



Cooperative Connections

SDSU Extension
Master Gardener
Program

**Growing Master
Gardeners in SD**

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**Rodeo School is
in Session**

Pages 12-13



2020 Marked by Challenges but Productivity Continued



Tim McCarthy, GM/CEO

tim.mccarthy@siouxvalleyenergy.com

2020 was quite the year. It was both challenging and record-setting. Unfortunately, we all had to endure some pretty difficult times. Some of our members lost their jobs and many of them dealt with sickness. At the Cooperative, we did everything we could to work closely with our members who were experiencing these things. We're glad to be moving on from that time period, but we do need to acknowledge that some of the operational challenges we experienced due to COVID actually allowed us to become even more efficient.

When the pandemic hit in early 2020, we had no idea what the future would bring. While it was nearly impossible to predict the exact trajectory of a novel virus outbreak, Sioux Valley Energy had already been preparing for an event similar to the COVID pandemic. In fact, the Cooperative developed an official pandemic plan years earlier to ensure the continuation of reliable electric service to our membership. As you can imagine, the plan was fluid and changed over time as we learned more about COVID. However, that planning, years in advance of the pandemic, allowed us to build a strong

foundation to help both our members and employees through a very difficult time.

Prior to the pandemic, the Cooperative had worked towards preparing and equipping our employees to work remotely. During the height of the pandemic, nearly 60 percent of our workforce was working from home. This allowed us to close our offices to public access while continuing to serve our members and provide the essential service of electricity. We worked very quickly to make adjustments and to eliminate as much paper in our work processes as possible. Our field personnel (line workers, electricians, warehouse coordinators, etc.) also altered their work to mitigate risk to themselves and to our members. As an essential service provider and community partner we felt as though it was our responsibility to closely follow the guidelines developed by local, state, and national officials as well as health experts. Going forward, even after the conditions allow for more face-to-face contact, many of our employees will continue to work from home or utilize a hybrid approach. We've learned throughout the past year that this working arrangement allows for exceptional service to our members.

By taking the steps we took, we were able to prevent COVID transmission within the workplace and do our part to help slow the spread of the virus within the community, while simultaneously providing reliable electric service and answering your calls.

Internally, our leadership team worked to identify and eliminate or postpone as many operating expenses in 2020 as we could. **Continues on page 3**

"During the height of the pandemic, nearly 60% of our workforce was working from home."

Remembering Allan Kooima

October 25, 1951 - April 22, 2021

Sioux Valley Energy District 2 Director Allan Kooima, 69, died April 22, 2021. Kooima had served on the Sioux Valley Energy Board since 2013 and currently was the Board secretary and represented the Cooperative on the South Dakota Rural Electric Association Board of Directors in Pierre.

We will miss Allan's leadership and service and offer condolences to his wife, Bernita, and his family.



Sioux Valley Energy

Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 497-440)

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

Sioux Valley Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

2020 Marked by Challenges but Productivity Continued...

Manager Column Continued from Page 2.

These budgetary adjustments helped us to delay a rate increase for over four months equating to nearly \$2 million in savings to the Co-op and to our members. We also put in place a program to assist members struggling to pay their electric bill and worked very closely with those members to develop a payment plan that worked for both the member and the Co-op, avoiding disconnection of electric service.

Although working conditions were adjusted to follow newly designed COVID protocols, productivity was not impacted. I want to mention just a few of those highlights:

- Between inbound and outbound calls, our employees answered and made nearly 470,000 phone calls in 2020.
- We constructed a total of 140 miles of line: 23 miles of new line and 117 miles of rebuilt line. This resulted in a net increase in utility plant of almost \$11.3 million. We also connected 491 new services, for a total of just over 27,000 services.
- Nearly \$117,000 in Operation Round Up® grants were awarded to non-profits, schools and communities within the Sioux Valley Energy service territory footprint.
- For the first time ever, we utilized virtual and phone options for district meetings, re-electing three directors. We also held a virtual special meeting which initiated the process for several bylaw amendments approved by the membership. The amendments addressed several operational and governance issues which came to light during the pandemic.
- Our independent auditors reported a clean audit of the 2020 financials.
- Federal paperwork for \$6.5 million in FEMA funds was processed and approved. These funds will be used to help pay for storm damage that occurred during the 2019 ice storm.
- We completed a \$66.3 million RUS/FFB loan application to fund the current 4-year construction work plan and it was approved in December.
- Sioux Valley had one of its best overall safety records in years with a minimal number of accidents and workplace injuries.
- Co-op members continued to make their homes and businesses more energy efficient and utilized Sioux Valley programs and services to help do that. In fact, we sold 511 efficient water heaters in 2020 (almost 20 more than the year before). These water heaters will be placed on load management, which will allow us to shift electric use to non-peak times maximizing the efficiency of the electric grid which lowers the cost of power for all.

Now that we are well into a new year, I simply want to say...thank you. Thank you for your patience during one of the most challenging years Sioux Valley Energy has ever experienced. Thank you to our employees for your continued perseverance and your absolute dedication to the Co-op's mission of "Serving Our Members. Always." And thank you to those of you who were a bright light in someone else's life during a time that could sometimes feel dark...many of us know a few people just like you and we will be forever grateful.



Serving Our Members. Always.

