



COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



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

Line Patrol Charity Ride

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

Food co-ops meet
community needs
Pages 12-13

CELEBRATING MEMBERSHIP



Jordan Lamb
jlamb@
oaheelectric.com

Fall is a busy time, and October is a particularly eventful month with school, community and sports activities in full swing. It's also when all cooperatives celebrate National Co-op Month.

When I say Oahe Electric Cooperative celebrates Co-op Month, it really means we are celebrating you! After all, our co-op wouldn't exist without you, our members.

Our core business purpose is to serve as your electricity provider, but the larger mission of the co-op is to help make our corner of the world a better place. "Concern for Community" is one of seven guiding principles that all co-ops share.

Above all, as a co-op we put our members' priorities first.

Similar to how our wires run through our service territory, our concern for community flows through all of our decisions – because being a co-op means being a responsible partner and good neighbor.

Oahe Electric works to help our community thrive through initiatives led by our employees and local board that's comprised of neighbors who live right here in our community. Because we're local, we understand our community's unique needs and strive to help meet them.

We're proud to support local youth through our scholarship programs. With your help, we offer Operation Roundup to provide assistance to our communities. We support area

foodbanks and other charitable organizations such as Feeding South Dakota.

The word "cooperative" is close to "cooperation," meaning people working together towards a common goal – mutually benefiting one another and the larger community. That's the essence of the cooperative spirit. Our employees and member-elected board members are invested in the community in which live and serve.

Above all, as a co-op we put our members' priorities first. As your trusted energy partner, we know that saving energy and money is important to you. That's why we have numerous programs in place to help, including rebate and incentives programs and load management programs to assist with controlling your energy usage, just to name a couple.

We want to empower you to manage energy use at home. If you haven't already, I encourage you take a moment and download SmartHub. Through the app, you can conveniently monitor and manage your energy use. And we're of course here to help, so give us a call if you have questions about your energy bills.

Oahe Electric is continuously examining ways to operate more efficiently while continuing to provide the highest level of friendly, reliable service you expect and deserve. After all, we're your local co-op. We were built by the members we serve.



Focused on YOU.

Electric cooperatives were created to serve their members. Because we're a co-op, we're able to adapt to our community's unique needs. That's the power of co-op membership.

OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

OAHE ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 019-042)

Board of Directors:

James Feller – Vice President
605.962.6207
Brandon Haag – Assistant Secretary
605.215.6758
Ryan Noyes – Treasurer
605.280.3500
Ross Sperry – Secretary
605.280.7770
Kirk Yackley – President
605.258.2412

Employees:

Tyler Arbach – Journeyman Lineman
Austin Bergeson – Journeyman Lineman
Mark Bruning – Line Foreman
Matt Eldridge – Chief Operations Officer
Trudie Feldman – Custodian
Brady Gaer – Journeyman Lineman
Sidney Geigle – Journeyman Lineman
Duane Hjelm – Journeyman Lineman
Sam Irvine – Administrative Services Specialist
Megan Jaeger – Membership Director
Les Job – Journeyman Lineman
Jordan Lamb – Chief Executive Officer
Dan Lettau – Journeyman Lineman
Steve Long – Power Supply Specialist
Valerie Marso – Chief Financial Officer
Tory Smith – Journeyman Lineman

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Our Mission

Oahe Electric delivers high quality, low-cost electric service to our local member-owners. As a Touchstone Energy® Cooperative, we are committed to meeting the highest standards of customer satisfaction. We do business with accountability, integrity, innovation and commitment to community. As an electric co-op, we are part of America's most trusted network of high quality energy providers.

Energy Assistance Available to Those that Qualify

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) helps eligible South Dakotans pay for home heating costs. Energy assistance may not pay for all your home heating costs but it will help ease the strain of the heating season. Energy assistance is applied to energy usage from Oct. 1 through May 15.

Eligibility for the program is based on:

- The number of people in the household.
- The gross income of everyone in the household.
- The type of heating for the home.
- Geographic area you live in.

