



# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Jessie Ruml pursues a labor of love growing an assortment of fresh-cut flowers at Pixie Acres Flower Farm near Castlewood  
*Photo by Rachel Clelland Photography*

## In Bloom

**Cut flowers spread summer cheer**  
Pages 8-9

**Addressing power supply and demand**  
Pages 12-13



# CARBON NEUTRAL VS. RELIABILITY



**Jordan Lamb**

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Oahe Electric Cooperative represents a piece of a very large network of electrical infrastructure spanning the entire United States and Canada. To ensure reliability and resource adequacy to meet growing load, regions developed Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs) to study regional generation, load and transmission systems and to coordinate new transmission and generation while also accounting for resource retirements. These RTOs add benefits and cost savings to our members by allowing everyone to share electrical infrastructure rather than to build over existing infrastructure as each individual utility is required to meet growing load.

Oahe Electric Cooperative lies within the Southwest Power Pool RTO. Other RTOs and non-RTOs encompass the United States. Frequently you see in the news that California, Texas, New England and East Coast areas experience rolling blackouts. Last February we received the first ever Energy Emergency Alert from SPP requiring all utilities within the footprint to shed non-essential loads. This was to prevent the collapse of the electric grid in a time where generation produced was shorter than the load being consumed. This year, we have received several notices from SPP encouraging users to curtail non-essential consumption voluntarily.

RTOs require all utilities within an area to maintain a certain 'nameplate' or size of a generator to meet its load obligations. If a utility has 100 MW of load, SPP would require them to have 115-130 MW of generation capacity to serve it in case of unexpected generator outages, planned maintenance outages and other normal utility operations. But what happens when a utility meets its nameplate obligations but during a peak period of load usage, it cannot run its generator?

The large push from the federal government right now is carbon neutral by 2035. This means that coal, natural gas and other combustion generation must be retired by then. For most power plants with a typical life of 40 years, this inhibits new combustion plants from being built to avoid a sunken asset cost (almost three-fourths of the plant life wasted, on a \$1-1.5 billion asset – that's a large amount of money put

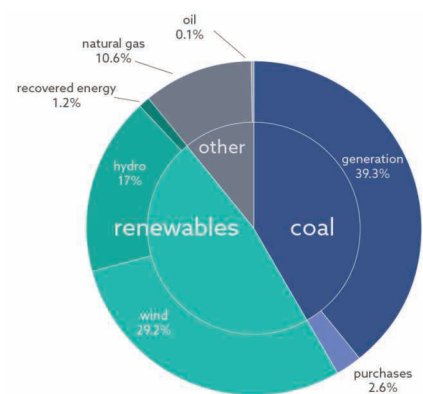
directly on the individual utility owner, in our case Basin Electric and inherently our members). To avoid this, many utilities were forced to retire historical coal and natural gas to meet carbon emission requirements by state and in place built predominantly wind resources. What happens when wind doesn't blow? Generation shortfall occurs and load must be shed to maintain grid frequency and voltage.

MISO (east of us) recently announced they are 5,500 MWs short of generation for this coming summer peak. For perspective, 1 MW of generation can supply approximately 850 homes. For 5,500 MWs of shortfall, this would require 4,675,000 homes to completely shut down during peaks this summer. With temperatures likely to reach into the 100s, this would be extremely dangerous to consumers.

Oahe Electric Cooperative and the Basin Electric family proudly utilize 46 percent of renewable energy to meet load requirements while also maintaining coal and natural gas assets to meet its load obligations and reliability during summer and winter peaks when renewables cannot perform to meet the load.

However, areas that are significantly short of generation during peaks within the RTO require other utilities within the footprint to export power. While RTOs provide extreme cost savings, there are also requirements to keep the entire footprint stable. While SPP has not formally announced it will be substantially short during summer peak (like MISO has), it is likely that parts of the footprint may be required to shed load in late June, July and early August. We have run studies on loads in our areas and have planned accordingly to automatically shed non-substantial load. These curtailments hold legal weight and lawsuits may follow if we do not operate according to RTO guidelines.

We will continue to keep our members informed on the issue. Carbon neutrality is great in concept but an extensive plan with backup resources installed to meet load requirements during low wind or sun hours is required prior to retiring combustion assets – something that historically has not happened prior to the retirements. If you have any questions regarding these complex issues, feel free to call into our office here in Blunt. We will continue to voice our concerns and operate in a manner that is best for our Oahe Electric members.



## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### OAHE ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 019-042)

#### Board of Directors:

James Feller – Vice President  
605.962.6207  
Brandon Haag – Assistant Secretary  
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Ryan Noyes – Treasurer  
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Tyler Arbach – Journeyman Lineman  
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Valerie Marso – Office Manager  
Tory Smith – Journeyman Lineman

OAHE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is published monthly by Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc., PO Box 216, 102 S. Canford, Blunt, SD 57522, for its members. Families subscribe to Oahe Electric Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. Oahe Electric Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to Oahe Electric Cooperative members on matters pertaining to rural electrification and better rural living. Subscription information: Electric cooperative members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. Periodicals Postage Paid at Blunt, SD 57522 and at additional mailing offices.

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.

