



# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Clarence Kooistra of VFW Post 628 in Sioux Falls salutes military veterans interred at the South Dakota State Cemetery

## Honoring our Veterans

A new resting place for fallen soldiers  
Pages 8-9

First responders in rural South Dakota  
Page 12



# Annual Meeting & Fall Activities



**Jordan Lamb**  
jlamb@  
oaheelectric.com

Oahe Electric Cooperative held its annual meeting Saturday, Sept. 18, at Sully Buttes High School in Onida. We had 300 members in attendance and served almost 550 meals. We thank all that helped setup, serve the meal, and pack up after the meeting was over!

A recap of the year for Oahe Electric Cooperative includes lower than expected winter sales due to a mild January, and

higher than expected summer sales picked up in scorching June and July. We also experienced an Emergency Energy Alert from our Regional Transmission Organization, Southwest Power Pool, on Feb. 16 due to severe cold temperatures, low wind conditions and frozen natural gas pipelines down south. This alert advised voluntary load shed from all people within the Midwest to prevent forced curtailment of services. Oahe Electric Members voluntarily shed large amounts of industrial and commercial load during this time to keep power to schools and homes and we appreciate and applaud your efforts in looking out for the membership.

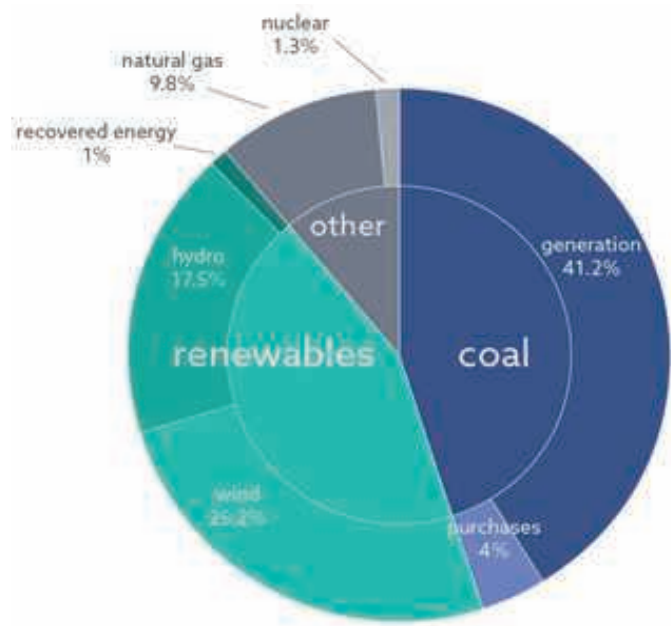
**With fall coming on fast and harvest and hunting season approaching, be safe in the fields. Check equipment for issues routinely to prevent injury or fires, wear safety glasses and ear plugs when hunting and enjoy your fall!**

The concern from Oahe Electric Cooperative and other cooperatives within the Basin and East River Electric families is a push for the entire region to maintain an 'All of the Above' genera-

tion mix. As of today, Oahe Electric's power mix is primarily combustible fuels with additions of hydropower from the dams and wind and solar renewables when available at affordable pricing (as seen below).

Oahe Electric Cooperative will continue to push for an all-of-the above generation mix to maintain load stability during severe temperature conditions while attaining renewables as available when it is price-incentivized for our membership.

Oahe Electric sent out surveys regarding the annual meeting, and we encourage you to fill these surveys out for a chance at additional bill credits! With fall coming on fast and harvest and hunting season approaching, be safe in the fields. Check equipment for issues routinely to prevent injury or fires, wear safety glasses and ear plugs when hunting, and enjoy your fall! Thank you for being the best members we could ask for and God Bless you and your families!



## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### OAHE ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 019-042)

#### Board of Directors:

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Brandon Haag – Assistant Secretary  
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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.

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## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

This month's question is:

How many registered members were there at the 70th annual meeting?

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!

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH WINNER

The Question of the Month winners for the September 2021 publication were John and Beth Bowman. They correctly answered the question, "Which animal is responsible for the most power blinks nationwide?" The answer was squirrels, as they were responsible for more than 1,200 outages in 2019!

Congratulations and we hope you enjoyed your prizes!

## LIKE US!

You can now keep in touch with your cooperative on Facebook! We will share with you the latest news, events, power outage updates, energy efficiency tips, money-saving rebates, load management information, legislative alerts, safety tips and much more!

We hope you "like" Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. on Facebook!

