



COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Dokken's Dogs

**Training Dogs to
Hunt**

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Anniversary**

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Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Members

West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc.

October 5, 2022

The Annual Meeting of the members of West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. was held at the Kadoka City Auditorium, City of Kadoka, Jackson County, State of South Dakota, pursuant to due notice to the members, commencing at 5:00 o'clock PM, MT on Wednesday, October 5, 2022.

The meeting was called to order by President Shad Riggle who announced that a quorum was present.

Pastor Marcia Brennan of Kadoka gave the invocation.

Manager Jeff Birkeland recognized all Veterans.

Members of the Kadoka Area High School Choir sang the National Anthem.

The Manager introduced the directors from the various zones. He then recognized past employees of West Central and special guests.

The business meeting commenced with Manager Birkeland stating the official notice of the meeting was published in the October Cooperative Connections and it is posted at the registration desk. Manager Birkeland then read the proof of mailing.

President Riggle announced that the minutes of last year's Annual Meeting were published in the Cooperative Connections and asked if the members wished to have them read or was there a motion to approve the minutes as published. A motion was made, seconded and upon being placed before the membership, the motion was approved. Thereupon the president declared the motion carried and the minutes approved.

President Riggle announced that the Financial Report, the President's Report, and the Manager's Report were published in the Cooperative Connections and asked if the members wished to have them read or was there a motion to approve the reports as published. A motion was made, seconded and upon being placed before the membership, the

motion was approved. Thereupon the president declared the motion carried and the reports approved.

President Riggle and Manager Birkeland each gave their reports.

Manager Birkeland announced the retirement of David J Mertens, Lyman County Town Director.

Manager Birkeland then called upon the Legal Counsel for West Central, Jessica Hegge of Platte, South Dakota. Mrs. Hegge reported on the legal status of West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., as follows:

From a legal point of view, the past year has been successful and relatively uneventful.

A review of the minutes indicates that all actions taken during the past year comply with the by-laws, articles of incorporation, South Dakota Law, and RUS regulations.

Jessica Hegge, Corporate Attorney, announced the results of the Director election process. The Directors were elected earlier through the zone meeting process as defined in the Cooperative's By-Laws. This year four Directors were elected, each to serve a three-year term, and they are as follows:

- Lyman County – Town Director
 - Zone 1 – Cliff Uthe
- Jackson County – Town Director
 - Zone 3 – Rich Bendt
- Haakon County – Rural Director
 - Zone 4 – Kevin Neuhauser

President Riggle then called for unfinished business followed by any new business.

Kory Hammerbeck, CEO of Rushmore Electric, gave an update.

Jessie Tucker, Manager of Member Services, conducted prize drawings at intervals throughout the meeting.

There being no further business to come before the board, President Riggle declared the meeting adjourned.

**COOPERATIVE
CONNECTIONS****WEST CENTRAL
ELECTRIC**

(USPS No. 018-988)

President

Shad Riggle, Hayes

Vice President

Kenneth Miller, Draper

Secretary/Treasurer

Marty Hansen, Philip

Directors

Rich Bendt, Kadoka

Mike McQuiston, Fort Pierre

Kevin Neuhauser, Midland

Paul Patterson, Draper

Jim Smith, Vivian

Cliff Uthe, Presho

Jim Willert, Belvidere

Attorney

David Larson, Chamberlain

CEO/Manager

Jeff Birkeland, Murdo

**Our Mission is to Provide
Safe, Reliable Service
to our Member Owners.**

West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., is an
equal opportunity provider and employer.

**Call 605-669-8100
24-hour Dispatching**

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Design assistance by SDREA

Official Notice

OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS OF WEST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

The Annual Meeting of Members of West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., will be held at the Midland School Gymnasium in the city of Midland, Haakon County, state of South Dakota, on Wednesday, October 4, 2023, at 5:00 p.m., MDT, to take action on the following matters:

1. Report of officers and directors.
2. The announcement of four (4) directors of the cooperative.
3. Transact any and all other business, which may come before the meeting. In conjunction with the announcement of four (4) directors for three (3) year terms scheduled for this meeting, the following members have been nominated for directors as provided by the by-laws:
 - James Smith, Lyman County, Zone One (1), Rural Director,
 - Paul Patterson, Jones County, Zone Two (2), Rural Director,
 - Marty Hansen, Haakon County, Zone Four (4), Town Director,
 - Mike McQuiston, Stanley County, Zone Five (5), At-Large Director.

Marty Hanson – Secretary

74th Annual Meeting Agenda

Date: Wednesday, Oct. 4, 2023

Location: Midland School Gymnasium, Midland S.D.

Time: Registration Opens at 4 p.m. (MDT)

Meeting Agenda:

Business Meeting Called to Order at 5 p.m. (MDT)

Introduction of Cooperative Directors

Notice of Annual Meeting

Proof of Mailing

Minutes of 2022 Annual Meeting

President's Report

Manager's Report

Attorney's Report

Announcement of Directors

Unfinished Business

New Business

All attendants will receive a cooler bag. Cash drawings will be held throughout the meeting, and a delicious meal served by the Midland Fire Department will follow!

