

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Former co-op general manager Jim Moore is one of the original organizers of the Line Patrol Charity Ride and was the designated lead rider in 2021 as the group embarked on its adventure

Line Patrol Charity Ride

20 years of assisting
co-op families
Pages 8-9

Food co-ops meet
community needs
Pages 12-13

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Members

West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc.

OCTOBER 6, 2021

The Annual Meeting of the members of West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. was held at the Lyman Gardens Auditorium, City of Presho, Lyman County, State of South Dakota, pursuant to due notice to the members, commencing at 5:00 o'clock PM, CDT on Wednesday, October 6, 2021.

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

The invocation was given by Father John Heying of Presho.

CEO/Manager Jeff Birkeland recognized all Veterans.

The National Anthem was sung by members of the Presho High School Choir.

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

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

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

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

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

President Riggle and Manager Birkeland each gave their reports.

Manager Birkeland announced the retirement of Vic Simmons, CEO of Rushmore Electric, Greg Arthur, Operations Assistant, and Lyle Linderman, Presho Foreman.

Manager Birkeland then called upon the Legal Counsel for West Central, Mr. David Larson of Chamberlain, South Dakota. Mr. Larson reported on the legal status of West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., as follows:

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

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

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

- **Jones County - Town Director**
- Zone 2 - Ken Miller
- **Jackson County - Rural Director**
- Zone 3 - Jim Willert
- **Stanley County - At-Large Director**
- Zone 5 - Shad Riggle

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

Vic Simmons, CEO of Rushmore Electric, gave an update.

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

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

**COOPERATIVE
CONNECTIONS**

**WEST CENTRAL
ELECTRIC**

(USPS No. 018-988)

President

Shad Riggle, Hayes

Vice President

Kenneth Miller, Draper

Secretary/Treasurer

Marty Hansen, Philip

Directors

Rich Bendt, Kadoka
Mike McQuiston, Fort Pierre
David J. Mertens, Kennebec
Kevin Neuhauser, Midland
Paul Patterson, Draper
Jim Smith, Vivian
Jim Willert, Belvidere
Attorney
David Larson, Chamberlain

CEO/Manager

Jeff Birkeland, Murdo

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

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

Call 605-669-8100
24-hour Dispatching

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Design assistance by SDREA

OFFICIAL NOTICE

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

The Annual Meeting of members of West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., will be held at the Kadoka City Auditorium in the city of Kadoka, Jackson County, State of South Dakota, on Wednesday, October 5, 2022, at 5:00 P.M., MDT, to take action on the following matters:

1. Report of Officers and Directors.
2. The announcement of three (3) directors of the cooperative.
3. Transact any and all other business, which may come before the meeting. In conjunction with the Announcement of three (3) directors for three (3) year terms scheduled for this meeting, the following members have been nominated for directors as provided by the by-laws:
 - Cliff Uthe, Lyman County, zone one (1), town Director
 - Richard Bendt, Jackson County, zone three (3), town Director
 - Kevin Neuhauser, Haakon County, zone four (4), rural Director

Marty Hansen – Secretary

West Central Electric's 73rd Annual Meeting

Meeting Agenda

- Call to Order at 5:00 (MDT)
- Introduction of Cooperative Directors
- Notice of Annual Meeting
- Proof of Mailing
- Minutes of 2021 Annual Meeting
- President's Report
- Manager's Report
- Attorney's Report
- Announcement of Directors
- Unfinished Business
- New Business

All attendees will receive a blanket. Cash drawings will be held throughout the meeting, and a delicious meal served by the Kadoka Fire Department will follow!

Come join us!

- Wednesday, Oct. 5, 2022
- Kadoka City Auditorium, Kadoka, SD
- Registration: 4 p.m. MDT

Practice fire safety this fall and winter

When the weather turns colder, you inevitably start hearing more news about house fires. Even a small fire can be devastating.

Most house fires are caused by cooking that gets out of hand. But the second most common cause is materials in the home that catch fire. This often occurs when a heat source, such as a space heater or flying embers from a fireplace, comes into contact with fabric or paper, which then ignites. Once a fire starts, it can move so rapidly that even the best efforts to put it out may fail.

When it comes to old houses, the risks are even higher. The older the wood is that a house is constructed of, the faster it burns. Once flames invade the walls of an old house, they move with frightening speed.

Fire protection in any home is necessary, but even more careful precautions should be taken if your house is older. Here's how to help ensure the safety of your house and everyone in it.

