

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Pick of the Patch

**Pumpkin Patches Offer
Plenty of Reasons to Get
Outside this Fall**

Pages 8-9

**Ghost Town Under
Lake Oahe**

Pages 12-13

Electric Rate Design



Tim McCarthy
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Chief Executive
Officer

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We've been traveling throughout our service territory hosting "Brats and Kilowatts" demand informational sessions. We're visiting all 10 districts to meet face-to-face with members discussing the billing changes coming in 2027.

While we have determined that the new rate structure will include energy (kWh), basic service, and demand (kW) charges, the 2027 rates have not yet been set.

We are analyzing several rate scenarios and are waiting for our wholesale power and transmission suppliers to provide their 2027 costs. Once those costs are known, the Cooperative will complete its rate and cost-of-service studies. The results and proposed rates will then go to the Cooperative's Board of Directors for review and approval in late fall.

As we develop the new rates, our goal is to accurately reflect the Cooperative's actual costs of providing service and ensure those costs are recovered fairly as wholesale power and transmission expenses continue to rise.

ELECTRIC RATE INCREASES

In addition to breaking demand out as a separate charge, members will see a rate increase in 2027, with additional increases possible in future years.

The primary reason is the continued increase in wholesale power and transmission costs. More than 62% of what members pay for electricity goes directly toward these costs, making changes in wholesale rates a significant factor in members' rates.

Another factor is the Cooperative's ongoing system replacement plan, which replaces approximately 125 miles of line each year. This investment has helped move Sioux Valley Energy's reliability into the top quartile nationwide providing a level of service we believe our members expect and deserve.

Maintaining that reliability

requires continued investment in aging infrastructure, as well as rising costs for materials, fleet, equipment and other expenses associated with system replacement. We must also continue adding capacity to our local system so it can handle each member's highest demand.

COST ALLOCATION AND RATE RECOVERY

As we develop rates that address these factors, we want to be sure that our rate recovery more closely matches how each member contributes costs to the system. It is about accurately reflecting how members use the electric system and then allocating those costs appropriately and fairly.

A HARVEST SAFETY REMINDER

As we close out the month, we're entering a busy time for farmers as harvest gets into full swing.

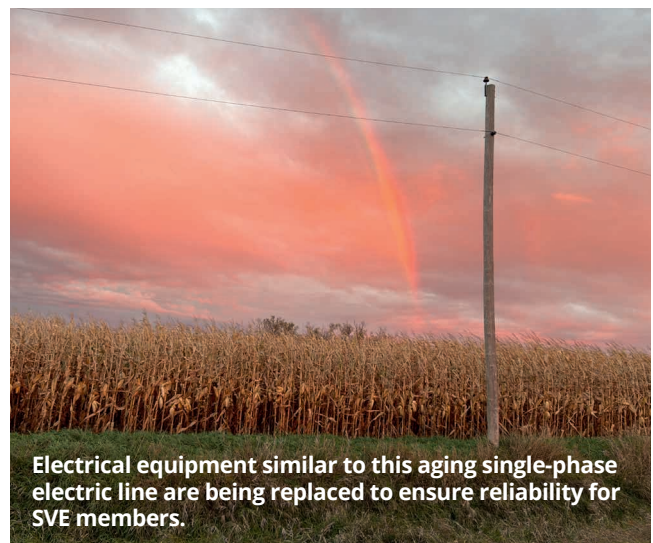
If you're operating large machinery, be aware of your surroundings, including electrical equipment and overhead lines. And if you encounter a combine or other farm equipment on the road, slow down and give them plenty of room.

Stay safe, everyone!



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>



Electrical equipment similar to this aging single-phase electric line are being replaced to ensure reliability for SVE 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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- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

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

Your Questions Answered

Question: *Regarding water heaters that have the shut-off switch controlled by SVE, how often has that action been taken in recent years? When this action is taken are all the water heaters (on load control) turned off at the same time or is there a cycling of those shut-offs? How long has the longest shut down for any water heater lasted?*

Answer: During a typical control period in SD, water heaters are "rolled". So, they will be off for two hours and on for one hour (typically). This equates to approximately two-thirds of all water heaters being controlled at any given time during a control period.

For Minnesota members, their water heater is on a "one hour roll cycle" with it being off for 83% of the hour and on 17% of each hour.

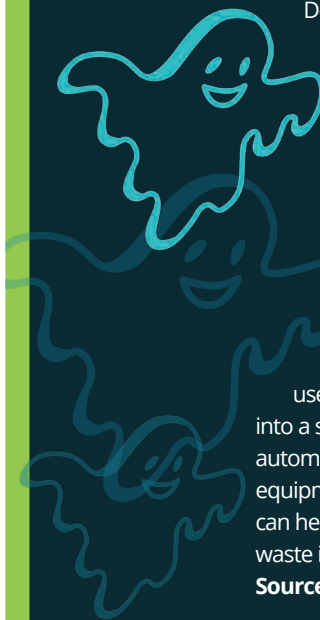
It would be unusual for a member to experience cold water due to load control because most of the controlled water heaters are large capacity. This means they are designed to store hot water during those control times.

