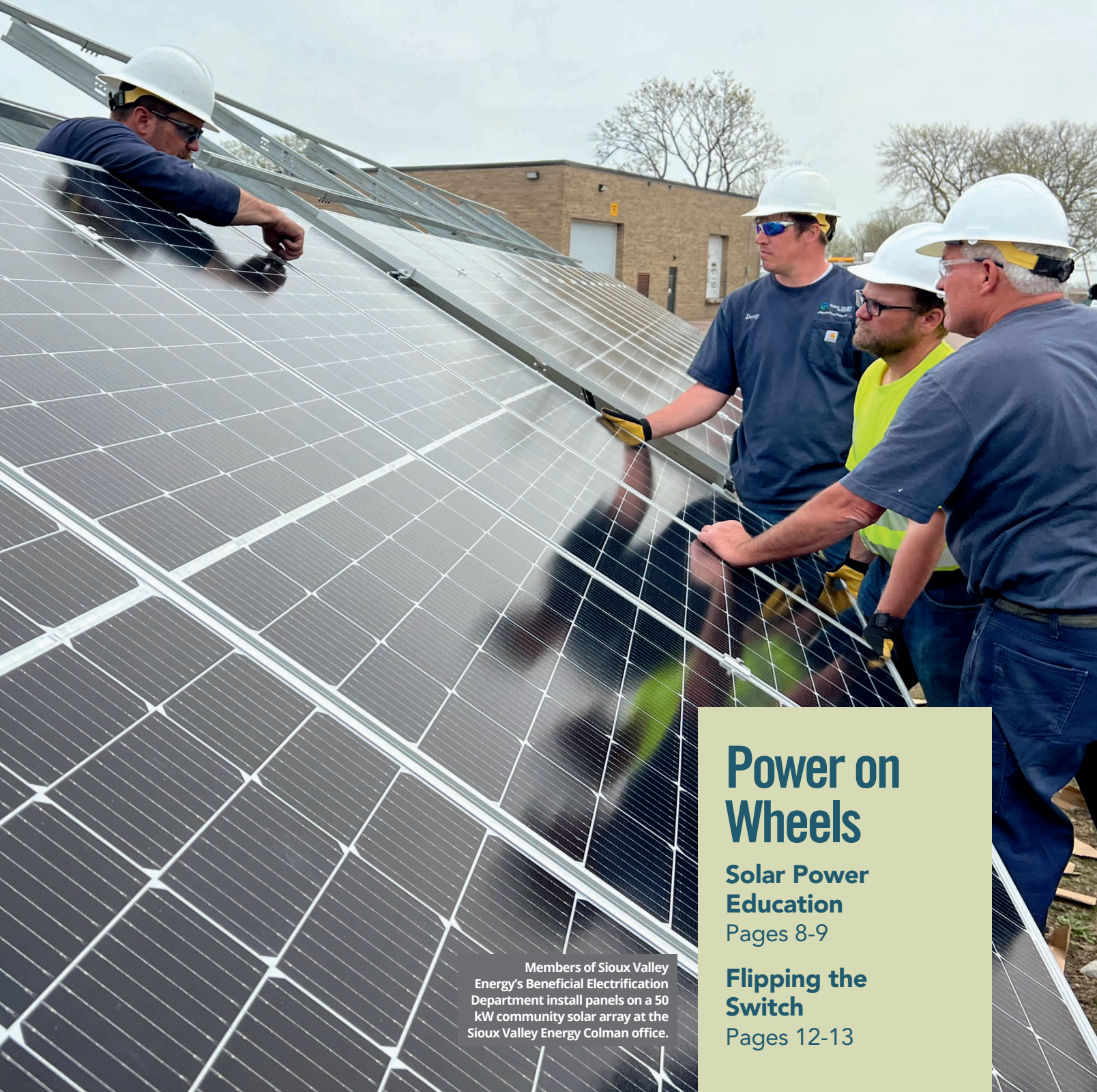


# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## Power on Wheels

**Solar Power  
Education**  
Pages 8-9

**Flipping the  
Switch**  
Pages 12-13

Members of Sioux Valley Energy's Beneficial Electrification Department install panels on a 50 kW community solar array at the Sioux Valley Energy Colman office.



