



Cooperative Connections



Faulkton mural is turning heads

Pages 8-9

Co-ops practice road safety

Pages 12-13

The 110-foot mural that towers over the town of Faulkton has attracted attention from across the country

Together We Save



Jordan Lamb

jlamb@oaheelectric.com

**Together we
can reduce
our demand by
utilizing new
technologies.**

“Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country.”

John F. Kennedy stated this at his inaugural address in January of 1961. This quote still resonates with us today and reflects the special bond Oahe Electric has with you – our member-owners.

Over the course of 60 years, many things have changed in the energy industry. We see large coal fired power plants begin to retire and renewables take their place. We have seen household appliances become more energy efficient along with LED lights to lower energy consumption. One thing that has not changed is Oahe Electric's obligation to provide safe, affordable and reliable energy to our member-owners.

Demand is the total capacity of a system required to deliver a peak amount of power for a short period of time. Demand determines how large generators are, the capacity needed for transmission lines, distribution lines, transformers and all serial devices between where the power is made upstream all the way to where it is delivered at your doorstep. Ideally, demand stays flat throughout the day and into the night. However, high energy consumption typically occurs only seven or eight hours of a 24 hour day.

Together we can reduce our demand by utilizing new technologies. In the transportation industry, electric vehicle chargers can be programmed to charge in the night during off peak hours to lower peak demand during the daytime. In the agricultural industry, farmers are installing grain bin management systems to monitor ambient air temperature, relative humidity and barometric pressure – while also monitoring East River Electric's system peak to utilize optimum drying times while reducing electric demand costs. In homes, our member-owners have installed LED lighting and replaced dated appliances with new energy efficient devices to help save costs. These together help to reduce peak demands and saving you – our member-owners – money.

This new technology also allows Oahe Electric to implement different rate structures that incentivize specific times of use. With the ability to control and shed load during peak loading conditions, we reduce the burden on the electric grid and lower the amount of new generation necessary to meet load growth – while saving money.

This month, we encourage you to analyze your energy usage habits. If you have questions regarding technology used to reduce demand, feel free to give us a call. Together as a cooperative, we save!

I would also like to thank our former General Manager, Rodney Haag, for his years of service as well as the transitional period he stayed on with Oahe to help ease changes. Rodney exemplifies cooperative values and loyalty to his family, friends and community. Oahe Electric wishes him the best in his retirement.

Oahe Electric Cooperative Connections

(USPS No. 019-042)

Editors

Russ Hohn and Sam Irvine

General Manager

Jordan Lamb

Oahe Electric Board of Directors

President

James Feller, 605-962-6207

Treasurer

Blaine Livermont, 605-945-2910

Vice President

Kirk Yackley, 605-258-2412

Secretary

Ross Sperry, 605-962-6141

Assistant Secretary

Ryan Noyes, 605-280-3500

Attorney

David Larson

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.

Introducing New General Manager, Jordan Lamb

Please help us in welcoming Oahe Electric's new general manager, Jordan Lamb!

Jordan joins Oahe Electric from East River Electric Cooperative, Oahe's transmission cooperative, where he was their planning engineer and system engineer. In that capacity, he implemented load forecasts and real time data to plan transmission and substation projects and identify system deficiencies in real time as well as a 10+ year outlook.

If you think he looks familiar, it may be because he is originally from Onida, S.D., where he graduated from Sully Buttes High School in 2012. After graduating high school, he attained a degree in electrical engineering from South Dakota State

University in Brookings, specializing in high voltage power. While in college he worked at Deer Creek Station, a 300 MW power plant owned by Basin Electric, who is Oahe Electric's generation cooperative.

Jordan plans on marrying his fiancé, Abbey Fjeldheim, this coming fall. Abbey is originally from Herreid, S.D., and also graduated from South Dakota State University with a degree as a registered nurse. She is currently working with Avera Hospital in Pierre. Together they have a dog named Louie (corgi).

If you see Jordan out and about, please help us in welcoming him to our cooperative family!

Statement of Nondiscrimination

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

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

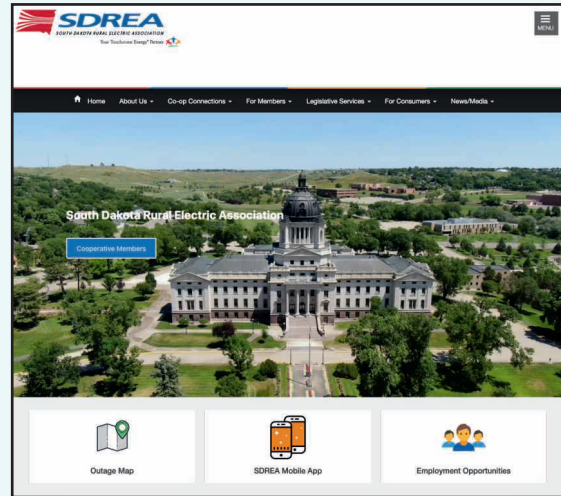
Five Electrical Dangers in Your Home

Of all the hazards that exist around your home, getting shocked by electricity is one that should not be taken lightly. Depending on the level of electrical current, contact with electricity can result in something as innocuous (but still painful) as a mild shock to more severe injuries like nerve damage and burns. In some circumstances, it can even cause cardiac arrest and death. Here's a list of some of the most common shock risks inside a home.