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.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month



Don't let phantom energy haunt your electric bill this October. Many electronics continue using electricity even when they're turned off. TVs, gaming systems, coffee makers and phone chargers can quietly draw power around the clock. While each device uses only a small amount, the energy waste can add up over time. Before heading out for Halloween fun, unplug devices you don't use regularly or plug them into a smart power strip that automatically cuts power when equipment is off. It's a simple trick that can help keep phantom energy waste in check.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

SAFETY IS ALWAYS IN SEASON

Fall hunting is a core memory treasured by many in South Dakota. It's a family and friend tradition that should be kept safe. This is your caring reminder to stay safe and enjoy a great hunt this season.

Simple Safety Rules for All Hunters

- Watch for posted warning signs and stay clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Know where power lines and equipment are located on the land you hunt.
- Be careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be easy to see.
- Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles; energized lines can shock or kill you.
- Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment; they can block lines and create hazards for crews.

Pheasant hunting often takes place in open fields with hedgerows and grassy strips, while dove hunting centers on fast, aerial crossings across agricultural landscapes. In both scenarios, lines may be hidden by trees or tall grass, especially near field edges and canal banks. Staying alert in these transition zones reduces the risk of an accidental encounter with electrical infrastructure.

Practical Rules for Pheasant and Dove Hunts

- Plan ahead: Check maps or ask landowners where lines and equipment are located.
- Keep a safe distance: Stay away from overhead and buried lines near fields and edges.
- Hunt with a partner: A second person can help spot hazards.
- Speak up about hazards: If you see lines or equipment, treat it as a hazard and avoid the area.
- Follow rules: Respect any posted electrical safety warnings or access restrictions.
- Share safety: Tell fellow hunters and guests about these tips.

Why These Safety Tips Matter

Power lines conduct large amounts of electricity and contact with lines or equipment can cause serious injury or death. Maintaining distance, avoiding contact with poles or lines, and not placing gear on equipment are effective practices that protect you, your hunting partners, and the line workers who keep power on.

Your electric cooperative remains committed to safe hunting. We encourage members to stay informed about local electrical safety rules and to know line locations on the lands they hunt. If you encounter hazards, report them right away so they can be addressed. Sharing these safety practices help create a culture of safety that benefits everyone.



The poster features a green camouflage pattern at the top, followed by a yellow and black diagonal hazard stripe. Below this is a target icon with a crosshair. The title "Electrical Safety Tips for Hunters" is in large, bold, white text. Below the title, a paragraph in white text reads: "We encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment while hunting. Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors." A list of six safety tips follows in white text.

Electrical Safety Tips for Hunters

We encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment while hunting. Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors.

- Keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Know where power lines and equipment are located where you hunt.
- Be vigilant in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.
- Never place deer stands on utility poles.
- Never place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment.



The drawing is on a piece of paper with a light blue background. It shows a person standing on a grassy field, flying a kite. A power line with a transformer is visible in the background. The text "Don't dig or fly kites by wires!" is written in the top left corner. The drawing is signed "Seth Raak" in the bottom right corner.

"Don't dig or fly kites by wires!"

Seth Raak, age 7

Seth cautions readers to not dig or fly kites around power lines. That is great advice, Seth! Thank you! Seth's parents are Nathaniel and Katie Raak, members of Central Electric Cooperative.

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.

Let's Eat CAKE

SWEDISH PANCAKES

Ingredients:

1.5 cups flour, sifted
3 tbsps. sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
3 eggs
2 cups milk
2 tbsps. butter, melted

Method

Sift together flour, sugar and salt. Beat in 3 eggs until thick and piled softly. Beat in milk and butter until blended. Lightly grease griddle with butter. For each pancake, spoon about 1 tbsp. of batter on skillet. Cook over medium heat until lightly brown on each side.

Lois J. Larson
Clay-Union Electric

CREAM CHEESE CUPCAKES

Ingredients:

1 box chocolate cake mix, prepared
1 (8 oz.) package cream cheese
1/3 cup sugar
1 egg
Dash of salt
1 (6 oz.) package chocolate chips
1 can cream cheese frosting

Method

Mix cake mix according to package directions. Fill cupcake liners 1/2 full. mix the cream cheese with the sugar. Beat in egg and salt, then add chocolate chips. Drop a teaspoonful of cream cheese mixture into each cupcake. Bake as directed on package. Frost with cream cheese frosting when cool.

Elaine Rieck
Southeastern Electric

CHOCOLATE ZUCCHINI CAKE

Ingredients:

2 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
2 tsps. baking soda
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. espresso powder (optional)
1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup canola or vegetable oil
1 cup granulated sugar
3/4 cup brown sugar, packed
4 large eggs, room temperature
1/3 cup sour cream or Greek yogurt, room temperature
2 tsps. vanilla
3 cups shredded zucchini (about 3 medium)
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

Method

Preheat oven to 350 °F. Grease two 9x2 inch cake pans (make sure they're at least 2 inches high or one bundt pan). Whisk the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder, espresso powder (if using) and salt together in a large bowl. In another large bowl using a handheld or stand mixer, beat the oil, granulated sugar, brown sugar, eggs, sour cream, vanilla and zucchini together until combined. Pour dry ingredients into the wet ingredients and beat on medium speed until completely combined. Beat in chocolate chips. Batter will be thick. Pour batter evenly into cake pans. Bake for around 25-32 minutes for round pans; 45 minutes for bundt pans or 9x13 pan; 18-22 minutes for cupcakes (24-30 cupcakes). To test doneness, insert a toothpick into the center of cake. If it comes out clean, it is done.

