

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Former co-op general manager Jim Moore is one of the original organizers of the Line Patrol Charity Ride and was the designated lead rider in 2021 as the group embarked on its adventure

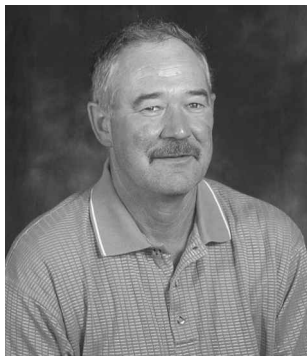
## Line Patrol Charity Ride

**20 years of assisting  
co-op families**  
Pages 8-9

**Food co-ops meet  
community needs**  
Pages 12-13



# In Remembrance



Kenneth VanZee was born on March 5, 1951 to Royce and Phyllis (DeWaard) VanZee in Platte, SD.

He attended New Holland Christian School and graduated from Dakota Christian High School in New Holland. He went to Western Technical College in

Colorado and graduated with an electronics degree.

He married Lanetta VandenBos on September 18, 1970 in New Holland, SD. He started working for Douglas Electric in 1970 and retired in January of 2017 after 46 years of serving his community. He was a member of Grandview Reformed Church in Armour. He enjoyed traveling, driving and enjoying the scenery, reading, learning and attending his children's and grandchildren's sporting events.

Ken died at his home in Armour on Monday, August 15, 2022 at the age of 71.

He is survived by his wife, Lanetta of Armour, SD, 3 children, Christa (Brad) Peterson of Platte, SD and their children, Brady and Alexis, Beth (Jeff) Weiler of Fargo, ND and their children, Morgan (Sam) Olson and daughter, Sawyer and Madison Weiler, and Ryan (Stephanie) VanZee and their boys, Thomas, James and Leo and 2 sisters, Kathleen (Ron) Holwerda of Sioux Center, IA and Wanda (Conley) Schaap of Edgerton, MN.

He was preceded in death by his parents and grandson Landon Weiler.

Ken began his employment with Douglas Electric in March 1971 as a Lineman, in July 1992 he was the Line Superintendent and March 1998 until his retirement in January 2017 was the Manager/Line Superintendent.

Our Thoughts and Prayers are with Lanetta and Family.



Douglas Electric Outages		
Date	Cause	Number of Members Affected
July 5	OCR Open	8
July 7	Planned-pull in new ACSR	2
July 12	Planned-tie in 2 miles of line	3
July 18	Bird between arrestor & bushing on transformer	19
July 21	Tree on line	25
July 24	Birds	2
August 3	Planned - string wire	10
August 4	Planned - tie in new wire	10
August 12	Planned - straighten poles in water	8
August 16	Planned - Change Pole	2

Operating Report		
	July 2022	July 2021
KWH Sold	2,026,327	1,835,837
Revenue	\$262,763.14	\$240,862.26
Cost of Power	\$118,877.49	\$124,227.29
Connected Consumers	825	822
Miles Energized	502.3	502.3
Consumers /Mile	1.64	1.64
Average KWH Used	2,456	2,233
Average Bill	\$318.50	\$293.02

## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### DOUGLAS ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 019-046)

#### Board of Directors:

Ervin Fink - President  
Joel Baier - Vice President  
David Neugebauer - Secretary/Treasurer  
Wayne Lefers  
Larry VanderLey

#### Office Staff:

Jay Spaans - Manager/Line Superintendent  
Phyllis Hrdlicka - Staff Assistant  
Sheila Sanders - Cashier-Receptionist

#### Line Crew:

Troy Ziebart - Line Foreman  
Randy VanZee - Journeyman Lineman  
Brandon Metzinger - Journeyman Lineman  
Adam Nase - Journeyman Lineman

Douglas Electric Cooperative Connections is the monthly publication for the members of Douglas Electric Cooperative, 27913 US Hwy 281, Armour, SD 57313-5726. Families subscribe to Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. The purpose of Douglas Electric Cooperative Connections is to provide reliable, helpful information to electric cooperative members on electric cooperative matters and better rural living. Subscription information: Douglas Electric Cooperative members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Non-member subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. Periodicals Postage Paid at Armour, SD 57313 and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Douglas Electric Cooperative Connections, 27913 US Hwy 281, Armour, SD 57313-5726, Phone (605) 724-2323; Fax (605) 724-2972; e-mail sheila@douglaelec.coop

**In case of a power outage, call  
(605) 724-2323**

#### MISSION STATEMENT

Dedicated to provide safe, low-cost  
reliable electricity to all our Members.



## October is National Co-op Month

From booming suburbs to scenic  
countrysides, electric co-ops play a vital role  
in shaping the local communities they serve.

## WHAT IS A CO-OP?

*with Safety Sadie*



An electric cooperative is a company that provides electricity to its members. Electric co-ops are owned and operated by their members, which keeps them invested and involved in their community. Electric cooperatives often provide service to rural communities.

