

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Pristine Prairie

**Tellus & Lori Waddell Grow,
Harvest Native Plants**

Pages 8-9

Drive Out to a Drive-In!

Pages 12-13

Investing in Reliability



Tim McCarthy
General Manager/
Chief Executive
Officer

Tim.McCarthy@
siouxvalleyenergy.
com

Sioux Valley Energy's electric system reliability ranks in the top 25% of all electric cooperatives nationwide. That is not a performance indicator that just happens overnight or by luck. It has taken years of strategic investment, planning, and scores of high performing employees to make it happen. Does that mean we get it perfect every time or that there will never be an outage? No. Unfortunately, mother nature, public contacts, faulty equipment, etc. will always be factors impacting reliability.

The Cooperative's most recent four-year construction work plan that runs from 2024 through 2027 totals \$83 million. The next work plan which will run from 2028 through 2032 may approach \$125 million. That means in a span of eight years, Sioux Valley Energy will have invested over \$208 million to ensure top-quartile reliability for our members. There is a significant investment needed to maintain and continuously improve an electric system that is 99.997% reliable.

We use something called a 'balanced scorecard' to track and measure a number of strategic objectives that fall within four perspectives including members, financial,

core business, and knowledge and skills. While the objectives change occasionally, one thing remains steady – our laser focus on reliability.

Each year we develop a load forecast that updates not only the most recent years' plans, but also what we anticipate a quarter of a century down the road. By the year 2050 we expect to nearly double our membership, reaching approximately 55,000 members, and believe that our peak demand will increase two-fold. When I reference peak demand, I mean the electricity that is needed to power every member with all their connected lights, devices, and appliances all at the same time.

We develop these forecasts to help Sioux Valley Energy and its transmission and power suppliers plan for the future. Our peak demand forecast helps us plan how to build the electric system to ensure that we can reliably serve existing and future homeowners, farmers, and small businesses.

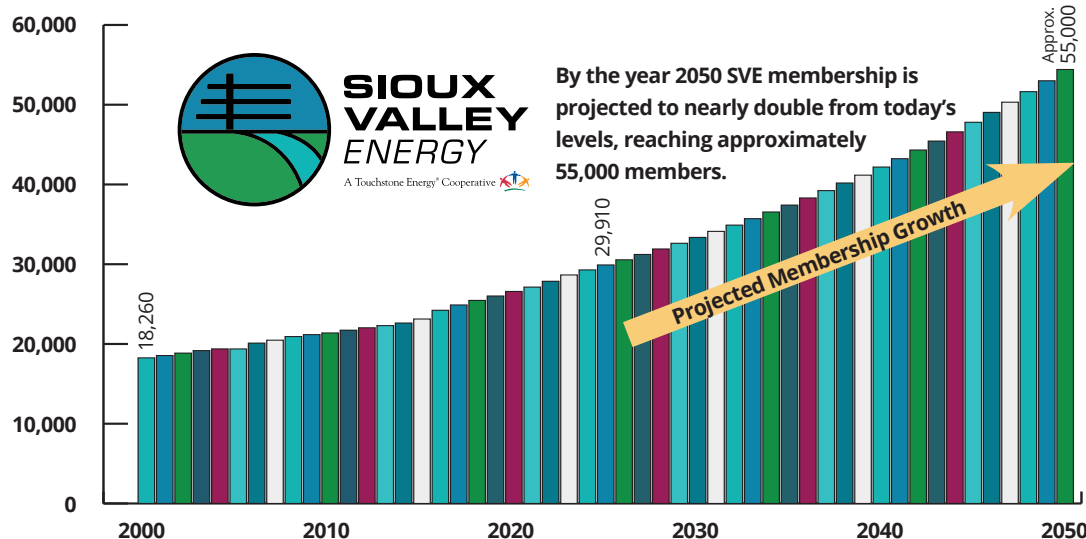
Our members remain our core priority as we develop electric rates to support continued reliability. 'Serving our members. *Always.*' is not just a tag line. It's what we do and how we live here at the Cooperative each and every day.



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.siuoxvalleyenergy.com/electric-demand-charge>

Sioux Valley Energy Members



COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

SIoux VALLEY ENERGY

(USPS No. 497-440)

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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.

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

Your Questions Answered

Question: Power costs are 62 cents of my energy dollar. What percentage comes from fossil fuels, solar, and wind?

Answer: As you indicated the cost of wholesale power and transmission make up the highest percentage of your electric bill (62%). That is why wholesale power costs are the number one driver of electric rates for Sioux Valley Energy members.

Just under 40 percent of the electricity you use is produced by coal resources. Around 27 percent comes from wind and solar. Hydropower makes up about 18 percent of that total with natural gas just over 14 percent. Basin Electric (SVE's bulk wholesale power generator) is constructing more natural gas generation so that percentage will rise once that is added to the generating fleet. Other power generation resources include oil, diesel, jet fuel, and recovered energy from the pipelines.

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.

**Thursday, Sept. 3rd
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.**

Electric co-ops at the State Fair

Come visit South Dakota's Touchstone Energy
Interactive Tent in Horticulture Park!

Family fun for all

LEGEND

- Dress Station
- Information
- Handicapped Restrooms
- ATM
- Stage
- AED
- First Aid Station
- Security
- Breast Feeding
- Handicapped Parking
- Tricycle Route
- Storm Shelter
- Fair Gate Entrance

STAYING PREPARED IN RURAL S.D.