- **Appliances.** Most shocks from appliances occur when people are trying to repair them. It's not enough to just turn off an appliance before attempting to work on it – you also need to unplug it to reduce risk. Large appliances are responsible for 18 percent of consumer product-related 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. A GFCI is a protective device installed on electrical outlets, primarily used where water is present.
- **Ladders.** Typically, ladders present a falling hazard, but 8 percent of consumer product-related electrical shocks were 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 at least 10 feet away from them.
- **Power tools.** Power tools account for 9 percent of consumer product-related shocks. 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 with power tools, use power tools incorrectly or use them in wet conditions. This is another situation in which GFCIs can help.
- **Electrical outlets and extension cords.** Inserting anything that doesn't belong – screwdrivers, knives, fingers or toy cars - 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.

Visit the new SDREA.coop

Want to know more about South Dakota's rural electric cooperative system? Check out our newly redesigned website at www.sdrea.coop. You'll find lots of useful information about our generation, transmission and distribution systems, energy efficiency ideas, legislative issues that impact electric rates, a statewide outage map and much more.



KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"Don't hit the pole! Be safe!"

Monroe Steiner, 6 years old

Monroe is the daughter of Brandon and Jen Steiner of Lake City, SD. They are members of Lake Region Electric.

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.

Super Seafood Recipes

Sheet Pan Fish and Chips

1/4 cup buttermilk	1 tablespoon oil
5 teaspoons OLD BAY® Seasoning, divided	1/4 cup flour
1 pound cod fillets, cut into 4x2-inch pieces	1 egg
2 large russet potatoes, cut into wedges (about 1-1/2 pounds)	1 cup cornflake crumbs
	McCormick® Tartar Sauce

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Mix buttermilk and 1 teaspoon of the OLD BAY in large resealable plastic bag. Add fish, then seal the bag. Refrigerate for 20 minutes. Toss potatoes and oil into large bowl. Sprinkle with another 2 teaspoons of OLD BAY; toss to coat evenly. Spread potatoes in single layer on foil-lined 15x10x1-inch baking pan that has been sprayed with no-stick cooking spray. Bake 25 minutes, turning potatoes halfway through. Remove pan from oven. Push potatoes to outside edge of the pan. Set aside. Place flour in a shallow dish. Beat egg, another 1 teaspoon of OLD BAY and 1 teaspoon water in a separate shallow dish. Mix cornflake crumbs and remaining 1 teaspoon OLD BAY in another shallow dish. Remove fish from the buttermilk mixture, allowing excess to drip off into bag. Coat fish in flour, shaking off excess flour. Dip in egg mixture, then press into the cornflake mixture until evenly coated. Discard any remaining flour, egg and cornflake mixtures. Place fish on a wire rack in center of pan with the potatoes. Bake 15 minutes or until fish is golden brown and flakes easily with a fork and potatoes are tender. Serve fish with potatoes and tartar sauce, if desired.

www.mccormick.com

Salmon Cheese Balls

1 16 oz. can of salmon	1 T. salt
8 oz. cream cheese	1 T. lemon juice
1 T. chopped onion	1 T. horseradish

Mix all ingredients together and shape into individual balls. Roll balls in chopped pecans and serve with crackers. Chill before and after shaping into a ball.

Denene Miles, Doland, SD

Shrimp Fettuccine with Pesto

15 extra large shrimp	comes in gluten free variety)
6 cloves of garlic	2-6.7 oz. jars of basil pesto
Extra virgin olive oil	Finely shredded parmesan cheese
12 oz. box of fettuccine (also	

Peel and chop garlic until finely diced. In large saute pan, pour a couple of tbsps. of extra virgin olive oil. Add shrimp (shelled and wiped dry with a paper towel). Cook until orange and slightly browned on each side (2-3 minutes per side). Add garlic and cook until light brown (do not over cook or garlic becomes bitter). Put on plate. Fill saute pan 3/4 full with cold water and bring to a rolling boil. Add entire box of pasta and cook 12 minutes. Stir to make sure pasta has separated. Drain in colander. Put the pasta, shrimp and garlic back into the saute pan. Add two jars of pesto sauce. Cook until heated. When serving, add parmesan cheese on top. Serves 4-6. Shrimp & Garlic with Cocktail Sauce: Prepare shrimp and garlic as directed above. Cool. Serve with cocktail sauce.

Sue Nipe, Sioux Falls, SD

Parmesan Baked Salmon

1/4 c mayo	4 salmon fillets
2 T. Parmesan Cheese	2 t. lemon juice
1/8 t. ground red pepper (cayenne)	10 crackers, crushed

Mix the mayo, cheese and pepper. Place salmon on foil on a cooking sheet. Drizzle with lemon juice. Top with cheese mixture. Sprinkle on cracker crumbs. Bake at 400 for 15 minutes. Then enjoy!

Julie and Jared Frank, Sioux Falls, SD

Please send your favorite beverage 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, telephone number and cooperative name.

Sign up for Auto Pay and Win \$50

Auto Pay

Are you interested in making your life easier and maybe putting some extra cash in your pocket? Sounds like a dream, right? Make this dream a reality by signing up for auto pay for your electric bill and you will be entered into a drawing to receive \$50!

With the automatic bill payment plan, you won't have to spend time writing or mailing checks. Plus, your bill will be paid on time, even when you're on vacation. Actually, paying your utility bill won't take any time at all! Each month, the amount due for your electric bill will be paid automatically from your checking/savings account or credit/debit card. The payment will be listed on your monthly account statement and on your next bill from Oahe Electric.

Members who have already discovered how easy auto pay is have already been entered into a separate drawing for a chance to win \$50! No additional work required! This is just our way of saying thank you for participating in the program.

