



# Cooperative Connections

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# Reflecting and Preparing



Jeff Birkeland, CEO

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

This is the time of year we reflect back on the past year and look forward to the opportunities of the New Year. We've had some changes this year and the biggest one being the retirement of Steve Reed. He served the West Central members for 42 years and 34 of those years were as manager/CEO. We wish him all the best in retirement!

This year, Mother Nature kept things wet, which raised havoc with our work plan. It's hard to install underground wire when it's muddy and flooded. However, through the course of the year, we did manage to get 22 miles of underground installed. I should clarify that this underground was to replace our vintage overhead lines and not to serve new member growth. We have roughly 70,000 poles with 37,000 of those being 1950s vintage. That's pretty amazing to think that we have poles in service that are 70 years old! This also means we have to continually replace those poles with underground or new overhead line so we can keep the lights on. It's no different than how our members operate, trying to get the best value out of the resources available.

Our main projects for 2020 will be to replace vintage overhead line with underground. We also have a couple road move projects and general maintenance items lined up for 2020. Once we get our list finalized, I'll report more on those projects. The one project we still have on the back burner is Keystone XL Pipeline. It's been 11 years since they first approached us about supplying power to two pump sites and it's been in the court system ever since. Will it get built? I have no idea. I do know that they are a member and if they request it, we will provide them power. That's our job.

I wish everyone a safe, happy and prosperous 2020!

## JAN. 10 IS NATIONAL CUT YOUR ENERGY COSTS DAY

By sealing uncontrolled air leaks in your home, you can save **10%-20%** on heating and cooling bills.



# West Central Electric

## Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 018-988)

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**Our Mission is to Provide  
Safe, Reliable Service  
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**Call 605-669-8100  
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Design assistance by SDREA

## Denne Joins Kadoka Outpost

West Central Electric is proud to announce the hiring of apprentice journeyman, Oakley Denne. He started his career with West Central on Nov. 11 and will be working out of the Kadoka outpost.

Denne was born and raised in Madison, S.D., and after graduating high school, he enrolled at Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI) and graduated with a power line construction and maintenance diploma. He worked 1,000 hours at Southeastern Electric before coming to West Central.

Denne is looking forward to meeting new people and going to places that he's never been to. "Everyone has been very nice and welcoming," he said about his new town and job. When asked about the differences between East River and West River, he noted, "The wind never stops blowing here!"

In Denne's spare time, he enjoys hunting and especially ice fishing.

Welcome to West Central!



**Oakley Denne**

## Board Approves General Capital Credit Retirement of \$704,000

The board of directors of West Central Electric has approved the general retirement of \$704,000. This is in addition to the \$36,222 that was retired to estates. The total 2019 retirement is \$740,222. This represents 100 percent of 1995-1998 capital credits and 37 percent of the West Central portion of 2018 capital credits. Capital credit checks will be mailed out the middle of December. If the credit value is less than \$35, it will be credited to your November electric bill. Capital credits are created when any earnings (revenues minus expenses) are left over at the end of each year. This creates a margin. At the end of each year, the co-op assigns each member-owner's account a share of the margin, known as an allocation. The cooperative's goal is to rotate capital credits on a 25-year cycle. Before returning margins back to members, co-ops use the capital to help offset the cost of debt for equipment and materials used for the construction and maintenance of the electric distribution system. This helps lower financing needs.

If you have any questions regarding your capital credit check, please contact our office at 605-669-8100 or 1-800-242-9232.

**West Central Electric will be  
closed Dec. 25 for Christmas  
and Jan. 1 for New Year's Day.**

Happy

New Year

## Winter Electrical Safety Tips

In South Dakota and western Minnesota, December through March is a particularly hazardous time of year for storms and electrical power outages. Heavy snow, ice and wind can ravage power lines, both on the main power grid and at home. Add to that the increased use of home heating equipment such as space heaters and electric blankets and the potential for dangerous electrical hazards and home fires only intensifies.

Keep your home and loved ones safe this season by following these important winter electrical safety tips:

- **Use space heaters safely.** Keep them a minimum of three feet from furniture, bedsprings, drapes or clothes and never leave them unattended when they're on. Don't use extension cords with your space heaters and always unplug the heaters when they're not in use. Keep space heaters away from wet or damp areas and never touch a heater when your body is wet.
- **Use caution with electric blankets.** Never use an electric blanket while you're sleeping. Make sure the plug and cord are in good shape; otherwise it can pose a fire hazard. Be sure to dispose of electric blankets that have worn or damaged areas.
- **Be careful with your kitchen appliances.** While crockpots and other slow-cooking devices get a lot of use in the winter, you should never leave them turned on when no one is home. Leaving them unattended is a major fire risk. And be sure to check electrical kitchen appliances for frayed or damaged cords and plugs before use.
- **Make sure your home is equipped with functioning carbon monoxide detectors.** Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless gas that kills at high concentrations and causes serious and irreversible injuries at lower levels. Deaths from carbon monoxide poisoning increase during the winter months due to the use of common fuels like natural gas, wood and coal. Installing an inexpensive carbon monoxide detector can save your family's life.
- **Are your smoke alarms in working order?** It's important to make sure that you have an adequate number of smoke alarms throughout your home and that they are functioning properly. Simply push the test button to make sure it beeps and replace the batteries if needed.
- **Don't overload circuits or wattage.** Despite the shorter, darker days of winter, don't go above the recommended wattage for your light fixtures. Don't overload wall outlets either and only plug three-prong cords into three-prong outlets. Use extension cords sparingly and only for temporary purposes.
- **Have your home's electrical panel inspected by a licensed electrician.** Because electric usage goes up significantly in winter, you may need an upgrade in order to meet this increased demand.
- **Keep outdoor outlets closed.** Check your outdoor outlets regularly to ensure that they don't have an accumulation of ice and snow on them. Keep them cleared off and closed to avoid moisture from invading the receptacle box and causing an outage.