## LOOK OUT

### FOR POWER SOURCES

**10'**

Do not get within 10 feet (in any direction) of a power line.

Be aware of power lines when working on the roof.

Do not trim branches or limbs near power lines.

Be careful when carrying long or tall objects such as ladders or poles.

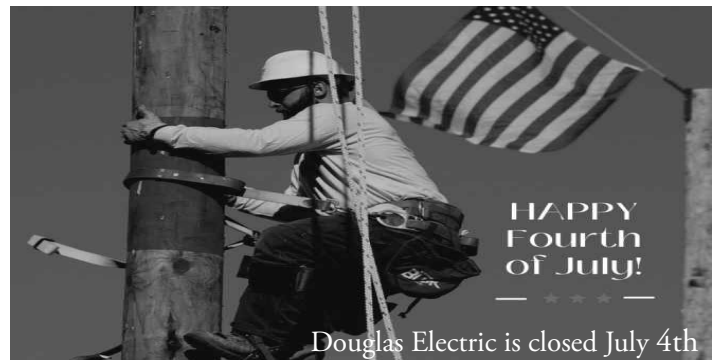
**811**

Before you dig, call 811 to have underground utilities marked.

**DANGER HIGH VOLTAGE**

Do not dig near padmount transformers or other utility equipment.

Safe Electricity.org



**HAPPY Fourth of July!**

Douglas Electric is closed July 4th

## Douglas Electric Welcomes New Members

Peter Goldammer  
Kaleb or Haley Maassen

## Douglas Electric Outages

Date	Cause	Number of Members Affected
April 27	Broken Pigtail on Pole Top	2
May 16	Blackbird - Transformer Pole	1
May 17	Lightning Arrestor	3
May 18	Harrison Sub - animal in circuit	326
May 25	Planned - change pedestal	6

## Operating Report

	April 2023	April 2022
<b>KWH Sold</b>	1,735,566	1,831,561
<b>Revenue</b>	\$226,717.54	\$229,958.52
<b>Cost of Power</b>	\$128,582.91	\$121,015.86
<b>Connected Consumers</b>	823	822
<b>Miles Energized</b>	501.3	502.3
<b>Consumers /Mile</b>	1.64	1.64
<b>Average KWH Used</b>	2,109	2,228
<b>Average Bill</b>	\$275.48	\$279.75

## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### DOUGLAS ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 019-046)

#### Board of Directors:

Wayne Lefers - President  
Larry VanderLey- Vice President  
David Neugebauer - Secretary/Treasurer  
Joel Baier  
Blake Ligtenberg

#### 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](mailto: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.



Manager Jay Spaans presents the Basin Electric Scholarship to Ashlyn Tapio. Ashlyn will be attending Chadron State College in Chadron NE to study Pre-veterinary medicine and is the daughter of Nate and Elsa Tapio.



Preston Koster is pictured with U.S. Representative Dusty Johnson at the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Year Banquet. Preston will be attending Kansas University majoring in Human Biology and is the son of Dean and Bonnie Koster.

# Fireworks Safety Tips

Summer is synonymous with barbecues, parades and fireworks. The National Safety Council advises everyone to enjoy fireworks at public displays conducted by professionals, and not to use any fireworks at home. They may be legal but they are not safe.

In 2017, eight people died and over 12,000 were injured badly enough to require medical treatment after fireworks-related incidents. Of these, 50% of the injuries were to children and young adults under age 20. Over two-thirds (67%) of injuries took place from June 16 to July 16. And while the majority of these incidents were due to amateurs attempting to use professional-grade, homemade or other illegal fireworks or explosives, an estimated 1,200 injuries were from less powerful devices like small firecrackers and sparklers.

Additionally, fireworks start an average of 18,500 fires each year, including 1,300 structure fires, 300 vehicle fires and nearly 17,000 other fires.

## Fireworks Safety Tips: If You Choose to Use Legal Fireworks

If consumer fireworks are legal to buy where you live and you choose to use them, be sure to follow the following safety tips:

- Never allow young children to handle fireworks
- Older children should use them only under close adult supervision
- Never use fireworks while impaired by drugs or alcohol
- Anyone using fireworks or standing nearby should wear protective eyewear
- Never hold lighted fireworks in your hands
- Never light them indoors
- Only use them away from people, houses and flammable material
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person
- Only light one device at a time and maintain a safe distance after lighting
- Never ignite devices in a container
- Do not try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks
- Soak both spent and unused fireworks in water for a few hours before discarding

- Keep a bucket of water nearby to fully extinguish fireworks that don't go off or in case of fire
- Never use illegal fireworks

## Sparklers Are Dangerous

Every year, young children can be found along parade routes and at festivals with sparklers in hand, but sparklers are a lot more dangerous than most people think.