As most South Dakotans know, weather on the Great Plains can be frightfully unpredictable. In fact, South Dakota holds the record for the fastest temperature rise ever recorded. On Jan. 22, 1943, the temperature in Spearfish climbed from 4 degrees below zero to 45 degrees above zero in only two minutes.

Winter storms also offer reminders of how quickly severe weather can reshape daily life. The Blizzard of 1966 brought wind gusts of 70 mph and snowdrifts reaching more than 30 feet. Roads remained blocked for days, and massive livestock losses made it one of the most severe blizzards in state history.

Winter Storm Atlas, another devastating blizzard in October 2013, dropped several feet of snow over the Black Hills. Heavy snow and strong winds toppled trees and power lines, and devastated livestock operations, leaving some residents without electricity for a week or longer.

Although not every storm will make the record books, severe weather can still disrupt a household. A little preparation on an ordinary day can make a difficult day much easier.

Make A Plan

Emergency preparedness begins with a plan. FEMA recommends that households develop a plan for alerts, appropriate shelter, evacuation and communication if family members become separated.

Start by identifying the types of emergencies most likely to affect your area. For rural South Dakotans, that may include anything from blizzards and tornadoes to severe thunderstorms and wildfires. A good safety plan starts by choosing a safe place inside the home for high winds and tornadoes, generally a basement or small interior room, away from windows.

Next, consider who in your household may need extra help during an emergency, including infants, older adults and pets. Make sure everyone knows where to go and what to do, then walk through the plan together.

Build A Practical Supply Kit

Once the plan is in place, start collecting and organizing supplies your household could rely on if the power goes out or travel becomes difficult. FEMA recommends keeping enough food and water for at least several days, with one gallon of water per person for each day. For example, a

family of four preparing for three days would need at least 12 gallons of water.

Choose nonperishable foods your household already eats and that can be prepared without electricity. Then add the basics needed to get through an outage, including flashlights, extra batteries, a first-aid kit and a way to recharge cellphones. A NOAA Weather Radio can also provide important updates even when cellphone service is unavailable.

Next, tailor the kit to your household. Set aside medications and other essentials.

There is no need to build the entire supply kit at once. Start with what is already in the house, then add supplies during regular shopping trips. Check the kit a few times each year to replace expired food, medications or batteries.

Preparedness cannot stop a storm, reopen a highway or restore electricity, but it can provide time and options when conditions begin to change.

For more information, visit Ready.gov for additional tips on making an emergency plan, building a supply kit and staying prepared.



"Don't plant trees near power lines."

Owen Williams, age 7

Owen reminds members to not plant trees near power lines. That is great advice, Owen! Thank you!

Owen's parents are Bruce and Jing Williams from Wakonda 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.

FALL DESSERTS

GOLDEN GRAHAM/ SMORES BARS

Ingredients:

7 cups Golden Graham cereal
16 oz. mini marshmallows
1/2 cup butter
6 full size Hershey bars

Method

Unwrap Hershey bars and break apart on lines and then each piece again in half. Set aside. Melt the butter and 6 cups of the marshmallows. Stir in the Golden Grahams cereal. Cool for one minute. Stir in remaining marshmallows and Hershey pieces. Press lightly into a greased 9x13 pan with slightly wet hands. Cool and serve.

Valerie Marso
Oahe Electric

THE BEST APPLE CRISP

Ingredients:

6 cups sliced apples
1 1/2 cups white sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon
6 tbsp. flour

Topping

(makes enough for two pans)

2 cups flour
2 cups soft butter
1 tsp. baking powder

Method

Mix ingredients in a bowl and place in a 9x12 glass baking dish. Mix topping ingredients together until crumbly and sprinkle over apple mixture. Don't pack. Bake at 350 F for 1 hour or until apples are done.

Ginny Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy

VERY GOOD PEACH DESSERT

Ingredients:

First layer:

1 cup flour
1/2 cup nuts
1 stick margarine
Mix together and press in 9x13 pan. Bake at 350 F for 10 minutes.

Second layer:

1 (8 oz.) package cream cheese
1 cup powdered sugar
Cream together and add 1 cup Cool Whip. Spread on top of cooled crust.

Third layer:

1 cup sugar
2 tbsp. white corn syrup
3 tbsp. cornstarch
1 cup water
Combine ingredients, cook until thickened, then remove from heat. Add 3 tbsp. of peach-flavored gelatin and 1/4 tsp. almond flavoring. Cool. Peel and slice fresh peaches, then combine with the cooled mixture. Spread on top of cheese filling. Top with a layer of whipped topping and chill.

Ginny Jensen
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.

Safety is Personal

#Co-opCares4Safety Puts Care Into Action

What does safety mean to you?

For some, it may mean looking both ways before crossing the street. For others, it's buckling a child into the right car seat, staying alert around farm equipment, or knowing what to do when working near electrical equipment.

At Sioux Valley Energy, we believe safety is about more than just following safety rules. It's about looking out for one another.

