



COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



This year's sunflower crop is expected to be bountiful as market forces have driven up demand and prices

Sensational Sunflowers

Sunflower market blooms

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Everyone's welcome in the Chislic Circle

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INFLATION & RATES



Jordan Lamb
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Widespread inflation across the country and the world impacts everything we do and everyone we know, even down to our member-owned Oahe Electric Cooperative. From 1913-2020, average inflation hovered near 3.1 percent. In 2021, the United States saw a 4.7 percent increase in inflation and in 2022, a staggering 9.1 percent average thus far. These high inflationary rates are by-products of product and material shortages from COVID-19 as well as a vast drop in lending rates and increasing home, commercial and agricultural real estate.

Oahe Electric Cooperative has seen the impacts of inflation as well. Material pricing has gone up substantially, some as high as double the historical price. Not only are the material prices higher, but also lead times have gone out. Our current lead time for certain types of transformers is approaching 170 weeks!

Poles that used to take around a week to order and arrive now can be delayed up to 12 weeks.

Oahe Electric, fortunately, has been ordering materials ahead of the projected installation date. This has almost doubled our total inventory on hand from a dollar amount and about 50 percent more physical material than normal. We will continue to order equipment as we are allotted, especially equipment we will eventually need regardless due to system maintenance and outages (poles, transformers, meters, etc).

One question we get from many of our member-owners: How does this affect our electric rate? Many utilities, even in our state, have increased rates anywhere from 7-18 percent in

one year! The good news is this: The cooperative is in great financial shape and these material increases are financed with our construction work plan over 30 years – meaning we will still ride on a historical inflationary average of 3.1 percent - whereas most utilities increase rates rapidly.

One mill (1/10th of a cent) increase on Oahe's rate increases our gross income approximately \$150,000. That dollar amount is approximately 1.1 percent of our total gross income and directly hits our net income. Since we are a non-profit, we run extremely lean – as lean as possible – to operate at a wholesale dollar amount and pass savings onto our members.

We project for upcoming years relatively flat rates, with any increases being substantially outpaced by inflation (9.1 percent this year!). We continue to monitor short and long term load forecasts and plan our future equities, loan debt service, and most important, the rates these create.

OUTAGE AND LIFE SUPPORT EQUIPMENT

If someone in your household depends on in-home life support equipment, please notify us immediately. Oahe Electric maintains a record of members who use devices such as respirators, supplemental oxygen, heart assistance devices, etc. These consumers are high priority during power restoration.

Because we cannot guarantee uninterrupted service, we strongly recommend these consumers have a backup power source and an emergency plan for extended power outages.

Members with special life-support needs should contact our office at 1-800-640-6243 and inform us of their situation so they can be included on our list.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

OAHE ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 019-042)

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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.

Thank You

Dear Oahe Electric Cooperative,

This is long overdue, but I want to express my sincerest appreciation for awarding me with a \$250 scholarship as part of Touchstone Energy's "Scholar of the Week" program! It was such an honor to receive such a prestigious award, and I really appreciate Oahe Electric's commitment to supporting education!

Best Regards,
Griffin Petersen

Oahe Electric Scholarship Committee,

Thank you for choosing me to receive the Oahe Electric Cooperative Scholarship! It is very much appreciated and will be extremely helpful for school tuition and expenses. I plan to attend Lake Area Technical College in Watertown for entrepreneurship and photography. It's great to know there are organizations and people that are willing to invest in students and their futures.

Thanks Again!
Ela Petersen

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, audiotape, 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.

Take safety precautions during harvest season

Harvest season brings long, grueling hours in the field, which can make workers weary and prone to neglect safety precautions that can prevent serious or fatal electrical injuries. Every year, an average of 62 farmworkers are electrocuted in the U.S., and many more are injured by shocks.

Farm operators, their family members and farm employees are urged to beware of overhead power lines, to keep farm equipment safely away and to know what to do if accidental contact is made with power lines.

