



COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Katie Grott, field station manager at SDSU's Cottonwood research facility near Philip, stays busy overseeing several ongoing projects designed to deliver practical and profitable solutions for producers.

Blazing new trails

Ag research abounds at Cottonwood

Pages 8-9

Line work courses through their veins

Pages 12-13

BUSINESS AS USUAL AND CONGRATULATIONS!



Jordan Lamb

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Oahe Electric Cooperative plans to discuss annual meeting dates and locations at the upcoming board meeting. The annual meeting will tentatively take place sometime early fall of 2022. Location and time is TBD. We look forward to the annual meeting and seeing our members!

Construction season has arrived for Oahe Electric

Cooperative. We have several

new projects to serve new load coming online this spring and summer and we are thrilled to live in an area that supports growth. If you are planning to build new services, reach out to us ahead of time. We have several different rebates for residential customers on equipment used to heat/cool your home as well as water heaters and other benefits offered to our cooperative members. Recently added to this list are mini-split units often used for garage or bonus space heating and cooling.

State and Federal governments have been in discussion with cooperatives regarding grid resilience/hardening of facilities. A primary focus for Oahe Electric is burying overhead three-phase 'trunk' lines to prevent outages that affect the largest number of members. Another major concern is cyber security of the grid and prevention of malicious attacks on our infrastructure. We take these threats seriously and continue to update and expand our internal protections against cyber-attacks.

Last and most important, Russ Hohn, our Member Services Manager, is retiring April 1 after serving Oahe Electric Cooperative Members for 35 years! We appreciate his dedication to the cooperative and wish him the best in his retirement! Be sure to check out his article in this issue of cooperative connections and if you see Russ out and about this spring, be sure to congratulate him! He will be missed dearly by both Oahe Staff and Oahe Members!

Friends in High Places: National Lineman Appreciation Day

Monday, April 18, is National Lineman Appreciation Day! Hurricanes, ice storms and other devastating natural disasters certainly put the spotlight on the nation's power lineworkers. We're grateful to the courageous, hardworking men and women who work tirelessly to restore service following these difficult events, as well as their daily work to keep power flowing. Oahe Electric is proud to recognize the dedication and commitment of our line crew! #ThankALineman



Front row, left to right: Sid Geigle, Tyler Arbach, Duane Hjelm, Tory Smith
Back row, left to right: Brady Gaer, Dan Lettau, Mark Bruning, Steve Long

Statement of Non-Discrimination

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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.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS OAHE ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 019-042)

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James Feller – Vice President
605.962.6207
Brandon Haag – Assistant Secretary
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Ryan Noyes – Treasurer
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POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Oahe Electric Cooperative Connections, PO Box 216, Blunt, SD 57522-0216; telephone (605) 962-6243; fax (605) 962-6306; e-mail oahe@oaheelectric.com; www.oaheelectric.com

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.

Onida Senior is Scholar of the Week

Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. is proud to announce its "Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week." The recipient of this honor is Griffin Petersen, a senior at Sully Buttes High School in Onida. The honor, bestowed by Dakota News Now, gives Petersen bragging rights for the week of March 20-26, 2022.

Griffin boasts a 4.0 grade-point average. He is or has been active in FCCLA (Gold – top superior rating on Sports Nutrition project), student council (class and regional president), National Honor Society (chapter president), basketball (two years), track (five years – state qualifier), cross country (five years – state qualifier), band (six years – drum major of marching band), chorus (six years – All State) and was a basketball statistician (one year).

Petersen will receive \$250 from Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. in partnership with East River Electric Power Cooperative, to reward him for his academic achievements. Another perk for being selected, Griffin is automatically in the running for a \$1,000 scholarship, to be awarded at a special banquet later this spring honoring all of this year's scholars.

The "Scholar of the Week" is an ongoing joint effort between Touchstone Energy co-ops, like Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc., and Dakota News Now. The program recognizes the achievements of high school seniors throughout the region. The honor is awarded to highly motivated seniors who excel in the classroom as well as in their community.

SMALL CHANGE CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

What is Operation Round Up?

Operation Round Up® is just what the name implies: each month, Oahe Electric simply "rounds up" the electric bills of voluntarily participating members to the next highest dollar. For example, a member's monthly bill of \$132.68 would automatically be rounded up to \$133, with the additional 32 cents going to the Operation Round Up Fund.

How do I participate?

Oahe Electric's Operation Round Up® program is an opt-out program – meaning that you are automatically enrolled, with nothing else needing done to participate! If you are not interested in donating, you can call the office at 1-800-640-6243 and request to be removed from the program.

How much will it cost members?

The most a member can contribute is 99 cents per month x 12 months = \$11.88/year – this doesn't sound like much, but with this small change, thousands of dollars can be generated and will mean a big difference to the people and organizations in our area.

Where will the money go?

All Operation Round Up® donations are placed in a trust and are administered by an independent board of trustees. The board is made up of community leaders who serve on a voluntary basis. The board evaluates all requests for funds, determines who will receive funding and how all Operation Round Up® funds will be distributed.

Who is eligible for funds?

The funds are used to address charitable

community needs, whether it is disaster relief for an individual, or an organization funding a special project. Since the program's first disbursement in 2009, the program has distributed over \$108,000. The region served by the fund is primarily the electrical area served by Oahe Electric, including Hughes and Sully counties.

