



# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## ATVs in SD

Summer fun on the  
off-road trails

Page 8

Sensible solar  
solutions

Page 12



# Electricity Through the Years



**Jordan Lamb**  
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Oahe Electric Cooperative continually upgrades outdated services to improve reliability as well as accommodate new load growth and enhance safety across our service territory. Older lines and transformers on the system age back to pre-1970s and 1980s – over a 40-year life span – and continue to perform with routine maintenance and replacements. Our primary goal as an electric cooperative is to provide value to our member-owners at a wholesale cost.

We are proud to have served you – our members – for an impressive 75 years! As we continue to investigate ways to keep electricity rates low, it is intriguing to look back at rate history alongside other common products.

**Future price trends of electricity continue to look promising, and we will still be here to provide our members electricity at a wholesale cost!**

Back in 1980, products were much cheaper than they are today, with one major exception:

- Gasoline: \$0.98
- Stamps: \$0.15
- Average cost of construction on a new home: \$76,400
- Residential electricity: 5.5 cents per kWh

Compared to now in 2021, we have the following:

- Gasoline: \$3.00
- Stamps: \$0.55
- Average cost of construction on a new home: \$423,800
- Residential electricity: 5 cents (heat and AC), 9 cents (lighting and miscellaneous)

Yes, you read that correctly – Oahe Electric Cooperative's heat and air conditioning rate is just 5 cents per kWh in 2021! You might be wondering how our incentive rate works compared to other forms of energy, and we are here to tell you it is fantastic!

Cost per 100,000 BTU by commodity as of May 5, 2021:

- Fuel Oil: \$2.50
- Propane: \$1.80
- Natural gas: \$1.46
- Electric heat pump (assumes 6 cents/kWh): \$0.73

Oahe Electric offers heat and air conditioning rebates for heat pumps SEER 15 and higher on homes. If you elect to use 100 percent electric heat and AC, you will pay almost half the cost to heat your home compared to natural gas! Future price trends of electricity continue to look promising, and we will still be here to provide our members electricity at a wholesale cost!

I hope you all are having a fantastic start to your summer, stay safe and God bless!

## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### OAHE ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 019-042)

#### Board of Directors:

James Feller – President  
605-962-6207

Blaine Livermont – Treasurer  
605-945-2910

Ryan Noyes – Assistant Secretary  
605-280-3500

Ross Sperry – Secretary  
605-280-7770

Kirk Yackley – Vice President  
605-258-2412

#### Employees:

Tyler Arbach – Journeyman Lineman

Mark Bruning – Line Foreman

Matt Eldridge – Operations Manager

Trudie Feldman – Custodian

Brady Gaer – Journeyman Lineman

Duane Hjelm – Journeyman Lineman

Russ Hohn – Member Services Mgr.

Sam Irvine – Office Services

Megan Jaeger – Billing Clerk

Jordan Lamb – General Manager

Dan Lettau – Journeyman Lineman

Steve Long – Material/Work Order/AMR  
Agent

Valerie Marso – Office Manager

Tory Smith – Journeyman Lineman

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#### Our Mission

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

## OPERATION ROUND UP DISBURSES FUNDS

Members of Oahe Electric's Operation Round Up Board of Trustees recently awarded funds to six 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 \$795 a month to the program, with an individual's total contribution ranging from 12 cents a year to \$11.88 a year. This year, seven applications with requests totaling almost \$28,000 were turned in. The board of trustees awarded \$10,250 split among the following organizations:

- **Blunt Rural Fire Department:** Scene lighting and generator for quick-deploy enclosed trailer
- **Junior Firefighter Program (Blunt):** Educational trip to view the Granite Mountain Hotshot Memorial and other fire departments in that area
- **Hughes County 4-H Sharp Shooters:** New electronic target system for the indoor air gun range
- **Pierre/Ft. Pierre Humane Society:** Remodel and upgrade grooming room
- **South Dakota Discovery Center and Aquarium:** Equipment for Little STEAMers preschool program
- **Sully County Historical Society:** Restoration of the interior dome of the Sully County Courthouse

## ACH WINNERS NAMED

Congratulations to D&T Mercer Farming and Daune Hettinger! 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 from their checking or savings account or with a recurring credit card payment. The Mercers and Duane don't have to worry about mailing their electric bills ever again and they won some extra cash. Can't beat that!