Applications can be obtained by calling 1-800-233-8503, online at www.dss.sd.gov/energyassistance, or at the local Department of Social Services office.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Person with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: 1.) mail - U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; 2.) fax: (202) 690-7442; or 3.) email: program.intake@usda.gov. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Practice fire safety this fall and winter

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

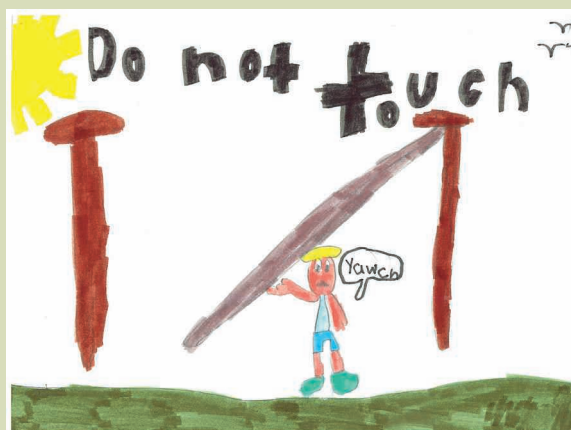
MAINTAIN IT ALL. Finally, test everything on a regular basis. Smoke detectors should be tested every month, their batteries replaced every six months, and old smoke detectors replaced every 10 years. Opt to purchase an extra fire extinguisher so your family can take it to the backyard and practice using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

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES REPRESENT AT DAKOTAFEST



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

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



Do not touch power lines

Kendyl Gill

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

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.



PRIMO PASTA!

PASTA WITH ZUCCHINI AND TOMATOES

Ingredients:

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

METHOD

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

MEXI-CORN LASAGNA

Ingredients:

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

METHOD

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

BAKED SPAGHETTI

Ingredients:

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

METHOD

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

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Got a Sub Meter? Please leave Power Turned On

Most of you remember when Oahe Electric was at your home to install the sub meter. This meter allows your heating and cooling usage to be billed at the reduced rate.

A problem that Oahe Electric encounters from year to year is that some of these meters are being shut off. This is done by shutting off a breaker in your service panel and when this happens, the meter

cannot record any usage at the reduced rate. Therefore, the electric usage consumed by your heating system is being billed to you at the regular residential rate.

This causes two problems.

First, the consumers call with a high bill complaint.

Second, Oahe employees have to diagnose the situation.

Oahe will try to contact the homeowner via phone. If the

problem cannot be fixed via phone, then we have to visit each site and check breakers, wiring and so on.

Please make certain that all of your electric breakers are turned on.

All electronic equipment has a switch or thermostat that should be used for and during maintenance. **DO NOT SHUT OFF YOUR BREAKERS** unless it's an emergency.

New Faces at Oahe Electric

Please help Oahe Electric in welcoming our new Journeyman Linemen, Les Job and Austin Bergeson!

Les previously worked at Black Hills Energy, both as a Journeyman Lineman, and most recently, a Meter Technician. He graduated from Granville, ND, before attending the Electrical Line Program at Bismarck State College.

Les has been married to his wife, Christi, for 29 years. They have three children and two



grandchildren.

In his free time, Les enjoys fishing, hunting and classic cars. He's also involved in the Shriners and Elks organizations.

Before coming to Oahe Electric, Austin worked as a lineman with both Boldt Powerline Construction and East River Electric Power Cooperative, and more recently, as a High Voltage Electrician with the Army Corps of Engineers. He graduated high school in Stanley County and from there joined the Powerline Construction and Maintenance program at Pratt Community College in Kansas.

Austin and his wife, Kalyn, share two sons, Trevin and Briar.

When he's not at work or with his family, Austin enjoys hunting, fishing, diving and roping.





Headley, three others named to 2022 SDAC Hall of Fame

Billy Gibson

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Cooperative mergers, storm restoration and pitched political battles over renewable power and annexation... Jim Headley has never backed down in the face of challenges during his 25 years of service on the Central Electric Board of Directors.

Headley was recently inducted into the South Dakota Association of Cooperative's Hall of Fame. He was honored at the annual banquet in Oacoma along with Stan Hanson, Deino Sather and Bryan Roth.

"It's a real privilege to be able to recognize these outstanding individuals who have done so much during their stellar careers to promote the cooperative business model and the many ways that model has benefited citizens all across the state for decades," said Brenda Forman, executive director of the association.