How do I apply for funds?

The easy-to-complete applications for funding are currently available and can be requested by phone at 605-962-6243. Applications can also be found on our website at www.oaheelectric.com. All applications are due by **April 30, 2022**.

Completed applications may be mailed to: Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 216, Blunt, SD 57522, faxed to: 605-962-6306, or emailed to: oahe@oaheelectric.com. After the deadline, the board of trustees will meet and allocate the funds to those they feel are in the most need.

How do I get involved?

There are currently two, five-year board of trustees position openings. Trustees normally have to commit one afternoon a year to review fund request applications in person, with the possibility of correspondence regarding emergency fund requests throughout the year. If you are interested in offering your time to this endeavor, please contact Samantha Irvine, Operation Round Up Coordinator, at 1.800.640.6243 or oahe@oaheelectric.com.

Together, by giving a few cents each month, Oahe Electric members can make a big impact on life in our area!

10 helpful tips for spring energy savings

Every season of the year provides many unique energy-saving opportunities for you and your family.

Here are some ideas particularly well suited for you to apply this spring.

1. **Clear the air:** Open windows to allow fresh air to circulate throughout your home.
2. **Cook outside:** Enjoy the sunshine by using your grill or smoker to add festive flavors to meals.
3. **Search and seal:** Cracks and spaces let conditioned air slip outdoors. Caulk and weatherstrip to seal leaks.
4. **Natural light:** Open blinds and curtains and turn off the lights to save energy and money.
5. **Be fan friendly:** Use ceiling fans to circulate air and keep cool.
6. **Atmospheric adjustment:** Remember to adjust your thermostat settings for the warmer months ahead.
7. **Tune up:** Schedule an appointment with a qualified heating, ventilating and air conditioning technician to identify any potential problems with your system.
8. **Peak savings:** Plan household chores that require electricity during off-peak hours (when energy demand is low).
9. **Take charge:** Consider disconnecting electrical devices you don't use regularly until you need them. Plugged-in devices use energy even when not in use.
10. **Move outdoors:** Time spent outdoors offers opportunities to turn off lights, TVs, computers and appliances. You'll be more active, have more fun and save more money.



DON'T TOY WITH PERSONAL SAFETY



When playing outdoors, keep a safe distance from power lines, substations and other equipment your electric co-op uses to send electricity to your home.

Flying remote-controlled toys and drones is a great way to have fun, but accidentally making contact with a power line or other electrical equipment can be dangerous and, in some cases, even deadly.

- Never fly kites or drones near power lines.
- Stay away from power lines, meters, transformers and electrical boxes.
- Never climb trees near power lines.
- If you get something stuck in a power line, call your electric co-op.



Fire Prevention

Jonie Smith

Jonie Smith sends out an important safety message for campers to extinguish fires before leaving the area. Jonie is the daughter of Myles and Amber Smith of Castlewood. They are members of H-D Electric Cooperative.

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.

LIP-SMACKING BEVERAGES

BLUEBERRY BANANA SMOOTHIE

Ingredients:

1 cup spinach
1/2 cup water
2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
1 tbsp. almond butter
1/2 cup bananas, frozen
1/2 cup blueberries, frozen
1 tbsp. chia seeds
1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp. minced ginger
1/2 cup berry yogurt
fresh blueberries, for garnish (optional)
Ground black pepper to taste

METHOD

In blender, blend spinach, water, apple cider vinegar, almond butter, frozen bananas, frozen blueberries, chia seeds, cinnamon, ginger and yogurt until smooth. Pour into two glasses and garnish with fresh blueberries, if desired.

culinary.net

FRENCH ICED COFFEE

Ingredients:

3 cups strong coffee
2 cups sugar
1 pint cream or half & half
1 qt. milk or almond milk
2 tsp. (vanilla) flavoring (other flavorings also work)

METHOD

Dissolve sugar in hot coffee. Cool. Add other ingredients. Pour into containers (I use the tall 2 c. Tupperware for individual drinks, but also use quarts.) Freeze. Take out and let thaw.

Ruth Schilberg, Viborg

SWAMP WATER

Ingredients:

1 small package lime gelatin
1 cup hot water
1 (12-oz.) can frozen unsweetened pineapple juice concentrate
2 liters carbonated water

METHOD

Mix lime gelatin with hot water to dissolve. Add frozen concentrate and carbonated water. Chill. Makes 10 servings.

Lily Gums, Clear Lake

FRUIT SLUSH

Ingredients:

4 cups sugar (granulated)
6 cups water
1 46 oz. can pineapple juice
2 12 oz. cans frozen orange juice
1 12 oz. can frozen lemonade (pink or yellow)
2 small bananas, mashed very fine (or other fruit)

METHOD

Mix and bring to a boil the sugar and water. When mixture is cool, add juices and fruit. Put in 5-quart pail and freeze. When frozen, use 2-3 scoops in a glass with 7-Up or ginger ale. Great drink for spring or summer.