Sparklers burn at about 2,000 degrees – hot enough to melt some metals. Sparklers can quickly ignite clothing, and children have received severe burns from dropping sparklers on their feet. According to the National Fire Protection Association, sparklers alone account for more than 25% of emergency room visits for fireworks injuries. For children under five years of age, sparklers accounted for nearly half of the total estimated injuries. Consider using safer alternatives, such as glow sticks, confetti poppers or colored streamers.



## Call Before You Dig!

### Dixie Koistinen

Dixie Koistinen advises diggers to call 811 before digging. This is a great tip for anyone doing construction or yard work this summer. Dixie is the daughter of Jerome and Lisa Koistinen from Lake Norden, S.D., members of H-D Electric.

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.





# Summer DESSERTS

**VICKY'S RHUBARB CAKE****Ingredients:**

1 egg  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup cream (sweet or sour)  
1 1/2 cups flour  
1 tsp. soda  
1/4 tsp. cinnamon  
2 cups rhubarb (slice thin)

**METHOD**

Mix in order. Grease and flour pan. Pour batter into pan and sprinkle 1 cup brown sugar, 1/2 cup nuts, and 1/2 cup chocolate chips over the top. Bake at 350°F for 50 minutes.

**Vicky Hoffman**  
South Dakota

**CHERRY CLOUD 9 DESSERT****Ingredients:**

1 white cake mix  
1 (3 oz.) pkg. cherry jello  
1 (8 oz.) carton of Cool Whip  
1 (24 oz.) can cherry pie filling

**METHOD**

Bake 1 white cake mix in 9x13" pan according to directions. Poke holes in cake and pour in 1 (3 oz.) pkg. cherry jello made with only 1 1/2 cups water. Refrigerate.

When this is cool, cover with 1 (8 oz.) carton of Cool Whip. Gently spoon on 1 (24 oz.) can of cherry pie filling. Refrigerate and serve.

This is a pretty red and white dessert to serve during holiday gatherings.

**Jane Ham**  
Rapid City, S.D.

**EASY RASPBERRY MOLTEN CAKES****Ingredients:**

4 oz. semi-sweet chocolate  
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter  
4 tsp. raspberry extract  
1 cup confectioners' sugar  
2 eggs  
1 egg yolk  
6 tbsp. flour  
Raspberry Sauce (recipe follows)

**Raspberry Sauce:**

1 package (10 ounces) frozen raspberries in juice, thawed  
1/2 teaspoon raspberry extract

**METHOD**

Preheat oven to 425°F. Butter 6 (6 oz.) custard cups or soufflé dishes. Place on baking sheet.

Microwave chocolate and butter in large microwavable bowl on HIGH 1 minute or until butter is melted. Stir with wire whisk until chocolate is completely melted. Stir in raspberry flavor and vanilla. Stir in sugar until well blended. Whisk in eggs and yolk. Stir in flour. Pour batter into prepared custard cups.

Bake 10 to 14 minutes or until sides are firm but centers are soft. Let stand 1 minute. Carefully loosen edges with small knife. Invert cakes onto serving plates.

For the Raspberry Sauce, mix raspberries and raspberry extract until well blended. Serve with cakes.

[mccormick.com](http://mccormick.com)

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2023. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

# Seal in Savings with Efficient Exterior Doors

**Q:** I like the style of my front door, but it is drafty. Can you recommend ways to fix the drafts and make it more energy efficient?

**A:** The front door of your home has a lot of meaning. It sets the stage for the home and is the first impression for your guests. Beyond curb appeal, the front door is a good place to look for energy savings.

Efficient exterior doors seal tightly and don't allow air to pass through. Limiting airflow from exterior doors can result in lower heating and cooling costs. Throughout the years, the construction of exterior doors has improved to increase their efficiency. If your door is older, it likely is not insulated.

