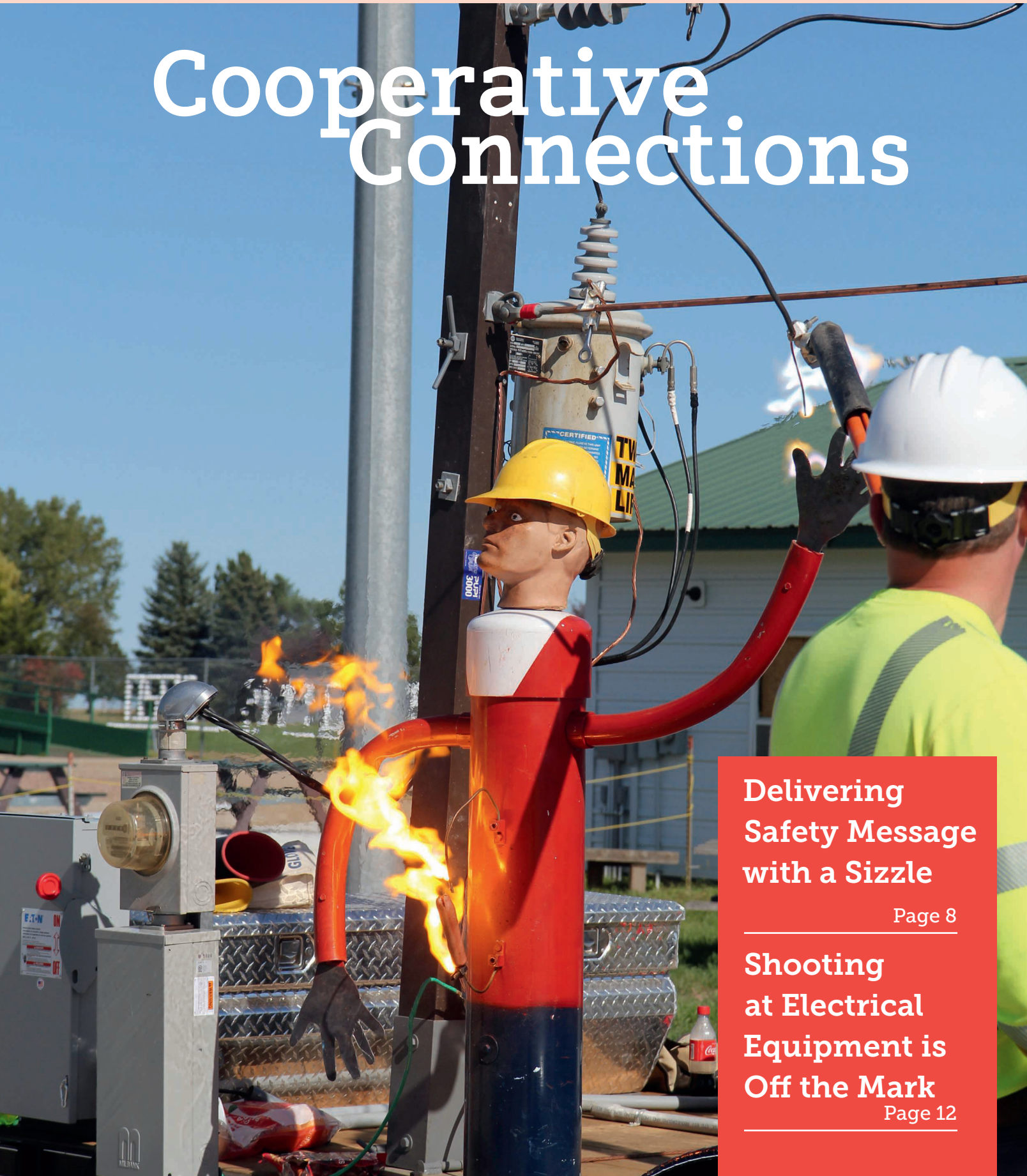




# Cooperative Connections



**Delivering  
Safety Message  
with a Sizzle**

Page 8

**Shooting  
at Electrical  
Equipment is  
Off the Mark**

Page 12





# Reminder on Electric Heat Meters

The 2019-2020 heating season is here. Oct. 1 marked the beginning of the heating season and West Central's electric heat rate.

To receive the maximum benefit of our electric heat rate, **please check to make sure your heat meter breaker is turned on.**

If you have electric heat but do not have a heat meter, please contact us at 669-8100 for more information about our electric heat rate.

If you are planning to update you current heating system or install electric heat on a new service, please call West Central Electric about the benefits of the electric heat rate and the rebates that are available for cooperative members.