Alana Neville, Milesville

STRAWBERRY SMOOTHIE

Ingredients:

2 cup fresh strawberries, stemmed & halved
1 cup plain yogurt
1/2 cup ice cubes or chips
1/2 tsp. ground cardamom
1/4 tsp. ginger

METHOD

In a blender, combine all ingredients. Blend on high speed until smoothie texture. Makes 2-12 oz. glasses.

Jane Ham, Rapid City

Please send your favorite casserole 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.

SIGN UP FOR AUTO PAY AND WIN \$100

Life is busy and you're always on the go. We get it. That's why we have options available to make receiving and paying your electric bill a breeze. AND if you sign up now you can take advantage of being entered into a drawing to receive \$100! If you are already signed up for auto pay, you will automatically be entered into a separate drawing as our way of saying thank you for participating in this program.

Auto Pay

Don't worry about due dates or late fees again! Complete the form below and you won't have to spend any more of your time writing or mailing checks. You can select checking account, savings account, debit card or credit card to be used for the automatic payment.

Paperless Billing

Cut down mailbox clutter, not trees! With SmartHub, you can receive an email notification the day that bills are generated. No more waiting! Go to www.oaheelectric.com to sign up today. You can also pay your bill on SmartHub, view previous bills, and if you really want to you can receive both the email notification as well as the paper bill.

Budget Billing

No more guessing what your bill is! You can sign up for budget billing in May or June and know how much your electric will be each month. If you would like to enroll in this option, call us at 1.800.640.6243

All of these features are FREE and can make your life just a little bit easier. Plus, you could win some extra cash! Return the form below by **May 20, 2022**, to be entered.

Member Authorization to Direct Payment via ACH or Credit/Debit Card

Member Name(s): _____

Electric Account Number(s): _____

Direct Payment via ACH is the transfer of funds from a member account for the purpose of making a payment.

Check one: ☐ **Begin Payment**

☐ **Change Information**

I/we authorize Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. to electronically debit my/our account and, if necessary, to electronically credit my/our account to correct erroneous debits as follows:

Check one: ☐ **Checking Account**

☐ **Savings Account**

☐ **Credit/Debit Card**

at the depository Financial Institution named below ("DEPOSITORY"). I/We agree that ACH transactions I/we authorize comply with all applicable laws.

Depository name: _____ Routing number: _____

Account number: _____

Name(s) on the account: _____

OR

Credit/Debit card number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

Debit transaction frequency:

Recurring Entries (entries that recur at substantially regular intervals, without further affirmative action by the Receiver)

Date of debit: Payments will commence the month following the receipt of this form, on the 20th of each month or the closest business day if the 20th falls on a weekend or holiday

Number of and/or frequency of debits: Monthly

Authorized debit amount (or method for determining amount): Monthly Billing Amount

I/We understand that this authorization will remain in full force and effect until I/we notify Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. in writing or via phone that I/we wish to revoke this authorization. I/we understand that Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. requires at least 3 day prior notice in order to cancel this authorization.

Name(s): _____

(Please Print)

Date: _____ Signature(s): _____

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

This month's question is: Who is responsible for locating private lines?

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

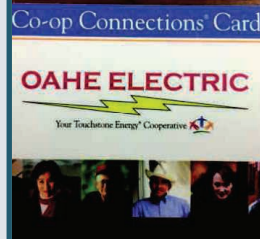
The Question of the Month winners for the February 2022 publication were Michael and Christie Gabel. They correctly answered the question, "How many board of trustee positions are open this year?", with the answer being two.

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 15% 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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ROBO RANCHING

Cottonwood Field Station Manager Katie Grott and student Lily McFadden take a break from their work. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

Cottonwood Field Research Station is abuzz with studies designed to increase producer profitability

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

There are robo-cops, robo-codes and robo-calls. But robo-cattle ranching?

That futuristic phrase is part of the nomenclature surrounding a beef production movement called “precision ranching,” an offshoot of the “precision agriculture” approach that promotes the use of advanced technology to improve yields and profitability.

This new wave of ag research evokes postmodern images of bovines grazing through the fields wearing high tech gadgets. Turns out, it’s a description not too far off the mark, according to Dr. Jamie Brennan, an assistant professor of research and extension specialist at South Dakota State University.

Based out of the West River Research and Extension Center in Rapid City, Brennan is using SDSU’s Cottonwood Field Station near Philip to study the viability of using high-tech GPS tracking collars to deliver real-time information on steer activity and behavior.

“By monitoring animal movement we can identify changes in behavior that might indicate sickness, for example, which can be sent as an alert to producers,” Brennan said.

He’s deploying the type of advanced accelerator technology commonly associated with Fitbit watches, vehicle trackers, smartphone map apps and other monitoring devices.

“We’re working to develop the capability for producers to easily identify not only where animals are on the landscape but also where they are selecting for grazing and resting locations,” Brennan said. “The work we are doing at the station is designed to determine the potential benefits - and possible shortcomings - of precision ranching technology and to predict the return on investment for the producer.”

Brennan’s project is just one of several intriguing studies currently in play at the Cottonwood Field Station. One of six field research centers in the SDSU Agriculture Experiment Station network, Cottonwood is among the

oldest facilities of its kind in the country. Covering more than 2,600 acres, Cottonwood was established in 1907 and has received regional and national acclaim with impactful results such as developing a new method of determining stocking rates for western regions and devising the Universal Soil Loss Equation now known as RUSLE2.