SmartHub and Online Bill Pay

You can also view and pay your bill online the day they are generated. Subscribers are able to sign up to receive an e-statement and access our account management

tool by going to our web site at www.oaheelectric.com, clicking on the Payment Options box and then on the SmartHub link. Once you have registered as a new user, you can easily access your account. The SmartHub option offers features such as viewing previous month's bills, downloading billing data, payment history and paying your bill via credit card. You can also sign up for automatic payments on SmartHub. You will still receive a paper statement unless you request otherwise. When the new bills are calculated for the month (around the 10th) you will receive notification via e-mail that your new account information is available online.

Budget Billing

Discover the convenience of having 12 equal monthly payments for your electric bill. The sign-up months for budget billing are May and June. If you would like more information, would like to sign up, or if you would like to have your budget bill amount calculated, please call the office at 1-800-640-6243.

Auto Pay, SmartHub/Online Bill Pay and Budget Billing are just a few ways to make bill paying more convenient - use them together or separately.

Just fill out the form below and return it to Oahe Electric, PO Box 216, Blunt SD 57522 by May 21, 2021, to have your electric bill deducted from your checking or savings account and for your chance to win \$50!

(please print)

Since your electric bill will vary in amount, Oahe Electric will send you a statement showing the amount to be deducted from your account. The deduction will occur on the **20th** of each month **or** the closest business day if the **20th** falls on a weekend or holiday. **Automatic bill payments will commence the month following receipt of this form.**

Name _____

Address _____

Daytime Phone _____

Member Account Number(s) _____

(List all account numbers you want paid automatically)

Please deduct my Automatic Bill Payment from my:

___Checking Account (or) ___Savings Account (or) ___Credit/Debit Card

Bank Account Number _____

Bank Name _____

Bank Address _____

Bank Phone Number _____

Bank Routing Number _____

**Be sure to include
a voided check
with this form.**

OR

Type of Card Used for Payment: ___Mastercard (or) ___Visa (or) ___Discover

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

I hereby authorize Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. to deduct my utility payment(s) from the checking/ savings account or Credit/Debit card listed above. I understand if at any time I wish to discontinue this service, I will notify Oahe Electric.

Signature

Date

Cooperative Connections Card Program Vendors			
Automotive			
Graham Tire Company	605-224-8643	Pierre	Receive a 10% discount on regularly priced service work. Cannot be combined with any other offer.
Lamb Motor Company	800-952-2222	Onida	Receive a free alignment check with the purchase of 4 new tires.
Napa Auto and Truck Parts/Farnam's Genuine Parts, Inc.	605-224-8624	Pierre	Receive 10-50% off retail price.
Food/Convenience Store			
Branding Iron Bistro	605-494-3333	Pierre	Enjoy \$1 off your order. Limit one per visit.
Gator's Pizza Pasta and Subs	605-224-6262	Pierre	Purchase any large pizza at regular price and receive a FREE order of breadsticks.
Grey Goose Store	605-945-0794	Pierre	Receive a free 20 oz. fountain soda or coffee with the minimum of a \$30 gas or diesel purchase.
The Corner	605-258-2400	Onida	Buy one breakfast sandwich at regular price, get second half off.
Health/Fitness and Beauty			
Anytime Fitness	605-224-4011	Pierre	Receive a free two-week mini-membership.
Home/Garden			
The Pink Petal	605-224-1775	Pierre	10% discount on cash and carry purchases - fresh floral only.
Slumberland Furniture	605-945-1997	Pierre	20% off any regular priced Lazy Boy items. Excluding special orders.
Services			
Airtech Heating and Cooling	605-945-0160	Pierre	\$50 discount on any new heat pump OR \$15 discount on any service call
Apryl's Animal House	605-224-9203	Pierre	10% off a grooming or boarding
Inman's Water Technologies	605-224-5111	Pierre	Receive a 15% discount on the rental price of a water softener and/or reverse osmosis drinking water system by paying a year in advance. Receive 10% off of the purchase price of a new Water Softener or reverse osmosis drinking water system when you mention this ad. Payments made by credit cards do not qualify for discounts/specials.
Olson Plumbing Inc.	605-224-6436	Pierre	\$50 discount on any electric boiler, Marathon water heater, or fireplace
Small Engine House	605-224-5815	Pierre	10% off parts and labor
Sports/Recreation			
Teton River Traders Gun Shop LLC	605-224-1371	Ft. Pierre	2% discount. Payments made by credit cards do not qualify for discount.
Retail			
Fastenal	605-224-4060	Pierre	10% off of fasteners and 5% off on all other products

Winner of Question of the Month

The Question of the Month winners for the January 2021 publication was Daniel Bucheli. He correctly answered the question "How long ago was East River created?"

The answer was almost 70 years!

Congratulations and we hope you enjoyed your prizes!

Question of the Month!

This month's question is:

When are Operation Round Up applications due?

Please submit your answer via e-mail to oahe@oaheelectric.com with the subject line reading: Question of the Month. A winner will be chosen and surprise gift will be sent to them.

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.



The mural in Faulkton is a prominent feature in the town. Aerial photography by Billy Gibson.

EYE-POPPING APPEAL

Faulkton Mural Attracts Attention from Far and Near

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@srea.coop

The story of how the small town of Faulkton became an attraction for art aficionados far and near actually begins on another continent many years ago.