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.

RECIPE CORRECTION THE BEST APPLE CRISP

Ingredients:

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

Topping (makes enough for two pans)

2 cups flour
2 cups brown sugar
2 cups soft butter
1 tsp. baking powder
3 cups oatmeal

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

Utility Assistance Programs

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

Sioux Valley Energy's goal is to help you avoid disconnection of electric service, so please call us at **1-877-511-8062** so we can work together to develop an acceptable payment plan.

Minnehaha County

LIEAP, Low Income Energy
Assistance Program
1-800-233-8503

Minnehaha County Human Services
605-367-4217

Minnehaha Community Outreach
605-331-3935

Minnehaha County Salvation Army
605-332-2331

Sioux Falls Interlakes Community
Action
605-334-2808

First Call for Help
211

Brookings County

LIEAP, Low Income Energy
Assistance Program
1-800-233-8503

Brookings County Welfare Office
605-696-8261

Brookings County Community Action
605-692-6391

Brookings County Salvation Army
605-219-8970

My Neighbor
605-691-3225

First Call for Help
211

Kingsbury County

LIEAP, Low Income Energy
Assistance Program
1-800-233-8503

Interlakes Community Action
1-605-854-3701

First Call for Help
211

Lake County

LIEAP, Low Income Energy
Assistance Program
1-800-233-8503

Interlakes Community Action
605-256-6518

Lake County Welfare
605-256-7619

First Call for Help
211

Moody County

LIEAP, Low Income Energy
Assistance Program
1-800-233-8503

Interlakes Community Action
1-605-256-6518

Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribal Office
605-997-3891

First Call for Help
211

Pipestone County

Southwestern MN Opportunity
Council
1-800-658-2444

Southwest Health & Human Services
1-888-837-6713

The Salvation Army Heat Share
800-842-7279

Pipestone County Veterans
Administration
507-825-1171

MN Department of Energy Services
800-657-3710

First Call for Help
211

Rock County

Southwestern MN Opportunity
Council
1-800-658-2444

Southwest Health & Human Services
1-888-837-6713

The Salvation Army Heat Share
800-842-7279

Rock County Veterans
Administration
507-283-5061

MN Department of Energy Services
800-657-3710

First Call for Help
211



SIoux VALLEY
ENERGY A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

SERVING OUR MEMBERS. *Always.*



Refreshing a Community Asset

Sioux Valley Energy is investing in the City of White's McKnight Hall Kitchen Remodel with a \$5,000 REVIVE 2030 grant and a \$1,500 Operation Round Up grant. SVE Vice President of Public Relations Carrie Vugteveen, right, presented a check to committee members working on the renovation plans.

#CoopCares4Safety

It's so easy to be in a rush.
However, it's just not worth the cost...

Please look up and around before you move large equipment.

Learn more by scanning this code or going to [CoopCares4Safety.com](https://www.CoopCares4Safety.com) or call 800-234-1960.

Sioux Valley Energy members:
Take the safety pledge and receive a **FREE** pair* of work gloves. Sign up at www.siouxvalleyenergy.com. *Supplies are limited.

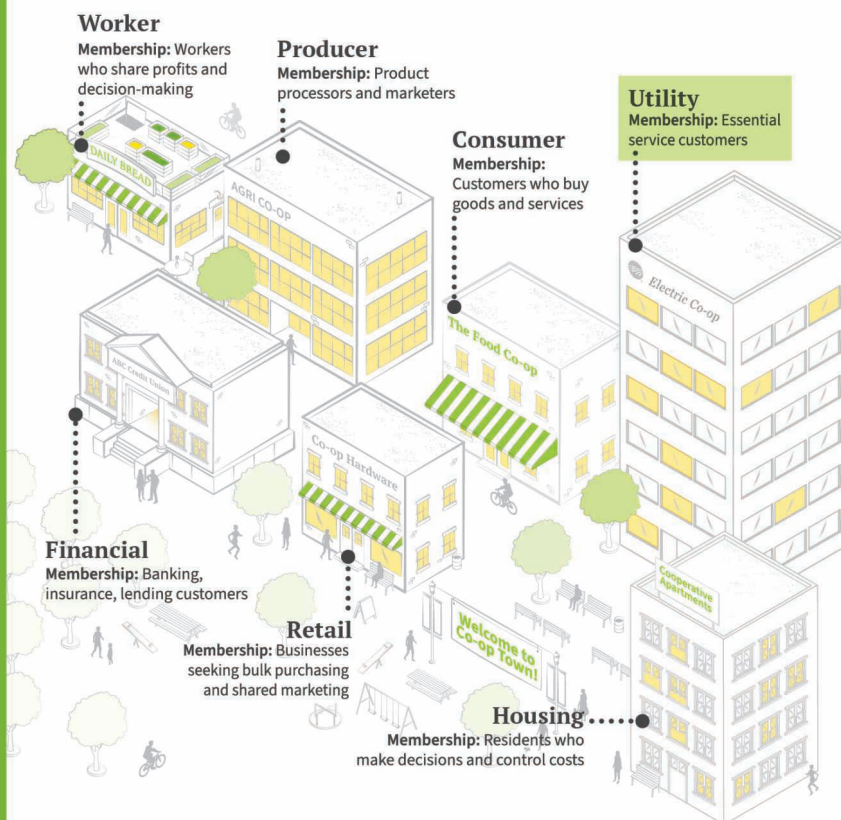
Celebrating Cooperatives: October is National Cooperative Month