The increasing size of farm equipment, particularly grain tanks on combines that have become higher with extensions, allows operators to come perilously close to overhead power lines over entrances to fields. It is vital to keep equipment safely away from these lines. Maintain a minimum 10-foot radius around electric lines.

Portable augers are the No. 1 cause of electrocution on the farm. Augers being maneuvered by hand around bin sites have caused the deaths of many farmworkers who became the path to ground for electricity when the top of the auger touched overhead power lines. Always retract or lower augers when moving or transporting.

Other equipment commonly involved in power line accidents includes oversized wagons, large combines and other tall equipment.

Harvest is the most likely period for farm-related injury accidents and fatalities. Combines and other equipment loaded onto trailers can contact power lines and cause electrocutions, as can raising the bed of a truck to unload. That's exactly how a 53-year-old Michigan truck driver was tragically killed when he raised the bed of his semitrailer truck while parked beneath a power line at the edge of a field. He was attempting to clean out the bed, and when he touched the truck bed, he became the path to ground for the electricity.

Follow these safety measures:

- Use a spotter when moving tall loads near power lines.
- Inspect farm equipment for transport height and determine clearance with any power lines under which the equipment must pass.
- Make sure everyone knows what to do if accidental contact is made with power lines. These accidents are survivable if the right actions are taken.

STUDENTS LEARN HOW POWER IS PRODUCED

A group of high school students recently gathered together to take a trip and learn how electricity is produced and how it is used to power their homes, farms, appliances and local businesses.

The students traveled to Bismarck, N.D., to tour the power generation facilities of Basin Electric, which supplies electricity across nine states and is one of the largest power producers in the country.

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.



Don't Mess With a
Transformer Box



Beware of the green box

Cambrie Koistinen

Cambrie, age 11, advises electric cooperative members to use caution around pad-mounted transformers, also known as green boxes, because they contain high-voltage power equipment. Cambrie is the child of Lance and Holly Koistinen of Hayti.

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.

FRESH FROM THE GARDEN

ZUCCHINI SPINACH CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

2 lbs. zucchini
1 lbs. frozen spinach
1 chopped onion
4 cloves of garlic
5 beaten eggs
1/2 cup salad oil
1-1/2 cup cracker crumbs (save
1/2 cup for top)
1-1/2 cup cheddar cheese (save
1/2 for top)

METHOD

Cook and drain first four ingredients. Add eggs, salad oil, cracker crumbs and cheddar cheese. Add salt, pepper and parsley to taste. Spread the remaining crumbs and cheese on top. Bake at 350 for 40 minutes.
Glenda Morton, Sioux Falls

CREAMY CUCUMBER SALAD

Ingredients:

1 1/2 long English cucumbers cut
in half moons
1 1/2 lb tomatoes on the vine
sliced in segments
1/4 cup red onion thinly sliced
(optional)
3 tbsp dill finely chopped
2 small garlic cloves grated
1/2 cup sour cream
1/2 tsp salt
Ground black pepper to taste

METHOD

In a large bowl, add cucumbers, tomatoes, red onion, dill, garlic, sour cream, salt and pepper. Stir gently from the bottom in the center of the bowl until well combined. Serve salad within next six hours or so.
ifoodreal.com

CUCUMBER SANDWICHES

Ingredients:

1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese,
softened
1 pkg. Good Seasons Italian
Dressing Mix (dry)
1 mini loaf of cocktail rye bread
1 cucumber, sliced
fresh dill weed, chopped

METHOD

The night before serving the cucumber sandwiches, mix together the cream cheese and the Good Seasons Italian Dressing Mix. Refrigerate overnight. Shortly before serving, spread some of the cream cheese mixture on a slice of the cocktail rye bread. Top with a slice of cucumber and sprinkle with dill weed.