Eight Tips to Help You Grow Your Garden Safely

Gardening may seem like a safe hobby - and for the most part it is. But it can potentially lead to injury. Emergency rooms treat more than 400,000 injuries each year related to outdoor garden tools, reports the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Trimming trees and tall bushes can take a deadly turn when electricity is involved. Never trim a tree that has grown into a power line. Metal and wood ladders can transmit electricity into your body if you come into contact with a live wire. Instead, ask your electric cooperative to send a professional to trim the tree.

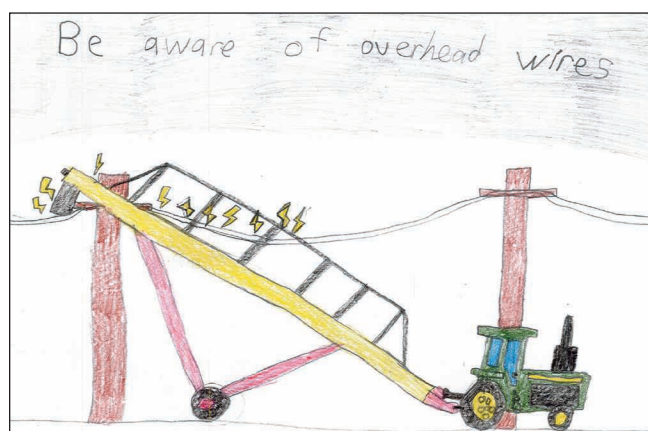
- At least three days before you begin a landscaping project that entails digging, call 811 to have underground utility lines marked.
- Never garden, trim trees or cut the lawn in bad weather. Wet and windy conditions can cause slipping and other hazards. Go inside immediately if you see lightning.
- Outlets protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters should be used for electric tools and trimmers. Never use tools outdoors when it's wet.
- Whenever possible, work in pairs so you're not using electrical equipment when nobody else is around - in case of an accident. And hire a professional if you doubt your ability to complete the job safely.
- Always wear the proper clothing and safety equipment for the task at hand. Gloves, eye and hearing protection, and dust masks can help prevent injuries and illnesses.
- Use the right tools for the job and use them safely. If you are using electric tools, watch where the cord is and unplug tools when not in use.
- Keep garden tools and equipment in proper working order. Equipment that is not maintained properly leaves the door open for potential accidents.
- Stay hydrated, use insect repellent and sunscreen (don't forget your face, neck and ears), and take breaks as needed to rest those hard-working muscles.

Did You Know?

- All thunderstorms produce lightning.
- Lightning often strikes outside the area of heavy rain and can strike as far as 10 miles from any rainfall.
- If you hear thunder, you're in the danger zone.

#StormSafety

KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



Be Aware of Overhead Wires

Carter Intveld, 11 years old

Carter is the child of Glenn and Darci Intveld of Sioux Falls. They are members of Sioux Valley Energy.

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.



Dig in to These Dairy Recipes

Tuna Cheesettes

½ c. American cheese	2 tbsp. chopped dill pickles
2-3 hard boiled eggs, chopped	½ c. salad dressing
1 can (7 oz.) tuna	½ tsp. salt
2 tbsp. chopped onion	¼ tsp. pepper

Preheat oven to 350. Mix ingredients and pile on ½ of a hamburger bun to make an open-faced sandwich. Bake for 30 min. Serve warm.

Ruth Schilberg, Viborg

Crustless Cheddar Mini Quiches

Non-stick cooking spray	1 egg
1/2 teaspoon olive oil	1/3 cup sun-dried tomatoes, plus additional tomatoes for garnish
1 leek, cleaned and finely chopped (about 1 cup)	1/2 teaspoon fresh or dried thyme
1 cup reduced-fat shredded Cheddar cheese, divided	
1 cup fat-free milk	

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Lightly spray a 12-cup muffin pan* with non-stick cooking spray. Heat oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Cook leeks until softened, stirring frequently, about 5 minutes. Divide leeks among muffin cups and top with 2/3 cup of Cheddar cheese. Blend milk, egg, sun-dried tomatoes and thyme in a blender or food processor for about 20 seconds or until tomato is minced. Pour milk mixture over cheese in muffin cups and top each with remaining cheese. Bake 30 minutes or until tops and edges are browned. Cool in pan for 3 minutes; serve warm or cold. Top with additional pieces of sun-dried tomato, if desired.

*May substitute with aluminum muffin cups or individual custard cups, if desired.

usdairy.com

Scalloped Eggs and Bacon

1/4 cup chopped onion	6 hard boiled eggs, sliced
2 tablespoons butter	1/4 teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons flour	1/4 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 cups milk	1 1/2 cups crushed potato chips
1 cup shredded American cheese	12 bacon strips
1/2 teaspoon dry mustard	

Cut bacon strips into 1 inch pieces and fry until crisp. Sauté onion in butter until tender. Stir in flour, gradually add milk and cook, stirring until thickened. Add cheese and mustard stirring until cheese melts. Place half of the egg slices in a greased 10 X 6 baking dish. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Cover with half of the cheese sauce, potato chips and bacon. Repeat layering. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes. Tips: Prepare eggs and bacon the night before and put together the next morning to save time. May also use ham cubes instead of bacon. Double the recipe and use a 9 X 13 baking dish.

Mary Jo Semmier, Chancellor

Very Berry Ice Cream

2 lbs frozen berries (raspberries, blueberries, strawberries or blackberries)	1/2 cup sweetened condensed milk
1 tablespoon honey	1/2 teaspoon salt

In blender, pulse berries, condensed milk, honey and salt until smooth, scraping down sides. Pour mixture into 5-by-9-inch loaf pan. Freeze uncovered 4 hours, or until set.

