

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

## Hot Air Balloons

**Festival Gains  
Popularity**  
Pages 8-9

**Go-Kart Racing**  
Pages 12-13

*Photo provided by  
Petra Wilson, owner  
of Western Horizons  
Hot Air Balloons.*

# Here to Serve



**Jeff Birkeland**  
CEO/Manager

“We’re here to serve you.” We’ve all heard this phrase countless times. These words may sound generic, but to us – your local electric cooperative – they mean everything.

West Central Electric was created to serve our communities and rural areas. Back in 1949, neighbors banded together and formed our co-op for the common good. In our case, it was the only way the communities could bring electricity to the area where there was none. In doing so, West Central Electric helped our members thrive. That mission-focused heritage is the golden thread that is woven throughout our history.

Today, we are continuing to power our communities. While our focus has remained steady on providing reliable energy to our members, today’s energy landscape and member expectations are far different than they were decades ago. That’s why we’re adapting, to keep pace with changing technology, evolving needs, and new expectations.

If you’re considering a solar installation, contact us; we would be happy to give you an unbiased view of the pros and cons. Investing in a solar system is a major decision, and it’s important to fully understand the costs, responsibilities, and potential energy savings. Unlike a solar company that has one objective – to sell their products and services – we will look at the total energy picture and help you determine the best options for your home. We understand that homeowners must undertake their due diligence, and we’re here to help you through that process.

In a similar vein, we recognize that many members are considering electric vehicle options. West Central Electric purchased a Ford F150 Lightning pickup and have been tracking the usage and charging characteristics. We did this to provide our members with real-life data so you can make informed decisions on whether an EV is right for you. We can also provide a candid assessment of residential and business charging requirements for all types of EVs.

So, the next time you hear West Central Electric use the phrase “we’re here to serve you,” we hope you know that we mean it. Service is deeply ingrained into who we are. We continue to evolve with the times, and in return, we’ve found additional ways to serve you and provide more options for you to power your life.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know ceiling fans can make a room feel 4 degrees cooler? To save energy through ceiling fan use, remember to raise your thermostat a few degrees while fans are turned on. Ceiling fans can help improve comfort year-round. In the summer, operate ceiling fans in a counterclockwise direction. Reverse the direction to clockwise during winter months and set fans on a low speed so warm air can circulate from the ceiling to the lower levels of the room.

Remember, ceiling fans cool people, not spaces. Be sure to turn them off when you leave the room.

*Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)*

## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

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**Our Mission is to Provide  
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WEST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is published monthly by West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., PO Box 17, Murdo, SD 57559. Periodicals Postage Paid at Murdo, SD 57559 and at additional mailing offices. Electric cooperative members devote \$1 from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$18 annually. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: West Central Electric Cooperative Connections, PO Box 17, Murdo, SD 57559; telephone 605-669-8100; fax 605-669-2358; e-mail [wcec@wce.coop](mailto:wcec@wce.coop); Web site: [www.wce.coop](http://www.wce.coop); Twitter: @WCElectric; Facebook: [www.facebook.com/WestCentralElectricCooperative](http://www.facebook.com/WestCentralElectricCooperative)

Design assistance by SDREA

# Youth Tour D.C.

Forty teens representing 20 South Dakota electric cooperatives headed to the Washington, D.C., area June 17-23 for the 2023 Rural Electric Youth Tour.

The program, which can trace its existence back to a 1957 speech by Lyndon B. Johnson where he encouraged electric cooperatives to send youth to the nation's capitol so they "can actually see what the flag stands for and represents," encourages teens to engage in their communities and learn about the importance of political involvement. More than 1,300 teens have represented the Rushmore State since South Dakota sent its first group in 1963.

The 2023 group visited many of the historic sites the region has to offer, including a Flag Day stop at Baltimore's Fort McHenry. The fort's bombardment in the War of 1812 was captured in Francis Scott Key's poem, which would eventually become the national anthem. Old Glory would play a recurring theme in the trip as students could see it at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History and also hear an inspirational message centered on the flag from Youth Day keynote speaker Mike Schlappi, a four-time Paralympic medalist in U.S.A. men's wheelchair basketball.