Source: [www.mrelectricians.us/best-winter-electrical-safety-tips](http://www.mrelectricians.us/best-winter-electrical-safety-tips)

✓ STOP AT THE BANK

✓ GRAB THE GROCERIES

✓ FIND MY POLLING PLACE

✓ REMEMBER TO VOTE

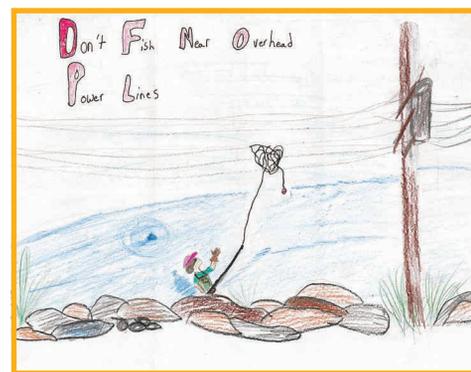


**CO-OPS VOTE**

A PROGRAM OF AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES  
WWW.VOTE.COOP

**ELECTION DAY  
NOVEMBER 3, 2020**

### KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"Don't fish near overhead power lines"**

**Lily Gums, 14 years old**

Lily is the daughter of Dave and Kathy Gums, Clear Lake, S.D. They are members of H-D Electric Cooperative, 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.

# Super Soups

## Leftover Turkey Chowder

4 slices bacon, chopped	1/4 cup flour
1/2 cup chopped onion	2 cups half-and-half
2 cups water	2 cups cubed cooked turkey
4 medium red potatoes, cut in 1/2-inch cubes (about 2 cups)	1 (8 3/4 oz.) can whole kernel corn, undrained
1 pkg. McCormick® Turkey Gravy Mix	1 tsp. McCormick® Sage, Rubbed

Cook bacon in large saucepan on medium heat until crisp. Add onion; cook and stir 3 minutes. Add water and potatoes. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 5 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Stir gravy mix and flour in medium bowl. Stir in half-and-half with wire whisk until smooth. Stir mixture into saucepan. Add turkey, corn and sage. Bring to boil on medium heat. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Makes 8 (1 cup) servings.

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 258, Fiber 1g, Protein 16g, Cholesterol 68mg, Total Fat 14g, Sodium 427mg, Carbohydrates 17g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Crockpot Potato Soup

1 (30 oz.) bag hash browns	1/2 cup chopped onion
3 (14 oz.) cans chicken broth	1/4 tsp. pepper
1 can cream of chicken soup	1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese

Combine first 5 ingredients in crockpot. Cook on LOW 6 to 8 hours. Add cream cheese 1 hour before serving.

**Bonnie Weber, Aberdeen, SD**

## Taco Soup

1 lb. ground beef, browned and drained	1 (10.75 oz.) can tomato soup
1 can chili beans, undrained	1 soup can water
1 pkg. taco seasoning	Tomato juice

Combine all ingredients; heat through. Serve with shredded cheese, corn chips or crackers if desired.

**Velma Schmitz, Bonesteel, SD**

## Curried Pumpkin Soup

8 oz. sliced fresh or canned mushrooms	1 (15 oz.) can pumpkin
1/2 cup chopped onion	1 (12 oz.) can evaporated milk
2 T. butter	2 T. honey
2 T. flour	1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
1 tsp. curry powder	Salt and pepper
3 cups vegetable broth	

In a large saucepan, saute mushrooms and onions in butter until tender. Stir in flour and curry powder until blended. Gradually add broth. Bring to a boil; cook and stir 2 minutes or until thickened. Add pumpkin, milk, honey, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Heat through.

**White Tail Ridge Bed & Breakfast, Hermosa, SD**

## Cheddar-Ham Chowder

2 cups water	1/4 cup butter
2 cups cubed potatoes	1/4 cup flour
1/2 cup sliced carrots	2 cups milk
1/2 cup sliced celery	2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese
1/4 cup chopped onion	1 (16 oz.) can corn, drained
1 tsp. salt	1-1/2 cups cubed, cooked ham
1/4 tsp. pepper	

In a large saucepan, bring first 7 ingredients to a boil; reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 8 to 10 minutes or until vegetables are just tender; remove from heat but do not drain. Meanwhile, in a medium saucepan, melt butter and blend in flour. Add milk all at once, cooking and stirring until thickened and bubbly. Add cheese, stirring until melted. Stir into undrained vegetable mixture. Return large saucepan to heat; add corn and ham. Heat through, stirring occasionally.