Culinary.net

Please send your favorite dairy 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 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Building? Remodeling?

Get in touch with Sioux Valley Energy early in your planning process!



Sheila Gross

Energy Services Specialist

New construction is booming around the region, and many Sioux Valley Energy members are working on new construction or remodeling projects.

Be sure to contact Sioux Valley Energy early in your planning process so that you can take advantage of various rebates and programs offered.

We offer several resources that will help you in the process.

First up are the knowledgeable employees at Sioux Valley Energy. Contact us at 800-234-1960.

Our website, www.siouxvalleyenergy.com, has several tools and resources for you. It outlines our rebate and incentive programs, includes tools and calculators, and more.

We also have several booklets and brochures that are available for download.

Take advantage of Sioux Valley Energy’s heat pump incentives for heating and cooling your home or purchase a lifetime tank-warrantied water heater from the Cooperative for \$400 plus applicable tax (some restrictions apply). Interested in technologies to put more control in your hands and save money? Check out our electric vehicle programs, Time of Use Rate, and smart thermostat rebate.

Finally, if you’re getting ready to dig, be sure to call 811 two to three business days before you put a shovel or backhoe to the ground to have underground utilities located. You can also request locates online at www.call811.com.

Please contact me about the topics below.

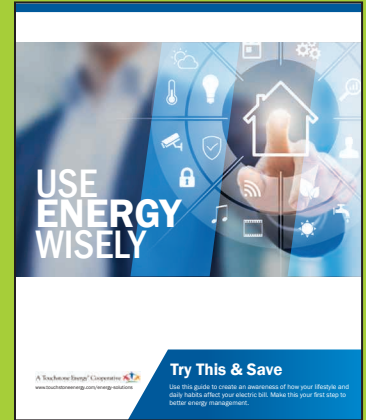
Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, ZIP: _____
 Account #: _____ Phone #: _____
 Email: _____

Mail this form to: Sioux Valley Energy, PO Box 216, Colman, SD 57017

I would like more information on:

- Heat Pump Rebate
- Electric Heat Rate
- Energy Audit
- Loan Program
- Electric Vehicle Program
- Time of Use Rate
- Third-Party Irrigation Rebate
- SmartHub Account Tool
- Smart Thermostat Rebate
- Commercial/Ag LED Program
- Commercial Heat Rebates
- Renewable Energy Credit
- Energy Saving Tips
- Interlock Kit/Generator
- Marathon/Westinghouse Water Heaters

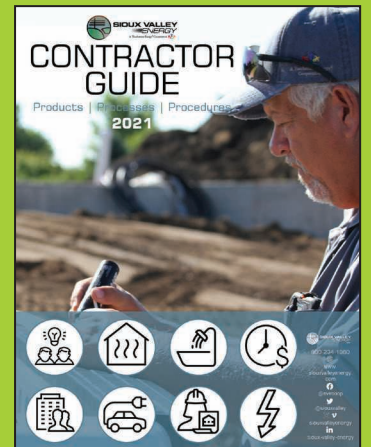
Available Resources



The *Use Energy Wisely* booklet is full of tips on how to save on your electric bill. It is available at www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-programs/energy-efficiency-tools

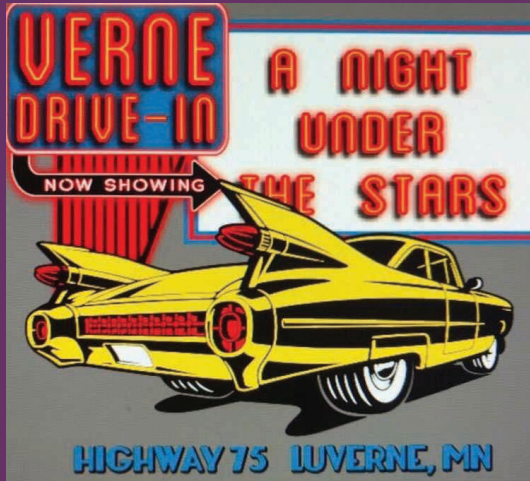


Energy Solutions outlines rebates and programs offered by SVE. Go to www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-programs/energy-solutions-catalog



Geared to builders, electricians and HVAC professionals, our *Contractor Guide* has valuable info for your building project. www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-programs/contractor-connections

Annual Meeting Planned for Tuesday, June 8 in Luverne



Enjoy the show!

Sioux Valley Energy Annual Meeting

Tuesday, June 8, 2021
Verne Drive-In Theatre
1607 S Kniss Ave
Luverne, MN 56156

Meeting Schedule

6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

*Registration Opens
Complimentary Meal*

- Pre-wrapped cold club sandwich, chips, cookie and bottle of water will be provided to occupants in each vehicle.

Park and tune radio to 91.5 FM

7:00 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.

Annual Meeting

8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

The Barn Flies (musical group)

- Alt-country and Americana duo of Casey Wilson and Carleen Wild Wilson.

9:20 p.m.

Cruella (Disney 2021)

- Rated PG-13
- <https://vernedriveintheater.com>

Please bring a lawn chair or you can also sit in your vehicle for the events.

The Barn Flies to Perform

The Barn Flies, an alt-country and Americana duo of Casey Wilson and Carleen Wild Wilson, will provide entertainment at Sioux Valley Energy's drive-in annual meeting June 8 in Luverne, Minnesota.

