



## **Energy** Efficiency Tip of the Month

The location of your thermostat can impact your HVAC system's ability to maintain an ideal indoor temperature. For maximum accuracy, thermostats should be placed in the center of the home, away from air vents, plumbing pipes and exterior doors. Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your thermostat, which can cause the HVAC to run longer than necessary. Avoid installing thermostats in rooms that tend to feel warmer or colder than the rest of the home. Do not place furniture in front of the thermostat, which can block air flow and result in inaccurate readings.



Douglas Electric Outages		
Date	Cause	Number of Members Affected
March 15	Grain Trailer Boom tore down neutrals	34
March 16	Bad Main Breaker	1
March 25	Consumer's pole broke	1
March 28	URD Fault	44

Operating Report		
	Feb. 2023	Feb. 2022
KWH Sold	2,550,555	2,638,972
Revenue	\$291,074.72	\$298,032.03
Cost of Power	\$158,644.44	\$162,195.30
Connected Consumers	824	830
Miles Energized	501.3	502.3
Consumers /Mile	1.64	1.65
Average KWH Used	3,095	3,179
Average Bill	\$353.25	\$359.07



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CONNECTIONS

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(USPS No. 019-046)

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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@douglaselec.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.

## **Cell Phone Boosters**



**Jay Spaans** 

Manager/Line Supt.

Is winter over? By the time you are reading this I sure hope it is. Honestly, I thought it was over a few weeks ago, but mother nature is still reminding us that she is in charge. We live in South Dakota because we are a hearty bunch, but I am ready for spring and summer!

I wanted to write about cell phone boosters or extenders that you may have in your house or plan to purchase to make your coverage better in your homes. Our electric meters run on a Verizon cellular

signal and depending on what cell phone booster or extender you purchase it can cause our signal to be

blocked. This can make it difficult for Douglas Electric when we are trying to receive our monthly meter readings. If you currently have a cell phone booster or extender that is ok, and we may have already contacted you and discussed this. If you have poor cell service and are thinking about buying a cell phone extender, please call the office first so we can discuss the best cell phone booster or extender that will work for you and not affect our meter communication. If you are on a Verizon cell phone plan and have poor coverage currently, I know that the Verizon SLSBU103 extender will work for you and not affect our meter communications.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the office, and we will try and answer any questions you may have.

Thanks Jay Spaans



# **Workplace Safety: Avoid Common Electrical Hazards**

Contact with or exposure to electricity is one of the leading causes of workplace fatalities. Follow these tips to avoid electrical injury:

### Overhead Power Line Contact

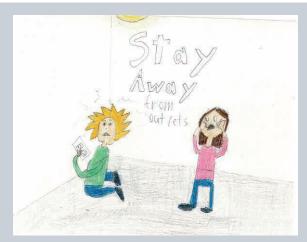
- 46% of all electrical fatalities are caused by contact with overhead power lines
- 57% of overhead power line fatalities were in non-electrical occupations
- Always assume all lines are live and dangerous
- Always look up; be aware of overhead power lines
- Keep yourself and equipment at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines
- Do not touch anything that is in contact with overhead power lines
- Carry equipment, including ladders, horizontally to avoid contact with power lines
- Stay at least 35 feet away from downed lines

### **Accidental Contact with Energized Conductors or Parts**

- 45% of all electrical fatalities were caused by working on or near energized conductors or parts
- 74% of these fatalities were in electrical occupations
- Always test for voltage before you perform work. Be sure to also test the area around the equipment you are working on to avoid accidental contact with energized equipment
- Always perform a site and risk assessment before conducting work. Hazards exist on and near the equipment your are working on
- When possible, turn off power before conducting
- Follow proper lockout / tagout procedures
- Avoid complacency. Every job is different, make sure you follow the hierarchy of controls and other electrical safety work practices on every job