Students also met with the state's congressional delegation and with Youth Tour participants from across the country while touring the many of our nation's historical sites – including the National Archives, Library of Congress, Mount Vernon, U.S. Supreme Court, and many more.

"The Library of Congress really left an impression. I think it's something that will stick with me," said Sawyer Sandal, who represented West River Electric Association on the trip.



Left to right: Sophie Dowling, Dane Daly, and Rachel Nemec pose for a picture in front of the White House.

# Working Out in the Heat

Exercising outdoors is a great way to enjoy the sunshine and warmer weather of summer. But you'll need to take some extra precautions to stay safe. Here are some do's and don'ts for working out when temperatures climb.

### **DO: Stay hydrated**

Drink plenty of water before, during and after your workout to prevent dehydration and help regulate body temperature. Nicole Thompson of the American Council on Exercise recommends slowly drinking water or sports drinks about four hours before exercising. Aim for 1 ounce for every 11 pounds of body weight – so 10 ounces for a 110-pound person or 20 ounces for a 220-pound person.

Weigh yourself before and after working out to determine how much fluid you need to replace. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics recommends drinking 2-3 cups of water for every pound lost.

### **DON'T: Drink products containing alcohol**

Alcohol is a diuretic, so it contributes to dehydration.

### **DO: Wear lightweight and breathable clothing**

Choose light-colored and loose-fitting clothes made of moisture-wicking materials. This'll help keep you cool and dry.

### **DON'T: Wear dark colors or heavy fabrics**

Dark-colored clothing can absorb heat and trap it against your body.

### **DO: Wear sunscreen**

The key number to look for on your sunscreen is the sun protection factor. An SPF of 15 filters out about 93% of UVB rays, according to the Environmental Protection Agency, while an SPF of 30 will filter out around 97%. Look for "broad spectrum" on the label to protect against UVA and UVB rays.

Apply sunscreen 15 or 20 minutes before going out (check the instructions on the label). Reapply every two hours – or more frequently if you're sweating a lot. Don't forget about your ears, lips and any bald spots on your scalp – they need protection, too.

### **DON'T: Work out during the hottest times of the day**

The sun is at its strongest between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., so try to schedule workouts for earlier in the morning or later in the afternoon. Remember, you can always work out inside and in an air-conditioned area if needed.

### **DO: Know the signs of heat-related illness**

Symptoms of heat exhaustion include:

- Nausea and dizziness
- Headaches
- Feeling weak

A weak or rapid pulse

Cold, clammy skin

If you experience any sign of heat exhaustion, move to a cool place, loosen your clothing, put cool and wet cloths on your body or take a cool bath, and sip water, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says. Get medical help if your symptoms don't go away after an hour, if your symptoms worsen or if you're throwing up.

Symptoms of heatstroke include:

A body temperature of 103° F or higher

Hot, dry, bright red or damp skin

Labored breathing

A fast, strong pulse

Headache, dizziness, nausea or confusion

Loss of consciousness

Heatstroke is an emergency. If you suspect it, call 911 immediately.

### **DON'T: Overdo it**

Adjust your workout intensity to account for the heat and listen to your body's cues. Shorter workouts are good when temperatures rise. Allow your body to get used to the heat. Then you can gradually increase your time outdoors and exercise intensity.



## Don't pull the cord!

### **Gabrielle Clement, Age 10**

Gabrielle Clement advises people it's not safe to pull the cord when disconnecting appliances from an outlet. Gabrielle is the daughter of Dustin and Michelle Clement from Box Elder, S.D., members of West River Electric Association.

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.

# Savory Summer SALADS

## GRAPE SALAD

### Ingredients:

2 lbs. red seedless grapes  
2 lbs. green seedless grapes  
1-8 oz. cream cheese (softened)  
1 cup sour cream  
1 cup sugar  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1 cup brown sugar  
1 cup chopped pecans

### METHOD

Wash and dry grapes. Mix cream cheese and sour cream. Add sugar and vanilla. Mix well. Fold in grapes. Place in 9x13 pan. Sprinkle with brown sugar and pecans.