Headley is a farmer and rancher from White Lake who recently retired from the Central Electric Board after 25 years. He was on the board when Tri-County Electric and InterCounty Electric

merged in 2000 and recalls wanting to make sure the right steps were taken so that the best interests of the members were taken into account.

He took a leadership role in completing the merger and later helped guide the co-op through issues such as emerging technology, rising cost pressures, cybersecurity and pitched political battles like the annexation of electric cooperative service territories and the adoption of renewable power.

In fact, Headley figured prominently in the creation of Prairie Winds, a 135,000-acre wind farm project near White Lake that has 108 turbines and the capacity to generate 162 megawatts of electricity each year. It was the first community-owned wind investment partnership with more than 600 South Dakota investors and is now owned by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

For his leadership, Headley received Basin Electric's "Cooperative Spirit Award" in 2011.

One accolade that holds special meaning for Headley was presented last year at the Buffalo County District Meeting when he received a star quilt from fellow Central Electric Director

Donita Loudner and Crow Creek Sioux Tribal Chairman Peter Lengkeek. The quilt was in recognition of his many years of dedicated service to the Tribe as he has made an effort to preserve many unique Native American artifacts found in his pastures.

Headley also serves on the Patten Township Board and has been active in a number of organizations including the White Lake School Board, Aurora County Zoning Board, GF&P Regional Advisory Board and United Methodist Church Board. He is currently a member of Farmers Union, Farm Bureau, Dakota Rural Action and the Jerauld County Game and Fish Club.

Jim and Cristine Headley have had four children. Their son Jay lost his life in a boating accident on Lake Poinsett in 2002 at the age of 30. Jay's children, Jack and Sydney, later moved to Colorado with their mother, and Jack passed away in 2016. For nearly 20 years, Headley has donated a portion of his board compensation to fund the Jay Headley Memorial Scholarship for dependents of Central Electric members.



Jim Headley



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

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

Billy Gibson

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Estimated amount
of Line Patrol funds

\$580,000

donated to electric
co-op employees

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

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

Jerry Swartz was one of the first



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

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

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

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

away from the gathering site and along the chosen route.

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

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

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

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

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



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



71ST ANNUAL MEETING HELD

Oahe Electric held its 71st Annual Meeting at three drive through sites, location in Blunt, Onida, and Pierre, S.D., and one in person site, located in Onida, S.D., on Saturday, Aug. 20, 2022. There was a record 471 registered members.

Included in this year's registration packet was a program with the 2021 financials along with reports from Office Manager Valerie Marso and Operations Manager Matthew Eldridge. There was also a program containing director candidate speeches, as there were two members running for one director position. Director candidates included James Feller and Troy Wiebe.

Polls were open from 3 p.m. - 5 p.m. After polls closed, the vote counting began, as well as an informational business meeting. After calling the meeting to order, President Kirk Yackley called on Pastor John Fette to perform the invocation. This was followed by Treasurer Ryan Noyes presenting Years of Service awards to Ross Sperry, director, 15 years; Dan Lettau, journeyman lineman, 20 years; and James Feller, director, 25 years.

In video presentations, Office Manager Marso reported on the meaning of cooperative membership, as well as the financial condition of the cooperative. Operations Manager Eldridge reported on the projects Oahe Electric linemen have worked on in the last year.

General Manager Jordan Lamb then took the podium, reporting on the cooperative, as well as East River Electric Power Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

President Yackley called for new business – there was

none – after which he called for unfinished business – there was none.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, upon a motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned.

After the vote counting was concluded, cooperative Attorney David Larson announced the successful candidate of the board election: James Feller. We are happy to have James' continued leadership on the board.

We would like to sincerely thank Troy Wiebe for his interest and commitment to his cooperative and wish him all the best with his future endeavors.

Thank you to all who came and helped to make this year's annual meeting such a great success!



QUESTION OF THE MONTH

This month's question is:

How many members registered for the 71st Annual Meeting?

Please submit your answer via email to oahe@oaheelectric.com with the subject line of "Question of the Month." A surprise gift will be sent to the winner!

WINNER OF QUESTION OF THE MONTH

The Question of the Month winners for the August 2022 publication was Lavern Lenz. He correctly answered the question, "How many drive-thru locations are there for your 71st Annual Meeting?"

The answer was three – Blunt, Onida and Pierre.

Congratulations, and we hope you enjoyed your prizes!