# A house full of Thanksgiving safety

Nearly every household uses extra electricity during the holidays - for cooking, decorating and heating. Take extra care to use electricity safely and to ask family members and house-guests to do the same. Here are some tips:

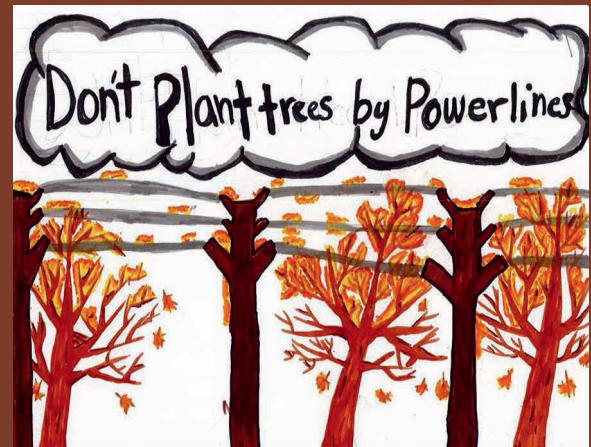
- Stay in the kitchen when broiling or doing any stovetop cooking.
- Keep children well away from cooking appliances while the appliances are in use.
- Keep towels, potholders and curtains away from hot surfaces in your kitchen.
- One of the riskiest holiday behaviors is overloading your electrical outlets. You will overload your wall outlets if you string strand after strand of holiday lights together and plug them into an extension cord that you plug into an outlet.
- Plugging multiple strands of cords into a power strip does not add any juice to the electrical circuit that powers the outlet you plug the strip into.
- Check decorative lights for damaged cords, plugs and sockets. Replace anything that's frayed, cracked or broken. Buy cords that are certified by UL; look for the UL symbol on the package.
- Don't run extension cords under rugs, carpets or baseboards, or anywhere they can be a tripping hazard.
- Only use decorations and cords outdoors that are properly rated for outdoor use.
- When you put up outdoor decorations, do not string lights in trees near power lines. Fasten outdoor lights carefully and securely with clips, never nails or tacks.
- Keep electric lights away from decorative metal trees.
- Keep all light strings and other decorations away from pets so they don't get tangled in them or chew the wires.
- Keep all decorations - and everything else - at least three feet away from heat sources such as fireplaces and space heaters.
- Always turn off your decorations when you leave home and when you're sleeping.
- Make sure smoke detectors are present and working properly.
- Use space heaters properly and safely. Keep them out of high-traffic areas and at least three feet from anything that can burn.
- Do not leave a space heater running unattended. Turn off space heaters and unplug them when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Never leave an open flame, including your fireplace or a candle, unattended.

## GOVERNOR'S STUDENT ART COMPETITION



The Governor's Office and the South Dakota Arts Council invite students to participate in the Governor's Student Art Competition.

Students in K-12 will compete in four age divisions. Winning entries will be exhibited in the State Capitol from January through September 2022. Submission deadline is Nov. 12, 2021. All artwork is to be submitted electronically as a high-resolution jpeg image, along with the Artwork Submission Form and the Authorization Release Form. Competition guidelines, instructions and all necessary forms are accessible at [https://artscouncil.sd.gov/events/student\\_art\\_Main.aspx](https://artscouncil.sd.gov/events/student_art_Main.aspx). Contact Rebecca.cruse@state.sd.us or call 605-773-3301 for details.



### Don't plant trees by power lines

Jazzlyn Magera

Jazzlyn shares good advice to avoid planting trees near power lines. Jazzlyn attends Brandon Elementary School and is the daughter of Rachel Schettler. They are members of Sioux Valley Energy.

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.



# SLOW COOKING BRINGS OUT FLAVORS OF FALL

## BABY BACK RIBS

### Ingredients:

2-1/2 lbs. pork baby back ribs, cut into eight pieces  
5 cups water  
1 med. onion, sliced  
2 celery ribs, cut in half  
2 tsps. minced garlic, divided  
1 tsp. whole peppercorns  
1/2 cup barbecue sauce  
1/4 cup plum sauce (Asian section of grocery store)  
Dash of hot pepper sauce

### METHOD

Place ribs in a 5-qt. slow cooker. Add water, onion, celery, 1 tsp. garlic and peppercorns. Cover and cook on low for six hours or until meat is tender. In a small saucepan, combine the barbecue sauce, plum sauce, hot pepper sauce and remaining garlic. Cook and stir over medium heat for five minutes or until heated through. Remove ribs. Discard cooking juices and vegetables. Coat grill rack with nonstick cooking spray before starting grill. Brush ribs with sauce. Grill, uncovered, over medium low heat for 8-10 minutes or until browned, turning occasionally and brushing with remaining sauce. Can also be finished in the oven using the broil setting.

**Melissa Roerig, Sioux Falls**

## CHILI BEEF AND PASTA

### Ingredients:

2 lbs. lean ground beef  
2 packages McCormick® Chili Seasoning Mix  
1 can (14.5 oz.) diced tomatoes  
2 cans (8 oz. each) tomato sauce  
1 cup coarsely chopped bell pepper  
1 cup frozen or canned whole kernel corn  
1 cup elbow macaroni, cooked and drained (about 2.25 cups)  
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

### METHOD

Cook ground beef in large skillet on medium-high heat until no longer pink; drain. Place in slow cooker. Stir in Seasoning Mix, tomatoes, tomato sauce, bell pepper and corn until well blended. Cover. Cook six hours on low or three hours on high. Stir in cheese and cooked macaroni during the last 10 minutes of cooking.