**Angie Ruiter**  
Sioux Falls, S.D.

## CHICKEN SALAD

### Ingredients:

1/2 cup plain lowfat yogurt  
2 tbsp. mayonnaise  
1 tsp. parsley flakes  
1/2 tsp. seasoned salt  
1/4 tsp. pure ground black pepper  
1/2 rotisserie chicken, cut into bite-size chunks (about 2 cups)  
1/2 cup thinly sliced celery  
1/4 cup chopped red onion

### METHOD

Mix yogurt, mayonnaise, parsley, seasoned salt and pepper in large bowl. Add chicken, celery and onion; toss to coat well. Cover. Refrigerate at least 30 minutes or until ready to serve. Serve in sandwiches or on salad greens.  
[mccormick.com](http://mccormick.com)

## CORN CUCUMBER SALAD

### Ingredients:

2 cans whole kernel corn (drained)  
1 cup diced, unpeeled and seeded cucumbers  
1/4 cup chopped red onion  
1/3 cup mayonnaise  
2 tbsp. chopped fresh cilantro  
2 tbsp. grated Parmesan cheese  
2 tbsp. lime juice  
1 tsp. paprika  
1/2 tsp. garlic salt  
1/4 tsp. ground cumin

### METHOD

Mix corn, cucumber and onion in large bowl. Set aside. Mix remaining ingredients in small bowl until well blended. Add to corn mixture; toss lightly to coat. Cover. Refrigerate 2 hours or until ready to serve.

[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.

# Teach Your Children Well



**Miranda Boutelle**  
Efficiency Services  
Group

**Q:** I'm making an effort to reduce my energy use, and I want my kids to start energy-saving habits as well. How can I encourage them to use less electricity at home?

**A:** When I was a kid, I dreamed of one day having a home where I could pay my own electric bill. Said no one ever. While it's not the most fun way to spend money, people typically want to live in a home with electricity. Educating kids on energy use and costs can help engage them in your family's goal to use less electricity. They can be electric conservation champions if you ask them to help. Here are some ways you can teach kids to use less electricity.

Show them how to read the electric bill. Focus on what you can control: kilowatt-hour use. If they are old enough, teach them how to do the math. You can calculate kWh use by multiplying wattage by hours used and dividing by 1,000. Multiply this by the kWh rate found on your electric bill to estimate how much you spend on power for each household appliance.

For example, if you have a space heater that uses 1,500 watts and is on for four hours a day for a month, it uses 180 kWh. With an average kWh rate of 13.7 cents in the United States, the space heater costs about \$25 a month to operate. That same space heater costs about \$74 a month if it is on for 12 hours per day. Your kWh rate may be lower or higher depending on where you live.

For household appliance wattage, look for the amount stamped on the bottom, back or nameplate. If the nameplate does not include wattage, figure it out by multiplying the voltage by the amperage.

To teach children the impact of saving

energy, have them help you conserve with the household's biggest energy-consuming appliances: heating and cooling. Teach kids to dress appropriately for the seasons, even when they are indoors, which allows you to set the thermostat to balance comfort and savings.

You can also leave the house during the hottest times of the day to go for a swim or play outside. Before you go, nudge up the thermostat a few degrees to avoid wasted energy cooling an empty house. Turn off fans when you leave a room.

The second-highest use of electricity is typically the electric water heater. Use a shower timer so bigger kids can monitor how long they are in the shower. Teach them to wash their clothes with cold water. If you have a gas water heater, look at the gas bill to find opportunities to save.

Other ways to save include turning off the lights when you leave the room. The more we switch to LED lighting, the less savings associated. Yet even little changes can add up throughout the year. If your child needs a nightlight to sleep with, make sure it's an LED bulb.

Powering down gaming stations and computers is another way to save. In the kitchen, keep the refrigerator door shut. Teach kids to take a quick peek and shut the door while they think about their snack options.

After teaching your kids about electric bills and showing them how to save electricity, make a game out of your family's energy conservation efforts. Challenge the family to use less energy than last month or the same month last year. Use the savings to reward them with a treat or let the winner pick the game night activity or film for family movie night.

You can also teach children where the electricity for their home comes from. Check out your electric co-op's website or give them a call to find out what energy sources power your home.

