

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



The success of the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally requires many megawatts of power provided by member-owned electric cooperatives, including lighting the main stage at the Buffalo Chip

Photo by Travel South Dakota

The Rally

Keeping the Sturgis Rally juiced up
Pages 8-9

High-flying fun at Catfish Bay
Pages 12-13

Tell us how we can serve you better

It's amazing what we learn through listening and observation.

For instance, new products and services are more likely to gain the satisfaction of consumers when their introduction into the marketplace follows reliable market research.

Here at West Central Electric, we have provided members with SmartHub, a program that enables you to check the status of your electric service and receive real-time updates on your energy use.

Our members are using the mobile app to conduct routine business with us, like making online bill payments, arranging service transfers and viewing real-time outage updates.

Since we launched SmartHub in 2013, 1,042 of our members have downloaded the app and use it to monitor more than 1,261 accounts. That is roughly a third of our entire membership.

These mobile services are just new ways of connecting with people, like the member services representatives you reach when you call us or greet you from behind the counter at our office. They help us offer quality services you expect us to provide.

Our goal is to find ways to help you control energy costs. That is why we communicate with you about energy prices

and ways we can work together to help ease the burdens on your wallet.

West Central also offers a load management program designed to help avoid high-cost energy by reducing overall demand during peak use periods. We lower the demand by actively load controlling water heaters and electric storage heat.

Approximately 1,200 of you participate in our program and we hope to expand more going forward. If you have not signed up, ask us about it – we are ready to listen.

ANNUAL MEETING

Listening improves understanding, builds trust, strengthens relationships and fosters cooperation. It is also crucial to collaboration and success.

That is why West Central still loves meeting with our members in person. Our annual meeting is a social event for our whole co-op family. We hope you will make plans now to join us on Oct. 5 in Kadoka for an evening of co-op business, fun and prizes. We will provide more information on this year's annual meeting in future editions of Cooperative Connections.

LISTENING TO YOU

So, how do we serve you better going forward? The same way many of us try to serve community, society and family better each day – by listening. In our offices, on telephones, through social media, and in our face-to-face meetings, we are ready to listen.

Whether you have questions about energy efficiency, electrical service or any of our products or services, just ask us. When we know just what you want, we are in a better position to deliver successful results.

Drop-in and see us, we are always glad to hear from you.



Jeff Birkeland
CEO



COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

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

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WEST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is published monthly by West Central Electric Cooperative, Inc., PO Box 17, Murdo, SD 57559. Periodicals Postage Paid at Murdo, SD 57559 and at additional mailing offices. Electric cooperative members devote \$1 from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$18 annually. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: West Central Electric Cooperative Connections, PO Box 17, Murdo, SD 57559; telephone 605-669-8100; fax 605-669-2358; e-mail wcec@wce.coop; Web site: www.wce.coop; Twitter: @WCElectric; Facebook: www.facebook.com/WestCentralElectricCooperative

Design assistance by SDREA

Understanding the difference between energy and demand

Demand can be explained as the capacity required to serve a load. As an example, think about the loads that can be on at the same time in your home. The water heater is 4.5 kW, the oven is about 4 kW, the clothes dryer is 5 kW, so you would need a generator with a capacity to handle a demand of $4.5 + 4 + 5 = 13.5$ kW.

Likewise, we would need to have a transformer at your home sized to meet this combined load. Overall, higher demand loads require more service from the utility, including generating plant capacity and more expense in lines, transformers and substation equipment.

Energy can be explained as the power delivered to your loads over a period

of time. Using the above example, if all the loads were on continuously for three hours, $13.5 \text{ kW} \times 3 \text{ hours} = 40.5 \text{ kWh}$. If you checked your electric meter before and after, you would see an increase in the reading of 40.5 kWh.



Jessie Tucker
Member Services

One of the best analogies to help understand the difference between demand and energy is by “filling a bucket.” Suppose you want to fill a five-gallon bucket with water. You can use a smaller inexpensive hose hooked to a little faucet that would supply the water at one gallon per minute, and it would take five minutes to fill the bucket.

Rather than using the smaller hose, you can get a larger more expensive hose and faucet that would fill your bucket at a rate of five gallons per minute. This would only take one minute to fill. In this example the consumption (energy) of filling the bucket with five gallons of water is the same but the flow rate (demand) would be much different.

Your home energy bill is typically based on the number of kWh that you consume. West Central Electric, on the other hand, must pay a cost for the maximum kW (demand) that we supply during the month, as well as the energy delivered in kWh.

A larger kW figure means our power supplier had to have enough generation capacity running to meet our peak load. More kW at the peak means more generators running. The more generators running means more expense and cost to supply the short-term peak load.

Base load, or load that is essentially continuous, is met with constant running coal plants. Load that rises above that level for shorter periods is met with short-term peaking plants that utilize natural gas or fuel oil. These plants are higher maintenance and require greater expense. Therefore, we pay for the maximum monthly peak load.