### Statement of Non-Discrimination

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Person with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](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.

## Handling food safely when grilling outdoors

One of America's favorite summer pastimes is grilling, and safe grilling starts with proper food handling. Here are a few simple guidelines for grilling food safely:

- Wash away harmful bacteria. Avoid providing a hotbed for bacteria. Unwashed hands are a prime cause of foodborne illness, also known as food poisoning, as are unwashed perishable foods such as meat, seafood, and peeled or cut fruits and vegetables.

- Keep perishable foods cold. If you'll be meeting up with friends away from your backyard grill, it's best to transport all perishables in an insulated cooler kept cold with ice or frozen gel packs.

- Throw away any perishable leftovers that have been out of a refrigerator or cooler for more than two hours—one hour if the temperature is above 90 degrees.

- Keep coolers out of direct sunlight and avoid opening them frequently, to keep the cold air inside.

- Marinate safely. Marinated meats should be stored immediately in a refrigerator or cooler, not on the kitchen counter or outside next to the grill. As long as a marinade is stored in a cool environment, it can remain there safely for several hours or days.

- Do not use marinade from a raw meat/marinade mixture as a sauce on cooked meat, unless you first cook the

sauce to a boil for at least three minutes to kill harmful bacteria.

- Use grilling shortcuts.

Pre-cooking food partially indoors before putting it on a preheated grill will give you quick results when your friends are hungry or your grill is slow or small. Conversely, flame-grill meat for a smoky, charbroiled flavor, then bake in an oven until it's cooked properly.

- Cook thoroughly and use a meat thermometer. It's best to cook food to the safe minimum internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. On the grill, meat and poultry will brown quickly, but the inside might only be cooked partially. To be sure the food has reached a safe internal temperature, use a meat thermometer.

Here are some safe minimum internal temperatures:

- Chicken: 165 degrees
- Beef hamburgers: 160 degrees

- Beef, veal and lamb (steaks, roasts and chops): medium-rare 145 degrees, medium

- 160 degrees
- Pork: 165 degrees

With proper refrigeration and thorough cooking, your backyard barbecue will be a tasty success.



### AVOID UTILITY SCAMS

Scammers will threaten you with everything from shutting off power to your home to legal action. Don't fall victim to these types of scams.

- Our employees will never show up at your door to demand payment.
- Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Our representatives have access

to the details they need to service your account.

- Demands for immediate payment by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, gift cards or cash reload cards should immediately raise red flags.



## Don't fly kites near trees and power lines

Annette Tschetter, 7 years old

Annette is the daughter of Elaine and Ryan Tschetter of Revillo. They are members of Whetstone Valley Electric based in Milbank.

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.



# SUMMERTIME DESSERTS

**WHOOPIE PIES****Ingredients:**

1 box spice cake mix  
1 1/2 cups apple butter  
1/2 cup canola oil  
2 eggs  
8 ounces cream cheese  
4 tablespoons butter  
3 cups powdered sugar  
2 tablespoons milk  
1 teaspoon vanilla

**METHOD**

Heat oven to 350 F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. In large bowl, whisk spice cake mix, apple butter, oil and eggs. With ice cream scoop or large tablespoon, spoon batter into rounded heaps, about 2-3 inches in diameter, onto parchment paper. Space spooned batter 2 inches apart. Bake 14 minutes. Let cool. In large bowl, beat cream cheese, butter and powdered sugar until smooth. Add milk and vanilla; beat until blended. Frost flat sides of pie halves and place halves together. Refrigerate and store in sealed container.