## ACH Winners Named

Congratulations to Riley Lamb and David Hansen! Their names were drawn from the numerous members who either had ACH or signed up for ACH during our promotional period. Oahe Electric's ACH Program allows consumers to pay their electric bill directly for their checking or savings account or with a recurring credit card payment. They don't have to worry about mailing their electric bills ever again and they won some extra cash. Can't beat that!

## Member Appreciation Meals Well Attended

We would like to thank all our members that took the time to attend on of our member appreciation lunches! Between Blunt, Pierre and Onida, we served 330 meals! Attendees were also able to get signed up for \$20 bill credits. The winners for each location were:

**Blunt:** Doug Ripley, Curt England, Marilyn Mattheis, Greg Hedrick and James Suedkamp

**Pierre:** Randy Bauer, Joan Hardwick, Curt England, Todd Schneider and Brad Mews

**Onida:** William Floyd, Larry Shoup, Dan Schnabel, Debra VanBalen and Walt Wendland

Again, thank you, and if you were unable to join us this year, we hope you can attend in the future!

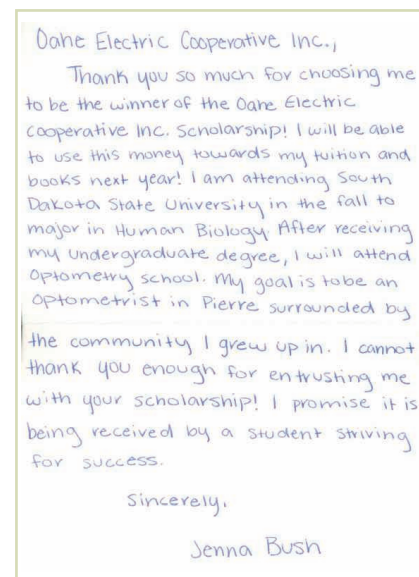
## THANK YOU

Dear Oahe Electric Cooperative Operation Roundup,

Thank you for your contribution to the Oahe Hockey Association (OHA) in support of our Capitalize on the Future campaign. Your generous gift of \$1,000 will be beneficial in providing youth in central South Dakota with a quality year-round ice facility. To date we have received \$162,000 in gifts and are excited for the future of hockey and ice skating activities in our community.

Thanks again for your contribution to our campaign!

Sincerely,  
Oahe Hockey Association



Thank you for your support of 2022 Post Prom!

Dear Oahe Electric,

Thank you for your generous donation to the 2022 Pierre Post Prom. Your contribution made the night a success!

Sincerely,  
The 2022 T.F. Riggs  
Junior Class Student Council

# Reduce your risk of shock in the home

Contact with electricity can result in something as innocuous (but still painful) as a mild shock to severe injuries like nerve damage and burns. In some cases, it can even cause cardiac arrest and death. Here's a list of some of the most common shock risks inside a home.

**1. Appliances.** Most shocks from household appliances occur during repairs. It's not enough to turn off an appliance before working on it - you need to unplug it to reduce risk. Large appliances are responsible for 18 percent of household electrical accidents; small appliances account for 12 percent.

There's also danger if your appliance comes into contact with water. Many of these hazards can be avoided by using a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). A GFCI is a protective device installed on electrical outlets, primarily used where water is present. When the device detects an imbalance in the electric current, it turns off the power to minimize the potential for an electric shock.

**2. Ladders.** Typically, ladders present a falling hazard, but 8 percent of household shocks are also related to ladders. Electrocutation typically happens when the ladder makes contact with electrical wires. Before you use a ladder, make sure you can clearly see all power lines in the area - including those that may be hidden by tree branches. Ensure that the ladder is 10 feet away and won't contact a power line if it falls in any direction.

**3. Power tools.** Power tools account for 9 percent of consumer product-related shocks. According to OSHA, when you use power tools that are not double-insulated, are damaged or have damaged cords, you increase your chances of being injured. The chance of danger also increases when you use incompatible cords, use power tools incorrectly or use them in wet conditions. This is another situation in which GFCIs can help.

**4. Electrical outlets and extension cords.** Inserting anything that doesn't belong - screwdrivers, knives, fingers or toy cars, to name a few - into an electrical outlet can result in a dangerous electrical contact.

Use cover plates that fit properly and safety covers on all outlets. By installing tamper-resistant receptacles, outlets will have permanent security against foreign objects being inserted into the slots.

Any broken, loose or worn-out plugs, switches and light fixtures should be replaced immediately.

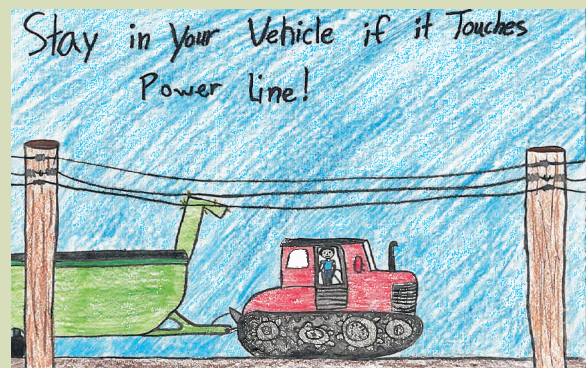
## COOPERATIVES RESPOND TO EMERGENCIES



When back-to-back spring snow storms struck Burke Divide Electric Cooperative (Columbus, ND), cooperatives from South Dakota and Minnesota traveled long distances to respond to the call for help.