The duo features Carleen's soaring powerful vocals and Casey's songwriting and guitar slinging. Much of their writing revolves around rodeo and rural life, along with a snarky dose of humor. Some of the duo's songs also document a part of history that they feel needs told and is often neglected in modern music and songwriting.





SDSU Extension Master Gardener Ruth Smith prepares for a local spring plant sale. Photos by Billy Gibson.

MASTER GARDENERS

Extension Program Seeks to Spread the Love of Gardening

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdua.coop

Sorry, Walt Disney. The happiest place on earth for Ruth Smith isn't located in Florida or California. It's found in the serene confines of her garden in Pierre, S.D.

A retired educator, Smith experiences relaxation and contentment while growing herbs, vegetables and florals in her terraced backyard garden. After spending a career in public education and dedicating herself to the development and guidance of local students, Smith now finds her bliss by focusing her efforts on cultivating fresh produce and plants.

She even confesses a proud affinity for something that most people absolutely abhor – weeding.

“I actually like weeding. I like tending to the plants and bringing them up with some tender loving care,” Smith said. “I always tell people this is my happy place. Some people like to take a boat out on the river or go hunting. This is what we like to do.”

The “we” Smith refers to includes her husband, Mark. Both enjoy gardening and both have been through the Master Gardener program administered by South Dakota State University Extension.

As current president of the Prairie Potters Master Gardeners Club based in Pierre, Smith is an enthusiastic proponent of serving as an ambassador for horticulture education both locally and throughout the state. She and Mark completed the training

and course work required to become Master Gardeners about 10 years ago, although Mark is currently on “inactive” status.

The goal of the program is to turn gardening enthusiasts into expert volunteers who share their research-based knowledge with community members across the state.

Since the program's inception in 1985, more than 400 Master Gardeners have logged nearly 80,000 hours of volunteer service answering questions from the public and hosting community programs.

It's that public interaction that interests Smith. She enjoys attending local farmer markets, plant sales, workshops, school programs and other community events.

“The fun part is getting out among people and helping them solve



Mark Smith repairs a retaining wall in front of his home in Pierre.

Master Gardener Clubs in SD

Club Name	Area
Brookings Area Master Gardeners	Brookings
Coteau Prairie Master Gardeners	Watertown
Custer County Master Gardeners	Custer
Dakota Prairie Master Gardeners	Miller
Fall River Master Gardeners	Hot Springs
Garden Gate Master Gardeners	Winner
Harding County Master Gardeners	Buffalo
Huron Area Master Gardeners	Huron
Minnehaha Co.	Sioux Falls
Missouri Valley Master Gardeners	Yankton
Northern Hills Master Gardeners	Spearfish
Pennington County Master Gardeners	Rapid City
Perkins County Master Gardeners	Bison
Prairie Partners Master Gardeners	Aberdeen
Prairie Potters Master Gardeners	Pierre
South Central Master Gardeners	White River

any problems they're encountering and giving them suggestions on how they can get better results for their efforts," she said. "We love to have conversations with people and we're not afraid to say we don't know something. We can always find out the answers and get back with them."

So, what's the question she gets asked the most? "Hmmm. It's probably, 'Something is wrong with my tomato plants. What should I do?'"

Rhoda Burrows is a horticulture specialist with SDSU Extension and works frequently with Master Gardeners. She said interest in the program has grown since the pandemic struck in March of 2020. While participants weren't allowed to attend in-person events as representatives of the program through most of last year, online teleconferences were held with many new prospects joining in.

"It's just such a fun group to work with," she said. "They're so enthusiastic and they have a deep hunger for knowledge and a heart for helping out each other in their communities. After the pandemic when people were restricting their movements, they discovered that gardening can be a good, wholesome family activity. Gardening is a source of fresh produce and more people are appreciating the benefits of healthy eating."

More information about the Master Gardeners program can be found by visiting www.extension.sdstate.edu. Those interested in becoming part of the program can contact SDSU's Extension Master Gardener Coordinator Aimee House Ladonski at 605-782-3290.

McCrary Gardens is an Inspiration for Horticulture Hobbyists

Gardeners are typically passionate self-starters and don't require much outside motivation. But McCrary Gardens is an ideal place to go for those gardeners looking for an ounce of inspiration over the summer months.

Created in 2012 on the Brookings campus of South Dakota State University, McCrary Gardens features a 25-acre garden and 45-acre arboretum along with a 9,300-square-foot Education and Visitor Center.

While visitation was down in 2020, McCrary Gardens is expecting a busy summer and welcomes gardening enthusiasts to see the ever-changing display of flowers, vegetables, herbs and more.

New to the facility this summer is a Native American medicinal garden area, a "three-sisters" garden with beans, corn and squash, as well as a pollinator garden designed to attract bees and butterflies. Professors and instructors from the Native American studies department collaborated as consultants on the project.