Elaine Rieck, Harrisburg

CHERI'S SALAD

Ingredients:

1-1 lb. pkg. veggie spiral noodles
2 1/2 c. diced ham
1 c. shredded cheddar cheese
1 c. chopped celery
1 bag frozen peas, thawed

Dressing:

1/2 c. mayonnaise
1/2 c. sour cream
1 tbsp. mustard
1 tbsp. sweet pickle juice
3/4 tsp. onion powder
1/3 c. sugar

METHOD

Cook noodles according to package directions, drain and rinse. Mix ingredients together in a bowl and set aside. Mix until blended and pour over salad. Stir until well blended.

Jan Antonen, Arlington

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.



Valerie Marso

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When your electricity goes out, you lose power in more ways than one. Daily necessities are out of reach without lights, warm water and heat or air conditioning. So, if you get a call from someone threatening to shut off your utilities because they say you owe money, you're going to pay attention – and you may even pay up so you don't lose these necessities. But hold up for one second and make sure that you are actually dealing with Oahe

Electric first!

Scammers have gotten very creative and seem to be relentless when it comes to what they will try to get away with. It seems that weekly, our members are receiving calls from someone claiming to represent Oahe Electric. How can you tell if it is someone running a scam or if it is someone actually from Oahe Electric? Here are a few tips to keep your hard-earned money safe:

- Scammers will usually want you to pay in a very specific way (ie via wiring money or using a prepaid card) Oahe Electric only accepts cash, money order, checks or credit cards.
- Make sure you're truly speaking to an Oahe Electric representative. If there is any doubt, call us back using the number from our website or on your bill.
- Use our secure payment gateway, SmartHub, to pay your bill online.
- Never wire money or give your card number to someone you don't know.
- Contact Oahe Electric directly if you have any questions or concerns about your bill at 1-800-640-6243.
- If you think a scammer has contacted you, report it to the FTC.

We want our members money to be safe – when it doubt, hang up and call us directly!

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

This month's question is:

What was the average inflation rate from 1913-2020?

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 July 2022 publication were Wyatt and Bridgette Loesch. They correctly answered the question "What does RTO stand for?"

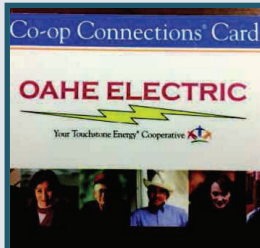
The answer was Regional Transmission Organization.

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!



Cooperative Connections Card Program Vendors

Automotive

Graham Tire Company	605-224-8643	Pierre	Receive a 10% discount on regularly priced service work. Cannot be combined with any other offer.
Lamb Motor Company	800-952-2222	Onida	Receive a free alignment check with the purchase of 4 new tires.
Napa Auto and Truck Parts/Farnam's Genuine Parts, Inc.	605-224-8624	Pierre	Receive 10-50% off retail price.

Food/Convenience Store

Branding Iron Bistro	605-494-3333	Pierre	Enjoy \$1 off your order. Limit one per visit.
Gator's Pizza Pasta and Subs	605-224-6262	Pierre	Purchase any large pizza at regular price and receive a FREE order of breadsticks.
Grey Goose Store	605-945-0794	Pierre	Receive a free 20 oz. fountain soda or coffee with the minimum of a \$30 gas or diesel purchase.
The Corner	605-258-2400	Onida	Buy one breakfast sandwich at regular price, get second half off.

Health/Fitness and Beauty

Anytime Fitness	605-224-4011	Pierre	Receive a free two-week mini-membership.
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Home/Garden

Slumberland Furniture	605-945-1997	Pierre	20% off any regular priced Lazy Boy items. Excluding special orders.
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Services

Inman's Water Technologies	605-224-5111	Pierre	Receive a 10% discount on the rental price of a water softener and/or reverse osmosis drinking water system by paying a year in advance. Receive 10% off of the purchase price of a new water softener or reverse osmosis drinking water system when you mention this ad. Payments made by credit cards do not qualify for discounts/specials.
Olson Plumbing Inc.	605-224-6436	Pierre	\$50 discount on any electric boiler, Marathon water heater, or fireplace
Small Engine House	605-224-5815	Pierre	10% off parts and labor

Sports/Recreation

Teton River Traders Gun Shop LLC	605-224-1371	Ft. Pierre	2% discount. Payments made by credit cards do not qualify for discount.
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Retail

Fastenal	605-224-4060	Pierre	10% off of fasteners and 5% off on all other products
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Sunflower commodity prices are making farmers smile

Billy Gibson

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It's hard to keep from smiling when you're driving past a field of golden sunflowers in full bloom during the late summer months.

