

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Mitchell Technical College launches careers in a wide range of fields including training for linemen like Lacreek Electric's Matt Kruid.
Photo by Billy Gibson

Tech Training

Mitchell Technical College
Pages 8-9

Promoting tribal tourism
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Power Line Maintenance



Jeff Birkeland
CEO/Manager

Have you ever heard the term “floater?” It’s a word we often use in our industry, and it refers to an electrical wire that has come untied from the insulator. Look at the picture below. It shows a wire tied onto an insulator. The insulator has a groove, and the wire sits in that groove. Our poles are spaced 250 feet to 300 feet apart, so the weight of the wire sitting in that groove helps hold the wire in place. We then use tie wire to fasten the electrical wire/conductor to the insulator. These two items hold the wire/conductor in place.

So, what causes the wire to come untied or break free from the insulator? As you might guess, there are numerous causes, but there is one that occurs most often. That one cause is the age of the line. A lot of our system is 60 and 70 years old. When the line was initially built, it was estimated to last 35 years. No one



Newly tied conductor on an insulator

expected poles to last this long. Luckily, our founding board of directors spent the extra money on Douglas Fir poles that naturally resist rot, plus they were treated with chemicals that keep moisture out. So, if our poles are good, what’s the issue? The weak link is the aluminum tie wire which holds the conductor onto the insulator. Seventy years of hot, cold, and wind have weakened that wire, and we are now more prone to “floaters.” When we get high winds, that will put stress on the aluminum tie wire, and this is where it will break. When the tie wire breaks, the conductor wire will fall off the insulator and “float” in the wind. As long as the wind blows hard, it will keep the electrical conductor away from the pole, and the lights will stay on. As soon as the wind decreases, the wire will move closer to the pole. Once the wire touches the pole, you

will see a blink. The blink is a breaker operating to try and keep the power on. Eventually, the wind will subside, and the wire will come to rest on the pole, which opens the breaker, and your power goes off.

So, here’s the next question. How do we fix this known problem? We fix it outage by outage. If we have excessive floaters on a section of line, then we will retie the wire on that section. We’d love to make this fix across our system, but that leads to cost issues



Floater example

which transpire into higher rates. We also come across sections of line that have poles that are going bad, so instead of spending the time and money to repair the conductor, we’ll do a system upgrade and install underground wire in its place.

The conversation of repairing a line or upgrading a line with new overhead or underground conversion takes place often. Of course, we would love to convert all overhead lines with underground, but you would not like the rate increases to get that done. One mile of straight, flat ground, single-phase underground line costs roughly \$45,000 per mile. Three-phase underground costs roughly \$85,000 per mile. West Central has 3,610 miles of distribution line. Let’s assume all 3,610 miles of line is single-phase. The cost to go all underground would be a minimum of \$162,450,000. We would have to borrow the money to do this, so those costs would be on top of that amount. I think it’s pretty clear by these rough numbers why we do not convert everything to underground as quickly as possible. These are simple calculations, and the actual costs would be much higher, but even with these numbers, the effect on your electrical rates would be massive.

If you see a “floater” or any other problem with our electrical lines, please call us at 605-669-8100. The quicker we know of an issue, the sooner we can fix it.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

WEST CENTRAL ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 018-988)

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Safe, Reliable Service
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Design assistance by SDREA

Skylar Zomer joins WCE's line crew based in Kadoka



Zomer proudly carries on his family tradition. He comes from a family with a strong background in electric cooperatives. His Dad is a line superintendent at Dakota Energy, and he has uncles who work at three different cooperatives in the state.

West Central Electric is proud to announce the hiring of apprentice journeyman Skylar Zomer. He started his career with West Central on Dec. 5 and will work out of the Kadoka outpost.

Skylar was raised in Wolsey, South Dakota. After graduating from Wolsey-Wessington High School he enrolled at Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI) and graduated in 2021 with a Power Line Construction and Maintenance diploma. After MTI, Skylar worked at East River Electric for 3,000 hours. He also has experience working for a construction company building houses.

He comes from a family with a strong background in electric cooperatives. His Dad is a line superintendent at Dakota Energy, and he has uncles who work at three different cooperatives in the state. Skylar is proud to carry on the tradition. "I like being outdoors, so I always knew I would not want an office job. I like going out and working in the backcountry."

Skylar has already felt support in his new surroundings, "Everyone in Kadoka has been very welcoming and asking if I need help with anything."

Skylar's family includes his parents, Matt and Kerri, and two younger brothers; Carson is attending MTI to be an electrician, and Keaton is a sophomore in high school. He also has a girlfriend, Adria, who is attending college in Bismarck.

Welcome to West Central!

Check out this handy electrical fire check list

Electrical Fires do not have to happen. Use this checklist to help you find and fix electrical fire hazards in your home before they can start a fire.

Smoke Alarms – Smoke alarms save lives!

- ✓ Do you have enough smoke alarms?
- ✓ Are they working?
- ✓ Do you test them?

Switches and Outlets – Be on the look-out for signs of trouble.

- ✓ Are they working?
- ✓ Do they make crackling, buzzing, or sizzling sounds?
- ✓ Are they warm to the touch?
- ✓ Do plugs fit snugly?

Cords – Never use damaged cords.

- ✓ Is there fraying or cracking?
- ✓ Are they pinched or pierced?
- ✓ Do you use extension cords all the time?
- ✓ Are cords getting enough air?

Lamps and Appliances – Use them safely.

- ✓ Are you using the right bulbs?
- ✓ Do you use space heaters safely?
- ✓ Are appliance cords protected from damage?

Electrical Panel – Know the basics.

- ✓ Do you have AFCIs?
- ✓ Have you tested your AFCIs?
- ✓ Are all circuit breakers and fuses the proper size?



KEEPING UP WITH ELECTRIC METERING TECHNOLOGY



South Dakota's electric cooperatives recently held an electric meter school in Pierre where more than 45 co-op employees learned about the latest technology in residential and industrial kilowatt hour metering processes. Metering is a key component of providing reliable, safe and affordable power to cooperative members all across the state.

To view scenes from this important training program and learn more about how electric cooperatives work to improve our communities, visit Cooperative Connections Plus by scanning the QR code at right.



Take care when flying kites

Jaclyn Koistinen

Jaclyn Koistinen, 11, is already thinking ahead to spring when kite-flying is a popular activity. She warns kids and adults both to take care when putting that kite in the air. Jaclyn is the daughter of Patrick and Jenilee Koistinen, members of H-D Electric based in Clear Lake.

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.

BRUNCH SWEET BRUNCH

CRAB QUICHE

Ingredients:
 1 (6 oz.) can crab meat (rinsed and drained)
 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese
 1/4 c. chopped green onion (or fresh chives)
 4 eggs.
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1 tsp. dry mustard
 1 c. milk (or half-n-half)

METHOD

Grease or spray pie pan. Combine crab, cheese and onion. Press into pie pan and up the sides. Whisk together the milk, eggs, salt and mustard. Pour mixture into pan. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake in 400 degree oven about 30 minutes or until set. Let set 5 minutes before cutting and serving.

Elaine Rowett, Sturgis

PRALINE PECAN CRUNCH

Ingredients:
 1 (21 oz.) box Quaker Oat Squares cereal (about 8 c.)
 2 c. pecans
 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
 1 tsp. vanilla
 1/2 c. light corn syrup
 1/4 c. margarine
 1/2 tsp. baking soda

METHOD

Heat oven to 250 degrees. Mix cereal and pecans in 9x13 inch pan. Set aside. Mix corn syrup, brown sugar and margarine in glass bowl. Microwave on high 1-1/2 minutes. Stir. Microwave 1 to 1-1/2 minutes more or until boiling. Stir in vanilla and baking soda and pour over cereal mixture. Stir to coat evenly. Bake 1 hour, stirring every 20 minutes. Spread on baking sheet to cool. Break into pieces and store in airtight container.

Nancy Stenson, Fort Pierre

CINNAMON APPLE BRUNCH BAKE

Ingredients:
 1 can (21 oz.) apple pie filling
 1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
 3 tbsp. butter, melted
 2 tsp. McCormick® Ground Cinnamon
 1 1/2 tbsp. McCormick® All Natural Pure Vanilla Extract
 1 can (12 oz.) refrigerated biscuits
 1/2 cup chopped nuts

METHOD

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix apple pie filling, brown sugar, butter, cinnamon and vanilla in medium bowl. Spread 1/2 of the apple mixture in 2-quart shallow baking dish. Cut each biscuit into quarters. Arrange biscuit pieces, points up, over apple mixture. Spread remaining apple mixture over biscuits. Sprinkle with nuts. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until golden brown. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

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.

Q: Are there ways to reduce energy use on a farm?

A: The importance of farms cannot be understated. Farmers feed our families and keep the country running, but the business brings many challenges, including risk and uncertainty. Finding ways to use less energy can reduce costs and result in energy savings for years to come.

When looking to improve farm efficiency, consider the following areas.

MOTORS AND PUMPS

Because motors and pumps account for a significant amount of energy use on a farm, replacing inefficient motors with efficient models can save energy and reduce costs. Adding variable frequency drives (VFDs) allow you to vary the frequency and voltage supplied to the motor or pump to adjust the motor's speed. This saves kilowatt hours and reduces load by only operating at the needed capacity. VFDs can be used in place of a phase converter, which allows use of three-phase power equipment where there is only access to single-phase power.

IRRIGATION

Upgrade irrigation equipment to use less water, which means less pumping and reducing the amount of water and energy consumed. The goal is to get the right amount of water where it is needed. This can be accomplished by reducing evaporation through system design and fixing leaks in the system. GPS and geographic information system technologies allow for more specific irrigation targeting. Monitor and test systems regularly to ensure maximum efficiency.

LIGHTS

The longer lights are on, the higher the potential for savings. Prioritize replacing incandescent or fluorescent exterior lighting on photocells or lights that stay on all night. LED lights last two to four times longer than fluorescents and 25 to 35 times longer than incandescents. That means less frequent replacement, which saves on materials and labor costs.

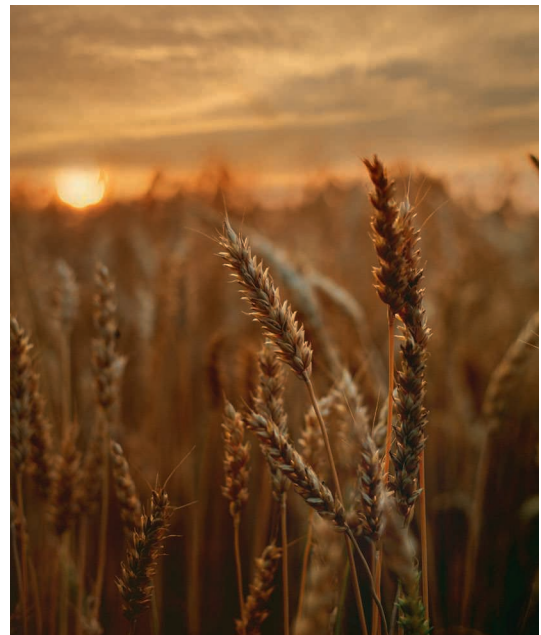
HEATER CONTROLS

In climates where engine block heaters are used to keep vehicle engines warm enough to start, adding engine block heater controls with

temperature sensors and timers will reduce electricity use. To keep water from freezing on farms with livestock, save energy by using stock tank heaters with thermostatic controls, which operate only when needed instead of running constantly. Insulated stock tanks may eliminate the need to heat water.



Miranda Boutelle
Efficiency Services
Group



EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

New farming technologies that offer efficiency possibilities include electric tractors, space heating and water heating. Equipment with information technology capabilities can aid efficiency by monitoring conditions and automating farming tasks. As with home efficiency practices, consider the equipment used most and the savings potential from upgrading or modifying existing equipment.

REBATES

About 80 percent of U.S. farms are located in counties served by electric cooperatives. Check with your local electric co-op to see if they offer rebates on farming equipment and energy-efficiency projects that help reduce energy use.

Improving efficiency on the farm can result in less energy use, lower bills and improved farming success during challenging financial times.



The Dirty Boot Band has entertained thousands of music lovers across the state and region. *Photo by DBB*

Dirty Boot Band makes music a joyful family affair

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Even The Grinch gets into the groove when the Dirty Boot Band takes the stage.

The family-based musical septet was playing a gig last December at Tiger's Tap in Fort Pierre when a fellow clad in a luminous green Grinch costume got up and danced a little jig.

That was okay with lead singer Sheridan Nickolas, who grinned at the gyrating Grinch while she kept strumming her Taylor six-string.

This particular set was one of about 50 gigs the DBB played last year with dates that found them venturing from one end of the state to the other. Audiences in places like Platte, Hayes, Mitchell and more heard the band belting out a blend of vintage country hits like Delta Dawn, Momma Tried and The Highway Song along with originals like Little Black Pickup Truck and To the Man I Loved.

They've played atop long-bed trailers, in hayfields, in senior citizen centers, shopping malls, bars and restaurants, and consider it an honor to respond to

invitations and play music for anyone wanting to have a fun time.

Hailing from the Onida and Fort Pierre area, the DBB is made up of cousins from the Weinheimer and Nickolas families who decided to form a group in the winter of 2020. The current line-up includes Jacob, Sam and Simon Weinheimer collaborating with Sheridan, Adelynn, Jace and Ty Nickolas.

Together, they work hard on honing their musical chops, memorizing lyrics, smoothing out their chord progressions, tightening their harmonies and even working on original tunes. When they're not touring around the state, the band mates are busy doing farm chores and tackling their academic subjects as students of the Seton Home Study School.

Somehow, they still find the time to compete in sports and pursue a side hustle of making baked goods and selling homemade jewelry.

Sheridan, a senior, is an ace softball pitcher and also likes to hunt.

"During hunting season, we do chores on the farm and do our school work, but



In lieu of a traditional gratuity for entertaining their audience at the Trader Days festival in Fort Pierre, members of the band received a free helicopter ride sponsored by an anonymous supporter. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

we also clean pheasants at the lodge," she said, referring to a family-owned hunting lodge, preserve and skeet range. "And in the spring it's calving season, so we're always checking on the cows."

She said the group plans on continuing to play more gigs and entertain more people as long as their limited time allows. And as they keep developing their chops, they're taking inspiration in the knowledge that their music is good enough to make a grinchy heart grow a few sizes when they play.



Mitchell Tech facilities were used for the annual electric cooperative rubber gloving school last summer. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Mitchell Tech prepares linemen to deliver the 'right stuff' for members

Billy Gibson

editor@sdrea.coop

It's rare that you find a cooperative lineman in the state of South Dakota who hasn't been through the training program at Mitchell Technical College.

Mike Puetz doesn't remember all the names and faces, but his mentorship has played a key role in turning loads of wannabe linemen into highly skilled craftsmen over the past 25 years.

Puetz serves as head of the lineman training department at MTC and is giving some thought to hanging up his hooks in the next year or so. When he reflects on his teaching career, he swells with pride at how the program has improved exponentially over time.

There have been many milestones in the emergence of the lineman education program rising to become one of the best of its kind in the country.

Back in 2018, for instance, the power line construction and maintenance school was named winner of the inaugural Siemens-Aspen Community College

STEM award. The honor is given by the Aspen Institute to eight colleges nationwide that provide "outstanding preparation" for students in high-demand jobs and provides selected schools with \$50,000 to apply toward scholarships and other forms of financial assistance.

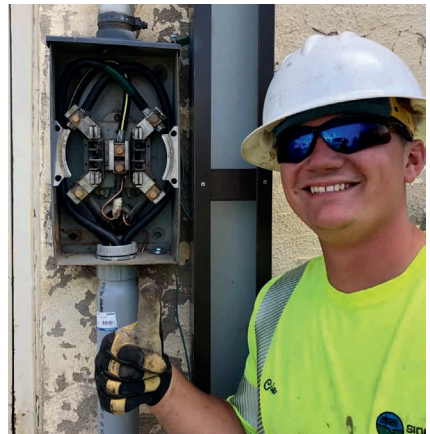
"That was definitely a shock," Puetz said. "There's a lot of good programs out there, and for us to be chosen for that prestigious award was unbelievable. We work hard to be able to say we have a very strong program, and that just gave us some validation that we're moving in the right direction. It's icing on the cake."

Mark Patterson, manager of loss control services at the South Dakota Rural Electric Association based in Pierre, has worked with Puetz for 15 years. He's hard-pressed to find many co-op linemen who haven't trained under Puetz.

"Mike has been around so long, and I'd estimate about 80 percent of the electric co-op linemen out there today have been trained by him," Patterson said. "They do a fantastic job of teaching the fundamentals, whether a student ends

up at a municipal, an investor-owned or a co-op. And our superintendents do an exceptional job of working with the graduates to help them gain the field experience they need to serve our members with a mindset of safety and efficiency."

Over the years, Puetz said, MTC has not only distinguished itself among similar programs but has also greatly expanded its array of academic and technical career tracks. There are tracks for construction and manufacturing, business and service industries, health sciences, engineering technologies and agriculture and transportation.



Sioux Valley Energy's Cole Anderson learned his trade at MTC.



At left, Mike Puetz has trained hundreds of future linemen. Above, Mitchell Technical College is well equipped to give electric linemen the real-world skills they need to succeed. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Cole Anderson is a lineman at Sioux Valley Energy based in Madison. He graduated from the training program four years ago and recalls why he selected MTC to learn the ropes of line work.

“I had an uncle who was a lineman in another state and I knew that’s what I always wanted to do,” said Anderson, a graduate of Chester Area High School. “I started looking at schools and noticed they had limited positions open and they were always taken very quickly. That told me how good their reputation was.”

Anderson received his certification in May of 2018, joined the cooperative as a 1,000 hour lineman, and eventually worked his way into a journeyman position.

Oddly enough, he met Puetz a year before he enrolled at MTC. While still in high school, Anderson was on a tour of the facility when he happened to encounter Puetz in the hallway. The two shook hands and after a brief conversation, Puetz said: “If I don’t see you here next year, I’m coming to track you down.”

Anderson said he finds himself frequently relying on his lineman education and remembering the things Puetz taught him, including those lessons that don’t necessarily have to do with line work.

“I think he’s awesome. He’s big on work ethic and he always told us that no matter what we did in life, a good work ethic will allow you to accomplish your goals and stand out from the rest,” Anderson said. “He also had a thing about belts. You had to wear a belt. If he saw you and you didn’t have one on, he’d take his off and give it to you.”

Anderson and his wife, Sarah, recently built a new home outside of Madison and are expecting a baby boy in March. He said he’s grateful for the outstanding

instruction he received during his education phase and is also thankful to have a position at an outstanding organization within the electric cooperative system.

“I just feel fortunate. It’s been a great experience all the way through,” he said. “I think it’s a privilege to be able to do a job I enjoy and to work with professionals who know their craft, and an organization that is focused on delivering the highest quality service to its members.”

For more information about MTC, visit www.mitchelltech.edu.



MTC is a prime training ground for future co-op linemen. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Winter Weather and Storms



Jessie Tucker
Member Services

Talking about history is always nice, but sometimes it isn't much fun to make. The wintry weather that our area has had as of late is undoubtedly something that we will be talking about many years

from now. We all went through the storms, so we will not do a complete weather recap. Instead, we hope to explain how the storms have affected West Central and recognize some member assistance we received.

The storms caused multiple issues throughout many places in our service area, although none of them were significant problems. As Jeff Birkeland talked about in his article on page two, we had many floaters. Dustin Vollmer, West Central's Midland Foreman, found one stretch of line with 13 phase floaters within a couple of miles.

As Operations Manager, Scott Kittelson said about the extreme conditions, "This is the first time I can remember that we could not send crews out during the daytime. It just wasn't safe for them to go out." The visibility was zero in many places, and if you can't see, you can't find or fix the problems on the lines.

"West Central set a new all-time peak at 40.5 megawatts..."

As the line crews always do, they fixed things and will continue to make improvements. A particular line section near Okaton also had some issues that caused outages. This line was off multiple times throughout the storms and even

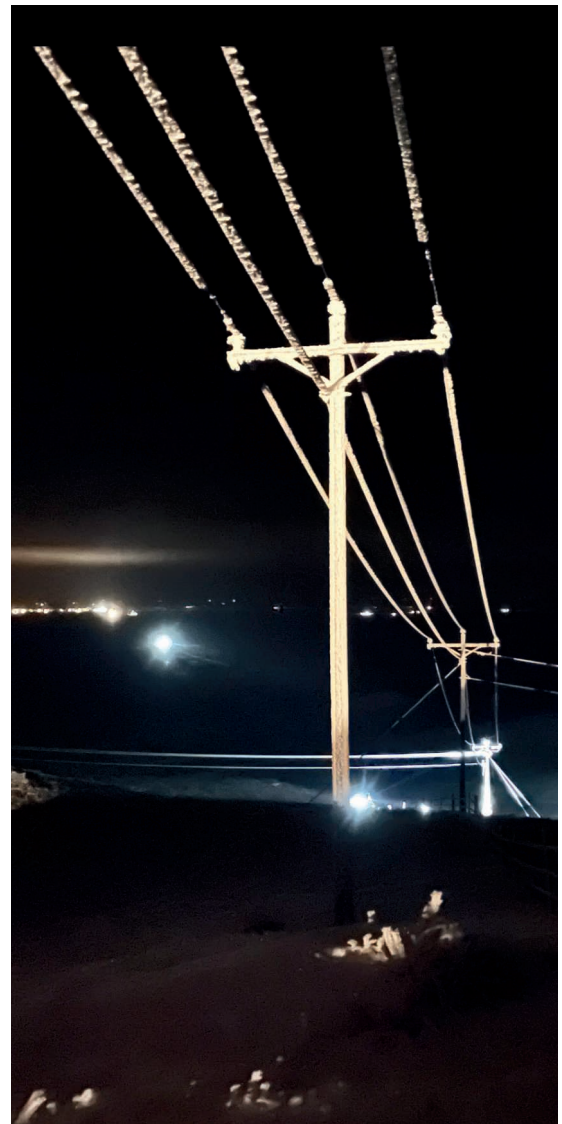
again on Christmas day. We have the problems fixed from the storms, but internal discussions have already taken place about lowering the outage times in this area. West Central's engineering and operations departments will develop a plan going forward.

We also wanted to take a moment to recognize some of the help we received during the storm. "It always amazes me how our members help us during storms, and I hope they know how much it is appreciated," said General Manager Jeff Birkeland.

We had multiple DOT plows open paths for us to get to outages. There were numerous times that our members pulled us out after getting stuck. In one instance, we even had a member offer to let the linemen stay at their house. We couldn't do it without your help, so thank you.

Through the extreme winds and cold temperatures, an interesting tidbit came out of the storms. West Central set a new all-time peak at 40.5 megawatts at 11 a.m. on Dec. 22. Peaks are caused when the rate of electricity being used is exceptionally high. In this instance, the electricity flowed faster than at any other time in the co-op's history. Putting 40.5 megawatts into perspective is like running 675,000 60-watt light bulbs! Our previous all-time peak was set in 2015 and was 37.78 megawatts.

We have had several mild winters in recent years, and to be completely honest, we were due for a hard one. With that being said, this is a little over the top. We hope everyone can find a little relief from the weather and that everyone has been weathering it and staying safe. Times like these can get a person down, but it will make spring that much greener.





Attention High School Juniors Win a Trip to Washington, D.C.

West Central Electric will once again sponsor high school juniors on an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. Each June, over 1800 high school juniors and seniors travel to Washington, D.C., to participate in the Rural Electric Youth Tour. During the week, they learn about Washington, D.C., government, cooperative philosophy, and rural electrification. The students are selected and sponsored by their local rural electric cooperatives. The South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) coordinates arrangements for the South Dakota students.

Some of the sites that toured are the Lincoln Memorial, National Cathedral, The White House, Air and Space Museum, Washington Monument, U.S. Capitol, Ford's Theatre, The Kennedy Center, the Metro, Arlington National Cemetery, Mount Vernon, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, The Smithsonian, Iwo Jima Statue, National Archives, U.S Supreme Court, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Students will participate in a breakfast briefing with the South Dakota Congressional Delegation.

Who is Eligible?

All area high school juniors whose parents are members of West Central Electric.

What Does It Cost?

West Central Electric, along with the other local electric cooperatives that participate in the weeklong event, funds the tour. The funding for the tour provides

for each participant's transportation, room and board, entertainment, and sightseeing events. Students are required to provide their spending money (snacks and souvenirs).

When is it Held?

The weeklong trip will be held on June 17- 23, 2023. Participants will meet for an orientation meeting on Saturday, June 17, in Sioux Falls. Then, the group will fly to Washington, D.C., on Sunday, June 18, and return to South Dakota on Friday, June 23. A commercial bus will be used for transportation while in D.C.

How do I Qualify?

Each entrant must submit an essay, not to exceed 500 words, on the following topic: "If chosen as a youth tour delegate, you will be traveling to Washington, D.C. to experience and learn about America's rich history. What moment in American history do you wish you had been a part of, and what would you have contributed?" All essays must be typed and include a cover sheet that states the title of the essay, the entrant's name and address, name of parent or guardian, and the name of your school.

Information may be picked up from your local school guidance counselor, at www.wce.coop, or from West Central Electric Cooperative, 204 Main Street, Murdo, SD 57559. West Central Electric must receive all essays on or before **Feb. 17, 2023**.



NATIVE TOURISM

Native Tourism Alliance shines spotlight on tribal nation culture

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Sure, many of the 15 million travelers who visit South Dakota each year may have marveled at the Mount Rushmore Memorial, snapped a selfie at Wall Drug or beheld the fast-moving waters in Falls Park.

But how many of them have witnessed the whirling splendor of a wacipi, the traditional Native American celebration of life? How many have paused to watch a Native artist crafting a colorful piece of beaded jewelry?

Several years ago, a blind spot was noticed in the Department of Tourism's efforts to attract visitors – not much attention was being focused on the state's nine federally-recognized tribal nations.

In an effort to address that oversight, the department teamed up with the George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies

and the tribes to develop a sustainable indigenous tourism industry by letting visitors know there are many points of interest available for exploration far beyond the beaten paths.

The five-year plan has been described as a “groundbreaking endeavor” and is one of the first initiatives of its kind under the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act and was unveiled in August of 2021. More than 60 state, local and federal organizations collaborated to formulate the strategy as a catalyst for economic growth.

“I think the Alliance is a potential revenue source for our tribes, and it’s a way for us to generate income, alleviate poverty and help conserve our natural resources and culture,” said Dew Bad Warrior-Ganje, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

The plan identified five guiding principles:

Native Tourism Alliance

CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX TRIBE
PO Box 590, Eagle Butte, SD 57625
605-964-4155

CROW CREEK SIOUX TRIBE
PO Box 50, Fort Thompson, SD 57339
605-245-2221

FLANDREAU SANTEE SIOUX TRIBE
PO Box 283, Flandreau, SD 57028-0283
605-997-3891

LOWER BRULE SIOUX TRIBE
PO Box 187, Lower Brule, SD 57548
605-473-5561

OGLALA SIOUX TRIBE
PO Box 2070, Pine Ridge, SD 57770
605-867-5821

ROSEBUD SIOUX TRIBE
PO Box 430, Rosebud, SD 57570
605-747-2381

SISSETON WAHPETON OYATE
PO Box 509, Agency Village, SD 57262
605-698-3911

STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE
PO Box D, Fort Yates, ND 58538
701-854-8500

YANKTON SIOUX TRIBE
PO Box 1153, Wagner, SD 57380
605-384-3641

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- Unity - Reunification of the Očhéthi Šakówi Oyate through shared history, commonalities, and collaboration on developing regional tourism.
 - Preservation - Promotion of art and culture in order to enhance self-identity and pride as well as preserve the culture, including language and traditional knowledge.
 - Woksape - Recognition of Elders as the driving force of traditional knowledge and wisdom in the development of regional tourism and educating the youth to be stewards of the language and culture.
 - Education - Creation of cross-cultural bridges and educating the World about Native American communities.
 - Self-sufficiency - Development of opportunities for Tribal Nations to become self-sufficient and create pathways to enhance livelihood.

Organizers gathered together and developed detailed goals and methods to achieve those goals. Planners were forced to start from the ground floor as not much data existed to determine the present status of Indigenous tourism.

They initially identified a “rich mix” of 145 existing natural, cultural and heritage attractions and special events to promote, in addition to potential agritourism initiatives.

Nearing the halfway point in the plan’s prescribed timetable, stakeholders report substantial progress and greater interest from visitors seeking an authentic cultural experience.

Calvin Bloemendaal, who has represented the South Dakota Department of Tourism in the Alliance from its inception, pointed out several specific measures of success.

Chief among them is the creation of a nine-day motorcoach tour of tribal territory that starts in Rapid City and terminates in Bismarck. The tour, coordinated with assistance by the tourism department, will begin this summer and will be operated through Destination America and Trafalgar Tours.

“It’s one of the first tours of its kind,” Bloemendaal said. “Destination America caters to an upscale clientele of individuals who like to travel a lot and have been to a lot of places. They’re looking for something unique and interesting they haven’t seen before.”

He also mentioned the progress that has been made in building a network of support for tribal tourism and the development of themed destination experiences.

There’s also a marketing guide that is part of the department’s general ongoing promotional efforts. More than 30,000 of the helpful guides were printed and are being distributed at visitor centers, trade shows and other industry events.

“I was at a trade show in Denver and people were extremely interested in this idea and gravitating toward it. The guide is an effective tool that inspires people to visit,” he said. “We’re making a lot of headway as far as putting together pitches and itineraries to attract more tour operators to the state.”





CULTURE ON DISPLAY

The Mead Cultural Center has a variety of exhibits and programs to appeal to every interest. *Photos by Mead Museum*

Mead Cultural Education Center has something for every interest

Billy Gibson

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The action seems to never cease at the Mead Cultural Education Center in Yankton.

Between three very popular permanent exhibits, community-based special events and temporary displays that come and go, the constant swirl of activity keeps Rob Marlow on his toes.

Marlow is program director at the museum, which is known affectionately to local supporters and frequenters as “The Mead.” He was finally catching his breath after the Christmastime crush when he and his team had to quickly turn their attention to installing a new traveling exhibit called “Crossroads: Changes in Rural America,” the product of a collaboration between the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street program and the South Dakota Humanities Council.

Previously, the touring exhibit spent several months on display at the South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum

on the SDSU campus in Brookings and will show at The Mead through the first week of March.

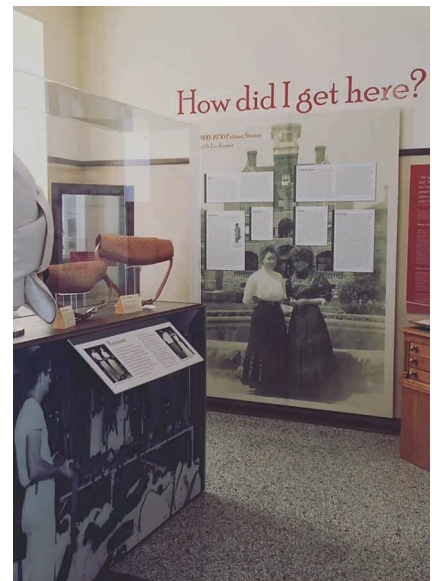
Other stops include the Sturgis Public Library from March 11 through April 30 and the Fort Sisseton Historic State Park from May 6 through June 25.

Marlow explained that the exhibit describes how the U.S. population has shifted away from rural and agrarian communities and moved toward more urban and suburban centers since 1900. It showcases the many ways agriculture-based towns and villages across the country have responded to those changes and in many cases have thrived.

As they’ve felt the impact of the long-term demographic trends, rural communities have been pro-active and intentional in finding new opportunities for growth, innovation and economic development.

“A lot of people who don’t live in rural towns have a perception that they’re barely hanging on by a thread, and that’s not always the situation. The reality is that while it hasn’t been easy,

farmers and ranchers and small town leaders have rolled up their sleeves and met these challenges head-on, to the point that we see many folks coming back to a lifestyle with a slower pace, more freedom, more comfort and more room to roam. It’s really a super success



A display focusing on the historic Yankton State Hospital is a popular attraction at the Mead Cultural Education Center in Yankton.



This display was created by the local Lego club and attracted a lot of interest during the Christmas season. *Photos by Mead Museum*

story, and this exhibit shows that. We're excited to have it here at The Mead," Marlow said.

Meanwhile, curious crowds continue to flock to the museum's three permanent exhibits, which include Yankton State Hospital: Minds, Methods and Medicine; Journey Forward: Connecting Cultures; and the Children's Transportation Museum.

Marlow said visitors and guests generally have a special fascination with the story of how the Mead Building in Yankton was once home to the state's largest mental health facility for women.

The permanent display designed by Jane Bobzin, Carol Ryan and Stan Hoffart opened in 2020 and tracks the history of the facility that dates back to 1879.

It highlights the accomplishments of hospital superintendent Dr. Leonard Mead and Dr. Leo Kanner, considered to be the "Father of American Child Psychiatry" for his innovative work in the field of autism.

"We get a lot of positive reviews and feedback about that display. People walk away learning a lot about the history of the facility and how the hospital provided treatment for those with mental disorders at the time," Marlow said.

Throughout the calendar year, the facility hosts a variety of seasonal events and activities such as the Hall of Trees held each year from Thanksgiving to Christmas.

This past Christmas, nearly 70 local businesses, social organizations and other sponsors decorated trees to reflect the spirit of the season. More than 1,300 visitors cast their vote for best-of-show by dropping a token in a box in front of their favorite tree. Registration fees paid by the competing tree decorators go toward providing free museum admission to those 17 and under.