**Happy Thanksgiving!**  
**West Central Electric will be closed**  
**Nov. 28 and 29 for Thanksgiving Day.**

## Official Notice of Publication Statement of Ownership, Management & Circulation (Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1. Publication Title: West Central Electric Cooperative Connections
2. Publication No.: 018-988
3. Filing Date: September 23, 2019
4. Issue Frequency: Monthly
5. No. of Issues Published Annually: 12
6. Annual Subscription Price: \$12
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: 204 Main Street, Murdo, Jones County, SD, 57559-0017
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: Same
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor & Managing Editor:  
 Publisher: West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., PO Box 17, Murdo, SD 57559-0017  
 Editor: Steven J. Reed, PO Box 17, Murdo, SD 57559-0017  
 Managing Editor: Same
10. Owner: West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., PO Box 17, Murdo, SD 57559-0017
11. Known bondholders/mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or more of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: RUS and CFC
12. Tax Status: Purpose, function and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
13. Publication Title: West Central Electric Cooperative Connections
14. Issue Date of Circulation Below: September 23, 2019

| 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation                               | Avg. No. of Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months | Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|
| A. Total number of copies (net press run)                          | 3619   | 3604                                |
| B. Paid and/or Requested Circulation                               |  |                                     |
| 1. Paid/Requested Outside County Mail Subscriptions                | 3571   | 3556                                |
| 2. Paid In-County Subscriptions                                    | 0  | 0                                   |
| 3. Sales Through Dealers, Carriers, Street Vendors & Counter Sales | 0  | 0                                   |
| 4. Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS                           | 0  | 0                                   |
| C. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation                         | 3571   | 3556                                |
| D. Free Distribution by Mail                                       | 48   | 48                                  |
| E. Free Distribution Outside the Mail                              | 0  | 0                                   |
| F. Total Free Distribution   | 48   | 48                                  |
| G. Total Distribution  | 3619   | 3604                                |
| H. Copies Not Distributed  | 0  | 0                                   |
| I. Total   | 3619   | 3604                                |
| J. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation                       | 99   | 99                                  |

Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation as of September 23, 2019

# West Central Electric

## Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 018-988)

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**Our Mission is to Provide  
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to our Member Owners.**

West Central Electric Cooperative,  
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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);

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Design assistance by SDREA

*Editor's Note: This is excerpted from Jeff's annual meeting speech.*

## A New Opportunity



**Jeff Birkeland, CEO**

[jeff.birkeland@wce.coop](mailto:jeff.birkeland@wce.coop)

First I want to take a minute and thank the board for giving me the opportunity to serve as your next general manager. My entire life has revolved around the rural electric cooperative. My dad's first job out of college was as a secretary at Moreau-Grand Electric and I watched him work his way up to the general manager's position. As a young kid, all I wanted was to be like my dad and that desire set my path to where I am at today. Today, I'm a very excited man with a tremendous amount of pride in my heart for West Central Electric, its directors, its employees and most importantly, you, the members. I do not take this new position and the responsibilities that come with it lightly.

I want you to know that you will get my very best, it's what you deserve.

I want to talk a little bit about West Central's Economic Development program. This is a program that is very important to our board of directors and to our members. Back in 2001, West Central Electric was approached by the Philip Hospital for some help with its hospital expansion. The board thought it was a project that would be of great benefit to our members and that set the ball in motion for our current economic development program. In December 2001, West Central Electric made its first economic development loan in the amount of \$716,000 to the Philip Hospital. It was a 10-year, 1 percent loan.

That \$716,000 was comprised of a \$450,000 loan that was paid back to USDA and \$266,000 which was paid to West Central and became the start of our revolving economic development loan program.

We have made a total of 11 loans totaling \$2,507,000. Among the organizations that have received these loans are Philip Hospital, Kadoka Care Center, Fort Pierre Community Foundation, City of Murdo, 4 Corners Fire Department, Philip Volunteer Fire Department and Reliance Volunteer Fire Department.

This year was our biggest year yet, in terms of number of loans and total dollar amount loaned out. We had three loans totaling \$1,610,000. Now, that dollar amount is much larger than we can handle at West Central, so to accomplish this, we joined the REED Fund, Inc., and no, that is not the Steve Reed Fund. The REED Fund stands for Rural Electric Economic Development and is headquartered out of Madison, S.D. By joining the REED Fund, our members now have access to a \$41 million loan base.

The first loan of the year was a \$70,000 loan to the Philip Volunteer Fire Department and they used the funds to purchase a new pumper truck that can be used in town as well as in the country. The second loan was to the Reliance Volunteer Fire Department for \$40,000 so they could renovate and expand their current fire hall. The last loan was to the Philip Health Services Hospital for \$1.5 million. This is the loan we needed the REED Fund for.

It is the largest economic development loan West Central has ever helped finance. Philip Health Services will be adding on to create 12 additional long-term care beds, a memory care unit, a therapy gym and dining area. They will also be adding seven new employees.

Now that's a pretty brief run down on 18 years of economic development. If anybody has any questions, you can catch me at the office.

In closing, I'd like to say that I look forward to the future and that we have 30 of the best employees working for you. So whatever may come up in the future, I assure you we'll meet it head on and get it taken care of.



# Electrical Safety Tips to Help Protect Homes and Businesses

Every year, electrical equipment, wiring, appliances and tools cause injuries and fires at both homes and workplaces.

Paying close attention to the condition of electrical equipment and taking appropriate and prompt action to correct electrical problems can help to ensure your safety and the safety of those around you.

Below are guidelines to help identify and reduce electrical hazards.

### Electrical Outlet Safety

- Avoid overloading outlets with too many appliances, and ensure that electrical loads are appropriate for the circuits.
- Unplug appliances when they are not in use to conserve energy, as well as minimize the opportunities for electric shock or fire.
- Use outlets instead of relying on extension cords and power strips. Consider having additional permanent outlets installed where needed.
- Use Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) in wet/damp areas like kitchens, bathrooms and outdoors.

