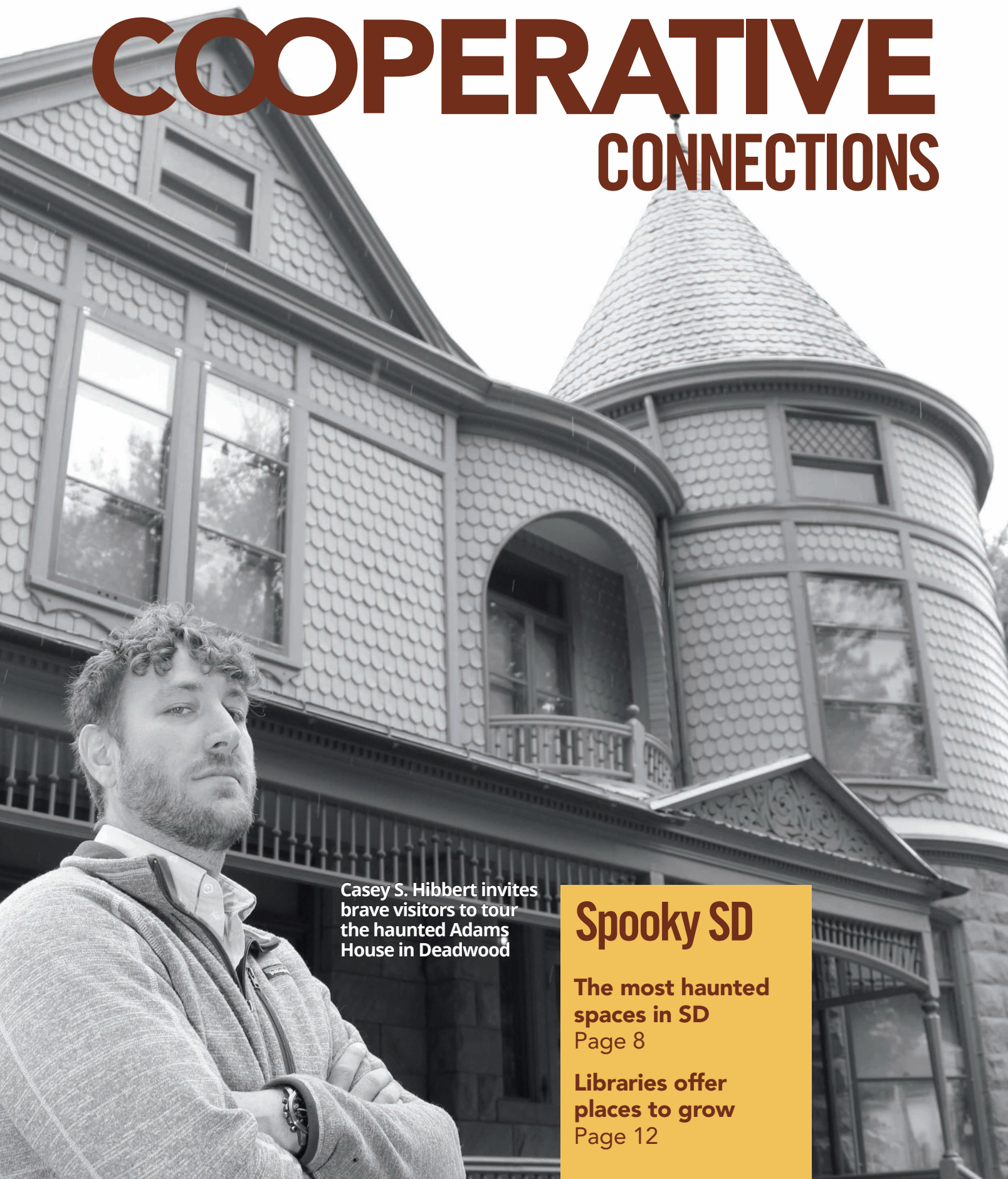




# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Casey S. Hibbert invites  
brave visitors to tour  
the haunted Adams  
House in Deadwood

## Spooky SD

The most haunted  
spaces in SD

Page 8

Libraries offer  
places to grow

Page 12

# A Busy Year at Oahe Electric Cooperative



**Jordan Lamb**  
jlamb@  
oaheelectric.com

I must admit I am surprised how fast things can change. Just a short year ago, the economy experienced a major set back from COVID-19. Employees throughout the country went to remote work environments if possible and entire communities 'locked down' in efforts to slow the spread. With things returning to normal this spring and over the summer, the economy and the people really fired up.