SMOKE DETECTORS. These are the first and best line of defense; they allow you to get out of the house at the first whiff of smoke. Six in 10 deaths in house fires occurred in homes that did not have working smoke detectors. Go beyond the federal recommendations and put a smoke detector in every room. Stay on the even safer side by opting for those that detect both smoke and carbon monoxide.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS. Keep small fires from getting out of control with fire extinguishers that are easily accessible. Choose several extinguishers that are light enough for even kids to handle. Make sure they have simple pull mechanisms that don't require much strength. Look for fire extinguishers that work for various parts of the house; for instance, an extinguisher in the kitchen should be able to handle grease fires.

INSTALL ARC-FAULT INTERRUPTERS. These ingenious little gadgets detect the electrical arcing that occurs when an old wire buried deep in your wall begins to fail. Speak with an electrician about where best to install interrupters and how your particular ones work.

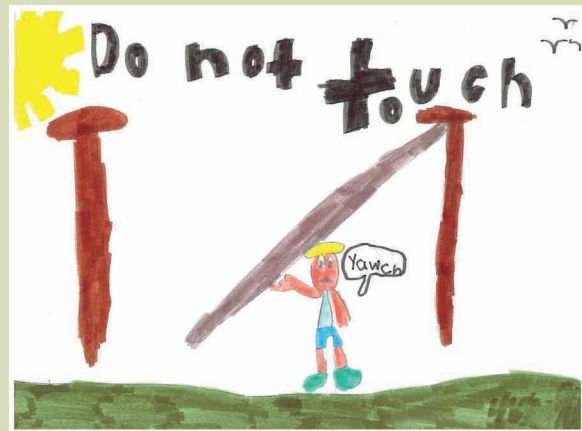
MAINTAIN IT ALL. Finally, test everything on a regular basis. Smoke detectors should be tested every month, their batteries replaced every six months, and old smoke detectors replaced every 10 years. Opt to purchase an extra fire extinguisher so your family can take it to the backyard and practice using it.

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES REPRESENT AT DAKOTAFEST



Electric cooperative representatives were on hand at the 2022 Dakotafest in Mitchell to share information about energy efficiency and electric-powered lawn implements and to showcase a 2022 Ford Lightning electric pickup truck provided by Vern Eide Ford. Shown left to right are Sheila Gross, Jared Rakness, Jennifer Gross, Patrick Soukup, Kristie Hauck, Brett Snyders and Tara Miller.

To see a video of this event and learn more about how electric cooperatives serve our members, visit Cooperative Connections Plus by scanning the QR code at right.



Do not touch power lines

Kendyl Gill

Kendyl knows that electricity always seeks a path to the ground and that all power lines should be treated as if they are energized. Kendyl is the child of Brent and Emily Gill, and they are members of Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber 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.

PRIMO PASTA!

PASTA WITH ZUCCHINI AND TOMATOES

Ingredients:

- 7 oz. short whole wheat pasta like penne fusilli or farfalle
- 2 lbs. zucchini, chopped
- 1 lb. grape or cherry tomatoes cut in halves
- 3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 6 garlic cloves minced
- 1/3 c. Parmesan cheese grated
- 1 c. parsley or 1/2 cup basil finely chopped
- 1 tsp. salt
- Ground black pepper to taste

METHOD

Cook pasta per package instructions undercooking by 2-3 minutes or until pasta is cooked but firm. While pasta is cooking, preheat large ceramic non-stick skillet on medium-high heat and swirl 1 tbsp. of oil to coat. Add zucchini and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally. Transfer to a bowl and set aside. Return skillet to stove, swirl 1 tbsp. of oil to coat, add tomatoes and cook for 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add garlic and cook for 1 minute, stirring a few times. Turn off heat and add cooked pasta and zucchini, remaining 1 tbsp. of oil, salt, pepper, cheese and parsley or basil; stir and serve. Adjust seasonings to taste. ifoodreal.com

MEXI-CORN LASAGNA

Ingredients:

- 1 lb. ground beef, browned and drained
- 1 can Mexican corn
- 1 can (15 oz.) tomato sauce
- 1 c. Pace picante sauce
- 1 tbsp. chili powder
- 1 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 16 oz. low-fat cottage cheese
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 c. parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp. oregano
- 1/2 tsp. garlic salt
- 12 corn tortillas
- 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese

METHOD

Combine first six ingredients in large skillet. Simmer 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Combine cottage cheese, eggs, parmesan cheese, oregano and garlic salt; mix well. Arrange 6 tortillas on bottom and sides of a lightly greased 13x9x2 baking dish, overlapping as necessary. Top with half the meat mixture. Spoon cheese mixture over meat. Arrange remaining tortillas over cheese. Top with remaining meat mixture. Bake 375 degrees for 20 minutes or until hot and bubbly. Remove from oven and sprinkle with cheddar cheese. Let stand 10 minutes, serve with additional picante sauce. Serves 8. **Carol and Rollie Smith, Brandon**

BAKED SPAGHETTI

Ingredients:

- 8 oz. package angel hair pasta
- 1/4 c. chopped parsley
- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 lb. ground pork
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. garlic salt
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper
- 1 1/2 tsp. sugar
- 1 tbsp. Italian seasonings
- 2 c. tomato sauce
- 1 c. water
- 2 c. canned crushed tomatoes
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 garlic cloves chopped
- 1/2 c. green peppers chopped
- 1/2 c. onion chopped
- 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 c. shredded Monterey Jack cheese

METHOD

Cook pasta and set aside. Add 1 tbsp. olive oil to pasta and stir in to keep it from sticking together. Precook beef and pork together with salt, garlic salt and black pepper. Drain grease off and set aside. In a large pan add parsley, Italian seasonings, tomato sauce and water, garlic, green peppers, onions and crushed tomatoes. Bring sauce to a boil then reduce to a simmer and continue to cook for 30 minutes. Add cooked meat to the sauce. Let set while preparing the baking pan. Grease a 9x13 inch pan. Layer sauce with spaghetti noodles in the pan. Bake 350 degrees for 30 minutes. At 30 minutes pull spaghetti from the oven and mix cheeses together then pour on spaghetti evenly. Bake 5-10 minutes until cheese is melted **Jane Cave, Sioux Falls**

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 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Change: the only certainty in life



Jeff Birkeland
CEO/Manager

It's been said that the only constant in life is change. For West Central Electric Cooperative, 2021 was marked by change and challenges which, were we less prepared, would have devastated many enterprises.

President John F. Kennedy once remarked, "Change is the law of life, and those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future." His successor, Lyndon B. Johnson, observed, "We must change to master change."

And the Great Communicator, President Ronald Reagan, said, "The very key to our success has been our ability, foremost among nations, to preserve our lasting values by making change work for us rather than against us."

At West Central Electric, we take those sentiments to heart, realizing that whatever warmth and nostalgia we hold for the past, it is quite likely that tomorrow will bring groundbreaking changes that our predecessors could never have fathomed.

In the case of your local electric cooperative, those changes and challenges of 2021 came in the form of post-pandemic supply chain interruptions and a series of June thunderstorms that struck the western third of our 7,000-square-mile service territory and left one third of our 3,600 valued members without power.

But, even two years into the pandemic upheaval, electric coops are experiencing issues with the supply chain that provides the equipment necessary to power our members' lives. Getting the most basic equipment has been an increasing struggle and attendant price hikes for everything from PVC pipe to transformers have been exorbitant.

For instance, since 2017, the cost per foot of 5-inch PVC pipe has risen from \$3.43 to a staggering \$23.45, a 584-percent increase. Simultaneously, the price of a 300 Kv transformer has gone from \$8,400 in 2017, to \$23,000 today. And, even if the cooperative can find a willing supplier, the wait for delivery can extend to as long as 152 weeks, or just shy of three years.

With less than moderate growth, West Central Electric has



Employees work to repair the damage caused by winds that clocked up to 95 mph.

been able to weather the supply chain storm, unlike many cooperatives in western South Dakota which may have 150-500 home subdivisions under development. But it did become an issue when West Central experienced a three-day series of thunderstorms and tornadoes in June.

With wind gusts clocked as high as 95 mph, the storms left a trail of destruction throughout the western third of West Central's service territory, leaving some coop members in the areas of Belvidere, Philip and Kadoka without power for as long as two days.

Losses included 214 downed distribution poles and 75 transmission poles. Winds were so intense that one massive "H" structure near Belvidere was pulled completely out of the ground. Six weeks after the storms subsided, and with the assistance of two contracted companies and five neighboring co-ops, repair work is still ongoing and is expected to continue well into the fall.

Total losses to West Central Electric are expected to approach \$1.7 million. In mid-July, South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem requested a disaster declaration from President Joe Biden, which has since been approved. This makes West Central eligible for reimbursement of repair costs through FEMA.