Today, Faulkton is home to an imposing 110-foot mural displayed on three sides of an Agtegra grain elevator, the town's most prominent structure. Visible from long distances on Hwy. 212, the mural depicts a boy and girl and several wide-brimmed hats blowing between them in the prairie wind. While the meaning of the mural is open to as many interpretations as there are viewers, the intriguing story of how the artwork came into existence is a "10 beer tale," according to Dave Hedt, the community leader who initiated the project.

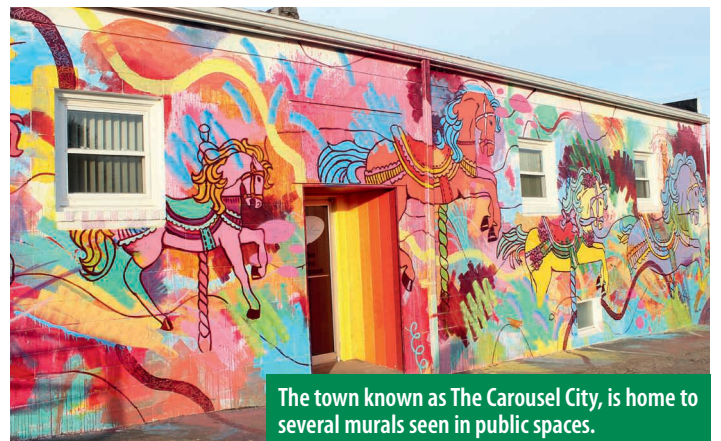
A native of Australia, the mate known among the locals as "Aussie Dave" was nursing a "frothy" in a bar in Melbourne when he encountered a chap from Faulkton who happened to be in Melbourne on business. He and Craig Mutsch struck up a conversation during that chance encounter in 1998 and kept in regular contact until 2013 when Hedt decided to relocate to South Dakota on a permanent basis.

Hedt went to work for Mutsch in the beginning before eventually setting down roots in Faulkton. He later married a gal from Harrold, became a regular at Lakeside Golf Club, built a retail strip center along the highway across from the Agtegra elevator and established several businesses in the quiet town.

The idea of creating the mural is actually credited to Hedt's father, who was visiting his son one day in 2015: "He was here and we were driving into town and he saw the grain elevator. He said, 'Hey, why don't you call Guido about painting a mural on that.' Right away I thought it was a great idea," Aussie Dave recalled.

In this case, Guido is the internationally renowned photographer and visual artist Guido Van Helten, who had painted a highly acclaimed mural on the side of a set of grain silos in Brim, Australia, not far from Hedt's home town of Dimboola.

"That mural had such a positive impact on the community, I knew it would get the same kind of response here and create the



The town known as The Carousel City, is home to several murals seen in public spaces.

Faulkton Mural Fast Facts

- The mural stands 110 feet high
- The project took seven weeks to complete
- Artist Guido Van Helton has done similar projects all around the world
- Local residents donated their time and labor to prepare the grain elevator for painting

same kind of excitement, for the town,” Hedt said.

He got in touch with the artist, who didn’t hesitate to take on the project. Van Helten visited Faulkton several times conducting preliminary work before taking his brushes in hand. As he’d done with previous similar projects, Van Helten spent time getting involved in community events and getting to know the residents of The Carousel City. He was hosted by a local family and tried to capture the ambiance of the town to inspire the visual and thematic elements of his work.

He received tremendous support from the community as folks chipped in to help the project financially and also contributed some “sweat equity” by scraping, cleaning and pressure-washing the elevator’s concrete surface in preparation for Van Helten’s artistic touch.

Grant funding was received from the South Dakota Arts Council and other non-profit groups, while the balance of the funds were raised privately through sponsorships and contributions from local businesses. Hedt is quick to point out no taxpayer money was used. For its part, Agtegra was quickly sold on the idea as plans were to eventually take the elevator out of service and move the operation to another site east of town.

As for what would ultimately appear on the side of the elevator, the residents were lending their support without knowing how the project would actually turn out. They figured they could always paint over it if they felt the mural’s theme wasn’t congruent with the town’s self-image.



Artist Guido Van Helton spent several weeks in Faulkton getting to know the local residents and getting a sense of the town’s spirit before he started painting.

“Guido kind of kept that a secret,” Hedt said. “He wanted it to be a surprise, but knew from the other things he’d done that it would be spectacular and something that we would all be proud of. He always paints what he feels is reflective of the town and the people.”

After the surface was prepared, it took several weeks for Van Helten to complete the painting while working suspended beside the large concrete canvas. The painting was unveiled on Sept. 1, 2018. Hedt said the result of the project has brought more positive results than anyone in the town could have anticipated.

“In terms of the financial impact, it’s just unbelievable the traffic we get through the town,” he said. “We had a woman from Washington state fly all the way here just to see it.”

Dawn Melius is owner of a local insurance agency and has been involved in the project since the beginning. She said the mural has brought a unique and welcomed vibrancy to the community.

“It’s such a great work of art, and people can interpret it however they want. That’s part of the fun of it and the attraction of it. It’s such an amazing project and it has brought a lot of interest to the town. Of course, once people are drawn here by the mural and they stop and spend some time around town, they like what they see and they have a real positive experience.”

Find an aerial video of the mural by visiting the Cooperative Connections Plus YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/n2gEDAltHMk>. Find out more about Van Helten at www.guidovanhelten.com.

CHARGE EV Invests in ZEF Energy



Russ Hohn

Member Services Advisor
rhohn@oaheelectric.com

ZEF Energy Inc. (Edina, Minn.) has added CHARGE EV, LLC, a collaboration of 29 community owned electric cooperatives, to its list of investors.