There are two strategies to address an inefficient front door: Purchase a new one or work with what you have.

If you want to replace your front door for aesthetic purposes, make it more functional or improve its efficiency, consider upgrading to an ENERGY STAR®-certified model. The ENERGY STAR® certification ensures the door you buy meets efficiency criteria for your local area. It also means the National Fenestration Rating Council independently tested and verified the door.

Certification requires any windows in the door to be double or triple pane to reduce heat flow, which results in a more efficient home. While windows in doors offer aesthetics, more glass means less efficiency. ENERGY STAR® offers different criteria based on the amount of glass the door has. That means that the bigger the windows in a door, the lower the efficiency. The most efficient doors have no glass or windows in them.

U-factor is the primary rating for efficiency on doors and windows. U-factor is the inverse of R-value, which is the rating used for insulation.

Unlike R-value where higher is better, the lower the U-factor, the more energy efficient the door. Check the U-factor on ENERGY STAR® doors at your local hardware store or online to help choose the most efficient door in your preferred style.

ENERGY STAR®-certified doors are made of the most efficient materials, such as fiberglass, wood cladding and steel with polyurethane foam core. They are built to fit snugly into their frames, reducing drafts and airflow.

When it comes to doors, you don't have to sacrifice style for efficiency. There are many styles available to match the architecture, whether your home is historic or modern.

When completely replacing a door and the frame, you can use expanding foam or caulk to fill the space between the door jamb and structural framing. ENERGY STAR® doors have specific installation instructions to ensure the desired efficiency.

If a new door isn't in your budget, there are less expensive options to reduce air leakage and improve your home's efficiency.

All of that coming and going throughout the years can wear out weatherstripping. If you can see daylight around the edges of the door or underneath it, it's time to stop those air leaks.

Weatherstripping around the door jamb can be adjusted to make a snug seal or replaced if it's too far gone. Apply one continuous strip along each side, and make sure it meets tightly at the corners.

There are many different types of weatherstripping products on the market, so shop around for what's right for you. Don't forget the door sweep at the bottom of the door.

Adding a storm door can also help and is less expensive than replacing the entire door. Most storm doors have options for using a screen or glass. Swapping the screen for the glass insert can help save energy in both the winter and in the summer if you use air conditioning. Consider a storm door that's easy to switch between glass and screen so you can maximize the benefits.

Open the door to energy savings by improving the efficiency of your exterior doors – without compromising the aesthetics of your home.



**Miranda Boutelle**  
Efficiency Services  
Group

# Home Health Care

## Dr. Saini Provides Home Health Care for Patients

Scott Waltman

For Dr. Mona Saini, providing care to patients in their homes is incredibly satisfying.

Saini lives in Custer and works for Monument Health. She started with what's since become Monument during her residency in Rapid City about eight years ago and has been in Custer for the past five years.

She started home visits early during the COVID-19 pandemic and has kept providing the service since, she said.

Taking care of patients in their homes is convenient for those folks and a privilege for Saini. She said it feels more personal for her and helps alleviate anxiety for people who have a hard time getting to the hospital or clinic.

The disappointing part of modern medicine is that not much home health care is provided, Saini said.

The home visits are part of her work for Monument, but not the only part. She's a general practitioner and also provides prenatal care. She and the other five physicians in Custer all do outpatient clinic,

hospital and emergency room work. Not all, though, provide home health care.

Saini earned her undergraduate degree from Oakland University on the north side of Detroit and went to medical school at the Indiana School of Medicine-Fort Wayne.

**"The disappointing part of modern medicine is that not much home health care is provided."**

She said she had an interest in rural health care while she was still in school, which is what led her to apply for a residency in Rapid City.

Saini's parents grew up in India, but she's found a wonderful home in Custer.



Dr. Mona Saini

Her parents are the children of farmers, and she appreciates the rural values of hard work, being humble and appreciative and family values.

"I lived in Michigan almost all my life, and I didn't even know all this was out here," Saini said of the Black Hills area.

She appreciates the community and the opportunity to help people without them having to leave the comfort of their homes.

"I love taking care of my rural health patients," Saini said. "I truly do"





# POWER ON WHEELS

West Central Electric Cooperative's solar trailer serves as an interactive exhibit showcasing solar power generation in action for members. Equipped with a built-in generator, battery storage unit, inverter, and six rooftop solar arrays, the trailer is a great resource for public outreach and education efforts in South Dakota.