Looking back over the past five or six months here, it is clear Oahe Electric Cooperative has experienced a ramp up in a magnitude we have never seen before. We are on pace to add a record number of new services ranging from residential housing, irrigation, grain bin and grain handling facilities, shops, RV hookups and a range of other services for our members. Existing businesses are expanding operations and the commodity prices are booming, something that historically has bode well for our area.

**Oahe Electric Cooperative continues to look ahead long term with the best interest of our members at the forefront. We are here to provide a service to you at wholesale costs to amplify your quality of life.**

With these new services coming online and the economy coming back, materials have been difficult for us to acquire at times. Transformers are still one of our longer lead times on equipment, but some other materials that have historically been readily available are experiencing shortages as

well (Plumbing PVC Pipe, for instance). We are evaluating risk for our members and pre-ordering longer lead time equipment to protect our membership. Devices that repair outages and equipment for new services are our main priorities.

Oahe Electric Cooperative continues to look ahead long term with the best interest of our members at the forefront. We are here to provide a service to you at wholesale costs to amplify your quality of life. This continues true through good times or bad times where we experience economic hardships or pandemics. Oahe Electric Cooperative sticking together with its neighboring cooperatives provides stability and value in a time where things change quickly, and we intend to keep building a brighter future for our members.

## THANK YOU

"Oahe Electric,  
Thank you for choosing me as your scholarship recipient. I am honored and can assure you that it will be spent toward my tuition this fall at SDSMT.

Thanks again!  
Landon Severson"

"Oahe Electric,  
Thank you so much for choosing me as a scholarship winner. I am very excited to start school in the next few weeks!

Thank you again for this opportunity, I am extremely grateful!  
Elle Hoops"

## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### OAHE ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 019-042)

#### Board of Directors:

James Feller – President

605-962-6207

Blaine Livermont – Treasurer

605-945-2910

Ryan Noyes – Assistant Secretary

605-280-3500

Ross Sperry – Secretary

605-280-7770

Kirk Yackley – Vice President

605-258-2412

#### Employees:

Tyler Arbach – Journeyman Lineman

Mark Bruning – Line Foreman

Matt Eldridge – Operations Manager

Trudie Feldman – Custodian

Brady Gaer – Journeyman Lineman

Sidney Geigle – Journeyman Lineman

Duane Hjelm – Journeyman Lineman

Russ Hohn – Member Services Manager

Sam Irvine – Office Services

Megan Jaeger – Billing Clerk

Jordan Lamb – General Manager

Dan Lettau – Journeyman Lineman

Steve Long – Material/Work Order/AMR Agent

Valerie Marso – Office Manager

Tory Smith – Journeyman Lineman

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#### Our Mission

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

# New Face at Oahe



Please help Oahe Electric welcome new temporary lineman Sidney Geigle!

Sidney is a journeyman lineman who has previously worked at West River Electric (summer help), Keller Construction out of North Dakota, Cam-Wal Electric Cooperative in Selby, S.D., and most recently at the City of Ft. Pierre. He graduated from Wall High School in 2008 before attending Mitchell Technical Institute to train as a journeyman lineman.

Sidney was recently married to Calley Worth of Gettysburg, who currently works for the South Dakota Department of Tourism. They live in rural Pierre with their mini Aussie Paisley and their kitten Ivy.

In his free time, Sidney enjoys hunting, golfing and playing softball.

#### Statement of Non-Discrimination

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

# Practice fire safety this fall and winter

When the weather turns colder, you inevitably start hearing more news about house fires. Even a small fire can be devastating.

Most house fires are caused by cooking that gets out of hand, according to the National Fire Protection Association. But the second most common cause is materials in the home that catch fire. This often occurs when a heat source, such as a space heater or flying embers from a fireplace, comes into contact with fabric or paper, which then ignite. Once a fire starts, it can move so rapidly that even the best efforts to put it out may fail.

When it comes to old houses, the risks are even higher. The older the wood is that a house is constructed of, the faster it burns. Once flames invade the walls of an old house, they move with frightening speed.

Fire protection in any home is absolutely necessary, but even more careful precautions should be taken if your house is older. Here's how to help ensure the safety of your house and everyone in it.