October is Fire Safety Month

Is your workplace or home fireproof? Each year, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) celebrates National Fire Safety Month in October. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2016, there were 88 occupational fatalities as a result of workplace fires or explosions. This is down from 2015, in which there were 121. While the statistics show that the number of fatalities due to fires or explosions in the workplace is on a downward slope, any number other than 0 is unacceptable and demands the attention from management, safety professionals and employees in every company. Not only do fires present a severe life safety hazard, they also can be detrimental to business success due to the possible destruction of business equipment and facilities. This campaign serves as a reminder to us all of the importance of fire safety awareness in both the workplace and our home lives.

The safety reminders communicated in the workplace can be easily translated to fire safety in the home. Establish a family emergency action plan, discuss escape routes with family members, and locate fire extinguishers in your home. Additionally, conduct a mock fire drill with your family members to ensure you and your loved ones know how to get out safely. During this drill, outline meeting places that are at a safe distance from the home. Designate a neighbor to contact for help in the event of an emergency. Simple exercises such as the aforementioned could mean the difference maker in your family making it out alive in the event of a fire in your home.

Below are key components to ensuring your workplace and home are fireproof:

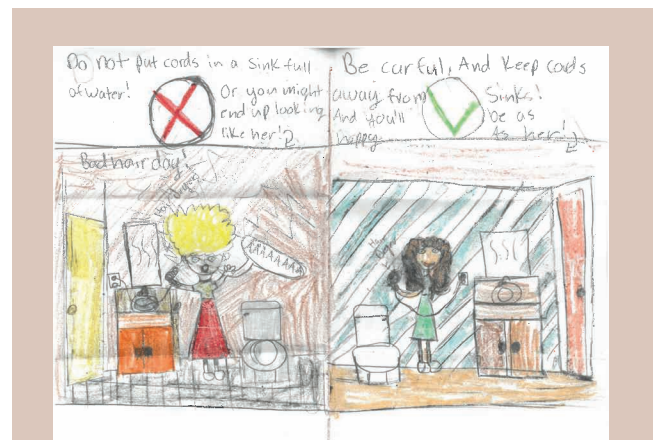
- **Eliminate Clutter** – Exercise good housekeeping. Clutter can easily become a fuel source in the event of a fire, allowing a fire to spread quickly. Furthermore, clutter can restrict access to emergency equipment and exit routes.
- **Fire Extinguishers** – Maintain the appropriate type and number of fire extinguishers. Conduct monthly and annual extinguisher inspections to ensure they are in good, working condition. Provide training for employees on the correct use of fire extinguishers.
- **Chemical Safety** – Use and store chemicals safely. Read hazard warning labels and safety data sheets

to determine flammability and other fire hazards. Ensure your chemical storage areas provide adequate ventilation for the storage of chemical or other hazardous substances.

- **Waste Control and Storage** – Limit the accumulation of flammable or combustible materials and residues as to prevent the risk for such materials contributing to a fire emergency.
- **Exits** – Ensure emergency exit route diagrams are posted and accessible in all areas of the facility for all employees to easily view. Additionally, ensure means of egress are well-lit with regulated exit signs and free from debris or clutter.

Remember it is always better to be proactive rather than reactive and it is best to alleviate hazards or hiccups in times of peace than in times of chaos. Utilize the above tips to reduce the risk for catastrophe or at least minimize the damage.

Source: Safety Resources, Inc.



Keep cords away from water!

Maddy Pannell, Age 12

Maddy Pannell advises people it's not safe to plug in appliances around water. Maddy is the daughter of Scott and Kim Pannell from Sioux Falls, S.D., members of Southeastern Electric Cooperative.

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.

PASTA PERFECT

ITALIAN SPAGHETTI

Ingredients:

1-8 oz. can tomato sauce
1-6 oz. can tomato paste
1 1/2 paste cans water
1 small onion, chopped
2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 tsp. garlic salt
1/2 tsp. chili powder
3 shakes cayenne pepper
1/8 tsp. black pepper
1 tsp. basil
1 tsp. oregano
1/2 to 1 lb. ground beef

METHOD

Combine all ingredients except ground beef. Cover and simmer 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Brown beef and add to sauce. Serve over cooked noodles. May add green peppers or mushrooms.

Gail Keating
Flandreau, S.D.

GARDEN HARVEST PASTA SHELLS

Ingredients:

2 tbsps. vegetable oil
2 medium zucchini, shredded
1/2 cup finely shredded carrots
2 cups chopped fresh broccoli
1 small onion, chopped
Salt and pepper
1 lb part-skim ricotta cheese
2 cups shredded mozzarella
1 egg, lightly beaten
1/4 cup grated parmesan
1 tbsp. dried basil
27.5 oz. jar pasta sauce
12 oz. pkg jumbo pasta shells, cooked and drained

METHOD

Heat oven to 350. In a large skillet heat oil, then saute broccoli, zucchini, carrots, and onions until tender. Season with salt and pepper. Set aside. In a large bowl, thoroughly combine ricotta, mozzarella, egg, parmesan, and basil. Add vegetables and stir to combine. Spread 1 cup of the pasta sauce evenly in a 9" x 13" baking dish. Fill pasta shells with the vegetable and cheese mixture and arrange in the baking dish. Spoon the remaining sauce over the shells. Cover and bake for 45 minutes. Uncover and bake another 10 minutes or until bubbly.