KINDS OF CO-OPS

Cooperatives come in many forms—from electric utilities and credit unions to farm supply stores and housing co-ops—but all cooperatives are built with a common purpose: to meet the needs of the members they serve.

Co-ops strengthen local communities, keep decisions close to home and invest in long-term success.

October is National Co-op Month.





PICK OF THE PATCH

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sirea.coop

South Dakota Pumpkin Patches Offer Plenty of Reasons to Get Outside this Fall

Cooler air, changing leaves and the search for the perfect pumpkin all mark the arrival of the autumn season. Across South Dakota, fall weekends bring families to farms and orchards for corn mazes, apple picking and hayrides.

But putting together a few weeks of fall fun takes months of work behind the scenes.

Pumpkin patches and orchards are preparing to welcome visitors for another season of pumpkins, games and family traditions.

Country Apple Orchard – Harrisburg, S.D.

By the time visitors arrive at Country Apple Orchard near Harrisburg, owner Greg Jones and his crew have already brought in three semi loads of straw bales and about 6,000 bushels of corn.

It's all part of preparing for a fall season

that lasts just a couple of months but requires work throughout the year.

"The property is kind of a full-time, year-round job," Jones said.

The orchard has been around for more than 30 years, and Jones is six years into owning the operation. Since taking over, he has expanded the pumpkin patches and added many of the attractions that now make up the orchard's fall festival.

The season opens Sept. 4 and runs through October, beginning with apple picking in September before pumpkins take center stage in October. Weekend festivities include zip lines, apple cannons, hay bale mazes, corn mazes, corn pits and, new this year, fresh-cut flowers.

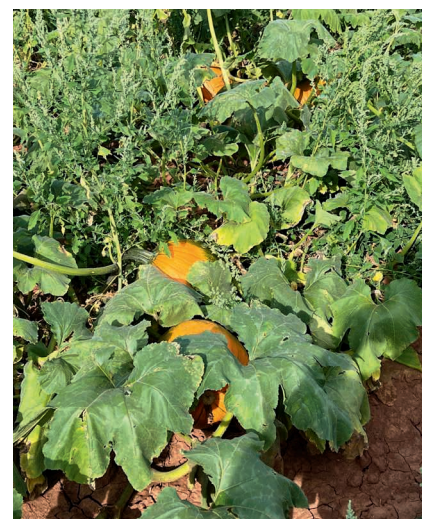
Country Apple Orchard is also a member of Southeastern Electric Cooperative, which helps power the operation through the busy fall season. Keeping everything running takes about

Lucas Hartshorn, owner of Lil' Harvester's Pumpkin Patch, and his family opening the patch for last year's fall season.
Photo submitted by Lucas Hartshorn

60 seasonal employees. Once the crowds disappear, that workforce drops to Jones and one other worker.

The effort appears to keep families coming back.

"They love coming out and they come out multiple times," Jones said, adding that some families with season passes



Pumpkins grow in the field at Lil' Harvester's Pumpkin Patch near Rapid City.
Photo submitted by Lucas Hartshorn

return nearly every weekend throughout the season.

Mazing Acres – Yankton, S.D.

What started as a small family project has grown into roughly 35 acres of fall festivities outside Yankton.

Scott and Molly Nedved opened Mazing Acres with their family in 2020. At the time, the idea was to create a small hobby farm that could teach their children the value of hard work while giving the community something new to enjoy.

“It’s grown more than we thought it would,” Molly laughed.

Today, Mazing Acres, a member of Bon Homme Yankton Electric Association, includes six acres of pumpkins, a five-acre corn maze, a flower patch and several attractions. Visitors can take a hayrack ride, watch pig races, play in the corn pit or try the apple cannons.

The corn maze, sponsored by First Dakota National Bank, changes design each year. For 2026, the design celebrates the nation’s 250th anniversary.

Although the festival lasts only several weekends, planning starts almost as soon as the previous season ends. The family reviews what worked, attends industry



A family poses for a photo in the giant pumpkin chair at Mazing Acres.
Photo submitted by Molly Nedved

conferences and selects the next year’s pumpkin varieties in late fall. By August, Scott said preparing the farm becomes “an all-day affair every day until we open.”

Visitors will notice a few changes this year. Saturday hours are being extended until 8 p.m., allowing families to experience the farm after dark, and a new tiny-town area will feature themed playhouses for younger children.

Mazing Acres opens Sept. 19 and runs through Halloween.

“We want to be something for every age,” Molly said. “Not just for the kids.”

Lil’ Harvester’s Pumpkin Patch – Rapid City, S.D.

