Nearly 40 years after Fort Meade’s first Star Spangled Banner rendition, Congress in 1931 declared it the national anthem.

Today, visitors to Fort Meade can stand near the place where that custom began. A historical marker near the parade ground bears the words “It Started Here,” connecting the South Dakota fort to the story of the national anthem.

“That flagpole that they lowered the flag down from for that event is still standing at Fort Meade, and still used,” Bender said.

For Bender, who grew up at Fort Meade while his father worked at the

VA hospital and mother served on the museum board, the historic post still carries the feel of another era.

“When you visit Fort Meade, it’s like stepping back in time,” Bender said.

Many visitors are surprised to learn about Fort Meade’s place in the anthem’s history.

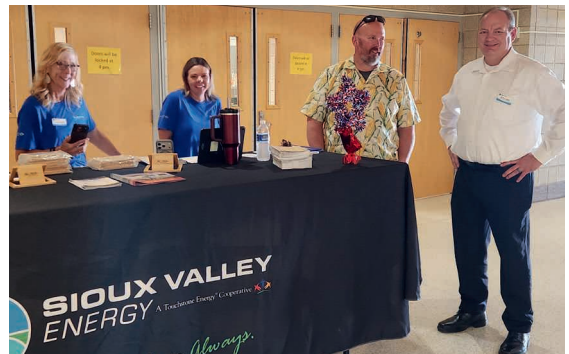
“It’s one of those things we just take for granted that we have a national anthem,” Bender said, “We never stopped to think about how these things came to be. But every one of those stories had to start at some point, and the national anthem story got its start in Fort Meade, South Dakota.”

The Fort Meade museum is open from mid-May through the end of September 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Saturday.

2026 Annual Meeting Held

Sioux Valley Energy held its Annual Meeting June 9 with 1,100 people attending, including 375 registered members. The main meeting site was the Tri-Valley High School near Colton, S.D., with satellite locations at Sioux Valley High School in Volga and Pipestone Area Schools in Pipestone, Minn.

Members attending the meeting were served a picnic meal and played Bingo before the meeting's 7 p.m. start. During the business portion of the meeting, the Board's elected officers provided reports and CEO Tim McCarthy shared information about the 2027 billing change to residential and general service members.



Above: Sioux Valley Energy Board President Dan Leuthold watches as Sioux Valley Energy Board Treasurer Ann Vostad delivers the Cooperative's financial report. Leuthold presided from the Colton location while Vostad and Board Secretary Don DeGreef reported from Volga.

Top right: American flags flew from bucket truck jibs at all three locations as the Cooperatives celebrated America's 250th birthday. **Middle right:** Employees and Directors greeted members at the Pipestone registration area. **Bottom right:** Members eat their dinner and play Bingo at Colton.



Left: Members of the American Legion Post in Volga called Bingo. **Above:** Bingo cards are raised in the air at Volga as members claim their prizes. **Bottom right:** A member at the Volga location receives their Bingo card from a Sioux Valley Energy employee. **Middle left:** Journey Lineworker Matt Determan called Bingo at Pipestone while Journey Electrician Kim C. Hansen **(lower left)** called Bingo at Colton.

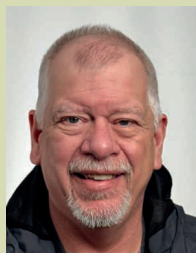


Above: Members registered to win a programmable slow cooker at the Energize Efficiency booth.



Employees Recognized for Years of Service

Five Sioux Valley Energy employees with a combined 155 years of service were recognized at the Cooperative's Annual Meeting June 9.



Terry Plecity
Staking Engineer
25 years



Sheila Gross
Energy Services Specialist
25 years



Sharla Haugen
Dispatch Manager
35 years



Jason Sage
Lead Staking Engineer
35 years



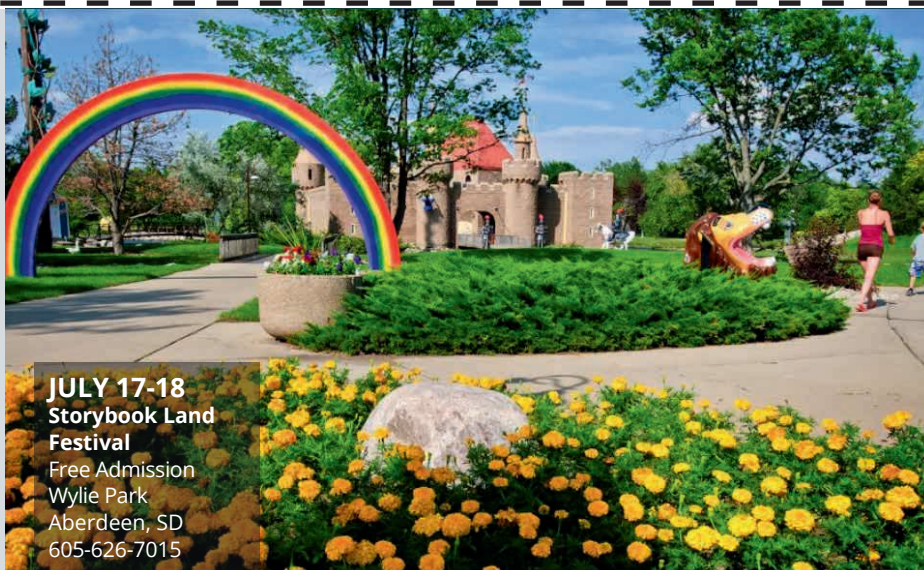
Tom Sebert
Lead Journey Lineworker
35 years

REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Dakotafest or the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____



JULY 17-18
Storybook Land
Festival
Free Admission
Wylie Park
Aberdeen, SD
605-626-7015

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.

JULY 2-4
USA 250th Celebration
at Mount Rushmore
Rapid City, SD
www.nps.gov

JULY 8
Oak Lake String Band
Performing
Museum Park
Bruce, SD
605-627-5671

JULY 8
Tracy Area Gardens & Quilts Tour
2-7:30 p.m.
Lakes Area – Shetek, Sarah, Gavin
Rain Date: July 9
Tracy, MN
507-629-3252
tracy.area.garden.quilts@gmail.com

JULY 10-12
Rooted: A Prairie Arts Weekend
Geddes, SD
Vendors, Artists: 605-428-5007

JULY 15-19
Danish Days
Viborg, SD
danishdays.org

JULY 18
A Celebration of Johnny Cash
7 p.m.
Gayville Hall
Gayville, SD

JULY 18
Forever Simon & Garfunkel
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

JULY 18-19
10th Annual Charles Mix
Saddle Club SDRA Rodeo
Geddes, SD
605-680-2763

JULY 24-26
Bruce Honey Days
Bruce, SD
605-627-5671

JULY 24-26
Winner Elks 57th Annual
Rodeo to Benefit LifeScope
7 p.m.
Tripp County Fairgrounds
Winner, SD

JULY 25
Planes, Trains & Automobiles
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

JULY 25
Disability Awareness &
Accessibility Committees
Resource Fair (DAAC)
11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Minneluzahan Senior Center
Rapid City, SD

AUG. 1-2
51st Annual Pioneer Power
Threshing Show
MN Machinery Museum
Hanley Falls, MN
507-828-5437

AUG. 1-2
Family Camping
Activity Weekend
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

AUG. 4-6
Farmfest 2026
8-a.m.-4 p.m.
Gilfillan Estate
28269 MN Hwy. 67
Morgan, MN
ideagroup.com/farmfest

AUG. 9
Czech Heritage Festival
8-a.m.-4 p.m.
Brechyn, MN
320-522-1218

Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.