Faye Chambliss
Murdo, S.D.

CREAMY CHICKEN AND BACON PASTA

Ingredients:

8 oz. spaghetti
1 1/2 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 3/4-inch chunks
2 tbsps. flour
4 slices bacon
1 cup milk
4 oz. (1/2 package) cream cheese, at room temperature
1 1/2 tsps. basil leaves
1 1/2 tsps. garlic powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. coarse ground black pepper

METHOD

Cook spaghetti as directed on package. Drain well. Meanwhile, toss chicken with flour. Set aside. Cook bacon in large skillet on medium heat until crisp. Drain on paper towels. Set aside. Remove all but 1 tbsp drippings from skillet. Add chicken; cook and stir 4 minutes or until golden brown. Stir in milk, cream cheese and seasonings until well blended. Reduce heat to low; simmer 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Cut bacon into bite-size pieces. Add to skillet. Place spaghetti in serving bowl. Add chicken mixture; toss well. Serve immediately.

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.

Looking Back, Moving Forward

West Central Electric Cooperative Overcomes Challenges, Makes Steady Progress Over the Past Year



Jeff Birkeland
CEO

We may never make history, become a famous athlete, invent a new product or start a multi-million-dollar company, but whatever our dreams are at West Central Electric Cooperative, the willingness to “keep on keeping on” will determine, over time, our measure of success.

Long before Tom Brady won his seven Super Bowl rings, a young man from Georgia was told he was too small to be an NFL quarterback and too weak to take the punishment. But the perseverance of Frank Tarkenton made him one of the longest lasting quarterbacks in the game’s history.

At the time, he also passed for more yards than anyone else in professional football.

On a related football note, Vince Lombardi didn’t become a head coach in the NFL until he was 47. Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team. In his first three years in the automobile industry, Henry Ford went bankrupt twice.

During its first year in business, the Coca-Cola company sold just 400 Cokes. Frank Woolworth labored to save his first \$50, then saw three of his five chain stores fail. After having been rejected by Hewlett-Packard and Atari, Apple microcomputers had first-year sales of \$2.5 million. And, back in 1905, the University of Bern rejected a Ph.D. dissertation, saying it was irrelevant and fanciful. Albert Einstein was disappointed but not defeated.

The common denominator in all of these cases was perseverance – the art of believing in

oneself and going the extra mile to make those dreams and aspirations a reality.

At West Central Electric, we share in that determination to get the job done, no matter the adversity, the time involved, and the costs expended. And, we know something about going the extra mile.

In fact, our service territory covers 7,000 square miles. Your electric cooperative maintains 4,100 miles of transmission and distribution lines, which with 29 employees, equates to more than 141 miles per person. While the vast majority of businesses rely on growth, new customers and ever-rising prices, West Central Electric has added just 106 new members in the last 30 years. Yet, our 3,694 members have not had a rate increase since 2016.

Those are facts of which we should all be proud. Through advanced technologies, improved equipment, efficiencies and better training, coupled with true dedication and perseverance of all of our staff, West Central continues to provide safe, affordable and reliable electric energy to every member of our co-op family.

However, this success has not been without its challenges. In June of 2022, our service territory was slammed by three consecutive nights of severe storms that broke 250 distribution poles, as well as 75 transmission poles. In the ensuing weeks, linemen worked tirelessly to bring the system back on-line. In the aftermath of those early summer storms, West Central spent \$1,725,071 to repair damages from the storms.

Fortunately, we are pleased to report that in May of this year, your cooperative received \$1.46 million in FEMA reimbursements for the June storms. That is the quickest West Central has ever closed out a project of such intensity and scope.

And, in terms of your cooperative’s workers, they proved what British Prime Minister Winston Churchill once insisted when he said, “Kites rise highest against the wind – not with it.”

Operations Update

This past year, the co-op’s operations team has been busy with multiple projects. In continuation of our overhead to underground conversion projects, by the time this report is published, we should have completed the first three projects including five miles of conversion west of Murdo at an estimated cost of \$225,000; .75 miles of conversion at Okaton with an estimated cost of \$36,000, and; 7.5 miles of conversion at Hilland at an estimated cost of \$600,000.

In coming months, West Central Electric expects to complete three other conversion projects with mileage and anticipated costs as follows:

- South of Kennebec, 3 miles at \$135,000.
- South of Kennebec, 1.75 miles at \$78,750.
- West of Philip, 1.75 miles at \$78,750.
- Northeast of Presho, 3 miles at \$135,000.