# EMPOWERING ENTREPRENEURS

## Four Bands Community Fund fosters prosperity

**Frank Turner**

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Empowering Native American communities and fostering economic growth, Four Bands Community Funds is a nonprofit working to create opportunities on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation and beyond. With service footprint spanning all communities on Cheyenne River from Dupree, Eagle Butte, Timber Lake, and Isabel, as well as serving entrepreneurs from Rapid City to Sioux Falls, the fund strives to assist others in achieving their own financial goals. Whether it's for an aspiring small business entrepreneur seeking a successful launch or an individual looking to improve their own financial situations, Four Bands Community Fund has a range of programs in place to provide support.

At the forefront of the nonprofit is Lakota Vogel, who serves as the executive director of Four Bands Community Fund. Born and raised on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation, Vogel joined the fund in 2011 and later assumed the role of executive director in 2015, further defining and advancing the nonprofit's mission within her hometown community.

The roots of the nonprofit reach back to 1999 when a forward-thinking group of representatives from the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and local community members came together to empower their local artist community. They established a new nonprofit, offering accessible, small-dollar loans to local artists residing on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation. The success of the nonprofit laid the groundwork for new and exciting avenues of support.

"We are an institution that believes in educating people and meeting them where they are at," said Vogel. "A lot of our initial efforts focused on engaging in conversations with the community about money,



Four Bands Community Fund's team of highly qualified staff.

including the youth."

Over time, the scope of the nonprofit's finance campaign expanded to encompass nearly every aspect of personal and business finance, including business lending, financial empowerment, youth entrepreneurship, small business development. Recognizing a need for support beyond the boundaries of the reservation, the Four Bands Community Fund extended the availability of its small business resources beyond the limits of the reservations in 2013, allowing all tribal member entrepreneurs across the entire state of South Dakota to access their small business loans.

Every incremental step toward progress has amounted to a significant impact for members the Cheyenne River Reservation community. To date, the nonprofit has distributed 611 business development loans, amounting to nearly \$21.3 million with default rates under 3%. Among the success stories that have blossomed from the community fund is Kelsie Kay Haskell, a business owner in Eagle Butte.

Entrepreneurial in nature, Haskell approached the community fund with a few business ideas. Noticing the absence of a coffee shop in Eagle Butte, Haskell set out to bring that caffeinated amenity to her community in 2019. That's when the community fund offered her support

through their new business incubator program. The business, Kelsie Kay's Coffee Shop, quickly grew.

"In the incubator, she got a small business loan for some equipment, like an espresso machine," said Vogel. "She did so well. During the pandemic, she bought a building in downtown Eagle Butte. She used some of our financing to renovate the building into a coffeeshop."

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, Haskell's business quickly became one of the earliest success stories from the fund's new program. Today, her business employs eight individuals, including members of youth in the Eagle Butte community. Vogel said Haskell's success has the potential to "change the face of rural America." According to Vogel, Haskell's success properly exemplifies the small yet thriving impact of successful entrepreneurship in rural communities.

"Entrepreneurship is not something that's talked about enough," said Vogel. "Entrepreneurship doesn't have to be large-scale, like wanting to become someone like Mark Zuckerberg, which I think oftentimes are the people that are held up as role models in the business world. In small communities, that's not what entrepreneurship looks like. Success looks like the Kelsie Kay Haskell of the world."



# TAKING TO THE SKY

Balloons light up the night during the night glow event of the festival.

## Fall River Hot Air Balloon Festival Gains Popularity

**Jocelyn Johnson**

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It's a picturesque and dramatic spectacle that's awed most people for several hundred years. Yet, spectators and pilots alike have not tired of the image. Hot air balloons have that quality of enchantment. And what better way to be enchanted than to see dozens of these balloons floating up into the sunrise of a South Dakota sky?

The annual Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce Fall River Hot Air Balloon Festival is attracting nearly 30 balloons and thousands of spectators on Aug. 25-27, 2023. The event is taking place at the airport outside of Hot Springs, S.D., where it will celebrate its 8th year of growing popularity. Festival sightseers can pack all-day-fun into their festivities by visiting the vendors, obstacle courses,

bouncy houses, and performances in Hot Springs by Magician Jared Furnau and the Wild Blue Band.

Petra Wilson, a local commercial pilot, founded the festival in 2016 before opening her own flying business – Western Horizons Hot Air Balloons.