**mccormick.com**

## WHITE PHEASANT CHILI

### Ingredients:

3 boneless pheasants cooked and shredded  
1 large onion chopped  
4 Tbsps. butter  
1/4 cup flour  
3/4 cup chicken broth  
2 cups half and half  
2 cans Navy beans  
1 tsp. Tabasco sauce  
1-1/2 tsp. chili powder  
1 tsp. cumin  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. pepper  
1-2 jalapeno peppers  
1-1/2 cups Monterrey jack cheese  
1/2 cup sour cream

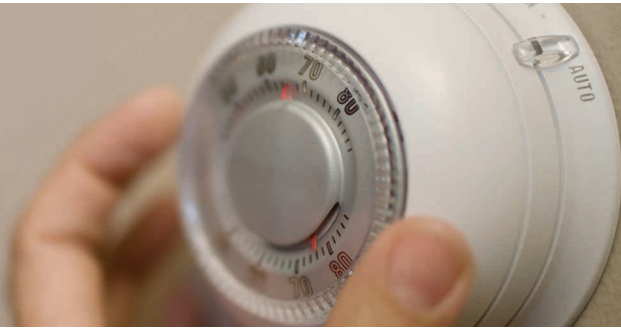
### METHOD

Cook and shred pheasant. Set aside. Cook onion with 2 Tbsps. butter until soft, add flour and remaining butter, whisking constantly. Add broth and half and half while whisking. Bring to boil for 5 minutes, or until onions are tender. Put in crockpot and add remaining ingredients. Put on high heat for one hour then reduce to low heat for one to two hours.

**Alice DeHaai, Keystone**

Please send your favorite holiday dessert 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.

# STAY WARM AND LOWER YOUR BILL



**Valerie Marso**  
vmarso@  
oaheelectric.com

At one time or another, I would venture to guess that most of us have all fallen on some hard times. Unfortunately, hard times may require that you pick and choose which bills get paid. If you are

at a point that you are questioning whether or not your electric bill is going to get paid, please call the office and let's have a discussion. Sooner rather than later. After you are disconnected is not the time to start talking about payment arrangements.

**We will work with you as much as possible to help get you through whatever bump in life you may be experiencing.**

We will be able to help you much better if you call as soon as you are aware that there might be an issue. There are also some programs available that may be able to assist with getting your bill paid:

### **Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)**

This program helps eligible South Dakotans pay for home heating costs for natural gas, electric heat, propane and fuel oil. If heating costs are included in your rent, you may also be eligible. You will need to complete an application by emailing

LIEAPApp@state.sd.us or calling 1.800.233.8503 or visiting the Department of Social Services website. If you have electric heat, your benefit amount will be applied from Oct. 1 through May 15.

### **Pierre Area Referral Service (PARS)**

PARS emergency program is designed to assist individuals who are experiencing short-term financial difficulties or those who are in crisis due to such things as age, disability, mental and/or medical condition. Based on availability of funds, assistance may be made for a variety of items including utilities. You will need to call their office (at this time they are not allowing any walk-ins for the safety of their staff and volunteers) at 605.224.8731 for details on how to complete an application.

There are more programs available, but these are some that we work with on a frequent basis. Please feel free to explore other options that may be accessible to you.

If you need to make a payment arrangement with Oahe Electric, there is no application but it does require communication from you. We will work with you as much as possible to help get you through whatever bump in life you may be experiencing.

Even if you aren't going through hard times but want to find ways to keep your bill low, there are several things you can control and do to your home to help with that. The internet is a great resource for this but to name a few:

1. Use cold water to wash your clothes.

2. Only run the clothes or dish washer when full.
3. Adjust your thermostat or get a programmable one so your heating/cooling system isn't working near as hard when you aren't even there to enjoy it.
4. Check old appliances – if they are running constantly, they are probably costing you an arm and a leg and upgrading will save you money in the long run.
5. Check seals on doors and windows for leaks.

We also offer energy audit services at no charge for our members. As always, please call the office or send us an email if you have any questions at all.

## THANK YOU

Oahe Electric Co-op Team,  
Thank you so much for joining the fight, Rev Up For A Cure, this year. The evening of love, hope and laughter happens due to your gift of HOPE. We hope to see you the evening of Oct. 16 for a one of a kind event.

Again Thank You,  
-Amanda

Thank you for your extremely generous donation from your "Round Up" Program. That was so kind of you!

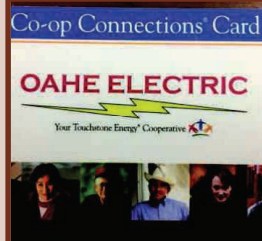
-PAWS Animal Rescue

Thank you for the question of the month prizes! We will put them to good use.