### Electrical Cord Safety

- Inspect electrical cords to ensure that they are not frayed, cracked or damaged.
- Do not place electrical cords in high traffic areas, under carpets, or across doorways where they pose a potential tripping hazard or could be easily damaged.

### Certification and Awareness

- Ensure that all electrical products and equipment are certified by a nationally recognized testing laboratory, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), and read the manufacturer's instructions carefully.
- Allow only trained and qualified electrical workers to perform work on electrical equipment.
- Be aware of signs of electrical problems such as flickering lights and/or buzzing, sizzling or humming sounds from electrical systems.

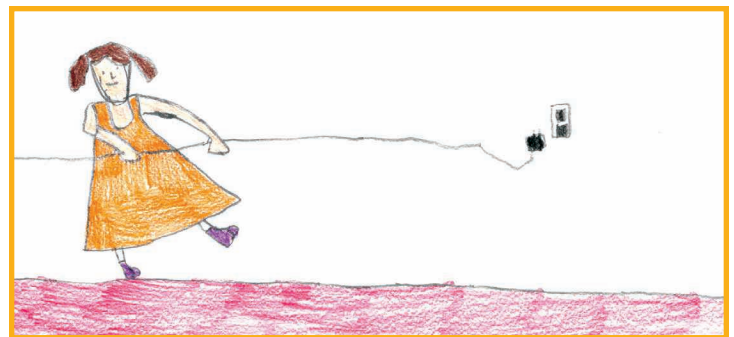
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## EMPOWER THE HEROES of TOMORROW.

One day, they'll be saving us!



### KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"Never jerk cords out of the outlets; grip the plug only."**

**Traci Tschetter, 8 years old**

Traci is the daughter of Ryan and Elaine Tschetter, Revillo, S.D. They are members of Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative, Milbank, S.D.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.



# Slow Cooker Sensations

## Slow Cooker Egg Casserole

|                                   |                                    |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 (32 oz.) bag frozen hash browns | 1-1/2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese |
| 1 lb. ham, cooked and cubed       | 12 eggs                            |
| 1 onion, finely chopped           | 1 cup milk                         |
| 1 green pepper, chopped           | 1/2 tsp. salt                      |
| 1 T. olive oil                    | 1/2 tsp. pepper                    |

Spray inside of slow cooker with cooking spray. In a small frying pan, saute onion and green pepper in oil until tender. Cool 10 minutes. Place 1/3 frozen hash browns in slow cooker. Add 1/3 ham, onion and green pepper mixture and cheese. Repeat layers, ending with cheese. In large bowl, beat eggs, milk, salt and pepper until well blended. Pour over hash browns. Cook, covered, on LOW for 10 to 12 hours or overnight until casserole is set and eggs are thoroughly cooked. Serves 12.

Mary Jessen, Holabird, SD

## Cream Cheese Chicken Taquitos

|                            |                           |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2 boneless chicken breasts | 8 oz. cream cheese        |
| 1 tsp. chili powder        | 1/3 cup water             |
| 1 tsp. garlic powder       | 1/2 cup shredded cheese   |
| 1 tsp. cumin               | 12 6-inch flour tortillas |

Combine chicken, chili powder, garlic powder, cumin, cream cheese and water in slow cooker. Cover and cook on LOW for 8 hours or 4 hours on HIGH. Place 1/4 cup chicken mixture into each tortilla. Top with 1 to 2 T. shredded cheese. Roll tightly and place in a single layer on greased baking sheet. Bake at 400°F. for 10 minutes or until tortillas are slightly browned and cheese is melted.

Cortney Reedy, Tea, SD

## Pork Sausage and Rice

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 2 boxes Uncle Ben's Wild Rice | 1 (8 oz.) can of mushrooms              |
| 1 lb. seasoned pork sausage   | 1 (10.5-oz.) can cream of mushroom soup |

Prepare Uncle Ben's rice as directed. Brown pork sausage. Combine all ingredients in slow cooker. Cook on LOW for 3 to 4 hours.

Robert Bernhardt, Aberdeen, SD

## Slow Cookers Tamale Pie

|  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 2 lbs. lean ground beef                                    | 1 (4 oz.) can chopped green chiles |
| 1 pkg. McCormick® Slow Cookers Chili Seasoning             | 1/2 cup water                      |
| 2 (14.5 oz. each) cans stewed tomatoes, cut-up             | <b>Topping:</b>                    |
| 1 (14.5 oz.) can kidney or pinto beans, drained and rinsed | 1 (8.5 oz.) box corn muffin mix    |
|  | 1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese    |

Cook ground beef in large skillet on medium-high heat until no longer pink; drain. Place in slow cooker. Add Seasoning Mix, tomatoes, beans, chiles and water; mix well. Cover. Cook 8 hours on LOW or 4 hours on HIGH. For the Cornbread Topping, if using low setting, increase to HIGH. Prepare corn muffin batter as directed on package. Drop batter by spoonfuls on top of simmering chili. Cover. Cook 30 minutes longer or until toothpick inserted into center of cornbread topping comes out clean. Sprinkle with cheese. Makes 10 servings.