Wall Drug billboards, old red barns and shiny grain bins are no match for the attention of motorists along I-90 when the sunflowers are bursting forth in all their spectacular yellow splendor stretching far into the horizon.

The subject of many aerial and terrestrial photographers across the region, sunflowers have a special appeal as they grow tall in the field and seem to greet the day leaning forward with a positive energy that exudes joy and optimism.

The current sunflower commodity market certainly has given farmers a reason to smile. South Dakota farmers raised nearly 600,000 acres and more than 1 billion pounds of sunflowers

last year, ranking second only to North Dakota for sunflower production. In fact, for the past decade the Dakotas and Minnesota have alternated the top three spots in their friendly competition depending largely on the vagaries of weather patterns. At least 75 percent of the U.S. commercial sunflower production has taken place in those three states.

About 1,000 of those South Dakota acres were grown by Brad Schecher, a fourth generation farmer who also rotates wheat, corn, flax and soybean crops on his 3,500-acre spread located near Bison in the northwestern part of the state, one of the hot-bed regions for sunflowers.

Schecher took over the family farm from his father nearly 10 years ago and said the military conflict in Ukraine and other economic factors have converged to form a "perfect storm" that has constricted international supplies and created a favorable environment for the

current global sunflower oil market. Commodity prices have broken all-time records by soaring 60 percent compared to a year ago.

"It's as good as any of the 10 years I've been involved in it," Schecher said. "Ukraine was the largest producer of sunflowers and the largest exporter of sunflower oil on the world market with about 50 percent of the overall market, but a lot of their crop has been destroyed or confiscated by the Russian military. That's one of the things that have driven prices up, and it's been good for the farmers."

High prices and high returns are keeping Schecher interested in raising sunflowers, but sometimes he has his doubts. Especially when he gets tired of fighting the fires, a battle that all sunflower farmers are bound to face at some point.

Schecher said that for all the eye appeal sunflowers hold, it's not always easy to bring in the crop. He explained that reaping the high-yield, high-oleic variety that he grows for the sunoil market can cause fires to break out during the combining process in the



Brad Schecher farms roughly 1,000 acres of sunflowers near Bison. *Photo by Brooke Schecher*

fall. The elevated oil content of the plant - ranging anywhere from 38 to 44 percent - along with the dust that's created during combining can result in a combustible mixture that is sometimes ignited by the presence of static electricity.

To make sure he's prepared, Schecher keeps a battery-operated leaf blower aboard the combine at all times.

"I have to keep blowing the combine off when I get to the end of the field to keep a fire from breaking out," he said. "You can see the accumulated piles of dust start glowing red-hot, and you can usually smell it and get it put out before it gets out of control. It's a hazard that you just have to contend with. Sometimes it can happen two or three times a day, especially when it's dry conditions."

Other farmers, such as Lance Hourigan of Lemmon, S.D., have addressed this common problem by investing in after-market solutions. Hourigan reached northward across the state border and recruited Stelter Repair out of New Leipzig, N.D., to manufacture an air tower to help

Estimated number
of sunflower acres

600,000

planted in South
Dakota in 2021

reduce the risk of fire during harvest time. Resembling a chimney, the device draws in air from above the combine where there is much less dust and debris billowing from the threshing process, and blows the air over the engine to help it stay cool and clean.