McCrary Gardens is open to visitors on Wednesday through Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

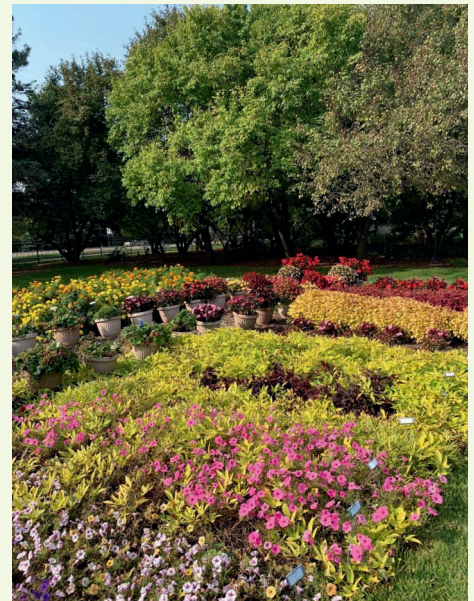
"There is always something new that's growing and blooming, and we have numerous annual beds that are planted each year," said Director Lisa Marotz.

What is expected to be a spectacular summer will culminate in the annual Garden Party held each year on the first Friday in August. While plans are still being finalized, past events have included food vendors, live music, games and free admission for the day.

"Pretty much everything we have is in bloom at that time. We want to invite everyone to come out and see what we have to offer," Marotz said.

McCrary Gardens is a privately-funded \$4.2-million facility that was the vision of founder and SDSU professor S.A. McCrary.

Last August, McCrary Gardens was named as a benefactor of an endowment from the estate of Frank and Mildred Denholm. A gift of more than \$422,000 went to the gardens while an additional gift of the same amount went to The South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum, which is hosting an exhibit entitled, "Electrifying Rural South Dakota," through Sept. 1.





SVE CEO/General Manager Tim McCarthy (far left) and SVE Operation Round Up Trust board member Greg Benda present a check to the Game Plan 4 Hope organization in Hills, Minnesota, for furnishing their Team E Fieldhouse. Representing Game Plan 4 Hope and the Team E Fieldhouse are Trenton Bass, Jeff Bass, Missy Bass and Heather Erickson. (The fieldhouse is named for Ethan Erickson who passed away in October 2019 after a fight with Burkitt Lymphoma/Leukemia).

FUNDING A GAME PLAN

Operation Round Up® Funds Help Hills, Minnesota, Group

Game Plan 4 Hope's Team "E" Fieldhouse of Hope in Hills, Minnesota, got a funding boost thanks in part to a \$5,000 grant from Sioux Valley Energy's Operation Round Up® program. The grant will help the organization renovate the former New Vision building on 3rd Street in Hills to accommodate donated medical equipment for the group, a place for board members to meet and work, a space for support and grief groups to meet, space for volunteers to assemble care packages and more.



Sioux Valley Energy co-op members contribute to ORU by having their electric bill rounded up to the next highest dollar and that money is collected for Operation Round Up. Many Sioux Valley Energy employees also help by deducting a small amount from their paychecks. Learn more about Sioux Valley Energy's Operation Round Up program at <https://www.siouxvalleyenergy.com/my-community/operation-roundup>.

The next application deadline is May 20.

Game Plan 4 Hope started in September 2019 after two Hills, Minnesota, families went through life-altering experiences and sought a way to help others going through similar situations. Trenton Bass was 17 when he was paralyzed in the second game of his senior year of high school football. Aaron and Heather Erickson's son, Ethan, lost his battle with Burkitt Lymphoma/Leukemia in October 2019. He was 12.

The Game Plan 4 Hope's team goals, as stated on its website, are:

It is our desire to provide families suffering life-changing hardships with a Game Plan 4 Hope and comfort during the most difficult times of their lives. Our families witnessed the many ways Trenton and Ethan embraced their new normal with peace, positivity, and perseverance.

Through the darkest hours, there was hope, and Ethan and Trenton never lost faith and continually felt Christ's presence. We are so proud of them and in the many ways they both touched and inspired others. On our journeys, we were recipients of so many wonderful acts of kindness, helping to fulfill our financial, spiritual, and physical needs.

We realize the positive impact that gestures of kindness can have on families in despair. Trenton and Ethan showed us how to shine Christ's light during times of darkness. We want to honor their spirit of hope by providing other families comfort and positivity.

Learn more about Game Plan 4 Hope, as well as Trenton and Ethan's stories, at <https://www.gameplan4hope.org>.



Jeff Bass gives Tim McCarthy and Greg Benda a tour of the space that will become the Team E Fieldhouse.

Safety Artists Recognized

Fourth grade students from across the Sioux Valley Energy service territory submitted approximately 300 safety posters and three winners were selected by members through online voting.

Coy Niemann of Sioux Valley Elementary, Oscar Anderson of West Central Elementary and Fletcher Nutt of Tri-Valley Elementary, won this year's contest. The boys are the sons of Crystal Niemann; Paul Anderson and Nichole Anderson; and Donald Nutt and Amanda Larron.

The contest winners received a \$50 cash prize in addition to having their posters displayed on billboards.

Sioux Valley Energy partnered with Lamar Advertising to construct the billboards, serving as public service announcements for electrical safety awareness. The most important tool in preventing electrical injuries is educating the public about the potential dangers of working and playing around electricity.



"Jump with two feet together away from downed powerlines." was the theme of Coy Niemann's winning entry. The billboard is along U.S. Highway 14 between Volga and Brookings.



Sioux Valley Energy's Amy Voelker and Terry Ebright presented Niemann with his prize.



Oscar Anderson's poster reminds farmers to **"Stay Put! Call 911 and Sioux Valley Energy"** if a tractor runs into power lines.