When a deadly derecho swept through eastern South Dakota in early May, co-op crews worked long hours to restore power to thousands of electric cooperative members. It's what cooperative linemen do.

Find out more about how our line crews respond to emergencies by visiting Cooperative Connections Plus. Simply scan the QR code at right.



## Call 811 before you dig

### Esmae Beld

Esmae Beld, age 11, offers some sound advice to stay inside your vehicle and call for help if it comes in contact with energized power lines. Esmae is the child of Orlando and Shanna Beld. 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.



# DREAMY DESSERTS

## LEMON MERINGUE PIE

Ingredients:

### Pie

1 cup sugar  
1/4 cup cornstarch  
1-1/2 cups cold water  
3 egg yolks, lightly beaten  
1/4 cup lemon juice  
1 tablespoon butter  
1/2 teaspoon McCormick® Pure Lemon Extract  
1 baked pie crust (9-inch)

### Meringue Topping

1/3 cup sugar  
1/2 teaspoon McCormick® Cream Of Tartar  
3 egg whites  
1/4 teaspoon McCormick® Pure Lemon Extract

### METHOD

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix sugar and cornstarch in medium saucepan. Gradually stir in water until smooth. Stir in egg yolks. Stirring constantly, bring to boil on medium heat; boil 1 minute. Remove from heat. Stir in lemon juice, butter and extract. Pour hot filling into baked pie crust. For the Meringue Topping, mix sugar and cream of tartar. Beat egg whites in medium bowl with electric mixer on high speed until foamy. Gradually add sugar mixture and extract, beating until stiff peaks form. Spread meringue evenly over hot filling, sealing to edges of crust. Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until meringue is golden. Cool completely on wire rack. Store in refrigerator.

**Mccormick.com**

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.

## CARAMEL STUFFED KRISPIE BARS

Ingredients:

### Caramel filling

4 oz. caramel Kraft bits, unwrapped  
4 oz. sweetened condensed milk  
8 tbsp. butter

### Rice Krispie layer

12 tbsp. butter, halved  
10 cup Rice Krispies, halved  
8 cup mini marshmallows, split in half  
2 cup additional mini marshmallows for sprinkling

### METHOD

Line pan (9x13) with nonstick foil. Microwave caramel bits, butter and condensed milk until melted and smooth when stirred. Microwave 6 tablespoons butter and 4 cups marshmallows just a minute and stir. Stir in cereal and press into pan. Pour on the caramel. Sprinkle on the additional 2 cups marshmallows and place in freezer for 15 minutes. Use the remaining Krispie ingredients and repeat directions. Press this layer on top of the marshmallows and caramel layer and return to freezer. Switch to the refrigerator and let set for a few hours. Cut into big squares and enjoy.

**Eric Neville, Milesville**

## DUMP BARS

Ingredients:

2 cups white sugar  
1 3/4 cups flour  
1 tsp. salt  
1 cup vegetable oil  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1/2 cup cocoa  
4 eggs  
1 cup chocolate chips

### METHOD

"Dump" all ingredients except chocolate chips together in bowl. Mix with spoon. Spread in greased 9x13 pan. Sprinkle chocolate chips on top. Do not stir. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

**Deanna Poppen, Sioux Falls**

# Electrical Safety Demonstrations Available



**Valerie Marso**  
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oaheelectric.com

At Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. we are committed to zero accidents at home and at work. We wanted to make you aware of the safety demonstrations we offer that educate the public on how to stay safe around

electricity. Our goal is to provide engaging, memorable and impactful safety training to students, emergency personnel or any other groups that might be interested.

The safety demonstrations we have available are:

## **POWER TOWN**

A 30 minute tabletop safety presentation that is designed for younger audiences. Power Town uses a small-scale version of a larger electrical system to demonstrate safety around power lines. Students can see firsthand how an electrical current moves through various items they may encounter in their daily lives, presented in a fun and easy-to-learn format. In addition, our demonstrations include an explanation of the personal protective equipment our lineworkers wear to complete their jobs safely.

## **CO-OPS IN THE CLASSROOM**

We team up with East River Electric Cooperative, our transmission cooperative, to bring this 60 minute program to fourth graders at our local schools. Co-ops in the Classroom is designed to help children learn the importance of respecting electricity through

hands-on lessons. The program teaches students ways to conserve electricity, how to be safe around electricity, helps them recognize where electricity comes from and also introduces them to the cooperative business model and cooperative principles. By learning these concepts from an early age, the kids will be better prepared to make wise energy decisions now and be conscientious consumers of energy in the future.

## **HIGH VOLTAGE DEMONSTRATION TRAILER**

Looking for something a little bigger? The High Voltage Demonstration Trailer is a mobile unit that simulates live power lines and gives the audience an opportunity to see an up-close and dynamic view of electricity. Life-size utility poles, actual electrical conductors and distribution transformers are used. Each hour-long demonstration shows what can happen when objects such as animals, trees, ladders and kites come into contact with power lines. The demonstration is presented to help educate the public about the dangers and hazards associated with overhead and underground power lines.

The safety mission of Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. is to develop and promote a healthy and safe environment for all employees, cooperative members and members of the public through the involvement of all individuals with regards to education, communication, training and safe work practices. We work every day to fulfill this commitment to safety and further that goal by offering these educational opportunities.