**Diane Fode, Rapid City, SD**

Please send your favorite brunch, seafood or appetizer/ beverage recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3).

Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in June 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

# Start the New Year Right with Energy Savings



Pat Keegan

Collaborative Efficiency

**Here are energy-saving measures you can do right away and some for later.**

*Taking some of these easy steps now should provide some quick energy savings. To save even more, you'll need a plan that includes the "later" steps we've shared here. An energy audit can help you determine a much better plan and your electric co-op may be able to provide an audit or recommend a qualified local auditor.*

This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency. For more information, please visit: [www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips](http://www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips).

**Dear Pat and Brad:** My neighbor claims they were able to cut their energy bills nearly in half. Is that even possible? What would I have to do to get there? It sounds like it would take a lot of time and money. – Luke

**Dear Luke:** The story you heard is not far-fetched. We've been involved with energy efficiency programs that have achieved those kinds of results. Let's talk about some energy-saving measures you can do right away and how you plan for greater savings down the road.

## Dial in savings.

**Now:** The first place to start is your home thermostat. In most homes, the largest portion of the energy bill goes toward heating and cooling. Setting back your thermostat by 7 degrees to 10 degrees for eight hours a day can save you up to 10 percent a year on heating and cooling. In the winter, you could aim for 56° F at night and when no one is at home and 68° F when you're up and around. If you're used to a warmer house, it may mean throwing on a sweater or pair of slippers. It should be noted this tactic is not as effective for some homes with radiant heat systems.

**Later:** Make sure to adjust your air conditioning settings next summer. If you have a manual thermostat and don't always remember to adjust it, consider purchasing a smart thermostat or at least one that's programmable.

## Set refrigerator and freezer temps for efficiency.

**Now:** Make sure your refrigerator and freezer aren't set to a colder temperature than needed. The fridge should be at 38° F to 40° F and the freezer compartment should be 5° F. If you have a separate chest freezer, set it to 0° F. Also check your water heater setting. You should aim for a setting of 120° F.

**Later:** Old refrigerators and freezers can use a lot of electricity. If yours was made before 1993, you can save upwards of \$65 a year with a new ENERGY STAR® model. If you eliminate a second refrigerator or freezer, you can save even more, especially if they are stored in your garage.

## Maximize the heat you've got.

**Now:** Look around each room and make sure the vents and radiators aren't blocked by furniture or other objects. If the floors feel cold even when the room is warm, put down area rugs for additional warmth. Open curtains and blinds to let the sunshine in and close them at night.

**Later:** Enlist the help of an energy auditor or HVAC specialist to test for duct leakage and ensure your whole system is balanced and running efficiently.

## Make bright moves with your lights.

**Now:** The obvious first step is to make sure lights are turned off when they're not in use. You can do this manually or employ one of many automated strategies. If you're still using incandescent bulbs, you could switch the five most-used bulbs to LEDs and save about \$75 per year. LEDs last much longer and use about one-fourth as much energy. Prices on LED bulbs have decreased in the past few years and you can save more if you buy them in packs.

**Later:** Over time, plan to replace all your old incandescent bulbs and consider smart lighting options that can be programmed to turn off when a room is not in use.

## Eliminate drafts.

**Now:** Look carefully around your home for signs of air leaks. If you have a gap under an exterior door, you can block it with a towel or better yet, install some weather stripping. Make sure windows are sealed with caulk and you can also seal areas around plumbing and wiring penetrations.

**Later:** Have an energy auditor do a blower door test, which is the best to identify all air leaks.

# Fiegen Elected to SPP Leadership Spot

South Dakota Public Utilities Commissioner Kristie Fiegen was elected to serve as vice president of the Southwest Power Pool's Regional State Committee at the group's meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas, in November.

Southwest Power Pool is a regional transmission organization that partners with member companies to manage the power grid, facilitate the wholesale purchase and sale of electricity and plan upgrades to transmission networks in Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming. Through these partnerships, SPP helps ensure the reliable supply of power, develop adequate transmission infrastructure and lower wholesale electricity prices.

The Regional State Committee is tasked with overseeing the fulfillment of the on-target, customer-driven goals of SPP as it provides bulk transmission, reliability and market services to transmission companies, utilities and end-use customers in the region. A member of each state's regulatory commission sits on this committee to provide input on matters of regional importance like recommending cost allocation policies that determine the amount electricity customers pay for the cost of building and operating transmission lines that cross several states in the SPP region.

"I am honored to be a part of the Regional State Committee," said Fiegen. "We are moving through a period of rapid change in the electrical supply industry. Given the value and cost of electricity in our daily lives, it's important for less populous states to have their voices heard as we navigate these changes. This leadership role allows me the opportunity to represent South Dakota's interests and ensure South Dakota consumers receive reliable and affordable electricity," she stated.

Fiegen is familiar with holding a leadership role on the committee having previously served as vice president and secretary.