"The way I got introduced to ballooning is a tale of serendipity," said Wilson. "Almost 20 years ago, my husband and I attended a hot air balloon festival in Peoria, Ill., where we are asked to become crew members for a weekend. On the last flight of the weekend, he asked us if we wanted to go for a ride. The ride was absolutely stunning and from that point on we were hooked."

Wilson became a private pilot in 2014 and a commercial pilot in 2017. In 2015, Wilson and her husband moved to Hot Springs, where she discovered she was the

only hot air balloon pilot flying in the area.

I introduced many different people to ballooning by inviting them out to watch and even crew," Wilson said. "Some of those people became my students and eventually became hot air balloon pilots in the Hot Springs area."

When asked how she started the festival, Wilson replied, "I decided this area was such a beautiful place to fly that I wanted to share it with all my ballooning friends and their friends, as well as locals who might appreciate the beauty of the balloons in the sky, so what better way to do this than having a balloon festival."

The festival started with the partnership between Wilson and Olivia Mears, Executive Director for the Chamber of Commerce in Hot Springs.

Mears said, "Folks from South Dakota, California, Nebraska, Colorado, and more attend this festival. We attract private pilots who fly for their own enjoyment and commercial pilots who are licensed to carry passengers."

Tamie Shrum, current balloon-meister for Fall River Hot Air Balloon Festival, is a commercial pilot overseeing the safety and regulation of the participating balloons. She travels the world to fly, including six countries and 37 states. Shrum owns three of her own balloons and earns her living flying passengers and training students how to fly.

"I like to do long jump flying, which is long distance flying," said Shrum. "My longest distance is 137 miles in a three-hour flight with a top speed of 78 mph."

Shrum explained that a considerable amount of studying goes into the preparation for a long jump flight. Everything matters – the time of year, time of day, location, and weather patterns.

"We work off of a microscopic level," Shrum said. "A regular person might say, 'It's not that windy today,' but a balloon pilot might say, 'It's too windy to fly today.'"

Describing how balloons fly, Shrum said, "In layman's terms, hot air rises and cold air sinks. You put heat in the

envelope, making it hotter than ambient temperatures which allows it to lift the massive weight it's carrying."

We use a burner with regular propane," Shrum continued. "The amount of propane needed changes based upon ambient temperature, altitude of flight, and how much passenger weight is being carried."

Balloons are simplistic in design but can be challenging to fly.

"You don't steer a balloon...while airplanes fly against the wind, balloons fly with the wind, which can be unpredictable," Shrum explained. "Sometimes you land in a park and sometimes you land in main street."

"I've flown over Pikes Peak in Colorado



Commercial Pilot Tamie Shrum looks below on other balloons while flying.

and in Japan along with many other places," Shrum said. "I've been fortunate to sightsee all over the world from 1,000 feet in the air while others are sightseeing from the surface...but South Dakota is one of the most gorgeous places to fly in."



Commercial Pilot Petra Wilson inspects her balloon.

# Energy Efficiency

## All Year Round



**Kitt Talich**  
Staff Engineer

If you are like me, you have seen numerous articles and tips throughout the years to help you make your space more energy efficient. However, you may also be like me and either forgot to do that one thing that sounded like a great idea at the time or maybe you just got busy with something else and put it off a little too long! (I still have that on my to-do list, honey!). It also seems like it is one of those things that is easy to overlook. One seemingly small thing can easily cause the usage of lots of energy that goes to waste. If a person takes a step back and changes their mindset to “think thermally” about their space, these energy sinks can usually be identified and remedied.

When it comes to using energy efficiently, the heat of the summer is just as important as the chill of the winter. Many of these upgrades will save you money all year round, making payback much quicker!

**Smart Thermostats** – Now that smart thermostats are more affordable (as little as \$70!), this simple upgrade makes for a quick and easy weekend project. ENERGY STAR certified models can save up to 8% on your annual energy costs. Smart thermostats offer a variety of bells and whistles, but the average model will allow you to set custom temperature schedules, adjust the settings from anywhere (from your phone), and over time, learn your cooling and heating preferences.