Many electrical accidents are preventable with some knowledge and education. Electricity is a necessity and it powers our daily lives but is

also very dangerous.

If you have any questions, or are interested in scheduling a safety demonstration for your class, career day, organization or group, please contact me at 1.800.640.6243 or vmarso@oaheelectric.com. We would love to see you!

## **OPERATION ROUND UP® DISBURSES FUNDS**

Members of Oahe Electric's Operation Round Up® Board of Trustees recently awarded funds to five area organizations.

Operation Round Up® is a fund of money generated by Oahe Electric members and overseen by a four-member board of trustees.

Oahe Electric members contribute an average of \$820 a month to the program, with an individual's total contribution ranging from 12 cents a year to \$11.88 a year.

This year, six applications with requests totaling almost \$18,000 were turned in. The Board of Trustees awarded \$10,500 split among the following organizations:

- **ABO School Positive Vibes:** Help fund committee, which was formed to promote, encourage and support all K-12 students in the ABO School District.
- **Blunt Fest:** Help fund event, including kids inflatables, bean bag tourney, poker run, live music, etc.
- **Lariat Riding Club:** Replace perimeter fence around rodeo grounds.
- **Oahe Hockey Association:** Assist in purchasing a dehumidifier.
- **Pierre Rural Fire Department:** Purchase a washing machine to clean PPE.

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

This month's question is: What does RTO stand for?

Please submit your answer via email to [oahe@oaheelectric.com](mailto: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 May 2022 publication Matt and Julie Miller. They correctly answered the question "What is the deadline to sign up for this year's Auto Pay promotion?"

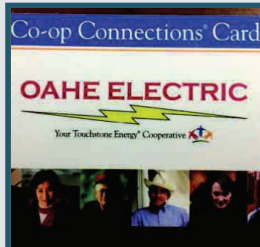
The answer was Friday, May 27, 2022.

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

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

### Food/Convenience Store

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

### Health/Fitness and Beauty

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

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

<b>Inman's Water Technologies</b>	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.
<b>Olson Plumbing Inc.</b>	605-224-6436	Pierre	\$50 discount on any electric boiler, Marathon water heater, or fireplace
<b>Small Engine House</b>	605-224-5815	Pierre	10% off parts and labor

### Sports/Recreation

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

<b>Fastenal</b>	605-224-4060	Pierre	10% off of fasteners and 5% off on all other products
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Philip and Jessie Ruml raise an assortment of fresh-cut flower varieties on their micro-farm near Castlewood. *Photo by Rachel Clelland Photography*

### Specialty micro-farmers raise fresh-cut flowers for weddings, parties and other red-letter events

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

The last time you saw a summer bride carrying a brightly colored floral bouquet down the aisle, it's likely those flowers came from some faraway field in some other part of the planet.

But that's quickly changing as a growing group of intrepid micro-farmers throughout the Upper Midwest are finding their way into the specialty fresh-cut flower business.

Emphasis on the word intrepid: it's not easy raising red roses in a climate more associated with icicles than irises.

Jessie Ruml isn't the least bit intimidated. She's in her fourth year of growing a variety of decorative flowers and reports that the bulbs are blooming and business is booming at Pixie Acres Flower Farm near Castlewood.

After 10 years as a dental hygienist waging a protracted war against plaque, Ruml decided to turn in her stainless steel sickle scaler and look for another occupation that would keep her on the

family farm and close to home with her four spirited daughters.

One afternoon while the children were out playing in the yard, she was swiping through her social media accounts and up popped a picture of a brilliant display of dahlias lying in the bed of an old pickup truck. The scene stopped her dead in her scrolling tracks.

"The colors were so vivid, I immediately felt the hair stand up on the back of my neck. I knew in an instant that's what I needed to do with my life," said Ruml, a self-described farm girl originally from Elk Point and a current member of H-D Electric Cooperative.

It didn't take long for Ruml to realize why South Dakota is not exactly known as the fresh-cut flower capital of the world - at least not yet. She compares growing flowers in eastern South Dakota to 24-hour babysitting. It's a painstaking task to bring flower seeds to full bloom in such a capricious and often harsh climate.

She and her husband Philip, who works full time in the ag industry,

don't even consider taking an extended vacation between the months of March and October when the Rumls hold a "fall finale" on the farm to sell off the remainder of their crop or donate it to local charities. Flower plants are high maintenance, sensitive to the elements and require tons of TLC with watering, weeding and fertilizing, she explained: "We can't leave them untended for more than a few hours at a time."

But Jessie keeps a positive perspective when her back and her body start aching from all the hard work.

"You have to get on your hands and knees because there's not a lot of mechanical equipment like in larger scale farming," she said. "But all the effort only makes it that much more special to bring somebody joy, to see the happiness on their faces when you give them a bouquet of fresh flowers. It's hard on your body, but I'm grateful for each day I get to put my hands in the dirt."