Fiegen began serving on the PUC in August 2011 when Gov. Dennis Daugaard appointed her to fill a vacancy on the commission. She was elected to her first full, six-year term in November 2012 and re-elected in November 2018. Fiegen is a member of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners' Committee on Gas and Subcommittee on Pipeline Safety, and serves on the Gas Technology Institute's Public Interest Advisory Committee.



**Kristie Fiegen**  
South Dakota  
Public Utilities  
Commissioner

## FEMA Can Assist With Furnaces, Wells and Septic Systems

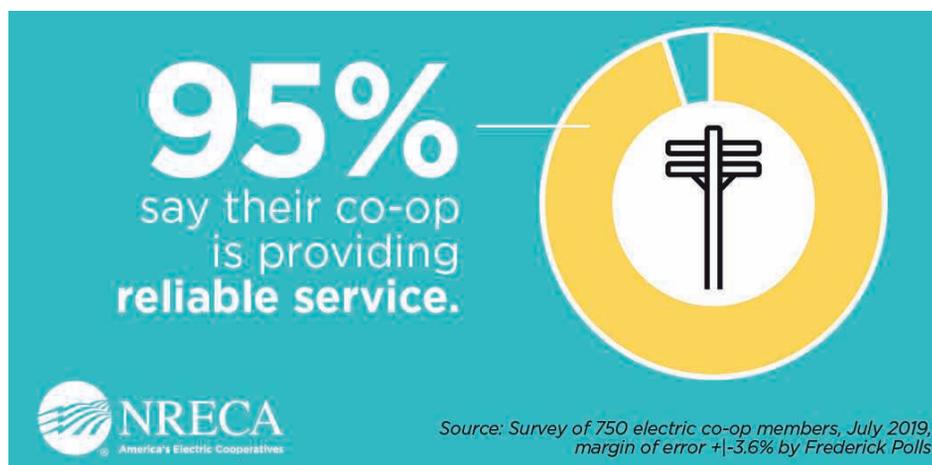
As the temperatures drop, the furnace becomes the most important appliance in the home. South Dakotans who had a furnace damaged by the severe storms, tornadoes and flooding between Sept. 9-26, should contact FEMA, even if they have already made repairs or purchased a replacement. FEMA can also help with wells and septic systems impacted by the disaster.

There are several ways to register:

- Go online to [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.DisasterAssistance.gov) or [DisasterAssistance.gov/es](https://www.DisasterAssistance.gov/es) (for Spanish).
- Call the disaster assistance helpline at 800-621-FEMA (3362) or 800-462-7585 (TTY). Lines are open daily from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. Help is available in most languages.
- At a Disaster Recovery Center. Visit [www.fema.gov/DRC](https://www.fema.gov/DRC) or call the helpline for a listing of open locations.

FEMA may pay up to the actual cost of the receipt or estimate for furnaces, wells and septic systems. If you have repaired or replaced the furnace, FEMA may provide assistance when valid estimates or receipts are submitted. If you have additional questions, contact the disaster assistance helpline number above or visit a disaster recovery center.

Individuals in Brookings, Charles Mix, Davison, Hanson, Hutchinson, Lake, Lincoln, McCook, Minnehaha, Moody and Yankton counties and the Flandreau and Yankton Indian Reservations are eligible to register for assistance.





Electric cooperatives are offering more than \$100,000 in scholarships for area students.

## COLLEGE AHEAD?

### Electric Cooperatives Offer Scholarships to Fuel College, Technical School Aspirations

**Brenda Kleinjan**

[editor@sdrea.coop](mailto:editor@sdrea.coop)

For more than 30 years, South Dakota's electric cooperatives have been helping fund the continuing education dreams of students planning to attend four-year colleges or technical schools.

Over the decades, the scholarships have funded students on their way to careers in education, medicine, government, energy and everything in between.

Through the Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship Program, each cooperative that is a Basin Electric member cooperative awards a \$1,000 scholarship to the dependent of a co-op member. Additional scholarships through the program are available to the dependents of co-op employees

Several cooperatives offer scholarships to individuals to become electric line workers or electricians. These scholarships, in addition to those awarded by the South Dakota Rural Electric Line Superintendents Association, amount to more than \$10,000.



# Future Engineer?

## Nationwide Scholarship Available

Since its inception three years ago, the Glenn English National Cooperative Leadership Foundation Scholarship Committee has awarded almost \$10,000 in scholarships to individuals pursuing a career in engineering.

This annual opportunity would not be possible without the foresight and generous contributions of the IEEE: Rural Electric Power Committee (REPC). Together, we hope to support future engineers with an interest and passion for defining and solving the electric utility challenges of the future, specifically in the rural parts of America.

### Dates & Deadlines:

- Applications will be accepted starting on Dec. 14, 2019.
- The deadline for application submission is 11:59 p.m. EST on May 15, 2020.
- Winners are selected by a scholarship committee and announced after the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association summer board meeting in Mid-July, 2020.
- Awards are distributed in August/September, 2020.

### Eligibility Requirements

- Must be a US Citizen
- Applicant must be enrolled in an ABET, four-year program of electrical engineering or electrical engineering technology, and have at least a 'B' average in major subjects.
- Applicant must be enrolled as a full-time student.
- Applicant must have already received academic credits equal to at least one year of college.