### **Electrical Safety in the Workplace**

- 69% of all electrical fatalities involved non-electrical occupations
- Know when to say when. If you feel unsafe performing a job, say something
- Be aware of potential electrical hazards in the workplace. Avoid electrical rooms and other potentially hazardous areas
- All electrical work should be completed by qualified workers with proper training
- GFCI protection should be installed where electricity and water may come in contact
- Five sources accounted for 92% of all electrical fatalities
  - Overhead power lines
  - Unexpected contact with electricity
  - Working on energized parts
  - Ground faults
  - Damaged wiring



### **Power Line Safety**

### Serena Dekrey, age 9

Serena Dekrey, age 9, gives wise advice to readers on electrical safety. She cautions us to be careful around power outlets. Serena is the daughter of Don and Cassandra Dekrey, members of Sioux Valley Energy based in Colman, 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.



1 tsp. salt

1/2 tsp. pepper

### **METHOD**

Mix flour, salt, pepper, and roll pieces of pheasant in the mixture. Brown in bacon grease. In separate pan, mix butter, milk, and 6 T flour. Stir and bring to a boil. Pour over the pheasant that had been put in a baking dish with bacon laid over it. Bake until tender.

**Gail Klipfel** Ellendale, N.D.

### **METHOD**

Preheat oven to 400°F. Brown meat in large skillet on medium-high heat. Drain fat. Stir in seasoning mix, beans, tomato sauce and corn. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low; simmer 5 minutes. Spoon into 2-quart baking dish. Sprinkle with cheese and tortilla chips. Bake 5 to 10 minutes or until cheese is melted. Serve with assorted toppings, if desired.

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bowl with wire whisk until well blended. Slow pour over chicken and rice. Cover with foil. Bake 45 minutes. Remove foil. Stir in broccoli. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake, uncovered, 15 minutes longer or until rice has absorbed all the liquid and broccoli is tender.

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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 2023. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

# Necessary Steps for Solar Commissioning

**Q:** I'm interested in adding solar panels to my house. What steps do I need to take?

A: Getting a solar photovoltaic system installed and operational on your house or property involves working with several parties to ensure a safe and functional system. You need to work with your electric utility, local building department and a solar contractor.

Here are the solar commissioning steps you need to

### Do Your Research

If you are considering a solar PV installation, I recommend starting with research. The cost of a residential solar photovoltaic system varies based on your location, the type of components used and the size of the system. With average costs ranging from \$16,000 to \$36,000, installing a solar system is a significant investment for most homeowners.

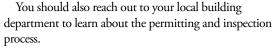
In my experience, people decide to install solar panels for financial benefit, environmental impact or a combination of the two.

The financial benefit of generating your own electricity is dependent on your energy use, the cost of the system, electric rates, and the specific rules and regulations for your state and electric utility.

Your electric utility can help you understand electric bill rate structures. Many states offer net metering, a billing mechanism that gives the owner credit for any extra electricity the system produces and supplies back to

the power grid. If your utility offers net metering, ask about being compensated for excess power generated by your solar PV system.

The environmental benefit of installing a solar system is based on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. This benefit is dependent on the type of electricity generation that powers your home. You can check with your utility to learn about its energy sources. This information provides you a better understanding of the type of power your PV system will offset.



### **Solar Proposals**

To find out potential costs and estimated energy production, you need a proposal from a solar contractor. I recommend getting two or three proposals from different contractors to compare system design and cost. You can also request a reference from a previous customer in your area.

Solar contractors work in multiple utility service territories and may not be familiar with the requirements in your state or at your electric utility. I always recommend reaching out to your electric utility before signing a solar installation contract. You want to understand your monthly electric bill costs, as well as the monthly solar system costs, after installing solar.

### Interconnection Agreement

If you commit to a home solar installation, you will sign an interconnection agreement with your electric utility. This contract between you and your utility stipulates the terms of connecting a distributed generation system, such as a solar PV system.

### Permits and Inspections

You or your contractor will work with the local building department for the necessary permitting prior to installation. Once the system is installed, you likely will need final inspections from the building department and the electric utility. Your utility will grant permission to operate prior to energizing your system. Don't assume your local building department will communicate with your electric utility. In my experience, this doesn't always happen.