Culinary.net

**ROCKY ROAD ICE CREAM****Ingredients:**

1/2 cup cocoa powder  
1 -14 oz. can sweetened condensed milk  
2 cup heavy cream  
1 cup half & half  
1 TBS vanilla  
1/2 cup chopped pecans  
1 cup miniature marshmallows

**METHOD**

In a small saucepan put in cocoa and whisk in sweetened condensed milk until smooth. Cook over low heat, whisking constantly until slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Transfer to a bowl and stir in both creams and vanilla. Pour mixture into ice cream maker and freeze. Stir in pecans and marshmallows halfway through freezing process. Transfer to airtight container and put in freezer to harden, about an hour. Makes 2 quarts.

Joan Antonen, Arlington, SD

**PRALINE PECAN CRUNCH****Ingredients:**

1 21 oz. box Quaker Oat Squares cereal (about 8 cups)  
2 cups pecans  
1/2 cup packed brown sugar  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1/2 cup light corn syrup  
1/4 cup margarine  
1/2 tps baking soda

**METHOD**

Heat oven to 250 degrees. Mix cereal and pecans in 9"x13" pan. Set aside. Mix corn syrup, brown sugar and margarine in glass bowl. Microwave on high 1-1/2 minutes. Stir, microwave 1 to 1-1/2 minutes more or until boiling. Stir in vanilla and baking soda and pour over cereal mixture. Stir to coat evenly. Bake 1 hour, stirring every 20 minutes. Spread on baking sheet to cool. Break into pieces and store in air tight container.

NANCY STENSON, FORT PIERRE

**MAMA'S CARAMEL PUDDING****Ingredients:**

1 cup sugar - melt in skillet until golden brown  
2 cups milk - stir until sugar is dissolved  
4 tps. corn starch stirred into a little milk

**METHOD**

Cook until thickened. Serve with whipped cream.

Elaine Rowett, Sturgis, SD

Please send your favorite dairy 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 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.



# Line Crew News, Pole-Top and Bucket Rescue



**Matt Eldridge**  
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oaheelectric.com

### Line Crew News

This spring has been busy for the line crew. We started the spring installing 3.5 miles of 3-phase underground just northeast of Pierre. This underground parallels Highway 14 going east through the Dell Acres area and ends just east of the Split Rock Subdivision. The cable on this project is installed and the crew is going to be doing the cut over process in the next couple of weeks.

Once the cable is energized, we will be retiring the overhead line. This project will help with reliability of service to these areas.

The crew has also been busy putting in new services. So far this year we have installed 21 new services and have many more on the books to get installed. Just like a lot of other things, this year our materials are getting harder to come by. Lead times on some of our supplies is up to 30 weeks out. Right now, we are sitting good with material we have on hand, but if you are thinking about installing a new service, the sooner you can let us know the better!

**Have a great summer and be sure to stay safe.**

### Pole-Top and Bucket Rescue

Every month, Oahe Electric hosts a safety meeting for their employees. These safety meeting 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 meeting 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 professional 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 and 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.



## WINNER OF QUESTION OF THE MONTH

The Question of the Month winners for the May 2021 publication were Jack and Ruth Ann Limanen. They correctly answered the question, "What are the sign up months for budget billing?" with the answer being May and June!

Congratulations and we hope you enjoyed your prizes!

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

This month's question is:

When are director petitions due?

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!

## 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!

Co-op Connections Card			
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.
Home/Garden			
<b>Slumberland Furniture</b>	605-945-1997	Pierre	20% off any regular priced Lazy Boy items. Excluding special orders.
Services			
<b>Airtech Heating and Cooling</b>	605-945-0160	Pierre	\$50 discount on any new heat pump OR \$15 discount on any service call
<b>Apryl's Animal House</b>	605-224-9203	Pierre	10% off a grooming or boarding
<b>Inman's Water Technologies</b>	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.
<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.
Retail			
<b>Fastenal</b>	605-224-4060	Pierre	10% off of fasteners and 5% off on all other products





# Summer fun awaits off the beaten path

Off-road enthusiasts from far and wide come to ride the Black Hills. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

## From the Black Hills to Avon, off-road ATV trails attract outdoor enthusiasts

**Billy Gibson**

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

Generations ago, folks flocked to the tiny hamlet of Nemo to search for gold buried deep in the nooks and crannies of the Black Hills region.