A lower peak means a lower use of more expensive generation sources and a lower cost to meet the load. That means a lower wholesale power cost and the savings get passed on to our members!

Energy can be explained as the power delivered to your loads over a period of time.

Electrical safety basics for children

The back-to-school season is a time when parents and school children fall back into the familiar routine of getting up early, getting dressed, grabbing breakfast, preparing lunch and shuffling out the door each day.

It's a time when students return to a learning mindset, ready to take on new ideas, knowledge and information.

Parents should seize the opportunity to teach school-age children a valuable and potentially lifesaving lesson: Respect electricity.

Here are several electrical safety basics every child should know:

- Mixing water and electricity can be deadly. Teach children not to use electric toys or other devices near water or in the rain.
- Plugging multiple devices into a single outlet or power strip can create sparks and even cause a fire if that outlet can't handle the load. Teach kids to plug into surge-protected power strips or to use one device at a time and unplug the rest.

When they unplug those devices, they should grab them by the plug, not the cord. Yanking a cord out of an electrical outlet can damage the appliance, the outlet or the plug.

- Electrical cords can be strangling hazards and might cause electrical burns if they are misused. Make sure youngsters keep cords away from their mouths and necks. It's best to hide cords so they aren't a temptation.

- Electrical outlets are receptacles for electrical plugs only. Children should know from an early age that it's a no-no to put foreign objects or fingers into power plugs. Sticking any other items into an electrical socket can lead to electric shock or death. Use childproofing outlet covers.

- Flying kites and climbing trees are never safe activities near power lines. If a tree has a power line running through it - or if it's even within reach of the line - it's not a safe place to play. If a kite gets caught in a power line, the child should not tug on it to get it loose. The string could conduct electricity and seriously hurt the child.

- Electrical substations are fenced off to keep children and animals out of the area. If a toy or small pet gets inside the fence, the child should inform a parent or teacher, who can call a trained worker to come and retrieve it.

COOPERATIVES HELP OUR MEMBERS SOLVE PROBLEMS



Electric co-op member services personnel focus their attention on making sure co-op members get the power they need when they need it. They help homeowners and businesses solve problems and find solutions to operate more efficiently. A group of co-op representatives recently took a guided tour of the Riverview Dairy near Watertown to learn how the dairy functions and how the local co-op can provide better service to the facility.

You can find out more about the many ways our electric cooperatives serve our members by visiting Cooperative Connections Plus. Simply scan the QR code at right.



Swim safely

Alayna Smith

Alayna, age 10, alerts both the young and old alike to refrain from swimming when any thunderstorms are around. Alayna is the daughter of Myles and Amber Smith and they are members of H-D Electric Cooperative 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.

TASTY SUMMER SALADS

SHELL MACARONI SALAD

Ingredients:

1 7-oz. box of shell macaroni, cooked, rinsed and cooled
2-3 fresh tomatoes, chopped
1/3 green pepper, chopped
3 celery ribs, sliced thinly
1/4 c. chopped onion
1 cucumber, seeded & chopped

Toss ingredients together; set aside.

Dressing

1/2 c. canola oil
3/4 c. sugar
1/2 c. vinegar
3/4 c. catsup
Dash of lemon juice

METHOD

Mix dressing ingredients well with wire whip and add to veggies and macaroni.

Joan Antonen, Arlington

TUNA AND EGG SALAD

Ingredients:

3 6-oz. cans tuna packed in water
3 eggs hard boiled, peeled and chopped
2 small dill pickles diced
1 large celery rib diced
1/4 cup red onion minced
1 tbsp. lemon juice or red wine vinegar
2 tsp. garlic powder, optional
1/4 tsp. salt, to taste
Ground black pepper to taste
1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt, 2%+ fat
2 tbsp. mayo

METHOD

Drain cans with tuna well by pressing hard on the lid while draining. Transfer to a large bowl and separate into flakes with a fork. Add chopped and peeled hard boiled eggs, pickles, celery, red onion, lemon juice, garlic powder (if using), salt, pepper, yogurt and mayo. Stir well with a fork and refrigerate. Serve cold in a sandwich or over salad greens.

ifoodreal.com

GARDEN VEGGIES 'N ROTINI

Ingredients:

3/4 c. oil
3/4 c. white vinegar
3/4 c. white sugar
1 tsp. garlic salt
2 tbsp. onion flakes
1 tbsp. mustard
Bring the above ingredients to a boil and remove from heat.
Cook 4 cups colored rotini noodles. Rinse and chill.
Cut up the following in chunky pieces:
1 tomato
1 cucumber
assorted peppers
1/2 red onion

METHOD

Stir veggies together with the rotini and dressing. Chill before serving.