Because the solar installation process involves multiple parties, preapproval and post inspections, it is important to check with your local utility and building department before committing to a solar PV installation.



Knowing the steps to solar commissioning can take the stress out of your installation.



Miranda Boutelle **Efficiency Services** Group



## **Escape Rooms Gaining Popularity for Group Fun**

Jocelyn Johnson

jocelyn.johnson@sdrea.coop

Conquering the riddle draws groups to the growing popularity of escape rooms. This is a relatively new attraction in South Dakota for many merry groups looking for an afternoon of fun.

An escape room is nothing more than a riddle room. It challenges its participants to get out - if they can.

Across the state, there are 10 businesses that offer this activity for fun. Black Hills Escape Rooms, located in downtown Rapid City, is one that opened in 2016. They accommodate five escape rooms, each with a distinctive scenario, entertaining guests with a storyline full of unique hints. The story of each room varies along with the difficulty level.

Ryan Comer, manager of Black Hills Escape Rooms, said the activity attracts groups looking to celebrate birthdays, family get-togethers, bachelorette parties and more. Businesses also rent out the rooms for employee team-building exercises

or holiday parties. Comer stated summer is the busy season for these groups, but Christmas is also busy with people looking to conquer the holiday themed escape

"People get addicted to these rooms," said Comer. "It's all about how adventurous you are and who's in your group."

Yet, despite the extra precautions and

supportive group effort, a few still get anxious about being trapped.

"The main fear that some people feel when getting into one of these escape rooms is claustrophobia, which might detour some people from even wanting to try it," said Comer. "But here, we always leave one door open for them to leave at any time. At other places, you might get locked in until you solve the puzzle or the time ends."

Each group is given one competitive hour to escape but is offered two hours to solve the riddle in every room. Two people is the minimum number of required participants and eight is the highest recommend number. Yet, Comer said four to six participants per room was the sweet spot for each of their escape rooms.

"Really though, it's not about the number of people you bring, it's who you bring," said Comer. "I've had a group of two people make escapes in record time and groups of eight who couldn't find a way out."



Friends put heads together to solve their riddle and escape the room.



Kraft refuses to go down amongst a group of Redbird defenders.

## Tucker Kraft's Road to the NFL

### Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

With a population of 500 residents, Timber Lake, S.D., may seem similar to many small-town communities across the state. The town is known for its scenic beauty, outdoor recreational opportunities, and rich history. However, what really sets Timber Lake apart from the rest is a homegrown NFL prospect: Tucker Kraft.

At an impressive 6-foot-5 and weighing 254 pounds, Kraft has proven himself to be South Dakota's latest up-and-coming football star. Ask any fan of college football and they will tell you that Kraft has the size and skill set to make waves on a professional level.

Luckily, Kraft's talents haven't gone unnoticed. During his latest breakout season as SDSU's All-American tight end, Kraft left an impression on NFL

scouts with his ability to outrun opponents, snatch incredible catches and charge through multiple tackles. A top contributor in nearly every game, Kraft led the Jackrabbits to their first-ever FCS National Championship. The historic season quickly cemented Kraft's place as a top tight end in the NFL Draft.

Kraft recalls the moment everything fell into place: "I just realized that when I had the ball, no one could touch me," he said. "I knew after that season that I was completely capable of playing with the pros."

Timber Lake High School head football coach Ryan Gimbel says he is not surprised to see his former stu-



Tucker Kraft

dent and player on the doorstep of the NFL. Countless hours in the weight room and gym, he said, revealed Kraft to be a student-athlete with incredible drive.

"Seeing the raw natural talent of Tucker spoke for itself and what he could accomplish, but he also had the dedication to take it to that next level," said Gimbel. "To me, it wasn't a surprise, and that was our running joke when he left high school - 'I'll see you playing on Sundays."

Kraft's journey to the NFL, however, was not without its fair share of adversity. Growing up in Timber Lake, Kraft lost his father to a plane crash when he was only 12 years old. Kraft overcame the childhood tragedy with his two brothers and mother by working tirelessly on and off the field. Honoring his father's legacy, Kraft followed in his father's footsteps to become an All-American college star like his father had done before him.