**Smoke detectors.** These are the first and best line of defense; they allow you to get out of the house at the first whiff of smoke. The NFPA found that six in 10 deaths in house fires occurred in homes that did not have working smoke detectors. Go beyond the federal recommendations and put a smoke detector in every room. Stay on the even safer side by opting for those that detect both smoke and carbon monoxide.

**Fire extinguishers.** Keep small fires from getting out of control with fire extinguishers that are easily accessible. Choose several fire extinguishers that are light enough for even kids to handle. Make sure they have simple pull mechanisms that don't require much strength. Look for fire extinguishers that work for various parts of the house; for instance, an extinguisher in the kitchen should be able to handle grease fires.

**Install arc-fault interrupters.** These ingenious little gadgets detect the electrical arcing that occurs when an old wire buried deep in your wall begins to fail. Speak with an electrician about where best to install interrupters and how your particular ones work.

**Maintain it all.** Finally, test everything on a regular basis. Smoke detectors should be tested every month, their batteries replaced every six months, and old smoke detectors replaced every 10 years. Opt to purchase an extra fire extinguisher so your family can take it to the backyard and practice using it.

**Have a plan.** What if the worst happens and those smoke detectors go off? Have a plan to get out fast. Make sure those on upper floors have a fire ladder that can get them safely to the ground. Designate a meeting place for all family members, and practice your safety plan at least once every six months.

Does all of this sound like overkill? It's not! Fire safety is imperative year-round for every home. Your home deserves to have the care required to keep it safe and sturdy, but more importantly, your family deserves the peace of mind that comes from knowing they are protected in an emergency.

## WE'VE GOT SD COVERED



South Dakota's electric cooperatives deliver affordable, reliable power to our members in every corner of the state. But we do so much more!

Visit our Co-op Connections Plus YouTube channel and you'll see co-ops in action providing valuable consumer information at Dakotafest and the South Dakota State Fair. You'll see co-ops at local community events and youth leadership programs. We've got South Dakota covered!

Simply scan the QR code to the right and be sure to subscribe!



### Call 811 before you dig!

#### Fletcher Nutt

Fletcher reminds readers of Cooperative Connections to be sure to call 811 before digging. Fletcher's parents are Donald Nutt and Amanda Larron of Sioux Falls.

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.

# PERFECT PASTA PICKS

## RATTLESNAKE PASTA

### Ingredients:

1/4 c buttery spread  
 2 T all-purpose flour  
 3/4 c dairy milk  
 1/2 c vegetable broth  
 1 T vegetable base  
 1/2 c Parmesan cheese, shredded  
 salt, to taste (optional)  
 pepper, to taste (optional)  
 1/4 c pickled jalapeno slices  
 3 T minced garlic  
 10 oz. cooked rotisserie chicken, shredded  
 1 green bell pepper, sliced  
 1 red bell pepper, sliced  
 1 handful fresh cilantro, minced  
 1 pound whole-wheat linguini, cooked

### METHOD

In medium pot, melt buttery spread then add flour; mix well. Slowly add dairy milk and vegetable broth, stirring well. Add vegetable base and Parmesan cheese; heat slowly until thickened. Add salt and pepper, to taste, if desired. Add jalapenos, garlic, bell peppers and roasted chicken; heat thoroughly. Serve over cooked linguini.

### Family Features

## HERB BAKED CHICKEN AND PASTA

### Ingredients:

2 cups uncooked medium pasta, such as rotini, penne or ziti  
 1 pound uncooked boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch cubes  
 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese, divided  
 1 1/2 cups water  
 1 package McCormick® Italian Herb Baked Chicken & Pasta Seasoning Mix  
 1 can (14 1/2 ounces) petite diced tomatoes, undrained

### METHOD

Preheat oven to 375°F. Place pasta, chicken and 1 cup of the cheese in 13x9-inch baking dish. Mix water, Seasoning Mix and tomatoes until well blended. Pour over pasta and chicken. Stir to coat well, making sure most of the pasta is covered with sauce. Cover with foil. Bake 45 minutes or until chicken is cooked through. Remove foil and stir. Sprinkle with remaining 1 cup cheese. Bake, uncovered, 5 minutes longer or until cheese is melted. Let stand 5 minutes. (Sauce will continue to thicken upon standing.)  
[mccormick.com](http://mccormick.com)

## SPAGHETTI PIE

### Ingredients:

6 oz. spaghetti  
 2 T. butter  
 2 well beaten eggs  
 1/3 c. Parmesan cheese  
 1 c. cottage cheese  
 1 lb. ground beef  
 1/4 c. chopped green pepper  
 1/2 c. chopped onion  
 2 c. chopped tomatoes  
 1 tsp. sugar  
 1 tsp. oregano  
 1/2 tsp. garlic salt  
 1/2 c. shredded mozzarella