On a related note, West Central remains committed to converting 25 miles of overhead powerlines to underground each year. Thus far in 2022, linemen have buried 4 miles of lines, with approximately 11 more miles planned through the remainder of the year. The June storms and multiple others, and cleanup and disposal of Keystone XL materials, have put this plan behind schedule.

Prior to experiencing June's storm damage, West Central sent four linemen and equipment to assist Burke-Divide Electric Co-op in Columbus, N.D., in its efforts to restore power to its



West Central Electric Cooperative organized a tour of the Basin Electric Power Cooperative facilities in North Dakota.

members. That cooperative lost more than 1,950 power poles in a series of storms that ravaged its service territory.

In other news from the last year:

- West Central Electric resumed its annual Basin Members Tour Aug. 23-25, the first in nearly two decades. With 44 members participating in the three-day trip, tour-goers learned how their electric energy is generated, from mine to mouth.

- D.J. Mertens is stepping down from the cooperative's Board of Directors. We salute his 15 years of service as Lyman County director.

- Lyle Linderman, WCEC's Presho foreman, retired in January after 37 years, 7 months of service to our cooperative. Shane Neiderworder is now the Presho area foreman.

- Safety demonstrations were conducted in Ft. Pierre last spring and further demonstrations are planned in Lyman and Jones counties this fall.

- Lineman training, including instruction in rubber-gloving, underground and meter school, transformer school, pole top and bucket rescue training, climbing training, substation training, competent person training for dirt-work and shoring, and CPR & AED training are ongoing.

- Central Dakota Development Corporation received a REED economic development loan of \$300,000 for the development of a new subdivision in Kennebec, S.D., which will assist in providing infrastructure.

- West Central continues to upgrade its equipment. The cooperative has four

service trucks, one digger truck, and one chipper on back-order.

- The annual audit report from Eide Bailly CPA provided a clean bill of health and the cooperative remains on a firm financial footing. West Central Electric has not raised its rates since 2016.

- In partnership with Rushmore Electric, West Central has built a solar trailer, which allows us to educate members and provide realistic expectations of solar power.

Lastly, we began this annual report by noting that change and challenges are inevitable. Nowhere is that evidence more abundantly clear than by sharing the changes in the sources of energy that West Central Electric relies on today, compared to two decades ago.

Succinctly, your cooperative, by being a member of Basin Electric, has taken full advantage of emerging technologies, which have changed the pace and the face of electric energy production and distribution over the course of the last 20 years. Those advances have

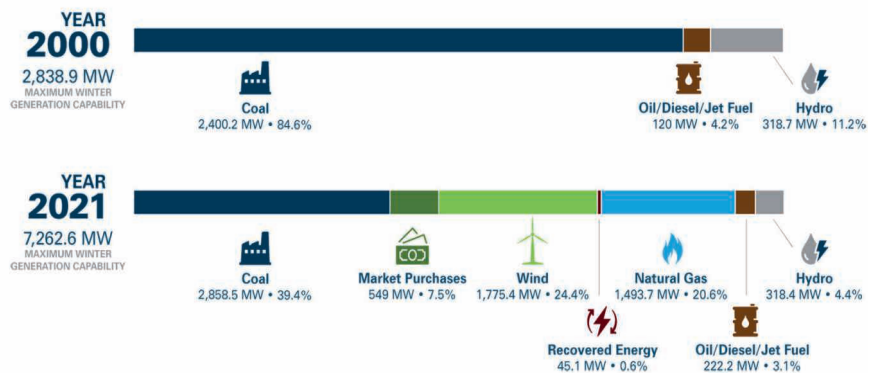
allowed us to provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity to our members, while maintaining the same number of employees at your cooperative and holding the line on costs.

In 2000, Basin's maximum winter power generation stood at 2,838.9 Mw. In 2021, that generation capability was 7,262.6 Mw.

Coal generation in 2000 accounted for 84.6 percent of WCEC's sources of energy. By 2021, coal supplied just 39.4 percent. Marketplace purchases added another 7.5 percent in 2021. Windpower, which didn't exist in our system in 2000, supplied 24.4 percent of our electricity last year. Natural gas generation added 20.6 percent.

Truly, one change makes way for the next, with innovation giving us the opportunity to grow.

*Jeff Birkeland, CEO/Manager
Shad Riggle, Board President
West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc.*





Roger Lawien and his wife, Kris, are regular participants in the Line Patrol Charity Ride. *Photos by Brad Letcher*

Line Patrol Charity Ride marks 20 years of serving those in need

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

When Roger Lawien encountered some unexpected health problems, his fear and anxiety were assuaged by the assurance that he had several key factors in his favor.