These scientific forays into precision ranching include virtual fencing (Vence™), Smart Feeder™ systems, mobile app-based mineral consumption monitors, methane emissions measuring devices and soil moisture monitoring.

The exploration into virtual fencing holds plenty of promise in helping producers manage their livestock and landscape more efficiently and effectively, according to Cottonwood Field Station manager Katie Grott.

While it may be hard for an old-school rancher to envision a world without barbed wire, fence posts and cattle guards, moving this technology to market could result in substantial savings for farm families.

Grott explained the technology is a much more sophisticated version of the kind of residential-grade invisible fence



A cow at the Cottonwood Field Research Station waits patiently for a Smart Feeder to be loaded with hay.

designed to keep pets from wandering around the neighborhood streets. Virtual fencing is already being used to contain goat herds and other smaller animals with measurable success.

The latest research testing involves combining an electrical pulse administered through a GPS-enabled collar, combined with an auditory stimulus to keep cattle confined within certain boundaries. A software program allows the rancher to define those boundaries as needed for successful grazing rotation and land management.

“We’re looking at how virtual fencing affects animal behavior, performance and natural resources,” Grott said.

Dr. Krista Ehlert, assistant professor and extension specialist, is also involved in the project and adds, “Virtual fencing turns physical labor into cognitive labor for producers, helping to reduce labor and potentially improve work-life balance for producers.”

Other projects at Cottonwood include work being led by assistant professor Dr. Hector Menendez. The research uses technology developed by the Rapid City firm, C-Lock. C-Lock has a scale that collects daily weight records on animals every time they drink. The data provide

valuable information on stocking rates, forage quality and weather conditions on individual animal performance.

“It’s an exciting time in the area of agricultural research,” Menendez said.

“We have secured funds to proceed with a project on interdisciplinary engagement in animal systems and precision livestock water monitoring. And we’re excited about holding producer-oriented workshops, training classes and field days to educate producers on how these advancements can improve their profitability.”

One rancher who keeps a close eye on the latest research results is Eric Jennings, president of the South Dakota Cattleman’s Association.

“There are some interesting new concepts being explored through this facility and others,” Jennings said. “We’re watching to see which of these systems prove to become both practical and affordable for producers to implement in their daily operations. For instance, the idea of virtual fencing has been around for a while, but the research and application of new technology has emerged as a viable option.”

Brennan, Ehlert, Menendez and others who work daily to blaze new pathways

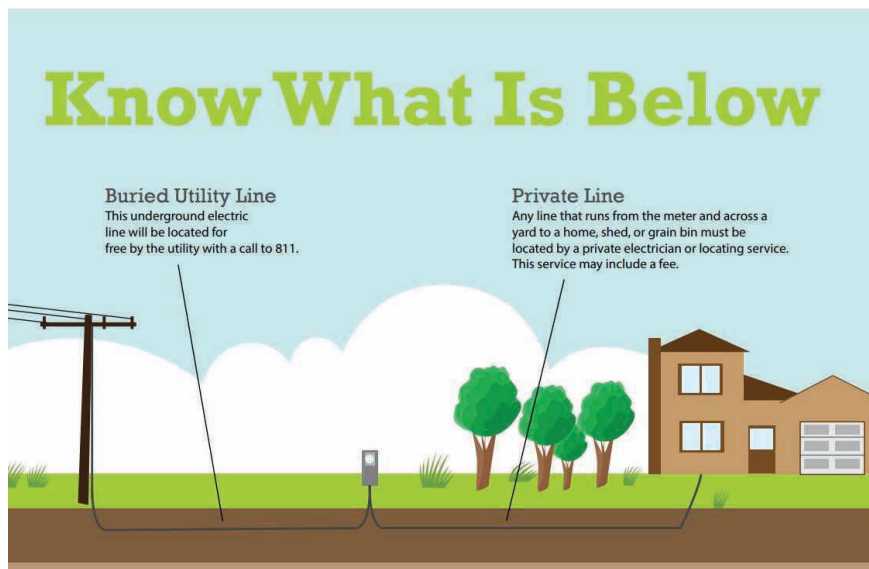
Amount of acres
researchers have

2,640

at their disposal at the
Cottonwood
Field Station

for cattle producers take gratification from knowing their labor and application of scientific methods could result in a farm family turning the corner toward profitability and sustaining a generational way of life. Plus, they enjoy drawing students into the process and inspiring the next generation of farmers.

“They receive training in animal science, rangeland ecology, precision technology, modeling, computer programming and boots-on-the-ground ranching,” Menendez said. “One of our aims is to encourage the next generation of professionals that can merge precision technology to maximize rangeland livestock production while maintaining ranching culture.”



KNOW WHAT'S BELOW: STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING



Matt Eldridge

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oaheelectric.com

Spring is just around the corner, and there's never been a better time to get outside and enjoy the fresh air. Perhaps you're making plans for a new garden or a lawn makeover. However you're planning to revamp your backyard oasis, remember to keep safety in mind for all projects – especially those that require digging near underground utility lines.