CHARGE EV's founding co-ops are located throughout the Midwest in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin. Together they are working to build a national electric vehicle (EV) charging brand powered by co-ops and investing in EV-focused companies.

"CHARGE EV's investment is not only important for growing our business, but it also demonstrates their belief in the ZEF Energy's ZEFNET utility platform and ZEFNET-enabled Level 2 and Level 3 chargers," said Matthew Blackler, CEO of ZEF Energy. "The EV market is taking off and having our chargers easily accessible will create a better EV driver experience. We believe connecting drivers with their serving utility is essential to achieving the beneficial load growth dream" said Blackler. ZEF Energy has successfully worked with electric co-ops and

municipalities since 2014. The company has won numerous grants and contracts across the Midwest, including the U.S. Department of Energy's Michigan to Montana (M2M) Interstate 94 Corridor project, which will install ZEF Energy chargers along the I-94 corridor. ZEF has the largest installed base of open standard DC Chargers in the Midwest. The ZEFNET platform is a turn-key approach to managing residential and commercial charger load and allows utilities to gather revenue grade metering and conduct precision load control.

"As cooperatives, we align with ZEF Energy's vision of the EV industry. Our collaboration further demonstrates we can build innovative and forward-thinking solutions in the Midwest," said Shannon Clark, CEO & General Manager of Richland Electric Cooperative (Richland Center, Wis.), one of CHARGE EV's founding cooperatives. "The ZEF investment allows us to have input into our needs as utilities in the EV market and ZEF is well positioned because they offer both hardware and software."

Blackler added, "Co-ops are forward thinking organizations and they recognize EV's will play a big part of their future. We look forward to working with CHARGE EV, spreading the word both regionally and nationally, for what can be achieved through picking the right partner, using co-op branded hardware and

software and pragmatic program delivery for rural electric cooperatives to make EV load growth, beneficial load growth." The companies did not disclose terms of the investment.

About ZEF Energy

ZEF Energy's mission is to support a reliable, low emissions transition to electric vehicles. We are a passionate group of software, hardware, development and policy experts that craft smart transportation electrification solutions. These solutions are outcome driven, nimble, and bring additional social benefit to our communities. We believe in accessible, convenient, and low burden offerings that support the economy as well as the environment.

About CHARGE EV, LLC

CHARGE EV was created by 29 electric cooperatives spread across Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin to help promote EV adoption and create a national charging network. Electric cooperatives serve more than 42 million people across 48 states. More information can be found at www.charge.coop.



Electric vehicles are a highly-efficient option for transportation and better for the environment than traditional car models.

Three Electrifying Kitchen Appliances to Save Time and Energy

Whether your oven and stove top are powered by gas or electricity, it's no secret that they consume more energy than smaller countertop appliances, like slow cookers and toaster ovens. In addition to efficiency, smaller kitchen appliances can provide faster cooking times and less hassle with cleanup. If you're looking for convenient cooking methods with the added bonus of energy efficiency, here are three electrifying appliances for your kitchen:

1. Air fryers are becoming increasingly popular, and consumers have a lot of good things to say about these handy little appliances. Air fryers use convection to circulate hot air and cook the food – this means little to no oil is required, resulting in healthier meals than those from traditional fryers. Air fryers are fairly small, so they won't take up much of your counter space, and with everything cooked in the fryer, cleanup will be a breeze. Air fryers are available in a variety of sizes, and prices range from \$40 to \$200+.

2. Electric griddles have certainly been around for a while, and they offer several benefits for any home chef (beyond bacon and eggs!). Griddles are convenient because you can cook everything at once – like a “one-pan” meal, and the possibilities are endless. From fajitas to sandwiches to French toast, griddles can help satisfy any taste buds. They consume small amounts of energy and provide quick cooking times, so your energy bill will thank you. Prices and sizes for griddles vary, but you can typically find one for about \$30 at your local retail stores.

3. Pizza brings people together, so why not consider a pizza maker for your kitchen? These compact, countertop machines are an inexpensive alternative to a costly brick oven, and they use less energy than your traditional oven. Choose your own fresh ingredients to whip up a faster, healthier pizza at home. Plus, most pizza makers are multifunctional and can be used to cook flatbreads, frittatas, quesadillas and more. You can purchase a pizza maker for about \$30 to \$150+ online or at your local retailer.

These are just a few electrifying appliance options for your kitchen. Remember, when you're cooking a smaller meal, countertop appliances can save time and energy.



Small Change That Changes Lives

Several years ago Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. implemented a program called Operation Round Up®. Operation Round Up® is just what the name implies. Each month, Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. simply “rounds up” the electric bills of voluntarily participating consumers to the next highest dollar. The funds collected are then used to address charitable community needs, whether it is disaster relief for an individual, or an organization funding a special project. Since the program's first disbursement in 2009, the program has distributed over \$100,000.

All Operation Round Up® donations are placed in a trust and are administered by an independent Board of Trustees. The board is made up of community leaders who serve on a voluntary basis. The board evaluates all requests for funds, determines who will receive funding and how all Operation Round Up® monies will be distributed. The region served by the Trust is primarily the electrical area served by Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc., including Hughes and Sully counties. The most gratifying thing about Operation Round Up® is that it is an extension of the concept of neighbor helping neighbor that built our electric cooperative.