"My brothers took a big part in raising me after my dad died," said Kraft. "My mom, my aunts and uncles all played a role, but I pride myself on getting a lot of things done independently."

Steely determination has carried Kraft to the highest level of football, and not even dramatic injury has been able to slow him down. In November Kraft officially declared his name in the NFL draft. Kraft's friends and family cheered him on as he showed off his incredible strength and skill on national television at the NFL Combine. There, Kraft proved his ability to play alongside the likes of Dallas Goedert, Riley Reiff and South Dakota's other pro footballers.

"I was kind of star-struck walking in," said Kraft. "Sitting down with the head coaches of the NFL franchise, you realize that you are at this level now. This is a job interview."

The NFL Combine, however, will

not be the last of Kraft's time on national television. Ranked as the sixth top tight end, Kraft's eyes are set on the draft in April. And, although he hails from somewhere small, Kraft plans to loom large on the field as a starting player with great potential.

"I want to go to a team that's going to use me, whether I'm on the line of scrimmage in the trenches with the big guys or catching balls and getting yards after the catch. I want to make an impact on a team, day one."

Whatever happens in April, Kraft's hometown is ready to cheer him on. According to Gimbel, most of Timber Lake is ready to don colors and jerseys that they are not used to wearing to support their hometown kid.

"The buzz in our town has just erupted," said Gimbel. "Our community, school, and family friends - they all want to see him be successful in the opportunity that he has worked for."



NFL prospect Tucker Kraft evades a tackler, leading SDSU to a 31-7 win last November against the Illinois State Redbirds.

## **Harrison Sub Maintenance**



East River Electric replaced the transformers and did some line maintenance at the Harrison Sub on March 8. Douglas Electric Lineman transferred the load from the Harrison Sub to the Armour and Hillside Subs previous to East River starting the maintenance work.

## Statement of Nondiscrimination

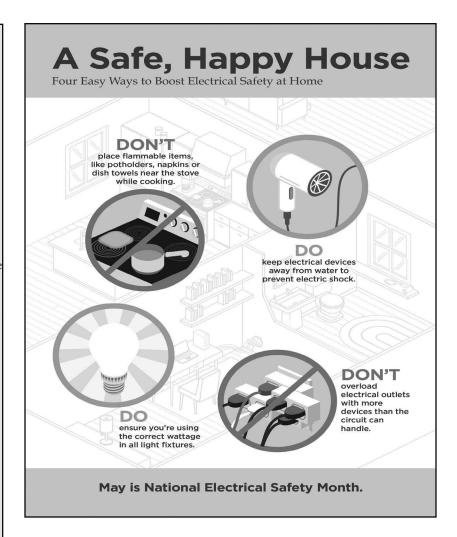
In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs).

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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.

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# IN CASE OF OUTAGE, CALL

	005-724-2323
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.  When reporting outages, please give name of member and location number to assist with prompt response.
4 <sup>TH</sup>	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



In a controlled demonstration, Journeyman Lineman Brady Gaer uses life-size equipment on the high voltage demonstration trailer to educate students about electricity.

# **Empowering the Public** to Stay Safe

**Frank Turner** 

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Electric safety is a topic that South Dakota students are excited to engage with. They often ask questions like, "What should you do if your tractor equipment touches a power line?" or "How can birds sit safely on a power line?" or even "What does it look like when something comes in contact with high voltage?"

These are some of the most popular questions Oahe Electric's Chief Financial Officer Valerie Marso has not only been answering but also demonstrating for more than 20 years.

"They always just have tons of questions," said Marso. "It's always fun to hear what they come up with next."

It's not just for entertainment, however. Oahe Electric and its employees are committed to realizing their goal of zero accidents at home and at work. Part of preventing tragedy starts with educating the public, especially youth, on how to stay safe around electricity.