While Schecher focuses on the high-oil variety that represents about 80 percent of the market, there are other varieties grown for silage, birdfeed and other uses. Confection sunflowers, grown mostly in the eastern part of the state, are those found bagged up on convenience store shelves, the kind loaded with an assortment of flavors and

seasonings and meant for chewing.

While sunflowers are native to the continent, their history in North America can be traced to American Indian tribes in present-day Arizona and New Mexico. Archaeologists have found that these tribes domesticated the crop as early as 3000 B.C. The seed was ground or pounded into flour for cakes, mush or bread. Some tribes mixed the meal with vegetables such as beans and squash. The seed was cracked and eaten for snacking, while the oil was squeezed from the seed and used in making bread.

Non-food uses included purple dye for textiles, body painting and other decorations. Parts of the plant were used to treat snakebites. The oil was used on the skin and hair, and the dried stalk was used as a building material.

Today, agricultural scientists are exploring new uses for the plant while also figuring out how to provide protection from wireworms and other threats. Meanwhile, bullish farmers are keeping their eye on the global markets while exuding the same sense of sunny optimism associated with the sunflowers they work so hard to raise.

Lineman News



Matt Eldridge

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It's the time of year that I like to give everyone an update on what our line crew has been doing for the past year. As might be expected, they have been very busy!

Last year we started our 10-year pole inspection rotation. We hired RAM Utilities to come in and go from pole to pole, inspecting and if needed, testing, every pole on our system.

In 2021, they worked in the southwest part of our service territory and inspected over 5,500 poles, rejecting only 120, which will now be replaced.

That is a very good ratio of rejected poles, considering some of them date back to the 1950s. With winter and spring weather being so mild, we were able to work on these and get them changed out and fix any other issues they found. This summer Ram Utilities is here again and have started inspecting the northeast part of our service territory. We are expecting to have a little higher percentage rate of rejects in this

area since the line age is older. We will start getting these changed out this fall and fixing any other damage they might find.

This summer between changing out poles, the line crew kept busy installing new services and fixing the overhead lines from all the thunderstorms that passed through our service territory. In June our neighboring co-op, West Central Electric, had storms pass through and tear down several miles of line. We were able to send three of our linemen there to help restore power to their members, embodying one of our seven cooperative principles, Cooperation Among Cooperatives.

As with many industries these days, the availability of materials is becoming an issue here at the cooperative, as we experience longer leads times for some of our supplies. Transformers and meter pedestals are over a year out from when we order them. We are doing our best to stay ahead of everything so we can keep material on hand for the new services that keep coming. If you are planning on needing a new service or are wanting a service upgrade, please get in touch with me as soon as possible so we can get material ordered and get the work scheduled.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your electric service, please give us a call and we will get it taken care of as soon as possible.

THE POWER OF PREPARATION

With severe weather events occurring more frequently, now more than ever, it makes sense to be prepared. During a prolonged power outage or other emergency, this means having enough food, water and supplies to last at least a few days.

In honor of National Preparedness Month in September, we want to remind members of our community about the power of preparation. While you don't have to achieve a "doomsday prepper" level of preparedness, there are several practical steps you can take to keep you and your family safe.

Even at a modest level, preparation can help reduce stress, anxiety and lessen the impact of an emergency event. We recommend starting with the basics.

Here are general guidelines recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency:

- Assemble a grab-and-go disaster kit. Include items like nonperishable food, water (one gallon per person, per day), diapers, batteries, flashlights, prescription medications, first-aid kit, battery-powered radio and phone chargers.
- Develop a plan for communicating with family and friends (i.e., via text, social media, third party, etc.).

September is National Preparedness Month. Make preparations to keep you and your family safe during severe weather events.

- Have some extra cash available; during a power outage, electronic card readers and cash machines may not work.
- Store important documents (birth certificates, property deed, etc.) in safe place away from home (for example, a bank safe deposit box).
- Keep neighbors and coworkers apprised of your emergency plans.
- Fill your car with gas.
- Organize your supplies so they are together in an easily accessible location that family members know about.