X S U A T W J V D X B T N U F M R R T P  
M G A R A H X H A S H K D Z V A K E H K  
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Z D S U Y N M F T P A C W K H E E W A A  
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ENERGY  
MEMBER  
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UTILITY  
SERVICE  
ELECTRICITY  
COMMUNITIES  
EDUCATION  
TRAINING  
NETWORK  
RENEWABLES

 Safe  
Electricity.org

# Practice fire safety this fall and winter

When the weather turns colder, you inevitably start hearing more news about house fires. Even a small fire can be devastating.

Most house fires are caused by cooking that gets out of hand. But the second most common cause is materials in the home that catch fire. This often occurs when a heat source, such as a space heater or flying embers from a fireplace, comes into contact with fabric or paper, which then ignites. Once a fire starts, it can move so rapidly that even the best efforts to put it out may fail.

When it comes to old houses, the risks are even higher. The older the wood is that a house is constructed of, the faster it burns. Once flames invade the walls of an old house, they move with frightening speed.

Fire protection in any home is necessary, but even more careful precautions should be taken if your house is older. Here's how to help ensure the safety of your house and everyone in it.

**SMOKE DETECTORS.** These are the first and best line of defense; they allow you to get out of the house at the first whiff of smoke. Six in 10 deaths in house fires occurred in homes that did not have working smoke detectors. Go beyond the federal recommendations and put a smoke detector in every room. Stay on the even safer side by opting for those that detect both smoke and carbon monoxide.

**FIRE EXTINGUISHERS.** Keep small fires from getting out of control with fire extinguishers that are easily accessible. Choose several extinguishers that are light enough for even kids to handle. Make sure they have simple pull mechanisms that don't require much strength. Look for fire extinguishers that work for various parts of the house; for instance, an extinguisher in the kitchen should be able to handle grease fires.

**INSTALL ARC-FAULT INTERRUPTERS.** These ingenious little gadgets detect the electrical arcing that occurs when an old wire buried deep in your wall begins to fail. Speak with an electrician about where best to install interrupters and how your particular ones work.

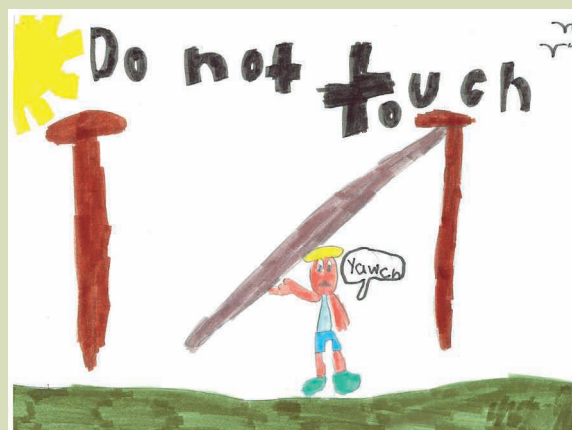
**MAINTAIN IT ALL.** Finally, test everything on a regular basis. Smoke detectors should be tested every month, their batteries replaced every six months, and old smoke detectors replaced every 10 years. Opt to purchase an extra fire extinguisher so your family can take it to the backyard and practice using it.

## ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES REPRESENT AT DAKOTAFEST



Electric cooperative representatives were on hand at the 2022 Dakotafest in Mitchell to share information about energy efficiency and electric-powered lawn implements and to showcase a 2022 Ford Lightning electric pickup truck provided by Vern Eide Ford. Shown left to right are Sheila Gross, Jared Rakness, Jennifer Gross, Patrick Soukup, Kristie Hauck, Brett Snyders and Tara Miller.

To see a video of this event and learn more about how electric cooperatives serve our members, visit Cooperative Connections Plus by scanning the QR code at right.



## Do not touch power lines

Kendyl Gill

Kendyl knows that electricity always seeks a path to the ground and that all power lines should be treated as if they are energized. Kendyl is the child of Brent and Emily Gill, and they are members of Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber Lake.

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.



# PRIMO PASTA!

## PASTA WITH ZUCCHINI AND TOMATOES

### Ingredients:

7 oz. short whole wheat pasta  
like penne fusilli or farfalle  
2 lbs. zucchini, chopped  
1 lb. grape or cherry tomatoes  
cut in halves  
3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil  
6 garlic cloves minced  
1/3 c. Parmesan cheese grated  
1 c. parsley or 1/2 cup basil finely  
chopped  
1 tsp. salt  
Ground black pepper to taste