The easy-to-complete applications for funding are currently available and can be requested by phone at 605-962-6243. Applications can also be found on our website at www.oaheelectric.com. All applications are due by April 30, 2021. Completed applications may be mailed to: Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 216, Blunt, SD 57522, faxed to: 605/962-6306, or emailed to: oahe@oaheelectric.com. After the deadline, the Board of Trustees will meet and allocate the funds to those they feel are in the most need.



Troy Ziebart, line foreman at Douglas Electric in Armour, loads up his vehicle before hitting the road to perform maintenance work on the co-op's system. Photo by Billy Gibson.

On the Road Again

Cooperative crews log millions of safe miles each year

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Some people follow their instincts to run away from emergency situations, others are obligated to steer towards them.

South Dakota's electric cooperative linemen often find themselves headed toward the site of potentially hazardous predicaments, whether it's simply answering an emergency outage call or engaging in rebuilding many miles of poles and lines in the most austere conditions in the aftermath of a major storm.

In any event, the first task for linemen is to arrive at the scene and make the return trip to co-op headquarters with themselves and their vehicles all in one piece. Many cooperative consumers are unaware of the fact that co-op linemen in South Dakota collectively log more than 8 million miles on the road each year taking care of maintenance projects, installing equipment, performing public service work, answering outage calls or other daily duties.

That figure includes those instances when linemen are called upon to drive long

distances across state lines to assist other fellow cooperatives restore power after a natural disaster, which raises the potential risk for accidents.

Compared to the amount of time and number of miles they travel on a routine basis, cooperative linemen have an impressive track record of operating their vehicles without incident and without harm to either themselves or the motoring public.

According to Mark Patterson, manager of loss control services at the South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) in Pierre, safe operating practices do much more than just save lives and property; they also keep insurance premiums down and help control the cost of fleet maintenance.

"Safety is such an important aspect of what we do as electric cooperatives, and it takes on many dimensions," Patterson said. "We often think of safety as adopting prudent practices when it comes to working in close proximity to different equipment such as power lines, transformers and substations. But it also includes other aspects such as safety in the workplace,

emergency preparedness, handling hazardous materials and knowing how important it is to be safe out on the road every time we leave the back shop and pull out of the gate."

As with many aspects of their operations, South Dakota's electric cooperatives are using the power of computer software and advanced technology to promote safety on the road. Many co-ops use software programs such as NexTraq, which processes and provides a wealth of information to help maintenance managers keep records on vehicle tracking and telemetry, fuel use and efficiency, service scheduling, driver performance, job completion and more.

These systems deliver real-time data not only on vehicle speed, heading, location, etc., but they also indicate where each vehicle is positioned at any given moment within the service territory so that supervisors can more effectively and efficiently coordinate movements of various crews throughout the system and throughout the work day.

"Linemen from the old days would be amazed at the advanced technology we



Cooperative linemen log thousands of hours on the road but sometimes find themselves having to take their vehicles off the paved surfaces. *Aerial photography by Billy Gibson.*

now have at our disposal,” Patterson said. “And it’s not just things like hydraulics and buckets and all the equipment we use today, but also the computer-based tools we have to help us do our jobs better. It all adds up to making the best use of the members’ resources and ultimately making sure the electricity we deliver is as affordable as possible. Members can count on the fact that cooperatives are trusted stewards of their resources and we’re doing everything we can to keep costs low.”

One of those mechanics who remembers the “old days” is Jody Pateneau, who has kept watch over the vehicle fleet at Moreau-Grand Electric for the past 20 years. Pateneau, who notes that linemen are required to carry a Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) and that he has one himself, said fleet maintenance was more of an art in the past.

“We kept records as well as we could, but we would just kind of know when parts or brakes or oil needed to be changed

and what needed to be done,” he said. “But with the new technology, we know what needs to be taken care of a long time before the guys driving the vehicle know. Our job is to make sure there are no break-downs when our guys get out there and that no one is in danger, and the computer helps us accomplish that goal.”

Patterson pointed out that the public also plays a role in making sure cooperative linemen and their vehicles stay accident-free. He said every year linemen and other utility workers across the country are severely injured or killed either in their vehicles or in their work sites.

“We should all be more aware of emergency workers who perform their jobs along roadsides or other places where traffic is present,” Patterson said. “We always remind the public to ‘slow down and move over’ when they see a work area or utility vehicle nearby. It’s not only good, sound advice, but it’s also the law in the state of South Dakota.”



Jody Pateneau has been a mechanic at Moreau-Grand Electric for 20 years and considers his job an important part of not only keeping linemen safe on the road but also containing costs for the cooperative. *Photo by Roger Lawien.*

Visit Co-op Connections Plus

Take a moment to visit our new online companion to *Cooperative Connections*. Co-op Connections Plus is a YouTube channel that features a more in-depth treatment of stories appearing in this publication as well as other subjects of interest to rural South Dakotans.

Search for “Co-op Connections Plus” and you’ll find videos on human trafficking, support programs for veterans, grain bin safety, the Co-ops Vote campaign and more. Be sure to “like” and “subscribe.”



A Career of Commitment

Tom Griffith

tom@tdgcommunications.com

Editor's Note: This is the final of a four-part series about Oahe Electric Cooperative's General Manager Rodney Haag, who began work with the cooperative shortly after graduating lineman's school in 1977 and recently retired.

It's been said that the lasting legacy of a man isn't defined by what he says about himself. Rather, a legacy is best described by his friends, family and those co-workers and associates who trod the same trail he did for so many years.

In the case of Rodney Haag, who recently retired as general manager of Oahe Electric Cooperative after more than four decades of commitment to his co-op and his community, the accolades emanating from those who know him best depict a man, small in stature, but big in heart who, despite obstacles and challenges, always got the job done.