In the last year alone, Oahe Electric traveled to nine different schools and led demonstrations for more than 900 students. For Marso, verbal communication is only half the battle when it comes to educating students

about electric safety. The real impact, she said, comes from showing them.

"The visuals and the noise that the high voltage makes really lands in a way that you just can't convey with words," said Marso. "It can scare the students a little bit, but I think it gives them a healthy respect for electricity.

Co-op across the state, including Oahe Electric, use three different interactive safety demonstrations to hone their message about safety: Power Town, Co-ops in the Classroom and the high voltage demonstration trailer.

One of the most popular, Power Town, is a small-scale, tabletop model of a few quaint houses attached to a small power grid. The miniature electrical system shows students how electrical current moves through

various items they may encounter in their daily lives, presented in a fun and easy-to-learn format. Line-workers, who work on the real equipment every day, lead the demonstration and teach students about personal protective equipment worn by co-op employees to complete their jobs safely.

Co-op in the Classroom is yet another powerful initiative South Dakota co-ops engage in to promote safety across the state. Working in conjunction with East River's Education and Outreach Program, co-ops meet the students where they are in the classroom to teach local youth the importance of respecting electricity through hand-on lessons that engage and excite the audience.

Lastly, the high voltage demonstration trailer is a portable unit that carries life-size equipment from events to local schools. It's a demonstration that always leaves an impression. Within a safe environment, students get to see actual equipment, such as utility poles, electrical conductors and distribution transformers, in action. Each hour-long demonstration shows what can happen when objects such as animals, trees, ladders and even fruit come into contact with power lines.

"This is equipment that our linemen work on every day, so they are comfortable showing these students how energy works," said Marso.

These demonstrations not only

entertain, but also promote a healthy and safe environment for co-op members and the public. During one of Oahe Electric's latest outreach events, Marso recalled listening to a small group of kids talk about how they sometimes sit on "the green boxes." They were referring to underground transformers. It became a teachable moment that left an impact on both the students and teachers.

"We told them to never touch them," she said. "You never know what going on in there, and it's always better to be safe than sorry. It was at least one person who took something home and actually used it. Moments like that show we are really making an impact with these students."



Oahe Electric Power Supply Specialist Steve Long teaches electric safety using Power Town, a miniature model used in safety demonstrations.



The Farmers' Daughters' Sewing Museum is located in Vermillion, S.D.

# Take a Stitch Back in Time

Jocelyn Johnson

jocelyn.johnson@sdrea.coop

A stitch in time saves family memories and sews history together at The Farmers' Daughters' Sewing Museum just outside of Vermillion, S.D. A mom and five daughters hold a passion for sewing and for the history of household sewing machines.

Collecting domestic vintage sewing machines began more than 20 years ago for Sally Abild who visited

auctions with her mom, Evelyn Hanson. There, they found various vintage sewing machines and began collecting them.

"I would see these vintage machines that were being sold for little or nothing," Sally said. "I hurt, in a way, for the families because I thought, 'These are a part of their history.' If I had my grandmother's or my mother's sewing machine, I would be extremely happy to have it."

She purchased 20 machines, not

knowing what to do with them, but wanting to preserve them. They were first stored in an old farmhouse before eventually moving to a milking barn, which was homesteaded by Sally's husband – Dick Abild's great grandfather. The barn was renovated and opened as a museum in 2017.

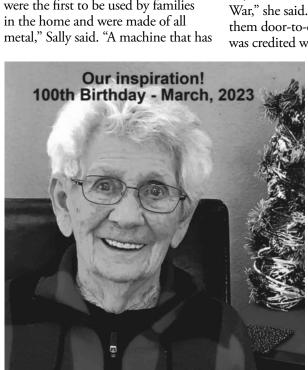
The museum's collection of sewing machines grew with contributions from her sisters.

"They would come across machines I had never seen in the Midwest," Sally said. "In the bigger cities, there was more money in the mid-1800s when sewing machines started to pop up. You would find a bigger selection in those areas that you didn't find in rural areas."

