

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Kuchen Country

**German Delicacy
Celebrates 25 Years as
South Dakota's Official
Dessert**

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Swimming Safely

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Roadside Safety: Culture of Care



Tim McCarthy
General Manager/
Chief Executive
Officer

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com

On Thursday, April 24 four utility workers were killed and two severely injured on the roadside doing powerline work for Carolina Power and Signalization in North Carolina. A dump truck driver ran a stop sign and hit six people, continuing on to also hit an occupied bucket truck, eventually crashing into a ditch. There are no words to express the sadness I felt reading about this horrible incident. Douglas Garland Sides, 71, of Summerfield; Madison Carter, 32, of Sandy Ridge; William Evans, 35, of Randleman; and Matthew Lockwood, 30, of Winston-Salem were all killed in the accident.

While we don't know the details of what led to the crash, it serves as a stark reminder that those who work on the roadside are often in danger. Sioux Valley Energy employees routinely work roadside and are witnesses to drivers who don't even notice they are there despite flashing lights, safety cones, flaggers, signage, etc.

TAKE THE TIME. EVERY TIME! Slow down near

roadside work zones. Give yourself time to get where you are going and expect and plan for delays during construction months. If you are able, move over and give our employees room to do their work. Need to make a call or send a text? It can wait – that text is not worth someone's life.

There is nothing more important to us than safety. It isn't a program, it isn't a campaign, it isn't even a strategy. It's a culture – a culture that is ingrained in each of our employees. We work to live that culture every day and share it with YOU, our members. At the end of the day, our safety culture is centered around caring for others.

Please join our culture of care and be vigilant as you pass through roadside work zones. Sioux Valley Energy employee lives are on the line.

As I end my column this month, I encourage you to attend our upcoming Annual Meeting scheduled for Tuesday, June 10. We will have three locations with the main site in Hartford and satellite sites in Volga and Luverne.

Our safety
culture is
centered around
**caring for
others.**

TAKE THE TIME. EVERY TIME.

1. Hands on the wheel
2. Eyes on the road
3. Slow down near utility work zones

 **SIoux VALLEY ENERGY**
A Truist Energy Company

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.**

Improving the Flow: REVIVE 2030 assists with CIP

A Sioux Valley Energy REVIVE 2030 matching grant in the amount of \$2,440 will assist the City of Valley Springs with a study to improve infrastructure in the community.

The city is currently in the process of developing a five-year Capital Improvement Plan with their city engineer, HDR.

The REVIVE 2030 grant will help fund a sewage flow monitoring study which will address future capacity requirements for the lagoon system.

Sioux Valley Energy representatives presented the check to the City of Valley Springs on May 9.

Learn more about REVIVE 2030 and the work being done to help local communities thrive and grow at <https://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/revive-2030-economic-community-development>



Sioux Valley Energy's Brandon Lane and Carrie Vugteveen presented a check to Valley Springs city officials to assist with an infrastructure study. Pictured are Ryan Nussbaum (Public Works), Lane, Mayor Rick Larsen, Donna Van Hout (City Finance Officer), and Vugteveen.

IS YOUR INFO UP-TO- DATE?

Scan the QR code below or call us at 800-234-1960 to update your phone number or email address. You can also sign up to receive your monthly magazine electronically.



Visit us at: www.siouxvalleyenergy.com

**SCAN HERE
TO UPDATE
& SIGN UP**



Summer Safety

Mosquitoes and Ticks

Source: American Red Cross

Don't let mosquitoes and ticks ruin your carefree summer fun. As we spend more time outdoors for activities like camping, hiking, swimming, picnicking and barbecuing, there is a greater chance of getting bitten by mosquitoes and ticks. According to the American Mosquito Control Association there are 176 known species of mosquito in the U.S. – putting Americans at risk from coast to coast. And while mosquitoes may be the most obvious detractor from summer fun – ticks are silent but dangerous. Most active during warmer months (April to September), it is especially important to be vigilant of blacklegged ticks, more commonly known as deer ticks, especially if you live in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, North-central or Northwest.

Mosquitoes and ticks are more than just itchy and annoying – if infected, these pests can pose a major health risk to people by possibly transmitting diseases. Follow these tips to prevent mosquito and tick bites this summer:

- Use insect repellents containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) when you are outdoors. Be sure to follow the directions on the package.
- Consider staying indoors at dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants and tuck your pant legs into your socks or boots.



Photo by Jimmy Chan

- Use a rubber band or tape to hold pants against socks so that nothing can get under clothing.
- Tuck your shirt into your pants. Wear light-colored clothing to make it easier to see tiny insects or ticks.
- When hiking in woods and fields, stay in the middle of trails. Avoid underbrush and tall grass.
- If you are outdoors for a long time, check yourself several times during the day. Especially check in hairy areas of the body like the back of the neck and the scalp line.
- Inspect yourself carefully for insects or ticks after being outdoors or have someone else do it.
- If you have pets that go outdoors, spray with repellent made for their breed/type. Apply the repellent according to the label and check your pet for ticks often.
- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying sources of standing water outside of the home, such as from flowerpots, buckets and barrels.



"Never Touch a Power Line!!"

Kashton Schecher, Age 7

Kashton cautions readers not to touch power lines. Thank you for your picture, Kashton! Kashton's parents are Brad and Brooke Schecher from Bison, 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.

SOUPS & SALADS

GERMAN KRAUT SOUP

Ingredients:

2 pork steaks
Water
1 diced onion
3 stalks celery
1 large carrot
Butter
6 diced potatoes
1 qt. sauerkraut
3 cups heavy cream
Salt and pepper (to taste)

Method

Gently simmer pork steaks in about three cups of water until done. (You can substitute other meat you have on hand – left over roasts or Polish sausage is nice). Dice meat. Sauté onion, celery and carrots in butter. In a Crock-Pot, add four cups of water, potatoes, sautéed veggies, diced meat and sauerkraut. Cook on low four to six hours until potatoes are tender. Add cream, salt and pepper. Transfer to a serving dish to share and enjoy!

Kari Bevers
Codington-Clark Electric Member

BLACK BEAN SALAD

Ingredients:

3 tbsps. lemon juice
1 clove garlic (minced)
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
3/4 tsp. ground cumin
2 tbsps. olive oil
(2)15 oz. cans black beans (drained and rinsed)
1 pt. cherry tomatoes (halved)
4 scallions or green onions
1 yellow or green bell pepper (cut into thin strips)
3 tbsps. fresh cilantro or parsley (chopped)

Method

In a small bowl, stir together lemon juice, garlic, salt, pepper and cumin until salt is dissolved. Slowly whisk in oil until dressing mixture thickens. In a large bowl combine beans, tomatoes, scallions or onions, peppers and cilantro or parsley. Toss with dressing to coat. Let stand at least 15 minutes before serving. *Makes 6 servings.