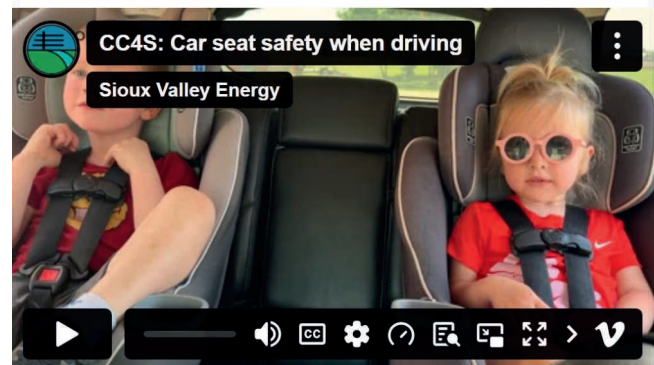
That's the idea behind the Cooperative's #Co-opCares4Safety campaign, which you may see and hear during the spring and fall months on television, social media, streaming services, websites, and radio.

Built from the Cooperative's *Culture of Care*, the campaign is designed to do more than simply share safety information. It's intended to capture attention, create an emotional connection, and inspire people to take action.

"The #Co-opCares4Safety messaging is geared toward connection and care," said Vice President of Public Relations Carrie Vugteveen. "Our goal is to draw interest, create an emotional connection and, ultimately, inspire action through stories from real people. While electrical safety is at the heart of what we do, there are so many other ways we can help people keep themselves and those around them safe."

That broader approach is what makes #Co-opCares4Safety unique. Along with the safety messages you'll see and hear throughout the community, CoopCares4Safety.com provides a collection of personal stories and short videos focused on a variety of everyday

#CoopCares4Safety



In the five months since the #CoopCares4Safety (CC4S) campaign launched, that webpage has more than 7,500 views. The CC4S safety vignettes have more than 500 views on YouTube. SVE has shared the videos through social and digital media; the recent campaign featuring just the vignettes had more than 25,000 impressions.

safety topics. Visitors can find reminders about flying drones, child car seats, farming, and electrical equipment – because safety doesn't stop when you leave the jobsite or step away from the power lines.

Website visitors can take the #Co-opCares4Safety pledge, making a personal commitment to be more safety-conscious and to look out for others.

Because at the end of the day, safety is about caring for others and ensuring that we all make it home safely.

So, this fall, keep your eyes and ears open for #Co-opCares4Safety. Take a few minutes to visit CoopCares4Safety.com to hear more personal stories, discover safety reminders, and find simple ways you can put care into action.

When it comes to safety, we're all connected – and we all have a part to play.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

September kicks off the fall shoulder season, when cooler mornings and milder evenings often mean you can give your heating/cooling system a break. Open windows, use ceiling fans and enjoy the fresh air whenever temperatures allow. It's also the perfect time to schedule annual HVAC maintenance before colder weather arrives. Because demand is typically lower during the fall, heating and cooling professionals often have greater availability, making it easier to book an appointment. Regular maintenance can improve your system's efficiency, help prevent unexpected breakdowns, and keep your home comfortable all year long.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy



CO-OP SUPPORTS AG EVENTS

Ag PhD Field Day

Sioux Valley Energy employees joined employees from Southeastern Electric Cooperative and East River Electric Power Cooperative to share electrical safety reminders with attendees at Ag PhD Field Day.



Sioux Empire Fair Ag Appreciation Day

Sioux Valley Energy employees joined employees from other cooperatives to serve the meal at the Ag Appreciation Day at the Sioux Empire Fair in Sioux Falls.



State FFA Officers Visit

Two officers with the South Dakota State FFA visited the Cooperative in August as part of their visits to various industries in the area.

Pickleball is coming!

Sioux Valley Energy's Operation Round Up® and REVIVE 2030 programs recently awarded \$6,500 in grants to help move the Garretson, S.D., pickleball courts closer to completion. The idea for new courts came from feedback gathered by the town's Youth Advisory Board. SVE's VP of Public Relations Carrie Vugteveen and Economic Development and Community Relations Executive Brandon Lane visited with Garretson community leaders, a Youth Advisory Board representative, and community partners to drop off the donation.



A photograph of a man and a woman, Tellus and Lori Waddell, sitting in the back of a black utility vehicle. They are both smiling at the camera. The woman is in the foreground, wearing a maroon t-shirt. The man is behind her, wearing a grey t-shirt, a maroon apron, and a camouflage baseball cap. They are in a field of tall green grass and wildflowers. The background shows a line of trees under a bright sky.

WONDROUS WILDFLOWERS & PRAIRIE PRESERVATION

Tellus and Lori Waddell.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

Waddell Native Seeds Turns Rural Acreage into Prairie Paradise

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Journeying east on U.S. Hwy. 12 toward Milbank, as you make a steep descent into Whetstone Valley, you'll pass the usual South Dakota crops – corn, soybeans, some wheat here and there.

But for Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative members Tellus and Lori Waddell of Marvin, the most fascinating – and lucrative – harvest is one most of us would overlook, growing tall in roadside ditches and uncut fields.

For more than 30 years, the Waddells have allowed their Grant County acreage to run wild as they grow, harvest and sell the seeds of dozens of native wildflowers and grasses.

"We started noticing wildflowers up in the pasture, and at that time [the internet was] coming out so we could do some research on what they were," Lori recalled. "Tellus started calling nurseries asking them if they wanted this or that ... and that's how we built into this – and there are not a lot of people that do this."

When Lori says "this," she's referring to more than just collecting seeds. She means getting up early before the weather

is too hot, rolling up her sleeves and driving around the property in a side-by-side scanning the ground for patches of whichever wildflower type is ready to be harvested – by hand – for seeds.

"It's very, very labor-intensive," Tellus added. "It's not like picking flowers – because we don't pick a flower. You have to let [the seeds] develop. Right now, we're picking things that blossomed about six weeks ago."