As the song goes, the times, they are a changing. Project costs and lead times are substantially different than they were just five years ago. Materials are two to three times the cost and lead times and many items are still more than a year out from deliveries. Transformers are two years out on deliveries, once ordered.

Projects and Purchases

West Central Electric wrapped up its disposal/disbursement of



Line crews making repairs after the June 2022 storms.

all TransCanada materials. Some materials were bought from West Central, some from other co-ops, but all of these goods were originally purchased by TransCanada. Without the Keystone XL, West Central had no use for these materials, which were sold for scrap value.

A temporary line move for Highway 14 construction just east of Philip has been completed. We also completed the Chamberlain bridge inspection as required every four years. The co-op needed to inspect this because we have a transmission tie line with Northwestern Energy that is attached to the bridge.

West Central Electric received a new digger truck in Philip that was originally ordered in January 2021 and, over the past year, we also took delivery of a new wood-chipper ordered in January 2022, and purchased and received a new mini-excavator. We have been waiting from Ford on four new service trucks, but unfortunately, we were notified that we will need to reorder. One will be ordered as a 2023 model, and the other three will be 2024 models.

Capital Credit Retirement

West Central Electric retired \$800,000 in December 2022, which was returned to the membership.

Solar Trailer

Another learning tool used by West Central is Rushmore Electric's solar trailer. Delivered in June 2022, Rushmore Electric is currently putting the final touches on the trailer. It will be used at co-op events as a method to explain solar generation and the importance of dispatchable generation to the membership.

Ford Lightning

West Central Electric purchased a Ford F-150 Lightning in February as a learning tool for the co-op and its membership. We have many members with questions about electric vehicles and this allows us to help answer those. We are not pushing the EV narrative, but simply learning from the Lightning. We have written a couple of articles about what we have learned and the Lightning will be used all throughout our service territory.

Basin Tour

We were extremely pleased when 44 co-op members participated in the bus tour at Basin Electric. Participants toured Basin's North Dakota headquarters and learned about the

electrical generation and distribution business. While at the headquarters, they saw the power trading floor where Basin Electric buys and sells power on the open market.

The members also toured the Dakota Gasification Company, DGC, which produces a wide range of products made from lignite coal which are sold for profit. Among the products produced are anhydrous ammonia, ammonium sulfate, UREA, diesel exhaust fluid, (DEF), synthetic natural gas, liquid nitrogen, krypton, and xenon gases. The tour also included visiting the Antelope Valley Power Plant, the Freedom Coal Mine, and the Wilton Wind Farm.

Economic Development

West Central Electric has assisted three organizations in securing \$685,000 in economic development loan funds in 2023. They include Philip Hospital at \$300,000, Fun Time Rental at \$325,000, and the Milesville Volunteer Fire Department at \$60,000.



Milesville volunteer fire department finalized a \$60,000 economic development loan.

Pursuing Grants

West Central submitted two projects under the IJA (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) totaling 18 miles of three-phase line with a total cost of \$2.57 million. West Central's share of that would be \$771,000. The co-op is still waiting to hear if those projects will be awarded. We also applied for some grants under the ERA (Energy Improvements in Rural or Remote Areas) for a total of \$1.3 million. Those projects were not chosen to advance.

Saying Goodbye

Sadly, Rob Kaiser, West Central Electric's accountant

for the past 23 years, died in October. His loss is incalculable. Rod's mathematical abilities and memory were unmatched and will long be remembered.

After 29 years with West Central, Mike Trapp has retired. He had spent the last 18 months as an operations assistant and before that he served as the foreman in Midland. Mike knew



After 40 years total and 29 of them with West Central, Mike Trapp retired in 2023.

everyone and every line in his service area. As importantly, everyone knew Mike. Please join us and our co-op family in thanking him for his years of service and in wishing him the best in retirement.

Saying Hello

In any organization, they say the only constant is change. At West Central, it's no different. That's why we are pleased to announce the newest additions to our staff:

- Skylar Zomer – Apprentice lineman in Kadoka
- Braeden Walton – Journeyman lineman in Presho
- Beth Feddersen – Accountant in Murdo
- Chase Barnes – Apprentice lineman in Midland
- Steven O'Dell – Pole tester/groundman in Murdo
- Derek Wolf – Moving into the IT department

In the coming months and years, we fully expect these new employees to adhere to the

adage – if you want to leave footprints in the sands of time, you will likely be wearing work boots.

In closing, we would like to thank you for your support as members of our cooperative for the past year and invite you to attend West Central Electric's Annual Meeting in early October. We love where we live and who we serve and remain grateful that we reside in a region of the world where common sense and a work ethic still prevails.



Rob Kaiser is and will continue to be missed by many.

FOR THE LOVE OF HUNTING DOGS

Source: Travel South Dakota

A Successful Hunt May Depend on Your Dog

Shannon Marvel

shannon.marvel@sdrea.coop

With numerous television appearances and A-list clients under his belt, Day County resident and Lake Region Electric Cooperative member Tom Dokken has become one of the premiere hunting dog trainers of our time.