Reta Eidem
Clay-Union Electric Member

LASAGNA SOUP

Ingredients:

1 lb. lean ground beef
1 cup chopped onion
1 can (28 oz.) petite diced tomatoes, undrained
1 can (15 oz.) tomato sauce
2 tbsp. garlic, herb and black pepper and sea salt all purpose seasoning
1 container (32 oz.) chicken stock, (4 cups)
8 oz. (about 10) lasagna noodles, broken into small pieces

Method

Brown ground beef in large saucepan on medium heat. Drain fat. Add onion; cook and stir 2 to 3 minutes or until softened.

Stir in tomatoes, tomato sauce, Seasoning and stock. Bring to boil. Add lasagna noodle pieces; cook 6 to 7 minutes or until noodles are tender.

Ladle soup into serving bowls. Serve with dollops of ricotta cheese and sprinkle with shredded mozzarella cheese, if desired.

McCormick.com

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 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Empowering Members through Education



Sheila Gross
Energy Services
Specialist

Considering a renewable energy or battery storage project? Contact 800-234-1960 for resources to help empower you to make informed energy decisions.

Check out our incentives and resources here:



Member education is an important focus at Sioux Valley Energy. We strive to be your trusted energy partner, providing the latest information on energy technologies and trends – from heat pumps and electric vehicles (EVs) to battery-powered yard tools, renewable energy, and energy storage systems. We've seen a growing number of inquiries related to energy generation and storage technologies, such as solar panels, wind turbines, and battery storage. If you're considering a renewable energy or battery storage project, we offer resources to help empower you to make informed energy decisions.

One such resource is the live production data available on our website: <https://www.sioxvalleyenergy.com/solar-energy-center>. This page provides insights into the performance of solar arrays located at our Brandon and Colman service centers. These demonstration projects, constructed by Sioux Valley Energy employees, serve as learning tools for both staff and members – provide valuable data on installation, maintenance, energy production, and financial paybacks specific to our region and climate.

Brandon Solar Demonstration Project

The solar array at our Brandon facility, constructed 10 years ago, has a capacity of 24.8 kW – enough to power two average-sized homes (without electric heat). The system includes 80 panels mounted on low-profile racking and oriented to the south, southwest, and west to study the impact of direction on production and demand shifting. An inverter monitoring system allows us to track the output of each individual panel. The projected return on investment is 18 to 20 years. On average, the annual production from

this array could power Sioux Valley Energy's Ford Lightning electric truck for 70,000 miles each year.

Community Solar Project at Colman

Commissioned in June 2023, the Community Solar Project at our Colman headquarters includes 140 solar panels, each rated at 450 watts. Sioux Valley Energy members were given the opportunity to subscribe to the output of one or more panels for a 20-year term, with credits applied directly to their monthly electric bill. This project was fully funded through 30 member subscriptions and a 30% federal direct pay incentive. The array is expected to generate approximately 87,000 kWh annually, resulting in nearly \$10,000 in total annual savings on subscribers' electric bills. The return on investment (ROI) was 8.1% in 2023 and 7.3% in 2024.

In addition, a **115-kWh peak shaving battery storage system** was installed in the fall of 2023. If operated at optimal performance, the system could pay for itself in approximately 16 years. This pilot project is designed to study how battery storage can help during peak energy usage periods. The unit can add up to 36 kW into the grid during peak demand.

Battery Storage Pilot Projects

With advances in battery technology, member interest in battery storage continues to grow – as a way to reduce electric bills and as a backup power source during outages. Although battery costs have decreased significantly over the past decade, they still represent a long-term investment. Currently, small residential systems cost over \$1,000 per kW of storage. In January 2024, we completed **two 14.4 kWh home battery storage pilot projects**. When paired with Sioux Valley Energy's Time of Use (TOU) rate, these systems recorded annual savings of \$930 and \$695. The estimated payback periods for the initial investments are 22 and 29 years, respectively. These pilot systems will help us better understand the performance and financial benefits of residential battery storage when combined with Time of Use (TOU) pricing strategies.

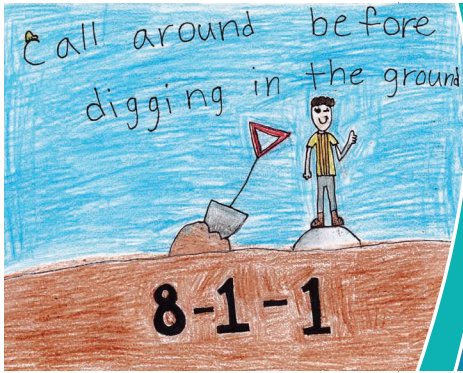
Sign Up to WIN!




Stop by the Beneficial Electrification booth at the June 10 Annual Meeting (See Page 15 for details) to register to win an EGO Power+ Nexus power station.

KIDS SAY STAY SAFE


Each spring, Sioux Valley Energy's Safety Steering Committee (SSC) asks fourth-graders at schools in the Cooperative's two-state service area to draw a poster depicting an electrical safety message. From the hundreds of posters submitted, 12 are selected for members attending the Cooperative's district meetings to vote upon. The four winning posters are then made into highway billboards that are displayed in May for Electrical Safety Month.



**SIoux VALLEY ENERGY**
A Tri-State Energy Cooperative

Call around before digging in the ground.

Saniya B.
4th Grade
Pipestone Area Elementary

**811**
SAFETY IS IN YOUR HANDS. EVERY DAY. EVERY TIME.



Pipestone's Saniya B. poses for a photo with SSC member Holly Kruger. Saniya's billboard is in Luverne on Hwy 75.



Tri-Valley's Seneca G. poses for a photo with SSC member Chris Graff. Seneca's billboard is on I-90 at Brandon.

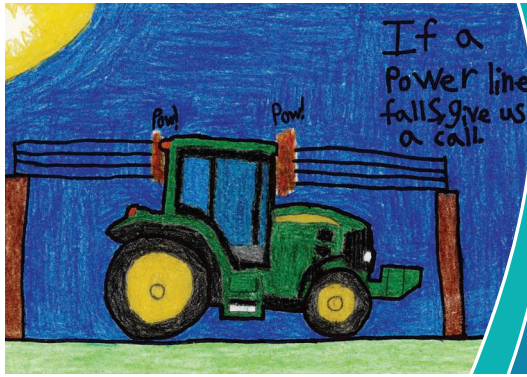



**SIoux VALLEY ENERGY**
A Tri-State Energy Cooperative

Stay SAFE with farm tools.