At Lil’ Harvester’s Pumpkin Patch south of Rapid City, the Hartshorn family’s fall tradition started in 2013 with pumpkins planted by hand.

Since then, owner Lucas Hartshorn said the patch has grown to about 11 acres.

Hartshorn started the pumpkin patch with his parents, Lyle and Donna, after his father retired. The family wanted a way to keep farming while creating an event they could enjoy with their children.

“We were looking for something to do with the kids in the fall,” Hartshorn said.

At the time, pumpkin patches were harder to find around Rapid City. After

visiting one themselves, the family decided they could create a similar experience on their own farm.

Each year brought something new. Planting pumpkins by hand eventually gave way to a planter, while the patch grew to include a petting zoo, bounce houses, wagon rides, a sandbox and other activities.

Lil’ Harvester’s, a member of Black Hills Electric Cooperative, also opens during the week for school field trips, where students get a closer look at agriculture. Hartshorn said demonstrations may focus on pumpkins or the differences between sweet corn, field corn and popcorn, including how each is grown. For Hartshorn, that mix of farming, education and family time remains at the heart of the patch.

“They get to come out to the farm and learn something,” Hartshorn said.

Across South Dakota, there are several more pumpkin patches and fall festivities similar to those put on by Country Apple Orchard, Mazing Acres and Lil’ Harvester’s Pumpkin Patch. Whether it’s a small hobby farm or a dedicated agritourism operation, each one offers its own take on fall traditions that continue to draw families back year after year.



Visitors of all ages can find something to enjoy at Mazing Acres near Yankton, including the farm’s giant slides.
Photo submitted by Molly Nedved

HOW TO READ YOUR BILL

Your monthly electric bill can help you monitor your electric demand each month and view usage comparisons. Residential, rural residential, and general service members currently have a demand line item on their bill with no charge associated.

That will change with your January 2027 billing when a demand charge will be associated with that billing component.

If you have more questions on how to read your bill, give our member services representatives a call today at 877-511-8062.

1. Member Information: Member name(s), bill date, account number, service address, and map location.

2. Total Amount Due: The total amount owed for the account.

3. Sioux Valley Energy Contact Information: Phone and website information.

4. Monthly Energy Use Comparison: Usage comparison for this month, last month, and this month last year.

5. Billing Period Averages: Average daily use and cost for current billing period.

6. Message Center: Sioux Valley Energy will post important messages to our members here.

7. Autopay: This is an optional program. Your payment will be automatically deducted from your checking/savings account or credit/debit card on the first business day after the due date. You can sign up for autopay by signing in to SmartHub.

8. Billing Address: Address bills will be mailed to.

9. Payment Address: Payments should be mailed to the address indicated on the stub.

10. Meter Detail: Rate description, billing period, and meter information.

11. Account Activity: Previous balance, payments, and adjustments.

12. Current Charges: Information on all charges associated with the account.

13. Energy Charge: the amount of usage (kWh) billed.

14. Demand Charge: The highest average kW measured in 15-minute intervals during the billing period. Demand measures a member's individual impact on the grid. Two members can use the same amount of energy (kWh) in a billing period but their demand (kW) can vary drastically. Running things such as appliances separately rather than simultaneously helps your demand.

15. Basic Service Charge: A monthly charge that covers the fixed costs associated with providing electricity to the location. Fixed costs include items such as meters, transformers, electric lines, and billing. These costs are independent of your electric usage. Basic Service applies to both active (energized) and disconnected (de-energized) accounts.

16. Operation Round Up®: ORU is a charitable program that provides funding to non-profit organizations throughout our service territory.

17. Usage Graph: Monthly comparison graph with average temperatures.

18. Other Ways to Pay Your Bill: A listing of other options on how to pay your bill.

19. Banner Ad: Sioux Valley Energy will post important member information here.

20. SmartHub: Information on what SmartHub can do and how to sign up.

How much electricity do common household items "demand"?

By understanding how much power common household or farm devices use, you can make small changes that may help lower your demand. One of the easiest ways to save is by spreading out your use of high-impact appliances throughout the day.

This list displays some typical, common kilowatt (kW) values of household devices. Remember to check your exact brand and model of appliance or device for exact kW information.

TIP: 1,000 watts = 1 kilowatt.

High Demand Impact

3 KW AND ABOVE

These appliances can significantly increase your individual peak demand, especially if more than one operates at the same time.

- Electric furnace: 10–20 kW
- Electric boiler: 9–15 kW
- Electric clothes dryer: 3–5 kW
- Electric water heater (tank): 3–5 kW
- Electric oven: 2–5 kW
- Central air conditioner: 2–5 kW
- Cold climate heat pump: 2.5–7 kW
- Level 2 EV charger: 6–11 kW
- Air compressor: 5.75 kW (1kW/HP)
- Welder: 9–12 kW
- 7.5 HP Grain Bin Fan Motor: 7.5 kW
- 10 HP Grain Bin Fan Motor: 10 kW
- On-demand (tankless) water heater: 20 kW

TIP: Avoid running multiple high-load items simultaneously to keep peak demand lower.