He knew he could rely on his faith. He knew he could rely on his family. And he knew he could rely on his fellow cooperative employees across the state.

Lawien, member services manager at Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber Lake, is a part-time volunteer and full-time advocate of Line Patrol, Inc., a charitable organization that exists to provide financial relief for South Dakota electric cooperative employees and their families in times of need.

Since the program was launched in 2003, hundreds of co-op employees have contributed to the emergency response fund by staging golf tournaments, bowling tournaments, auctions, trap shoots, 5K runs, raffles,

bake sales and more. One of the most popular and highly anticipated events is the annual Line Patrol Charity Ride held each September.

This year's 20th annual event took place on Sept. 10 and was co-hosted by Rushmore Electric, Butte Electric and Grand Electric. More than 200 riders and other participants gathered in Whitewood at the Iron Horse Inn and spent the afternoon motoring through the picturesque northern Black Hills.

Lawien was there perched aboard his prized Indian Roadmaster, soaking in the experience with his co-op friends and feeling grateful to have a dependable network of support that can be counted on not only to help rebuild lines and poles after a storm but also render aid in a personal crisis situation.

"Having been a recipient of funds from this program, it means a lot to be among these fellow co-op employees who are all so eager and willing to demonstrate their kindness and sincerity by showing up every year to contribute

Estimated amount of Line Patrol funds

\$580,000

donated to electric co-op employees

to a worthy cause like this," Lawien said. "It's that same cooperative spirit that bonds us all together. It's the can-do attitude they bring to their jobs every day in service to their members and their ongoing efforts to improve the quality of life in their communities. They are salt-of-the-earth people who care deeply for one another and the people around them."

Lawien said more than 240 families have received assistance through the fund totaling roughly \$580,000. He is one of three directors of the program along with Jessie Tucker (West Central Electric) and Tim Neises (Central Electric).

Jerry Swartz was one of the first



Jerry Swartz, pictured above-left, was the first recipient of Line Patrol funds after he was injured in 2004.

recipients of Line Patrol funds after he was involved in a workplace accident. He expressed what the charitable organization has meant to him and his family.

“Back in 2004, I had an extreme accident at work. I spent six months in recovery and this foundation gave us a check for \$500 to help us out. It may not seem like much money, but at the time it meant everything to me and my family. It’s amazing. God bless this fund and the people who donate to it and keep it running,” Swartz said.

One of the original organizers of the Charity Ride is former Northern Electric General Manager Jim Moore. Each year, as is the custom, Moore leads the cavalcade of dozens of motorcycles

away from the gathering site and along the chosen route.

“The ride has just gotten bigger and better over the years,” Moore said. “The money goes to help co-op employees in need. One person had a tornado damage their home, another lineman from Yankton was killed in Afghanistan and we set up a scholarship fund for his three children. I always tell my wife, Janice, this is the one thing I look forward to every year and truly love because we’re helping employees and their families get back on their feet.”

Laine Mitchell, communications director at Butte Electric, said helping to host the Charity Ride was an honor for the cooperative and something the organization was happy to support.

“Having many of our own employees benefit from the Line Patrol fund over the years, we are thrilled to co-host this year’s event and help raise money for other cooperative families across South Dakota. The ride is just one of the many ways the foundation bonds our cooperatives together and has touched countless lives in the last 20 years,” Mitchell said.

The weekend began with a social on Friday evening and concluded the following night with a buffet dinner and charity auction.

Sponsors for this year’s ride were Irby, Altec, RESCO, Dakota Supply Group, Border States Electric, WESCO and The Okonite Company.



Hundreds of riders from across the state participate in the annual Line Patrol Charity Ride each year. The program exists to provide financial support for electric cooperative employees and their families in times of need.

Voting Authorization Necessary for Organizations

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

Authorization to Vote

This is to certify that the _____ of _____ in a duly assembled meeting, designated _____ who is a(n) _____ of said organization, to represent the _____ at the regular Annual/Zone Meeting of the members of West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., to be held October 5, 2022 and said person is authorized to cast such member's vote on all issues that may come before said meeting.
The undersigned verifies that (s)he is the _____ of said organization and authorized to execute this instrument on behalf thereof.

State of South Dakota)
)ss.
County of _____)

On this ___ day of _____, 2022 before me the undersigned Notary Public of the State of South Dakota, personally appeared _____ known to me to be the person named in the above foregoing instrument, who acknowledged that (s)he executed the same for the purpose therein specified, (s)he being authorized so to do.

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

2022 Attorney's Report

Why do cooperatives have so much debt?

One of the things I am frequently asked about is why the rural electric cooperatives always carry so much debt? The simple answer is that they were designed to be creatures of debt.

The fact is that with our sparse populations and long distances to cover, it was simply impossible for rural electric organizations to attract the capital necessary to develop a viable system to deliver service across such a vast landscape. Private industry seeking to maximize profits was not going to do it. The only way that rural systems could be financially feasible was through a government-backed program of long term, low interest loans.



David Larson
Attorney

The Rural Electrification Administration (REA) was created by executive order in 1935 for this purpose. It was in reality a special banking entity designed to provide the necessary financing for three levels of the system:

1. Distribution cooperatives which supply electricity directly to the local members,
2. Transmission cooperatives, which supply electricity to the various distribution cooperatives within their geographic area, and
3. Generation cooperatives which build and operate the large generating facilities that create the power

By being able to finance their development through these loans, the local cooperatives were able to construct multi-million dollar systems and spread the costs in such a way that they could provide efficient, low cost, electricity to their members when nobody else would even consider providing electrical service to the country's rural communities.

The same thing is still true today. Even though the rural cooperatives have been a success in paying off their loans, they still would never be able to attract private capital without offering a rate structure that the members would simply be unable to pay. New development to meet new demands means a continuing need to borrow the necessary funding. By providing electrical service at the lowest rates possible, through non-profit operation and the federal loan program, rural electric cooperatives have been able to bring electricity to the country, allowing its members to keep their own funds for the development of their own farms, ranches, and businesses.

Statement of Revenue and Expenses

FOR THE YEAR
ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2021

Operating Revenues	2021	2020
Farm and Residential	\$9,050,699	\$9,167,241
Small Commercial	2,065,858	1,994,805
Large Commercial	5,016,285	5,125,845
Irrigation	130,801	106,916
Street Lighting	297,784	296,163
Sales to Others	322,835	305,361
Miscellaneous Electric Revenue	580,530	918,861
Total Operating Revenue	17,464,792	17,915,192

Operating Expenses	2021	2020
Cost of Power	8,599,760	8,948,870
Operation and Maintenance Expense	2,694,925	2,561,224
Consumer's Accounting and Collecting	278,770	289,485
Electric Sales and Promotion Expense	295,237	272,351
General and Administrative Expense	1,312,820	1,391,798
Property insurance Expense	64,651	63,878
Maintenance of General Property	197,202	169,264
Taxes	240,223	249,058
Depre. and Amortization Exp.	1,693,813	1,647,622
Interest on Long-Term Debt	940,195	973,100
Total Operating Revenue Deductions	16,317,596	16,566,650
Net Operating Margins	1,147,196	1,348,542
Interest Income	146,214	209,846
Gen. and Trans. Capital Credits	289,927	433,498
Other Nonoperating Income	733,120	75,631
Net Margins for the Year	\$2,316,457	\$2,067,517

Balance Sheet

DECEMBER 31, 2021

What We Own	2021	2020
Total Cost of Electrical System (After Depreciation)	\$34,700,242	\$34,538,528
Investments, Other Noncurrent Assets	9,341,318	9,397,207
Cash and Cash Equivalents	214,530	6,047,750
Temporary Cash Investments	5,993,016	3,954,999
Receivables Less Reserves	1,542,360	1,622,200
Notes Receivable-Current Maturities	36,100	33,100
Materials and Supplies on Hand	1,571,652	1,404,342
Advanced Payments on Insurance, Etc.	52,468	54,204
Deferred Debits	-	12,178
Total Assets	53,451,686	57,064,508

What We Owe	2021	2020
Total Borrowed from RUS, CFC, FFB	44,262,712	44,262,712
Total Paid on Loans	(16,292,903)	(15,621,492)
Balance Owed RUS, CFC and FFB	27,969,809	28,641,220
Accounts Payable and Other Liabilities	4,720,922	8,683,483
Margins and Equities		
Patronage Capital	12,230,091	11,817,057
Margins for Current Year	2,316,457	2,067,517
Other Equities	6,214,407	5,855,231
Total Liabilities and Equity	\$53,451,686	\$57,064,508

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



The Sioux Falls Food Co-op has persevered for 50 years by adhering to the co-op model. *Photo by Sioux Falls Food Co-op*

Food co-ops meet the need for nutritious, healthy choices

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Back in the 1930s, rural community leaders all across the country began traveling from farm to farm knocking on doors and asking for \$5 as seed money to build out a network of electric distribution systems.

It was not an insignificant sum to solicit from many farmers and ranchers contending with substandard soil conditions, the vagaries of weather patterns and fairly primitive mechanization compared to today's operations.

But in exchange for that investment, those same community leaders turned the promise of rural power into a reality and presently there are more than 750 locally-owned electric cooperatives serving roughly 40 million Americans.

Bess Pallares keeps that electric co-op success story close to mind as she embarks on establishing a grocery store in Brookings County using the

cooperative business model as her template.

Pallares is president of the Dakota Community Market board of directors, whose members have been working since 2019 to bring a food cooperative to the Brookings area. She reports that the endeavor hasn't been a cake walk, but she continues to be inspired by the way like-minded electric co-op leaders back in the '30s managed to gain popular support for locally-owned, independent entities created to provide a valuable service.

The board's market analysis indicates that a "low food access zone" exists within Brookings County when it comes to full-service retail grocery stores with just two providers in a 50-mile radius.

"On average, there are typically 2.84 grocery stores per 10,000 population. We have .68 in this area," she said. "People keep saying they're sick of having to drive miles and miles to get to a full-service grocery store that stocks



Bess Pallares

what they want and need for their families."

To generate start-up capital, the board is offering memberships at \$150, a little more than a week's worth of groceries for many families. Meanwhile, Pallares and her board members are scouring the landscape for additional financing sources and federal grant opportunities with plans to have a retail store up and running as soon as possible.

She has had discussions with East River Electric in Madison about accessing available funds through the Rural Electric Economic Development Fund (REED). The REED program



Caselli's Garden is among a growing list of fresh food suppliers for Dakota Community Market. *Photo by Caselli's Garden*

is designed to provide financing to help build the economic base of rural communities within East River Electric's regional service area. Hundreds of organizations, businesses, medical facilities, housing projects and many more have received financial support through the REED program over the past 20 years.

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Pallares said she sometimes feels exactly like those early electric cooperative pioneers, attempting to pave the way for providing a reliable source of quality, low-cost food in the Brookings area. She has become active in the Billie Sutton Leadership Institute Rural POWER program to help tap into the regional business community with the goal of developing an optimum financial strategy and making connections with future suppliers and other partners.

"The Institute opens up a giant network across the state where you can meet a lot of people doing the same kinds of things you're doing, and they've

got great ideas and big goals and a fearless entrepreneurial spirit. One of our board members has gone through the class and I'm doing it now. It's been transformational," she said.

The Dakota Community Market is not the only fearless group striving to launch a locally-owned and locally-controlled food cooperative. The Coteau Community Co-op is also trying to establish a food co-op to serve the Watertown area. Both have plenty of successful models and supporters to help guide and inspire their efforts.

The National Food Co-op Startup Network and the National Co-op Grocers based in Minneapolis are both available to provide resources and expertise. Additionally, there are a few successful stores already operating in South Dakota, including Natural Abundance in Aberdeen, Breadroot Natural Food Co-op based in Rapid City and the Sioux Falls Food Co-op.

Patrick Saylor is general manager of the Sioux Falls Food Co-op on West 18th Street, an operation that has been going strong for the past 50 years through several relocations, growing competition and even a fire. Saylor sees food co-ops across the region as sharing the same common goals and working together to accomplish those goals.

"We tend to put a different twist on things, but in the end we all want the families we serve to have a better way of

accessing the food they eat to maintain good health and a healthy lifestyle," said Saylor, who used to frequent the store as a teen and replaced long-time manager Molly Langley in 2016. "It's always encouraging to see different leaders working hard to do what we've been able to do. It takes a lot of effort and it takes tireless visionaries to stay focused and committed to achieving what you want to accomplish together."

In meeting its commitment to improve the quality of life in the community, the co-op has a program called Big Change, where shoppers are invited to round up their expenditures to the next whole dollar amount. The difference is added to a fund that goes to support local charities such as the Teddy Bear Den, Mobile Pantry of Sioux Falls, Bishop Dudley Hospitality House, SD Voices for Peace and many more. The co-op even has a space available for public meetings and workshops.

The store recently celebrated an expansion and re-opening, and Saylor said he's optimistic about the future while keeping an eye on industry trends.

"We're growing. There's a lot of competition, but we've got a great location, great employees and a great product," he said. "The co-op model is alive and well. We have members who support us and are committed to our mission of providing a source of healthy, affordable good choices."

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT



Jeff Birkeland
CEO/Manager



Scott Kittelson
Manager of
Operations



Kit Talich
Staff
Engineer



Seth Geigle
Line
Superintendent



Jessie Tucker
Manager of
Member Services



Rob Kaiser
Staff
Assistant



Jill Rankin
Office
Manager



Cindy O'Hern
Billing Supervisor



Stephanie Hesse
Accountant



Carrie Lolley
Administrative Asst.



Joni Moore
Member Services



Jade Konst
IT Coordinator

Philip



Nathan Drury
Foreman



Rhett Bothwell
Journeyman
Lineman

Presho



Shane Neiderworder
Journeyman
Lineman



Grady Floyd
Journeyman
Lineman



Derek Wolf
Journeyman
Lineman



Jordan Jessop
Journeyman
Lineman

Kadoka



Landon Stout
Foreman



True Buchholz
Apprentice
Lineman

Murdo



Dana DesLauriers
Foreman



Greg Glaze
Journeyman/
Purchasing
Agent



Jared Dowling
Technician/
Metering Tech



Rick Schiley
Journeyman
Lineman



JayTe Sealey
Pole Tester/
Groundsman



Jackson Volmer
Journeyman
Lineman

Midland



Dustin Vollmer
Foreman



Alec Schofield
Apprentice
Lineman



Mike Trapp
Operations
Assistant



Shad Riggle
President
Zone 5
Stanley County



Ken Miller
Vice President
Zone 2
Jones County



Marty Hansen
Secretary/Treasurer
Zone 4
Haakon County



Rich Bendt
Zone 3
Jackson County



Mike McQuiston
Zone 5
Stanley County



D.J. Mertens
Zone 1
Lyman County



Kevin Neuhauser
Zone 4
Haakon County



Paul Patterson
Zone 2
Jones County



Jim Smith
Zone 1
Lyman County



Jim Willert
Zone 3
Jackson County





September 29-October 1
Buffalo Roundup and Arts Festival
Photo Credit: Chad Coppess

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.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

SEPT. 29-OCT. 1
Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup & Arts Festival
 Custer, SD
 605-255-4515

SEPT. 30-OCT. 1
Oktoberfest
 Citywide, Deadwood, SD
 605-578-1876

SEPT. 30-OCT. 2
SiouxperCon
 1201 N West Ave.
 Sioux Falls, SD

OCT. 1
Prairie Village Hobo Marlin Pumpkin Train
 45205 SD Highway 34
 Madison, SD
 605-256-3644

OCT. 1-2
Magic Needlers Quilt Festival
 Codington County Extension Complex, Watertown, SD
 605-881-3273

OCT. 7
The Pumpkin Patch
 Rapid Valley United Methodist Church, Rapid City, SD
 605-393-1526

OCT. 7-9
Great Scarecrow Festival
 Campbell Park
 Huron, SD
 605-353-8530

OCT. 7-9
Black Hills Powwow
 444 Mt. Rushmore Road
 Rapid City, SD
 605 341-0925

OCT. 7-8
Holman Acres Pumpkin Fest & Vender Show
 Philip, SD
 605-441-1060

OCT. 8
Fall Festival
 Fairburn United Methodist Church, Fairburn, SD
 605-255-4329

OCT. 8-9
Crazy Horse Marathon & Races
 Crazy Horse Memorial
 12151 Avenue Of The Chiefs
 605-390-6137

OCT. 15
Fall Festival
 18473 US Hwy 83, Onida, SD

OCT. 22
Ladies Day
 The Crossing Bar, Mina, SD
 605-390-2939

OCT. 28-30
ZooBoo
 Great Plains Zoo
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-7003

NOV. 3-5
Yankton's Harvest Halloween
 Downtown, Yankton, SD
 harvesthalloween.com

NOV. 3-5
Huron Ringneck Festival & Bird Dog Challenge
 100 4th Street SW, Huron, SD
 605-352-0000

NOV. 5-20
Rustic Designs & More Christmas Show
 9 a.m.-5 p.m. daily
 Ethan, SD
 605-770-2411

NOV. 11-13
Christmas at the Barn
 Front Porch 605, Groton, SD
 605-216-4202

NOV. 12
Black Hills Meat Festival
 Black Hills Harley Davidson
 2820 Harley Dr., Rapid City, SD
 605-390-7917

NOV. 18-20
Deadwood's Big Whiskey Festival
 Deadwood, SD
 605-578-1876

DEC. 2-3
Christmas in the Hills
 Mueller Center, Hot Springs, SD
 605-745-4140

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