**Use or install ceiling fans** – I am sure you have heard of this one before, but it works! Using a ceiling fan can allow you to adjust your thermostat by up to 4 degrees. Just make sure it is turning the correct direction for the season. Forward (blowing down) for the wind-chill effect in the summer and reverse (sucking up) in the winter forcing the warm air at the ceiling down.

**Change those Light Bulbs** – Even if you installed the CLFs (or curly bulbs!) a number of years ago you can still save more by switching to LEDs. A good LED bulb should last about 30 times longer than an old incandescent style and are about 1/6th the cost to operate. LEDs also last three times longer than CFLs and cost about half as much to operate. You can find LEDs in any color (red, green, blue, white) and any temperature you prefer. The temperature of the bulb will be listed on the box somewhere and will range from 3000K to 7000K. If you like a “warm light”, with a little red hue to it, you are looking for something around 3000K. If you want to match incandescent lights you are looking for something around 4000K. Bright White, more akin to a direct sunlight, would be 5000K. Above that you get into light with more of a blue hue at 7000K.

**Blackout/heavy shades or curtains** – We use this one all the time in our house. In the winter we keep the shades open (especially in the south facing windows) to let in the light and heat from the sun in and close them at night to hold the heat in. It really is amazing how much free heat you can get using this method! Of course, in the summer you just do the opposite to keep that direct sunlight from coming in. Due to our location and the angle of the sun during South Dakota summers, it seems to me that the most crucial times to close shades is the east windows in the morning and the west facing windows in the afternoon and evenings.

**Weatherization** – Weatherization can mean a whole host of things. Everything from recaulking around windows and doors and replacing door seals to adding insulation in your attic. Focus and check on any areas where small gaps may form allowing your warm or cool air from inside to leak out. Generally speaking, a few dollars spent on repairing or improving weatherization items will have a quick payback and keep saving you money all year round!

# Ag Appreciation Day at the Central States Fair

**When:** August 22nd | 4pm-6pm

**Where:** Kjerstad Event Center  
-915 Centre St.

**What:** -Free Meal  
-Discounted Rodeo Tickets\*  
-RSVP required  
\*visit RSVP site for more details



RSVP Here:



Please come show your support in honoring these individuals for their dedication to the agriculture community. Ag Appreciation Meal will be August 22nd from 4-6pm at the Kjerstad Event Center. You must RSVP by scanning the QR code or by visiting the following link: <https://bit.ly/3CzCRNP>



**Jerry Hammerquist**  
2023 Rural Neighbor Award  
Sponsored by: Touchstone Energy Cooperatives



**Bashful Bison**  
Agribusiness Award  
Sponsored by: Elevate Rapid City



**Rick Wulf**  
2023 Rural Neighbor Award  
Sponsored by: Central States Fair



# RACING FAMILY FUN

Go-kart racers in Aberdeen are placed in divisions by age and skill to keep the races competitive. The track usually hosts races twice a month during the summer months. *Photo by Scott Waltman*

## Go-kart Racing at Aberdeen Track is a Family Affair

**Scott Waltman**

Kevin Horn didn't set out to drive to Aberdeen several times a summer so he could race.

Instead, after seeing races on TV, the Waubay mechanic bought a go-kart for his then-9-year-old daughter. But while she was driving, the kart skidded on some wet grass and she hit the kart trailer. After that, she turned the keys over to Dad.

That was about 11 years ago. Horn took his daughter's number 9 and flipped it to make a 6, and he's been racing ever since.

Like others who race at the Aberdeen Karting Club track at the Brown County Fairgrounds, his story has a tie to family, even if it didn't work out exactly as he thought it would.

Karting, racers and organizers say, is a family affair.

Brody Griffin of Watertown is 10 and started karting three years ago.

He makes the rounds, mostly to the closest tracks in Aberdeen, Brookings and Miller. He races just about every weekend during summer, and the allure is simple. Griffin said he just likes driving.

He was named rookie of the year his first season and finished second in his division his second season in Aberdeen.

But it's not all zipping around the track and trying to pass other drivers. Griffin said he helps work on his kart with his father.

That makes sense to Landon Schott, a 24-year-old racer from Aberdeen who is one of the track's most successful drivers. Now that he's a little older, helps with public relations and social media for the track.