Today they come in search of family outdoor fun and adventure along the hundreds of miles of nature trails that course throughout the craggy terrain.

During most months of the year, Nemo is a quiet outpost with a

smattering of permanent residents who spend their days in unhurried leisure. But the warm summer months bring thousands of visitors seeking to explore the undulating wooded landscape on foot or on horseback, but most of all nestled in the seat of a side-by-side.

The Black Hills area is widely regarded as the state's top draw for all-terrain adventurers, and Nemo stands smack dab at the center of the action.

One of the town's busiest denizens during the summer crush is Dane Hilger, who runs D&K ATV

Rentals in Nemo. Hilger does a brisk business pairing up riders with fully licensed and permitted machines that allow visitors to free-range along the trails and take in the breathtaking vistas. His fleet of more than a dozen two-seaters and four-seaters gets snapped up quickly as the town is completely transformed during the summer season, which typically kicks off with the annual Black Hills ATV/UTV Rally held in mid-June.

"There are so many people in town it seems like it's hard to get around sometimes, but it's very family-oriented and everybody gets along and has a good time getting out and enjoying the great outdoors."



Vacationers and even day-trippers have access to everything they need during a visit to Nemo with the Brandin' Iron restaurant, camping sites, a general store and lodging.

Adam Rice, a native of Rapid City, owns and operates the Brandin' Iron in addition to another restaurant in Arizona. Soon after high school, he headed to Arizona for culinary school and later opened his business there. But two years ago, Rice was lured back to South Dakota and decided to resettle in Nemo.

"The town just has an aura about it. It's pristine and gorgeous. There's no better way to see the Black Hills. You can get to a lot of cool places through the trail system that goes literally thousands of miles and you never have to get on the road. You can get to Deadwood, you can get to Mount Rushmore, you can go to Sturgis. I go out into the woods just about every day. There's always something interesting to see."

Larry Kaiser owns the Nemo Merchantile store where visitors will find fuel, snacks, beverages, clothing and an assortment of dry goods.

He laments that during the summer he is often too busy to ride the trails, but he enjoys supplying the provisions visitors need.

"It's just a lot of fun. You meet the most interesting people and everybody's having a good time."



## TOP ATV TRAILS IN SD

1. **Centennial Trail**  
West of Rapid City
2. **Northern Black Hills**  
West of Rapid City
3. **Southern Black Hills**  
Southwest of Rapid City
4. **Buffalo Gap National Grassland**  
Southeast of Farmingdale
5. **Bear Lodge Mountains**  
North of Sundance
6. **Oahe Downstream OHV Area**  
North of Pierre
7. **Talsmas ATV Trail Park**  
South of Avon
8. **Reveheim Bay OHV Area**  
Southeast of Mobridge

They bring their kids, the grand parents and the dog and they just relax, unwind and have fun."

While Nemo may be considered the mecca of ATV riders, there are several other prime spots in South Dakota open to the public.

In the southeastern region of the state near Avon, Jerry and Tina Talsma welcome ATV riders to their Trails End Ranch situated alongside the Missouri River.

The third-generation land owners opened Talsma's Trail Park in 2005 with several hundred acres open to the public and trails that range from novice to extreme.

There are climbing hills, creek crossings, deep brush, open prairie land, river bottom terrain and expansive scenic bluffs overlooking the Missouri. There are also several play areas for riders to kick up some mud.

There are different fees to enter the park depending on the mode of transportation and special discounts for groups of 10 or more machines



Many ATV trails across the state have access to fishing, scenic vistas and places to pull over for refreshments such as the Merchantile store in Nemo shown above.

as well as multi-day and seasonal passes. Camp sites are available at a rate of \$20 per night with electricity and \$10 without.

The Talsmas have big plans for the summer with a Customer Appreciation Day on Aug. 14, a fundraising event for Horse Haven on Sept. 11 and a Halloween Scare Ride on Oct. 9.