-Beth Bowman

### Statement of Non-Discrimination

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Person with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202)720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800)877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: 1.) mail - U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; 2.) fax: (202) 690-7442; or 3.) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.



## Cooperative Connections Card Program Vendors

### Automotive

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

### Food/Convenience Store

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

### Health/Fitness and Beauty

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

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

<b>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.
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### Retail

<b>Fastenal</b>	605-224-4060	Pierre	10% off of fasteners and 5% off on all other products
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# A PLACE TO REST

The South Dakota Veterans Cemetery located northeast of Sioux Falls provides a new resting place for U.S. military veterans and their families. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

## State Veterans Cemetery in Sioux Falls opens new options for military families

**Billy Gibson**

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

A dozen distraught family members surrounded the casket conspicuously draped with a bright, crisp American flag. The brilliant hues of red, white and blue stood in stark contrast to the slate gray sky hanging overhead and the slight chill that filled the air.

As the gathered mourners paid their last respects and turned back toward the administration building at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery, the clouds suddenly burst open and a heavy rain began to fall.

“Well, your daddy was a rancher,” the grieving widow said to her son as they made their way down the hillside. “A good rain is exactly what he would have wanted. This would have made him smile.”

Erin Brown is director of the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery (SDVC) located northeast of Sioux Falls and she often hears stories that family members share about their loved ones who arrive at their final resting

place there. A military veteran herself, Brown said those stories bring added meaning and significance to her work.

“The veterans – and their families – are very important to us,” she said. “When I hear those kinds of stories and hear them describe a lifetime of memories and all the good times they had together, it reinforces the idea that there’s real value in what we’re doing here at the cemetery.”

The SDVC is the first federally funded, state-owned and operated veterans cemetery in the state, although there is no residency requirement for military veterans to be interred there. The Black Hills National Cemetery is located a few miles east of Sturgis.

The facility is located on 60 acres donated by the City of Sioux Falls and ultimately will have enough space for over 28,000 casket grave sites, cremation grave sites, a columbarium for cremated remains and a scattering garden. More than 600 in-ground crypts have already been installed. The facility was made possible by more

than \$7 million in federal money, state funds and private donations.

Since the ribbon-cutting ceremony last Memorial Day, the cemetery has seen a steady stream of burials. There were four on a recent Friday.

SDVC staff works with the families to arrange details of the burial services which typically include a final pre-service consultation with the families, a processional to the committal shelter, a 15-20 minute service, folding and presentation of the flag, and a rifle salute and Taps presented by local military-related volunteer organizations.







Members of the grounds crew are all veterans and can relate to military families in their time of grief.

Clarence Kooistra is one of those volunteers who donates his time to make sure veterans receive a proper burial and their families receive the proper respect. He's a member of the VFW Post 628 Honor Guard based in Sioux Falls.

"I just feel it's very important that these men and women are treated with the respect they deserve for the sacrifices they've made to preserve our freedoms and democracy in our country," Kooistra said. "It's a privilege for me to come out here and do this for the families."

While construction commenced on the cemetery two years ago, it took several years to bring the project to fruition. At the time the first federal grant application was submitted in 2017, Brown was serving as a veterans program manager in the State Department of Veteran's Affairs helping veterans navigate through the federal bureaucracy to receive their rightful benefits. She often found, however, that some of the former soldiers would balk at the benefits "so that someone they felt needed it more than them could get it."

When the cemetery director position opened up, she jumped at the chance to find another way to help veterans.

In performing her job, Brown

calls on her own military experience, which includes joining the Minnesota National Guard in high school and receiving advanced individual training at Fort Lee in Virginia. She returned and attended college for three years before getting deployed to Iraq for nearly two years.

She worked in supply management at a Marine base between Ramadi and Fallujah and eventually left the service as an E-5.

When she and her staff are interacting with veterans and their families, they have little difficulty relating to them on a personal basis.

"The military is the kind of experience that you don't know you want or need until you have it," she said. "All of those experiences have put me into one of the most rewarding jobs I've been able to do. Without it, I wouldn't be able to relate to the families and get the help they need and have earned. Once they realize I'm also a veteran, things change and they see me differently."

Brown and her staff - all of whom are veterans themselves - have

developed personal relationships with the families whose loved ones are interred at the facility. During their visits to the cemetery, family members often express their gratitude to the staff for their work in keeping the facility well maintained and give updates on how the family is faring and if they have any further needs.

Brown said she is looking toward the future with optimism for the



The Committal Shelter is the site of many outdoor funeral services for veterans.

cemetery and its mission, especially after the South Dakota Veterans Council last summer announced a \$2.1 million donation from philanthropist T. Denny Sanford, PREMIER Bankcard CEO Miles Beacom and his wife Lisa.

For more information, visit <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteranscemetery/>.





300 members registered between the outside and inside meetings.