Fletcher Nutt's poster reminds everyone to **"Call 811 Before You Dig."**



Chester's Avery Schut Named Touchstone Energy® Scholar of the Week

Avery Schut, a student at Chester Area High School, has been chosen as a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 'Scholar of the Week.' Schut was recognized with a cash award by Sioux Valley Energy and was featured on Dakota News Now for her accomplishments. She is the daughter of Pat and Sara Schut of Madison.



Avery Schut
Chester Area High School

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, like Sioux Valley Energy, have joined together with Dakota News Now to recognize the achievements of high school seniors throughout the region. Recipients are highly motivated high school seniors who excel in the classroom and community. This program was founded on the four pillars of Touchstone Energy: Integrity, Accountability, Innovation, and a Commitment to Community.

"Avery is a talented young person who has an extensive list of accomplishments both in and out of the classroom. She is an example of what we need in our future leaders, and we are proud that she was chosen as a Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week," said Tim McCarthy, Sioux Valley Energy General Manager/CEO.

On her nomination form, Chester Area High School Counselor, Lisa Hansen, listed Schut's vast academic and music/arts accomplishments but also described the volunteer activities she has taken part in including peer mentoring, serving community meals, working at church events, and flood clean-up.



A student at the Korkow Rodeo School learns the “lift, charge and stay back” method of saddle bronc riding under the watchful eye of former champion Chad Ferley. Photos by Billy Gibson

Class is in Session

Rodeo School Teaches Youngsters the Basics of the Sport

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Jeff Reis saw that his son was in big trouble, so he quickly hurled himself over the heavy metal railing and sprinted across the rodeo arena toward the bucking chute.

That’s where Casey, a high school senior bull rider and student at the Korkow Rodeo School, was getting set for his final run of the day. But things weren’t proceeding as planned. While Casey was going through his preparations, the agitated bull began climbing up the railing and turning toward the unwelcomed antagonist straddling his back.

Casey was able to get a grip on the top rail of the chute and the spotters eventually pulled him free, but not before his father had gotten halfway across the arena floor.

“Bulls have done this before, but I haven’t seen one get that high or be able to turn the way this one did,” Jeff recalled. “When it spun and belly rolled and started pulling Casey away from the spotters, I panicked because I thought something truly catastrophic was about to happen.”

Thanks to the spotters and handlers and his own quick reflexes as a multi-sport

athlete, Casey escaped the few seconds of terror injury-free. The recalcitrant animal got everyone’s attention and made a big scene, but it did nothing to diminish Casey’s grit and determination. Even his father was a bit surprised at what happened next.

Casey made it clear he wasn’t nearly finished with that bull.

“I couldn’t believe his mentality after that,” Jeff said. “He was shook up, but he went out and got a new spur strap that had broken off, fixed all of his equipment, got his rope back on and rode that same bull.”

Lots of lessons were learned during that dust-up, but then that’s the purpose of the Korkow Rodeo School. Having completed its 36th year in April, the school is one of the oldest and most established of several similar schools operating across the state that offer instruction to hundreds of eager young riders and future champions.

Jim Korkow, owner of the Anchor K Ranch east of Pierre, said the school tends to separate those who are genuinely interested in rodeo from those who “might want to go looking for a set of golf clubs.”



Jeff Willert preps a saddle bronc student for the youngster’s first ride.

Though last year’s school was canceled, dozens of students of various ages and skill levels returned to the Anchor K this time around to learn the basics of saddle bronc, bareback and bull riding, and also ways to stay safe.

Korkow’s son T.J. runs the annual three-day school, which is led by a team of skilled riders and instructors as well as a physical trainer and other highly-experienced support staff. Each year the school attracts dozens of riders from several different states.

Instructor Chad Ferley is a two-time PRCA World Champion saddle bronc rider and five-time NFR qualifier from Oelrichs who has participated in the event

**SD HS Rodeo Assn.
Regional Qualifying
Rodeos:**

June 4-6 - Huron,
Highmore, Buffalo, Wall
June 11-13 - Watertown,
Winner, Dupree, Sturgis

State HS Finals Rodeo:

June 15-19 - Ft. Pierre, SD

National HS Finals Rodeo:

July 18-24 - Lincoln, NE

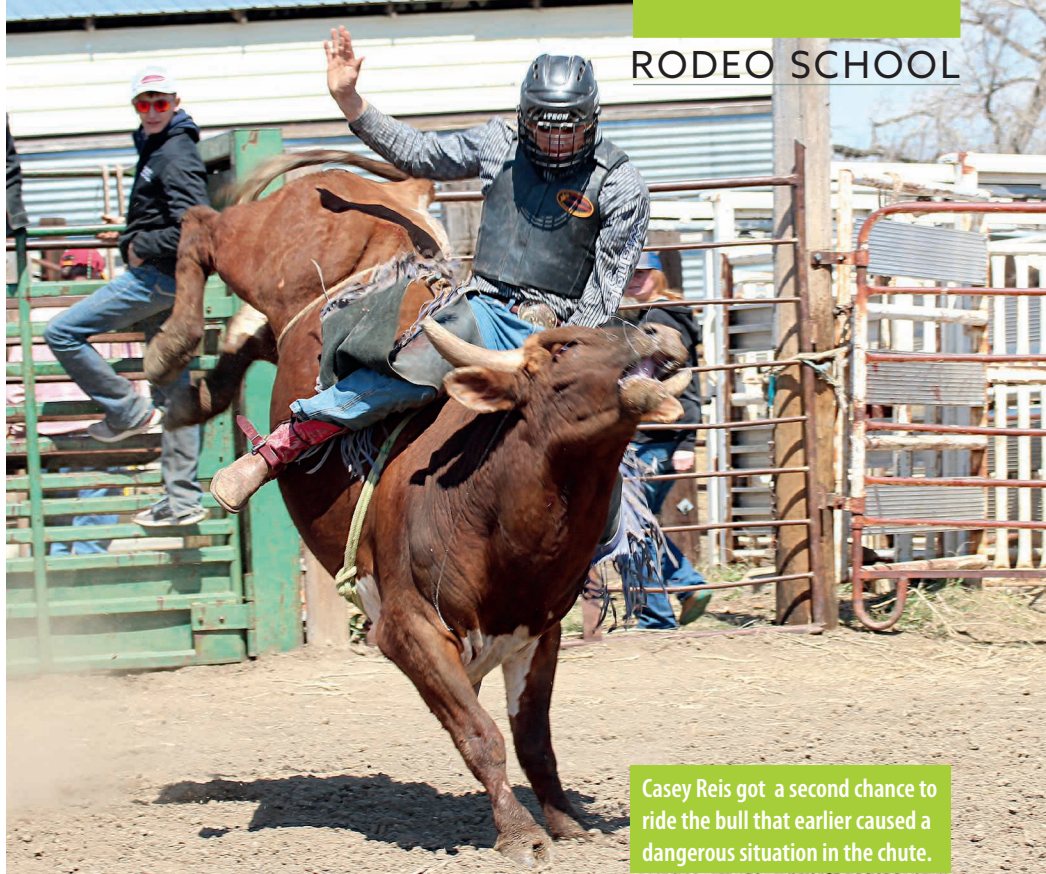
for the past 12 years. Ferley, a member of Black Hills Electric Cooperative in Custer, said students don't leave the school ready for the pro circuit but are there to learn the basics... at least after the initial shock wears off from that maiden voyage that takes the young rider from zero to 90 in a split second.

"After their first ride, they always say it was a whole lot faster than they thought it was going to be," Ferley said. "At first, most of them just black out. We're here to give them the basics, talk to them after each ride and tell them what they did wrong and what they did right, and give them the information they can apply and practice on down the line as they ride more horses."

Fellow instructor Jeff Willert is a PRCA World Champion saddle bronc competitor, five-time NFR qualifier and member of West Central Electric Cooperative. He said he enjoys passing on to youngsters all the tips and tricks that he learned throughout his successful rodeo career.

"With bronc riding, we tell them to lift, charge and stay back," he said. "But things happen so fast, and it's hard for them to pay attention because as soon as that chute opens, they lose their train of thought. You just try to drill things into their head and they eventually get it. It's trial and error. The more you ride, the more you learn."

Ken Korkow said throughout more than three decades of operating the school, one particular student stands out among all the others. An uninitiated 42-year-old gentleman from Alaska came to the ranch



Casey Reis got a second chance to ride the bull that earlier caused a dangerous situation in the chute.

with the intention of checking off an item from his bucket list of things he'd never done before, Korkow recalled. Organizers always make a point to match the stock with the rider's level of experience, so the instructor set up the non-traditional student with a black angus pasture bull.

"He managed to stay on it for longer than I thought he would," Korkow said. "The instructor blew the horn at six seconds when he saw the guy was about to come off, but he blew it early just so he'd think he made it the whole eight seconds. But all the kids who were around got excited for him and went out there and cheered for

him and gave him high-fives. It was quite a moment I'll always remember."

While some express concern about the future of rodeo in the age of youngsters getting more involved in technology, Willert said he doesn't share that concern.

"It can be rewarding from many stand-points," he said. "There are still a lot of kids who don't spend all day playing video games. They see the value of hard work and the farming and ranching lifestyle and they respect the culture. They understand that while some things may be difficult, it's all worth it when you can walk away knowing that you've stood up to the test."



A young rider hangs on just before getting thrown to the ground.

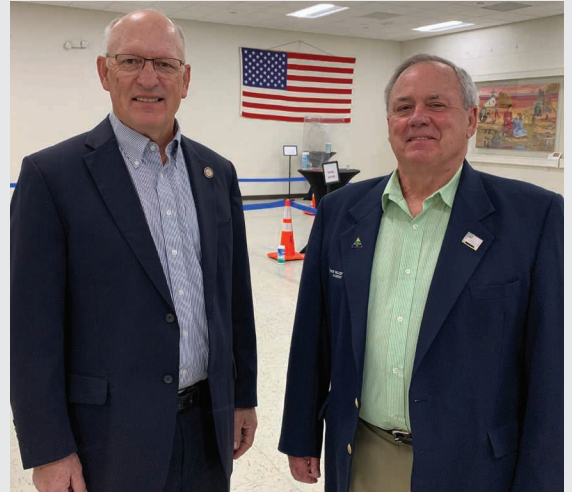
Your Opinion Matters to Us!

Sioux Valley Energy is conducting a member survey project. You could receive the survey via mail or email. If you do not participate online, you may receive a phone call inviting participation by phone. We anticipate that the survey will be distributed mid-May.

Sioux Valley Energy and the survey vendor, Inside Information, will not ask for credit card information or sell or share your private information.

Inside Information will provide survey results which will help us to send co-op updates and other important messages. The more completed survey questionnaires we receive, the more accurate the information will be, so please take the time to answer the short survey.

Please contact us with any questions you may have about the survey project.