## Solar trailer takes renewable education on the road

**Frank Turner**

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Solar panels are creating a buzz in the energy industry. Every day, co-op employees around the state answer an ever-growing list of questions, such as “Can solar save me money on my energy bill?” and “Are solar panels a reliable source of energy?”

Addressing increasing public interest, West Central Electric Co-op, serving towns such as Murdo and Kennebec, has developed an innovative approach to public outreach regarding solar panels. Their solution: a solar trailer — a portable structure designed to inform the public about the efficiency, pros and cons of solar panels.

“West Central Electric has approxi-

mately 3,700 members and I get two or three calls a month from our members asking about solar power,” said Jessie Tucker, the co-op’s member services manager.

Tucker noted that the recent surge in solar power interest isn’t limited to West Central. Co-ops throughout the state have been fielding similar inquiries. So, when the concept of a solar trailer was introduced in 2021, several nearby co-ops, including Rushmore Electric Power, were quick to get on board.

“We thought, wouldn’t it be great if we had something that we could show to the membership and explain how solar panels work and go from there,” said Tucker. “We envisioned the trailer as a resource that could be utilized throughout western South Dakota, if not the entire state.”

With support from surrounding co-ops, the trailer was completed in June 2022. Although the trailer is a work in progress, it has already been showcased at several co-op outreach events over the past year, including Black Hills Electric’s Co-op Day and more.

The solar trailer serves as an interactive exhibit where members can step inside for a first-hand experience. Upon pressing a button, the six rooftop solar arrays activate and start generating a total of 1.92 kilowatts of energy directly from the trailer’s roof. Apart from solar panels, the trailer is equipped with a built-in generator, a battery storage unit, and an inverter that converts power from direct current (DC) to alternating current (AC).

The trailer, according to Tucker, highlights the benefits of a diversified approach to South Dakota’s energy mix. For a reliable and dependable energy grid, renewable sources such as solar need to be paired with other forms of power generation.

“What we are really trying to com-



municate is that you can't fully rely on distributed generation, whether it's solar or wind," Tucker explained. "For reliability and safety, it's important to consider all available energy sources. Solar power has its limitations, especially when the sun isn't shining or during the night."

The introduction of a solar trailer comes as co-ops across the state are in the midst of their own solar initiatives. Just last month, Sioux Valley Energy completed its own solar project that permits its members to purchase a 20-year subscription to the power output from a newly constructed 140-panel solar array located in Colman, S.D. The project allows members who are passionate about renewable energy a direct route to purchase solar power through their local co-op.

"A lot of people are very interested in solar power, but they don't want to go through the process of using up land and roof space," said Ben Pierson, manager of beneficial electrification for Sioux Valley. "Members aren't interested in constructing these projects themselves, so our solar

project offers those members an alternative way to get involved in solar."

More than 30 members participate in the subscription program, and because the project was entirely financed by the participating members, it won't impact other members of the co-op.

"This project was one hundred percent funded by the members that are purchasing the output of those panels," said Pierson. "This project allows these members to see a local, physical solar asset in their community that is working for them and is credited on their bill each. So really



The solar trailer has been featured at several co-op public outreach events.

our focus with renewable is really about member choice."

The landscape of renewable energy is vast and ever-changing and every co-op is planning their own approach, but with resources like the solar trailer, tools for education and engagement are within reach for members wanting to learn more.



The interior of the solar trailer is equipped with battery storage and outlets – powering everyday electrical appliances, such as a hairdryer.

## Director Petitions Due August 11



The 2023 Douglas Electric Annual Meeting will be held Monday, September 11, 2023 in the Douglas Electric Headquarters at 27913 US Hwy 281.

Two Directors terms will expire at the Annual Meeting. Joel Baier from District No. 1 – Belmont, East Choteau and Independence Townships and Wayne Lefers from District No. 5 – Holland, Joubert and Walnut Grove Townships. The change in bylaws at the 2000 Annual Meeting changed the term of District No. 1 and 5 to a three-year term.

Individuals from District No. 1 and 5 who are interested in running for the Douglas Electric Board of Directors may pick up a nominating petition for the election to be held at the annual meeting. Petitions are available and can be picked up at the office of Douglas Electric.