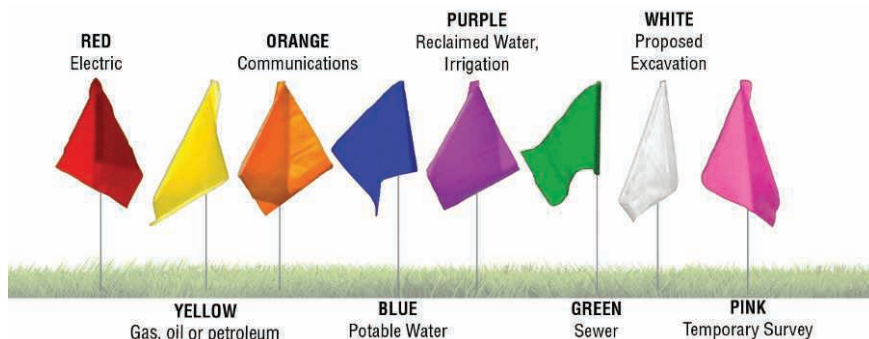
Most of us never think about the electric, gas, water and other utility lines buried below the ground, but hitting one of these lines while digging is not the

reminder you'll

want – trust us! Oahe Electric reminds all members who are planning a digging project to call 811 at least three business days before you start. Or you can submit a request online by visiting www.call811.com/811-In-Your-State. Here's how the process works:

After you call 811 or submit your request online, all affected utilities will be notified of your intent to dig. It may take the utilities a few days to get to your request, so please be patient. The affected utilities will send someone out to mark the buried lines with paint or flags. Before you break ground, confirm that all the utilities have responded to your request. If you placed your request by phone, use the process explained by your 811 call center representative. If you submitted your request online, refer to your 811 center ticket to confirm everything.

By taking this important step before you break ground on your project, you can help protect not only yourself but our community. Disrupting an underground utility line can interrupt service, cause injuries and cost money to repair, so remember to call 811 first and know what's below.



5 STEPS FOR SAFE DIGGING

Working on an outdoor project? Careless digging poses a threat to people, pipelines and underground facilities. Always call 8-1-1 first. Here are five easy steps for safe digging:



1. NOTIFY

Call 8-1-1 or make a request online two to three days before your work begins. The operator will notify the utilities affected by your project.

2. WAIT

Wait two to three days for affected utilities to respond to your request. They will send a locator to mark any underground utility lines.

2-3

3. CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utilities have responded to your request by comparing the marks to the list of utilities the 8-1-1 call center notified.



4. RESPECT

Respect the markers provided by the affected utilities. The markers are your guide for the duration of your project.



5. DIG CAREFULLY

If you can't avoid digging near the markers (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state laws), consider moving your project location.



Source: call811.com

A Wonderful Career



Russ Hohn

rhohn@
oaheelectric.com

An early morning drive to Blunt, S.D., and the nervous feeling of an upcoming job interview kept me wide awake for the three hours of travel time. June of 1988 was the first time I had ever visited the small city in central South Dakota. I had just returned from working a short stint in New Hampshire. The lifestyle of New England was more “way more” than this country boy could handle. My 35-year career at Oahe Electric had just begun.



One third of my career was spent with others on the line crew. Learning every day from my elders, the smiles, storm jobs and stories shared will not be forgotten. Many times, people would comment, “working that storm must have been terrible.” Honestly, I never felt that way because it was not just me

out there doing the job. All our employees were asked to work long hours, helping get the system back to normal. The remainder of my career was in the Member Service position. Without a doubt, this is truly the best position in the cooperative world. Yes, several hats must be worn, but every step and every phone call were worth it! Satisfaction from the members saying thank you was truly heart felt. Satisfaction from children at schools after electrical safety demonstrations or their parents calling me to say thank you is a wonderful feeling. I have no idea,



how many electrical safety presentations I was involved with, but I never grew tired of doing it. The thought of saving someone from an electrical accident was the drive to continue.



My family and I are blessed for the opportunities that

Oahe Electric has given us. The local school systems provide a great education. Local law enforcement, fire departments and first responders have done an excellent job over the years. When asked if I would do it again, “absolutely!”

Retirement from Oahe Electric Cooperative is just that, retiring from the co-op world! A list of things people want help with already awaits. Now I can spend time with family more frequently. The outdoors has

always been a passion and I plan to enjoy it to the fullest. And yes, traveling is part of the excursion also.

My parents, Eldon and Tina Hohn, still reside on the family farm and in my opinion; are the most wonderful parents in the world. Thank you, mom and dad, for everything!

I thank God for this great country, my family for standing by my side, fellow employees, and the members of Oahe Electric.

Sincerely,

Russ Hohn



#THANKALINEMAN

VOLTAGE IN THEIR VEINS

The Miller and Wingen men share a total of 177 years of experience in the electric utility industry. Pictured above are Joel Miller, Rollie Miller, Travis Miller, Corey Miller, Wes Wingen and Dustin Wingen.

Miller, Wingen utility workers represent a combined 177 years of faithful service

Tara Miller

taram@centralec.coop

Take a moment to imagine life without electricity. No household appliances, no electric heat, no air conditioning, no internet and no phone. In 1925, only half of homes in the U.S. had electricity. Fast forward to 2022, and electricity is a basic necessity.