Sally and her sisters, Gloria, Marie, Linda and Geri, carefully researched the history of each machine they owned, putting them in order and fixing them up. Today, visitors to The Farmers' Daughters' Sewing Museum are able to view more than 120 vintage machines along with treasured family mementos. Sally's family has a legacy of sewing their own clothes. She remembers her great grandmother making dresses from feed sacks and her mother, Evelyn, would sew clothes for the family on her treadle machine, since electricity wasn't available on the farm until the 1950s.

"I had to learn how to sew growing up," Sally said. "If I wanted something new, I had to learn how to make it for myself."

The Farmers' Daughters' Sewing Museum is one of three vintage sewing museums in the United States. "We collect domestic vintage machines - meaning our machines were the first to be used by families



Evelyn Hanson instilled the love of sewing and vintage machines in her five daughters.



Sally Abild and her family pose outside of the Farmers' Daughters' Sewing Museum.

plastic in it is not a vintage machine."

One of the oldest domestic, vintage machines on display at the museum is one by Elias Howe, who made the first official patented and manufactured sewing machine in 1846.

'We also have a Singer Model 12, which came out after the Civil War," she said. "Isaac Singer sold them door-to-door to families and was credited with coming up with

the first payment plan – allowing up to 10 years to pay for this machine. It's said that Singer's Model 12 was the machine that clothed a nation."

The most unique machine that Sally favors, however, is a Wilcox and Gibbs that came about it the mid-1800s.

"It's a small, chainstitch machine that was loved by many women back then," Sally said. "They could easily take it

from house to house, and it was easy to use. It's also the symbol we use for our museum."

Most vintage sewing machines tended to be family heirlooms, which were passed down from generation to generation.

"Many women who visit the museum have a machine that was passed down to them by their mothers or grandmothers and want to find out more information on them," Sally said. "Men love to visit too to learn more about the mechanics of these machines."

Sally revealed the transition from vintage sewing machines, made with metal, to newer sewing machines, made with plastic, began when America gave Japan two Singer patents after World War II. Japan capitalized on this and managed to perfect a design that they sold in America for a third of the cost. To compete with this, Singer began to put plastic parts into their machines and before eventually going out of business in 1988. Consequently, the age of vintage sewing machines ended when the convenience and affordability of plastic was introduced.



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 6 Cinco de Mayo Fiesta

Lake Farley Park Milbank, SD 605-432-6656

### MAY 17 Norwegian Independence Day

6 p.m. Vivian, SD 605-222-3296

### MAY 20 Buggy Museum Open House

10 a.m. Stockholm, SD 605-938-4192

### MAY 20 Booth Day

10 a.m. Booth Fish Hatchery Spearfish, SD 605-642-7730

### MAY 20 Frühlingsfest and Spring Market

1 p.m. Main Street Square Rapid City, SD 605-716-7979

### MAY 25 Wine Walk

5 p.m. Downtown Businesses Aberdeen, SD 605-226-3441

### MAY 26-28 Hidden Treasure Heritage Festival

Lead, SD 307-259-4484

### MAY 27 Back When They Bucked All-Day Rodeo

9 a.m. Days of '76 Event Complex Deadwood, SD 605-717-7642

### **MAY 27**

**Norwegian Constitution Day** 11 a.m. Lake Norden, SD 605-874-2171

### JUNE 3

Health Connect of South Dakota: The Human Race 5K 9 a.m. Sertoma Park Sioux Falls, SD

### **JUNE 11**

## River Honoring Community Potluck

5 p.m. Clay County Park River Shelter Vermillion, SD 605-670-0540

### JUNE 16-18 Fine Arts In The Hills Show & Sale

Main Street Hill City, SD 605-574-2810

### JUNE 18 Father's Day Fishing

10 a.m. Palisades State Park Minnehaha County, SD 605-594-3824

### **JUNE 21**

### 2023 McCrossan Boys Ranch Golf Classic for Kids

Central Valley Golf Course Hartford, SD 605-339-1203

### JUNE 23

### Flandreau Fridays

5 p.m. Downtown Flandreau Flandreau, SD

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