# 70TH ANNUAL MEETING HELD

Oahe Electric held its 70th annual meeting at the high school in Onida, S.D., on Saturday, Sept. 18, 2021. This year, members had the option to attend a drive thru or the traditional style meeting indoors. There were 300 registered members, which is similar in number to the past few years.

Whether attending via the drive thru or traditional indoor meeting, a hamburger dinner was served to 539 attendees. The Oahe Electric linemen were manning the grill and the Sully Buttes Senior Class delivered the sack lunches.

Included in this year's registration packet was a program with the 2020 financials along with reports from Office Manager Valerie Marso, Operations Manager Matthew Eldridge, and Member Services Manager Russ Hohn. There was

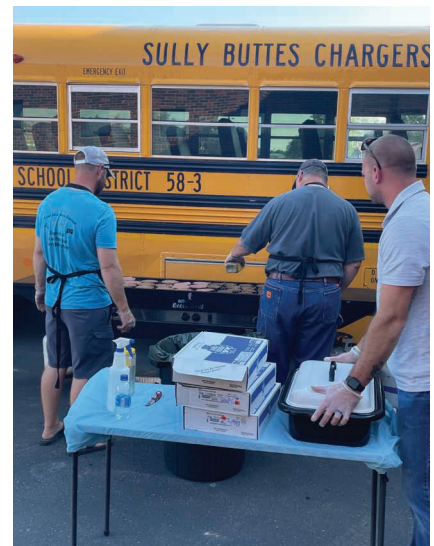
also a program containing director candidate speeches, as there were five members running for two director positions. Director candidates included Ken Gillaspie, Brandon Haag, Blaine Livermont, Ross Sperry and Troy Wiebe.

Polls were open from 5-7 p.m. After polls closed, the vote counting began, as well as the business meeting. After calling the meeting to order, President Jim Feller called on Pastor John Fette to perform the invocation. This was followed by Vice President Yackley presenting Years of Service awards to Tory Smith, Lineman, 20 years; and Megan Jaeger, Billing Clerk, 10 years.

In video presentations Office Manager Marso reported on how the cooperative has both changed and stayed the same over the past twenty years, as well as the financial condition of the cooperative. Operations Manager Eldridge introduced our line department and reported on the projects they have worked on in the last year, and Members Services Manager Hohn talked about cooperatives giving back to their communities, both here and abroad.

General Manager Jordan Lamb then took the podium, introducing himself and reporting on the cooperative, as well as the SPP, East River Electric Power Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

President Feller called for new business; there was none, after which he called for unfinished business, which there was none of either.



Oahe Electric line crew cooked the hamburgers and coordinated the meal serving.

At this time, Cooperative Attorney David Larson announced the successful candidates of the board election: Brandon Haag and Ross Sperry. Ross has been an Oahe Electric board member for fifteen years and we are happy to have his continued leadership on the board. Brandon is newly elected to his position, and we welcome the opportunity to work with him on the future of the cooperative.

We would like to sincerely thank Blaine Livermont for his years of commitment to the cooperative and wish him all the best with his future endeavors.

Thank you to all who came and helped to make this year's annual meeting such a great success!

539 meals were served by the Sully Buttes Senior Class.





## ANNUAL MEETING DOOR PRIZE WINNERS

Thank you to all our members who took time out of their busy schedules to attend their 70th annual meeting. All members that attended the meeting saw a \$20 credit on the bill they received in October. In addition to those credits, we drew live on Facebook for additional energy credit door prizes. We'd like to thank our suppliers and business partners for sponsoring some of these bill credits – we appreciate their support and look forward to working with them into the future!

The winners of the door prizes were:

- **\$50** – Courtesy of EIR Testing and Maintenance Co. of Farmington, Minn. – **Robert Arbach**
- **\$75** – Sponsored by East River Federal Credit Union of Madison, S.D. – **Oahe Trails Resort**
- **\$75** – Courtesy of Oahe Electric Cooperative – **Sargent Ranch Lodge LLC**
- **\$100** – Sponsored by Border States Electric of Rapid City, S.D. – **Douglas Holter**
- **\$100** – Courtesy of Jerry's Electric of Colman, S.D. – **Penny Wagoner**
- **\$100** – Sponsored by K & H Electric of Linton, N.D. – **David Rinehart**
- **\$250 (x2)** – Courtesy of First Dakota National Bank of Pierre, S.D. – **Thomas Ranch and David Mercer**
- **\$500 (x2)** – Sponsored by Oahe Electric Cooperative – **Douglas Hillmer and Lenny Degenstein**
- **\$750 (x2)** – Courtesy of Oahe Electric Cooperative – **Karla O'Day and Ken Gillaspie**

Congratulations to all our winning members!

## Employees Receive CPR, AED and First Aid Training

In September, Oahe Electric employees were certified in CPR and First Aid. Oahe Electric provides CPR and AED training every year, and first aid training every other year, to keep employees up-to-date on any procedure changes.