April is Lineworker Appreciation Month – a time to celebrate and honor the brave men and women who often work in hazardous conditions to power our world.

The Miller family, originally from Canova, has 177 years of electric industry experience, and most of them started their careers as lineworkers.

WHERE IT ALL STARTED

Before attending school to become a lineworker, Joel Miller, better known as “Joe” or “Smokey” to some, graduated from Canova High School and began working at Overhead Door Company

in Sioux Falls. While he didn’t mind the work, he knew it wasn’t what he wanted to do for the rest of his life. Joe then heard about an opportunity to attend school and become a lineworker.

“I knew Ron Callies. He was an instructor,” Joe said. “He told us to look at the program, so Robert Zens and I checked it out and thought we would give it a try.”

Joe graduated from what is now known as Mitchell Technical College (MTC) in 1978 and began the family’s legacy of life on the line when he joined East River Electric in Madison. He started on the construction crew and later worked in maintenance. His friend Robert Zens also worked at East River Electric, but passed away in a motorcycle accident in 1980.

Joe worked at East River Electric for nearly 20 years before he moved to Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) in Pierre. WAPA is a federal organization that markets and delivers hydroelectric power and related services

across the 15-state region. Joe retired from his position of line foreman at WAPA in 2020 after 43 years.

FOLLOWING THE LEADER

Rollie was next in the Miller family line-up, a year younger than Joe. His mom talked him into going to Pipestone, MN, to work at Bayliner Boats with his older brother Ed. Rollie then worked at Feterl’s Manufacturing in Salem where he welded augers until he decided to enroll in line school at MTC at the age of 20.

“The biggest reason I went to line school was because Joe had just done it, and I was friends with Robert Zens. I saw how they just did it, and I thought I could do it, too,” Rollie explained.

Rollie now manages Vigilante Electric Cooperative in Dillon, MT. Before running the show, he worked for an electrical contractor and for West River Electric.

He then attended SDSU and worked for Bob’s Electric in Flandreau with Reggie Gassman, who is manager of customer electrical services at Sioux

Valley Energy. They both grew up in the Canova area.

Rollie earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering, allowing him to become a licensed professional engineer.

"My education has greatly benefited me throughout my career," Rollie said.

Rollie's boys are also following the family tradition. Cody Miller attended SDSU to become an electrical engineer and consults for electric utilities, and Logan "L.J." Miller is enrolled in the power line construction and

maintenance program at MTC.

"It's not a cake walk. I told them you really have to study and work hard," he said.

After Rollie, Corey was the next Miller brother to attend MTC.

"The reason I went into it is because I had two older brothers who were



Cody Miller



L.J. Miller

linemen. I knew when I was a freshman in high school that I was going to be a lineman," Corey said.

After graduating from MTC in 1987, Corey became an apprentice lineworker at Public Service of New Hampshire. He worked there for three years, then took a position at Missouri Public Service.

Like his brothers, Corey worked his way up the ranks. He was hired as a lineworker and promoted to foreman, then supervisor, and now works in management. He is also on the board of directors for the International Lineman Rodeo Association, helping host the annual lineman rodeo event which promotes lineworker safety.

Corey's 15-year-old son Zach plans to become a lineworker after high school. Corey shares this advice for anybody

- **Joel Miller**, Retired Line Foreman at Western Area Power Administration (Pierre, SD)
43 Years, 6 months of industry experience
- **Rollie Miller**, General Manager at Vigilante Electric Cooperative (Dillon, MT)
42 years, 6 months of industry experience
- **Corey Miller**, Director of Regional Operations at Evergy (Lexington, MO)
35 years, 6 months of industry experience
- **Travis Miller**, Foreman at Southeastern Electric (Salem, SD)
30 years of industry experience
- **Wes Wingen**, Manager of Meter Services at Black Hills Power (Rapid City, SD)
15 years, 10 months of industry experience
- **Cody Miller**, Electrical Engineer (Dillon, MT)
8 years, 6 months of industry experience
- **Dustin Wingen**, Former Lineworker at Alaska Village Electric Co-op (Anchorage, AK)
2 years of industry experience
- **Logan (L.J.) Miller**, Student in the power line program at Mitchell Technical College

considering a career in the field:

"We need linemen. It is an awesome profession to get into. Linemen live to restore power – that's their lifeblood. And, quite honestly, you will make a very good wage while doing that."

Travis was the last of the Miller brothers to attend line school. He decided milking cows wasn't his calling, so in 1991 at age 26, Travis followed the path started by his big brother Joe.

"I figured they all did it, so I could probably do it better," Travis joked. He is now the foreman at Southeastern Electric in Salem.

Wes and Dustin Wingen are the sons of Stacy (Miller) and Bob Wingen. They are nephews to the Miller brothers and have also been involved in the electric utility industry. Dustin was a lineworker in Anchorage, AK, before coming back home to farm. Wes is an engineer and manager of meter services at Black Hills Power in Rapid City.

IT'S A MILLER THING

The Miller family had nine children: Sandy, Duane, Ed, Joe, Rollie, Stacy, Derrin, Travis and Corey. Marcella, mother of the youngest eight children,

passed away in 2011, and Duane "Stub" Miller, the family patriarch, currently resides in Howard. Stub shared, "People don't know it today, but having electricity is something we shouldn't take for granted."