She breaks up the monotony and the grind of flower farming by conducting floral design workshops, which she describes as a "girls' night out" where there's lots of laughs and perhaps some light spirits flowing in the



## ZONE 4 FLOWER VARIETIES

Here are the top five flower varieties most suitable for USDA Hardiness Zone 4 planting:

1. Petunias
2. Daisies
3. Dahlia
4. Zinnia
5. Tulips



Christy Heckathorn, owner of Fleurish Flower Farm and Design near Elk Point, shows Union County Electric General Manager Matt Klein how she uses soil blocking to grow hardier seedlings and increase production. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

studio. Participants learn how to make arrangements and fill vases and tour the fields to see how the operation works.

She also looks for opportunities to support the community, like donating a portion of her sales to assist families whose homes were destroyed by a tornado that severely damaged much of Castlewood on May 11.

Over the past few years, more growers are taking on the challenge of Zone 4 flower farming and have entered the market in places like Belle Fourche, Vermillion, Lake Preston, Sioux Falls, Mitchell, Wolsey, Artesian and others. Many are members of the South Dakota

Specialty Growers Association based in Yankton. The group held a virtual “member meet-up” on June 14 to collaborate, educate and exchange ideas.

One floral designer who jumped into the fresh-cut flower business two years ago is Christy Heckathorn, owner of Fleurish Flower Farm and Design in Ruml’s native Elk Point. In point of fact, it was Heckathorn - a family friend - who designed the floral arrangement for Ruml’s bridal bouquet 15 years ago.

Heckathorn got involved in the industry when she went to work at Pioneer Drugs, a local pharmacy that also had a flower shop and a soda fountain

inside. She spent five years there serving customers and also working on the side to help brides select arrangements for their big day.

While Heckathorn has gathered an wealth of training and experience over the years, she said she delights in using flowers to elicit smiles and positive reactions in her clients and other people she meets – especially those who could use a laugh when battling through personal challenges.

“A lady once came with her family and I could tell she had a lot on her mind,” she recalled. “I talked with her and found out she was going through cancer treatment and they had come here just to get away for awhile, enjoy the flowers and forget about things. My mother just went through cancer treatment. So I told them to come back any time and they would always be welcomed.

“One of the reasons I love flowers is because they bring joy to other people. If you can grow flowers and put a smile on someone’s face as a result of your labor, that’s a good life recipe.”



Jessie Ruml uses a pair of high tunnel greenhouses on her farm near Castlewood to shelter her flower plants from often unpredictable South Dakota weather patterns. *Photo by Rachel Clelland Photography*

# Pole Top and Bucket Rescue



**Matt Eldridge**

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oaheelectric.com

Every month Oahe Electric hosts a safety meeting for their employees. These safety meetings cover a large number of topics, including CPR and first aid training, office safety, flagger training, blood-borne pathogens and climber certification, just to name a few! It is important for us to have these safety meetings to remind and train employees on how to do their job safely.

Recently, Oahe Electric linemen participated in pole top and bucket rescue training. The exercise is meant to train linemen on how to safely lower an injured co-worker from the top of a pole to the ground. Oahe Electric linemen perform pole top and bucket rescue drills once a year.

One-by-one the linemen test their skills on how quickly they can strap on their climbing gear, climb a 35-foot pole and safely rescue a 175-pound dummy. The dummy must be secured with a rope before being safely lowered to the ground where co-workers are prepared to provide emergency first aid care until emergency medical professionals arrive on scene to take over.

Bucket rescue training involves taking over the controls on the body of the truck and bringing the lineman to the ground safely.

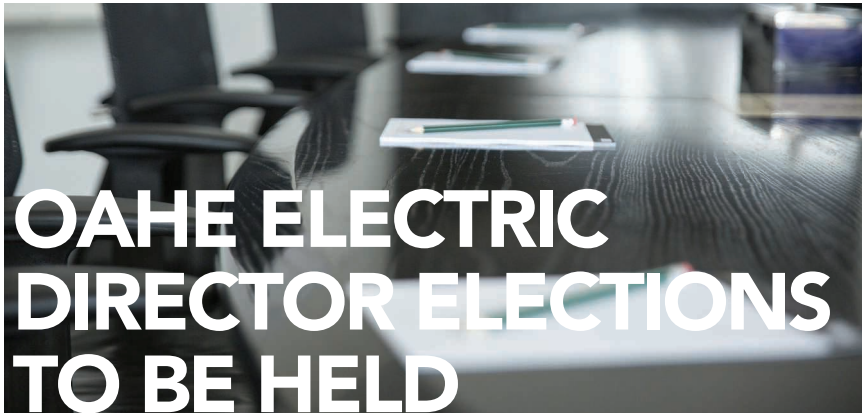
Pole top and bucket rescue are an essential part of the safety training at Oahe Electric – safely rescuing a fellow lineman could mean the difference between life and death. Pole top and bucket rescue training, along with other safety training, ensure our linemen and other employees are constantly reminded of the safety aspect of their job and the importance of using equipment in the safest manner possible.



## POLE TESTING BEING DONE IN AREA

Oahe Electric would like to let our members know that there will be pole testing being done in northeast Sully County this summer. As with all things these days, we don't have an exact date of arrival, but RAM Utilities will be here testing approximately 5,000 poles sometime from the end of June through mid-July. If you have any questions, please call the office at 1-800-640-6243.





The annual meeting of the members of Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. will be held on **Aug. 20, 2022**.