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 362, Total Fat 14g, Cholesterol 89mg, Sodium 9340mg, Protein 26g, Carbohydrates 33g, Dietary Fiber 4g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Mississippi Pot Roast

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1 3 to 4 lb. chuck roast  | 1/4 cup butter                              |
| 1 pkg. ranch dressing mix | 4 to 5 pepperoncini peppers with some juice |
| 1 pkg. au jus gravy mix   |   |

Place roast in slow cooker. Sprinkle dressing mix and au jus mix on top. Place peppers on top of the mixes; add butter. Cook on LOW 8 hours. *Note: Do not add any water or broth to this. It will make enough liquid as it cooks.*

Jean Osterman, Wheaton, MN

Please send your favorite holiday, soup or brunch 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 2019. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

Editor's Note: This is excerpted from Steve's annual meeting speech.

## Farewell



**Steve Reed, Past CEO**

**Throughout the history of West Central, one of our proudest accomplishments has been our record of safety.**

Thank you to those of you who attended your cooperative's annual meeting – a milestone 70th anniversary of your co-op.

In many ways, it was a day of celebration – an annual observance in which we recount all that we have accomplished together over the past year, and a day on which we note some of the challenges that await your electric cooperative in the days ahead. During the meeting, I touched on a couple of topics and more can be gleaned from the annual report that was sent out earlier.

Throughout the history of West Central, one of our proudest accomplishments has been our record of safety. We once amassed 1 million man-hours without a lost-time accident. And, we're happy to report that we went through another year without any lost-time accidents involving our employees. That's good for our workers and that's good for our members.

Virtually every year, West Central has had to deal with the impact of weather in one form or another. And 2019 was no different. We started the year with severe cold, followed by heavy snow and then severe flooding. The adage in South Dakota of "if you don't like the weather just wait a few minutes" was certainly true this year.

While most of the world hates change, we recognize that change is necessary to achieve progress. Therefore, as we continue to embrace more underground, our equipment needs are evolving and changing. This past year, we upgraded our trencher to a much larger machine and we will be upgrading our fault-finding equipment this fall.

We continued our pole-testing program in 2019. It still amazes me that the 1950s-vintage poles continue to test better than poles produced in the 1990s. As we have previously noted, we are extremely appreciative of past boards who insisted on high-quality poles in the formative years of the co-op.

I'm pleased to report that the co-op remains on firm financial footing. The cooperative ended 2018 with excellent margins and met all its lender's financial requirements.

After four decades with West Central, I am most proud of all we have accomplished – together. Someone much wiser than me once observed that leadership is the ability to put the right people in the right jobs and then sit on the sidelines and be a rousing good cheerleader. I've been extremely fortunate in that regard and though today I question some of the decisions I made early in my tenure, I've never been more confident that your cooperative's management team is prepared to meet any challenge that faces them.

The board has promoted our CFO, Jeff Birkeland, a 25-year employee of West Central, to become only the fourth CEO in the co-op's history. He will guide the co-op forward in the years to come. I think they made an excellent choice.

Jeff realizes, as I came to understand over time, that a good manager is not a person who can do the work better than his men and women; he is a person who can get his men and women to do the work better than he can. And, he knows that everyone in this organization, from our members and board to our linemen and office staff, truly wants a leader who will inspire us to be what we know we can be.

The time has come for me to say thank you. I feel a little bit like one of those people on an awards show when they are called up, and only have two minutes to recognize the people who have had an impact on their 43-year career with the cooperative. I am sure I will forget someone, but you truly are all on my mind and have had a big impact on my life and career.

First, I want to take the opportunity to thank my parents who provided me the guidance and leadership to succeed in today's world. I followed in my father's footsteps, as he was the manager of Moreau-Grand Electric starting in 1966. Since 1966, there has been a family member as a CEO with an electric co-op in South Dakota. I'm also very proud of the fact that my sister, Char, who is the CEO of Northern Electric Cooperative in Bath, will continue that tradition.

I would not have been successful if it weren't for the people who supported me throughout my career. This started very early with my relationship with Carol Palander, Hermine Bradley and George Fosheim. They taught me the cooperative way and helped me through the many challenges in my early



years. They were the ones that encouraged me to apply for the CEO position. I will be eternally grateful to these three people who contributed so much to me and taught me so much.

I'm also grateful to the board that promoted me to CEO in 1985. This group of 10 directors gave me the opportunity to lead this great organization. It is only as I get older that I wonder what they must've been thinking at the time to give a 27-year-old the keys to the car and said don't break it. I have grown to respect their judgment over the years and appreciate their forthright manner. I've been blessed through the years with three great board chairmen, leaders in their own right, starting with Joe Hieb who continually told me, "Time is on your side, be patient." I'd like to think I'm a very patient person, but I've been told otherwise. Charles Oller, who served on the Rushmore board and was chairman for many years, provided good common-sense leadership and direction for me and the co-op. Mike McQuiston has assumed the mantle, as chairman of the board. Mike has ascended to the level of being on the board of Basin Electric. He is the only board member we've ever had at that level. We believe that's a great accomplishment and great asset to the co-op. I thank all three of these chairmen for providing guidance and direction for the co-op.

I developed many friendships with people from all areas of the country over these past many years. One of those was Bart Birkeland, Jeff's father, who also became a CEO within a year after I did. We developed a relationship that continues today. Bart, who retired several years ago, has agreed to take me under his wing on this retirement thing.