LIKE US!

You can now keep in touch with your cooperative on Facebook! We will share with you the latest news, events, power outage updates, energy efficiency tips, money-saving rebates, load management information, legislative alerts, safety tips and much more!

We hope you "like" Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. on Facebook!

Annual Meeting Door Prize List

Oahe Electric would again like to thank our members for joining us for their 71st Annual Meeting! The Tuesday following the annual meeting, we had a Facebook Live event to draw for \$3,575 worth of energy credits and gift cards!

We'd like to thank our suppliers and business partners for sponsoring some of our door prizes – we appreciate their support and look forward to working with them into the future!

- **(x4) \$25 Scheel's Gift cards** – Courtesy of K & H Electric in Linton, N.D. – Jared Odens, Darla Hannum, Mundt Brothers, John Heezen
- **(x2) \$50 Bill Credits** – Sponsored by American Solutions for Business out of Aberdeen, S.D. – Barb Leesman, David Mercer
- **\$75 Runnings Gift card** – Courtesy of Oahe Electric Cooperative – Roger Inman
- **\$100 Bill Credit** – Sponsored by EIR Testing and Maintenance of Farmington, Minn. – Adam Kulesa
- **(x2) \$100 Bill Credits** – Courtesy of Jerry's Electric of Colman, S.D. – James Ripley, The Corner LLC
- **(x2) \$250 Bill Credits** – Courtesy of First Dakota National Bank of Pierre, S.D. – Leonard Spomer, Roger Brees
- **(x2) \$500 Bill Credits** – Sponsored by Oahe Electric Cooperative – Ron Bren, Allen Weischedel
- **(x2) \$750 Bill Credits** – Courtesy of Oahe Electric Cooperative – Ross Kornmann, Keith Stanek

Thank you all again for joining us for our Annual Meeting and congratulations to all our winning members!

Please Take the Time to Complete Your Survey:

Oahe Electric has once again included a survey with the billing sent in September. This is in regards to your annual meeting and how you would like it conducted in the future. So please take the time to fill out and return your survey and you will be entered into a drawing for the chance to win one of four \$50 energy credits!

CO-OPS OFFER HEALTHY CHOICES

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

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

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

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

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

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

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

cooperative business model as her template.

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

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

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



Bess Pallares

what they want and need for their families."

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

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



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

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

Hundreds of organizations, businesses, medical facilities, housing projects and many more have received financial support through the REED program over the past 20 years.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Black Hills State University is one of four higher ed institutions to adopt the Build Your Base with Beef program. *Photo by BHSU Athletics*

Beef is what's for lunch in many local school district cafeterias

Billy Gibson

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Beef. It may be what's for dinner, but now it's what's for lunch in many school cafeterias across the state.

In January of 2019, the Wall School District launched a program called "Beef to School" in an effort to add locally-raised beef to the weekly lunch menu and provide protein-rich meals to meet the nutritional needs of the students. At the time, it was billed as the first program of its kind in South Dakota.

The pandemic threatened to scuttle the initiative before it had the chance to gain momentum, but school district leaders, parents and supporters stuck to their mission and today the program has spread to nearly 20 local school districts.

Wall Meat Processing located just north of town is at the center of the action, identifying and working with local ranchers to deliver beef products for hungry students.

Inflation and rising market prices have also presented challenges, but Food Services Director Lynn Dunker stresses that community support has been key to success.

"The price of groceries and the price of everything just keeps going up," Dunker said, "but we've had individuals donate monetary funds out of their own pockets, and Wall Meat Processing is doing what they can to help us and to get other processors involved. We have a very supportive community and they've really been backing this program because they know how important it is that children get good nutrition."

In fact, it was local rancher and concerned citizen Josh Geigle who brought the Beef to School idea to the district leaders after learning about a similar program in Nebraska.

Dunker said the program is part of a popular farm-to-school model that emphasizes locally-grown fresh foods that are generally healthier for young students and their cognitive, behavioral

and physical development.

Besides benefiting from quality nutrition, students also have the opportunity to learn more about where their food comes from and the importance of ranching and farming to the overall success of the community.

"Some maybe don't even realize where beef comes from in the first place," said Wall School District Superintendent Dan Baldwin. "And now when they found out it's their dad, their uncle, a family member, it's actually someone from their ranch, I think that's a really neat thing."