During the annual meeting, the members present will be electing one board member to fill a three-year position. Any individual who satisfies the qualifications and complies with the nominating procedures set forth below, should be prepared to serve a minimum of 24 to 36 days per year attending meetings on behalf of the cooperative.

Petitions are available at the headquarters in Blunt.

Should there be any questions concerning the bylaw procedures or if you would like to request a petition, feel free to call or stop in at the office. Petitions are due by **July 7, 2022**.

## Bylaws Governing Election of Directors

### SECTION 3 - QUALIFICATIONS:

No person shall be eligible to become or remain a director or to hold any position of trust in the Cooperative who: (A) is not a member and bona fide resident in the area served or to be served by the Cooperative; or (B) is in any way employed or financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business selling electrical or plumbing fixtures or supplies to members of the Cooperative; or (C) is an employee of the Cooperative.

Upon establishment of the fact that a director is holding office in violation of any of the foregoing provisions, the Board of Directors, by official motion shall remove such director from office. Nothing contained in this section shall affect in any manner whatever the validity of any action taken at any meetings of the Board of Directors.

### SECTION 4 - NOMINATIONS:

Any fifteen (15) or more members acting together may make nominations by petition not less than forty-five (45) days prior to the meeting and the Secretary shall post such nominations at the principal office of the Cooperative. The Secretary shall mail with the notice of the meeting or separately but at least ten (10) days before the date of the meeting at statement of the number of directors to be elected and the names and addresses of the candidates nominated by petition. There shall be no nominations from the floor unless no petition has been filed for a vacancy. In that event only, nominations shall be taken from the floor for that vacancy, and nominations shall not be closed until at least one minute has passed during which no additional nomination has been made. No member may nominate more than one candidate.

### 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](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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

# SUMMER POWER

## Local co-ops are prepared to meet peak demand for electricity this summer

You may have seen articles recently about the potential for rolling power outages across the West and Midwest that could be triggered by a combination of insufficient generation, increased demand for power and warmer than normal temperatures expected this summer across the region. While no one can predict what extreme weather could be coming our way, or unexpected issues with power plants and renewable resources, electric co-ops in South Dakota and western Minnesota are confident that we will have enough generation to meet our electric needs.

The following questions and answers aim to provide background on Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs), the role RTOs play in serving consumers, potential power supply impacts to this region throughout the summer,

and some lessons learned from the February 2021 energy emergency.

### WHERE DOES MY ELECTRICITY COME FROM?

Decades ago, when electric cooperatives were created to bring power to rural America, there were few electric generation options available. In our region, electric cooperatives worked together to access hydropower from the dams on the Missouri River and later created East River Electric Power Cooperative, Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative to fulfill their power needs.

These generation and transmission cooperatives provide transmission services and construct regional power plants and transmission infrastructure. In the past, when co-ops needed

more electric generation because of economic growth, we built it.

Co-ops still own and build generation units today, but the operation of the grid that serves our region changed significantly about seven years ago. In 2015, East River Electric, Rushmore Electric, Basin Electric and the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), which sells hydropower from the dams, all entered the Southwest Power Pool (SPP). SPP is an RTO that operates throughout the central portion of the United States and allows utilities to work together to provide the most efficient and cost-effective generation and transmission services to control costs.

### DOES THE SOUTHWEST POWER POOL (SPP) EXPECT TO HAVE ENOUGH GENERATION TO MEET DEMAND THIS SUMMER?

SPP operates like the “air-traffic controller” of the bulk electric grid from Canada to Texas. It oversees the grid and the wholesale power markets serving most of the electric cooperative consumers in South Dakota. According to a May 12 press release from SPP, the organization said it “expects to have enough generating capacity



to meet the regional demand for electricity through the summer season.” SPP anticipates that demand for electricity will peak at 51.1 gigawatts during the summer season, which runs June to September 2022. According to SPP, a diverse fleet of generation units, including cooperative-owned power plants and renewable resources, will be prepared to serve at least 55.5 gigawatts of demand.

### **WHAT IS THE MIDCONTINENT INDEPENDENT SYSTEM OPERATOR (MISO) AND WHY DOES IT EXPECT TO HAVE AN ENERGY SHORTFALL THIS SUMMER?**

The Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) is similar to SPP – it is an RTO responsible for matching generation resources with power demand from consumers throughout the Midwest in states like Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Michigan and Illinois. Each RTO serves different areas of the country and has a different mix of generation resources. Some consumers in South Dakota are served from the MISO system, but most cooperative consumers are served through SPP. MISO raised alarms in April when the organization said it projects “insufficient firm resources” to supply the summer demand for electricity.

In 2005, MISO’s total generation mix was 76 percent coal, 13 percent nuclear, 7 percent natural gas and the rest came from a mix of other resources. By 2020, the amount of coal-based generation fell to 33 percent while natural gas grew to 34 percent, nuclear reached 17 percent and wind and solar accounted for 13 percent. It has been a drastic change in a short amount of time. With a higher amount of variable generation resources, less

## **SPP “EXPECTS TO HAVE ENOUGH GENERATING CAPACITY TO MEET THE REGIONAL DEMAND FOR ELECTRICITY THROUGH THE SUMMER SEASON.”**

firm generation available and the anticipation of increased electric usage because of higher than average temperatures, it sets up the potential for rolling power outages across the MISO footprint this summer.