One of Haag's admirers is Dennis "Swede" Larson, who moved to the small town of Blunt in 1945, served as mayor for a decade, and still regards Haag as a trusted friend who cared for the town in which he lived and worked.

"I know every crook and cranny of Blunt and I've known Rodney and Janice since they came to town," the 85-year-old Larson said recently. "Rodney is a wonderful guy. He started from the bottom and went to the top at the cooperative."

Larson said he was most impressed with Haag's commitment to their small town, which went well beyond the scope of his duties at the co-op.

"Every time the town needed something he was right there," the former mayor said. "If we had a problem, say we needed to put up Christmas lights or something, he'd send the boys down and get it done. In an emergency or a flood, he'd fill sandbags and do anything he could to help out. Rodney was just a great man to have in the community and he's a wonderful guy."

"I don't lie about anything and that's the sincere truth," Larson added. "Frankly, I don't know anybody who doesn't like Rodney. He's done a lot for everybody here and we're all going to really miss him greatly."

Gerald Walton worked side-by-side with Rodney for many years while Walton was line superintendent and Rodney was line foreman at the local cooperative. Although Walton retired in 2000, he still recalls Rodney's work ethic, whether they were completing routine tasks or tackling the remnants

Rodney never hesitated to get out in the field to support his co-op or his community.



After four decades, Oahe Electric's Rodney Haag hands off reigns

of a winter storm in the middle of the night.

"He was a good worker and he always wanted to make sure things were done and done right," Walton said. "Nobody wants to go back and do it again."

Bob Sargent, who has spent a lifetime farming and ranching straight west of Onida about a mile from the reservoir, knows a bit about the cooperative business. He sat on Oahe Electric's board of directors for 30 years, watching a string of four general managers come and go. Sargent said Rodney would be remembered most for his work ethic, as well as his commitment to the community he inhabited for 43 years.

"Rodney was well-liked by all the consumers, so he fit in really well," said Sargent, who left the co-op board in 2013. "He was dedicated to the co-op and I'm sure he had the best in mind for all the members. He was just a good fit for Oahe Electric and he did a very good job."

But, Sargent said, Rodney's concerns extended well beyond the co-op he led.

"I got to know him pretty well after he became manager and he was always a fun guy to be with," Sargent added with a chuckle. "I think he was a leader in the community. I'm sure the co-op will miss him. But I don't think Rodney will be totally detached from the co-op or the community. He still has so many friends in the area."

Michelle Colson worked as Oahe Electric's office manager for 13 years before becoming a supervisory general field representative for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service 17 years ago, meaning she has worked with Rodney for the past 30 years.

"What I know about Rodney is he is 'that' guy," Colson said. "Hard working, humble, kind, dedicated, smart and loyal. Rodney is the guy you want on your team. Over his 40-year career, he's transitioned from lineman to line foreman to line superintendent to general manager. I watched him consistently display perhaps his greatest professional quality which is to openly seek out knowledge, ask those around him for input, analyze all the information and then lead in the direction set."

"Whatever the task was, he was right there willing to pick up the shovel and dig every bit as hard as what he was asking of those around him," she added. "He was always willing to indulge us women in the office on those snowy days when we didn't want to walk across the parking lot to get something from the store or pick up the mail from the post office. He was thoughtful to put our vehicles in the garage during the day while the trucks were out so our cars would start at the end of the work day. He looks out for everyone around him. Then on those hot, sunny days after working down in the Pocket on irrigation, he might 'gladly show' the rattlesnake find of the day – by holding it up outside my office window."

As most of Rodney's colleagues attest, the Haag family didn't just live in Blunt. Indeed, they were the best of what Blunt and the surrounding small towns had to offer.

"Not only is Rodney 'that' guy; Rodney, Janice and their children are 'that' family," Colson claimed. "They didn't just live in Blunt. They have all been an integral part of the Sully Buttes community. They epitomize what makes rural America the best place to live; not because of the weather, but because of the people."

Rodney in his earlier days with Oahe Electric.



Valerie Marso has worked at Oahe Electric for the past two decades, the last 11 years as office manager. She describes herself as “the mother hen of the office, particularly during storms,” and she says she never had a boss quite like Rodney Haag.

“Looking back, what I remember most is the guys liked to pull pranks on him,” Marso said. “Well, he likes to ride his bike to work.

Once the guys put his bike all the way up in the shop rafters and he had to get it down. They also liked to grease his handlebars or his pedals. When he went to get on his bike, it was all slippery and gross. There’s not a lot of managers you could do that with.”

Marso also said she never met a man more dedicated to his cooperative and his community.

“He knows a lot of people because he’s lived here so long,” she said. “People still call him at home. They ask him to find out why they have no power or if Oahe can help hang Christmas lights. He gets things done. He knows we help wherever we can because it’s a part of our commitment to community. And, Rodney is very easy-going and has a very good moral compass. He never pretends to know everything but, he’s always been absolutely willing to learn.”

Marso also said that her boss had established an enviable record during his tenure.

“When Rodney walks out that door, there will be a lot of history and knowledge leaving with him,” she said.

Pastor Brad Urbach has spent the past 49 years as a clergyman, primarily at Faith Lutheran Church in Pierre, but extending to smaller communities in the area, including Trinity Lutheran Church in Blunt. Urbach came to know Rodney and Janice Haag shortly after they moved to town so long ago, and he said he was immediately impressed.