CARING FOR VULNERABLE FAMILY MEMBERS

If you have older family members or those with special needs, make sure they have enough medication and supplies for a few days. If they don't live with you, arrange for a neighbor to check in on them. If a severe weather event is expected, consider having your relative stay with you if feasible, otherwise call them daily. If you have an infant or young children, make certain that you have ample formula, diapers, medication and other supplies on hand to weather an

outage lasting several days or more.

KEEPING FOUR-LEGGED FAMILY MEMBERS SAFE

For families with pets, having a plan in place in the event of a prolonged outage or an emergency will help reduce worry and stress especially if you need to make a decision during an emergency.

- Bring pets indoors at the first sign of a storm or other emergency. Pets can become disoriented and frightened during severe weather and may wander off during an emergency.
- Microchip your pet and ensure the contact information is up to date.
- Store pet medical records on a USB drive or in an easy-to-remember location.
- Create an emergency kit for pets (include shelf-safe food, bottled water, medications and other supplies).

At Oahe Electric, we care about your safety. Planning for an emergency situation today can give you more confidence to deal with severe weather and potential outages in the future.

CHISLIC FESTIVAL

Roger and Lori Pietz claimed the New Age Nosh Award at last year's Chislic Festival in Freeman. Photos by SD Chislic Festival

Step inside the Chislic Circle for unique food and lots of family fun

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

In a world already rife with scads of dander-raising hot-button issues, add chislic to the list. It seems that anytime more than a few cocksure chislic chefs gather around a grill, controversy can't be too far away.

The bickering typically begins with picking the proper protein. Opt for the traditional scrumptious cubes of mutton or lamb, or take a risk and go hog-wild with pork or maybe buffalo? How about swinging farther to the edge with venison, goat, beef or chicken? Dare we add emu to the list?

At least one restaurant is sending the chislic cosmos into spasms by serving up plates of (gasp) "fish-lic."

The plethora of opinions surrounding the preparation of chislic starts with the choice of meat and springboards from there into seasonings, cooking methods and even serving techniques. Grilled,

deep fried or air fried? Fork, toothpick or skewer? Don't get a chislic enthusiast started on the sauce selection.

Many people and various cultures have a strong attachment to their particular favorite types of food, but South Dakota's desire for chislic is unusually intense – especially for those who dwell within the Chislic Circle.

If the name Chislic Circle evokes images of a secret society that conducts mysterious midnight rituals around a raging bonfire deep in the forest, well, it's not quite that. It's more of a clever marketing concept, and an effective one for community leaders who take pride in their chislic lore. In fact, everyone is invited to come inside this circle.

At the center of the Chislic Circle lies Freeman, S.D., with the chislic realm falling inside a 100-mile radius and including communities such as Kaylor, Menno, Hurley, Marion, Bridgewater, Emery and others. The Circle was spun into creation in 2018 when a small

but passionate contingent of chislic connoisseurs decided to celebrate and demonstrate their pride in their unique culinary heritage.

Andrea Baer was part of that early chislic cadre. She said the catalyst came when chislic was officially declared the "state nosh" by the Legislature four years ago.

"Before then, when you mentioned chislic outside of the area, there was hardly anyone who knew what you were talking about," said Baer, who is a native of Turkey Ridge still living on the farm her forebears from Denmark settled several generations ago. "It's something that's very unique to the area and we



like to celebrate it.”

That celebration has taken the form of an annual event that’s been recognized by tourism officials as one of the state’s fastest-growing festivals with an estimated 10,000 attendees last year after a pandemic pause in 2020. Organizers were expecting up to a couple thousand for the inaugural event in 2018, but four times that many showed up. The following year, the party was moved from the Freeman softball field to the more spacious 40-acre Prairie Arboretum.

This year’s festival was held on July 30 with the usual food vendors touting their unique savory recipes, libations, live music, a family-friendly kid zone, bingo, dancing, a cornhole competition, 5K run/walk, helicopter rides and other forms of family-oriented fun.