Medium Demand Impact

0.5 KW TO 3 KW

These appliances use a moderate amount of power. While this equipment individually places a lower demand on the system than those listed in the first column, SVE still advises members to spread their electric use and avoid stacking.

- Microwave: 0.6–1.5 kW
- Dishwasher: 1–2 kW
- Space heater: 1–1.5 kW
- Clothes washer: 0.3–0.8 kW
- Electric range burners: 1–3 kW each
- Vacuum cleaner: 0.6–1.2 kW
- Toaster: 0.8–1.5 kW
- Coffee maker: 0.8–1.2 kW
- Induction cooktop (single burner): 1–1.8 kW
- Well pump: 0.5–2 kW running
- Window AC unit: 0.5–1.5 kW
- Heat Tape (100 feet): 1 kW
- LED security light: 0.07 kW
- Block heater: 1.5 kW
- Cattle waterer: 1 kW
- Hair dryer: 1.5 kW
- Air fryer: 1.5 kW

TIP: Running several medium-load devices at once can mimic the impact of a single high-load appliance.

Low Demand Impact

UNDER 0.5 KW

These contribute very little to your peak demand and generally have minimal impact unless you run many of these appliances all at once.

- Refrigerator: 0.1–0.2 kW
- Freezer: 0.1–0.2 kW
- TV: 0.05–0.2 kW
- Desktop/laptop computer: 0.05–0.25 kW
- Wi-Fi router: 0.01–0.02 kW
- LED lights: 0.005–0.015 kW each
- Phone chargers and small electronics: below 0.02 kW

TIP: Simple changes like shutting off lights and unplugging unnecessary electric devices can reduce your individual peak demand.





LOST BENEATH OAHE

The Rise, Fall and Disappearance of a South Dakota Ghost Town

Frank Turner

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Beneath the waves of Lake Oahe lies more than dead trees and walleye. Just below the surface near Akaska sit the remnants of LeBeau, an early 1900s railroad town once filled with immense promise and prosperity, whose story is worthy of its own Wild West feature film.

For years, Caroline Thorsen has collected the history of her great-grandfather, Antoine Le Beau, and the town that bore his name. Through Thorsen's collection and research by railroad historian Don Hofsommer in "A Promise Broken: LeBeau and the Railroad," we can dive beneath the waters of Lake Oahe and dredge up the story of LeBeau's dramatic rise and fall.

A French Fur Trader

The story of the ghost town of LeBeau begins with Antoine Le Beau Sr., a French fur trader whose journey in the mid-1800s took him from France to Quebec, Canada, then to St. Louis, Missouri and eventually up the Missouri River to what is now South Dakota.

"As I unfortunately did not know [Antoine], I hope he is remembered as being a brave gentleman who crossed the ocean from France to come to America and eventually become friends with the Native Americans, married in Native Tradition," said Thorsen, Le Beau's great-granddaughter.

The woman Antoine married was Mary Little Thunder, a member of the Two Kettle Band of Sioux. Antoine himself was later one of several Frenchmen adopted

into the Sioux Tribe at a Great Sioux Council, where he was given the name "Ogless," or "Red Shirt."

Le Beau worked with the American Fur Company before establishing a trading post along the Missouri River near present-day Akaska. The post became the foundation of a small town that would eventually bear his name and become a brief, yet bright, gateway to the West.

The Railroad

By the time the railroad arrived, Antoine Le Beau Sr. was gone, but the town was quickly gaining the reputation of a small metropolis. In 1907, the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway (M&StL) reached LeBeau, connecting the small Missouri River settlement to Watertown and markets farther east.

"As LeBeau prospered, so did the M&StL's westernmost extension; as LeBeau withered, so did its railroad," Hofsommer writes.

Cattle companies from Texas had taken notice of both LeBeau and the grasslands west of the Missouri. Once they learned cattle thrived west of the river, they began moving large herds into the region. Through its railroad, LeBeau offered those ranchers a new route to market.

The next trick was getting the cattle across the river. On the west side of the Missouri, large holding pens could accommodate as many as 3,500 animals. From there, cattle crossed the river aboard the Scotty Philip, a steam-powered ferry. Once across, they could be loaded directly onto eastbound rail cars.

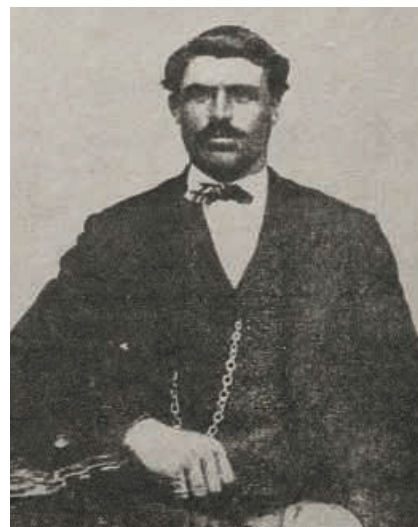
The mouth of Swan Creek on Lake Oahe where the ghost town of LeBeau resides under the waves. *Photo by Frank Turner*

In 1908, roughly 24,000 cattle passed through LeBeau on their way to and from the West River ranges, representing about \$1 million in livestock at the time. The feat helped cement the town's place as a major cattle-shipping point on the Missouri.