### METHOD

Cook pasta per package instructions undercooking by 2-3 minutes or until pasta is cooked but firm. While pasta is cooking, preheat large ceramic non-stick skillet on medium-high heat and swirl 1 tbsp. of oil to coat. Add zucchini and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Transfer to a bowl and set aside. Return skillet to stove, swirl 1 tbsp. of oil to coat, add tomatoes and cook for 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute, stirring a few times. Turn off heat and add cooked pasta and zucchini, remaining 1 tbsp. of oil, salt, pepper, cheese and parsley or basil; stir and serve. Adjust seasonings to taste. [ifoodreal.com](http://ifoodreal.com)

## MEXI-CORN LASAGNA

### Ingredients:

1 lb. ground beef, browned and drained  
1 can Mexican corn  
1 can (15 oz.) tomato sauce  
1 c. Pace picante sauce  
1 tbsp. chili powder  
1 1/2 tsp. ground cumin  
16 oz. low-fat cottage cheese  
2 eggs, beaten  
1/2 c. parmesan cheese  
1 tsp. oregano  
1/2 tsp. garlic salt  
12 corn tortillas  
1 c. shredded cheddar cheese

### METHOD

Combine first six ingredients in large skillet. Simmer 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Combine cottage cheese, eggs, parmesan cheese, oregano and garlic salt; mix well. Arrange 6 tortillas on bottom and sides of a lightly greased 13x9x2 baking dish, overlapping as necessary. Top with half the meat mixture. Spoon cheese mixture over meat. Arrange remaining tortillas over cheese. Top with remaining meat mixture. Bake 375 degrees for 20 minutes or until hot and bubbly. Remove from oven and sprinkle with cheddar cheese. Let stand 10 minutes, serve with additional picante sauce. Serves 8.  
**Carol and Rollie Smith, Brandon**

## BAKED SPAGHETTI

### Ingredients:

8 oz. package angel hair pasta  
1/4 c. chopped parsley  
1 lb. ground beef  
1 lb. ground pork  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. garlic salt  
1/2 tsp. black pepper  
1 1/2 tsp. sugar  
1 tbsp. Italian seasonings  
2 c. tomato sauce  
1 c. water  
2 c. canned crushed tomatoes  
2 bay leaves  
2 garlic cloves chopped  
1/2 c. green peppers chopped  
1/2 c. onion chopped  
1 c. shredded cheddar cheese  
1 c. shredded Monterey Jack cheese

### METHOD

Cook pasta and set aside. Add 1 tbsp. olive oil to pasta and stir in to keep it from sticking together. Precook beef and pork together with salt, garlic salt and black pepper. Drain grease off and set aside. In a large pan add parsley, Italian seasonings, tomato sauce and water, garlic, green peppers, onions and crushed tomatoes. Bring sauce to a boil then reduce to a simmer and continue to cook for 30 minutes. Add cooked meat to the sauce. Let set while preparing the baking pan. Grease a 9x13 inch pan. Layer sauce with spaghetti noodles in the pan. Bake 350 degrees for 30 minutes. At 30 minutes pull spaghetti from the oven and mix cheeses together then pour on spaghetti evenly. Bake 5-10 minutes until cheese is melted  
**Jane Cave, Sioux Falls**

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 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

### Q. What cost-effective improvements will make my home comfortable year-round?

A: It isn't pretty, but insulation and air sealing typically provide the biggest bang for your buck when it comes to home energy efficiency improvements. When installed together, they can save you money and make a big difference in comfort and energy use.

#### Insulation Rating

Insulation is rated in R-value. The R stands for resistance to heat transfer. The higher your R-value, the slower the heat transfer, or less wasted energy. There are several different types of insulation, including fiberglass batts, blown fiberglass, cellulose and foam. Each has its own R-value listed on the packaging. To determine the R-value of your existing insulation, multiply the number of inches by the R-value per inch for the type of insulation.

Insulation level recommendations are based on your geographic location. Generally, the colder the climate, the higher the recommended R-value.

#### Where to Insulate

The typical locations for insulation are the attic, walls and floor. If you have a forced-air heating or cooling system, your ductwork should be insulated, too. You want a consistent thermal barrier around your home for maximum efficiency. A bonus to insulation is it can reduce noise from the outside of your home.

Attic insulation minimizes energy waste and can help maintain a more consistent temperature throughout your home. Combined with air sealing, it also can prevent ice dams from forming on your roof in colder climates.

Attics can be insulated using batts or blown-in insulation. Recommend R-values range from R-30 to R-60. If you use your attic for storage, you can build a raised platform with room for insulation underneath. Add insulation and weatherstripping to access doors

or hatches.

Exterior walls and walls separating heated and unheated areas of the home—such as garages or enclosed porches—should be insulated to an R-value ranging from R-13 to R-21, based on your location and wall construction.

Wall insulation can be installed during construction or a remodel. If your home wasn't insulated when it was built, you can have the insulation blown in by a contractor. Blown-in options include cellulose, fiberglass and foam.