The four Miller brothers share a combined 151 years of electric industry experience. When you add it all up, the Miller and Wingen men boast an impressive 177 years of electric industry experience.

They couldn't have worked in this profession without the support of their families, which are too large to list. All the storm jobs, dangerous assignments and family moves were worth it when they think about the people they serve. They all agree, "It's a Miller thing" and working with voltage is in their veins.

THANK A LINEWORKER

Please take time to thank lineworkers for all they do to brighten our lives. We thank the Miller family for their many years of service in the industry.

Editor's note: Writer Tara Miller is Travis Miller's wife and works for Central Electric Cooperative near Mitchell.

We Need Your Help!

Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. Outstanding Capital Credit Checks

Please notify Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc., in Blunt, S.D., at 1-800-640-6243 if your name is on this list and you did not receive or have misplaced your check. If you know someone on this list, or their personal representative, please have them contact Oahe Electric. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Please refer to SDCL 47-16-54 through SDCL 47-16-57 for unclaimed capital credit forfeiture procedures.

Anderson, John And Meghan
Ashley, Mary
Autumn Enterprises Inc C/O Marty
Vandeneykel
Bennett, Merlin O And Susan
Berry, Mavis L
Bieber, Brooke
Big Eagle, Jennifer M
Boyd, Shane Estate
Boyles, Charles A Estate
Boys & Girls Club Of Three Districts C/O
Ronda Hawk
Brewer, Robert W
Brookings, James E Sr Estate
Bunn, Carey
Burgher, Chandra And Bret
Burke & Associates
Burke Re Llc C/O Bob Burke
Burnham, Harold
Byrum, Mark
Carlton, Michael
Christopherson, David
Clark, Zack
Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Co.
Cowan, Chad And Jessica
Cressy, Christopher
Dean, Terry
Dennis, Paul Estate
Dm&E Railroad Corporation
Edwards, Charles And Marilyn
Elton Eller Inc
Epp, Jose And Rebekah
Erickson, Albert Estate
Evans, Ernest R And Genevieve M
Fagerhaug, Joel And Stephanie
Fallis, Amy
Farm And Ranch Solutions C/O Lucas
Solberg
Fawcett, Jeremiah And Jessica Tyler
Fire Cloud, Travis
Franke Harvesting C/O Charlie Frankie
Garrett, Carlin Estate
Garrett, Ronald J
Goosen-Goertz, Bonnie J
Graf, Karl L And Glen E
Hall, Cody And Jacque
Hanish, Denise
Hartl, Monte R And Dawn

Harvey, Shane And Sharon
Herald, Joddie
Hilgemann, Rick
Huber, Kim Estate
Hughes, Douglas Q
Hunsley, Nancy
Integrated Tower Networks Inc C/O Dan
Korus
Iversen, Heather And Francis
Jacobs, Valerie G
Jones, Charles H And Michele M
Jost, Marti
Jpd Llc C/O Jayme Deis
Kelley Family Inc
Kessler, Robert J
Klein, Mathias And Kate
Kuhrt, Bernell F And Doris
Lambie, Darrell Estate
Larson, Donley W Estate And Elizabeth
Estate
Lebeau, Michael
Lewis, Larua A
Libby, Patrick
Linn, John J Estate
Lucero, Isaac And Keely Vincent
Macleod, Barry
Mahowald, Doug
Manning, Scott And Mindy Allum
Manz, Paul And Margaret
Manz, Robert P Estate
Marsh, William And Jamie
Martin, Sam
Mccarty, Christopher
Mehrer, David And Jean
Merrill, Keith B Estate
Meyer, Steven J
Midwest Feeders Inc
Miller, Allen D And Xu Zou Chen
Miller, Duane R
Mitchell, Bob And Emily Townsend Hill
Morgan, David F
Naughton, David
Nauman, Patti
Newling, Benjamin And Skye Sharkey
Nolte Construction And Steve Nolte
Npp Llc
Oahe Plains System Corp
Olson, Charles J

Park Apts - Agar
Paulsen, Brad
Pease, Michael D Estate
Performance Agriculture
Pierre Concrete C/O Don Christiansen
Pitlick, Mark And Shannon
Preiser, Sheila
Quick, Christopher
Ramsdell, Daniel
Rapp, Nicole
Red Water, Mary Jo
Redden, Oliver
Reeves, Eric
Richardson, Charles Jr. And Allison
Rivenes, Marvin G Estate
Roddewig & Son C/O Cj Or Curtis
Roddewig
Russell, Shannon Estate
Sand Livestock Assoc 1986-1 And Chuck
Sand Estate
Schmitz, Marc And Amy
Schroyer, Gerald Estate And Artalee
Estate C/O John Schroyer
Schumacher, Ervin And Gertrude
Seals, Rodney
Shultz, Eleanor Estate
Slama, Randy And Dawn
Smith, Richard N
Sommer, Sue Estate
Sowards, Paul
Stanley, Mike And Kayla
Stewart Farms C/O Van Stewart
Stickney, Robert W
Tays, Matthew J
Tchida, Josh And Jerusha
Telford, Loretta J Estate
Thompson, Barry
Vanderplaats, Brian Estate And Robin
Estate
Vilhauer, David Estate
Votava, Jeanie
Wegner, Danny And Margaret
White Mountain, Hoksila And Memorie
Traverse
Woods, Gordon And Dawn
Zackery, Kandi M And Cory Burtman



LANDLORD OR TENNANT – WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ELECTRIC BILL?