But you won't hear the modest pro brag about himself. Instead, Dokken gives credit to the hard work and the innate capabilities of the dogs themselves.

The 70-year-old Minnesota native has been professionally working with dogs over the last 50 years at his training facility, Dokken Oak Ridge Kennels, Inc. in Northfield, Minnesota.

It's one of the largest gun dog training kennels in the region.

His love for hunting alongside a canine

companion harkens back to his teenage years when he'd tag along to go hunting throughout the country with his friend and his friend's Labrador Retriever, Charlie.

"We were probably 16 years old when we started hunting together. He had a lab and I didn't have one. We hunted with that dog just about every weekend."

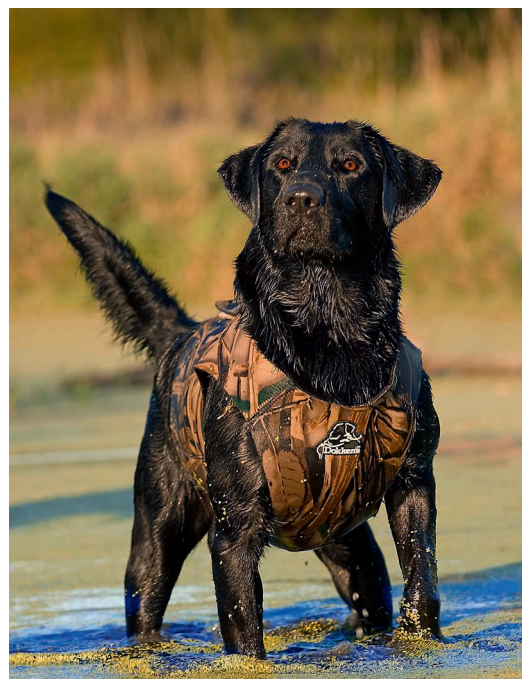
After a few years, Dokken decided it was time to get his own dog.

And to that dog goes all the credit, in Dokken's eyes.

"I started training her then I started running field trials. I did really well, not because of me, but I had a good dog who did

really well on a national level," he recalled.

After that, Dokken was hooked and knew training dogs was what he wanted to do for a living. He's since established



An adult black lab out hunting

himself as one of the top hunting dog trainers in the world, even bolstering a line of dog training products – Dokken Dog Supply – which is carried in sporting good stores across the country.

“That’s just as a result developing products we wanted for training themselves,” Dokken said of his supply company.

Some of the dogs Dokken has trained have hunted under some big names, including President George W. Bush and country music legend Hank Williams, Jr., along with many major professional athletes.

But it takes some prying to get that kind of info out of the humble Dokken, and he’s quick to emphasize that everyone that he does business with is treated the same, no matter what.

“Every customer is important. One person doesn’t get treated different than the other,” Dokken said.

His facility employs four full-time trainers, as well as office staff.

When Dokken isn’t training one of the 350 hunting dogs that come to his Minnesota training facility each year, he’s at home with his wife, Tina, in Day County.

“My wife and I live north of Webster. That’s our connection with the area. I’ve hunted down in the Lily area for years. We’ve had our place here 18 years or better,” Dokken explained.

“My mom’s family homestead is down in the Selby area, so as kids we’d be back on the farm for a good portion of the summer,” he added.

Dokken said his business trains pretty much any of the sporting, pointing and flushing breeds. But in the Upper Midwest, the more popular breed tends to be the Labrador Retriever.

Dokken has a special place in his heart for labs, which he described as a hardy breed able to withstand the punishing winter conditions known to challenge hunters in South Dakota during pheasant season.

And in South Dakota, pheasants are

king, according to Dokken.

“As far as population of pheasant – up in our area the weather sometimes knocks them back a little bit. Last year we had rain in December, which is a little bit of a factor when it comes to pheasant numbers,” Dokken said.

“The further south and west you get, the population changes too. Regardless, South Dakota numbers will always be top in the U.S.”

Hunters who have a dog in their arsenal have a much greater advantage over those who do not. For one, they can flush birds out of thick cover and, unlike the average human, have an absolute blast doing so.

“Without a dog – if you’re a pheasant hunter – you’re not going to have the ability to get the birds up and get them out of higher and denser cover. Finding birds that you’ve shot is going to be a real challenge as well. A dog is a great conservation tool as well,” Dokken said.

From a training standpoint, Dokken advises dog owners to start teaching their hunting partners good habits when they’re really young.

The earlier the training begins, the more success you’re setting the dog up for down the line.



Dokken with two adult labs

“Try to buy the best bloodlines that you can because if you do, in most cases your success rate just gets higher.”

Dokken says it boils down to three things: teaching, repetition and reinforcement. For the human, practicing patience is crucial.

“A majority the time the dog is not in the wrong, it’s that the dog can’t understand what you want,” he said.

The entire job is a dream for Dokken and his team, and one he hopes to continue for decades more to come.