With dozens of plants and just as many harvest schedules, the Waddells have a steady amount of work to do from mid-spring all the way into fall.

Traversing the lightly traveled trails over their expansive, glacially carved property, (this reporter was joined by two labs in the back seat of the side-by-side) Tellus and Lori are quick to point out distant patches of coneflowers, blazing star, wild turnips, vervain and their personal favorite flora they cultivate, milkweed.

"It's for the butterflies," Tellus explained as he pulled the vehicle up to the family's newest experiment: milkweed planted as a row crop.

"It's the first time we've ever done that," Tellus said, proudly explaining his youngest son, Levi Waddell, is heading up the initiative.

Tellus added, "As every generation takes over, you'll get different things."

Most outbuildings on the Waddells' land double as drying rooms for at least one harvest during the season.

That includes their three-stall garage – a more accurate description may be the seed processing facility – where the Waddells dry the seeds, separate them from the chaff and package them for shipment to area greenhouses and other customers.

Demand has grown to the point where the Waddells have hired about a dozen part-time summer workers to help harvest seeds.

Their harvesting efforts don't stop at the

The Waddells are row cropping milkweed for the first time. Monarch butterflies lay their eggs on milkweed, making it an important resource for conservation efforts.

Photo by Jacob Boyko





Lori Waddell enjoys photographing native flowers on the acreage.
 Top row: prairie lily, pasque flower (S.D. state flower), wild turnip.
 Bottom row: blazing star, scarlet gaura, coneflower.
Photos by Lori Waddell

fence line – Tellus is known to park his car, knock on the doors and ask to collect seeds if a patch of prairie catches his eye.

"We have picking rights [agreements with property owners] from here to Pierre down to Grand Island, Nebraska," Tellus said, recounting an especially vibrant purple field of vervain near Forestburg.

This led Tellus to a more solemn conversation. Piece by piece, he and Lori have bought surrounding acreage in an effort to isolate their native plants from the effects of drifting pesticides. Tellus said that when mixed into a slight breeze, the chemicals are potent enough to wipe out their native broadleaf plants for years at a time – even if the spraying takes place miles away.

Tellus and Lori's observation is that biodiversity is shrinking throughout the region for this same reason – diverse fields of native flowers and grasses are becoming more difficult to find, and the wildlife that relies on native plants for food are becoming increasingly scarce.

"You talk to people in their 80s, and they'll talk about walking through a field of lilies," Tellus said. "And then they just sit there for a bit and try to think of the last time they've seen that. Sometimes 40 or 50 years ago."

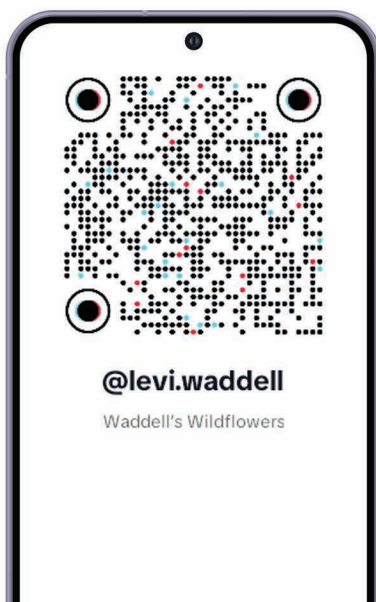
He continued, "that's when people realize the prairie is pretty much gone."

Levi Waddell uses social media to spread awareness about native plants, conservation and his family's operation.

His TikTok page, Waddell's Wildflowers, has more than 1,000 followers and 19,000 likes and chronologizes the day-by-day life of a native plant harvester.

The Waddells hope to share their story to educate others on the importance of conservation and inspire them to preserve the native prairie for generations to come.

"God gave us this beautiful earth and we're ruining it," Lori said. "If we can at least preserve and protect our little corner, I feel like we've done our job."



PROCESSING NATIVE SEEDS



The harvested seeds are spread indoors to dry for several weeks.



The dried seed heads are broken apart to loosen the seeds from the surrounding plant material.



The seeds are fed into a hammer mill to break apart remaining plant material from the seeds.



The cleaned seeds are sifted one final time to remove any extra material. The separated chaff is spread where the seeds were harvested so any unseparated seeds can germinate.



Get to Know Your Energy Use with SmartHub®

The Cooperative offers a powerful tool to help you monitor and manage your electricity use. SmartHub is a free online and mobile app that gives you easy access to your account and valuable insights into how you use energy.

With SmartHub, you can:

- View your energy use (kWh) and demand (kW)
- Track your daily and hourly usage patterns
- View and pay your bill
- Sign up for Auto Pay and Paperless Billing
- Receive cooperative news and updates
- View and report outage information
- Manage your account notifications
- And much more!

Beginning in 2027, the Cooperative will add a demand charge for residential and general service members. SmartHub is the perfect tool to help you prepare.

Start by checking your daily demand and thinking about how you used electricity that day. Did you spread out the use of large appliances throughout the day, or did you stack them by running several at the same time?

As you monitor your usage, you'll begin to see how different appliances and activities affect your home's highest demand. Understanding these patterns now will help you make simple adjustments before the new rate takes effect.

Download SmartHub by scanning this QR code or by downloading the app from the App Store or Google Play.



New to SmartHub®?

How to get started:

1. Go to www.sioxvalleyenergy.com and click "Register Account" within the "Manage Your Account" box. Click the link towards the bottom of the SmartHub login box to sign up as a new user.