Vic Simmons, with the many discussions we have had over the years on rates and contracts. Dick Johnson, a friend and confidant in my later years, and once again all of those contemporaries that I have been associated with over the past 40-plus years.

As I look back on my career and think that in 43 years, I attended more than 500 board meetings, 43 annual meetings and countless other meetings throughout the country, I have missed only one board meeting due to the death of my father. A fact I am very proud of.

The co-op has more than \$50 million in physical assets but its greatest asset continues to be its employees – dedicated, hard-working people that have done a lot. They are there through thick or thin. I've had the pleasure of working with more than 110 full-time employees during my tenure, as well as countless other part-time employees. I have established friendships that have lasted a lifetime.

We thank the employees for their service. In the earlier years, I recognized we needed to change how we were structured and operated to meet the challenges we were facing. This change started with the addition of Dean Nelson as manager of operations in 1989. Together, we formulated a plan to consolidate our operations and make our work practices uniform throughout the system. This was the first leg in creating a strong leadership team. This was followed quickly by the addition of Joe Connot as our manager of member services, followed a few years later by Jeff Birkeland as CFO.

With this group, we laid out a strategy and discussed ways to improve the system. We had many lively debates and discussions, but at the end of the day, we were always able to come to a consensus.

I owe a special thank you to Joe Connot. Joe and I met back in 1976 when we both attended line school together. As Joe will remind me, he has known me longer than both of my wives and we have a friendship that continues today. Thank you to Joe for all you've done for me over the years.

I could go on with many more employees, Justin Bryan, Sheila Hurst, Susie Rankin, Ralph Byre, Eddie Arthur, Norm Payne, Scott Kittelson, Jessie Tucker, Kit Talich, Seth Geigle, Jill Rankin, Rob Kaiser and others who all were very helpful in moving

the cooperative forward. I say thank you to all the current and former employees.

Over the years, the board has changed, but the commitment has remained the same, doing what was in the best interest of the membership. I am extremely appreciative for what the current board has done for not only me, but the entire co-op. I know they've put a lot of time and effort into where they want to go in the future and I believe they've selected the right person in Jeff. I wish them all the success in the world, particularly since I intend to remain a member of the co-op. I'm sure it will be interesting the first time I go into the office to visit Jeff and I will be on the wrong side of the desk.



I also want to thank you, the members, who made this journey so enjoyable for me. The difficult times, rate increases, storm jobs. It is best summed up with a note that I received from Richard Doud in 1985. I had just become CEO, he wished me well, congratulated me and thought that I would do a good job. I cherish that note to this day. Again, thank you to all the MEMBERS for being supportive all these years.

In closing, I also need to thank my family: Ryen, Lucas, Sarah, Kaitlin and Whitney, their spouses and all of my grandchildren. I so look forward to spending more time with them. And, I thank my wife, Debra.

Again, thank you for all you've done as I look forward to the next journey of my life.





Dakota Energy lineman Brandon Moore draws an arc on the high voltage demonstration as DEC's Greg Palmer explains the dangers of getting close to electrical equipment.

# CO-OPS DELIVER SAFETY MESSAGE

## High Voltage Trailer Brings Safety Messages to Local Communities

**Brenda Kleinjan**

editor@sdrea.coop

The hum of electric current arcing can be heard split seconds before the eye registers the glowing arc on the wire and the flames shooting from the ends of a grapefruit attached to a human-like model of the rural electric cooperatives' high voltage demonstration trailer.

As the hum subsides and the gasps of Miller High School students dwindle, Dakota Energy Cooperative's Greg Palmer continues his explanation of electricity's need to find a path to ground.

"This will show you what would happen to your body



Moore shows the scorched insides of a grapefruit that had been used on the high voltage demonstration trailer.

Photos by Brenda Kleinjan/SDREA



**“This will show you what would happen to your body internally if you were to come in contact with 7,200 watts of electricity.”**

internally if you were to come in contact with 7,200 volts of electricity,” said Palmer, who works out of the Huron, S.D.-based cooperative’s Miller office. Palmer, along with lineman Brandon Moore were part of the Miller High School FFA Chapter’s Ag Safety Day in early October.

The duo used a newly constructed demonstration trailer used by South Dakota’s electric cooperatives to deliver safety messages to student groups, community groups, fire departments and others across the state. The co-ops have been using one trailer for more than two decades and this fall added the second trailer to the safety fleet.

Moore continues the demonstration, draws an arc on the example power lines.

“Electricity travels at the speed of light – you can’t just let go,” explains Palmer. “You can’t see it, you can’t smell it. The only time you see it is when something bad is about to happen.”

Moore removes the grapefruit from the demonstration trailer and cuts it in half.

With this grapefruit, it looks normal from the outside, you can see where the electricity went in and out. But when you cut it open, you see what it does to the inside of the body – it chars everything,” Palmer explains.

“You’ve heard the same story before: don’t climb on the green boxes, don’t fly kites near power lines. But especially this time of year, be aware of where power lines and underground boxes are located,” Palmer said.



Employees at Moreau-Grand Electric helped construct the state’s second High Voltage Demonstration trailer used by South Dakota electric cooperatives.

Photo by Roger Lawien/Moreau-Grand

“This morning we changed a pole because someone ran into it with a (silage) chopper and broke it off,” Palmer said.

Palmer went on to explain that if an accident like that happens and the power line comes in contact with the equipment or tractor, the best plan is to stay in the tractor or piece of equipment until the line can be de-energized.

For information about bringing this safety demonstration or other safety demonstrations to your school, community group or fire department, contact your local electric cooperative.



Miller High School students examine the insides of a hotdog held by Dakota Energy’s Greg Palmer. The hotdog is used as an example of what an electrical contact can do to human muscle. On the Cover: Flames shoot out the ends of an energized hotdog as Brandon Moore guides an electrical current into the demonstration unit to show the impact an electric contact has on the human body.





# 70TH ANNUAL MEETING HELD IN MURDO

## Reed Retires and Birkeland takes over as CEO

**Jessie Tucker**

[jessie.tucker@wce.coop](mailto:jessie.tucker@wce.coop)

On Oct. 2, West Central Electric held its annual meeting at the Harold Thune Auditorium in Murdo, S.D. An estimated 320 guests partook in the evening's events which included the meeting, meal and prize giveaways.

After Rev. Ray Greeneth gave the invocation and the national anthem was sung, Board President Mike McQuision officially called the meeting to order at 5 p.m. (CDT).

The board's report was given by Mike McQuision and among other things, spoke of succession planning and how Jeff Birkeland has been named the next CEO, after Steve Reed retires.

"With big shoes to fill, Jeff has been attending training to take over his new position, but I have no doubt that he is up to the challenge," finished McQuision.

In his speech, CEO/Manager Steve Reed informed members of project updates and also showed videos provided from other staff members. Jeff Birkeland also spoke of the current economic development loans and gave an overview of this program. Reed then gave special recognition to certain people who made a difference in his 43-year long career.

"I also want to thank you, the members, who made this journey so enjoyable for me. The difficult time, rate increases, storm jobs. It is best summed up with a note that I received from Richard Doud in 1985. I had just become CEO, he wished me well, congratulated me and thought I would do a good job. I cherish that note to this day. Again, thank you to all the members for being supportive all these years."

Board director Shad Riggle presented service awards to Journeyman Linemen Dana DesLauriers, Rick Schiley and Derek Wolf



for five years; Journeyman Lineman Dustin Vollmer and Staff Assistant Rob Kaiser for 20 years; Journeyman Lineman Greg Arthur and CFO Jeff Birkeland for 25 years; Operations Manager Scott Kittelson for 30 years; and Foreman Lyle Linderman for 35 years. Incoming Manager Birkeland then recognized retiring employee Steve Reed for 43 years of service.

Attorney David Larson presented his legal report and announced that three directors were appointed to three-year terms:

- DJ Mertens, representing Lyman County;
- Rich Bendt, representing Jackson County; and
- Kevin Neuhauser, representing Haakon County.

Guest speaker Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative Manager Vic Simmons spoke on power supply and other challenges relative to the cooperative world.

The meeting featured a free roast beef dinner prepared and served by the Murdo Lions Club. Cash drawings were held throughout the evening.





Member Services Manager Jessie Tucker poses with WCEC members who won prizes at the co-op's 70th annual meeting.



CFO Jeff Birkeland gave an update during the meeting. The WCEC board has selected him to become the co-op's fourth general manager.



Members of the Murdo Lions Club served the meal.



Part of the WCEC employee group poses for a photo.

# Employees' Years of Service Recognized

During the annual meeting, nine employees with a combined 170 years of service to the members of West Central Electric Cooperative were recognized for their on-going dedication.

Hats off to these employees - and all your employees - for their hard work!



**Lyle Linderman**  
Foreman  
35 Years



**Scott Kittelson**  
Operations Manager  
30 Years



**Greg Arthur**  
Journeyman Lineman  
25 Years



**Jeff Birkeland**  
CFO  
25 Years



**Rob Kaiser**  
Staff Assistant  
20 years



**Dustin Vollmer**  
Journeyman Lineman  
20 Years



**Dane DesLauriers**  
Journeyman Lineman  
5 Years



**Rick Schiley**  
Journeyman Lineman  
5 Years



**Derek Wolf**  
Journeyman Lineman  
5 Years

# Don't Shoot!

## Vandals and Errant Shots Wreak Havoc with Equipment

**Brenda Kleinjan**

editor@sdrea.coop

**"You get really cold weather and the line tightens up and that's when you'll see those weak spots break."**

With fall comes an increase of outdoor hunting activities.

One thing not on any responsible hunter's bag list is electrical equipment.

The irresponsible actions of those firing the shots can have costly – and untimely – consequences for electric cooperative members.

Shots fired at electric equipment can cause immediate, noticeable damage, often times causing for emergency, after-hours dispatch of crews to locate and repair the problem disrupting power to members.

Other times, the damage weakens a line or piece of equipment. Time, weather or storms can cause the weakened area to fail, likely at an inconvenient time for members.

"It never comes at a convenient time," said Dale Schwagel, line superintendent at Traverse Electric Cooperative in Wheaton, Minn., of when the damage occurs...and when past damage usually surfaces.

"You get really cold weather and the line tightens up and that's when you'll see



Fall decor at some South Dakota electric cooperatives carry an important safety reminder about not shooting at or near power lines.



Bullet holes caused by vandals riddle a co-op transformer.





Routers are being installed at Traverse Electric Cooperative in Wheaton, Minn., as part of a system-wide meter upgrade.

When vandals target power lines and electrical apparatus, system reliability is at stake.



A newly installed router at Traverse Electric Cooperative in Wheaton, Minn., was destroyed by a vandal's bullet, causing more than \$1,600 in damage.

those weak spots break,” said Schwagel.

The co-op has been relatively vandal-free for the last several years.

However, this summer the co-op encountered damage to newly installed routers which are part of a system-wide meter upgrade.

Schwagel estimates the cost of the damage will total more than \$2,500 once labor is tacked on to replacing the \$1,600 piece of equipment.

“Shooting this piece of equipment is a cost to the co-op and the members. Ultimately that’s where the costs go,” said Schwagel.

If you see damage to co-op equipment, report it to the co-ops so repairs can be made.





Pierre Junior Shooters took the top spot on the podium at the Daisy National BB Gun Championship Match while the Marshall County 4-H Sharp Shooters took the third tier.

## South Dakota Youth Are

# NATIONAL TOP GUNS

**Daisy®**

<https://www.daisy.com/daisy-nationals/>

Each year the Daisy National BB Gun Championship Match features youth teams from across the nation competing in this five-meter, four-position National Championship match, and this year the Pierre Junior Shooters from Pierre, S.D., edged the team out of Walton County, Ga., to take home the Gold Medal and traveling trophy. The event wrapped Saturday night, July 6, with a festive medal ceremony that named not only the Team National Championship, but also Championships in Individual, Alternate and Champion Divisions.

Sixty-four teams converged on Rogers, Ark., for the 54th year of the “Daisy Nationals.” Teams consist of five shooters and two alternates ages 8 to 15, who have completed the Daisy Curriculum and other training provided by organizations such as the 4H Shooting Sports, Royal Rangers, the American Legion and other community and youth-based clubs. Teams must also place first, second or third in their state’s NRA-sanctioned contest to get an invite.

“The Daisy Nationals is a celebration of youth competitive shooting,” said Daisy Public Relations Director Lawrence Taylor. “Competitive BB gun shooting is your gateway to the shooting sports. We’ve had youth compete in the Daisy Nationals who went on to compete – and win – in Olympic shooting events.”

Youth competitors shoot 10 shots from each of four positions – standing, kneeling, sitting and prone – at the target placed at 5 meters. They shoot Daisy Model 499B Champion BB guns, billed as the world’s most-accurate BB gun. Each year multiple shooters place all 10 shots in the bullseye.

There’s also a safety aspect to this match. On the first day, every competitor takes a 50-question written test that covers gun safety, match rules and shooting knowledge. The results of the test make up 20 percent of each competitor’s final score and that can be the difference between the Gold and Silver medals.

- Daisy National BB Gun Championship Match Top 5 Teams**
- Pierre Junior Shooters**  
Pierre, S.D.
- Walton County 4H**  
Walton County, Ga.
- Marshall County 4H Sharp Shooters**  
Marshall County, S.D.
- Humboldt Sharpshooters**  
Humboldt, S.D.
- Permian Basin Young Guns**  
Midland, Texas



An award is given to the team that scores highest on the test, and this year for the first time, three teams from South Dakota tied to win this award: the Humboldt Sharpshooters, Marshall County and the Pierre Junior Shooters.

Eric Bird from Wyandotte County, Kan., shot a 488 with 21 bullseyes to win the Individual National Championship, and he had a perfect score on the written test. Right on Bird's heels was Anthony Stacy from Walton County, Ga., who shot a 485 with 21 bullseyes. The tightest race in the Individual Division was between Stacy and bronze medal winner Irene VanDyke of Carvelius, Ore., who also scored 485 but had two less bullseyes.

In the Team Division, winning the Silver Medal was Walton County 4H out of Georgia. Walton County scored 2,382 with 87 bullseyes – two more than the Pierre Junior Shooters, who won the event with 2,385. The Marshall County 4H Sharp Shooters took the Bronze Medal with a score of 2,363 with 70 bullseyes. Rounding out the top five was the Humboldt Sharpshooters from Hartford, S.D., followed by the Permian Basin Young Guns from

**An award is given to the team that scores highest on the test, and this year for the first time, three teams from South Dakota tied to win this award: the Humboldt Sharpshooters, Marshall County and the Pierre Junior Shooters.**

Midland, Texas.

“Competitive shooting teaches mental focus, patience, coordination and the bigger lessons of practicing to improve a skill,” Taylor said. “That’s very easy to see in shooting because your shot groupings

are big when you first start, but as you practice those groups shrink and get tighter – it’s the perfect illustration of how you improve through practice.

“We’ve also seen how this program improves the lives of those with attention disorders or issues. Competitive shooting requires disciplined breathing and muscle memory and tack-sharp focus. Coaches have repeatedly told us how kids who were struggling with school or other issues have improved in those areas after getting into competitive shooting.”

The Daisy Nationals match rules state that a youth who shoots on a team this year must sit out and let another youth have the opportunity to shoot on the team. But, these former team members are not left out – they can attend and compete in the Champions Match.