“It’s what we do,” he said. “It’s a labor of love.”



Source: Travel South Dakota

Voting Authorization Necessary for Organizations

A number of questions seem to arise concerning voting at the Annual/Zone Meetings by non-individual members of the Cooperative, such as schools, municipalities, churches, organizations, and corporations. All of these members are entitled to representation and one vote, but the proper procedure must be followed to exercise this right. Each such member should see that a representative is designated in writing prior to the meeting. The representative must be a person who will not be voting another membership as no person shall be entitled to more than one vote on each matter submitted to a vote at the meeting. This written authorization must be in the following form and must be filed with the Secretary of the Cooperative prior to formal commencement of the meeting. To avoid errors, we urge you to get these in just as soon as possible for approval.

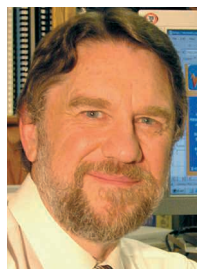
Authorization to Vote

This is to certify that the _____ of _____ in a duly assembled meeting, designated _____ who is a(n) _____ of said organization, to represent the _____ at the regular Annual/Zone Meeting of the members of West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., to be held October 4, 2023, and said person is authorized to cast such member's vote on all issues that may come before said meeting. The undersigned verifies that (s)he is the _____ of said organization and authorized to execute this instrument on behalf thereof.

State of South Dakota)
)ss.
County of _____)
On this ____ day of _____, 2023 before me the undersigned Notary Public of the State of South Dakota, personally appeared _____ known to me to be the person named in the above foregoing instrument, who acknowledged that (s)he executed the same for the purpose therein specified, (s)he being authorized so to do.

Notary Public, South Dakota
My commission expires _____, 20____

2023 Attorney's Report



David Larson
Attorney

Once Again, I would like to take the opportunity to encourage those of you who are planning to construct new grain bins to consult and work with the cooperative in deciding where to place the bins.

Every year, across the country, there is at least one incident in which someone working at or near a grain bin has tragically suffered death or injury by coming into contact with a power line. In addition, there are many more incidents in which the owners of the bins have been required to move an improperly placed bin or been required to pay the cost of moving a power line in order to avoid a dangerous situation. In all cases the problem could have been avoided by consulting with the cooperative first.

In the past, the cooperative has sent letters to all its rural members, reviewing some of the considerations that must be made in placing the bins and reminding the members of the necessity of consulting the cooperative before making any final decisions on placement of the bins. If you would like current informatin please feel free to call the cooperative.

A common misconception is that so long as the bin itself is not contacting the line you are ok. That is not true. In addition to clearance by the bin itself, a number of other factors need to be considered including the placement of access ports, use of probes, and portable auger use that might cause someone to come in contact with the line.

In placing a bin, there are three sets of legal requirements that must be looked at. The first of these is the cooperatives easement. The cooperatives easement generally prohibits building any structure within the lines right-of-way or which would interfere with the operation of the line in any way. In rural areas, the right-of-way generally exists within 20 feet on either side of the line is constructed. Anything constructed within the right-of-way is in violation of the easement and can be legally removed at your cost. That is not the end of the issue however.

The second factor to look at is South Dakota law which generally prohibits any act or activity that would result in any person, tool, equipment, machinery, or material used in the work to come within 10 feet of an overhead electrical line. Violation of this law is a Class 2 misdemeanor, punishable by fine of \$1000 or imprisonment for a period of 30 days, or both the fine and imprisonment. Violation of this law may also make the person responsible strictly liable for any loss or injury resulting from violation.

The third factor, and probably the most important, is the National Electrical Safety Code section specifically dealing with grain bins. These rules may require clearances of up to 15 feet on the "non-loading" side of the bin, and clearances well over 100 feet on the "loading side". These rules are actually much too complicated to set out in this report – which is why the cooperative urges you to get in contact with them prior to placing the bin.

Unfortunately, failure to work with the cooperative in the beginning gets everyone started off on the wrong foot. I would just like to let you know that everyone at the cooperative, including myself, would rather sit down with you and plan the placement of your bins in a safe and efficient manner than have to come out and tell you that that what you have already done has to be dismantled or changed. We certainly don't want to see any of you killed or injured. Please take the time to work with the cooperative and do things right.