For more information on the private park, visit [talsmastrailpark.com](http://talsmastrailpark.com). For more information about riding in the Black Hills, visit [blackhillsatvally.com](http://blackhillsatvally.com) and [custersd.com](http://custersd.com) where you'll find details about ATV activities in the Custer area.



# Invisible Electrical Dangers



**Russ Hohn**

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Approximately 1,000 people die, and 30,000 people are injured, every year due to electrical accidents. While electricity typically transmits without incident, there are times when the electrical path becomes disrupted. When this happens, the current can flow through any type of conductive material in its path, causing electric shock. For people or animals this can mean serious internal and external burns or even death.

Electricity is referred to as a silent killer since it is often undetectable, typically unable to be seen, heard or smelled. Precautions should be used both inside and outside your home, but often people are less cautious outdoors. Always be aware of overhead power lines and never get close to them. Always carry long objects horizontally. Always call 811 before doing any type of digging; underground power lines are very dangerous also. Statistics indicate an underground power line is damaged every nine minutes!

## **STAY INSIDE THE VEHICLE OR EQUIPMENT IF IT CONTACTS A POWER LINE AND CALL 911 IMMEDIATELY!**

A power line does not have to be arcing, sparking or buzzing to be energized. Again, the silent killer favors no one. ALWAYS assume that every power line is energized,

and call professionals if you see something out of the ordinary.

Use safety precautions around the green electrical boxes. At times, these boxes are jarred and moved from their original position. NEVER attempt to move this equipment. Stay away and call the authorities, such as the power company, law enforcement or 911. It is very important that you share your location with them, ensuring a faster response time!

Stay inside vehicle or equipment if it contacts a power line and call 911 immediately! Do not try to get out until utility workers tell you it is ok. If the vehicle or equipment starts on fire and you must get out, YOU MUST JUMP! You cannot touch any part of the vehicle or equipment and the ground at the same time. Jump as far as possible and keep your feet together as you HOP AWAY from the accident scene. If you see someone involved in this type of accident, DO NOT APPROACH THE VEHICLE. Call the authorities and keep others from approaching the vehicle.

Never fly a kite or drone near a power line. If an object becomes entangled, never attempt to retrieve it yourself, call 911. Teach children not to climb trees near power lines. Also teach them not to sit or play around green electrical boxes.

Everyone at Oahe Electric wishes you a safe and fun summer! Your cooperative exists only because of you. God bless!

Approximately  
**1,000** people die,  
and **30,000** people  
are injured, every  
year due to electrical  
accidents.



## Smart Management. Smart Life. SmartHub.



**Valerie Marso**  
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oaheelectric.com

Life is fast, and it can be hectic, but it doesn't all have to be complicated. Paying your Oahe Electric bill shouldn't be a complex task, and with our SmartHub web and mobile app, it won't be.

You may have heard about SmartHub, our innovative tool for account management, but what can it do for you? SmartHub can help you take control of your Oahe Electric account like never before, giving you more time to focus on other responsibilities.

SmartHub has several features that make managing your account as easy as possible. Whether through the web, or your smartphone or tablet (Android or iOS), you'll be able to pay your bill, view your usage, contact customer service and get the latest cooperative news.

As soon as you log in, you'll be able to view your billing history and make a payment with just a couple of clicks... or taps, if you're using the app. You'll be able to see your current bill, along with bills from the previous month or even the previous years if you want to compare costs. Not only will you see your billing history, but you'll be able to view your actual use. You can see how your use is trending over time, which will allow you to take steps to lower your bill.



Making payments through SmartHub is fast and easy.

The first time you make a payment either through the web or through your mobile device, you'll be able to securely store your payment information for

future transactions. The next time

you need to pay your bill, it will only take a couple of clicks.

You'll also be able to see important Oahe Electric notices with SmartHub. You'll be able to select how you want to be notified about your bill. You can either be notified by email only or email and elect to still receive a paper bill. Either way, you will know what your bill is the same day it is calculated instead of waiting for it to be delivered.

Access SmartHub by visiting [www.oaheelectric.com](http://www.oaheelectric.com) (click on the red payment options box and then on the SmartHub link) or by downloading the app on your mobile device through the Apple App Store (iOS devices) or Google Play Marketplace (Android devices).