2. Fill in the information on the New User Registration screen.

3. Continue to follow the prompts.

Hint: Use the last 4 of the main account holder's social security number.

4. A successful attempt will display this message.

Congratulations!
Your registration is complete. You will receive an email with instructions for setting your password.

Retrieve the temporary password from your email and login.

The system will require you to change the password after the first login.

Note: Check junk or spam folders if you do not receive the email.

Goodbye, paper.

Hello, convenience and savings!



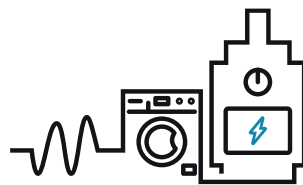
Swap out your paper newsletter with the *electronic version*.
Email us at info@siouxvalleyenergy.com to make the switch!

Join the paperless movement to avoid postal delays!

Sioux Valley Energy offers a convenient paperless billing option, reducing postage and printing costs for the Cooperative and saving members the ever-increasing price of a stamp. **To sign up for the paperless option, scan the QR code or log into the SmartHub website or mobile app.**



siouxvalleyenergy.smarthub.coop



SPREAD DON'T STACK

Brats & Kilowatts

Learn more about demand at our Brats and Kilowatts events

4:30-6 p.m. 'Come and Go' Learning – Don't have much time? Join us for our 'Come and Go' learning opportunity. Enjoy a brat and chips and chat with an expert about your demand and how it will impact your bill.

6-6:30 p.m. Demand 101 Session – Grab some food and join Sioux Valley Energy as they present 'Demand 101'.

6:30-7 p.m. Q&A Session – Have more questions? We will have experts on hand to answer all your questions!

Monday, August 24

District 8:

Generations
105 S Estey St
Luverne

Thursday, August 27

District 1:

McKnight Community Center
300 W Main St., White

Tuesday, September 8

District 9:

Sioux Valley Energy
Pipestone Service Center
1102 7th St SE
Pipestone

Thursday, September 10

District 2:

Sioux Valley School
200 Hansina Ave, Volga

Thursday, September 17

District 5: Taopi Hall

102 E 3rd St, Colton

Thursday, October 1

District 4:

Dakota Prairie Playhouse
1205 Washington Ave N
Madison

Tuesday, October 6

District 7:

Humboldt
Community Center
201 S Main St, Humboldt

Thursday, October 8

District 3:

Sioux Valley Energy Office
23491 471st Ave., Colman

Tuesday, October 13

District 6:

Sioux Valley Energy
Brandon Service Center
108 N Heritage Road
Brandon

Monday, October 19

District 10:

Edgerton Public School
423 1st Ave W, Edgerton

Please register to attend at siouxvalleyenergy.com or by calling 800-234-1960.



DRIVE OUT TO A DRIVE-IN

Outdoor Movie Theaters Offer Old-Time Fun

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

It's one of the defining cultural behemoths of the 20th century. Load the family into the station wagon – or someone you fancy in a borrowed hot rod – and head over to the drive-in theater. You pick up popcorn and soda pop, tune your car stereo to the transmitter, and settle in for an unforgettable experience.

It all started in 1933, when Richard Hollingshead of Camden, New Jersey, began developing an accessible and comfortable way to bypass the confining indoor theater seats and allow moviegoers a way to enjoy a show from the comfort of their own vehicle.

The Smithsonian Magazine reports a peak of more than 4,000 American drive-in theaters in 1958. But with cities continuously expanding and the price of property increasing, most of them have closed in the time since. Today, it's estimated that fewer than 300 drive-in theaters remain.

But don't fret! If you're reading this magazine, there are still some nearby drive-in movie theater options for you and your family (or your date) to enjoy!

Midway Drive In – Miller, S.D.

In Miller, mid-May through Labor Day weekend is drive-in movie season. Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights are illuminated by the distant glow of the local drive-in movie theater.

Sarah Resel is one of the owners of the Midway Drive-In. Growing up in Miller, the drive-in was her weekend hangout and the site of so many cherished memories. Years later, that's still the case – just under slightly different circumstances.

A show is about to start at the Midway Drive In near Miller.
Photo submitted by Midway Drive In

"We pretty much don't have weekends during the summer," Resel said. "We're committed to being here with the theater. We all have full-time jobs; we always call this our community service."

Despite the hefty commitment, Resel says seeing people turnout from all over the country for an authentic drive-in experience makes it worthwhile.

"I think with us in our Miller community, we take it for granted that it's just here," Resel said. "It's crazy the support we get from other towns coming to our community."

Pheasant Drive-In – Mobridge, S.D.

Cam Wal Electric Cooperative members Jon and Jill Olson of Mobridge have experience with both indoor and outdoor theaters.

"The day-to-day prep is a little bit different," Jill said, explaining



The Pheasant Drive-In sits on the Missouri River hills near Mobridge.
Photo submitted by Pheasant Drive-In

the maintenance needed for the property and screen, along with weather surprises.

"I think weather is probably the number one issue," she continued. "We had a windstorm that came through Sunday [July 19] and caused some damage for us."

Even with the unexpected challenges, Jill said owning the drive-in theater is a positive experience, and on summer nights as people from near and far gather for a showing, she's reminded why she does it.

"It's a completely different vibe than sitting inside a dark theater," Jill said. "Parents do such a good job making it a fun experience, like bringing a pickup, backing it in and letting the kids sit in the back end. The other weekend, we had a family bring a bunch of blow-up air mattresses. The kids can talk and run back and forth – it just isn't your typical thing."