### METHOD

Cook spaghetti, drain. Stir in butter, Parmesan cheese and eggs. In buttered 10 inch pie plate, form the mixture into a crust. Spread the cottage cheese over crust. Cook beef until browned. Drain fat. Stir tomatoes, sugar, oregano and garlic salt into cooked beef. Put all in spaghetti crust. Bake 350 degrees for 25 minutes. Add mozzarella and cook five minutes more or until cheese is melted. Bulk sausage may replace ground beef.

Linda Sherry, Sioux Falls

Please send your favorite dairy recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

## ICYMI



**Valerie Marso**  
vmarso@  
oaheelectric.com

Hopefully you got a chance to join us for your 70th annual meeting! But in case you missed it (ICYMI), I spoke about some of the ways your cooperative stats have changed over

the last 20 years. Here is a recap:

Let's start with the balance sheet. A balance sheet shows a quick snapshot of the financial health of a company and communicates its "book value." In 2000 our balance sheet showed about \$15.5 million and as of year-end 2020 displays more than twice that at nearly \$32 million.

Over the last 20 years, our linemen installed an average of 70 new services per year. For a frame of reference, during that same time, a neighboring cooperative similar in size averaged three new services per year. Some cooperatives have a negative growth rate meaning they retire more services than they build. We are fortunate to have consistent growth as this helps with rate stabilization.

In 2000, our kWh sales were 53 million. Jump to 2020 and they nearly tripled to 144 million! This is due in part to a large facility coming online in 2019. Without that load, our sales would have doubled – which is still excellent. To put

this into perspective, in 2020, a residential service consumed an average of 1,590 kWh meaning these sales would be enough to power more than 91,000 houses!

The number of members and meters have increased over the past couple of decades as well! When you first think of members and meters, I would venture to guess that you might think that those numbers are very similar. The reality is one member can have multiple meters. For instance, you might have a shop, a house and a well. You are one member but you have three separate services all with their own meters. Currently we have 3,193 meters and 2,049 members. The number of meters has increased by nearly 700 since 2000. Now, if you think back to how many new services we have installed and do the math, I bet you are thinking – that doesn't quite add up? One important factor in that equation is the removal of old services. As for members, that number has increased by 48 percent since 2000.

If you take the revenue from all of our different rate classes (irrigation, residential, market rate load, sales for resale, commercial, etc) and divide by the number of kWh sold, you get an average cost per kWh. I am happy to say that in 20 years, that figure has increased by less than TWO CENTS! When compared to other common expenses – well, there is no comparison really! On average, rent increased 20 percent (excluding inflation), secondary education tuition increased 50 percent, food increased nearly 40 percent, gas increased 45 percent and the ever so popular

coffee increased 25 percent if you brew your own and 50 percent if you get it to-go from a chain.

The one thing that hasn't changed in the last two decades, is the number of employees we have. In 2000 we had 13 employees and that remains the same today. All of the growth I mentioned above has been accomplished without increasing any staff. That in itself is pretty amazing. Pair that with the fact that we have some of the lowest rates in South Dakota and this is an excellent indicator that we have become extremely proficient at maximizing efficiencies instead of hiring new employees to take on the extra workload that comes with growth.

As a numbers nerd, I have enjoyed analyzing the data that represents some of the change that I have seen since I first started, and I hope that it has provided you with some valuable information as well.

And lastly, I want to mention that in the bill you will receive around Oct. 8, there will be a survey about your annual meeting. Regardless if you were able to attend or not, I encourage you to share your opinion about the listed items (and please send additional notes if there is something that we didn't cover) and return it to us. This will get you entered into a drawing for one of three \$50 bill credits just for taking the time to send it in. By providing us with your feedback, we are able to adjust your meeting and what is offered based on the majority's preference for enhanced enjoyment and participation.

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

This month's question is:

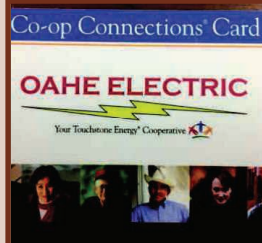
In the past 20 years, on average, how much has the cost of a kWh increased at Oahe Electric?