“My initial impression was you measure a man a little by does he look you in the eye, does he shake your hand firmly and does he smile?” Urbach said. “The first time I shook Rodney’s hand I knew this was someone I liked.”

Over the ensuing years, the pastor would confirm all of the Haag children and even officiate at the wedding of their daughter. For nearly all of that time, Rodney served as president of the congregation at Trinity Lutheran Church.

“Rodney was always someone you could go to, one of those go-to guys who if he said, ‘I’ll take care of it,’ he took care of it,” the pastor recalled. “For four full decades I’ve been a part of the Haags’ journey, and I can honestly characterize Rodney as someone who is good to his word, someone you can depend on and, as Martin Luther said, ‘He put the best construction on all things.’”

Pastor Urbach laments the loss to the Blunt community of Rodney and Janice, who have relocated to Sioux Falls for their retirement.

“Well, gosh, we just lose a wonderful couple involved in schools and the community,” he said. “They’re the type who would roll up their sleeves and get dirty. I think all his employees greatly respected Rodney, a man who was

the heart of the community. It’s tough to lose a family like that. It’s a loss and I think it makes everybody sad to have Rodney and Janice leave town.”

As Rodney and Janice settle into their new four-bedroom ranch-style house on the southern edge of Sioux Falls, where they will be close to a son and daughter, as well as four grandchildren, Rodney said he’d love to spend more time on a golf course and “chasing the wife around the house.” He also expects he and Janice will return to their old stomping grounds on a regular basis, as son Brandon, his wife Cori and their children live just down the road from Blunt in Pierre.

“I’ll also likely get a part-time job, but one in which I have absolutely no responsibility,” Rodney said with a grin. “Just arrive at a certain time and get off at a certain time, that’s about it.”

Rodney also noted that he’d never forget the warm embrace of his staff at Oahe Electric, nor the welcoming nature of the residents of Blunt.

“I won’t lie, it’s going to be hard to quit Oahe Electric,” he said as his retirement neared. “I’m going to miss the actual work. But, there comes a time in life when you know it’s time to go. I’ll come back and visit periodically. They say I won’t, but I will. They’re not just co-workers or employees – they’re friends. They were and will continue to be part of my life.”

In parting ways with the town and the staff at the place that employed him for more than two-thirds of his life, Rodney had a message for the dedicated staff of Oahe Electric Cooperative.

“Be true to yourself, your fellow workers and your members,” he solemnly asked. “Be loyal to your fellow employees. I want them to know that they work in a place that values their experience and their dedication. When we’re here, we’re all one, a team, and the only way this cooperative can move forward is through a combined effort.”

Similarly, Rodney said he had great confidence that Oahe Electric would continue to bring power to the plains and the co-op members to whom he was dedicated for the past 43 years.

“The biggest thing I want our members to know is I believe we have the best co-op members in the state of South Dakota,” he said. “In my career, my experience is our members will do everything they can to help you. My position has always been, even with a disgruntled member, that a problem generally has a relatively simple solution. In most cases, in five minutes face-to-face, an issue can be resolved.

“Lastly, I want folks to know that I’m proud to have been a member of this exceptional team,” he said. “It’s been a great life and a great living, and it’s satisfying to know that I’ve been an integral part of this cooperative’s history.”



Even as Rodney embarks on his next life adventure, his work on the behalf of Oahe Electric and the Blunt community will never be forgotten.

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

February 18-25

Twelfth Annual Black Hills Film Festival, Virtual
605-574-9454

February 20

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

February 20-27

SD State High School Wrestling Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD

February 25

Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood Live: Neighbor Day, Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD
605-367-6000

February 27

Nemo 500 Outhouse Races Nemo Guest Ranch, Nemo, SD
605-578-2708

March 5-6

SD High School State Debate & IE Tournament, Central High School, Aberdeen, SD

March 5-7

BH Rapid's President's Cup 2021, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Rushmore Hall, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

March 11-14

Team 8-Ball Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Rushmore Hall, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

March 12-13

St. Patrick's Day Weekend, Main Street, Deadwood, SD
605-578-1976



St. Patrick's Day Weekend, Mar. 12-13, 2021

March 13

28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride and Tour, Spearfish Canyon Lodge, Lead, SD
605-641-4963

March 13

St. Patrick's Day Celebration, Knights of Columbus Hall, Watertown, SD
605-886-5814

March 13-14

Philip Area Annual 2021 Gun Show, American Legion Hall, Philip, SD
605-859-2280

March 19-20

Sioux Empire Arts & Crafts Show, W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Building, Sioux Falls, SD
605-332-6000

March 23-24

Shen Yun, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Fine Arts Theatre, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

March 25

A Lakota View of the Dead Hills, Homestake Adams Research and Cultural Center, Deadwood, SD
605-722-4800

March 27

SD State High School All-State Band Concert, Mitchell Fine Arts Center, Mitchell, SD

April 8

The Wildest Banquet Auction in the Midwest, Sioux Falls Arena/Virtual, Sioux Falls, SD
605-339-1203

April 9-10

Forks, Corks and Kegs Food, Wine and Beer Festival, Main Street, Deadwood, SD
605-578-1876

April 9-18

Four Weddings & An Elvis, Mitchell Area Community Theatre, Mitchell, SD
605-996-9137

April 17

Winefest Renaissance, Boys and Girls Club of Aberdeen Area, Aberdeen, SD
605-225-8714

April 23-24

Junkin' Market Days, W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Building, Sioux Falls, SD
605-941-4958

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.