Plenty of things in life are complicated. Manage your Oahe Electric account simply, quickly and easily with SmartHub.

## Oahe Electric Director Elections to be Held

The annual meeting of the members of Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. will be held in Onida, S.D., on **Sept. 18, 2021.**

During the annual meeting, the members present will be electing two board members to fill two, 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 **Aug. 4, 2021.**

### 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.



# SENSIBLE SOLAR

## South Dakota's electric cooperatives promote fair, sensible solar policies

**Billy Gibson**

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

With summer in full swing, the sun is bearing down on South Dakotans. But that wasn't the case just five months ago when an unexpected polar vortex covered much of the country in a blanket of snow and ice.

As co-op members now reach for the sunscreen and a cold beverage, it's easy to forget that back in February the same solar panels that are streaming torrents of ions today were reduced to a trickle when a convergence of circumstances caused a series of rolling blackouts.

That historic event alerted policymakers from Texas to the Canadian border to hit the pause button and take another look at how renewable power fits into the national grid-based energy picture.

Across the country, the solar market is facing what can be described as growing pains. Those pains stem from the fact that the nascent stages of solar energy were heavily subsidized through taxpayer dollars, as early adopters benefited from an array of state, federal and municipal government tax credits, exemptions, incentives, rebates and subsidies designed to get the industry off the ground. Tapping into these programs, owners of solar installations have been able to deduct up to half of their costs.

But as more homeowners and businesses opt for solar and as the cost of solar has dropped 80 percent since 2010, those subsidies are shrinking and the industry is in the process of having to eventually stand on its own feet. At the federal level, for instance, the Investment Tax Credit (ITC) established in 2005

has allowed new residential and commercial solar owners to deduct 26 percent of their installation costs from their federal taxes. The ITC is set to be reduced to 23 percent in 2023 and eliminated for homeowners by 2024. The Biden Administration has proposed extending the program for another two years.

According to the Energy Information Administration, direct federal government subsidies for solar alone totaled \$34.4 billion between 2010 and 2019.

As solar subsidies decline, the true costs for ratepayers to have 24-hour access to both intermittent renewable power and more reliable traditional power at the same time are coming to bear.

In Nevada, for example, incentives for homeowners were phased out in 2016 after the state's largest energy company argued that its costs of creating and delivering power weren't being fully covered and the expenses of serving every home and business in the system were being shifted to those exercising their right not to have rooftop panels placed on their homes.

Predictably, once the incentives



*Sensible Solutions for Our Energy Future*



South Dakota's electric cooperatives support reasonable strategies for our energy future that make sense for our members:

- Renewable energy solutions that are both productive and practical
- Rate structures that take affordability into account
- Balanced strategies centered on the best interests of co-op consumers
- Technology-based policies that promote economic development

**"WE RELY ON INTERMITTENT RENEWABLE SOURCES TO CURB EMISSIONS AND MORE RELIABLE FOSSIL FUELS TO DELIVER THE BASELOAD POWER OUR MEMBERS NEED."**

ROBERT RAKER

West River Electric, characterized the state's electric cooperatives as being neither pro-renewable energy nor anti-renewable energy.

"We're pro-reliability and pro-affordability for our members," he explained. "We rely on intermittent renewable sources to curb emissions and more reliable fossil fuels to deliver the baseload power our members

to communicate with one another as each cooperative in the state has its own set of interconnection requirements and policies determined by their management.

"If one of our members wants to get involved in renewable energy, we need to know about it so we can work with the member to make sure the process goes as smoothly as possible," Raker said.

Chris Studer, chief member and public relations officer at East River Electric, echoed Raker's comments and emphasized another important factor in open member-to-cooperative communication: safety.

"Just make sure to call your co-op. It's a safety issue. Improperly installed equipment could put the homeowner's property and co-op employees who work on the infrastructure at risk and that's what we want to prevent."

Studer said the state's cooperatives will continue to play an active role as the renewable market evolves.