Hilltop Drive Inn Theater – Gregory, S.D.

"It's awesome," Rosebud Electric Cooperative member Dawn Boyer said when asked about running a drive-in movie theater.

"It's like owning a piece of the past while being in the present – and hopefully the future."

When Dawn was a kid, her mom worked at the ticket counter, sometimes taking Dawn along too. When she learned in 2018 the theater was looking for a new owner, it just seemed right.

"Two weeks later, I was running a theater I knew nothing about," Dawn laughed.

The drive-in is an 80-year-old landmark in Gregory County, and the oldest operating drive-in theater in the state. The age is catching up with it, Boyer said, explaining the heavy maintenance schedules necessary to keep the theater running.

Though the theater is becoming harder to operate, Boyer says the smiles on visitors' faces make it all worth it.

"The people who come through that have never seen a drive-in before – that's who we do it for," Boyer continued. "The expression on somebody's face when that big screen lights up at night is awesome."

Pheasant City Drive-In Theatre – Redfield, S.D.

Redfield's drive-in theater has been open continuously since 1953, and thanks to Dave and Stacey Marlow, it will continue for many years.

"We bought it at the time the industry was changing over to digital projectors," Stacey said, recalling the 2014 sale. "And [the previous owner] wasn't going to do it, so we went to him and asked if he'd like to sell it."

Since taking over, they've upgraded the display system again, installing a brighter, higher-contrast laser projector that allows shows to begin earlier and helps future-proof the theater.

While modern, the theater retains its original elements: the speaker poles are functional (Dave spends hours wiring each spring) and the propane popcorn maker satisfies hungry moviegoers.

"People tell us all the time, 'We are so glad you took this and have kept it going,'" Stacey said. "This is a part of our town we didn't want to lose, so we decided we were the ones to step up and save it."

Winner Drive In Theater – Winner, S.D.

In 2022, Rosebud Electric Cooperative members Austin and Jill Moser were looking for more space for their family. They finally found the perfect house on a nice chunk of land – with a catch.

"The movie theater was included," Jill said. "We thought, 'Why not?'"

The Mosers say running the drive-in theater with their three kids has been a good experience for the family and has given the kids an opportunity to work concessions.

During the Mosers' second season in operation, a windstorm damaged the screen, necessitating a lengthy rebuild. Luckily, the theater was able to reopen for the 2025 season.

"It's really great to see how many people still support drive-in movie theaters," Jill said. "There's not that many left in the country. We meet people from all over – we've had people from France come to the theater."

Verne Drive In – Luverne, Minn.

Half an hour east of Sioux Falls, the Verne Drive In welcomes hundreds of I-90 travelers Wednesday through Sunday each summer.

Owner and operator Doug Rozeboom said his goal is to provide an experience that is affordable, fun and unique for both locals and travelers.

"I don't want to say drive-in theaters are a thing of the past, but they're becoming it," Rozeboom said. "It's a unique experience because you can't just go anywhere to watch a movie outdoors on a big screen."

He continued, "Kids are able to run around and throw a football, so they can blow off some steam."

Rozeboom described the enthusiasm of moviegoers, recounting creative truck-bed setups, typically with lawn chairs, sofas or mattresses.

"For the Toy Story 5 premiere, someone had a tree-trimming truck, so they had the boom arm out," he laughed. "I was like, 'Huh, that's interesting.'"

Making the perfect setup is part of the drive-in movie theater experience!
Photo submitted by Verne Drive In



Winner's drive-in features a curved screen.
Photo by Kim Boyko



THE POWER OF THE PAUSE

How job briefings help co-ops
think through safety

Frank Turner

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Before an electric cooperative line crew begins work, the job starts with a pause.

The pause may only take a few minutes, but for crews working around energized equipment, changing weather and other hazards, those few minutes matter.

Before the first step of the job, line crews gather for a tailgate safety session – a documented pre-job briefing where they identify the task, hazards, protective equipment, and plan.

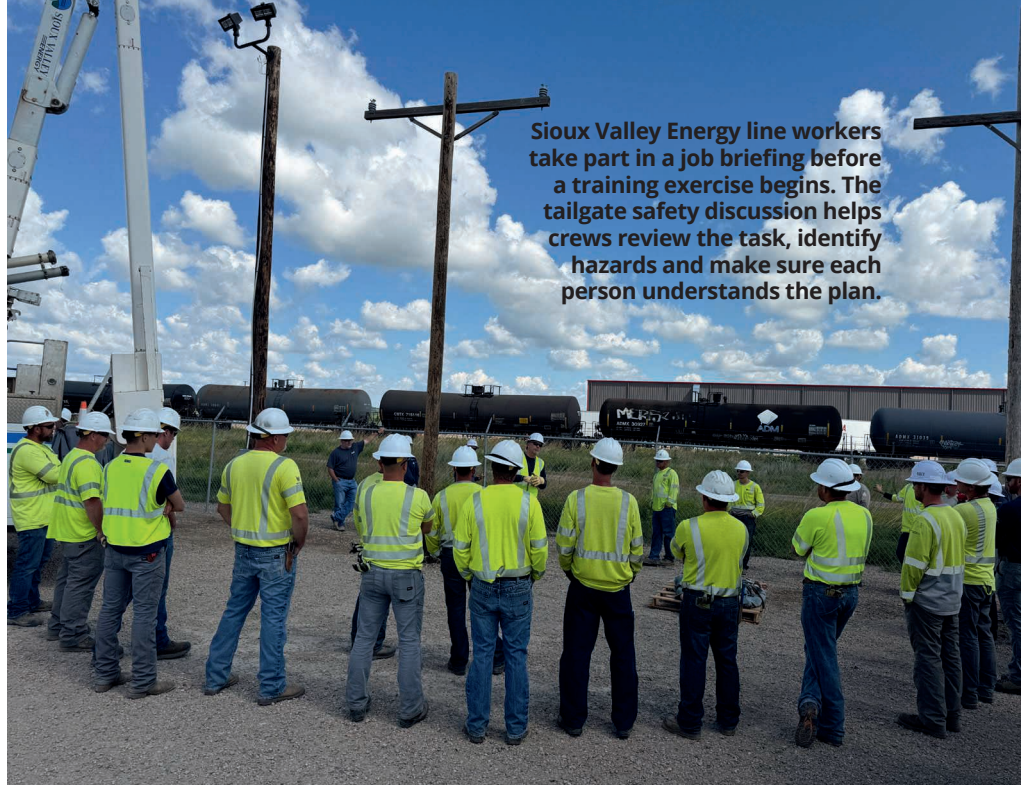
For Travis Denison, Manager of Safety at Sioux Valley Energy, that conversation is one of the most important tools crews have to fight complacency.