### **HOW DO THE ENERGY MARKETS WORK?**

Basin Electric owns generation and sells it into the SPP and MISO markets. Basin Electric buys all the power they need from those same markets to serve their membership, including your local electric co-op. It helps control costs throughout our co-ops by allowing us to sell generation into the markets when it is economically advantageous, or to access cheaper generation from the market when we need it. It was a critical strategic step taken by electric cooperatives to save their members money. But it also means that we can be subject to SPP directed rolling outages if demand exceeds generation across the entire SPP footprint like we saw in February 2021. Although electric cooperatives in the Dakotas are required to have enough generation to serve our own consumers, because co-ops are integrated in the grid we must share in any potential outages due to an energy emergency.

### **DID UTILITIES LEARN ANYTHING FROM THE FEBRUARY 2021 ENERGY EMERGENCY?**

In February 2021, record-low temperatures and record-high electricity use across a region stretching from the Canadian border to Texas created what SPP called “the greatest operational challenge in its 80-year history.” Yet, even in

the extreme conditions, SPP had about four hours total of rolling outages across its 14-state region. That included South Dakota and cooperatives served by East River Electric and Rushmore Electric. East River was required to drop about 83 megawatts of demand over a short time on Feb. 16, 2021. Rushmore Electric was required to drop 22 megawatts on Feb. 16, 2021. After the emergency, SPP commissioned a comprehensive report and conducted an in-depth analysis of what happened. The report produced 22 actions, policy changes and assessments related to fuel assurance, resource planning and availability, emergency response and other areas.

Joining SPP was a strategic step that our cooperative network took several years ago to capture the benefits of being in an RTO. We have experienced immense financial and operational benefits over the past several years from our membership in SPP which have helped to keep electric rates stable. Looking ahead to this summer, most electric cooperatives in South Dakota are not within the MISO footprint and are not expecting an impact from any potential MISO rolling power outages. However, a few local co-ops in Minnesota and northern South Dakota may be called upon to take a rolling outage. Those co-ops will communicate with members if this becomes a possibility and will work to minimize the impact of these potential outages.



There are more than 25 fairs and festivals on the schedule in South Dakota and southwestern Minnesota. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

## Electric co-ops support the mission of fairs and festivals to educate and entertain

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

When Scott Wick was a boy growing up in western Sioux Falls, he set upon a clandestine quest to find a way of sneaking into the Sioux Empire Fair without having to spring for a ducat.

Like a well-trained but cash-starved recon platoon, he and his mischievous chums used to probe for breaches in the site's perimeter, lured by the music, lights and laughter emanating from the other side of the fence.

Things have come full circle. Today, Wick serves as president and CEO of the Sioux Empire Fair. Now he spends his time looking for ways to prevent people from weaseling their way inside the gates.

Wick gets a chuckle out of the irony of those memories and is careful to note that he quickly became a reformed juvenile trespasser. He went on to not

only participate in the fair as a volunteer worker but also became a contributing part of the entertainment.

From third grade through his freshman year in high school, Wick and his compatriots rode their bicycles down to the fair site and went through the front gates - legally - to help hired hands set up the carnival rides, tend to livestock and prepare amusements for thousands of giddy fair-goers.

He even parlayed his interest in the fair into a profitable enterprise. He shares an old dog-eared Argus Leader newspaper photo of his 11-year-old self selling rides to patrons on the back of a Brown Swiss steer for 50 cents a pop at the Old McDonald's Farm exhibit.

Aside from his present-day security detail, Wick stays busy not only preparing for the Sioux Empire Fair but also staging more than 130 events held annually at the W.H. Lyons Fairgrounds throughout the calendar year with a full

range of activities such as weddings, flea markets, arts and crafts shows, a Renaissance festival, livestock events and more.

"The Sioux Empire Fair and these other events have a long history and people always come up to me and talk about the old days, back in the 50s and 60s when they used to come here as a kid," Wick said. "The size of the steers and the heifers have changed drastically over the years, but people still come here for the same reason as always - to have some good family fun. For a lot of people, this serves as an annual family gathering or a kind of reunion."

The 83rd event will be held Aug. 5-13 and will feature nine nights of musical entertainment on the Billion Automotive Main Stage with headliners like .38 Special, Old Dominion, Sawyer Brown, Justin Moore and more.

The Sioux Empire Fair is considered to be the top event among fairs and festivals in terms of attendance from visitors across the region, but there are many county and local events that





Fairs and festivals offer opportunities for fun, education and games to test your skills. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

are annual attractions throughout the summer and fall.

The Heartland Association of Fairs, Festivals and Events lists 25 programs taking place across South Dakota.

Electric cooperative organizations serving members in South Dakota and Minnesota have a long tradition of supporting local fairs and festivals through employee engagement and both financial and in-kind contributions.

Sonje Oban, a representative of FEM Electric based in Ipswich, joined the cooperative after working for the Brown County Fair for several years. She sees a similarity in the local roles of electric cooperatives and the organizations responsible for making sure county fairs provide opportunities for education and entertainment for families.