Ginny Jensen, Volga

NANCY'S MACARONI SALAD

Ingredients:

Dice:

1 onion
1 green pepper
1-2 carrots
1 cup celery
2 cups Velveeta Cheese

Add:

1 can peas
1 - 16 oz. pkg. macaroni cooked and drained

Dressing:

1 cup sugar
1 pint mayo
1 cup white vinegar
1 - 14 oz. can evaporated milk

METHOD

Mix together gently and refrigerate, best overnight. Add any type of meat, boiled eggs etc., as desired.

Nancy Nelson, Mission Hill

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.

Q: How do I operate my thermostat to use less energy and still be comfortable?

A: Heating and cooling account for about half the energy used in a typical home, so it's a great place to use less energy. When used wisely, your thermostat can help reduce wasted energy.

Here's some information on thermostat types, common operational misconceptions and best practices you can start today.

TYPES OF THERMOSTATS

Mechanical thermostats are easy to control by adjusting a dial or sliding switch. The downfall is you must make temperature adjustments manually, which is easy to forget. They are inefficient because they typically heat or cool the home beyond the set point.

If your cooling is set to 72 degrees, a mechanical thermostat may actually cool your home to 70 degrees before it turns off, wasting energy. Then it might not come on again until the home reaches 74 degrees. That four-degree temperature change is noticeable and can lead people to adjust the thermostat setting down even more, which wastes more energy.

Also, some mechanical thermostats contain mercury. You can determine that by removing the front plate and looking for small glass bulbs. If your thermostat contains mercury, replace it and find a way to properly recycle it.

Digital thermostats are more accurate, efficient and some are programmable, which is a great option for people who don't have internet or don't want their thermostat data tracked.

Smart thermostats - which require an internet connection - are Wi-Fi-enabled and can be controlled using a smartphone app. Programming is easier, and you can track and manage use and temperature data. However, that data is shared with the manufacturer.

Smart thermostats can learn your preferences and set a schedule that automatically adjusts the temperature. Some have geofencing, which

adjusts the temperature based on the distance your smartphone is from home.

MISCONCEPTIONS

A common misconception is the higher you turn your thermostat up or down, the faster your home's temperature will change. Turning your thermostat down to 55 degrees to cool your home faster is like repeatedly pushing the elevator button and expecting it to come faster.

It's likely you will forget you adjusted it and waste energy by over heating or cooling the home. Set your desired temperature for heating and cooling or program your thermostat so you don't make extreme adjustments.

Many people believe it takes more energy to heat or cool a house instead of leaving it the same temperature. The larger the temperature variance between inside and outside, the more energy your system uses. Setting your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting for eight hours a day can save up to 10 percent a year on your energy bill, according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

BEST PRACTICES

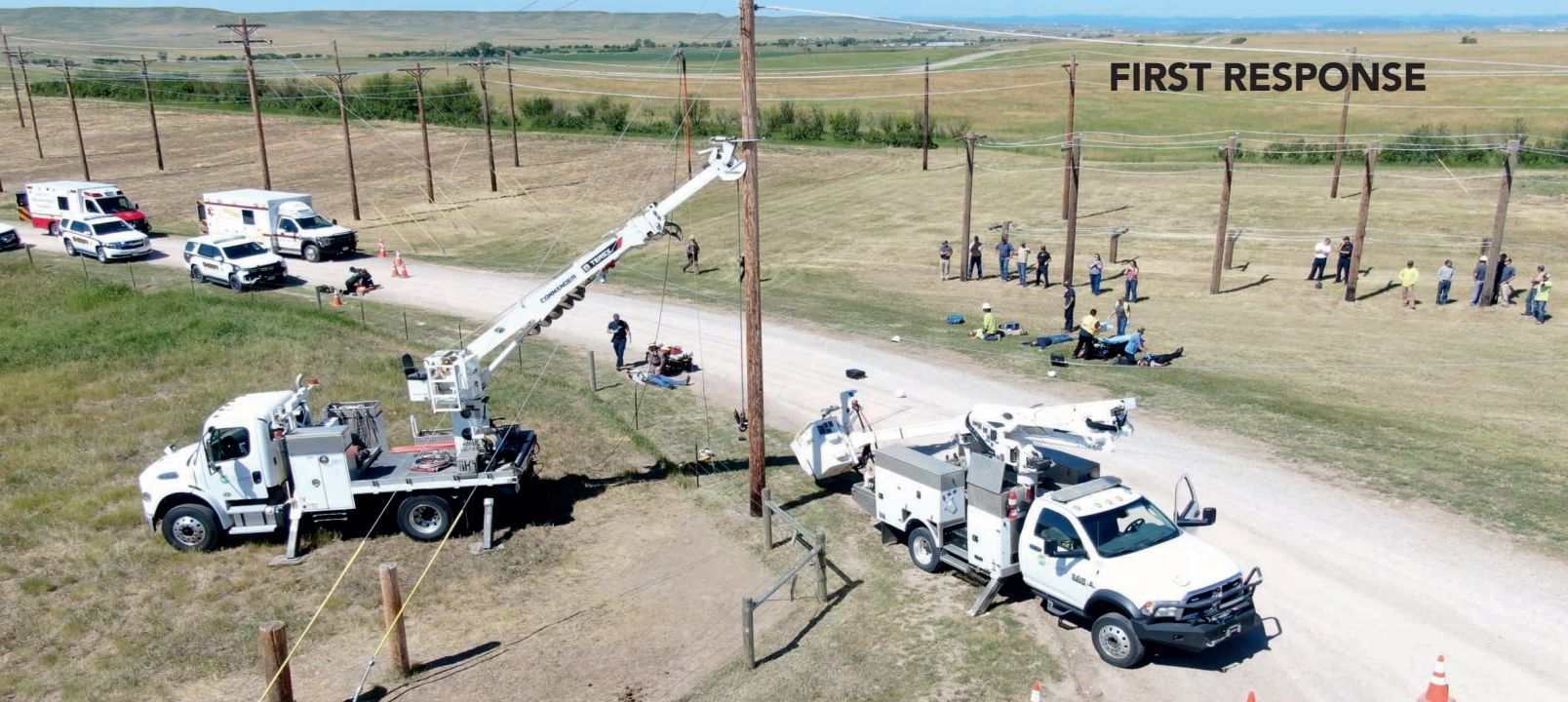
Use these heating and cooling tips from the DOE to add efficiency and savings to your home:

- Set it to 78 degrees in the summer when you are home and awake, and warmer at night or when away. Set your thermostat to 68 degrees in the winter when you are home and awake, and cooler at night or when you are away.
- Upgrade to a programmable or smart thermostat that automatically adjusts the temperature throughout the day and when you leave the house.
- When on vacation, set your thermostat to 85 degrees in the summer and 55 degrees in the winter.
- In the summer, fans allow you to set your thermostat about 4 degrees warmer without feeling it. Remember, fans cool people not rooms, so turn them off when you leave a room.

Use your thermostat to optimize energy efficiency and find a balance between comfort and affordability.



Miranda Boutelle
Efficiency Services
Group



A mayday drill was conducted near New Underwood to train co-op employees and first responders. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Mock drill benefits cooperative employees and responders

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

A tragic scene unfolded near New Underwood last month with several accident victims lying on the ground severely injured after making contact with an energized power line.

There was blood, bruises and burn marks. Sirens blared, engines revved and vehicles kicked up clouds of dust as more than a half-dozen agencies arrived to save lives, manage the crisis and reduce the risk of further harm. Paramedics, deputies and other first responders began CPR on the victims and hauled them into ambulances.

Fortunately, the scenario was fake news, all part of a mock mayday drill organized by West River Electric at the Brinks Training Facility east of Rapid City. The co-op staged the drill not only for the benefit of its linemen and other employees but also to educate first responders on how to work in the presence of electric utility infrastructure.

Participants were the Rapid City Fire Department, Box Elder Fire Department, Pennington County Sheriff's Office, Life Flight, Wall Ambulance, State Highway Patrol and Pennington County Dispatch.

"The goal was for everyone to get something out of it, from the paramedics to the dispatchers who accepted the mayday call," said Brendan Nelson, line superintendent at West River Electric. "Thanks to everyone involved. We hope we never actually have to go through something like this. All the co-ops in our system strive to develop a culture of safety and we're all working to achieve the same objective - delivering power to our members safely and economically, and getting everybody back home."

He said the exercise went smoothly and there were many lessons learned regarding managing an accident scene, coordinating communication and maneuvering around what are always assumed to be energized power lines. After the drill, a debriefing session was held at the co-op's office in Rapid City.

Mark Patterson, manager of loss control at the South Dakota Rural Electric Association in Pierre, also attended the exercise. He said electric cooperatives place the highest priority on safety and invest considerable time and resources toward making sure line workers are prepared to respond to emergency situations as they arise.

"All of our co-ops take safety training

very seriously," Patterson said. "Part of that commitment means participating in these kinds of drills and other training programs to make sure we're prepared to respond to accidents and emergency situations as expeditiously as possible. To make sure our response is effective, it's important that we have a good idea about our roles and responsibilities well before an accident occurs."

Patterson and his team at the association conduct on-site safety programs throughout the year, including rubber-gloving, hot-sticking, grounds testing, pole-top rescues, equipment inspections, state and federal rules and regulations, First Aid and more.

He emphasized that intra-agency coordination and awareness of the presence of power lines are paramount in successfully managing an accident scene and saving lives.

"Sometimes an emergency responder might not be fully aware of power lines and transformers and other equipment because they're focusing on other things in an intense situation," Patterson said. "So we just want to have some conversations to make sure everyone knows that we need to assume all equipment is energized and to notify us as soon as possible so we can get to the scene and do what we need to do to lower the risk of danger."

To see a video of the drill, visit <https://youtu.be/HOS0LLrLbk>.

CO-OPS KEEP THE RALLY ROLLING



Electric co-ops are committed to keeping The Rally energized

Billy Gibson

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The frenetic atmosphere that has come to be associated with the annual Sturgis Motorcycle Rally can be loud, chaotic and - well let's just say - very colorful.

But behind those vivid scenes are electric cooperative employees working hard to make sure the Rally has the juice required to keep the lights glaring, the amps blaring, the air conditioners humming and the blenders blending.

The three local co-ops that serve the Black Hills and surrounding area are Butte Electric, West River Electric and Black Hills Electric. In conjunction with wholesale supplier Rushmore Electric in Rapid City and power generator Basin Electric based in Bismarck, N.D., the co-ops deliver much of the electricity used by campgrounds, restaurants, shops, concert stages, biker bars and other entertainment venues.

The power providers are diligent about keeping pace with the increasing growth of The Rally, which is rebounding from a temporary drop in attendance brought on by the coronavirus pandemic over the past two years.

Corey Trapp, chief engineering officer at Rushmore Electric, said power demand can increase significantly during The Rally. For instance, he indicated the area north of Sturgis served by Butte Electric that includes Full Throttle and other sites can jump from 1-2 MW to 8-9 MW during the event.

At the Buffalo Chip, West River Electric has nearly 40 meters located across the 600-acre spread serving scores of bars, campgrounds and cabins, as well as the main stage. Power use skyrockets from about 30 KW to more than 4.2 MW.

This year marks the 82nd installment of The Rally. Ten years ago, organizers were concerned about the potential future of the event if younger riders didn't start joining in on the fun. According to data gathered by local government agencies, Mount Rushmore National Park and other sources, attendance is back on the upswing.

An estimated 555,000 riders participated in the Rally last August, up nearly 14 percent from 2020 and an increase of 9.5 percent over the five-year average from 2016 to 2020.

Statistics show that nearly 30 percent of attendees were first-timers in 2021, which is welcomed news for promoters who work year-around to keep The Rally rolling, including



RALLY FACTS

- 🏍️ 555,000 – No. of 2021 participants
- 🏍️ 54 – avg. age in 2019
- 🏍️ 46.5 – avg. age in 2021
- 🏍️ 52% - campground attendees
- 🏍️ 18% - hotel attendees
- 🏍️ \$81,005 - avg. household income
- 🏍️ \$382 - spent per day
- 🏍️ 85% - motorcycle owners
- 🏍️ 81% - Harley owners
- 🏍️ \$1,090,398 - raised for charity

the city of Sturgis, the South Dakota Department of Tourism, the Black Hills and Badlands Tourism Association and scores of business owners who depend on the seasonal revenue to sustain their operations.

The increased buzz of activity keeps the V-twin economic engines purring throughout the Black Hills area, but delivering the power has its own set of challenges that may not be apparent to partiers. Electric cooperative officials report that global shortages in materials and supplies make it difficult to meet the increase in power demand, but they're committed to doing everything possible to meet that demand.

“We’re seeing delays in equipment necessary for infrastructure upgrades, but we know how important electricity is for The Rally to run successfully,” said Brett Fosheim, director of operations at Butte Electric based in Newell. “A lot of visitors and business owners are

An estimated 555,000 visitors enjoyed the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally last year. As attendance climbs, electric cooperatives are committed to delivering the power needed to keep the party going. *Photos by South Dakota Travel*

depending on us, so we’re prepared every year to step up to the plate with power that’s affordable, reliable and there when everybody needs it.”

Fosheim said just as organizers work all year long to plan and promote the 10-day event, electric cooperatives also anticipate the rise in electricity demand and coordinate with their common power generator, Basin Electric, to fill the need and handle peak loads. Butte Electric serves Full Throttle, Days Inn Campground and the Sons of Silence Campground, among other venues.

Because electric cooperatives are created by their members to serve their members, they’ve been delivering electricity since the early days of The Rally. The annual event traces its roots back to 1938 when a group of Indian Motorcycle enthusiasts led by local franchise owner Clarence “Pappy” Hoel got together to race one another, pull off some riding stunts and party together around a common interest in the brand.

What started as a quaint occasion called the Black Hills Classic with just

nine racers and a sparse crowd has become an international attraction.

Except for the World War II years between 1939 and 1941, The Rally has been a much-anticipated mainstay attracting visitors from across the planet. During the war, organizers suspended the event due to gas restrictions in support of the war effort.



While the current supply shortages mentioned by Fosheim have kept power providers on their toes and doubly prepared for The Rally, he said cooperatives are committed to delivering quality service not only during the event but long after the riders have peeled out of town.

Considering buying a portable generator? Follow these tips to reduce your risk of harm

With the recent storms that the West Central Electric service area has experienced, many members are considering a backup generator for their homes or businesses. Hooking up some of your home's electrical circuits



Kit Talich
Operations

to an emergency generator means you can have lights and heat even during a power outage, but weigh the risks and heed these safety tips if you decide to buy one.

• Install your generator outdoors under a protective weather shield, like a vented shed, not in your basement! Most units use the same kind of gasoline you put in your lawn mower; a fuel that emits deadly carbon monoxide fumes. Carbon monoxide is odorless and colorless and

can kill in a matter of minutes if it seeps into your living space.

• Hire a licensed electrician to install the generator and the transfer switch. Improper installation can send electricity from your generator out onto co-op power lines, energizing wires that line workers believe to be out of service. If a line worker is handling the line when it becomes energized, he or she could be severely harmed or killed. West Central Electric will install a transfer switch on your meter pole at a reasonable cost, just give us a call.

• Buy a generator with enough capacity to run the appliances you will need while the power is out. If you plan to operate expensive equipment like a computer, double-check with your dealer to make sure the generator can safely power sensitive electronics.

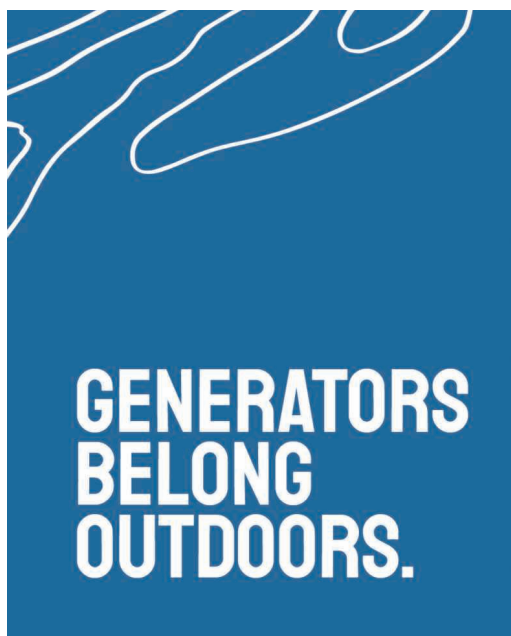
• The average life of a moderately priced generator is between 300 and 500 hours, so have it serviced regularly, and start it

up about once a month to make sure it is ready to go.

• Store gasoline safely. Many portable generators are equipped with five-gallon tanks. But because power outages generally are few and far between, it's likely that the gas will go bad between uses. Keep a gallon of fresh gas in your generator's tank and another gallon or two away from your house. Replace the gas every two to three months or add a fuel stabilizer. Remember - spilled fuel can cause fires and explosions.

• Do business with a reputable company that offers a warranty for their products.

• After a power failure, make sure to disconnect all equipment before firing up the generator. Once the generator is running, restart your largest electric motor first, and then turn on other motor-powered items one at a time. After all necessary equipment is operating, power for lights is available.





Basin Electric Members Bus Tour

August 23-25

Ever wonder where your electricity comes from?
Take the Basin Electric Tour and see it firsthand!

Sign up today to reserve your seat! For the first time in over 25 years, West Central Electric is again offering our member-owners a Basin Electric Bus Tour. The tour will be held on August 23-25, 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 Nextera Energy's Wilton Wind Energy Center. 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	





FAMILY FUN AT CATFISH BAY

Summer fun for the entire family awaits at Catfish Bay Water Ski Park in Sioux Falls. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

Pigs fly and family fun abounds at Catfish Bay Water Ski Park

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

If you stop by Catfish Bay, you probably won't see a single catfish during your stay. But you will definitely see a pig flying, a chicken hurtling through the air and water skis sprouting up from a pocketful of magic seeds.

Catfish Bay Water Ski Park, located just off I-90 in Sioux Falls, is a family entertainment venue where a squad of highly skilled skiers leap and spin and build four-tier human pyramids as they skim across the water's surface.

Billed as "The Greatest Show on H₂O," the event attracts spectators from miles around who show up each Friday evening during the summer months to see the high-flying theatrics reminiscent of Florida's famed Cypress Gardens. The show features ski jumpers dressed as chickens, Hee Haw-inspired corn pone humor and a daredevil in a pig costume elevating 30 feet into the air astride a water-propelled fly board.

The show is the brainchild of Jim

Bruns, an idea that spawned from his mind as "a God thing." While he was a college student in the early '90s, Bruns joined the Sioux Falls Water Ski Club and honed his skills enough to turn pro.

It was during college that he hatched a plan to establish a show similar to those being staged at SeaWorld and other similar sites. First thing he needed was a lake. He found the perfect spot when a contractor dug out a 25-acre borrow pit adjacent to the interstate. He bought the pit and – voila! – one man-made lake...just add water.

Second thing he needed was a performing cast. Bruns gathered some of his fellow skiers of all ages and sizes, pulled together a program and then plowed forward for a few years determined to make the show a success. Just when he began wondering if he was going to be able to keep the labor-intensive venture alive, he experienced another epiphany. He needed to rededicate the program to building youth, strengthening families and developing leaders. He formed a

mission statement: "MV2 – Mission, Vision and Values."

"It was a simple plan from the start," Bruns said just before the start of the season-opening show on Memorial Day. "But in 2007 I hit a wall. I sat down and prayed about it and came up with MV2. Now I have so many stories of kids who have come out here and learned a skill and learned about teamwork and goal-setting. They learn how to overcome obstacles."

One of those youngsters is Beth Bruggeman, who serves as assistant show director. A recent college graduate, she has been involved in the program for 10 years. She was a 13-year-old gymnast and cheerleader when she decided to try out for the ski team and now she's a star in the show with boundless energy, a beaming smile and a scar on her eyebrow as her personal badge of courage and grit.

"One of the things I like about it is there are people who participate of all skill levels who are anywhere from 6 to 60 years old. You don't find groups with that kind of diversity. You get to form different kinds of connections and friendships," she said.

Brun's own children, James and Amara, are two other stars of the show. Amara, 13, professes to be the more gushingly dramatic. A student at O'Gorman Junior High, Amara has been part of the act since she was 2, riding on her dad's shoulders. Today she barefoots, swivels, climbs the pyramid and charms the crowd with her effervescent smile.

"I like entertaining people and making them feel like they've come to a special place," she said.

Beside Brun's, Jeremiah Newman is another example of the motto: the family that skis together stays together. He and his children, 14-year-old Marissa and 12-year-old Tyler, are involved in all aspects of the show. He's a member of the military and a former international professional skier who still competes around the region and specializes in performing flips and twists on an air chair hydrofoil.

"This is such a family-friendly environment. It's priceless. It keeps me active and it keeps our family close. Instead of sitting on the sidelines watching my kids, I get to be out there with them," he said. "We talk about the importance of making a life-long commitment to fitness and good nutrition and things that will serve them well along the way."

While the skiers are preparing for their next set, attention turns toward the stage area and a charming recurring character named Norman, who always comes up with some crackpot scheme that never fails to fail. Brun's explains that the Norman character stands as a metaphor for anyone who has had a dream and felt the frustration of failure.

"The thing about Norman that makes him different is that he never loses his enthusiasm and keeps on trying," Brun's said. "His motto is to dream big and never give up."

Brun's is living out the dream he had as a younger man. To this point, Norman has never revealed his last name. But it could very well be Brun's.

Below, Catfish Bay performers pull off a "four-stack" configuration. At right, the character known as "Norman" rides a flying pig.





The Touchstone Energy flag has flown proudly at the last 20 State High School Rodeo Finals. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

Electric co-ops support high school rodeo through popular Short Go Shirt program

Billy Gibson

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Folks who attended the State High School Rodeo Finals in Fort Pierre this summer could see Tobi Hintz coming from halfway across the arena.

Hintz is a student at Timber Lake High School and serves as the association's 2022 Rodeo Queen. She cut a dashing figure at the event with her decorative sash, bright red lipstick, fringed shoulder bag, buckle-shaped sterling silver earrings and baby blue cowgirl hat with a sparkling tiara wrapped above the brim.

Oh, and she can also ride pretty well, too. Over the past two years, she's earned Touchstone Energy Short Go Shirts at the state finals in recognition of her rodeo skills in barrel racing and pole bending.

This year marked the 20th celebration of the Touchstone Energy Short Go

Shirt program. Since 2002, Touchstone Energy cooperatives have donated more than \$140,000 towards the program that honors contestants who make it to the Short Go round of the state finals competition in their respective events.

This year in Fort Pierre, 145 student-athletes visited the Touchstone Energy booth to sign up for their shirts, which will be embroidered with the TSE logo and delivered to contestants this fall.

While Hintz has a bubbly personality and a flair for fashion, she takes pride in wearing her two Short Go Shirts that identify her as an accomplished competitor.

"It's so cool and it's such an honor to win a Short Go Shirt," she said. "It's so unique for us competitors because I don't know how many states actually get the opportunity to receive something like this. Every contestant appreciates it. The more shirts the merrier!"

Tobi, a national finalist in the rodeo

queen competition two years ago, has been involved in rodeo from a young age and said she likes the friendships that are forged with her peers.

"You meet so many people and make so many friends. Sometimes you wonder why you're doing it, but then you learn that there's a rhyme and reason for all the chaos and madness," she said.

Ann Sundermann has served as executive secretary for the High School Rodeo Association for the past 17 years. She describes the level of enthusiasm surrounding the TSE Short Go program that she's experienced over the years.

"Winning one of these shirts is the thing the kids anticipate the most," Sundermann said during a brief pause in the rodeo action. "We'll have 40 kids coming into the office asking where do they sign up for their Short Go Shirts. Then once they've been ordered they want to know when is their Short Go Shirt coming in. All the kids know about Touchstone because they've seen these shirts for the past 20 years."



Over the past 20 years, electric cooperatives have distributed more than 3,200 Short Go Shirts.

Sundermann said she's seen a lot of value from the program that demonstrates the electric cooperative system's ongoing involvement in youth development, education, sports activities and overall community support.

"It's been a privilege to work with the local electric cooperatives. They take pictures of the kids with their shirts and run them in their magazines and the kids send the pictures to us. They give the kids a lot of recognition for all their hard work and all they've achieved. With the commitment cooperatives have to their communities and their support for this outstanding program, I think it's a great long-term partnership and we look forward to continuing for many years to come," she said.

Marty Philips is public relations coordinator for the association. He noted that Short Go Shirts don't spend much time stashed away and gathering dust in the closet.

"The shirts get worn out because the kids wear them constantly. They're right at the front of their closets. It's such a great honor for them. They wear them to work, they wear them to school, they wear them to college and even when they're adults. I see them all over the state," Philips said. "They wear them

with pride because they know they earned it and they know they did the work to make it to the Short Go round. A lot of kids think it's better than a buckle. We appreciate what TSE has done for the kids because that's what this is all about, it's all about the kids. Everything we do is for the kids."

Todd Eliason, a recent retiree from Rushmore Electric in Rapid City who administered the program for Touchstone Energy since it began in 2002, said he looked forward to working with rodeo organizers and the student-athletes each year.

"These kids are our future, and to see how goal-oriented and determined they are and to see how hard they work, it really makes you feel positive about the future," he said.

Eliason cited Layni Stevens as a prime example. Not only did Layni earn a Short Go Shirt but she also punched her ticket to the national event in Gillette, W.Y., by finishing first in the girl's cutting competition.

"It's such an honor to receive a Short Go Shirt. The more shirts, the merrier!"

- Rodeo Queen Tobi Hintz

"I'm just grateful to be at the finals and it's an even greater blessing to get to wear a Short Go Shirt," Layni said. "It's one of your goals to get to the Short Go round. Sometimes it doesn't always go your way, but to know you get the reward of getting a shirt is just really cool. You can wear it all year long, to all kinds of events and to college."

To see a video of the event, visit www.youtube.com/watch?v=iT-oZ1Oxn7o



REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Dakotafest or the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____

AUGUST 16-18
Dakotafest

Photo Credit: AFBF photo/Philip Gerlach



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.

JULY 25-30
Days of '76 Rodeo and Parades

18 Seventy Six Dr., Deadwood, SD, daysof76.com

JULY 29-31
Badlands Astronomy Festival
Ben Reifel Visitor Center, Interior, SD, 605-433-5243

JULY 29-31
Meghan Newsam Community Celebration
Murdo, SD, facebook.com/MeghanNewsamCC

JULY 29-31
Paha Sapa Cowboys and Indians Art Festival
Outlaw Square, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

JULY 30
South Dakota Chislic Festival
Prairie Arboretum, Freeman, SD, sdchislicfestival.com

AUGUST 5-6
Foothills Days and Rockin' Ribfest
Citywide, Wessington Springs, SD, 605-539-1929

AUGUST 5-7
Sioux River Folk Festival
Newton Hills State Park, Canton, SD, facebook.com/SDFOTM/

AUGUST 5-13
Sioux Empire Fair
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD, siouxempirefair.com

AUGUST 5-14
Sturgis Motorcycle Rally
Main St., Sturgis, SD, sturgismotorcyclerrally.com

AUGUST 11-13
Clay County Fair
515 High St., Vermillion, SD, claycountyfair.net

AUGUST 12-14
Fort Pierre Trader Days
Various Locations, Fort Pierre, SD, 605-412-8549

AUGUST 15-21
Brown County Fair
400 24th Ave. NW, Aberdeen, SD, browncountysdfair.com

AUGUST 19-21
Black Hills Threshing Bee
13380 Alkali Road, Sturgis, SD, 605-490-2024

AUGUST 19-21
Yankton Riverboat Days
Citywide, Yankton, SD, riverboatdays.com

AUGUST 19-27
Central States Fair and Rodeo
800 San Francisco St., Rapid City, SD, centralstatesfair.com

AUGUST 24-28
Corn Palace Festival
604 N Main St., Mitchell, SD, 605-995-8430

AUGUST 24-28
Kool Deadwood Nites
Citywide, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

AUGUST 25-28
Prairie Village Steam Threshing Jamboree
45205 SD Hwy. 34, Madison, SD, 605-256-3644

AUGUST 26-27
Hill City Wine, Brew and BBQ
Elm St., Hill City, SD, hillcitywinebrewandbbq.com

AUGUST 26-27
Sizzlin' Summer Nights
Main St., Aberdeen, SD, 605-226-3441

AUGUST 26-28
Fall River Hot Air Balloon Festival
Various Locations, Hot Springs, SD, fallriverballoonfest.com

AUG. 30-SEPT. 4
Sturgis Mustang Rally
Thunderdome, Sturgis, SD, sturgismustangrally.com

SEPTEMBER 1-5
South Dakota State Fair
890 3rd St. SW, Huron, SD, sdstatefair.com

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