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2022

Operating Revenues	2022	2021
Farm and Residential	\$9,479,294	\$9,050,699
Small Commercial	2,083,043	2,065,858
Large Commercial	4,980,351	5,016,285
Irrigation	140,827	130,801
Street Lighting	297,728	297,784
Sales to Others	350,371	322,835
Miscellaneous Electric Revenue	553,935	580,530
Total Operating Revenue	17,885,549	17,464,792
Operating Expenses		
Cost of Power	9,076,286	8,599,760
Operation and Maintenance Expense	2,536,997	2,694,925
Consumer's Accounting and Collecting	288,698	278,770
Electric Sales and Promotion Expense	319,657	295,237
General and Administrative Expense	1,486,064	1,312,820
Property Insurance Expense	66,297	64,651
Maintenance of General Property	189,419	197,202
Taxes	250,043	240,223
Depreciation and Amortization Expenses	1,707,996	1,693,813
Interest on Long-term Debt	983,818	940,195
Total Operating Revenue Deductions	16,905,275	16,317,596
Net Operating Margins	980,274	1,147,196
Interest Income	132,243	146,214
Generation and Transmission Capital Credits	1,034,341	289,927
Other Nonoperating Income	616	733,120
Net Margins for the Year	\$2,147,474	\$2,316,457

Balance Sheet

DECEMBER 31, 2022

What We Own	2022	2021
Total Cost of Electrical System (After Depreciation)	\$34,452,440	\$34,700,242
Other Investments	9,849,969	9,341,318
Cash and Cash Equivalents	1,968,577	214,530
Temporary Cash Investments	6,851,812	5,993,016
Receivables Less Reserves	3,517,368	1,542,360
Notes Receivable – Current Maturities	12,400	36,100
Materials and Supplies on Hand	2,066,362	1,571,652
Advanced Payments on Insurance, Etc.	80,933	52,468
Deferred Debits	8,205	-
Total Assets	58,808,066	53,451,686
What We Owe		
Total Borrowed from RUS, CFC and FFB	49,822,712	44,262,712
Total Paid on Loans	(16,958,220)	(16,292,903)
Balance Owed RUS, CFC and FFB	32,864,492	27,969,809
Accounts Payable and Other Liabilities	3,749,101	4,720,922
Margins and Equities		
Patronage Capital	12,825,297	12,230,091
Margins for Current Year	2,147,474	2,316,457
Other Equities	7,221,702	6,214,407
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$58,808,066	\$53,451,686

The financial statements of West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., were audited by Eide Bailly, LLP, Certified Public Accountants of Sioux Falls, S.D. A copy of the complete audit report is available for review at the cooperative headquarters.



Touchstone Energy Celebrates 25 Years with Commercial Debut

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives is encouraging member electric cooperatives and their member-owners to pop some popcorn, settle in, and join them in celebrating the organization's 25th anniversary on Nov. 29, when they'll debut their

newest line of 2024 commercials.

The historic milestone will commemorate a quarter-century of Touchstone Energy's drive to establish a universal brand – seen on t-shirts, logos, and even soaring hot air balloons – for co-ops nationwide. Select commercials from the lineup, which will feature on the Touchstone Energy website, will highlight the local South

Dakota prairie landscape and local co-op employees with Sioux Valley Energy.

Touchstone Energy Board of Directors President and Sioux Valley CEO Tim McCarthy said he is glad to see South Dakota being represented on a national scope. "We are excited to be celebrating this historic milestone," said McCarthy. "Touchstone Energy continues to be an invaluable resource for co-ops in South Dakota and throughout our nationwide network."

Touchstone Energy's journey began 25 years ago when a group of movers and shakers recognized the need for an outward-facing organization that would connect the image of

co-ops across the nation. Although individually small, cooperatives from all around the nation believed a unified brand would broaden and strengthen their presence. Together, these co-ops owned and operated more distribution lines than any other sector in the electric utility industry and served more than half of the American landmass. On Nov. 26, 1998, 17 founding co-ops established Touchstone Energy, powering through a time of regulatory uncertainty.

“In the late ‘90s, there were some revolutionary things happening in the energy industry,” said Jana Adams, executive director of Touchstone Energy. “The cooperatives really wisely said: as individual entities we are small, but if we come together and create a recognizable brand, we will have a better opportunity to compete in this evolving energy landscape.”

From the start, Touchstone Energy was set on making an impression. By purchasing six iconic Touchstone Energy branded hot air balloons and sponsoring notable events such as the famous NASCAR Talladega 300 race, Touchstone Energy quickly transformed into a nationally recognizable brand.

To date, Touchstone Energy’s membership has grown to nearly 700 co-ops, which now reaches more than 30 million member-owners across 46 states. Along with this remarkable growth, Touchstone Energy has enhanced its services, including advertising, social media management, and web development, among others. Over time, Touchstone Energy’s wide range of services, said Adams, have become a crucial communication resource for their membership.

“Our first national ad was in the early 2000s, and to this day, we run advertisements in every single zip code served by a Touchstone Energy cooperative,” said Adams. “We are

constantly innovating and giving our cooperative members the opportunity to highlight the great work they do and the achievements they have.”

Looking back on the last quarter century, Adams said Touchstone Energy is thrilled to connect to its original roots and celebrate its longstanding service to co-ops across the country.



Touchstone Energy celebrates 25 years while producing new commercials in South Dakota.



“We encourage everybody to join us on Nov. 29 for our 2024 national ad premier and to celebrate the 25 years behind us, but more importantly the many years ahead of us where we continue to work together,” she said.