"At this stage in the emergence of the distributed generation market, the fixed costs that electric utilities have invested in their infrastructure needs to be taken under consideration as more members bring localized solar installations into the system," he said.

"Other states have addressed this issue by establishing fixed charges for distributed generation owners in a way that was fair for everyone, while also setting up a system to streamline the resolution of any disputes that may arise. We'll continue to serve as an advocate for all co-op consumers."

were sun-setted and solar owners had to pay for maintaining the same grid that they depend on when their panels aren't producing power, demand decreased.

In South Dakota, where there are no state government subsidies, investor-owned Black Hills Energy has followed Nevada's lead by proposing that the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission institute tariffs on homeowners to compensate the power company for those fixed costs required to keep the system functioning for all ratepayers who use it.

Opponents argue that the tariffs could potentially obliterate the state's growing solar market, which saw 462 MW installed through the first quarter of 2021.

As for South Dakota's electric cooperatives, the system's leaders paid close attention to the polar vortex event and the lessons learned in the aftermath. Robert Raker, public relations manager at

need. It's like a parent trying to determine which is their favorite kid. We favor both of them because we need to help protect the planet but we also need to fulfill our obligation to serve our members whether it's day or night, hot or cold, sunny or cloudy, windy or calm."

Raker noted that co-ops have embraced the integration of renewable power into the state's fuel mix. Electric co-ops were leaders in introducing wind power, which now makes up roughly 25 percent of the supply while 17 percent comes from hydroelectric dams along the Missouri River. Co-ops are also involved in the construction of Wild Springs solar farm, which is expected to go on-line next year as the largest solar array in the western part of the state.

Without a clear and complete set of rules in place for distributed generation, Raker said it's paramount that members and their cooperatives work together

LET THE GAMES BEGIN



# LET THE GAMES BEGIN

## SDHSAA plans to resume normal activities with the fall semester begins

**Billy Gibson**

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

Success on the field of play often hinges on putting together a solid playbook to prepare for the rigors of competition. Like many organizations, the South Dakota High School Activities Association (SDHSAA) didn't have a playbook designed to deal with the coronavirus pandemic that interrupted the slate of sporting events mid-stream in the spring of 2020.

But just as it teaches student athletes the merits of teamwork and perseverance, the association

executed a quick response by pulling together a premier task force with a variety of participants to determine an effective plan of attack against the global menace.

The A-team included officials from the state Department of Health, Department of Education, local school administrators, private medical practitioners, teachers, coaches and parents. After using the balance of the spring season to reset and regroup, members of the task force spent last summer pursuing their work without any preconceived notions of where their efforts would lead or how the future would look. All were in agreement, however,

that the primary goal would be to protect the health of the students, parents, coaches, referees and others involved in youth activities under the association's purview.

It was the responsibility of Executive Director Dan Swartos to serve as head coach of the campaign to draft and execute a game plan before the fall 2020 season commenced even as many restrictions were still in force. He credited all involved in the effort for recognizing the importance of "keeping kids active" while staying focused on the goal of returning to sports and extracurricular activities in a safe manner.

"There was never any pressure placed on anyone to decide to play sports or not to play sports. Our goal was to keep everyone safe as we dealt with the pandemic and determined the best way to respond and return to normal activities





Officials at the SDHSAA say they plan to resume a normal slate of events this fall. Photos by South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

as the pandemic ran its course,” he said. “We listened to those in the health profession for their recommendations based on what they were experiencing and balanced that with recommendations and observations that were coming from other quarters. The governor’s office trusted us and gave us the space we needed to make the best decisions.”

Swartos also gave high praise to leaders of the local school systems for being flexible as the chain of events unfolded. As an example, he referred to Lance Christianson, the 2019 state golf champion. Christianson was a student at Little Wound on the Pine Ridge Reservation when the school was forced to shut down due to the pandemic. Christianson was faced with the prospect of not being able to compete for another golf title in 2020.

Swartos explained that meetings were held and an agreement was hammered out to issue a waiver and allow Christianson to participate in the state tournament competition.