Seneca G.
4th Grade
Tri-Valley Elementary


**811**
SAFETY IS IN YOUR HANDS. EVERY DAY. EVERY TIME.



**SIoux VALLEY ENERGY**
A Tri-State Energy Cooperative

If a power line falls, give us a call.

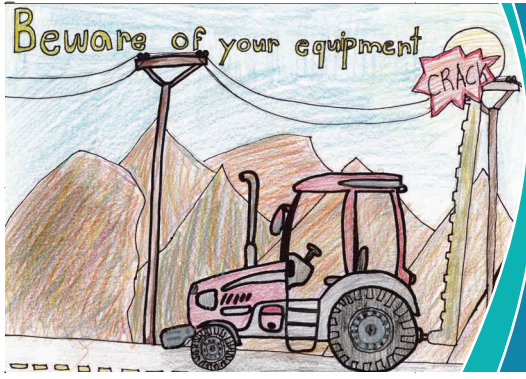
Tristan T.
4th Grade
Robert Bennis Elementary


**811**
SAFETY IS IN YOUR HANDS. EVERY DAY. EVERY TIME.

Brandon Valley's Robert Bennis Elementary had two winners in this year's contest. Tristan T.'s billboard is located along I-29 south of the Colman exit, while Hannah C.'s billboard is located along S.D. Highway 34 east of Madison.




SVE Safety Manager Terry Ebricht makes a presentation to Robert Bennis Elementary's Tristan T. and Hannah C. recognizing their winning safety posters.



**SIoux VALLEY ENERGY**
A Tri-State Energy Cooperative

Beware of your equipment.

Hannah C.
4th Grade
Robert Bennis Elementary

**811**
SAFETY IS IN YOUR HANDS. EVERY DAY. EVERY TIME.



Pietz's Kuchen Kitchen & Specialties employees Amanda Garcia and Myra Bachman with owners Lori and Roger Pietz.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

SOUTH DAKOTA IS KUCHEN COUNTRY

German Delicacy Celebrates 25 Years as State's Official Dessert

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

On a brisk spring morning, balls of dough rise hours before the sun. One at a time, they're placed onto a press and flattened before being positioned into tins. Carefully, Lori Pietz ladles custard overtop, sprinkles in fruit, and passes off a tray of the desserts to her husband, Roger, for baking. As Roger pulls open the door of the stainless steel commercial oven, a wave of heat emanates across the kitchen. He slides the tray of five desserts onto a shelf in the oven, then removes another tray and sets it aside to cool before they begin packaging.

Roger and Lori will repeat this process at least 100 more times this morning to keep up with their customers' orders.

In the town of Scotland, northwest of Yankton, Pietz's Kuchen Kitchen & Specialties is one business that has turned South Dakotans' love for kuchen – a

delectable unification of cake, custard and pie – into a thriving business.

Kuchen, the German word for cake, has been a staple at European kitchen tables for centuries. The delicacy has stood the test of time, continuing to serve as a tea-time – or any-time – favorite across cultures and continents, especially right here in South Dakota.

"I think it's because of the population, because the greatest proportion of immigrants (in South Dakota) are the Germans from Russia," co-owner Lori Pietz said of kuchen's popularity. "There are German areas, there are Czech areas, there are Norwegian areas — but there are a lot of Germans from Russia."

Roger comes from one of those German-Russian families where the tradition of baking homemade kuchen has been passed down for generations.

"I watched my mother make kuchen as a little kid," Roger remembered. "I'd stand a little ways from the oven and I'd watch

her make it and I loved it."

Staying true to his German-Russian roots, Roger's love for kuchen never faded. After marrying Lori, Roger remembers telling her that if he could ever recreate his mother's kuchen recipe, he could probably market it and sell it.

Owning a kuchen shop was always a retirement dream, the couple recalled. But after going through several farm accidents, the Pietzs' decided to pivot in 2008. Trading plows for whisks, Pietz's Kuchen became a reality.

The operation quickly outgrew their make-shift basement kitchen, so Roger and Lori opened up a storefront and commercial kitchen in the nearby town of Scotland in 2011.

Today, the store ships an estimated 2,500 kuchen monthly to grocery stores, butcher shops, and restaurants across South Dakota and the Midwest.

Roger and Lori's kuchen offerings range from Americanized options – blueberry, peach, strawberry – to the more traditional blends of 18th and 19th century Europe, including rhubarb,

prune and cottage cheese.

Lori explained that historically kuchen was made using ingredients that were readily available, making it the ideal comfort-food and cultural dish for immigrants building their lives on South Dakota farms.

“There are a lot of Germans from Russia who brought rhubarb over with them, so they made a lot of rhubarb kuchen,” Lori said. “Flour and sugar were available, and they all had chickens and cows, so that’s kind of how it kept going.”

Lori didn’t grow up eating much kuchen. Her mother, who was of Czech descent, favored fluffy pastries called kolaches – filled with jam, poppy seeds or cream cheese.

But once Lori joined the Pietz family, she saw an opportunity to bridge both traditions. Drawing on the popularity of poppy seed kolaches in the Czech community, she created a Czech-inspired twist: poppy seed kuchen.

“There’s a lot of Czech people out there that like poppy seed kolaches,” Roger said. “And when they hear there’s poppy seed kuchen, they’re buying it.”

Kuchen’s footprint in South Dakota extends far beyond Scotland. Annual events like the Kuchen Festival in Delmont and Schmeckfest in Freeman invite locals and visitors alike to sample a variety of recipes and baking styles.

In McPherson County, the town of Eureka also has a reputation for being a kuchen-tasting hot spot, with several local kitchens offering their own takes on the dish.

South Dakotans’ love for kuchen runs so deep that it’s been codified into law; In 2000, State Sen. James Lawler, whose district included Eureka, helped lead the charge in Pierre to designate kuchen as the official state dessert.

Lawler, who once served as a judge for a local kuchen contest in Eureka, said the bill was part of a broader push to support local industries and breathe new life into small towns.

“The town of Eureka really got behind me and supported that bill,” Lawler recalled. “Those women up there got together and made enough kuchen for the whole legislature, and we fed them all and got the bill passed.”

A framed commemorative print of that bill hangs on the wall by the checkout counter in Roger and Lori’s shop – a tribute to all of the kuchen fans who have made their business what it is today.

“If you asked me 15 years ago what our business was going to be...I’d have said we’d sell a few,” Roger laughed. “I thought if it flopped, my friends would buy some from me and they wouldn’t let me down. Never did I anticipate this. Never. It’s just unbelievable.”

The Germans From Russia

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Russian leaders made an appeal to German families to emigrate to Russia, promising land, religious freedom and military service exemptions.

According to the Prairie Public Broadcasting documentary, *The Germans From Russia: Children of the Steppe, Children of the Prairie*, the first wave of German immigrants arrived in 1764 during the reign of Catherine the Great. For Catherine, this was strategic; adding population to the sparser areas of her empire not only developed Russia’s agricultural economy, but also helped create a buffer against invaders from central Asia.