Valerie Marso
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oaheelectric.com

Meet Fred Renter and Joe Landlord! A very popular question we get is, “Who is responsible for the electricity bill? The renter or the landlord?” The good news is, there is no wrong answer. But

like any other choice, there are pros and cons to having one or the other be responsible. Let’s check out the

options!

Joe Landlord signs the membership application. This means that he receives all of the rights and privileges of cooperative membership including the right to vote at the annual meeting and the earning of capital credits. This also means that Joe Landlord is responsible for

paying the electric bill. There are varying reasons that Joe Landlord may want to retain membership as renters come and go. He may think he is doing them a favor as well as himself by not having to pay a transfer fee and deposit each time the meter transfers names. Perhaps he wants to receive all the capital credits for the property he owns and wants to be able to vote at the annual meeting. Oahe Electric has no issues with this method but please keep in mind that if this is the option that is chosen, ultimately Joe Landlord has to pay the utilities even if Fred Renter up and leaves and doesn’t pay him. Also, there is an option for the bill to be sent directly to Fred Renter but Joe Landlord is still the member regardless of who actually pays the bill since he signed the membership application.

If Fred Renter signs the membership application, they become the member and receive all the privileges that go along with it. This also means that Joe Landlord has no idea if Fred Renter is paying his electric bill or if his service has been terminated by request or due to nonpayment. Depending on the

time of year, that could create a very unfavorable situation within the property that is being rented. If Joe Landlord calls in and wants to know how much electricity is being used or how much is owed, he would not be able to do so without Fred Renters permission since it is Fred’s account and he is the member. This also means that Joe Landlord is not responsible for any unpaid electric usage.

Generally, this is something that is addressed in the lease agreement. Ultimately it makes no difference to Oahe Electric which way it is set up and again, there is no wrong answer. Each landlord has their own reasoning for which option they choose but the above points are just somethings to keep in mind when making your decision. If you have any questions on how your membership is officially recorded, please contact our office.





APRIL 16
Easter Egg Hunt at
Reclamation Ranch, Mitchell, SD

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.

MARCH 25-26

Schmeckfest

748 S Main Street, Freeman, SD, 605-925-4237

MARCH 26

Annual Ag Day

Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

MARCH 30

Elton John Tribute Concert

Performing Arts Center, Mitchell, SD, 605-770-7813

APRIL 2

Watertown Coin and Currency Show

Elks Lodge, Watertown, SD, 605-882-4663

APRIL 2-3

Youth & Family Services' 25th Annual Kids Fair

The Monument, Rapid City, SD, youthandfamilyservices.org/kids-fair/

APRIL 8-9

Forks, Corks & Kegs Festival

Various Locations, Deadwood, SD, deadwood.com/event/forks-corks-kegs

APRIL 8-9

Jackrabbit Stampede Rodeo

Swiftel Center, Brookings, SD, swiftelcenter.com

APRIL 8-10

CAHF Spring Fling Eggstravaganza Series

Carroll Acres Hobby Farm, Rapid City, SD, carrollacreshobbyfarm.com

APRIL 8-16

The Passion and the Cross

Orpheum Theater Center, Sioux Falls, SD, siouxfallsorpheum.com

APRIL 9

Keystone Spring Fling Vendor Fair

1101 Madill Street, Keystone, SD, 605-786-3035

APRIL 16

Easter Egg Hunt

Reclamation Ranch, Mitchell, SD, 605-770-2867

APRIL 22-24

36th Annual Korkow Ranch Rodeo School

Korkow Ranch, Pierre, SD, 605-224-5607, www.korkowrodeos.com

APRIL 22-23

Junkin' Market Days

W. H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-941-4958

APRIL 23

Lakota All Star Basketball Games

The Monument Summit Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-342-41985

APRIL 23

Martina McBride

Swiftel Center, Brookings, SD, swiftelcenter.com

APRIL 23

Winefest Renaissance

1121 1st Avenue SE, Aberdeen, SD, 605-225-8714

APRIL 23-24

46th Mobridge Area Art Show

Scherr-Howe Arena, Mobridge, SD, 605-845-2060

APRIL 23-24

Brookings Quilt Guild Show

Swiftel Center, Brookings, SD, 605-690-3246

APRIL 27-30

45th Annual Kingswood Rummage Sales

Southwest Sioux Falls, SD, kingswoodrummage.com

APRIL 28-30

26th Annual Black Hills Dance Festival

The Monument, Rapid City, SD, blackhillsdancefestival.com

APRIL 29-MAY 1, 5-7

Ordinary Days

Grand Opera House, Pierre, SD, pierreplayers.com

APRIL 30

SDSO Centennial Finale

Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, sdsymphony.org

MAY 7

Cinco de Mayo Fiesta

131 E Falls Park Drive, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-274-3735

MAY 14-15

Ellsworth Air and Space Show

1940 EP Howe Drive, Ellsworth AFB, SD, ellsworthairshow.com

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