This is also a good opportunity for Oahe Electric to remind the community of Blunt and the surrounding area that there is an AED in our social room that is available during business hours (Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.) for any resident that may have need of it.

## Do I Really Need One?



**Russ Hohn**  
rhohn@  
oaheelectric.com

The importance of having a UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply) in your home or office has many positives. A UPS is a device with two main functions. It is an emergency power system that provides a backup energy source during utility outages. A UPS can keep a system operating through an outage, or it can allow you enough time to shut your equipment off to prevent damage. It also prevents against power surges or sags that can damage sensitive equipment.

Most computers today are virtually free of moving parts and can better withstand power failures. However, equipment from four years ago or older is at high risk for damage or data loss. UPS systems are an essential solution that offer reliability and further enhance your business. Extreme weather events, such as the Texas winter storm in February 2021 stressed the importance of having quick access to backup power sources. A UPS system would not have been able to last the duration of this storm, however it would have allowed enough time for data to be saved and provide a favorable method of shutting down.



There are three types of UPS. Single conversion, double conversion and multi conversion. Single conversion Standby UPSs are the most widely used. These units are built for consumer electronics, surveillance and security systems, banking and point of sales installations. Standby devices detect input power and switch to battery when “undervoltage” is detected. These units also have built in surge protection. Double conversion systems also called “online” units convert power twice. In the first step, the input AC power is converted to DC and fed to an inverter. Then the DC power is converted back to AC and sent to the output to feed the equipment which is connected. Again, this system watches for input power to fall below its tolerance level. This type of UPS achieves a high level of connected component isolation from outside utility power and is recommended for critical IT infrastructure. Multi-mode systems as the name reflects, uses features from single and double conversion systems to achieve greater protection. This unit operates as line interactive with normal power. In case of power sag or surge, this unit changes to double conversion mode to better isolate equipment. A complete loss of power will trigger this unit to act as a standby and uses its battery power.

When searching for a UPS, make sure the unit is UL listed. Thank you for your patronage and support, God Bless!

# THE FIRST TO ACT



The state's emergency medical services workforce declined 30 percent last year, though some are still eager to serve.

## Though rural South Dakota is experiencing a shortage of first responders, some are still eager to bear the responsibility

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The early morning fog had already settled in heavy and thick as a damp blanket when Joey Denison pulled out of his driveway in Lake Norden. He was headed to Lake Preston for his job as an electric lineman and just happened to be fresh off earning his paramedic license in his spare time.

Within just a few minutes of driving along Hwy. 81, the blurry image of a wrecked semi came into view through the haze. The rig was overturned and rested across the roadway. At first blush, the scene appeared to be a one-vehicle accident, but Denison soon saw the small pickup that was crushed beneath the trailer.

When he got close enough to peer inside the vehicle, he saw a young woman who had clearly sustained severe damage to her skull. His four years of training through EMT and paramedic school kicked into high gear.

"There were cars still running into the semi from the other side so I positioned

my truck where no one could run into her car," Denison recalled. "Then I pulled her car out from underneath the trailer with my truck. I could see her head was shattered and someone had already called 911 to report that she was dead. Eventually, we were able to get her out with the Jaws of Life and transport her to the hospital in Madison."

The young lady made a full recovery and she and Denison still stay in contact three years later.

Denison doesn't characterize his actions as heroic; he sees his response as something that neighbors and citizens simply do for one another. Spurred on by his passion for helping others, Denison began his EMT training seven years ago and now volunteers his services in Lake Norden and the surrounding area.

"I always kind of regretted not going into the military, so this is my way of being a community servant," he said.

These days he teaches classes in emergency training and notes a shortage of qualified volunteers to staff rural first responder operations.

According to the South Dakota Department of Health, over the past year the active EMS workforce has declined 30 percent.

Denison said assumptions sometimes depart from reality when it comes to EMS work, and he encourages those who have a penchant for serving others to consider first responder training.



Joey Denison says emergency response work is both challenging and rewarding.

"The physical act of rendering first aid is a lot of repetitive training and muscle memory, but people think it's too complex. If you can catch a baseball, you can put your hand over a cut. It's not that hard," he said. "We can't be afraid to help someone in need in an emergency situation. Someday it could be you who needs the help."



# A LIFETIME OF CO-OP SERVICE TO MEMBERS

*Co-op leaders recognized at SDAC Hall of Fame banquet*

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Harry Thomas still remembers turning on the “power switch” for the first time at his home when he was a youngster.

That was made possible by his local electric cooperative, and for Thomas it was a life lesson about the great things that can happen through co-op organizations. He went on to serve for nearly four decades on the board of Venture Communications and was one of four recent inductees into the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives Hall of Fame.