“It forces our professionals to stop and go through the steps of the job they’re going to do and identify the hazards with each of those steps,” Denison said.

Despite the casual name, a tailgate safety session is not a public demonstration or a quick conversation at the back of a pickup. It is a documented briefing used by crews before work begins. The goal is to slow down and communicate, making sure that everyone is focused on the work in front of them.

“These are jobs that our crews do every day, but all of a sudden something in the environment can change. There can be hazards that the crew didn’t talk about or recognize, and somebody can get hurt,” Denison said. “That job briefing or tailgate session is made to stop the

Sioux Valley Energy line workers take part in a job briefing before a training exercise begins. The tailgate safety discussion helps crews review the task, identify hazards and make sure each person understands the plan.



crews, make them aware of their surroundings, talk about the job and each of the hazards, and discuss how they’re going to protect themselves.”

Denison’s focus on safety also runs in the family. His brother, Joe Denison, is a loss control professional with SDREA – the same role Travis previously held before joining Sioux Valley Energy. Both came to safety work after years around line crews and firsthand experience with the risks of electric utility work.

“We were both linemen,” Travis said. “The more experienced you get as a lineman, the more you recognize the mistakes you made as an apprentice. You see the shortcuts that maybe you made yourself or that you saw other linemen make.”

So how does a tailgate safety session actually work? The details change with the job, but the idea is the same: slow the job down before it starts.

For instance, if a crew is conducting a pole top rescue training, the briefing begins before anyone climbs. The crew identifies the emergency location, the people involved, and who is leading the job and the protective equipment required.

Then they talk through the work itself. If the crew is practicing a mock mayday call or using a rescue manikin, they also talk through what could go wrong during the training. Someone could strain a muscle. A climber could make blunt contact with a pole or hardware. A falling object could injure someone below. Even a knife or hook could create its own hazard if people are not paying attention.

“We list the job, the steps of the job, the personal protective equipment we’ll use, and the energy sources,” Travis said. “We talk about anything to do with the job

before we start, so everybody's on the same page."

For Denison, the value of a job briefing is not limited to line crews. Members do not need a formal briefing form before starting work at home or on the farm, but they can use the same pattern to stay safe – name the job, look at the location, identify the equipment involved, and talk through what could go wrong.

At home, that might mean looking up before raising a ladder, checking for power lines before trimming trees, or calling 811 before digging a post hole, planting trees, building a deck, or installing a sign.

That message is especially important on the farm, when large equipment may operate near overhead power lines.

"Be aware of the power lines," he said. "Have that talk. Communicate. Make the people you are working with aware of the potential dangers around them."

Sioux Valley Energy has also worked to carry that message to members through radio ads, videos, and public outreach. The Cooperative has shared reminders about overhead power lines, green boxes, construction work, and the importance of locating underground utilities before digging. At times, Sioux Valley Energy has also partnered with Southeastern Electric Cooperative on public safety messaging.

Denison said the goal is similar to a utility crew's tailgate session: get people thinking before something goes wrong.

"Think about what you're doing," Denison said.

SDREA - Job Briefing
Aerial Unit Testing

Cooperative: Thompson Center Coop Date of the Testing: 6-30-26 Cooperative System Location: L24C72
Emergency Location: Substation # 440 Temperature: 76 Humidity: 68% Voltage: 7200
Section 14 Township-112N Range-4West

Type of Personnel Involved:
Line Superintendent: Lead Lineman SDREA Less Control: Personnel
Groundman: Contractor Apprentice

Work Procedures:
Person in Charge of the Aerial Unit Testing: ADP
Safe Location for Testing: N/A Set Up Traffic Control Devices if Necessary
Ground Each Truck to System Neutral: ✓ Inspect the Aerial Unit Boom Condition
Competent Aerial Unit Operator Identified: ✓ Rubber Gloves Shall be Worn ✓
Aerial Unit will be tested for 3-5 minutes: ✓ Retract Boom to de-energizing test unit
Removal of the Truck Ground from System U: ✓ Repeat for the next Aerial Unit
Remove Skanska Tester from Boom: ✓