“FEM is community-oriented and community-driven. We wouldn’t exist if it weren’t for the members that we serve and who own the cooperative,” she said. “Having worked with the fair and now with the co-op, I see that in many ways my priorities and goals are the same: to make a positive contribution to the community and to enhance the lives of both our members and the public at-large. There’s also a big similarity in the educational component. The fair

has lots of exhibits and demonstrations relating to the ag industry, while here at FEM one of our goals is to educate our members on how to use power wisely, safely and economically.”

Carrie Vugteveen is vice president of public relations at Sioux Valley Energy based in Colman. The co-op serves east-central South Dakota and southwestern Minnesota and is involved in many local events throughout the calendar year.

One of those events is the Rock County Fair held in Luverne, Minn., each July. SVE brings a high voltage trailer, a bucket truck and an electric vehicle to educate and inform fairgoers about how electric grid systems function, how they’re maintained and how renewable resources are changing the industry.

For the Sioux Empire Fair, SVE joins several other distribution cooperatives, along with transmission provider East River Electric, in

serving lunch for Ag Appreciation Day.

“County fairs are an important part of our communities, which is why the co-op is involved,” Vugteveen said. “A good example is our partnership with the Rock County Fair. A few years ago we worked with organizers to bring attendees safety demonstrations with a high-voltage trailer, examples of equipment we use to work on lines such as personal protective equipment and bucket trucks as well as our electric vehicle ‘EVie.’ To get everyone involved we had Sioux Valley Energy ‘passports’ that could be stamped if they visited our demonstrations. If fairgoers filled their passports, they would receive a prize.”



Electric cooperatives are involved in making sure local events are fun for everyone. *Photo by East River Electric*



**JULY 2-4**  
Fourth of July Holiday Weekend

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.

**JUNE 24-26**  
**Black Hills Bluegrass Festival**  
Rush No More RV Resort & Campground, Sturgis, SD, [blackhillsbluegrass.com](http://blackhillsbluegrass.com)

**JUNE 24-26**  
**Main Street Arts & Crafts Festival**  
Centennial Park, Hot Springs, SD, [mainstreetartsandcrafts.com](http://mainstreetartsandcrafts.com)

**JUNE 24-26**  
**Quarry Days**  
Citywide, Dell Rapids, SD, 605-428-4167

**JUNE 25**  
**Zippity Zoo Day**  
805 S. Kiwanis Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7003

**JUNE 26**  
**Prairie Village Variety Show**  
Prairie Village, Madison, SD, 605-256-3644

**JUNE 30-JULY 4**  
**Annual Black Hills Roundup**  
300 Roundup Street, Belle Fourche, SD, [blackhillsroundup.com](http://blackhillsroundup.com)

**JULY 2-4**  
**Sitting Bull Stampede Rodeo**  
Various Locations, Mobridge, SD, 605-845-2387

**JULY 3-4**  
**Custer's Old Time Country Fourth of July**  
Various Locations, Custer, SD, 605-673-2244

**JULY 4**  
**4th of July Parade & Celebration**  
Kemp Avenue, Watertown, SD, 605-886-5814

**JULY 9-10**  
**10th Annual Native POP**  
Main Street Square, Rapid City, SD, [nativepop.org](http://nativepop.org)

**JULY 9-10**  
**Brookings Summer Arts Festival**  
Pioneer Park, Brookings, SD, [bsaf.com](http://bsaf.com)

**JULY 13-16**  
**Black Hills Corvette Classic**  
Various Locations, Spearfish, SD, [blackhillscorvetteclassic.com](http://blackhillscorvetteclassic.com)

**JULY 14-17**  
**Corn Palace Stampede Rodeo**  
Various Locations, Mitchell, SD, [cornpalacestampede.com](http://cornpalacestampede.com)

**JULY 14-17**  
**Danish Days**  
Various Locations, Viborg, SD, [danishdays.org](http://danishdays.org)

**JULY 15-17**  
**Gold Discovery Days**  
Various Locations, Custer, SD, 605-673-2244

**JULY 15-17**  
**Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant**  
43379 Rose Lane, De Smet, SD, [desmetpageant.org](http://desmetpageant.org)

**JULY 16-17**  
**Hills Alive**  
Memorial Park, Rapid City, SD, [hillsalive.com](http://hillsalive.com)

**JULY 23**  
**Bierbörse**  
Main Street Square, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

**JULY 23**  
**Yankton Rock-N-Rumble Motorcycle Rally**  
3rd Street, Yankton, SD, 605-299-9734

**JULY 25-30**  
**Days of '76 Rodeo and Parades**  
18 Seventy Six Drive, Deadwood, SD, [daysof76.com](http://daysof76.com)

**JULY 27-31**  
**South Dakota Summer Spotlight - Livestock Show**  
State Fair Grounds, Huron, SD, 605-222-9561

**JULY 29-31**  
**Bruce Honey Days**  
Various Locations, Bruce, SD, 605-627-5671

**JULY 30**  
**South Dakota Chislic Festival**  
Prairie Arboretum, Freeman, SD, [sdchislicfestival.com](http://sdchislicfestival.com)

**AUGUST 5-13**  
**Sioux Empire Fair**  
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD, [siouxempirefair.com](http://siouxempirefair.com)

**AUGUST 5-14**  
**Sturgis Motorcycle Rally**  
Main Street, Sturgis, SD, [sturgismotorcyclerally.com](http://sturgismotorcyclerally.com)

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