### Essay Requirement Information

- To be considered for the Engineers of the Future Scholarship, you must submit an essay using the following requirements as your guide:
  - Essays need to be between 1,000 and 1,500 words.
  - Essays must describe, in detail, plans to pursue a career as an electrical engineer, with an emphasis in electric power, in an electrical utility serving a rural area.
  - Essays must demonstrate knowledge of the unique challenges facing the electric industry in Rural America and describe how you might address these issues as an engineer.

But, the majority of scholarship money available from the region's electric cooperatives are not tied to a specific program of study.

A study released this summer by WalletHub.com found that South Dakota has the highest rate of student loan debt of any state in the country while Minnesota finished sixth on the list.

The study, performed by consumer finance website WalletHub.com, had researchers analyze 12 different measures of indebtedness, including average student debt, number of students with debt, and unemployment rate.

South Dakota had the highest proportion of students with debt, and was fourth highest when it

came to percentage of student loan borrowers over age 50.

Some of the scholarships offered by electric cooperatives require that students be in high school, while other scholarships are designed for students that may be returning to school.

Additionally,

students selected to represent their local electric cooperative on the Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., are eligible for a \$10,000 Glenn English Foundation Scholarship. Students can apply for the undergraduate scholarship once they have completed one semester of college or technical school.

Deadlines for local scholarships vary, so check with your local electric cooperative for details.

**South Dakota led the nation in student loan debt, according to a national study.**

Of the scholarships being offered by electric cooperatives, more than \$10,000 is dedicated to students seeking energy-related careers.



# Members Send Thanks

Thank you for the rebate we received from West Central Electric on the heat pump we recently installed.

**Tracy and Karen Dowling - Draper**

Thank you very much for your donation to the American Legion Game Night. Your donation is greatly appreciated.

**Philip American Legion Post**

I want to thank you for the money I won at the annual meeting and for the Yeti. Also, thank you for the good service with keeping the power on during all kinds of weather.

**Karen Snider - Murdo**

Thank you for the cash drawing I received at the annual meeting. We enjoyed the meeting and the meal.

**Ray Pike - Draper**

Thank you for the \$70 door prize I won at the annual meeting. Congratulations, Steve, on your retirement; and congratulations, Jeff, as you begin your new position. Good luck to you both.

**Pat Snook - Midland**

Thank you so much for drawing our name for one of the \$300 prizes. Thanks also for the wonderful meal and meeting.

**Virgil and Kathleen Stickler - Murdo**

A great annual meeting celebrating 70 years. Thank you for the \$70, what a surprise! Keep up the good work!

**Marsha Sumpter - Kadoka**

I came to the meeting to get a mug to send to my brother, Albert Olson, and see his friends and coworkers. I never expected to

receive a prize. Thank you very much.

**Bev Johnson - Presho**

Thank you for the supper, Yeti mug and the \$70 that I won.

**Jim Smith - Philip**

Mel and I are so thankful for the cash prizes we won at the annual meeting. The business meeting was informative and interesting. The supper was excellent and bountiful. We brought home the entire roast beef from our plates and enjoyed two more meals!

Good job!

**Mel and Clarice Roghair - Okaton**

Thank you West Central not only for the great meal and money I won at the annual meeting, but also for all you as a co-op do for our communities. I really appreciate West Central Electric. You are a great team!

**Jill Venard - Murdo**

Thank you so much for the surprise of \$300 I was given at the annual meeting. I am also enjoying my Yeti cup. We appreciate all that is done to keep our electricity in working order in all kinds of weather.

**Marilyn and Chuck Strait - Murdo**

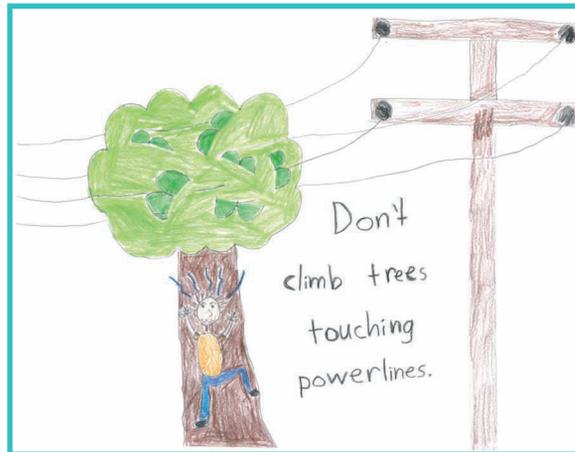
Thank you so much for the Yeti cups my husband and I got Wednesday evening, the \$70 I won and the great meal. We appreciate all you do for so many. Enjoyed the meeting, learning how the operation functions. We hope Steve enjoys his retirement and Jeff will enjoy his new job. Keep up the good work. It's appreciated.

**Grace and Ed Stiefvater - Kennebec**

Thanks to a great group of people for the \$70 I won at your annual meeting. Good supper too. We appreciate your excellent service.

**Bill Valburg - Draper**

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to go to D.C. It was a lot of fun and I learned so much. I met tons of new people that I even keep in touch with now. Definitely the



best trip I have been on, so I appreciate you guys so much!