All candidates from District 1 and 5 who submit a qualifying petition with 7 or more signatures from members residing in their district by the deadline of **August 11** will be on the ballot for that district. Directors shall be elected by all members of the cooperative service area by written ballot. There will not be nominations from the floor at the annual meeting.

Please take a moment to read through this section of the company bylaws to acquaint yourself with the process.

Article IV, Section 4. Director Nominations:

An individual desiring to be a nominee for a director position for which a term is expiring must, not less than twenty (20) days prior to the member meeting at which members are scheduled to elect directors, submit a completed nominating petition to the Cooperative which nominating petition shall contain the following information:

1. The name of the candidate;
2. The director position for which the candidate will run; and
3. The printed names, addresses and telephone numbers and original signatures of at least seven (7) members residing in the director district in which said candidate is seeking election.

At least seven (7) days prior to the member meeting at which members are scheduled to elect directors, the Cooperative shall notify members of the director positions for which members are scheduled to vote; and the names and corresponding director positions of all director candidates.



## Statement of Non-discrimination

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).

Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at <http://www.acsr.usda.gov/complaintfilingcust.html> and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(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: [intake@usda.gov](mailto:intake@usda.gov).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

## Rubber Gloving refresher course held for linemen



On May 16, the line crew at Douglas Electric participated in its annual rubber glove refresher course as part of the cooperative's safety training program.

Once a year the linemen are required to get recertified in rubber gloving.

Rubber gloving or "working it hot" as the linemen call it, is a procedure where the linemen perform work or maintenance procedures on energized lines to prevent disruptions in service for the cooperative members.

The linemen use personal protective equipment (PPE) such as rubber gloves, rubber sleeves, rubber hoses and rubber blankets to make sure the energized wires do not come in contact with them or any ground source.

Joe Denison, a lineman safety instructor from the South Dakota Rural Electric Association based in Pierre, was on hand to oversee the training session and to make sure the linemen were performing their tasks correctly and in a safe manner. This procedure requires the linemen to work together and be aware of their surroundings.

Douglas Electric takes pride in our lineman safety training program to protect not only our linemen from harm but also to protect the members and general public. An effective safety program reduces the risk of injury, saves lives and also helps keep the cooperative's insurance rates and other expenses as low as possible.



# FLIPPING THE SWITCH

Third generation ranchers Ken and Kathleen Meier stand by one of the first electric utility pole installed on their ranch.

## The Meier Family and Illuminating Rural South Dakota

**Frank Turner**

[frank.turner@sdrea.coop](mailto:frank.turner@sdrea.coop)

In the rural heartland of Firesteel, S.D., a transformational moment still echoes in the minds of third-generation ranchers Ken and Kathleen Meier. Over a span of 56 years on their farmstead, they have run cattle, reared horses, and even raised two children. After all

of those years, however, they still vividly remember the moment when electricity illuminated their rural community for the first time in the early 50s.

It's safe to say, their memories go back a long way. And yet, their bond with their home extends even further, reaching back a century to when their families were still

establishing roots in the frontier of the rural prairie.

Ken recalls the unlikely story which brought his grandpa, Anton Meier, from Iowa to the captivating, rolling landscape near Timber Lake, S.D., in 1923.

"Well, my grandpa was ornery when he had a bit too much to drink," said Ken. "Anyway, after a night of drinking, they threw him out of a bar in Iowa, so he crawled into a train car for a nap. When he woke up, he was in South Dakota."

According to Meier, his grandpa Anton quickly fell in love with the state and decided to relocate his



family to a new frontier near Timber Lake. In a coincidental twist of fate, Kathleen's family also settled in the same area around the same time. Unlike Anton's serendipitous journey,

Kathleen's grandfather, Frank Holzer, had a more traditional approach.

"My grandpa didn't get a free ride," laughed Kathleen. "He came down with our family from North Dakota with a horse and a milk cow tied to the back of the family's covered wagon."

When their families first settled the area, it was the era of kerosene lamps, horses and hard work. Yet in their childhood, both Ken and Kathleen witnessed the transition from kerosene lamps to electric light bulbs, a change that would propel their families and their communities forward.

"I must have been 9 or 10, but I remember when Moreau-Grand put our line up," Ken reminisced. "The memory of those first poles being driven into the ground by a couple of guys with an old International Truck has stuck with me. It was just something you don't forget."