Festival board member and chislic expert Ian Tuttle also presented, “From Russia with Love: The History of Chislic” at the nearby Heritage Hall Museum and Archives.

Tuttle enjoys telling the story of how chislic arrived in the late 1800s with a particular group of immigrants described as “Germans from Russia.” A group of German Mennonites and Hutterites originally fled religious persecution in the 16th century and migrated eastward through the Russian Empire where they raised crops and sheep.

They chopped the meat into small pieces, cooked it over a fire and called it “shashlik,” a word for “skewer” rooted in the Turkic languages of Central Asia. The word is a close cousin to the more widely known “shish kebab.”

Eventually, those migrants found their way to present-day southeastern South Dakota and made sure to bring their shashlik with them. Those residing



inside the Chislic Circle generally recognize Johann Hoellwarth as the individual who introduced chislic to the Dakota Territory. Born in 1849 to a German Lutheran family in the Crimea, Hoellwarth settled just outside of where Freeman is today and was laid to eternal rest in the town.

Each year a panel of seven fearless judges takes on the task of naming the festival’s “best chislic.” For the past two years the top Traditional Division Award has gone to Kyle Sturzenbecker and his squad of Sheep Flockers.

Sturzenbecker said he and his fellow chef Josh Goehring don’t characterize themselves as competitive, but he also isn’t about to give away any trade secrets.

“You don’t have to do a whole lot. I just let the flavor of the meat speak for itself,” he said. “Honestly, I never

thought I’d win. I just like to cook good food that people enjoy eating.”

In 2021, the non-traditional New Age Nosh Award was claimed by Roger Pietz, owner of the Pietz Kuchen Kitchen. The establishment is mostly known for its rich custard dessert, but for the festival Pietz decided to go in a different direction and put together a tangy chislic pizza.

Ultimately, the Chislic Festival is about celebrating family, honoring the past and preserving the rural lifestyle.

“The tradition of chislic comes not from cities, the wealthy, or the privileged,” Baer said, “but from the rural, hardworking farm tradition of the people who settled this area. We thrive on the rural, while building the region through vibrant community.”

Anglers get hooked on fly fishing for fun and sport

Billy Gibson

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Tall tales, small tales, long tales, short tales...Buddy Seiner is interested in hearing any fishing tale you'd like to tell.

While he's partial to fly fishing, Seiner is passionate about fishing in all of its forms. And he offers an open invitation to anglers of every ilk to share their stories of fishing adventures enjoyed with friends, family members or in the presence of one's own company.

Seiner started www.fishstories.org after his grandfather passed away and he realized there were no audio or video recordings of the many outings they took together casting flies and chatting about whatever popped into their minds in the moment.

Several years ago, Seiner stood on the main stage during a TED X speech in Rapid City and explained his purpose in creating the website. Soon after, he began hauling in a mess of fish stories submitted by avid anglers from far and wide. Today, the archive holds more than 400 sagas of lunkers that were landed, the big ones that got away and precious time spent with loved ones in the great outdoors.

"I believe all fish stories need to be told," said Seiner, who works as a communications consultant based in Pierre. "I used to fish a lot with my grandpa and I realized I'd never hear his voice again after he passed away. He was full of wisdom and had a great sense of humor. I had some regrets about not recording him, so I started this project as a way for people to preserve those cherished voices and to preserve the memories."

Seiner observes that many people are in some way connected with fishing, whether they pursue it themselves or know someone who likes the feel of a rod and reel. He has found that the stories submitted to the site feature not only intriguing narratives of reaching the day's limits under clear cerulean skies but they also reveal relationships that run deeper than the deepest river channel. Some describe disastrous events.

One of those is the story of an outdoors escape that quickly turned tragic. A young woman tells how she lost her husband to an accident while the two were ice fishing on a frozen lake in Minnesota.