Your home should also be insulated between the floor and crawlspace or unheated basement. If your basement is heated, install insulation in the box sills—the area between the foundation floor of the home's main level.

Consider building and insulating the exterior walls in the basement or installing foam insulation on foundation walls. Check your local building code requirements. Recommended R-values for floor insulation range from R-13 to R-30. Also insulate heating and cooling ductwork located in unconditioned spaces to prevent energy waste.

#### Importance of Air Sealing

Think of insulation as a cozy sweater and air sealing as a windbreaker for your home.

You know that cozy sweater is no match for winter winds, so you need an extra layer to stop it from ripping through. The same goes for your home.

Air sealing prevents drafts and air infiltration from outside. It can improve efficiency, comfort and indoor air quality.

Air sealing can be done as a DIY project, but it is challenging to pinpoint and properly seal air leaks. Consider hiring a contractor to complete a blower door test and seal leaks.

Typically, air sealing is done around plumbing and electrical penetrations with spray foam or caulk. If using spray foam around gas appliances, temporarily turn off pilot lights. Spray foam is extremely flammable.

Sheet metal and high-temperature heat-resistant caulk should be used to seal gaps between framing, chimneys and metal flues.



**Miranda Boutelle**  
Efficiency Services  
Group



## Headley, three others named to 2022 SDAC Hall of Fame

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Cooperative mergers, storm restoration and pitched political battles over renewable power and annexation... Jim Headley has never backed down in the face of challenges during his 25 years of service on the Central Electric Board of Directors.

Headley was recently inducted into the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives Hall of Fame. He was honored at the annual banquet in Oacoma along with Stan Hanson, Deino Sather and Bryan Roth.

"It's a real privilege to be able to recognize these outstanding individuals who have done so much during their stellar careers to promote the cooperative business model and the many ways that model has benefited citizens all across the state for decades," said Brenda Forman, executive director of the association.

Headley is a farmer and rancher from White Lake who recently retired from the Central Electric Board after 25 years. He was on the board when Tri-County Electric and InterCounty Electric

merged in 2000 and recalls wanting to make sure the right steps were taken so that the best interests of the members were taken into account.

He took a leadership role in completing the merger and later helped guide the co-op through issues such as emerging technology, rising cost pressures, cybersecurity and pitched political battles like the annexation of electric cooperative service territories and the adoption of renewable power.

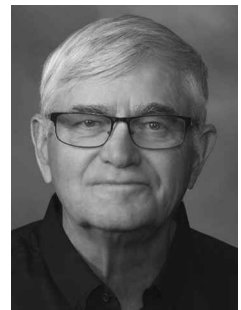
In fact, Headley figured prominently in the creation of Prairie Winds, a 135,000-acre wind farm project near White Lake that has 108 turbines and the capacity to generate 162 megawatts of electricity each year. It was the first community-owned wind investment partnership with more than 600 South Dakota investors and is now owned by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

For his leadership, Headley received Basin Electric's "Cooperative Spirit Award" in 2011.

One accolade that holds special meaning for Headley was presented last year at the Buffalo County District Meeting when he received a star quilt from fellow Central Electric Director

Donita Loudner and Crow Creek Sioux Tribal Chairman Peter Lengkeek. The quilt was in recognition of his many years of dedicated service to the Tribe as he has made an effort to preserve many unique Native American artifacts found in his pastures.

Headley also serves on the Patten Township Board and has been active in a number of organizations including the White Lake School Board, Aurora County Zoning Board, GF&P Regional Advisory Board and United Methodist Church Board. He is currently a member of Farmers Union, Farm Bureau, Dakota Rural Action and the Jerauld County Game and Fish Club.



Jim Headley

Jim and Cristine Headley have had four children. Their son Jay lost his life in a boating accident on Lake Poinsett in 2002 at the age of 30. Jay's children, Jack and Sydney, later moved to Colorado with their mother, and Jack passed away in 2016. For nearly 20 years, Headley has donated a portion of his board compensation to fund the Jay Headley Memorial Scholarship for dependents of Central Electric members.





Roger Lawien and his wife, Kris, are regular participants in the Line Patrol Charity Ride. *Photos by Brad Letcher*

## Line Patrol Charity Ride marks 20 years of serving those in need

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

When Roger Lawien encountered some unexpected health problems, his fear and anxiety were assuaged by the assurance that he had several key factors in his favor.

He knew he could rely on his faith. He knew he could rely on his family. And he knew he could rely on his fellow cooperative employees across the state.

Lawien, member services manager at Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber Lake, is a part-time volunteer and full-time advocate of Line Patrol, Inc., a charitable organization that exists to provide financial relief for South Dakota electric cooperative employees and their families in times of need.

Since the program was launched in 2003, hundreds of co-op employees have contributed to the emergency response fund by staging golf tournaments, bowling tournaments, auctions, trap shoots, 5K runs, raffles,

bake sales and more. One of the most popular and highly anticipated events is the annual Line Patrol Charity Ride held each September.