**Josie Rush - Philip**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to go to D.C. with the Youth Tour. It was enjoyable and I made many good friends. We got to sight-see about anything you could imagine. One of my favorite things was the National Archive's museum. The Declaration of Independence was breathtaking to see and very moving. That's not to say that the Washington Monument wasn't also very incredible. Unfortunately, we weren't able to go to the top because it was under construction. However, seeing the war memorials was a satisfying alternative. Another awesome place we got to explore was Fort McHenry. That's where we learned about the flag, its significance and what it really represents. Again, I would just like to say thanks for sending me to Washington, D.C.

**Bryce Muirhead - Presho**

Thank you so much for the amazing opportunity to go to Washington, D.C. I had the best time with the new friends I made along the way. I know that these friendships will last a lifetime. I'm so grateful to have been chosen to go on this trip and learn about American history while making so many memories along the way. Thank you, West Central Electric!

**Lilli Moore - Murdo**

We really appreciate all the wonderful prizes for our Scotty Philip 5k! You are so thoughtful! Thanks again.

**Tricia, Mike and Doreen**





# West Central Electric Offers \$20,000 in Scholarships

## What is the West Central Electric Scholarship Program?

The West Central Electric Cooperative Scholarship program is a program developed and designed to encourage and recognize the academic achievements of the children of West Central Electric Cooperative members. By recently increasing the scholarship amount, West Central will now give out 20, \$1,000 scholarships!

## How may the scholarship be used?

The West Central Electric Scholarship program will award scholarships to students of rural electric cooperative members in five counties served by West Central Electric Cooperative.

The scholarships are for the 2020-2021 school year. The scholarships may be used for educational costs, housing or educational materials. The student must enter college/vocational school in the fall of the year in which the scholarship is given.

## Who is eligible to receive the scholarship?

The applicant must be a U.S. Citizen and the natural or adopted child of a member of West Central Electric Cooperative. The applicant must be a graduating high school senior who is enrolled or planning to enroll in full-time graduate or undergraduate course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college or

university. One half of the scholarship moneys will be given to students who are enrolled or planning to enroll in an accredited vocational/technical school.

## How are the recipients selected?

The scholarships are awarded on the following guidelines. Work experience, participation in school and community activities, a statement explaining his/her educational and career goals, SAT/ACT scores and a written recommendation by a third party (not someone associated with the education system). A short essay is also required. Applications without all the listed criteria will not be considered.

## How can I apply?

To apply, you must provide the required criteria and a completed scholarship application, which can be obtained at your local high school, at the West Central Electric Cooperative headquarters in Murdo, S.D., or on our website at [www.wce.coop](http://www.wce.coop).

Applications should be returned to West Central Electric and must be received by Feb. 14, 2020 to be eligible. The applicant is responsible for submitting all the necessary information for the scholarship. For further information contact: WEST CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. at 605-669-8100.

# Technical Schools, Colleges Ready the Workforce

Variety of programs offered for in-demand careers

**Brenda Kleinjan**

editor@sdrea.coop

Each year, more than 10,000 people head to area technical schools and technical colleges to develop the skills employers in the region are seeking.

South Dakota's four technical schools – Lake Area Technical Institute in Watertown, Mitchell Technical Institute in Mitchell, Southeast Technical Institute in Sioux Falls and Western Dakota Technical Institute in Rapid City – have been serving students in the region for the last century, with three of the schools starting in 1968 and the fourth starting in 1969. Neighboring states have similar offerings at schools within easy driving distance of South Dakota.

This fall, Lake Area's campus at Watertown, S.D., was at capacity with 2,228 students. The school notes that students have a 99 percent placement rate after graduation.

Nearly 1,200 students attend Mitchell Tech which notes that 99 percent of its graduates find employment or continue their education. The school also notes that 82 percent of its grads stay in the Rushmore State.

For Southeast Tech's 2017-2018 graduates, the school said that 95 percent are employed or continuing their education, with 95 percent of those employed were employed in a field related to their Southeast Tech program.

Western Dakota Tech is the only technical college serving the western half of the state. It notes that 96 percent of its most recent graduates are working, continuing their education or enlisting in the military.



Among the programs offered at Mitchell Technical Institute in Mitchell, S.D., is South Dakota's only power line program for training future line workers.

## National Leaders

Technical colleges across the region have been recognized for excellence in their field.

The \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, awarded every two years, is the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges. With a singular focus on student success, the Prize highlights institutions with outstanding achievements in four areas: student learning, certificate and degree completion, employment and earnings, and high-levels of access and success for students of color and low-income students.

In November, the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program named the nation's top 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges.

Eleven schools based in Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota made the list:

# Minnesota West Community & Technical College

Technical education needs in southwestern Minnesota have been served by the campuses of Minnesota West Community and Technical College for more than 75 years.

The college has five campuses: Canby, Granite Falls, Jackson, Pipestone and Worthington in addition to centers in Luverne and Marshall.

The college offers a wide array of ever-changing programs and services, including career and transfer preparation, industry and customized training, community education, athletics, performing arts, student organizations, clubs, and personal enrichment. The school provides students opportunities to earn an associate degree, diploma or certificate in more than 60 disciplines, plus convenient campus locations throughout southwest Minnesota as well as online learning opportunities.