The settlements dotted the Volga River in Russia and the Black Sea in modern Ukraine and Crimea. The German villages closely resembled the communities they left behind as well as the ones they’d later build on the American prairie, with distinct churches and earth-brick houses.

While the Germans held onto their language, culture, and customs, Slavic influence gives the Germans from Russia a distinct identity. One notable difference is in their kuchen. While the traditional German dish resembles a yeast-based fruit cake, the eastern version is typically richer and made with custard.

Later in the 19th century, the special privileges German settlers had been granted were slowly being eroded. The Germans’ special status was lowered to that of common peasants, they could now be drafted into the Russian army, and were forced to assimilate to the Russian language and education system.

Many German settlers left their villages in Russia to start over once again in North America and South America, while those remaining in Russia would go on to suffer through civil and world wars and the man-made Holodomor famine during the 20th century.

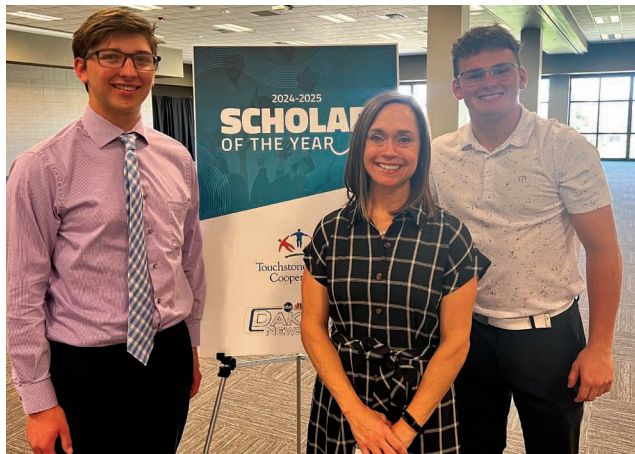
The Germans who had settled the banks of the Volga River went on to populate large swaths of Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado, while the Germans from the Black Sea region primarily settled the Dakota Territory and Canada – bringing kuchen with them.



Fruit is sprinkled over the dough, followed by a ladle of custard. Lori Pietz uses a scale to ensure nutrition labeling is precise.

Photo by Olivia Opland

Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives' Scholar of the Year Banquet



Chester Area High School seniors Arien Stalford, left, and Layke Wold, right, attended the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Scholar of the Year banquet at Lake Area Technical College in Watertown, S.D. on May 3 with Sioux Valley Energy Vice President of Public Relations Carrie Vugteveen. Not pictured is Brandon Valley High School's Libby Klein. Learn more about the students' stories at <https://siouxvalleyenergy.com/touchstone-energy-scholar-week>

Community Connection



The SVE Madison line crew volunteered to dig holes for the entrance arch at the Madison Veteran's Park in May. Veterans with the park were on hand to guide the project. The park is a past recipient of Operation Round Up® funding.

ALLOCATION NOTICE INCLUDED IN JUNE BILL

Sioux Valley Energy members will notice a note in the message center on their June bill indicating the amount of their 2024 capital credit allocation. (Those receiving their bill via SmartHub can view the statement on line.)

Each year, after the Cooperative's financials have been audited and the Cooperative's books have been closed, the allocation is calculated for each member owner.

Allocated capital credits appear as an entry on the permanent financial records of the Cooperative and reflect your investment in SVE. When capital credits are retired, a bill credit is issued to you (or check, if you no longer are a member), and your ownership in the Cooperative is reduced. The Board of Directors determines the amount and timing of capital credit retirements.

ALLOCATION

An allocation is made annually for each member based on the amount of electricity purchased. The allocation is the member's share of the net margins. The Co-op sets this money aside to be used as operating capital for improvements and maintenance over a period of years.



When a person establishes service with us, they become a member and are eligible for capital credits.

Capital credits represent a member's share of the Cooperative's margins during the time they have membership.



At the end of each year, any funds remaining after expenses (margins) are allocated to the member's account based on percentage of electricity purchased.

The allocated funds are used as operating capital for system improvements and maintenance until the Board of Directors retires capital credits.





SAFETY

IS THE BACKBONE OF RELIABILITY

Safety is **#1** at your **Touchstone Energy® cooperative** – from the on-going training of our employees to classroom safety programs and safety events for our kids. Our commitment to electrical safety has always been job one so we can deliver reliable energy and peace of mind. That's why safety runs through everything we do.

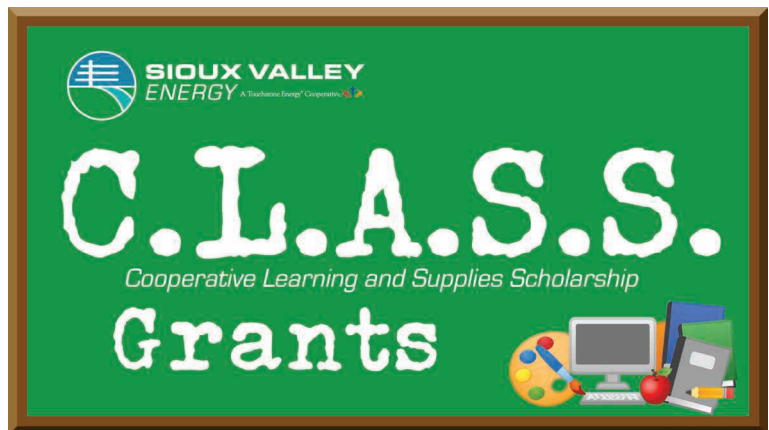
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(800) 234-1960 @SIouxVALLEY @SVECOOP SIoux-VALLEY-ENERGY

JOIN US FOR SAFETY DAY

SATURDAY **AUGUST 9, 2025** 9 A.M.-NOON
108 N HERITAGE RD **BRANDON, SD**

Sioux Valley Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

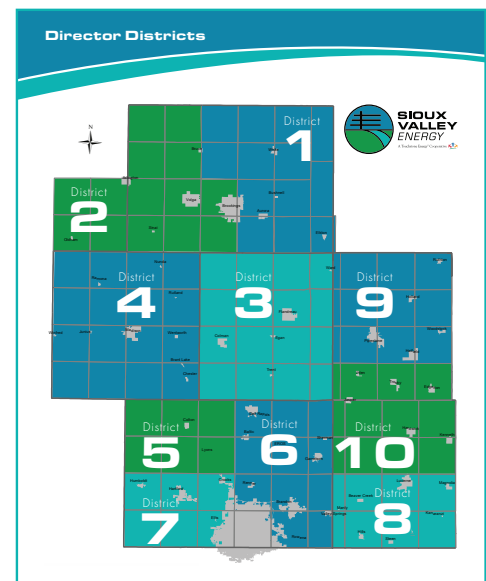


C.L.A.S.S. GRANT PROGRAM RETURNS

Program established for area teachers

Teachers from across the region are wrapping up the school year and to give them a head start for 2025-2026 Sioux Valley Energy will bring back its C.L.A.S.S. Grant program. Many teachers purchase classroom supplies on their own. To help, the Co-op will provide 10 area teachers a \$350 grant to purchase supplies for their classroom. Teachers can submit an online

entry to Sioux Valley Energy at SVEClassGrants.com. All entries must be submitted by **10 a.m. on Friday, August 15**. The grant recipients will be selected through a drawing which will be held at noon on August 19 via Facebook. One teacher from each of the Cooperative's 10 districts will be selected from the drawing. District boundaries are pictured.



Enter online: www.SVEClassGrants.com

SWIMMING SAFELY

Tips to Ensure Your Family Swims Safe This Summer

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

The leading cause of death for American children under the age of five: drowning.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 4,000 fatal drownings occur each year in the U.S., with the number of deaths sharply increasing in May and reaching a peak in July.

And according to Consumer Affairs, that number has been on the rise since 2020, especially among young children.

Whether at a waterpark, lake, backyard pool, or even a hot tub, being safety-aware and educating others can prevent drownings and other pool accidents and save lives.

According to Holly Hardy, aquatics director for the Oahe Family YMCA in Pierre, safety begins with supervision.

“Somebody should always be observing the water when there are kids in a pool,”

Hardy said. “It doesn’t matter if it’s our (YMCA) pool, a backyard pool, or the river. There needs to be a person there that’s responsible for watching the kids.”

At the YMCA’s pool, lifeguards who aren’t sure about a child’s swimming skills can have them do a swim test, where the child has to either show they can swim the length of the pool or remain in the shallow end.

“At our (YMCA) pool, we have those big slides and kids want to go down them because their buddies are going down them, and they want to go down but they can’t swim,” Hardy explained. “That’s where we pull the most people out of the water – the slide or the diving board.”

The YMCA lifeguards also have a rule against seeing how long you can hold your breath – children can hyperventilate before submerging and faint, which is called a

hypoxic blackout. Hardy also stresses the importance of swimming lessons, since understanding basics like how to float, swim, exit water and feeling oriented and calm are critical for water safety. She recommends to begin swimming lessons as soon as possible – The YMCA offers swimming lessons for children as young as six months old.

But swimming lessons are not a substitute for properly securing a pool.

According to Consumer Affairs, 87% of fatal drownings for the 0-5 age range occur in backyard pools.

That’s why a sturdy fence and self-latching gate around the pool area are still essential for preventing accidents. Even temporary mesh fence options can work in some instances.

Additionally, submersion alarms and door alarms can audibly alert you when someone enters the pool or pool area.

By communicating the pool safety rules to children and guests, as well as taking preventive measures to prevent accidents in the first place, you may be saving lives.

Pool Safety Checklist

Is there supervision?

- All children should be under responsible adult supervision.
- Designate “water watchers” and minimize distractions.
- Keep a phone close by for calling 911.
- Always swim with a buddy – Never alone.
- Keep throwing equipment or reaching equipment nearby.
- Consider CPR training – it could save a life.

Can everybody in the pool swim?

- Ensure everyone in the pool can at least swim from one end of the pool and back.
- Weak or new swimmers should keep to shallow water and use flotation aids.
- Parents should stay close – preferably within arm’s reach – to weak or new swimmers.
- Sign up for swimming lessons – it’s a lifesaving skill.

Are there safety barriers?

- Install and maintain a proper fence and self-latching gate around the pool.
- Consider a door alarm and pool alarm for an audible alert when someone enters the pool or pool area.
- Hot tubs should have properly-latched covers.

Recognize hazards.

- Stay away from drains and water intake pipes, as body parts, hair, jewelry, and loose clothing can get pulled in. Drains should have anti-entanglement drain covers, and pumps should have accessible shut-offs.
- Ensure tiles, handrails, anti-slip pads, and ladders are properly installed and maintained.

- Electrical work should be done by a qualified electrician. Chargers, extension cords and other electronics should be kept away from the pool area.
- Check your pool water regularly to avoid illness from contaminants and chemical burns.
- Avoid slips and falls by picking up pool toys and other hazards. Do not run or roughhouse near the pool.
- If you’re not sober, don’t swim.
- Diving can result in serious injury. Make sure others know when a pool is not safe for diving.
- Store pool chemicals and additives somewhere inaccessible to children.
- Ensure proper lighting is installed around the pool area and never swim in the dark.
- Consider an animal escape ramp for pets and wild animals.

Remind your children and guests...

Establish pool-safe rules for your children and any guests at your home. Remind your children to...

- Never swim without permission and supervision. Other children are not supervisors.
- Don’t enter a pool area or go near water alone.
- Never roughhouse or run in the pool area.
- Never dive in shallow water.
- Stay away from chemicals and additives.
- Keep the pool area tidy and hazard-free.
- Keep electrical devices and cords away from the pool area.
- Never hyperventilate or try and see how long you can hold your breath underwater. Hyperventilating can induce fainting, called hypoxic blackouts and lead to drowning.

A Luverne woman and an American Legion Post were the most recent area finalists in the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Who Powers You Contest.

Finalist Lori Sorenson of Luverne was featured on KELOLAND Living on April 24, 2025, while finalist Higgins-Jessen-Olson Post #88 of White and Toronto was featured May 8, 2025.

Lori Sorenson/Carson's Cause

Lori's nominator wrote: "My sister, Lori, started Carson's Cause after her 21-year-old son took his own life. He hadn't battled the anxiety or depression for long. It wasn't a lifelong battle like most. It was a moment of darkness in an otherwise outgoing resilient young man. After the funeral, the memorial fund was a large amount of money and Lori knew she wanted to do something positive with it. We grew up in home where education was



SVE VP of Public Relations Carrie Vugteveen, left, presents Lori Sorenson, center, and Gracie Rozeboom a Who Powers You Contest certificate.

very important. Our mom was our lifelong teacher, always encouraging her five daughters to learn at every opportunity. She would tell us that an education was something no one could take from you. So, my sister decided she could start at the local level. Soon the idea was born with Carson's girlfriend, Gracie Rozeboom, to buy a book for every child in the Luverne Public School. Carson's Cause has currently bought books for students in Pipestone, Edgerton Public, and Hills-Beaver Creek. Plus, other activities to normalize kids and parents alike to discuss brain health with each other. To watch for a friend, classmate, or family member who may need help and where to turn if they do. To let them know their brains are just like teeth, feet, or any other part of their body that may need help. Lori truly wants this generation to be educated and not have the stigma to hide when their brains need help. She is doing that one child at a time."

Higgins-Jessen-Olson Post #88

The Higgins-Jessen-Olson Post #88 nominator wrote: "For 35 years, the American Legion Post 88 of White and Toronto, South Dakota, has presented the colors before home sporting events at Deubrook High School. This is a physical reminder to all in attendance of the importance of citizenship and respect for the American flag.



Higgins-Jessen-Olson Post 88 with their Who Powers You Contest certificate.

It's also a way that Post members remember and honor their fellow veterans. Flag advocacy is one of the missions of the American Legion. A four-person honor guard presents the flag at every basketball, football, and volleyball game, cross country meet, and homecoming parade held by the school. This spring, as the school's extracurricular activities have expanded, they are adding three softball games and two home track meets to the mix in addition to graduation and the South Dakota Open Martial Arts Tournament. They have also presented before capacity crowds at South Dakota State University basketball games when the ROTC cadets were unavailable. To give a sense of this commitment by the Post members, during the 2024-2025 school year, the honor guard will present about 32 times. Extrapolated over the past 35 years, this amounts to more than 475 presentations of the colors."

ANNUAL MEETING SET FOR JUNE 10

Meeting to be held concurrently in Hartford, Luverne, and Volga

Sioux Valley Energy will welcome members to its 2025 Annual Meeting on Tuesday, June 10 in three different locations.

A complimentary meal will run from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Bingo will begin at 5:15 p.m. with the meeting portion of the evening following at 7:00 p.m.

The main meeting site will be located at the West Central High School in Hartford, S.D., with two remote locations at Sioux Valley School in Volga, S.D., and the Generations Event Center in Luverne, Minn. Members who are not able to attend can watch the meeting on a livestream that will be broadcast on the

Sioux Valley Energy website. Scan the QR code below to access the livestreamed version.

Members will receive an invitation postcard (below) in the mail prior to the meeting. Bring the card to the meeting to receive an Annual Meeting gift.

Meeting attendees can also stop by the Beneficial Electrification booth at all three meeting locations to register to win an EGO power station. A winner will be drawn via Facebook live the day after the meeting.

A copy of the Cooperative's 2024 Annual Report is inserted into this edition of the newsletter.

Join SVE for its Annual Meeting on Tuesday, June 10!



2025 Annual Meeting

TUESDAY, JUNE 10, 2025

HARTFORD • LUVERNE • VOLGA

Meal: 5-7 p.m. • BINGO: 5:15-6:50 p.m.

Meeting: 7-7:45 p.m.

Menu: Hamburger or hot dog

with spring salad, fresh fruit, and cookie.

The meeting will be broadcast from **West Central High School** (705 E 2nd St, Hartford) to the **Generations Center** (105 S Estey St, Luverne) and **Sioux Valley High School** (200 Hansina Ave, Volga).

Attend the location most convenient for you. Watch the meeting live at www.siouxvalleyenergy.com or by scanning this code with your phone.



We look forward to seeing you June 10!

OFFICIAL NOTICE of Sioux Valley-Southwestern Electric Annual Meeting
 at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, June 10, 2025, at Hartford, S.D.; Luverne, Minn.; & Volga, S.D.

Sioux Valley Energy is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.



JUNE 19-21
Czech Days
 Music, Dancing, Foods & Parades
 Tabor, SD

Photo courtesy of Travel South Dakota

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.

MAY 24-SEPT. 13
Buggy Museum
 Free Buggy Rides + More
 Saturdays 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Stockholm, SD
 605-938-4192

MAY 31
Miss Prairie Village Pageant
 6:30 p.m.
 Lawrence Welk Opera House
 Madison, SD
www.prairievillage.org

JUNE 5
Danish Constitution Day Celebration
 6:15 p.m.-9 p.m.
 Danish Folk Dancing & Music
 Daneville Heritage Museum
 Viborg, SD
 605-766-1312
danevilleheritage.com

JUNE 5, 7
Wheel Jam
 7 p.m.
 Dakota State Fair Speedway
 Huron, SD

JUNE 6
Northern Bull Riding Tour
 6:30 p.m.
 Madison, SD
www.prairievillage.org

JUNE 7
Prairie Village Tractor Pull
 3 p.m.
 Madison, SD
www.prairievillage.org

JUNE 13-15
Friendship Days
 Hills, MN

JUNE 13
Jesse James Days
 Garretson, SD
visitgarretsonsd.com

JUNE 13-15
Ipswich Trail Days
 Ipswich, SD
ipswichtraildays.com
ipswichtraildays@gmail.com

JUNE 14
Roslyn Vinegar Festival
 Roslyn, SD
 320-808-8873

SAVE THE DATE

1-800-234-1960

JUNE 10

Sioux Valley Energy Annual Meeting
 West Central School
 Becker Center (Hartford SD)
 Generations (Luverne MN)
 Sioux Valley School Gym
 (Volga SD)

AUG. 9

Safety Day
 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
 Sioux Valley Energy
 Brandon Service Center
 108 N Heritage Rd, Brandon, SD

JUNE 19-22
Hartford Jamboree Days
 Hartford, SD
 605-941-0809

JUNE 19-22
Plaza Suite
 Theater Production by Mad Arts
 Madison, SD
www.prairievillage.org

JUNE 25-28
Crystal Springs Rodeo
 Clear Lake, SD
 605-874-2996

JUNE 27-28
Buckhorn Rodeo
 Britton, SD
 605-880-5077

JUNE 30
Ice Cream Social
 4-6 p.m.
 Free Music, Ice Cream,
 Kids Games & Fun
 Lake County Museum Lawn
 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.

2025 | ANNUAL REPORT



SIoux VALLEY
ENERGY A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

SERVING OUR MEMBERS

Always

YOUR PARTNER IN PROGRESS

Colman • Brandon • Pipestone • Hartford

ANNUAL REPORT of Sioux Valley-Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc., PO Box 216, 23491 471st Ave, Colman, SD 57017

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Dan Leuthold
Board President
Ellsworth, Minn.
District 8 Director



Dave Daniel
Board Vice President
Wentworth, S.D.
District 4 Director



Don DeGreef
Board Secretary
Brookings, S.D.
District 1 Director



Ann Vostad
Board Treasurer
Volga, S.D.
District 2 Director



Rodney DeMent
Board Member
Humboldt, S.D.
District 7 Director



Gary Fish
Board Member
Brandon, S.D.
District 6 Director



Dr. Leslie Heinemann
Board Member
Flandreau, S.D.
District 3 Director



Gregg Johnson
Board Member
Pipestone, Minn.
District 9 Director



Mark Rogen
Board Member
Garretson, S.D.
District 6 Director



Lucas Roskamp
Board Member
Jasper, Minn.
District 10 Director



Allan Weinacht
Board Member
Colton, S.D.
District 5 Director

CONTACT US

Outages:
800.234.1960
Member Services:
877.511.8062
Address:
23491 471st Ave
Colman, SD 57017



STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM



Tim McCarthy
General Manager/
Chief Executive Officer



Jason Maxwell
Chief Financial Officer



Kimberlee Hansen
Vice President of Human Resources and Member Services



Justin Moose
Vice President of Technology



Ted Smith
Vice President of Engineering and Operations



Carrie Vugteveen
Vice President of Public Relations



Brenda Schelhaas
Executive Assistant

YOUR PARTNER IN PROGRESS

Sioux Valley Energy is your Partner in Progress. While progress may look different for each individual, collectively as a Co-op, we define it as providing the necessary foundational support to maintain and build strong communities. That includes powering your businesses and homes reliably, safely, and at cost-based rates; it means supporting community initiatives that enhance our members' lives; it means successfully working through challenges together; and finally, it means living out our mission of: Serving Our Members. Always.

For about a decade, Sioux Valley Energy has been replacing approximately 125 miles of aging overhead line each year. This is an aggressive work plan and while we have made significant progress, we need to continue at this pace to ensure our members continue to benefit from top-quartile reliability. These investments have improved our system to a point where it currently delivers 99.989 percent reliability for our members.

The electric utility industry is entering into a time of transformation, facing unprecedented demand for electricity. Electric co-ops, like Sioux Valley Energy, are just one part of the energy sector experiencing the need for significant grid investments fueling upward rate pressures. Over the next decade, our wholesale power supplier, Basin Electric, is planning to invest around \$12 billion in new transmission and generation assets to support members' increased demand for electricity. These investments will impact electric rates for co-op members for several years, but will also help support progress in our communities well into the future. Sioux Valley Energy's cost for power in 2025 increased by 7% and resulted in the need to implement an average 4.9% rate adjustment in January of 2025. The increase was applied to the variable energy sectors of our rates.

As we face those upward rate pressures, our commitment to members is to mitigate rate impacts to the best of our ability. The challenging aspect of that mitigation is that power supply is the largest part of the Cooperative's budget. Over 60 cents of every dollar you pay to Sioux Valley Energy goes toward power supply. So, when there is a power supply rate increase, it is impactful to our members.

It is likely that the Sioux Valley Energy membership will grow to over 30,000 members in 2025 with forecasted sales of more than 960 million kilowatt hours. It won't be long before we hit the milestone of 1 billion kilowatt hours. We anticipate the Cooperative's electric load will nearly double over the next 20 years.

As we navigate this changing landscape, we are seeking ways to take pressure off the electric system during peak times, shifting electrical demand. Historically, we have been able to do that through our load management system with controllable electric water heaters. The water heater program was foundational to the concept of what we now call beneficial electrification. Many of our rebate and special rate programs for 2025 are designed to incentivize off-peak electric use. We also include a "demand" line item on our residential and rural residential members' electric bills. While those members are not currently charged based on demand (higher costs during peak electric use periods), we believe it is important that our members are kept aware of their impact on the electric grid.

As we address these various challenges, our culture of safety will continue to be the top priority for not only our employees but also the general public. Our new "Take the Time. Every Time." public education campaign was developed to remind everyone to slow down, focus on the task at hand, and be aware of your surroundings especially around roadside work zones and near electric equipment.

Sioux Valley Energy's guiding principles include:

- *Commitment to Safety*
- *Community Service*
- *Member Focus*
- *Dedication to Quality*
- *Value-Based Products and Services*
- *Responsible Growth*

As your partner in progress moving into the future, the above values will continue to serve as the foundation of everything we do. Every work plan; every community engagement; and every technology we implement will be based on our guiding principles. We encourage you to take a look at our organizational strategy which is built into our balanced scorecard. You can review Sioux Valley Energy's strategy, by scanning this QR code.



Dan Leuthold
Board President



Tim McCarthy
General Manager/CEO

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SIOUX VALLEY-SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

June 11, 2024

Pursuant to notice having been given on the 21st day of May 2024, the Annual Meeting of the members of the Sioux Valley-Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc. (dba Sioux Valley Energy) was held on Tuesday, June 11, 2024 in three locations. The main meeting site was at Brandon Valley High School, Brandon, SD with remote meeting sites at Sioux Valley School, Volga, SD, and Pipestone Area High School, Pipestone, MN. A member appreciation event featuring The Lost Keys was held in conjunction with the meeting in Brandon. Entertainment was provided by Travis Denison in Volga and by The Barn Flies in Pipestone, MN.

Carrie Vugteveen, Vice President of Public Relations, welcomed the remote meeting sites in Volga and Pipestone. Carrie also thanked the Sioux Valley Energy employees and acknowledged Lori George who is retiring after 27 years at SVE.

Brandon Lane, Economic Development and Community Relations Executive, gave the invocation. Jay Buchholz, Manager of Public Relations, introduced The Lost Keys who sang the National Anthem.

Carrie Vugteveen introduced the members of the Sioux Valley Energy Board of Directors.

Carrie Vugteveen welcomed former employees and directors, special guests/dignitaries, G&T representatives, and the Sioux Valley Energy Operation Round Up® directors.

The business meeting was called to order at 7:13 p.m. by Board President Gary Fish, who presided as Chairperson, and Donald DeGreef, Board Secretary, acted as Secretary for the meeting.

The Secretary presented the Notice of the Meeting and the Proof of Mailing and reported that a quorum was present with 601 members registered. A motion was made by Janice Wilson and seconded by James Harsma to approve the minutes of the June 6, 2023 Annual Meeting as printed in the 2023 Annual Report. The motion carried.

Dave Daniel, Board Treasurer, presented the treasurer's report for 2023. A motion was made by Arthur Westendorf and seconded by Eli Schmidt that the treasurer's report be approved as presented. The motion carried.

GENERAL MANAGER/CEO REPORT/EMPLOYEE AWARDS

The management report was presented by General Manager/CEO Tim McCarthy. As part of the management report, Manager McCarthy recognized the following Sioux Valley Energy employees for their years of service with the Cooperative:

- Jeff Huebner, Warehouse Coordinator – 25 years
- Dave Jensen, Mechanic – 25 years
- Ryan Hyland, Journey Lineworker – 30 years

Manager McCarthy recognized the students who will be part of the next EmPOWER Youth Leadership Program. He also introduced the EmPOWER scholarship recipients for this past school year.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the meeting, Gary Fish declared the meeting adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Donald DeGreef, Secretary



Don DeGreef
Board Secretary



Construction on expansion of the Brandon Service Center wrapped up in 2024. The 32,500-square foot expansion adds meeting, office, and warehouse space.

Sioux Valley Energy crews headed to South Carolina to assist with hurricane repairs in September and October 2024.

In June 2024, journey lineworker Steve Dvergsten represented the Co-op on an NRECA International Program trip to Guatemala where crews electrified a remote village.

TAKE THE TIME. EVERY TIME.

This harvest, check your clearances and keep your distance from electrical equipment.



The Cooperative engaged in a multi-media public education campaign to fight power line contacts.



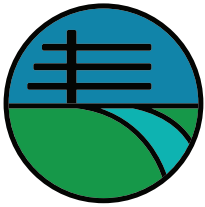
The Co-op's high voltage demonstration trailer assisted with safety education throughout the Cooperative's service area. Here it is pictured at Ag PhD's Hefty Seed Day at Baltic, S.D.



The Co-op's 110-plus workforce donated 681 hours of work to local organizations throughout the Co-op's service territory as part of its volunteerism program, Community Connections. Here (left), employees assist with playground construction at the new day care facility in Hills, Minnesota.

RIGHT: Sioux Valley Energy spearheaded an educational electric vehicle event at the Sioux Empire Fairgrounds in September.





SIoux VALLEY
ENERGY A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

764

new meters
added

639

members
received **rebates**

46

miles of line
constructed

29,746

total **services**

\$886,790

spent on energy
efficiency programs

**\$1.8
Million**

in **savings** from
load management

**\$1.76
Million**

**capital credit/
estate retirement**

**\$103.54
Million**

total **operating revenue**

Total **utility plant** reaches

**\$360
Million**

57.8

average
outage minutes

**921
Million**

kWhs **sold**

114

employees

99.989% **reliability**

Sioux Valley Energy is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

SERVING OUR MEMBERS. *Always.*



SIOUX VALLEY ENERGY
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For Years Ended December 31, 2024 and December 31, 2023

	2024	2023
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Operating Revenues:

Revenue from Electric Sales	\$103,538,442	\$100,147,813
Total Operating Revenue	\$103,538,442	\$100,147,813

Operating Expenses:

Cost of Power	63,492,186	61,065,030
System Operations and Maintenance	10,663,894	10,371,177
Member Accounts Expense	2,005,599	1,947,283
Member Service and Sales Expense	1,149,761	1,039,791
Administrative and General Expense	6,982,666	6,750,580
Depreciation	9,047,034	8,288,325
Interest	7,421,774	6,564,734
Taxes	1,389,353	1,389,905
Other Expense	187,446	135,594
Total Operating Expenses	\$102,339,713	\$97,552,419

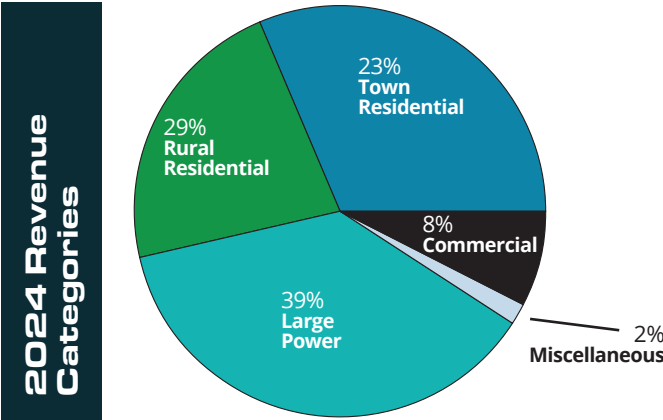
Operating Margins	\$1,198,729	\$2,595,394
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Non-operating Margins

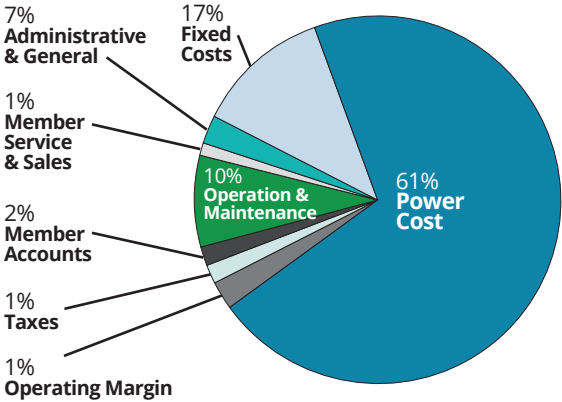
Merchandising	(528,251)	(449,957)
Interest Income	303,307	446,064
Gain (Loss) on Sale of Equipment or Property	(56,917)	(1,231)
Total Non-operating Margins	(281,861)	(5,124)

Capital Credits from Associated Organizations	4,823,827	5,951,026
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Net Margins	\$5,740,695	\$8,541,296
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How the Dollars Were Spent: 2024



SIOUX VALLEY ENERGY
BALANCE SHEET December 31, 2024, and 2023

	2024	2023
Assets:		
Distribution and General Plant	\$359,670,009	\$325,307,819
Less Depreciation	69,376,313	63,448,023
Net Plant	290,293,696	261,859,796
Other Property and Investments		
Investments	67,777,404	63,959,026
Investments	67,777,404	63,959,026
Current Assets:		
Cash	5,634,509	6,264,035
Accounts Receivable	10,472,045	9,116,774
Inventory	7,965,680	8,603,386
Other Current Assets	1,056,128	1,026,971
Total Current Assets	25,128,362	25,011,166
Deferred Debits	1,483,733	1,419,581
Total Assets	\$384,683,195	\$352,249,569
Equities:		
Patronage Capital	\$113,037,468	\$109,076,994
Other Equities	5,540,508	5,067,408
Total Equities	118,577,976	114,144,402
Liabilities:		
Long-term Debt	211,774,556	208,582,737
Current Liabilities		
Current Maturities of Long-term Debt	8,819,000	8,821,000
Notes Payable	28,000,000	5,000,000
Current Lease Liability – Operating	43,635	41,689
Accounts payable	7,486,223	5,831,768
Other Current and Accrued Liabilities	5,787,707	5,434,629
Total Current Liabilities	50,136,565	25,129,086
Other Liabilities		
Member Deposits	788,412	836,840
Deferred Credits	3,405,686	3,556,504
Total Liabilities	266,105,219	238,105,167
Total Equities and Liabilities	\$384,683,195	\$352,249,569



Colton Spader
Kyle Thomson
Michael Uhing
Derry
Van Hofwegen
Amy Voelker
Larry Voss
Carrie Vugteveen
Joan Wangberg
Michele Wanner
Chad Williams
Molly Williams
Kendra Wire
Nathan
Zimmerman
Sandy Zwart