This year's 20th annual event took place on Sept. 10 and was co-hosted by Rushmore Electric, Butte Electric and Grand Electric. More than 200 riders and other participants gathered in Whitewood at the Iron Horse Inn and spent the afternoon motoring through the picturesque northern Black Hills.

Lawien was there perched aboard his prized Indian Roadmaster, soaking in the experience with his co-op friends and feeling grateful to have a dependable network of support that can be counted on not only to help rebuild lines and poles after a storm but also render aid in a personal crisis situation.

"Having been a recipient of funds from this program, it means a lot to be among these fellow co-op employees who are all so eager and willing to demonstrate their kindness and sincerity by showing up every year to contribute

Estimated amount of Line Patrol funds

**\$580,000**

donated to electric co-op employees

to a worthy cause like this," Lawien said. "It's that same cooperative spirit that bonds us all together. It's the can-do attitude they bring to their jobs every day in service to their members and their ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life in their communities. They are salt-of-the-earth people who care deeply for one another and the people around them."

Lawien said more than 240 families have received assistance through the fund totaling roughly \$580,000. He is one of three directors of the program along with Jessie Tucker (West Central Electric) and Tim Neises (Central Electric).

Jerry Swartz was one of the first





Jerry Swartz, pictured above-left, was the first recipient of Line Patrol funds after he was injured in 2004.

recipients of Line Patrol funds after he was involved in a workplace accident. He expressed what the charitable organization has meant to him and his family.

“Back in 2004, I had an extreme accident at work. I spent six months in recovery and this foundation gave us a check for \$500 to help us out. It may not seem like much money, but at the time it meant everything to me and my family. It’s amazing. God bless this fund and the people who donate to it and keep it running,” Swartz said.

One of the original organizers of the Charity Ride is former Northern Electric General Manager Jim Moore. Each year, as is the custom, Moore leads the cavalcade of dozens of motorcycles

away from the gathering site and along the chosen route.

“The ride has just gotten bigger and better over the years,” Moore said. “The money goes to help co-op employees in need. One person had a tornado damage their home, another lineman from Yankton was killed in Afghanistan and we set up a scholarship fund for his three children. I always tell my wife, Janice, this is the one thing I look forward to every year and truly love because we’re helping employees and their families get back on their feet.”

Laine Mitchell, communications director at Butte Electric, said helping to host the Charity Ride was an honor for the cooperative and something the organization was happy to support.

“Having many of our own employees benefit from the Line Patrol fund over the years, we are thrilled to co-host this year’s event and help raise money for other cooperative families across South Dakota. The ride is just one of the many ways the foundation bonds our cooperatives together and has touched countless lives in the last 20 years,” Mitchell said.

The weekend began with a social on Friday evening and concluded the following night with a buffet dinner and charity auction.

Sponsors for this year’s ride were Irby, Altec, RESCO, Dakota Supply Group, Border States Electric, WESCO and The Okonite Company.



Hundreds of riders from across the state participate in the annual Line Patrol Charity Ride each year. The program exists to provide financial support for electric cooperative employees and their families in times of need.

## STAY SAFE OUT ON THE HUNT

Take precautions to stay safe on your next hunting expedition.

- Know the signs of a heart attack or other life-threatening condition.
- Have a way to get in touch with the outside world.
- Always implement firearm safety techniques.
- Do not lean a tree stand against a utility pole.
- Do not fire at power lines, insulators or conductor cans.
- Carry a first aid kit.
- Check the weather in advance and be prepared.
- Check tree stands regularly for stability.
- Survey the area for potential electrical hazards.
- Be visible: Wear blaze orange.

Learn more at: [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org)

IN CASE OF OUTAGE, CALL 605-724-2323	
1 <sup>ST</sup>	Look at your main meter.
2 <sup>ND</sup>	If the display is NOT lit up, you do not have power and should call Douglas Electric. If your main meter display is ON, you should have power.
3 <sup>RD</sup>	If the display is ON, you can check your breakers below the meter or the breakers in your house.
4 <sup>TH</sup>	When reporting outages, please give name of member and location number to assist with prompt response. If you don't get an answer at 605-724-2323, call: Troy Ziebart, 933-2249, Adam Nase, 770-0630, Brandon Metzinger, 770-6469, Randy VanZee, 770-2565 or Jay Spaans, 530-3683

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

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August 9 and 10, members from Douglas Electric and Charles Mix Electric gathered together for the Basin Electric Bus Tour to North Dakota.

The first stop was to tour Prairie Winds Generation near Crow Lake, we continued onto Pierre and toured the Oahe Dam, we then stopped along the way to see the Cathedral on the Prairie in Hoven, S.D.