Today, those original poles placed in the ground more than 70 years ago still stand tall on their ranch. Kathleen, too, recalls the transformative impact they had.

"I was about the same age when we first wired our house," said

Kathleen. "I remember how fun it was to just turn the lights on and have bright lights."

However, the electrification of their neighborhood brought more than just the novelty of flipping a switch. Kathleen's family promptly modernized their home. Their stove and fridge transitioned from kerosene to electric, and they even invested in a milking machine. The arrival of electricity didn't just bring about change; it revolutionized daily life on the ranch, making it cleaner and more efficient.

"Our old washing machine ran on a gas engine," said Kathleen. "You had to stomp on a pedal to get that motor started. It smoked up the entire house. Once we had electricity all we had to do was plug it in."

Progress didn't stop at the washing machine. "It didn't take long for things to change," added Ken. "I remember when I was about thirteen, my neighbor purchased the first television in the neighborhood, so everything happened fast. We would all go to watch whatever was on."

The transition has continued to benefit the Meier family. Today, their son, Kent Meier, works in the power industry with Border States Electric, a company that sells electrical equipment, tools and appliances. Their daughter, Cindy Lindskov has carried on the family tradition as a fourth-generation rancher in Isabelle, S.D., a town conveniently located just a stone's throw away from her parents.

It's amazing how much has changed over the years," said Ken. "Since the day we first got electricity, Moreau-Grand has done a great job of keeping our light on and burning bright."



One of the original utility poles on Ken and Kathleen Meier's land was created in 1950, yet it still functions to this day.

# SOLAR POWER

National Grid Renewables is building a solar farm next to an existing substation near New Underwood.  
*Photo courtesy of Western Area Power Administration*

## New Underwood Solar Power Update

**Scott Waltman**

Next year, a new solar farm near New Underwood should be providing power for homes and businesses in South Dakota and beyond.

Wild Springs Solar is being developed by Minnesota-based National Grid Renewables. The same company already operates a wind farm in Clark County, so it might already be familiar to some residents.

The solar farm is projected to be the biggest one in the state, according to National Grid Renewables. It's being built on roughly 1,000 acres.

Plans call for it to produce 128 megawatts a year. That could power 16,000 South Dakota homes, though some of the electricity will also be sent

out of state.

The solar farm is being built near an existing Western Area Power Administration substation, making for easier power distribution to groups like Basin Electric Power Cooperative, one of the largest providers of electricity in the Dakotas.

"When determining where to site renewable energy projects, things we consider include but are not limited to accessibility to transmission, land availability, resource, customer demand and community support," a Wild Springs Solar representative. "The Wild Springs project area was selected for proximity to the electrical transmission system, New Underwood substation, land suitable for a solar project from an environmental, regulatory/permitting,

design perspective and cooperative landowners."

Construction on the solar farm began in January.

Basin Electric, which is based in Bismarck, N.D., is a transmission cooperative that serves about 3 million customers in nine states. It has an agreement with National Grid Renewables to purchase 114 megawatts of electricity.

For Basin Electric, the agreement amounts to the first time it has agreed to buy solar power on a large scale. The cooperative has plans to bring on more than 150 megawatts of solar capability in the next two years.

Andy Buntrock, Basin Electric's vice president of strategic planning and communications, said stressing reliability is a priority for the cooperative this year.

"When we communicate on renewables we emphasize that they are just part of an all-of-the-above energy strategy that ensures reliable and



affordable power for our membership,” he said. “It’s important that we maintain dispatchable generation that has a reliable fuel source, while taking advantage of non-dispatchable generation like our first-ever solar project in South Dakota.”

Coal and natural gas are examples of dispatchable generation. They are fuels that are highly dependable because they are in constant supply.

“The construction of the Wild Springs Solar Project in South Dakota represents our commitment to bringing clean, renewable energy and economic development to the state of South Dakota. The project will contribute significantly to the tax base, as well as the local communities,” the National Grid Renewables spokesperson said.

In 2020, the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission approved a construction permit for Wild Springs Solar. That procedure set out what’s being built near New Underwood, including:

- 340,000 solar panels.
- A tracking system.
- Access roads.
- A substation.
- An operation and maintenance building and parking lot.
- Electric collection lines.