Thomas and Paul Symens were recognized as 2021 inductees at the ceremony held in Watertown Sept. 22, while Chuck Birkholt and Dan Lindblom were honored as 2020 inductees. Last year’s banquet was canceled due to the pandemic.

“I’ve been around cooperative systems all my life,” Thomas said. “I remember when the co-op brought power to the farm and when Sully Buttes built the first telephone line out there. Those things would not have happened if not for cooperatives. The Bell companies built in the towns, but they had no



Inducted into the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives Hall of Fame were Harry Thomas, Chuck Birkholt and Paul Symens. Not shown is Dan Lindblom, who was unable to attend the induction ceremony in Watertown.

interest in going into the country.”

Symens served on the board at Lake Region Electric in Webster before he was elected to the state Legislature in 1987 and again in 1996. He was a board member for Farmers Union Marketing and Processing for 36 years.

“I’ve put in a lot of time with cooperatives and I know how co-ops work. I was raised in co-ops and it has been a pleasure to be a part of that process. The magic of co-ops is people working together to help each other, and as long as board and management do their jobs, it’s going to be successful.”

Symens said his advice for the younger generation of co-op leaders would be to learn about the history of cooperatives, how they were founded and why they exist.

“Learning from history will teach you a lot and keep you from making mistakes,” he said.

Birkholt started his cooperative career

as a laborer at Cam Wal Electric in Selby. He went to work “digging holes and setting poles” for 85 cents an hour until he discovered he could make more money as a lineman.

He worked at the co-op for 45 years, the last eight as general manager. He went on to serve on the board at Venture Communications for the past 21 years.

“I told my wife I always wanted to see



Hall of Fame inductee Chuck Birkholt addresses the audience at the Watertown Event Center.

what it was like on the other side of the board table,” he said. “But I think she just wanted me out of the house.”

Lindblom, a long-time board member at Black Hills Electric in Custer, was unable to attend the banquet.

# HUNTING FOR THE HUNGRY

Sportsmen Against Hunger is nearing one million pounds of game meat donated to food banks across the state since 1993.

## South Dakota hunters donate game meat for families in need through Sportsmen Against Hunger program

**Billy Gibson**

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

One million pounds of meat is an awful lot of protein...and a lot of goose burgers.

The organization Sportsmen Against Hunger is closing in on one million pounds of wild game donated to the needy since the program was founded in 1993 by Dr. Jeff Olson and Dr. Tom Kafka.

For nearly three decades, generous hunters throughout the state have given away a variety of game meat including deer, antelope, elk, pheasant, grouse and geese.

According to Olson, the goose meat has been quite a hit.

“Apparently, there are a lot of people who like to eat goose burgers,” he said. “It may not

sound too appetizing when you think about it, but it’s not bad and a lot of the people who receive our donations say it’s great. They’ve developed quite a taste for it.”

Olson recalls that even when he launched the program he was completely oblivious to how many people in the state were going to bed hungry every night.

“We’re reaching one million pounds of meat our hunters and processors have donated over the years, but there are so many who are food insecure in our state that we could use another several million and still not meet the need,” he said.

Olson is accustomed to working around a maze of regulations, restrictions and prohibitions, noting “there’s a new and different hurdle we have to jump every year.”

Presently, the program is facing the challenge of finding enough plants to process the donated animals. Just a few years ago, there were nearly 50 wild game processors on the list of licensed receiving plants. Today there are just 14.

Olson cites pandemic-related problems in the industry and a dearth of available workers. The plants have been forced to take domestic animals for production and push donated wild game to the back of the line.

Ron Fowler has served as field director for the program since 2005 when he retired from South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks as a game management specialist after 35 years. He works out the details of the operation, recruits processors and hunters to participate and sorts through the red tape of state and federal regulations, health precautions, quality control and the program’s certification system.

He explained that when a hunter





decides to donate a doe deer or antelope, they fill out a certificate and deliver it to any processor in the state that's on the prearranged receiving list. The certificate covers \$75 of the processing fee while the hunter is responsible for any balance, though some facilities will accept the certificate as full payment. In the case of bucks, the hunter is responsible for the entire balance, which could run to more than \$100. Processors collect the certificates



Ron Fowler, left, delivers a shipment of donated venison to a Feeding South Dakota warehouse facility.



Pictured at left, South Dakota fishermen donated 320 pounds of cleaned walleye in 2020. Above, Dr. Jeff Olson presents a plaque to Bruce Anderson, president of the Western Buffalo Company in Rapid City, for participating in the Sportsmen Against Hunger program. Shown far left is SAH Board Member Tom Weaver. Far right is SAH field director Ron Fowler.

and turn them in at the end of the season for payment.

Fowler said the policy is in place to help control and manage the state's deer population. He said some hunters will obtain more than one deer license, keep one for themselves and donate the others.

"When the program started, we had no funds to cover any of the hunter's cost, but then we created a foundation and now we can pay for does, plus we provide the casing for processors and pay for the cost of getting the meat to the food banks where it's distributed to those who need it."