Wednesday morning the Freedom Coal Mine and Antelope Valley Station north of Beulah, N.D., were toured. These two facilities are where coal is mined from the earth, our tour group learned how their power is produced, transmitted and delivered to their homes and farms.

Douglas Electric Members attending were: Evan and Kathy Baas, Eldon and Jane Baier, Joel and Nancy Bialas, Donald Bitterman, Carl and Bev Buenning, Percy and Carol Dykshorn, Ewald and Jean Fink, Dwight and Sherry Gerlach, Tom Heber, Harley and Cindy Hubers, Dennis and Jackie Niewenhuis, Larry VanZee, Denny and Judy Ziebart, Elroy Zomer and Manager Jay and Angela Spaans.



# CO-OPS OFFER HEALTHY CHOICES

The Sioux Falls Food Co-op has persevered for 50 years by adhering to the co-op model. *Photo by Sioux Falls Food Co-op*

## Food co-ops meet the need for nutritious, healthy choices

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Back in the 1930s, rural community leaders all across the country began traveling from farm to farm knocking on doors and asking for \$5 as seed money to build out a network of electric distribution systems.

It was not an insignificant sum to solicit from many farmers and ranchers contending with substandard soil conditions, the vagaries of weather patterns and fairly primitive mechanization compared to today's operations.

But in exchange for that investment, those same community leaders turned the promise of rural power into a reality and presently there are more than 750 locally-owned electric cooperatives serving roughly 40 million Americans.

Bess Pallares keeps that electric co-op success story close to mind as she embarks on establishing a grocery store in Brookings County using the

cooperative business model as her template.

Pallares is president of the Dakota Community Market board of directors, whose members have been working since 2019 to bring a food cooperative to the Brookings area. She reports that the endeavor hasn't been a cake walk, but she continues to be inspired by the way like-minded electric co-op leaders back in the '30s managed to gain popular support for locally-owned, independent entities created to provide a valuable service.

The board's market analysis indicates that a "low food access zone" exists within Brookings County when it comes to full-service retail grocery stores with just two providers in a 50-mile radius.

"On average, there are typically 2.84 grocery stores per 10,000 population. We have .68 in this area," she said. "People keep saying they're sick of having to drive miles and miles to get to a full-service grocery store that stocks



Bess Pallares

what they want and need for their families."

To generate start-up capital, the board is offering memberships at \$150, a little more than a week's worth of groceries for many families. Meanwhile, Pallares and her board members are scouring the landscape for additional financing sources and federal grant opportunities with plans to have a retail store up and running as soon as possible.

She has had discussions with East River Electric in Madison about accessing available funds through the Rural Electric Economic Development Fund (REED). The REED program





Caselli's Garden is among a growing list of fresh food suppliers for Dakota Community Market. *Photo by Caselli's Garden*

is designed to provide financing to help build the economic base of rural communities within East River Electric's regional service area. Hundreds of organizations, businesses, medical facilities, housing projects and many more have received financial support through the REED program over the past 20 years.

**Hundreds of organizations, businesses, medical facilities, housing projects and many more have received financial support through the REED program over the past 20 years.**

Pallares said she sometimes feels exactly like those early electric cooperative pioneers, attempting to pave the way for providing a reliable source of quality, low-cost food in the Brookings area. She has become active in the Billie Sutton Leadership Institute Rural POWER program to help tap into the regional business community with the goal of developing an optimum financial strategy and making connections with future suppliers and other partners.

"The Institute opens up a giant network across the state where you can meet a lot of people doing the same kinds of things you're doing, and they've

got great ideas and big goals and a fearless entrepreneurial spirit. One of our board members has gone through the class and I'm doing it now. It's been transformational," she said.

The Dakota Community Market is not the only fearless group striving to launch a locally-owned and locally-controlled food cooperative. The Coteau Community Co-op is also trying to establish a food co-op to serve the Watertown area. Both have plenty of successful models and supporters to help guide and inspire their efforts.

The National Food Co-op Startup Network and the National Co-op Grocers based in Minneapolis are both available to provide resources and expertise. Additionally, there are a few successful stores already operating in South Dakota, including Natural Abundance in Aberdeen, Breadroot Natural Food Co-op based in Rapid City and the Sioux Falls Food Co-op.

Patrick Sayler is general manager of the Sioux Falls Food Co-op on West 18th Street, an operation that has been going strong for the past 50 years through several relocations, growing competition and even a fire. Sayler sees food co-ops across the region as sharing the same common goals and working together to accomplish those goals.

"We tend to put a different twist on things, but in the end we all want the families we serve to have a better way of

accessing the food they eat to maintain good health and a healthy lifestyle," said Sayler, who used to frequent the store as a teen and replaced long-time manager Molly Langley in 2016. "It's always encouraging to see different leaders working hard to do what we've been able to do. It takes a lot of effort and it takes tireless visionaries to stay focused and committed to achieving what you want to accomplish together."