A Bustling Town

By the end of the season, LeBeau featured two banks, a newspaper, a drugstore, a general store and a local saloon. The growing town also boasted two lumberyards, a grain elevator and a livery, along with prominent businesses like the Idle Hour billiard and pool parlor, the Hotel LeBeau and Arcade Hotel. For entertainment, residents could even catch a show at Zimmer's Opera House.

As the town grew, M&StL officials planned to continue the rail line west of the



French fur trapper Antoine Le Beau Sr.
Photo submitted by Caroline Thorsen

Missouri by building a bridge across the Missouri, hinting at a long expansion all the way to the West Coast. The excitement only reinforced the idea that LeBeau was destined to become the gate to the west.

The buzz captured the attention of Murdo MacKenzie, general manager of the Matador Land and Cattle Company, and his wealthy son, Dode. Described as a likable and fine young man – while sober – Dode moved to LeBeau in his early 20s to oversee Matador's South Dakota operations.

A Questionable Killing

At the end of the 1909 shipping season, Dode MacKenzie began frequenting LeBeau's saloons. On Dec. 11, he was shot and killed by Bud Stephens, who was tending the bar that morning at Phil DuFran's saloon.

Local accounts of what happened that day – and of Dode MacKenzie's character – differ greatly. One local official described MacKenzie as a stand-up individual, while another local woman said he was known to shoot behind the heels of women in the town when "spirits took him."

Exactly what happened on Dec. 11 will never be known, but according to the version later presented by Stephens' defense at trial, MacKenzie became furious when Stephens failed to hear him order a drink. Rebuffed, MacKenzie crossed the street to purchase what he believed were



The paddle-wheeler Scotty Philip loads cattle at LeBeau, S.D., to be fattened on grasslands west of the Missouri River. For about three years, LeBeau was one of the Northwest's most important cattle-shipping towns.
Photo courtesy of the South Dakota Historical Society

.45-caliber shells, loaded his gun, walked back, pointed it at Stephens and pulled the trigger twice. As the story goes, MacKenzie had accidentally purchased .38-caliber shells, which failed to fire and instead plopped onto the floor. It was then that Stephens reached for his gun and began firing, killing the young MacKenzie.

A Dying Town

The trial resulted in Stephens' acquittal, drawing the ire of Dode MacKenzie's father and the Matador Cattle Company. The company effectively boycotted LeBeau, and no Matador cattle ever entered the town again.

Within months of the trial, a suspicious fire made matters worse. Although fires weren't uncommon in the Wild West, townsfolk discovered that the fire hose, telephone and telegraph lines had all been cut prior to the fire. No arsonist was ever caught.

The bad luck didn't stop there. A competing rail line to the north completed a bridge across the Missouri at Mobridge, undercutting LeBeau's stream of West River cattle. By 1924, M&StL abandoned the town, tearing out its segment of rail line. Within a year, the post office closed.

Beneath Lake Oahe

LeBeau had been a ghost town for decades when Lake Oahe came for what was left.

Construction of Oahe Dam near Pierre began in 1948 as part of a massive federal effort to control flooding and generate hydroelectric power along the Missouri River. In August 1958, the river was closed at the dam and the newly created reservoir began to fill.

As the water rose, it eventually covered the old LeBeau townsite near the mouth of Swan Creek. The empty foundations, cellar holes and remnants of the once-bustling railroad town disappeared beneath Lake Oahe. Unlike most ghost towns in South Dakota that faded away with time, LeBeau vanished beneath the Missouri.



A crowd gathers around a band near the railroad in LeBeau, S.D., with the depot and Missouri River visible in the distance. About a year after this photo was taken, the town installed 10-foot-wide concrete sidewalks along Main Street.
Photo courtesy of the South Dakota Historical Society.

SIX TIPS TO REDUCE WILDFIRE RISKS

Wildfires are no longer confined to the western United States. Traditionally associated with dry, fire-prone regions like California, wildfires are now affecting areas in the Midwest. Dry conditions and prolonged drought could lead to fire impacts in ditches, grasslands, or fields in this area.

The Cooperative is working to reduce the risk of wildfires throughout its service territory. Through regular vegetation management, grid maintenance, and hardening practices, we are proactively working to reduce risks and improve the reliability of our local system.

To learn more about Sioux Valley Energy's wildfire mitigation plan, log on to: www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/wildfire-mitigation.

As a Cooperative member, there are steps you can take to prevent wildfires.

- **Properly extinguish campfires.** Always douse your campfire with water, stir the ashes and ensure everything is cool to the touch before

Sioux Valley Energy uses a tree contractor to manage vegetation around power lines. This improves system reliability and reduces fire risk.



leaving the area. If you are using a fire pit—use the cover to avoid embers escaping.

- **Don't burn on windy days.** Avoid outdoor burning when it's windy or dry, as embers can easily spread and ignite surrounding areas.
- **Clear vegetation and debris.** Maintain a defensible space around your home by removing dry leaves, dead branches and other flammable materials.
- **Use equipment safely.** Tools like lawnmowers or chainsaws can spark fires. Use them during cooler times of the day and keep them in good working condition.
- **Follow local fire regulations.** Always check for burn bans or restrictions in your area before burning anything or using open flames outdoors.
- **Avoid parking in tall, dry grass.**

For more information on wildfire prevention and preparedness, visit www.redcross.org.