When Schott started racing, he said his father made it clear to him that he would be helping work on the kart and had to keep it clean. Karting can be a big financial investment, and his dad wasn't going to spend heaps of money if his son wasn't going to pitch in and be engaged.

Schott, too, said he appreciates the friendly and family atmosphere of karting.

Sponsorships are critical to both the Aberdeen track and its racers, he said. He wouldn't have been able to travel across the country racing without



Josiah Combellick serves as the event's flagman.  
*Photo by Scott Waltman*

having sponsors since he started driving in 2006, he said.

The Aberdeen track doesn't have any employees, and the Aberdeen Karting Club is a nonprofit group, so contributions are important, Schott said.

Rick Cartney is the vice president of the Aberdeen Karting Club and has been involved with the track since it was founded in 1996. His first race was in Aberdeen that first year, and now he gets to the track to start prep work around 9 a.m. on race days. Races usually start around 4 p.m. and last into the night.

For Cartney, the payback comes from the smiles on the faces of young racers.

"Mainly, it's for the kids," he said.

They do their best racing when they don't win, but they learn, grow and mature, Cartney said.

The Aberdeen track is between an eighth and a 10th of a mile long and is great for young racers who are just

starting out, he said.

There are races in Aberdeen a couple of times a month during summer, with the schedules of other tracks in the region taken into consideration so drivers can make it to as many races as possible. Generally, there are 30 or 40 drivers in Aberdeen, most of them young people, Cartney said.

Starting at the Aberdeen track has served Schott well. He has advanced to grand national events with both the International Karting Federation and Maxxis Kart Racing, finishing as in the top five, but never quite nabbing a championship. Last December, Schott said, he traveled to Daytona, Fla., and raced with about 70 other drivers, never finishing outside of the top 14.

"I guess maybe I'm just an adrenaline junkie," Schott said.

In 2013, as a junior driver, he won a Maxxis regional championship. The event drew drivers from across the nation and is called the Maxx Daddy, he said.

Schott said that and winning an end-of-season state championship in 2021 on his home track in Aberdeen are, at least to date, two of the highlights of his career.

He also won the state championship in 2015 in Brookings.

The state karting championships used to be in Brookings, but have been in Aberdeen in recent years. They return again this year on Aug. 12.

That event will likely draw about 200 drivers from South Dakota and surrounding states, Cartney said. A heavy bronze trophy in the shape of Mount Rushmore goes to the winner.

It will be yet another chance for the karting community to gather. Both Schott and Horn said they have made friends traveling the karting circuit. It's one of the most enjoyable parts of racing, they said, and Cartney agrees.

"These people are like a second family," he said.



Landon Schott helps prepare a go-kart before the races begin in Aberdeen on Saturday, June 17. Schott is one of the most successful racers from the Aberdeen Karting Klub. *Photo by Scott Waltman*



# HARVESTING HISTORY

The manual labor of past generations of farmers and ranchers is on display each year at the James Valley Threshing Show each September in Andover. *Photo courtesy of James Valley Threshers Association*

## Andover Threshing Show Focuses on History of Agriculture With an Eye to the Future

**Scott Waltman**

Most of the time, the population of Andover hovers somewhere around 65 people.

But during the first weekend of September, there's a parade that usually has four times as many entrants as there are residents.

And when a one-of-a-kind tractor is unveiled, well, the number of visitors swells to a tally approaching 10,000.

The annual James Valley Threshing Show is easily the biggest event in the small Day County town each year. And it's not even close.

In fact, organizers can't think of a bigger threshing show in eastern South Dakota or even across the borders into parts of North Dakota and Minnesota.

Tim Olson is president of the James Valley Threshers Association. He said the show has grown considerably since it moved from a farm just outside of Aberdeen. Most years, he estimates,

about 4,500 people attend.

Olson has been working with the show since it arrived in Andover in 1979. The first event near Aberdeen was in 1974, so he and others who are involved are already looking forward to the 50th show in 2024.

In 2018, a Case 150-horsepower steam-powered tractor that was built from scratch debuted at the James Valley Threshing Show. That year, Olson said, there were probably around 8,000 people who attended. And while many showed up for the impressive tractor, the only one of its kind in the world, they found so much more, he said.