In meeting its commitment to improve the quality of life in the community, the co-op has a program called Big Change, where shoppers are invited to round up their expenditures to the next whole dollar amount. The difference is added to a fund that goes to support local charities such as the Teddy Bear Den, Mobile Pantry of Sioux Falls, Bishop Dudley Hospitality House, SD Voices for Peace and many more. The co-op even has a space available for public meetings and workshops.

The store recently celebrated an expansion and re-opening, and Sayler said he's optimistic about the future while keeping an eye on industry trends.

"We're growing. There's a lot of competition, but we've got a great location, great employees and a great product," he said. "The co-op model is alive and well. We have members who support us and are committed to our mission of providing a source of healthy, affordable good choices."



Black Hills State University is one of four higher ed institutions to adopt the Build Your Base with Beef program. *Photo by BHSU Athletics*

## Beef is what's for lunch in many local school district cafeterias

**Billy Gibson**

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Beef. It may be what's for dinner, but now it's what's for lunch in many school cafeterias across the state.

In January of 2019, the Wall School District launched a program called "Beef to School" in an effort to add locally-raised beef to the weekly lunch menu and provide protein-rich meals to meet the nutritional needs of the students. At the time, it was billed as the first program of its kind in South Dakota.

The pandemic threatened to scuttle the initiative before it had the chance to gain momentum, but school district leaders, parents and supporters stuck to their mission and today the program has spread to nearly 20 local school districts.

Wall Meat Processing located just north of town is at the center of the action, identifying and working with local ranchers to deliver beef products for hungry students.

Inflation and rising market prices have also presented challenges, but Food Services Director Lynn Dunker stresses that community support has been key to success.

"The price of groceries and the price of everything just keeps going up," Dunker said, "but we've had individuals donate monetary funds out of their own pockets, and Wall Meat Processing is doing what they can to help us and to get other processors involved. We have a very supportive community and they've really been backing this program because they know how important it is that children get good nutrition."

In fact, it was local rancher and concerned citizen Josh Geigle who brought the Beef to School idea to the district leaders after learning about a similar program in Nebraska.

Dunker said the program is part of a popular farm-to-school model that emphasizes locally-grown fresh foods that are generally healthier for young students and their cognitive, behavioral

and physical development.

Besides benefiting from quality nutrition, students also have the opportunity to learn more about where their food comes from and the importance of ranching and farming to the overall success of the community.

"Some maybe don't even realize where beef comes from in the first place," said Wall School District Superintendent Dan Baldwin. "And now when they found out it's their dad, their uncle, a family member, it's actually someone from their ranch, I think that's a really neat thing."

### **BUILD YOUR BASE WITH BEEF**

Another protein promoting program reaching both high school and college students is called Build Your Base with Beef and is specifically directed at athletes who rely on good nutrition to perform at their maximum level.

The South Dakota Beef Industry Council, Sanford Health and the Sanford Sports Science Institute have teamed up to develop a comprehensive tool kit for student-athletes that includes ready-to-use educational materials that help students and their



## AFTER WORK BEEF POT ROAST

### Ingredients:

- 1 beef Bottom Round Rump Roast (3 to 3-1/2 lbs.)
- 1 envelope (0.7 z.) Italian dressing mix
- 2 large onions, each cut into 8 wedges
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 red bell peppers, cut into 1-1/2 inch pieces
- 1/2 cup beef broth
- 2 zucchini, cut into 1/4-inch thick slices
- 2-1/2 tbsp. cornstarch dissolved in 2 tbsp. water

### Directions

Press dressing mix evenly onto all surfaces of beef roast. Place onions and garlic in 4-1/2 to 5-1/2-quart slow cooker; top with roast. Add bell peppers and broth. Cover and cook on high 5 hours or low 8 hours. Add zucchini. Continue cooking, covered, 30 minutes or until pot roast is fork-tender. Remove roast and vegetables. Strain cooking liquid; skim fat. Combine 2 cups cooking liquid and cornstarch mixture in medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly; cook and stir 1 minute or until thickened. Carve roast into slices; season with salt and pepper, as desired. Serve with vegetables and gravy.

families adopt more healthy lifestyle choices, practices and habits.

Build Your Base has been endorsed by the National Scholastic Athletics Foundation (NSAF) and recently expanded its reach by appearing at the 2022 Nike Indoor Nationals in New York City last spring. Jack Links serves as the official snack sponsor of the program.

Chris Nilsen, a pole vault record-holder, Olympic silver medalist and former University of South Dakota student, has endorsed the program along with other prominent Olympic athletes such as hammer thrower Deanna Price and shot putter Payton Otterdahl.

“Build Your Base prepped me so well, and without this nutritional approach I wouldn’t be in such great shape. Eating well is such a big part of competing well, and they absolutely do their part,” Nilsen said.