Steps to prevent wildfires:

- **Properly extinguish campfires.**
- **Don't burn on windy days.**
- **Clear vegetation and debris.**
- **Use equipment safely.**
- **Follow local fire regulations.**
- **Avoid parking in tall, dry grass.**





ELECTRIC SAFETY DURING THE FALL

From dump truck driver to teenager, everyone should be aware of potential electrical hazards.

Harvest means long hours, increased stress, and tight schedules. Safe Electricity reminds farmers that it only takes a split second for someone to come into contact with electricity. Your most seasoned worker to your least, your spouse, your son or daughter or other family member, an ag-related worker dropping off a load or applying fertilizer – any person on your farm is at risk of becoming injured or killed due to electrical contact.

“Review overhead power line locations and height clearance with anyone and everyone working on the farm or doing business there,” says Erin Hollinshead, executive director of Safe Electricity. “Although harvest is filled with tight deadlines and heightened work stress, making time for safety, including electrical safety, can save lives.”

To help keep those who work or do business on your farm safe not only during harvest but year-round, follow these electrical safety tips:

- Educate everyone that potential electrical hazards include both direct and indirect contact with an overhead power line or pole. Indirect contact (coming too close to a power line or pole), could cause electricity to arc/jump.
- Both direct and indirect contact can change electricity's path to ground. Once that path changes, the stray voltage can energize anything in its path, such as a truck, a tractor, an extension, the

ground, or a person.

- Start every workday with a safety meeting. Discuss all operations for the day and go over power line/pole locations. Emphasize safety above speed to everyone on the farm, especially during busy seasons like harvest.
- Never assume that because someone grew up on the farm that they understand the potential of stray voltage or other electrical hazards. In fact, do not assume this for anyone. For example, teens who have moved irrigation pipes to free an animal have been seriously hurt or electrocuted.
- Encourage drivers and operators to position grain augers in their lowest position or to lower truck bed boxes before moving. Be especially cautious of overhead lines when using augers in the field to load trucks on the road.
- Review potential hazards with grain/dump truck drivers and spot them when possible. Also:
 - Encourage drivers to load and unload all materials away from overhead power lines.
 - Even better, create a dedicated drop zone away from all overhead power lines.
 - Post 10-foot clearance rule and “look up and look out” reminders.
- If you see that a hydraulic truck bed, extensions or other equipment gets within 10 feet of or contacts a power line, utility pole or guy wire, instruct the driver to stay in the cab. Call 9-1-1 to have your electric

cooperative or utility dispatched to deenergize the power. Give instructions from 50 feet away and inform everyone else to stay back.

- Know how to instruct someone to properly exit a cab if necessary due to fire (do so from at least 50 feet away). The person should cross their arms close to their chest and make a solid jump out of the cab. Then, the person should make deliberate hops, with feet together, hopping away as far as they can. When people walk or run in an area with stray voltage, they could be exposed to two different voltages at the same time and become electricity's path to ground. This is known as step potential.
- Encourage folding and unfolding to be done well into the field, not at the field's edge, which could have power lines running next to it.
- Do not store irrigation pipes, hay bales, machinery or anything else under power lines.

Be aware of power line locations in the proximity of grain bins. Always load and unload on the side without a power line. Contact your electric cooperative or utility with questions about grain bin power line clearance/ OSHA regulations.

Contact your electric cooperative or utility about damaged or downed power lines or poles. Utility crews would much rather check out an issue than risk a potentially dangerous situation.

Learn more at safeelectricity.org.



OCT. 31
Yankton's Harvest Halloween
 Yankton, SD
www.harvesthalloween.com

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.

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

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

OCT. 9-11
S.D. Showdown Truck Show
 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Viborg, SD
 605-940-0087

OCT. 17
Fabricadabra
 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Dakota Prairie Quilt Guild
 Yankton, SD
 605-660-1612

OCT. 23
A Night of Laughter & Music
 6 p.m.
 American Legion Post 15
 Sioux Falls, SD
 Tickets & Info: 605-336-3470

OCT. 24
Women of Today Craft Fair
 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
 West Central Becker Center
 Hartford, SD
 605-359-2049

BRATS & KILOWATTS

Learn more about energy demand at our Brats & Kilowatts events

4:30-6 p.m.
 'Come & Go' Learning

6-6:30 p.m.
 Demand 101 Session

6:30-7 p.m.
 Q&A Session

SEPT. 17
District 5
 Taopi Hall
 102 E. 3rd St.
 Colton, SD

OCT. 1
District 4
 Dakota Prairie Playhouse
 1205 N. Washington Ave.
 Madison, SD

OCT. 6
District 7
 Humboldt Community Center
 201 S. Main St.
 Humboldt, SD

OCT. 8
District 3
 Sioux Valley Energy Office
 23491 471st Ave.
 Colman, SD

OCT. 13
District 6
 Sioux Valley Energy
 Brandon Service Center
 108 N. Heritage Rd.
 Brandon, SD

OCT. 19
District 10
 Edgerton Public School
 423 1st Ave. W.
 Edgerton, MN

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

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.