The plant will use solar panels that have been developed by First Solar.

National Grid Renewables is establishing a charitable fund for the New Underwood School District with plans to donate more than \$500,000 in the

first plant’s first two decades.

“Our National Grid Renewables onsite team has also worked closely with the school board and district to provide additional education about solar energy and the Wild Springs Solar project to some of the local high school classes, including a personalized tour of the site,” the company representative said.

But National Grid sees benefits that extend far beyond the Pennington County community. The upside, according to National Grid Renewables, will also include:

- Offsetting 193,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions each year.
- A \$22 million economic impact in the project’s first 20 years of operation.
- \$12 in new tax revenue in the first two decades.
- 225 new construction and operation jobs.

And when the plant is producing power, that should equate to the removal of 41,000 vehicles from roads in a year’s time.

WAPA helped clear the way for the project in 2021, finding the solar farm would have no significant impact on environmental resources or humans, said Eric Barendsen, public affairs specialist for WAPA.

That’s also when WAPA entered into an agreement with Wild Springs Solar and the Southwest Power Pool allowing the solar farm to be connected to WAPA’s New Underwood Substation.

Ultimately, that will help Basin Electric power South Dakota.

The cooperative transmits power to two generation and transmission cooperatives in the state – Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative and East River Electric Cooperative. Those co-ops then send electricity to their distribution cooperatives, which provide electricity to homes, schools and businesses across South Dakota.

The Clark County wind farm uses 77 turbines to create 200 megawatts of power, the National Grid Renewables representative said. It began operation in 2019 and employs 10 people.



Construction began earlier this year on a large solar farm near New Underwood in Pennington County. Some of the power will be purchased by Basin Electric and be distributed to cooperatives in South Dakota.

## REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Dakotafest or the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

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**July 14-16**  
**Badlands Astronomy Festival**  
25216 Ben Reifel Road  
Interior, SD  
605-433-5243

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.

**JUNE 23-25**  
**46th Annual Main Street Arts & Crafts Festival**  
Centennial Park  
Hot Springs, SD

**JULY 1**  
**Hill City's Annual Star-Spangled Celebration**  
8 a.m.  
Hill City, SD  
605-574-2368

**JULY 4**  
**Philip VFD Firework Display**  
Lake Waggoner  
Philip, SD

**JULY 7-8**  
**Buffalo Gap Blow Out Rodeo**  
6 p.m.  
Buffalo Gap, SD  
605-890-1533

**JULY 8-9**  
**Brookings Summer Arts Festival**  
Brookings, SD  
605-692-2787

**JULY 12**  
**Tracy Area Gardens & Quilts Tour**  
2 p.m.  
Tracy, MN

**JULY 13-16**  
**Pioneer Days**  
White, SD  
605-690-4458

**JULY 14-16**  
**Burke Stampede PRCA Rodeo**  
Burke, SD  
605-830-2083

**JULY 15**  
**Huron MS Walk/Run**  
8 a.m.  
Lake Byron  
Huron, SD  
605-350-5922

**JULY 15-16**  
**Charles Mix Saddle Club SDRA Rodeo**  
Geddes, SD  
605-680-2763

**JULY 21-23**  
**Winner Elks 54th Annual Rodeo**  
Winner, SD

**JULY 28-29**  
**Farley Fest**  
Lake Farley Park  
Milbank, SD  
[www.farleyfest.com](http://www.farleyfest.com)

**JULY 29**  
**BBQ Pit Row and Car Show**  
Winner, SD  
605-842-1533

**JULY 30**  
**Bergen Threshing Bee**  
9 a.m.  
Bristol, SD  
605-237-0310

**AUG 13-14**  
**Twin Brooks Threshing Show**  
Featuring Allis Chalmers  
Twin Brooks, SD  
605-880-2884

**AUG 21**  
**30th Annual Bishop's Cup Golf Tournament**  
Minnehaha Country Club and  
The Country Club of Sioux Falls  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-988-3765

**SEPT 4**  
**Hidewood Valley Stream Threshing Show**  
Steam Whistle Blows  
1 p.m.  
47236 183rd St  
Clear Lake, SD

**SEPT 29-30**  
**Junkin' Market Days**  
Ramkota Exhibit Hall  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-941-4958

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