STAFF



Jeff Birkeland
CEO/General
Manager



Scott Kittelson
Manager of
Operations



Kit Talich
Staff
Engineer



Seth Geigle
Line
Superintendent



Jessie Tucker
Manager of
Member Services



Stephanie Hespe
Staff
Assistant



Jill Rankin
Office
Manager



Cindy Fox
Billing Supervisor



Beth Feddersen
Accountant



Carrie Lolley
Administrative Asst.



Joni Moore
Member Services



Derek Wolf
IT Coordinator

Philip



Nathan Drury
Lineman
Foreman



Rhett Bothwell
Journeyman
Lineman

Presho



Shane Neiderworder
Lineman
Foreman



Grady Floyd
Journeyman
Lineman



Braeden Walton
Journeyman
Lineman



Jordan Jessop
Journeyman
Lineman

Kadoka



Landon Stout
Lineman
Foreman



Skylar Zomer
Apprentice
Lineman

Murdo



Dana DesLauriers
Lineman
Foreman



Greg Glaze
Journeyman/
Purchasing
Agent



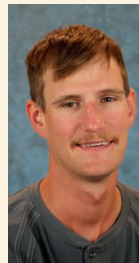
Jared Dowling
Technician/
Metering Tech



Rick Schiley
Journeyman
Lineman



JayTee Sealey
Apprentice
Lineman



Jackson Volmer
Journeyman
Lineman



Steven O'Dell
Pole Tester/
Groundsman

Midland



Dustin Vollmer
Lineman
Foreman



Chase Barnes
Apprentice
Lineman



Shad Riggle
President
Zone 5
Stanley County



Ken Miller
Vice President
Zone 2
Jones County



Marty Hansen
Secretary/Treasurer
Zone 4
Haakon County



Rich Bendt
Zone 3
Jackson County



Mike McQuiston
Zone 5
Stanley County



Kevin Neuhauser
Zone 4
Haakon County



Paul Patterson
Zone 2
Jones County



Jim Smith
Zone 1
Lyman County



Cliff Uthe
Zone 1
Lyman County



Jim Willert
Zone 3
Jackson County

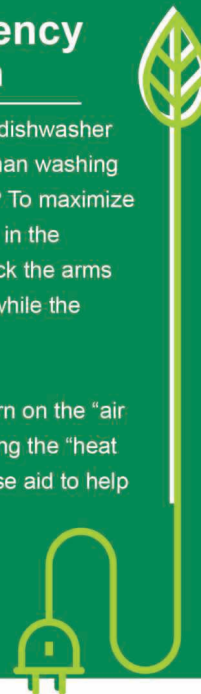


Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Did you know using your dishwasher is more energy efficient than washing a load of dishes by hand? To maximize efficiency, wash full loads in the dishwasher and don't block the arms or other parts that move while the appliance is in use.

For additional savings, turn on the "air dry" setting instead of using the "heat dry" setting and use a rinse aid to help dishes dry faster without spotting and streaking.

Source: Dept. of Energy





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.

SEPT 22-23
Holiday Arts & Crafts Fair
 9 a.m.
 Davison County Fairgrounds
 Activity Center
 Mitchell SD
 605-359-2049

SEPT 22-24
Coal Springs Threshing Bee
 Meadow, SD
 605-788-2229

SEPT 23
German Fest
 Webster, SD
 605-380-0588

SEPT 23
Springfield Dakota Senior Meals Fall Festival
 9 a.m.
 Springfield Community Building
 Springfield, SD

SEPT 24
Annual Bazaar & Fall Fest
 4-7 p.m.
 St. John the Baptist Catholic Church
 Wagner, SD

SEPT 30
Day of Wellness
 10 a.m.
 Sturgis Armory
 Sturgis, SD

SEPT 30
Mission Quilt and Bake Sale
 Zoar Lutheran Church
 Revillo, SD

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

OCT 6-7
Holman Acres Pumpkin Fest & Vendor Show
 Philip, SD
 605-441-1060

OCT 7
Spirit of Dakota Award
 Huron Event Center
 Huron, SD
 605-352-6073

OCT 12-19
"In Flanders Fields" Art Exhibition & Silent Auction
 Vermillion Public Library
 Vermillion, SD

OCT 14
Oktoberfest
Leo Lonney Polka Band
 6 p.m.
 Menno, SD
 605-660-1839

OCT 19-21
Fall Fundraising Rummage Sale
 Spearfish Senior Center
 Spearfish, SD
 605-642-2827

OCT 21
Fall Festival
 11 a.m.
 18473 U.S. HWY 83
 Onida, SD
 605-788-2229

OCT. 28-29
Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Association
 Ramkota Hotel Exhibit Hall
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-731-9155

NOV 11
Sisseton Area Merchants & Crafters Holiday Extravaganza
 Sisseton, SD
 605-698-7425

NOV 12
Lutefisk, Lefse & Meatball
 4-7 p.m.
 Trinity Lutheran Church
 Chamberlain, SD
 605-730-0553

NOV 24
Parade of Lights
 7 p.m.
 Dakota Avenue
 Huron, SD
 605-788-2229

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