Please submit your answer via email to [oahe@oaheelectric.com](mailto:oahe@oaheelectric.com) with the subject line of "Question of the Month." A surprise gift will be sent to the winner!

## LIKE US!

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

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



## 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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# SEARCHING FOR SPOOKS

Casey S. Hibbert peers out into the natural world through a window in the top floor of the haunted Adams House in Deadwood. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

## Paranormal enthusiasts search for signs of the hereafter in SD's haunted spaces

**Billy Gibson**

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

Those eerie, creaky footsteps heard coming from the stairwell in Deadwood's historic Adams House could be the restless spirit of former owner W.E. Adams. Or they could simply be a figment of the imagination.

Maurice "Mo" Miller isn't going to try to convince you either way. He just wants to collect evidence that there was in fact an unexplained sound and let you draw your own conclusions.

Miller is founder and lead sleuth of the Black Hills Paranormal Investigations team. He and his six-member squad aren't out to bust ghosts or chase mischievous spirits away. They only want to make a friendly connection with inhabitants of the afterlife, maybe say hello and spend some quality time together.

For the past 10 years, Miller and his crew have been conducting their missions all across the Black Hills area and have logged scores of audio recordings and other evidence they offer as possible proof of the existence of the hereafter.

Every October, Miller invites fearless guests to accompany the investigators on their missions. But he often warns visitors beforehand: Don't come dressed in a Dracula costume or some silly getup - this is serious business.

"This isn't a dog-and-pony show," Miller said. "We never do investigations with the public on Halloween because people will come dressed up as a vampire or a witch and think it's the county fair. The shows on TV are for entertainment. We have fun, but we don't contrive things for entertainment value and promise we'll deliver a ghost in a jar or yank one out into the open with a hook."

Miller developed a passion for the paranormal when he had an unexplained experience as a youngster.

"I was in my bedroom and - I don't know how or why it happened - the closet door blew off the hinges and went flying across the room. My parents thought the door came down because I'd been swinging on it like a monkey. I was a little unnerved and slept on the couch for a month. But I started reading academic material on the subject to see if there was really something to this paranormal thing, and it's been my passion ever since."

The BHPI team has several black metal cases, or "spirit boxes" full of devices, contraptions and gizmos they use to detect the presence of wandering ghosts. There are electromagnetic field meters, binoptic cameras, infrared static cameras, digital audio recorders and more.

They've completed investigations of many haunted places in Deadwood and the surrounding area such as the Homestake Opera House, the Bullock Hotel, the Brothel Deadwood, the Lucky Nugget Casino and others.





Black Hills Paranormal Investigations team member LeAnn Harlan keeps an eye out for spirits during a recent visit to a private residence in Spearfish. Above/right, a device used by BHPI triggers when spirits are detected nearby.

As far as the fear factor goes, Miller said during late-night investigations he often finds himself keeping a close eye on BHPI Case Manager Mark Shadley, a retired police sergeant and seasoned law enforcement officer. If the former lawman starts showing

selling author Ann Charles, but there are many other famously haunted places and spaces around the state.

Author Chad Lewis has been researching paranormal activity in South Dakota, across the region, and around world for nearly 30 years and has written 25 books on the supernatural, including *The South Dakota Road Guide to Haunted Locations* as part of his “Unexplained” series. While Lewis has made many television appearances, he often speaks to local audiences and calls attention to some of the lesser known haunted sites such as Devil’s Gulch in Garretson and Spirit Mound State Historic Prairie near Vermillion.

“Spirit Mound’s legends date back as far as Lewis and Clark. In their journals, they wrote that once arriving upon Spirit Mound, their guides would go no further as they feared small creatures that looked like little people and were very good with poisonous arrows.”

He has explored many haunted sites in the Hills such as the Mount Moriah Cemetery and the Keystone Mount View Cemetery at the foot of Mount Rushmore. But Lewis has also studied spooky places in eastern South Dakota such as the Orpheum Theatre and Old Minnehaha Courthouse in Sioux Falls, Mount Marty College and Dakota

### Visit these haunted sites if you dare

Here is our Top 10 list of the eeriest, scariest, most haunted places in South Dakota. Enter at your own risk:

- Bullock Hotel - Deadwood
- Adams House - Deadwood
- Old Minnehaha Courthouse Museum - Sioux Falls
- Dakota Theater - Yankton
- Hotel Alex Johnson - Rapid City
- Sioux San Hospital - Rapid City
- Lucky Nugget Casino - Deadwood
- