

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

Small Town, Big Dreams

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Road to the NFL**
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REED Fund



Jeff Birkeland
CEO/Manager

Last month I reported on West Central's economic development program and briefly touched on the REED Fund. The Reed Fund, Rural Electric Economic Development, Inc. is a nonprofit corporation governed by 26 electric cooperatives, which provide financing to in all or parts of approximately 70 counties in South Dakota and western Minnesota. To date, we have helped secure 2.5 million dollars in economic development loans for our members.

A few quick facts:

- Incorporation in 1997
- Loans Issued – 381
- Total Funds Loaned – \$114 Million
- Total Employment by REED Borrowers – Over 9950
- Total Project Investment - \$946 million
- Total Real Estate Financed – 2.1 million square ft.

REED Fund is a community development financial institution dedicated to providing financing and helping to leverage investment to make a difference in the region.

REED offers loans that:

- Promote growth
- Contribute to job, business, and wealth creation
- Improve the infrastructure and economic base in rural areas

The fund demonstrates cooperative principles of commitment to community and cooperation among cooperatives in a meaningful way that adds value to the local economy. REED Fund is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation and does not restrict lending to members of a rural electric cooperative.

Business, Industry, and Agri-Business

Loans support business development and expansion and contribute to employment and business ownership

opportunities in the areas of:

- Retail, services, and manufacturing firms
- Agriculture processing, marketing, and support services
- Facilities and equipment

Community Development & Housing

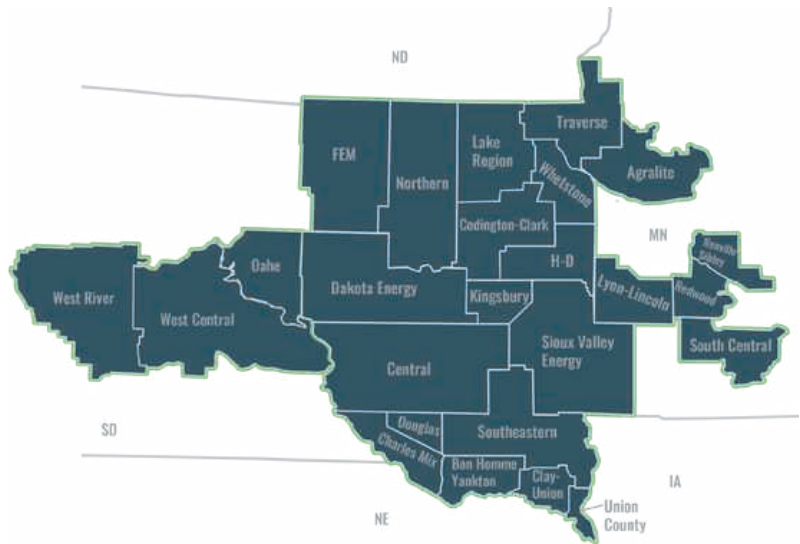
Loans contribute to the quality of life and services necessary for sustainable development in the areas of:

- Health care, education, recreation, arts
- Public safety and emergency services
- Community infrastructure, facilities for lease to business
- Multi-family rental housing with broad-based community support

REED Financing

- Must reasonably assist the project and may not exceed 50% of the total projects cost
- Cannot be solely for refinancing existing debt from another lender
- Is open to anyone in the geographic coverage area regardless of power supplier
- Applications are thoroughly analyzed prior to approval

REED Fund partners with commercial banks, non-profits, and government agencies to provide financing. For additional information, an application, and conditions that apply, please see our website at www.reedfund.coop or contact us at West Central Electric at 605-669-8100.



**RURAL ELECTRIC
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INC**
REED FUND

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

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(USPS No. 018-988)

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Safe, Reliable Service
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Design assistance by SDREA

West Central Electric Awards Scholarships to Area Youth



Sydni Snyder

Sydni Snyder – Hi, my name is Sydni Snyder, I'm 18 years old, and I am a senior at T.F. Riggs High School in Pierre, S.D. I enjoy working and volunteering in my community. I am a National Honors Society member and I graduated as one of 23 selected students across the state for the Youth Trooper Academy in June of 2022. I love spending time with family and friends and traveling all over South Dakota.



Hannah Brost

Hannah Brost – My name is Hannah Brost, and I am a senior at T.F. Riggs High School in Pierre, S.D. I live on a ranch south of Draper, S.D. My parents are Del and Christy Brost, and I have an older brother, Kade Brost. In high school, I have been involved in cheerleading, play, volleyball, band, choir, Turner Youth, and NHS. This fall, I plan on attending the University of South Dakota to further my education. Thank you, West Central Electric Cooperative, for choosing me as the recipient of this scholarship.



Karlie Coyle

Karlie Coyle – My name is Karlie Coyle, and I am a senior at Philip High School. I am the daughter of Rocky and Chris Coyle. My school activities include FCCLA, choir, and basketball. I plan to further my academic career at Lake Area Technical College or my academic and athletic careers at Bethany Lutheran College this fall. I then plan to go into Occupational Therapy and return to Philip for work.



Jolie Dugan

Jolie Dugan – My name is Jolie Dugan and I am currently a senior at Jones County High School. I have lived on a ranch northeast of Murdo for the majority of my life with my parents Scott and Tarra Mathews and my younger brother Cole. Some of my hobbies include baking, reading, hunting, and fishing. I also love to stay active, so I participate in cross country, basketball, volleyball, and track and field.

Gracie Eisenbraun – My name is Gracie Eisenbraun, and I am a senior at Kadoka Area



Gracie Eisenbraun

High School. Throughout my high school years, I have had the privilege of participating in numerous sports, clubs, and volunteer organizations for which I am so grateful for. I am excited to continue my educational path as I attend Northern State University in the fall of 2023 to study digital media and work towards my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree.



Keeleigh Reis-Elwood

Keeleigh Reis-Elwood – Hello, my name is Keeleigh Reis-Elwood, and I live on the family ranch outside of Reliance, S.D., with my parents and three siblings. I am active in several activities in and out of school.

I participate in competitive and football sideline cheer, FFA, 4-H, gymnastics, band, color guard, high school and 4-H rodeo, and showing livestock. I enjoy being outside, whether that's working with animals or just hanging around. In the future, I plan on attending Dakota Wesleyan University to pursue a degree in Elementary Education.



Daniel Cass Finn

Daniel Cass Finn – My name is Daniel Cass Finn. I live near Midland with my parents, Shad and Jenna Finn, and my siblings, Cole and Emma. I attended Midland School from kindergarten to 7th grade, then completed 8th-12th grades in Philip. I have been involved in football, basketball, rodeo, National Honor Society, FFA, and Student Council. In my free time I enjoy team roping, brandings, and working in the shop to fix vehicles and equipment. I plan to attend Lake Area Technical College in Watertown for Diesel Technology.



Gracie Fitzgerald

Gracie Fitzgerald – My name is Gracie Fitzgerald, and I am from Philip, S.D., where my family runs Philip Hardware, a.k.a. Colt's Nuts and Bolts. In my free time, I enjoy camping, fishing, and reading. My favorite subjects in school are history and advanced biology. After graduation, I plan to attend SDSU for a degree in biology so that I can go into a health science related career such as dental hygiene.

Continued on page 10

Workplace Safety: Avoid Common Electrical Hazards

Contact with or exposure to electricity is one of the leading causes of workplace fatalities. Follow these tips to avoid electrical injury:

Overhead Power Line Contact

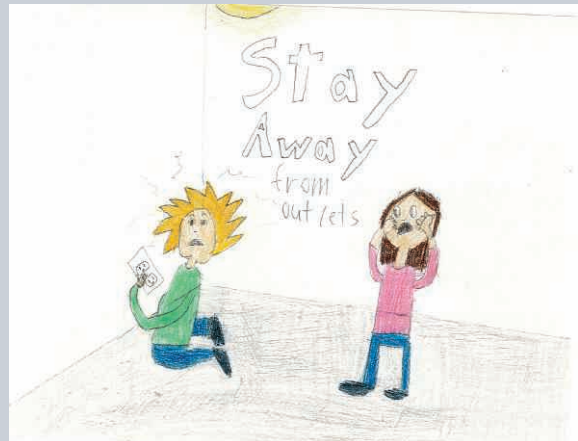
- 46% of all electrical fatalities are caused by contact with overhead power lines
- 57% of overhead power line fatalities were in non-electrical occupations
- Always assume all lines are live and dangerous
- Always look up; be aware of overhead power lines
- Keep yourself and equipment at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines
- Do not touch anything that is in contact with overhead power lines
- Carry equipment, including ladders, horizontally to avoid contact with power lines
- Stay at least 35 feet away from downed lines

Accidental Contact with Energized Conductors or Parts

- 45% of all electrical fatalities were caused by working on or near energized conductors or parts
- 74% of these fatalities were in electrical occupations
- Always test for voltage before you perform work. Be sure to also test the area around the equipment you are working on to avoid accidental contact with energized equipment
- Always perform a site and risk assessment before conducting work. Hazards exist on and near the equipment you are working on
- When possible, turn off power before conducting work
- Follow proper lockout / tagout procedures
- Avoid complacency. Every job is different, make sure you follow the hierarchy of controls and other electrical safety work practices on every job

Electrical Safety in the Workplace

- 69% of all electrical fatalities involved non-electrical occupations
- Know when to say when. If you feel unsafe performing a job, say something
- Be aware of potential electrical hazards in the workplace. Avoid electrical rooms and other potentially hazardous areas
- All electrical work should be completed by qualified workers with proper training
- GFCI protection should be installed where electricity and water may come in contact
- Five sources accounted for 92% of all electrical fatalities
 - Overhead power lines
 - Unexpected contact with electricity
 - Working on energized parts
 - Ground faults
 - Damaged wiring



Power Line Safety

Serena Dekrey, age 9

Serena Dekrey, age 9, gives wise advice to readers on electrical safety. She cautions us to be careful around power outlets. Serena is the daughter of Don and Cassandra Dekrey, members of Sioux Valley Energy based in Colman, 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.

COMFORTING CASSEROLES

PHEASANT CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

1 pheasant
1/2 cup melted butter
Bacon grease
1/2 cup flour
4 cups milk
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper

METHOD

Mix flour, salt, pepper, and roll pieces of pheasant in the mixture. Brown in bacon grease. In separate pan, mix butter, milk, and 6 T flour. Stir and bring to a boil. Pour over the pheasant that had been put in a baking dish with bacon laid over it. Bake until tender.

Gail Klipfel
Ellendale, N.D.

TACO CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

1 1/2 pounds ground beef
1 package taco seasoning mix
1 can (16 ounces) pinto beans, drained and rinsed
1 can (15 ounces) tomato sauce
1 can (11 ounces) whole kernel corn, drained
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
1 cup crushed tortilla chips

METHOD

Preheat oven to 400°F. Brown meat in large skillet on medium-high heat. Drain fat. Stir in seasoning mix, beans, tomato sauce and corn. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low; simmer 5 minutes. Spoon into 2-quart baking dish. Sprinkle with cheese and tortilla chips. Bake 5 to 10 minutes or until cheese is melted. Serve with assorted toppings, if desired.

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CHICKEN, BROCCOLI, AND RICE CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

1 lb. chicken tenders
1 cup long grain rice
1 1/2 cups chicken stock
1 cup milk
2 tsps. garlic powder
2 tsps. onion powder
1 1/2 tsps. whole rosemary leaves, crushed
1/2 tsp. ground black pepper
1/2 tsp salt
2 cups broccoli florets
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

METHOD

Preheat oven to 400°F. Spread chicken and rice in greased 2-quart baking dish. Mix stock, milk and seasonings in medium bowl with wire whisk until well blended. Slow pour over chicken and rice. Cover with foil. Bake 45 minutes. Remove foil. Stir in broccoli. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake, uncovered, 15 minutes longer or until rice has absorbed all the liquid and broccoli is tender.

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.

Necessary Steps for Solar Commissioning



Miranda Boutelle
Efficiency Services
Group

Q: I'm interested in adding solar panels to my house. What steps do I need to take?

A: Getting a solar photovoltaic system installed and operational on your house or property involves working with several parties to ensure a safe and functional system. You need to work with your electric utility, local building department and a solar contractor.

Here are the solar commissioning steps you need to take.

Do Your Research

If you are considering a solar PV installation, I recommend starting with research. The cost of a residential solar photovoltaic system varies based on your location, the type of components used and the size of the system. With average costs ranging from \$16,000 to \$36,000, installing a solar system is a significant investment for most homeowners.

In my experience, people decide to install solar panels for financial benefit, environmental impact or a combination of the two.

The financial benefit of generating your own electricity is dependent on your energy use, the cost of the system, electric rates, and the specific rules and regulations for your state and electric utility.

Your electric utility can help you understand electric bill rate structures. Many states offer net metering, a billing mechanism that gives the owner credit for any extra electricity the system produces and supplies back to the power grid. If your utility offers net metering, ask about being compensated for excess power generated by your solar PV system.

The environmental benefit of installing a solar system is based on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. This benefit is dependent on the type of electricity generation that powers your home. You can check with your utility to learn about its energy sources. This information provides you a better understanding of the type of power your PV system will offset.

You should also reach out to your local building department to learn about the permitting and inspection process.

Solar Proposals

To find out potential costs and estimated energy production, you need a proposal from a solar contractor. I recommend getting two or three proposals from different contractors to compare system design and cost. You can also request a reference from a previous customer in your area.

Solar contractors work in multiple utility service territories and may not be familiar with the requirements in your state or at your electric utility. I always recommend reaching out to your electric utility before signing a solar installation contract. You want to understand your monthly electric bill costs, as well as the monthly solar system costs, after installing solar.

Interconnection Agreement

If you commit to a home solar installation, you will sign an interconnection agreement with your electric utility. This contract between you and your utility stipulates the terms of connecting a distributed generation system, such as a solar PV system.

Permits and Inspections

You or your contractor will work with the local building department for the necessary permitting prior to installation. Once the system is installed, you likely will need final inspections from the building department and the electric utility. Your utility will grant permission to operate prior to energizing your system. Don't assume your local building department will communicate with your electric utility. In my experience, this doesn't always happen.

Because the solar installation process involves multiple parties, preapproval and post inspections, it is important to check with your local utility and building department before committing to a solar PV installation.



Knowing the steps to solar commissioning can take the stress out of your installation.



A Fun Escape

Escape Rooms Gaining Popularity for Group Fun

Jocelyn Johnson

jocelyn.johnson@sdrea.coop

Conquering the riddle draws groups to the growing popularity of escape rooms. This is a relatively new attraction in South Dakota for many merry groups looking for an afternoon of fun.

An escape room is nothing more than a riddle room. It challenges its participants to get out – if they can.

Across the state, there are 10 businesses that offer this activity for fun. Black Hills Escape Rooms, located in downtown Rapid City, is one that opened in 2016. They accommodate five escape rooms, each with a distinctive scenario, entertaining guests with a storyline full of unique hints. The story of each room varies along with the difficulty level.

Ryan Comer, manager of Black Hills Escape Rooms, said the activity attracts groups looking to celebrate birthdays, family get-togethers, bachelorette parties and more. Businesses also rent out the rooms for employee team-building exercises

or holiday parties. Comer stated summer is the busy season for these groups, but Christmas is also busy with people looking to conquer the holiday themed escape rooms.

“People get addicted to these rooms,” said Comer. “It’s all about how adventurous you are and who’s in your group.”

Yet, despite the extra precautions and supportive group effort, a few still get anxious about being trapped.

“The main fear that some people feel when getting into one of these escape rooms is claustrophobia, which might detour some people from even wanting to try it,” said Comer. “But here, we always leave one door open for them to leave at any time. At other places, you might get locked in until you solve

the puzzle or the time ends.”

Each group is given one competitive hour to escape but is offered two hours to solve the riddle in every room. Two people is the minimum number of required participants and eight is the highest recommend number. Yet, Comer said four to six participants per room was the sweet spot for each of their escape rooms.

“Really though, it’s not about the number of people you bring, it’s who you bring,” said Comer. “I’ve had a group of two people make escapes in record time and groups of eight who couldn’t find a way out.”



Friends put heads together to solve their riddle and escape the room.

TUCKER KRAFT



SMALL TOWN, BIG DREAMS

Kraft refuses to go down amongst a group of Redbird defenders.

Tucker Kraft's Road to the NFL

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sirea.coop

With a population of 500 residents, Timber Lake, S.D., may seem similar to many small-town communities across the state. The town is known for its scenic beauty, outdoor recreational opportunities, and rich history. However, what really sets Timber Lake apart from the rest is a homegrown NFL prospect: Tucker Kraft.

At an impressive 6-foot-5 and weighing 254 pounds, Kraft has proven himself to be South Dakota's latest up-and-coming football star. Ask any fan of college football and they will tell you that Kraft has the size and skill set to make waves on a professional level.

Luckily, Kraft's talents haven't gone unnoticed. During his latest breakout season as SDSU's All-American tight end, Kraft left an impression on NFL

scouts with his ability to outrun opponents, snatch incredible catches and charge through multiple tackles. A top contributor in nearly every game, Kraft led the Jackrabbits to their first-ever FCS National Championship. The historic season quickly cemented Kraft's place as a top tight end in the NFL Draft.

Kraft recalls the moment everything fell into place: "I just realized that when I had the ball, no one could touch me," he said. "I knew after that season that I was completely capable of playing with the pros."

Timber Lake High School head football coach Ryan Gimbel says he is not surprised to see his former stu-



Tucker Kraft

dent and player on the doorstep of the NFL. Countless hours in the weight room and gym, he said, revealed Kraft to be a student-athlete with incredible drive.

“Seeing the raw natural talent of Tucker spoke for itself and what he could accomplish, but he also had the dedication to take it to that next level,” said Gimbel. “To me, it wasn’t a surprise, and that was our running joke when he left high school – ‘I’ll see you playing on Sundays.’”

Kraft’s journey to the NFL, however, was not without its fair share of adversity. Growing up in Timber Lake, Kraft lost his father to a plane crash when he was only 12 years old. Kraft overcame the childhood tragedy with his two brothers and mother by working tirelessly on and off the field. Honoring his father’s legacy, Kraft followed in his father’s footsteps to become an All-American college star like his father had done before him.

“My brothers took a big part in raising me after my dad died,” said Kraft. “My mom, my aunts and uncles all played a role, but I pride myself on getting a lot of things done independently.”

Steely determination has carried Kraft to the highest level of football, and not even dramatic injury has been able to slow him down. In November Kraft officially declared his name in the NFL draft. Kraft’s friends and family cheered him on as he showed off his incredible strength and skill on national television at the NFL Combine. There, Kraft proved his ability to play alongside the likes of Dallas Goedert, Riley Reiff and South Dakota’s other pro footballers.

“I was kind of star-struck walking in,” said Kraft. “Sitting down with the head coaches of the NFL franchise, you realize that you are at this level now. This is a job interview.”

The NFL Combine, however, will

not be the last of Kraft’s time on national television. Ranked as the sixth top tight end, Kraft’s eyes are set on the draft in April. And, although he hails from somewhere small, Kraft plans to loom large on the field as a starting player with great potential.

“I want to go to a team that’s going to use me, whether I’m on the line of scrimmage in the trenches with the big guys or catching balls and getting yards after the catch. I want to make an impact on a team, day one.”

Whatever happens in April, Kraft’s hometown is ready to cheer him on. According to Gimbel, most of Timber Lake is ready to don colors and jerseys that they are not used to wearing to support their hometown kid.

“The buzz in our town has just erupted,” said Gimbel. “Our community, school, and family friends – they all want to see him be successful in the opportunity that he has worked for.”



NFL prospect Tucker Kraft evades a tackler, leading SDSU to a 31-7 win last November against the Illinois State Redbirds.

Youth Scholarships, Continued from Page 3



Colby Fosheim

Colby Fosheim – My name is Colby Fosheim; I am the son of Jared and Tracy Fosheim. I have three siblings: two sisters, Kaitlyn, and Kalli, and one brother, Clayton. I have lived in Midland, S.D., since mom and dad

brought me home from the hospital. I started kindergarten in Philip, S.D., and have been attending school there ever since. After graduation, I will be pursuing a degree at Mitchell Technical College in Power Line Construction and Maintenance.



Dylan Fuoss

Dylan Fuoss – I am currently a senior at Jones County High School. I have been very actively involved in many high school activities such as football, rodeo, FFA, and FCA. I have lived on our ranch south of Draper, S.D., for my whole life with my parents Mike and Lyranda Fuoss and my two brothers. I plan to attend Dakota State University in the fall of 2023 studying Business Management.



Kori Gabriel

Kori Gabriel – I plan to attend Mitchell technical Institute in the fall where I will be going into the medical field. I have always enjoyed being helpful to people and by pursuing a degree as a Medical Assistant I will be able to

continue doing so. I grew up in Haakon County on our family ranch, which has shaped me into the person I am today.



Tory Grassrope

Tory Grassrope – I have attended and had my educational career at Lower Brule my whole life. I am currently the salutatorian of my class and am enrolled in three dual credits this year. I have a cumulative GPA of 3.826

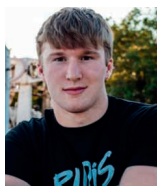
and the greatest academic achievements I've earned in my high school career are the student of the year and the artist of the year awards presented at the end of each school year. I plan on pursuing a bachelor's degree in business management with a minor in art or studio. I'm choosing to major in business management, because it offers a wide field of jobs in very different projects. I want to manage native artists, because I myself am one and have had experience in the field and market. To pursue a career as an artist is hard, but an amazing and beautiful thing to see and is something I want to be a part of.

To manage or sell for a native artist or show is the dream because in our art is our stories and struggles, and as a native, spreading our stories is a crucial part of our culture.



Emma Hunt

Emma Hunt – I was born in Kansas and moved to Murdo in the Spring of 2008. I was then raised in Jones County by David and Katie Hunt, a fourth generation rancher with land in western Jones County. Over the years, I have competed in volleyball, basketball, track, as well as many other extracurricular activities. I plan to attend Northern State University in the fall to run track and major in Criminal Justice.



Noah Hutmacher

Noah Hutmacher – My name is Noah Hutmacher. I attend Chamberlain High School and live in Ocoma, S.D., with my parents Joe and Laura Hutmacher, our two dogs Ripp and Willie and our pet goose Larry. I have two older brothers Brock Feltman and Nash Hutmacher. My future plans are to attend Northern State University to obtain my Business degree while also playing football for the Wolves.



Gunner Johnson

Gunner Johnson – Gunner is a Senior at Lyman High School, and is the son of Chad and Darcy Johnson. He lives north of Kennebec where he is active in all aspects of the family farming operation. He earned All-Conference Lineman honors in football and was 4x state qualifier in wrestling, placing 5th this season. Next fall he will attend Mitchell Tech for Power Sports and Technology.



Kamri Parsons

Kamri Parsons – My name is Kamri Parsons, daughter of Wade and Marcy Parsons. I grew up in Milesville on our family ranch and will graduate from Philip High School in May 2023. I am active in FCCLA, National Honor Society, and Student Council. Following graduation, I will attend Lake Area Technical College to become a Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant.

Sydney Tedrow – I am currently a senior at T. F. Riggs High school in Pierre, S.D. I was born in Bismarck, N.D., but have lived in this area since I was six weeks old. I have participated in many activities throughout my ele-



Sydney Tedrow



Hannah Thorson

mentary, middle, and high school years including dance, swim team, tennis, basketball, track, softball, FBLA, NHS, and Governor 2 Governor. Next year, I plan to attend South Dakota State University to major in mathematics.

Hannah Thorson – My name is Hannah Thorson. I am currently a senior at Philip High School. I grew up on a ranch in the Philip area my whole life. During high school, I participated in FCCLA, NHS, Band, and Choir. After high school, I plan to attend Chadron State College in Chadron, Neb., to pursue a degree in Elementary Education.



Mallory Valburg

Mallory Valburg – I am Mallory Valburg, daughter of Barry and Missy Valburg. I will graduate from Jones County High and have been active in athletics, FFA, and Student Council. This fall, I will attend DWU where I'll major in Pre-Vet and play collegiate volleyball. Thank you for choosing me as a recipient of your scholarship!



Tance Wagner

Tance Wagner – My name is Tance Wagner. My family includes Tim, Lorri, Tate, Kacie, and Kenzie. I come from a farming/ranching family. I took part in football and wrestling in high school, placing fourth at state wrestling in 2022 and fifth in 2023. I enjoy hunting, snowmobiling, and helping on the farm/ranch. I will graduate from Lyman High School and am attending Mitchell Technical College's Architectural Design and Building Construction program this Fall.



Abby Wyly

Abby Wyly – My name is Abby Wyly and I have lived south of Fort Pierre my entire life. I grew up helping my dad and brothers on our family farm and ranch. I have attended Stanley County for all of my educational career, and I keep myself very busy with all of the activities I am involved in. I have plans to attend Dakota Wesleyan University and major in elementary education in the fall.



Sign up today to reserve your seat! For the second year in a row, West Central Electric is again offering our member-owners a Basin Electric Bus Tour. The tour will be held on August 29-31, and members will have the opportunity to see the electrical system that provides electric power to their homes and farms. You'll see Basin Electric Co-op Headquarters, Antelope Valley Station electric generating plant, Coteau Properties Freedom Mine, Great Plains Synfuels Plant, and Transmission System Maintenance Menoken outpost. This is an excellent opportunity for members to view their vast electrical system "up close." You'll make new friends and see some fascinating sites. Best of all, the trip is free! If you are interested in such a trip, please fill out the form below and send it to our main office at West Central Electric PO Box 17 Murdo, SD 57559. For additional questions, please call us at 605-669-8100!

West Central Electric / Basin Bus Tour	
Names:	
Address:	
City/State/Zip	
Cell Phone Number	





ELECTRIC SAFETY IN ACTION

In a controlled demonstration, Journeyman Lineman Brady Gaer uses life-size equipment on the high voltage demonstration trailer to educate students about electricity.

Empowering the Public to Stay Safe

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Electric safety is a topic that South Dakota students are excited to engage with. They often ask questions like, “What should you do if your tractor equipment touches a power line?” or “How can birds sit safely on a power line?” or even “What does it look like when something comes in contact with high voltage?”

These are some of the most popular questions Oahe Electric’s Chief Financial Officer Valerie Marso has not only been answering but also demonstrating for more than 20 years.

“They always just have tons of questions,” said Marso. “It’s always fun to hear what they come up with next.”

It’s not just for entertainment, however. Oahe Electric and its employees are committed to realizing their goal of zero accidents at home and at work. Part of preventing tragedy starts with educating the public, especially youth, on how to stay safe around electricity.

In the last year alone, Oahe Electric traveled to nine different schools and led demonstrations for more than 900 students. For Marso, verbal communication is only half the battle when it comes to educating students

about electric safety. The real impact, she said, comes from showing them.

“The visuals and the noise that the high voltage makes really lands in a way that you just can’t convey with words,” said Marso. “It can scare the students a little bit, but I think it gives them a healthy respect for electricity.

Co-op across the state, including Oahe Electric, use three different interactive safety demonstrations to hone their message about safety: Power Town, Co-ops in the Classroom and the high voltage demonstration trailer.

One of the most popular, Power Town, is a small-scale, tabletop model of a few quaint houses attached to a small power grid. The miniature electrical system shows students how electrical current moves through

various items they may encounter in their daily lives, presented in a fun and easy-to-learn format. Line-workers, who work on the real equipment every day, lead the demonstration and teach students about personal protective equipment worn by co-op employees to complete their jobs safely.

Co-op in the Classroom is yet another powerful initiative South Dakota co-ops engage in to promote safety across the state. Working in conjunction with East River's Education and Outreach Program, co-ops meet the students where they are in the classroom to teach local youth the importance of respecting electricity through hand-on lessons that engage and excite the audience.

Lastly, the high voltage demonstration trailer is a portable unit that carries life-size equipment from events to local schools. It's a demonstration that always leaves an impression. Within a safe environment, students get to see actual equipment, such as utility poles, electrical conductors and distribution transformers, in action. Each hour-long demonstration shows what can happen when objects such as animals, trees, ladders and even fruit come into contact with power lines.

"This is equipment that our linemen work on every day, so they are comfortable showing these students how energy works," said Marso.

These demonstrations not only

entertain, but also promote a healthy and safe environment for co-op members and the public. During one of Oahe Electric's latest outreach events, Marso recalled listening to a small group of kids talk about how they sometimes sit on "the green boxes." They were referring to underground transformers. It became a teachable moment that left an impact on both the students and teachers.

"We told them to never touch them," she said. "You never know what going on in there, and it's always better to be safe than sorry. It was at least one person who took something home and actually used it. Moments like that show we are really making an impact with these students."



Oahe Electric Power Supply Specialist Steve Long teaches electric safety using Power Town, a miniature model used in safety demonstrations.



SEWING MEMORIES

The Farmers' Daughters' Sewing Museum is located in Vermillion, S.D.

Take a Stitch Back in Time

Jocelyn Johnson

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A stitch in time saves family memories and sews history together at The Farmers' Daughters' Sewing Museum just outside of Vermillion, S.D. A mom and five daughters hold a passion for sewing and for the history of household sewing machines.

Collecting domestic vintage sewing machines began more than 20 years ago for Sally Abild who visited

auctions with her mom, Evelyn Hanson. There, they found various vintage sewing machines and began collecting them.

"I would see these vintage machines that were being sold for little or nothing," Sally said. "I hurt, in a way, for the families because I thought, 'These are a part of their history.' If I had my grandmother's or my mother's sewing machine, I would be extremely happy to have it."

She purchased 20 machines, not

knowing what to do with them, but wanting to preserve them. They were first stored in an old farmhouse before eventually moving to a milking barn, which was homesteaded by Sally's husband – Dick Abild's great grandfather. The barn was renovated and opened as a museum in 2017.

The museum's collection of sewing machines grew with contributions from her sisters.

"They would come across machines I had never seen in the Midwest," Sally said. "In the bigger cities, there was more money in the mid-1800s when sewing machines started to pop up. You would find a bigger selection in those areas that you didn't find in rural areas."

Sally and her sisters, Gloria, Marie, Linda and Geri, carefully researched the history of each machine they owned, putting them in order and fixing them up. Today, visitors to The Farmers' Daughters' Sewing Museum are able to view more than 120 vintage machines along with treasured family mementos. Sally's family has a legacy of sewing their own clothes. She remembers her great grandmother making dresses from feed sacks and her mother, Evelyn, would sew clothes for the family on her treadle machine, since electricity wasn't available on the farm until the 1950s.

"I had to learn how to sew growing up," Sally said. "If I wanted something new, I had to learn how to make it for myself."

The Farmers' Daughters' Sewing Museum is one of three vintage sewing museums in the United States. "We collect domestic vintage machines – meaning our machines were the first to be used by families in the home and were made of all metal," Sally said. "A machine that has



Sally Abild and her family pose outside of the Farmers' Daughters' Sewing Museum.

plastic in it is not a vintage machine."

One of the oldest domestic, vintage machines on display at the museum is one by Elias Howe, who made the first official patented and manufactured sewing machine in 1846.

"We also have a Singer Model 12, which came out after the Civil War," she said. "Isaac Singer sold them door-to-door to families and was credited with coming up with the first payment plan – allowing up to 10 years to pay for this machine. It's said that Singer's Model 12 was the machine that clothed a nation."

The most unique machine that Sally favors, however, is a Wilcox and Gibbs that came about it the mid-1800s.

"It's a small, chain-stitch machine that was loved by many women back then," Sally said. "They could easily take it

from house to house, and it was easy to use. It's also the symbol we use for our museum."

Most vintage sewing machines tended to be family heirlooms, which were passed down from generation to generation.

"Many women who visit the museum have a machine that was passed down to them by their mothers or grandmothers and want to find out more information on them," Sally said. "Men love to visit too to learn more about the mechanics of these machines."

Sally revealed the transition from vintage sewing machines, made with metal, to newer sewing machines, made with plastic, began when America gave Japan two Singer patents after World War II. Japan capitalized on this and managed to perfect a design that they sold in America for a third of the cost. To compete with this, Singer began to put plastic parts into their machines and before eventually going out of business in 1988. Consequently, the age of vintage sewing machines ended when the convenience and affordability of plastic was introduced.



Evelyn Hanson instilled the love of sewing and vintage machines in her five daughters.



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.

MAY 6
Cinco de Mayo Fiesta
 Lake Farley Park
 Milbank, SD
 605-432-6656

MAY 17
Norwegian Independence Day
 6 p.m.
 Vivian, SD
 605-222-3296

MAY 20
Buggy Museum Open House
 10 a.m.
 Stockholm, SD
 605-938-4192

MAY 20
Booth Day
 10 a.m.
 Booth Fish Hatchery
 Spearfish, SD
 605-642-7730

MAY 20
Frühlingsfest and Spring Market
 1 p.m.
 Main Street Square
 Rapid City, SD
 605-716-7979

MAY 25
Wine Walk
 5 p.m.
 Downtown Businesses
 Aberdeen, SD
 605-226-3441

MAY 26-28
Hidden Treasure Heritage Festival
 Lead, SD
 307-259-4484

MAY 27
Back When They Bucked All-Day Rodeo
 9 a.m.
 Days of '76 Event Complex
 Deadwood, SD
 605-717-7642

MAY 27
Norwegian Constitution Day
 11 a.m.
 Lake Norden, SD
 605-874-2171

JUNE 3
Health Connect of South Dakota: The Human Race 5K
 9 a.m.
 Sertoma Park
 Sioux Falls, SD

JUNE 11
River Honoring Community Potluck
 5 p.m.
 Clay County Park River Shelter
 Vermillion, SD
 605-670-0540

JUNE 16-18
Fine Arts In The Hills Show & Sale
 Main Street
 Hill City, SD
 605-574-2810

JUNE 18
Father's Day Fishing
 10 a.m.
 Palisades State Park
 Minnehaha County, SD
 605-594-3824

JUNE 21
2023 McCrossan Boys Ranch Golf Classic for Kids
 Central Valley Golf Course
 Hartford, SD
 605-339-1203

JUNE 23
Flandreau Fridays
 5 p.m.
 Downtown Flandreau
 Flandreau, SD

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