The school boasts of its small class sizes, personalized attention and focused, hands-on learning. Its technical programs provide students with the practical skills to begin successful careers in a variety of industries immediately upon graduation. Liberal arts programs at Minnesota West are a great starting point for careers or further study in numerous fields. Credits earned in our associate of arts and associate of science programs are designed for seamless transfer to other Minnesota State institutions.



Lake Area Tech in Watertown was nationally recognized as a top community college.

## ■ MINNESOTA

- Alexandria Technical and Community College
- Minnesota State Community and Technical College
- Northland Community and Technical College
- Ridgewater College
- Saint Paul College

## ■ NEBRASKA

- Central Community College
- Northeast Community College

## ■ NORTH DAKOTA

- Bismarck State College
- North Dakota State College of Science

## ■ SOUTH DAKOTA

- Mitchell Technical Institute
- Southeast Technical Institute

Based on strong and improving student outcomes – including in learning, completion rates, employment rates and earnings, and equity – 15 percent of community colleges nationwide have been invited to apply for the Aspen Prize. Data show that over the last two years, student retention, graduation rates, and degree completion have improved at the top tier of 150 Aspen Prize-eligible colleges.

The 150 community colleges named in November 2019 as eligible to compete for the 2021 Prize were selected from a pool of nearly 1,000 public two-year colleges nationwide using publicly available data on student outcomes. Located in 39 states in urban, rural, and suburban areas,

serving as few as 500 students and as many as 75,000 students, these colleges represent the diversity and depth of the community college sector.

The top 10 finalists for the 2021 Aspen Prize will be named in May 2020. The Aspen Institute will then conduct site visits to each of the finalists and collect additional quantitative data, including employment and earnings data. A distinguished jury will make award decisions in

**Lake Area Technical School in Watertown, S.D., was the 2017 Aspen Prize winner, the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges.**

spring 2021.

Lake Area Technical School in Watertown, South Dakota, was the 2017 Aspen Prize winner. In the 2017-2018 school year, Minnesota West was one of 150 top community colleges nationwide competing for the Aspen Prize while MTI was a 2019 Top 10 finalist.



When the South Dakota Legislature convenes in January, it will transform several ideas into legislative bills, some of which will become state law.

# WHERE DOES A BILL COME FROM

## Legislative Research Council

<http://sdlegislature.gov>

When state legislators are in Pierre every year for the annual legislative session, the majority of their time is spent discussing ideas for changes in state law. Ideas vary from changing only a word or two of a current law, an entire section of law, getting rid of a current state law, or creating a new law.

All of the ideas, regardless of their size or scope, must be presented to the Legislature in the form of bills. Bills are simply the ideas recorded on paper in a prescribed format.

Only legislators and legislative committees may present or introduce bills to the Legislature. However, ideas for bills come from a multitude of sources. First, legislators have their own ideas for bills stemming from their expertise in certain fields, experiences they have had, or observations they have made. Special interest groups are another source of ideas. Members of these groups often ask legislators to sponsor bills promoting their interests.

Many ideas for bills come from government agencies. Each year several bills are introduced at the request of the Governor or on behalf of a department in state government. Those who work closely with state law are often able to

recommend ways to improve it.

Finally, ideas for bills come from those individuals represented by the legislators, the constituents who live in their districts. The next step is to put an idea into the form of a bill. Anyone can draft a bill, but the rules of the Legislature require that all bills be in the proper form and style.

A legislator wishing to introduce a bill generally brings the idea or a draft of the proposed bill to the Legislative Research Council, where staff members will either draft the bill or make final preparations on the bill drafted by others.

The legislator who begins to move the bill through the legislative process is known as the prime sponsor. The prime sponsor may introduce the bill independently or seek other legislators to act as co-sponsors of the bill. Senate bills have senators as prime sponsors, and House bills have house members as prime sponsors. However, members of either house may co-sponsor any bill.

Bills may not be introduced until the first day of a legislative session. However, those elected to serve in the upcoming Legislature may pre-file bills with the Legislative Research Council, up to 30 days in advance of the first legislative day. Interim committees may pre-file legislation under the names of individual legislators who served on the committee.

The rules require executive agencies to pre-file any legislation they wish to have considered. A bill in proper form consists of three main parts: the title, the enacting clause, and the body.

- The title gives the reader a brief summary of the subject of the bill. The SD Constitution dictates that bills embrace only one subject, and that subject must be expressed in the title.
- The enacting clause, “BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA,” is also required by the SD Constitution and indicates that everything listed below it is to become the law of the state.
- The body is the remainder of the bill, the part that will actually become law, if passed. It is divided into sections to make it easier to read and to reference.

In addition to the three main parts, a bill also includes a list of sponsors and a number. The name of the prime sponsor always appears first on the bill and then the co-sponsors are alphabetically listed. If a committee is sponsoring a bill, then only the name of the committee is listed. A number is assigned to the bill upon introduction and is used to identify the bill as it works its way through the process.