Fowler said these days most donated venison is coming from deer taken within, or close to, city limits. Several larger cities and towns have allowed deer to be taken in close proximity of their borders simply to hold the deer population down and keep them out of yards, gardens and streets. The cost of processing those animals is typically shared with the local government.

Sportsmen Against Hunger is also seeing more anglers getting in on the action. More than 300 lbs. of cleaned walleye has been donated in the past year. At this year's Governor's Cup Walleye Fishing Tournament, for instance, nearly 1,000 fish went to the needy.

Most of the cleaning is done by local volunteers and members of sportsmen clubs.

Thousands of pheasants are also donated each year, often by those who are visiting the state and can't take home their kill.

Fowler maintains a steady drum beat of encouraging hunters to donate their game even though he knows the incentives to do so are diminishing. He notes that in earlier times processors weren't hard to find, but now a hunter may have to drive some distance to the nearest facility.

"It used to be more convenient for hunters when you didn't have to drive across the state to find a processor, but people are still hungry," he said.

Fowler said his work can often be challenging, but he stays motivated by remembering that there's always a need.

"There are so many families in our state that struggle and they need help," he said. "It all comes down to a warm, fuzzy thing for me. The work is a little more than I first anticipated but I can't just ignore it when I see an opportunity to help someone who needs it. We get a lot of positive feedback from our processors and the people we help are very grateful."



**Thanksgiving**  
November 25, 2021

To have your event listed on this page, send complete information, including date, event, place and contact to your local electric cooperative. Include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Information must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to your event. Please call ahead to confirm date, time and location of event.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

#### **OCTOBER 22-23**

**Governor's South Dakota Showcase**  
1201 N West Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-773-3301

#### **OCTOBER 22-24, 28-30**

**A Little Piece of Heaven**  
Grand Opera House, Pierre, SD, call 605-224-7826 to purchase tickets

#### **OCTOBER 23**

**Aberdeen Oktoberfest**  
Aberdeen Civic Arena, Aberdeen, SD, 605-380-8448

#### **OCTOBER 29-30**

**Deadweird**  
Various Locations, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

#### **OCTOBER 30**

**16th Holiday Shopping Extravaganza**  
Davison County Fairgrounds, Mitchell, SD, call Cindy at 605-999-8563 for more info

#### **OCTOBER 30**

**Scare in the Square**  
Main Street Square, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

#### **OCTOBER 30**

**Yankton's Harvest Halloween**  
Downtown, Yankton, SD, email [mandi@bostonsyankton.com](mailto:mandi@bostonsyankton.com) for more info

#### **OCTOBER 31**

**Halloween Bash Weekend at Mazing Acres Pumpkin Patch**  
30851 433rd Avenue, Yankton, SD, 605-760-2759

#### **NOVEMBER 4**

**Chris Young Famous Friends Tour**  
Summit Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

#### **NOVEMBER 6**

**Cyrus Steele Comedy Show**  
Homestead Opera House, Lead, SD, visit <https://www.homesteadoperahouse.org/> for more info and tickets

#### **NOVEMBER 5-7, 12-14, 19-21**

**Julius Caesar**  
Black Hills Playhouse, Rapid City, SD, visit <https://www.bhct.org/> for more info and tickets

#### **NOVEMBER 12-13**

**Sioux Empire Arts and Crafts Show**  
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-332-6000

#### **NOVEMBER 13**

**Christmas at the Homestead**  
Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve, North Sioux City, SD, 605-232-0873

#### **NOVEMBER 13**

**Deadwood's Big Whiskey Fest**  
Main Street, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

#### **NOVEMBER 13**

**Sisseton Area Merchants and Crafters Holiday Open House Extravaganza**  
Sisseton, SD, call Beverly at 605-698-7425 for more info

#### **NOVEMBER 19-20**

**Holiday Arts Christmas Show**  
Masonic Hall, Mitchell, SD, 605-359-2049

#### **NOVEMBER 20**

**Little Norge Fest: A Taste of Scandinavia**  
Canyon Lake Activity Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-342-4226

#### **NOVEMBER 26**

**Parade of Lights**  
Dakota Avenue, Huron, SD, 605-352-0000

#### **NOVEMBER 26-28**

**Beautiful - The Carole King Musical**  
Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, visit <https://www.washingtonpavilion.org/> for more info and tickets

#### **NOVEMBER 27**

**Holiday Celebration and Winter Market/Festival of Lights Parade**  
Downtown, Rapid City, SD, 605-381-4204

#### **DECEMBER 2**

**Christmas on the Prairie**  
526 North Broadway Avenue, Miller, SD, 605-853-3098

#### **DECEMBER 3**

**Handel's Messiah**  
First Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

#### **DECEMBER 4**

**Rapid City Garden Club's Wreath & Centerpiece Sale**  
Central States Fairgrounds, Rapid City, SD, 605-343-0710

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