BUILD YOUR BASE WITH BEEF

Another protein promoting program reaching both high school and college students is called Build Your Base with Beef and is specifically directed at athletes who rely on good nutrition to perform at their maximum level.

The South Dakota Beef Industry Council, Sanford Health and the Sanford Sports Science Institute have teamed up to develop a comprehensive tool kit for student-athletes that includes ready-to-use educational materials that help students and their

AFTER WORK BEEF POT ROAST

Ingredients:

- 1 beef Bottom Round Rump Roast (3 to 3-1/2 lbs.)
- 1 envelope (0.7 z.) Italian dressing mix
- 2 large onions, each cut into 8 wedges
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 red bell peppers, cut into 1-1/2 inch pieces
- 1/2 cup beef broth
- 2 zucchini, cut into 1/4-inch thick slices
- 2-1/2 tbsp. cornstarch dissolved in 2 tbsp. water

Directions

Press dressing mix evenly onto all surfaces of beef roast. Place onions and garlic in 4-1/2 to 5-1/2-quart slow cooker; top with roast. Add bell peppers and broth. Cover and cook on high 5 hours or low 8 hours. Add zucchini. Continue cooking, covered, 30 minutes or until pot roast is fork-tender. Remove roast and vegetables. Strain cooking liquid; skim fat. Combine 2 cups cooking liquid and cornstarch mixture in medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly; cook and stir 1 minute or until thickened. Carve roast into slices; season with salt and pepper, as desired. Serve with vegetables and gravy.

families adopt more healthy lifestyle choices, practices and habits.

Build Your Base has been endorsed by the National Scholastic Athletics Foundation (NSAF) and recently expanded its reach by appearing at the 2022 Nike Indoor Nationals in New York City last spring. Jack Links serves as the official snack sponsor of the program.

Chris Nilsen, a pole vault record-holder, Olympic silver medalist and former University of South Dakota student, has endorsed the program along with other prominent Olympic athletes such as hammer thrower Deanna Price and shot putter Payton Otterdahl.

“Build Your Base prepped me so well, and without this nutritional approach I wouldn’t be in such great shape. Eating well is such a big part of competing well, and they absolutely do their part,” Nilsen said.

Along with four colleges and universities, more than 25 South Dakota high schools have adopted Build Your Base and integrated it into their athletic departments and lesson plans.

Athletes learn how to determine the proper amounts of beef protein to consume for optimal effect in the maintaining, building and repairing of muscle.



Co-op leaders visit Southwest Power Pool facilities in Arkansas

A contingent of more than 35 electric cooperative leaders from throughout South Dakota and western Minnesota recently visited the facilities of the Southwest Power Pool based in Little Rock, Ark.

The Southwest Power Pool (SPP) is the Regional Transmission Organization (RTO) responsible for managing the electric grid and wholesale power market throughout a 13-state region that spans from the Canadian border to northern Texas.

While RTOs seldom attract much public attention, the polar vortex that swept across the country in the winter of 2021 placed grid operators closer to the spotlight. The roles and responsibilities of RTOs have also come to the fore with concerns over extreme weather events, changing market forces, aging infrastructure, grid congestion, the emergence of renewable power sources and other issues.

The tour was organized by Codington-Clark Electric General Manager Dave Eide. He said he initiated the event because he believed electric cooperatives that transmit and distribute power within the SPP’s footprint would benefit from engaging in face-to-face interactions with those responsible for moving electricity across the grid.

“This was a very eye-opening visit, as we were able to see first-hand how the Southwest Power Pool operates,” Eide said. “Coordination is key, and having personal interaction with the professionals at SPP helps in preparation for the next storm event.”

Eide explained that in the real-time generation, transmission and delivery of electricity, supply and demand must balance out to provide 24-hour continuous service that is safe, efficient and affordable for consumers. When situations develop that threaten to throw the system out of equilibrium, RTOs work in collaboration with utilities throughout the service area to keep the network stable.

The process includes communicating with those entities under the RTO’s umbrella to take decisive measures to modulate either the supply or the demand.



To have your event listed on this page, send complete information, including date, event, place and contact to your local electric cooperative. Include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Information must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to your event. Please call ahead to confirm date, time and location of event.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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