Kevin Anderson has also been working with the event since it moved to Andover. He thinks perhaps 10,000 people attended the 2018 show to see the Case 150.

His son, Kory, led the effort to build the machine. In 2008, he started making wooden patterns out of mahogany that were used to create all of the castings for

the engine. And that was after a trip to the Case plant in Racine, Wisconsin, two years earlier where he was given a tour of the archives and paged through steam engine prints, making all the copies he wanted to guide his endeavor.

Fast-forward to last fall, after heaps of planning and building, and the Case 150 was certified as the Guinness world record for largest steam-powered tractor in operation.

Much of the work on the 750,000 behemoth was done at Anderson Industries and Dakota Foundry, both of which are based in Webster.

It can sometimes overshadow other events at the threshing show. But Olson and Kevin Anderson want visitors to know there are plenty more activities on the 65 acres owned by the threshing association.

There's the parade with more than 250 entries, a working saw mill, steam and gas plowing, threshing, a quilt show, a kiddie tractor pull, antique tractors of all kinds, a car show, spinning and weaving, blacksmith demonstrations, a toy and doll show, live music and more.

And while some people might traditionally associate tractors and fieldwork with men, that's not the case, Anderson said.



It took nearly 10 years to build a Case 150-horsepower steam-powered tractor from scratch.  
*Photo courtesy of Kory Anderson and James Valley Threshers Association*

Not with the Ladies of Steam. The program is run by women and offers other women a chance to learn about and ride an old-fashioned steam tractor.

"They don't mind getting greasy," Anderson said of the Ladies of Steam.

The program is a way to attract new and younger members to the association, he said.

Anderson's love of antique tractors, especially steam tractors, is one of the reasons he's remained active in the group through the decades. But the older generation is slowly handing things off to a younger crop of helpers.

Olson agrees. He said he used to be a young buck yelling at the older folks that they didn't know what they were doing. Now, the tables have turned.

The threshing show is a celebration of harvest and history and a chance for friends to gather as summer comes to an end, he said.

"It's a reflection of the past," Olson said. "It's the way all of our ancestors did stuff. Everything was manual labor back then."

Last year, the Case 150 pulled a

50-bottom plow. It's believed to be a world record, though that has yet to be verified.

The tractor will be at this year's show, but there are no plans to attempt more records, Anderson said.

The 2023 James Valley Threshing Show will be Sept. 8, 9 and 10 at Thresherman's Park in Andover. Admission is \$10 a day or \$25 for the entire weekend.

There's a smaller threshing show in Twin Brooks, but some of the other regional shows have faded away.

That's why the Andover event keeps looking to the future.

The association awards a scholarship each year that covers the tuition for a young person to attend the University of Rollag Steam School in Minnesota in spring. And organizers send out invitations to all schools within 100 miles of Andover that offer students free admission on the show's first day.

It's a way to share the history of agriculture and, with luck, plant a seed.

"The future of the show is the young kids," Anderson said.



A parade with more than 250 entries each year is one of the most popular events during the James Valley Threshing Show in Andover each September. *Photo courtesy of James Valley Threshers Association*

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**AUG 11**  
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Geddes, SD  
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**AUG 13-14**  
**Twin Brooks Threshing Show**  
Featuring Allis Chalmers  
Twin Brooks, SD  
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**AUG 19**  
**Yankton Extreme Bull Riding**  
7:30 a.m.  
Yankton Rodeo Arena  
Yankton, SD  
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**AUG 21**  
**30th Annual Bishop's Cup Golf Tournament**  
Minnehaha Country Club and  
The Country Club of Sioux Falls  
Sioux Falls, SD  
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**SEPT 2**  
**Hidewood Valley Barn Dance**  
7 p.m.  
47236 183rd St  
Clear Lake, SD

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

**SEPT 8-10**  
**James Valley Threshing & Tractor Show**  
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Andover, SD  
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**SEPT 16**  
**SD Coin & Stamp Convention**  
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**Coal Springs Threshing Bee**  
Meadow, SD  
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**SEPT 23**  
**Springfield Dakota Senior Meals Fall Festival**  
9 a.m.  
Springfield Community Building  
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