During session, legislators spend a majority of their time discussing bills, but bills are not the only proposals that come before the Legislature. Legislators may introduce commemorations and resolutions. Commemorations express legislative recognition and listed below are four types of resolutions that may be introduced:

- A simple resolution is unique in that it pertains to and is acted on by only one house. It is used primarily to express an opinion, gratitude, or condolences, or to make a request of the other house.
- A concurrent resolution expresses an opinion of the Legislature, but it has no force of law. Often it is used to persuade Congress to act in a certain way or to make a request of the Governor or a government agency.
- A joint resolution is, by law, used to propose changes to the SD Constitution and submit them to the voters at the next election. It is also used to ratify or propose amendments to the United States Constitution. Unlike the previous two types of resolutions, a joint resolution only contains matters of legislation.
- A resolution of disapproval allows the Legislature to disapprove of any reorganization of the executive branch done by the Governor during the preceding year. It is the newest type of resolution and used less frequently than the others.

# How An Idea Becomes Law in South Dakota

## Idea

- A bill is simply an idea that someone would like to see become law.
- It could be anything from the penalty for committing a crime to the amount of money that can be spent on a state program.
- The idea can come from anyone, but only a State Representative or State Senator can take the idea and guide it to final passage through the State Legislature.

## Drafting

- The drafting of the idea into a bill is done by the Legislative Research Council, the permanent, non-partisan staff of the Legislature.
- A bill may be filed by any member of the House or Senate, and generally more than one legislator will sponsor a bill. The legislator whose name appears first on the bill is the “prime sponsor.”

## Introduction

- A bill is given to the Chief Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate and is assigned a number. If the bill is sponsored by a Senator, it is a Senate Bill. If the bill is sponsored by a Representative, it is a House Bill.
- The bill is given a First Reading in the “House of Origin.” The “House of Origin” is the chamber that sponsored the bill.
- At a First Reading the bill’s number and title are read aloud.
- The Senate President Pro Tempore or Speaker of the House then assigns the bill to a committee.

## Committee

- A committee’s responsibility is to examine a bill carefully, take testimony for and against the bill, and decide what to do with the bill.
- The committee has the following options:
  - Send the bill to the floor with a “Do Pass” recommendation,
  - Amend
  - “Table” the bill, which kills the bill, unless the full body orders the committee to send the bill to the floor (“Smoke-Out”), or
  - Defer the bill to the day after the last Legislative Day, which also kills the bill.

## Debate

- If a bill reaches the floor, it is debated and voted on by the body.
- If it passes, the bill is sent to the other body, where it goes through the same introduction and committee processes.

## Law

- If a bill passes both the House and Senate, it is sent to the Governor.
- If signed by the Governor, the bill becomes law.
- If vetoed by the Governor, the Legislature has an opportunity to decide whether to override or uphold the veto.
- If the Legislature succeeds in overriding the veto, the bill becomes law.

<http://sdlegislature.gov/docs/studentpage/idealaw.pdf>

**October 19-January 5**

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

**November 22-January 5**

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

**November 26-December 26**

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

**December 15-March 31**

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

**December 19-21**

Strawbale Winery Twilight Flights, Renner, SD, 605-543-5071

**December 21-24, 27-28**

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

**December 31**

Make-A-Wish New Year's Eve Benefit and Dance, Ramkota Hotel & Convention Center, Doors Open at 7 p.m., Aberdeen, SD, 605-370-4588

**January 10**

Taste of Sturgis, Sturgis City Auditorium, Sturgis, SD, 605-347-3233

**January 12**

Yoga on the Ice, Main Street Square, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

**January 14**

41st Annual Ranchers Workshop, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. CT, Antelope Multi-purpose Building near Mission, SD, 605-259-3252 ext. 3

**January 16-17**

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



**January 24-25: Pro Snocross Races, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876**

Photo courtesy: travelsouthdakota.com

**January 17**

Justin Moore & Tracy Lawrence, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

**January 18**

Lakota Games on Ice, Prehistoric Indian Village, Mitchell SD, 605-996-5473

**January 18**

Heroes Skate Day, Main Street Square, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

**January 31-February 2**

12th Annual Winterfest of Wheels, Convention Center, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-231-3100

**January 31-February 2**

Winterfest, Lead, SD, 605-584-1100

**January 31-February 9**

Annual Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo, Rapid City, SD, 605-355-3861

**February 1**

Lake Hendricks Fishing Derby, Hendricks, MN, 507-828-2113

**February 1**

Living History Fair, Brookings Renegades, Lake Area Technical Institute, Watertown, SD, 605-693-4589, dhuebner@itctel.com

**February 10-16**

Frost Fest, Brookings, SD, 605-692-6125

**February 14**

Snow Ball, Brookings, SD, 605-692-6700

**February 21**

KORN and Breaking Benjamin, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

**February 21-22**

Mardi Gras Weekend, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

**February 26**

The Harlem Globetrotters, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

**February 27-March 1**

SD State Dart Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

**March 3**

RCCA presents Young Irelanders, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

**March 14**

28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride and Tour, Lead, SD, 605-641-4963

**March 20-21, 27-28**

Annual Schmeckfest, Freeman, SD, 605-925-4237

**March 28**

Annual Ag Day at the Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

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.