The 2022 Hall of Trees exhibit also included a 1,400-piece Lego display built by the Yankton Community

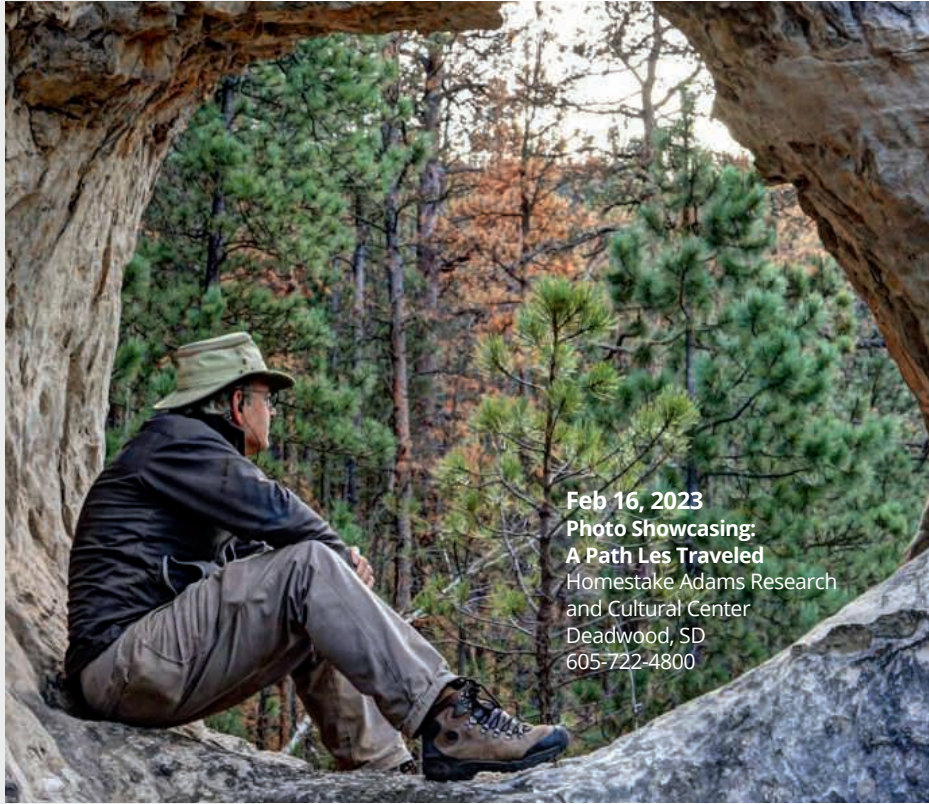
"There's a lot to see and explore at the Mead Building. We feel like the discovery process is something that never ends."

- Rob Marlow

Library Lego Club led by local brickmeister Tom Cihak. Last year's display featured an assortment of Tonka trucks.

Another popular seasonal event occurs during Halloween and is centered around "haunted history" tours of the Mead Building and an "overnight experience" where guests gather together with their sleeping bags and snacks, share ghost stories and listen for signs of any paranormal activity taking place in the crooks and crevices of the structure.

"There's a lot to see and explore at the Mead Building," Marlow said. "We feel like the discovery process is something that never ends."



Feb 16, 2023
Photo Showcasing:
A Path Les Traveled
 Homestake Adams Research
 and Cultural Center
 Deadwood, SD
 605-722-4800

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.

FEB. 3-4
TOOTSIE
 Show Dates:
 Feb. 3, 7:30 p.m.
 Feb. 4, 2 p.m.
 Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m.
 Washington Pavilion
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-6000

FEB. 4
Lake Hendricks Fishing Derby
 9 a.m. registration
 Hendricks City Public
 Lake Access
 Hendricks, MN
 507-828-2113

FEB. 4
**James River Gobblers
 Hunting Heritage Banquet**
 Highland Conference Center
 Mitchell, SD
 605-999-3208

FEB. 10-11
Mardi Gras Weekend
 Mardi Gras Events & Parade
 Sponsored by Deadwood
 Chamber of Commerce
 Main Street
 Deadwood, SD

FEB. 11
Songs of Romance
 7:30 p.m.
 Washington Pavilion
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-6000

FEB. 16
Photo Showcasing:
A Path Les Traveled
 12 p.m.-1 p.m.
 Homestake Adams Research
 and Cultural Center
 Deadwood, SD
 605-722-4800

FEB. 24
Calamity's Shindig
 6 p.m.-9 p.m.
 Homestake Adams Research
 and Cultural Center
 Deadwood, SD
 605-722-4800

FEB. 28
BIG Career & Internship Fair
 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Ramkota Hotel
 Sioux Falls, SD

MARCH 4
Annual Ag Day
 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
 Washington Pavilion
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-6000

MARCH 18
Shamrock Shuffle Fun Run
 12 p.m.
 Main Street
 Presho, SD

MARCH 25-26
**Greater Sioux Falls Model
 Train Show**
 Multi-Cultural Center
 Sioux Falls, SD

MARCH 30
**"The Wildest Banquet
 Auction in the Midwest"**
 5:30 p.m.
 South Dakota Military
 Heritage Alliance
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-339-1203

APRIL 1
Mozart Requiem
 7:30 p.m.
 Washington Pavilion
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-6000

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