While there are stories of heartache and loss, Seiner said most tales tend to trend toward the positive. He has his own fond memories of how his uncle introduced him to fly fishing



Part art and part skill, fly fishing is an increasingly popular pastime across the region. *Photo by Travel South Dakota*

26 years ago and how he started tying his own flies as a college student.

“My Uncle Dwaine gave me a rod and I went in the back yard and started practicing. He always told me I’d enjoy it and he was right,” Seiner said.

It was at Bear Butte Creek near Sturgis that Seiner landed his first trout. He was casting for a brown trout beneath a willow tree. The fish went for the dry fly – a blue wing olive – and both the fish and Seiner were hooked. The fish was landed and released but Seiner’s love of the sport has never waned.

Fly fishing is growing in popularity across the region as more anglers discover the adventure and what many describe as the therapeutic benefits of casting flies out across the water. Though fly fishing is often associated with the clear, cold, fast-running streams found in the Black Hills area, Seiner said there is a wide range of options available depending on an angler’s tastes and preferences.

“We have a lot of water that’s prime for fly fishing,” he said. “It’s a sport Buddy Seiner started fishstories.org to preserve fishing tales and memories like those he has of his late fishing pal, Lucy.

that’s new to a lot of people and it’s gaining momentum. You can catch anything on a fly rod. You can go for trout and fish the stock dams out west, you can sight-fish for walleye or channel catfish in the clear waters of the Missouri River, you can fish the glacial lakes in the northeast or fish for carp out near Yankton.”

Whether they go for carp or brown trout, many fly fishers take an interest in maintaining and preserving the habitat for future generations to enjoy.

Seiner serves on the board of a group called Black Hills Fishers and works

with folks like Hans Stephenson of Dakota Angler and Outfitter in Rapid City to promote the sport of fly fishing, support conservation and educate the public on how to preserve the environment.

“Fly fishing is so much fun,” he said, “but if we don’t do what we can to protect our woods and waters, it will be a tragedy. We need to stay committed to preservation and conservation, and I’ve found that most people who enjoy the outdoors are very conscientious. We want people to have fishing stories to share for generations to come.”



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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.

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

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

AUGUST 25-28
Steam Threshing Jamboree
Prairie Village, Madison, SD,
605-256-3644

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

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

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

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

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

SEPTEMBER 4
Dakota Five-O
City Park, Spearfish, SD,
dakotafiveo.com

SEPTEMBER 8-11
S.D. State Senior Games
Watertown, SD, 605-491-0635
or 605-753-3668

SEPTEMBER 10
605 Black Hills Classic
Lions Park, Spearfish, SD,
605-274-1999

SEPTEMBER 10
Germanfest
Fawick Park, Sioux Falls, SD,
siouxfallssistercities.com/event

SEPTEMBER 10
Insect Festival
McCrory Gardens, Brookings, SD, 605-688-6707

SEPTEMBER 10
Sidewalk Arts Festival
Main Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD,
605-367-6000

SEPTEMBER 16-18
South Dakota Film Festival
Capitol Theatre, Aberdeen, SD,
southdakotafilmfest.org

SEPTEMBER 17-18
Northeast South Dakota Celtic Faire and Games
37925 Youth Camp Rd.,
Aberdeen, SD, 605-622-0144

SEPTEMBER 23-24
Hops and Hogs Festival
Citywide, Deadwood, SD,
605-578-1876

SEPTEMBER 23-25
HNIRC Championship of Champions
Stanley County Fairgrounds,
Fort Pierre, SD, horsenations
indianrelay.com

SEPTEMBER 24
Great Downtown Pumpkin Festival
Main Street Square, Rapid City,
SD, 605-716-7979

SEPTEMBER 24-25
Menno Pioneer Power Show
Pioneer Acres, Menno, SD,
mennopowershow@yahoo.com

SEPT. 29-OCT. 1
Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup & Arts Festival
Custer, SD, gfp.sd.gov/buffalo-roundup

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

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

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