Personal Protective Equipment
Truck Grounds: ✓ Work Area Protection Devices: Out of Sight Rubber Gloves: ✓ Hot Sticks: ✓ Hard Hats: ✓
Safety Glasses: ✓ High Visibility Vest: ✓ Flagger Personnel: ✓ Aerial Unit Tester: ✓ Strobes or Beacons: ✓

Special Tools & Equipment Required
Aerial Unit Tester: ✓ Spotting Scope: ✓ Slip Watch/Watch: ✓

Potential Hazards
Contact Energized Lines with Equipment: ✓ Vehicular Traffic: ✓ Discharge of Hot or Burning Oil: ✓

Energy Source Control
Substation: Sectionalizer ✓ OCR: ✓ Installed 1 Shot: ✓
Fuse Outlets: SCADA Electronic VFI: ✓ Other: ✓

Personal at Job Site
Signature: Joe Denison Signature: David Rehn Signature: _____
Signature: Danley Swartz Signature: Tony Swanson Signature: _____
Signature: Billy Bob Signature: Lynne Becker Signature: _____
Signature: Harsh Church Signature: Casey Larson Signature: _____
Signature: Jason Peto Signature: Devin Thompson Signature: _____

This mock SDREA job briefing form, created for illustration, shows how line crews may document pre-job planning before aerial unit testing. The example highlights the kinds of details crews review before work begins, including location, personnel, work procedures, protective equipment, tools, energy controls, and potential hazards.

As part of its
**Forward Farm
Safety Toolbox**,
the University
of Wisconsin-
Madison
Division of



Extension notes that creating a culture of safety must be the foundation of a farm safety program because it shapes how people think, act, and make decisions every day.

A safety culture encourages proactive hazard management, reduces injuries and close calls, and ensures that everyone goes home safely at the end of the day. Safety requires Management and Leadership. A culture of safety can also increase worker satisfaction, productivity, positive relationships, and employee retention.

Regular communication with all workers in a farm setting is critical. The toolbox notes the following:

Build the habit of having informal weekly tail gate conversations with your team:

- Length: Short, 10-15 minutes
- Timing: Early in the week
- Topics: Seasonal review of recent close calls

Effective farm safety training is an important tool that builds a positive and supportive workplace culture. When employers prioritize their care about safety, they show they care about their team's well-being. This strengthens connection and trust.

A recommended method is brief (10-15 minute) "toolbox" training. These can be informal sessions in familiar environments, such as the lunchroom, the shop, or while gathered around a machine or work setting. These meetings should be:

- **Brief and Consistent:** Keep sessions under 15 minutes and schedule them weekly or biweekly.
- **Small and Engaging:** 5-10 people are best and will encourage participation and conversation.
- **Accessible:** Ideally, have a "visual" present like a machine or animal handling situation in the background. Use simple language to accommodate different reading levels and languages. If you have a handout, keep it simple and to the point.

Successful safety toolbox training involves two-way conversation. When workers are encouraged to share experiences and concerns, they feel respected and valued. This leads to higher safety compliance, reduced risk, and a stronger return on investment for the farm business.

<https://farms.extension.wisc.edu/forward-farm-safety-toolbox/creating-a-culture-of-safety/>

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: _____ Dakotafest – Find us in the Touchstone Energy Building!
Your Email Address: _____ S.D. State Fair – Find us in the Horticulture Park!



SEPT. 3 (ONE DAY EVENT)
Touchstone Energy Cooperatives
at the South Dakota State Fair
Horticulture Park, State Fairgrounds
Huron, SD

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.

AUG. 27-30
Steam Threshing Jamboree
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

SEPT. 1-6
20th Annual Sturgis Mustang Rally
Sturgis, SD
SturgisMustangRally.com

SEPT. 6
Studebaker Car Show
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
South 6th St.
Custer, SD

SEPT. 9
BFest Concert Series & Farmers Market
Matt Gauger Performing
Museum Park
Bruce, SD
605-627-5671

SEPT. 12-13
Harvest & Kuchen Festival
Delmont, SD
605-505-0535

SEPT. 12-20
Rustic Designs & More Fall Country Show
9 a.m.-6 p.m.
41450 264th St.
Ethan, SD
605-770-2411

SEPT. 13
Antique Car & Tractor Parade
Registration 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m.
Parade 1 p.m.
Farmer, SD
605-641-5498

SEPT. 18-19
34th Annual Granite Threshermen's Swap Meet & Antique Classic Car Show
Free Admission
Granite, IA
Contact: Darrel Hansen
605-261-9720

SEPT. 19
Veterans Stand Down
8:30-11:30 a.m.
1600 W. Russell St.
Sioux Falls, SD

SEPT. 25-OCT. 4
Masquerade (LightsUp)
Orpheum Theatre
Sioux Falls, SD
Box Office: 605-367-6000
MasqueradeMusical.com

SEPT. 26
Harvest Pumpkin Fest
3-7 p.m.
Eureka City Park North Shelter
Eureka, SD
605-230-1777

SEPT. 26
Harvest Festival Supper
West Nidaros Lutheran Church
25403 471st Ave.
Crooks, SD
605-212-5730

OCT. 3
9th Annual 437th Flea Market
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Salem, SD
605-421-4190

OCT. 3-4
The Black Market
Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.,
Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Bldg.
Sioux Falls, SD
605-332-6004

OCT. 3
Pumpkin Train/ SoDak Vendor Showcase
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

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.