Along with four colleges and universities, more than 25 South Dakota high schools have adopted Build Your Base and integrated it into their athletic departments and lesson plans.

Athletes learn how to determine the proper amounts of beef protein to consume for optimal effect in the maintaining, building and repairing of muscle.



## Co-op leaders visit Southwest Power Pool facilities in Arkansas

A contingent of more than 35 electric cooperative leaders from throughout South Dakota and western Minnesota recently visited the facilities of the Southwest Power Pool based in Little Rock, Ark.

The Southwest Power Pool (SPP) is the Regional Transmission Organization (RTO) responsible for managing the electric grid and wholesale power market throughout a 13-state region that spans from the Canadian border to northern Texas.

While RTOs seldom attract much public attention, the polar vortex that swept across the country in the winter of 2021 placed grid operators closer to the spotlight. The roles and responsibilities of RTOs have also come to the fore with concerns over extreme weather events, changing market forces, aging infrastructure, grid congestion, the emergence of renewable power sources and other issues.

The tour was organized by Codington-Clark Electric General Manager Dave Eide. He said he initiated the event because he believed electric cooperatives that transmit and distribute power within the SPP’s footprint would benefit from engaging in face-to-face interactions with those responsible for moving electricity across the grid.

“This was a very eye-opening visit, as we were able to see first-hand how the Southwest Power Pool operates,” Eide said. “Coordination is key, and having personal interaction with the professionals at SPP helps in preparation for the next storm event.”

Eide explained that in the real-time generation, transmission and delivery of electricity, supply and demand must balance out to provide 24-hour continuous service that is safe, efficient and affordable for consumers. When situations develop that threaten to throw the system out of equilibrium, RTOs work in collaboration with utilities throughout the service area to keep the network stable.

The process includes communicating with those entities under the RTO’s umbrella to take decisive measures to modulate either the supply or the demand.



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.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

**SEPT. 29-OCT. 1**  
**Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup & Arts Festival**  
 Custer, SD  
 605-255-4515

**SEPT. 30-OCT. 1**  
**Oktoberfest**  
 Citywide, Deadwood, SD  
 605-578-1876

**SEPT. 30-OCT. 2**  
**SiouxperCon**  
 1201 N West Ave.  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**OCT. 1**  
**Prairie Village Hobo Marlin Pumpkin Train**  
 45205 SD Highway 34  
 Madison, SD  
 605-256-3644

**OCT. 1-2**  
**Magic Needlers Quilt Festival**  
 Codington County Extension Complex, Watertown, SD  
 605-881-3273

**OCT. 7**  
**The Pumpkin Patch**  
 Rapid Valley United Methodist Church, Rapid City, SD  
 605-393-1526

**OCT. 7-9**  
**Great Scarecrow Festival**  
 Campbell Park  
 Huron, SD  
 605-353-8530

**OCT. 7-9**  
**Black Hills Powwow**  
 444 Mt. Rushmore Road  
 Rapid City, SD  
 605 341-0925

**OCT. 7-8**  
**Holman Acres Pumpkin Fest & Vender Show**  
 Philip, SD  
 605-441-1060

**OCT. 8**  
**Fall Festival**  
 Fairburn United Methodist Church, Fairburn, SD  
 605-255-4329

**OCT. 8-9**  
**Crazy Horse Marathon & Races**  
 Crazy Horse Memorial  
 12151 Avenue Of The Chiefs  
 605-390-6137

**OCT. 15**  
**Fall Festival**  
 18473 US Hwy 83, Onida, SD

**OCT. 22**  
**Ladies Day**  
 The Crossing Bar, Mina, SD  
 605-390-2939

**OCT. 28-30**  
**ZooBoo**  
 Great Plains Zoo  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-367-7003

**NOV. 3-5**  
**Yankton's Harvest Halloween**  
 Downtown, Yankton, SD  
[harvesthalloween.com](http://harvesthalloween.com)

**NOV. 3-5**  
**Huron Ringneck Festival & Bird Dog Challenge**  
 100 4th Street SW, Huron, SD  
 605-352-0000

**NOV. 5-20**  
**Rustic Designs & More Christmas Show**  
 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily  
 Ethan, SD  
 605-770-2411

**NOV. 11-13**  
**Christmas at the Barn**  
 Front Porch 605, Groton, SD  
 605-216-4202

**NOV. 12**  
**Black Hills Meat Festival**  
 Black Hills Harley Davidson  
 2820 Harley Dr., Rapid City, SD  
 605-390-7917

**NOV. 18-20**  
**Deadwood's Big Whiskey Festival**  
 Deadwood, SD  
 605-578-1876

**DEC. 2-3**  
**Christmas in the Hills**  
 Mueller Center, Hot Springs, SD  
 605-745-4140

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