The Pierre Junior Shooters have captured national titles in 2004, 2005, 2008, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2016, as well as 2017, to go along with the 2019 crown. South Dakota has also had strong national finishes in the 1980s and ’90s – as well as top 10 finishes in other years of competition.

## S.D. 4-H Shooting Sports Teams Finish Strong

South Dakota 4-H members received national recognition during the 2019 4-H Shooting Sports National Championships held in Grand Island, Neb. June 23-28, 2019.

Of the 659 youth from across the United States who competed, 36 were South Dakota 4-H members who qualified during the 2019 4-H Spring Shoot in Pierre and the 2018 4-H Fall Shoot in Mitchell.

The South Dakota teams who received national recognition include:

Hunting Skills placed third overall, third in Wildlife ID, second in General Skills and third in Decision Making. The team had top ten finishes throughout the competition including Kaylee Bosma of Lincoln County who placed ninth in General Skills, Hunter Laverack of Bennett County who placed fifth in Decision Making and Dylan Singrey of Brookings County who placed second in General Skills and sixth overall. The hunting skills team was coached by SDSU Extension Youth Safety Field Specialist John Keimig.

Air Rifle placed third overall, second in 3 Position, second in Standing, and fourth in Silhouettes. Throughout the competition, members of the team were recognized with top ten finishes in different phases. Justin Merriman of Hughes County was recognized as first in 3 Position, fourth in standing and eighth overall, Jessica Hays of Hughes County placed in each phase and seventh overall and Alexandra Smith of Hughes County placed seventh in Standing, 10th in Silhouettes and 10th overall. The air rifle team was coached by Sean Kruger, a 4-H Volunteer in Hughes County.

For more information on 4-H shooting sports, contact John Keimig, SDSU Extension Youth Safety Field Specialist by email or call 605.688.4167.



Third-place Hunting Skills team consisted of, from left, Cloe Swanson of Minnehaha County, Kaylee Bosma of Lincoln County, John Keimig with SDSU Extension, Dylan Singrey of Brookings County, Hunter Laverack of Bennett County.

Photo Courtesy of Dawn Foiles



Third-place Air Rifle members were Justin Merriman of Hughes County, Eli Dissing of Minnehaha County, Alexandra Smith of Hughes County, Sean Kruger of Hughes County and volunteer Jessica Hays of Hughes County.

Photo Courtesy of Dawn Foiles

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**October 19**

4th Annual Fall Festival, East Pierre Landscape and Garden Center, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Pierre, SD, 605-224-8832

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**October 19**

Spooky Science, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

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**October 19-January 5**

Pheasant Hunting Season, Statewide, Pierre, SD, 605-223-7660

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**October 20**

United Methodist Church Bazaar, 5 to 7 p.m., Auditorium, Draper, SD, 605-669-2869

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**October 23**

Methodist Church Bazaar, 5 p.m., Beef, ham, fried chicken and all the trimmings, Reliance, SD

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**October 25-27**

Autumn Festival, An Arts and Crafts Affair, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-331-2889

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**October 25-27**

Zoo Boo, Great Plains Zoo, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7003

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**October 26**

ZOO BOO, Bramble Park Zoo, Watertown, 605-882-6269

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**October 26**

Scare in the Square, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

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**October 31-November 2**

Ringneck Festival and Bird Dog Challenge, Huron, SD, 605-352-0000

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**November 1-2**

First Chance Bonanza, PRCA Rodeo, Brookings, SD, [www.suttonrodeo.com](http://www.suttonrodeo.com)



Photo courtesy: Harvest Halloween

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**November 2**

Fall Fling Craft/Vendor Fair, Dakota Christian School, Corsica, SD, 605-243-2211

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**November 9**

Area Merchants and Crafters Annual Holiday Extravaganza, Sisseton, SD, 605-698-7425

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**November 9**

Hairball, Mitchell, SD, 605-995-8430

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**November 15-December 18**

Black Hills Christmas Tree Permit Season, Custer, SD, 605-673-9200

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**November 16**

Christmas Craft Fair, Legion Hall on Main Street, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Free admission, Tripp, SD, Contact Becki Hauser at 605-480-3009

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**November 22-23**

Holiday Arts Christmas Craft Show, Masonic Hall, Mitchell, SD, 605-359-2049

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**November 22-January 5**

Winter Wonderland, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-275-6060

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**November 26-December 26**

Christmas at the Capitol, Pierre, SD, 605-773-3178

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**November 29-30**

1880 Train Holiday Express, Hill City, SD, 605-574-2222

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**November 30**

Holiday Celebration and Winter Market, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

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**December 7**

Christmas in the Village Craft Fair, Community Center, Oacoma, SD, Contact Leslie at 605-730-1076

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**December 7**

Frontier Christmas, Lake City, SD, 605-448-5474

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**December 7**

Holidazzle Light Parade, Spearfish, SD, 605-717-9294

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**December 7-8, 14-15, 21-24 and 27-28**

1880 Train Holiday Express, Hill City, SD, 605-574-2222

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**December 14-15**

Black Hills Cowboy Christmas, Lead, SD, 605-584-2067

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**December 15-March 31**

South Dakota snowmobile trails season, Lead, SD, 605-584-3896

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**January 7-9**

Dakota Farm Show, Vermillion, SD, 800-873-1411

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**January 16-17**

Media One Funski, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-339-0000

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.