That kind of flexibility and adaptability was paramount, Swartos said, as the pandemic was impacting local schools in different ways in various parts of the state.

“The situation was different from east to west, rural and urban,

## “SOMETIMES YOU DON’T FULLY APPRECIATE WHAT YOU HAVE UNTIL IT’S TAKEN AWAY FROM YOU.”

DR. DAN SWARTOS

school population sizes and other variables,” Swartos said. “Things were happening differently in Sioux Falls compared to Lemmon. It was breaking out in some parts of the state, but in Harding County they didn’t have any coronavirus cases until the fall. We had to look at things like some small schools having 500-seat arenas and others having 5,000-seat arenas. We decided not to place restrictions on attendance and leave it up to the systems to make those kinds of decisions. The way our members responded, it was extraordinary.”

Swartos said he looks forward

to a fall 2021 semester that will seem close to normal for students, parents, teachers and administrators.

“Our plan right now is to go full speed ahead as normal, but we’re continuing to meet and take assessments of how things are going and receive the recommendations of the task force,” Swartos said.

“One of the things we learned is how important our sports and activities are to the development of our students. Sometimes you don’t fully appreciate what you have until it’s taken away from you. It’s important physically, mentally and socially.”



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**July 4**  
Independence Day



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.

**JUNE 19-20**  
**Aberdeen Arts in the Park**  
Melgaard Park, Aberdeen,  
SD, 605-226-1557

**JUNE 25-27**  
**Annual Main Street Arts  
and Crafts Festival**  
N River Street, Hot Springs,  
SD, 605-440-2738

**JUNE 30-JULY 4**  
**Annual Black Hills Roundup**  
300 Roundup Street, Belle  
Fourche, SD, 605-723-2010

**JULY 2-4**  
**Custer's Old Time Country  
Fourth of July**  
Various Locations, Custer,  
SD, 605-673-2244

**JULY 2-4**  
**Gold Camp Jubilee Days**  
Various Locations, Lead,  
SD, 605-584-1100

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

**JULY 4**  
**Fall River Fourth of July**  
Various Locations, Hot Springs,  
SD, 605-745-4140

**JULY 4**  
**Fourth of July Celebration**  
703 Main Street, Deadwood,  
SD, 800-344-8826

**JULY 4**  
**Fourth of July Parade**  
Kemp Avenue, Watertown,  
SD, 605-886-5814

**JULY 9-11, 16-18, 23-25**  
**Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant**  
43379 Rose Lane, De Smet,  
SD, 605-983-5251

**JULY 9-11**  
**Annual Hot Harley Nights**  
J&L Harley-Davidson, Sioux  
Falls, SD, 605-334-2721

**JULY 10-11**  
**50th Annual Brookings  
Summer Arts Festival**  
W Highway 14 and 1st  
Avenue, Brookings,  
SD, 605-692-2787

**JULY 16-17**  
**Storybook Land Festival**  
Wylie Park, Aberdeen,  
SD, 605-626-7015

**JULY 16-18**  
**Gold Discovery Days**  
Various Locations, Custer,  
SD, 605-673-2244

**JULY 16-24**  
**Senior Summer Tournaments**  
Rapid City, SD, Contact Lindsey  
Meyers at 605-394-4175

**JULY 27-31**  
**Days of '76 Rodeo & Parades**  
Various Locations, Deadwood,  
SD, 605-578-1876

**JULY 31**  
**Chislic Festival**  
Freeman's Prairie Arboretum,  
Freeman, SD, 605-496-9946

**AUGUST 6-7**  
**Sully County Historical  
Society Fishing Tournament**  
West Prairie Resort, Onida, SD,  
605-258-2541

**AUGUST 14**  
**Sully County Historical  
Society 5K Fun Run/Walk**  
Sully County Courthouse,  
Onida, SD, 605-258-2541

**AUGUST 17-19**  
**Dakotafest**  
2300 E Spruce Street, Mitchell,  
SD, 877-611-8161

**AUGUST 26-29**  
**58th Annual Steam  
Threshing Jamboree**  
Prairie Village, Madison,  
SD, 605-256-3644

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