Dr. Leslie Heinemann, left, will be replacing Bruce Martinson on the Sioux Valley Energy Board of Directors. Heinemann was elected during the District 3 meeting.

Heinemann to Succeed Martinson on SVE Board

During the District 3 meeting on May 10, Sioux Valley Energy members elected Dr. Leslie Heinemann to succeed Bruce Martinson on the Sioux Valley Energy Board of Directors.

Martinson served as the District 3 Director from 2004 to 2021 and decided not to seek re-election.

"Bruce has made significant contributions to Sioux Valley Energy and we have greatly benefited from Bruce's knowledge, diligence and deep commitment to the mission of the electric cooperative," said SVE Board President Allan Weinacht.

Heinemann, a retired dentist who had a practice at Flandreau and Dell Rapids, served six years in the South Dakota House of Representatives, including a term as the Majority Whip in 2017-2018.

Heinemann and his wife, Libby, live northwest of Flandreau. The couple have four grown children and nine grandchildren.

Heinemann credits his experience as a legislator as instilling an interest in the electric grid process and electric cooperatives.

"I look forward to serving the cooperative members of Moody County and learning more about the electric system," Heinemann said.



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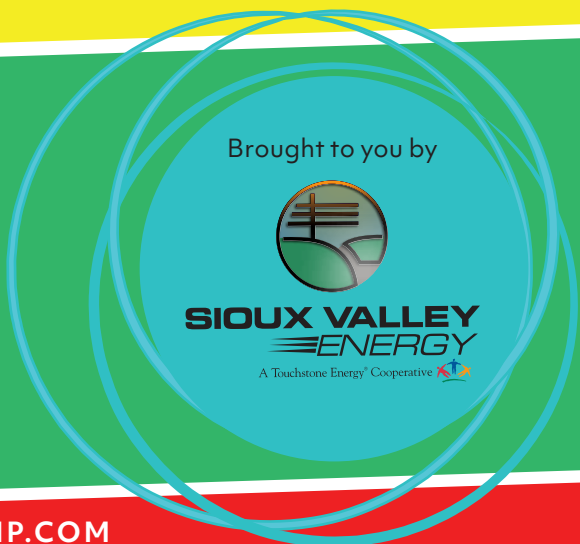
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- Leadership Skills
- Cooperatives
- Personal Strengths
- Communication Skills
- Team Building
- Health & Wellness
- Electrical Safety/CPR
- Networking
- Career Options

TO APPLY:

The 12-month program is open to upcoming juniors and seniors who are ready to commit to fully EmPOWER themselves with fun, positive, open minds. Applications are available from your school counselor or on the Sioux Valley Energy website. Submit via email to Chinelle.Christensen@siouxvalleyenergy.com.



Note: Please make sure to call ahead to verify the event is still being held.

May 21-23

Annual Sound of Silence Tesla Rally, Downtown, Custer, SD
605-673-2244

May 21-23

State Parks Open House and Free Fishing Weekend, All State Parks and Recreation Areas, SD
605-773-3391

May 22

Frühlingsfest and Spring Market, Main Street, Rapid City, SD
605-716-7979

May 22

La Framboise Island Bike Race, Steamboat Park, Pierre, SD
605-224-7054

May 31

PPQG 25th Annual Quilt Show, Harding County REC Center, Buffalo, SD
605-641-5591

June 3

Downtown Hartford Market, Main Avenue, Hartford, SD
605-999-6660

June 3-6

Wheel Jam, South Dakota State Fairgrounds, Huron, SD
605-353-7340

June 4-5

Sioux Falls Senior Games, Sioux Falls Parks and Rec Center, Sioux Falls, SD
605-978-6924

June 4-6

Black Hills Blues Stomp and Swamp Romp, Rush No More RV Resort and Campground, Sturgis, SD
605-347-2916



Czech Days, June 18-19, 2021 (Photo by Travel South Dakota)

June 5-6

Siouxland Renaissance Festival, W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD
866-489-9241

June 6

Miss Prairie Village & Miss Prairie Princess Pageant, Prairie Village, Madison, SD
605-256-3644

June 11-13

Regional Qualifying High School Rodeo, Multiple Locations, SD
605-529-5868

June 15-19

SD State High School Finals Rodeo, Stanley County Fairgrounds, Fort Pierre, SD
605-529-5868

June 17-19

Hartford Jamboree Days, City Park, Hartford, SD
605-941-0809

June 17-20

South Dakota Shakespeare Festival, Prentis Park, Vermillion, SD
605-622-0423

June 18-19

Czech Days, Lidice Street, Tabor, SD
605-463-2478

June 19

Divas Gone Country Concert, Prairie Village, Madison, SD
605-256-3644

June 19

605 Summer Classic Beer and Music Festival, Cherapa Place, Sioux Falls, SD
605-274-1999

June 19

South Dakota Cattlemen's Foundation Prime Time Gala, Denny Sanford PREMIER Center, Sioux Falls, SD
605-945-2333

June 19-20

Aberdeen Arts in the Park, Melgaard Park, Aberdeen, SD
605-226-1557

July 10-11

50th Annual Brookings Summer Arts Festival, West Highway 14 and 1st Avenue, Brookings, SD
605-692-2787

July 23-25

Arlington Days, City-wide, Arlington, SD
605-690-5717

July 29-August 1

Bruce Honey Days, City-wide, Bruce, SD
605-627-5671

July 31

ATV Mud Bog, Arlington, SD
605-690-5717

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.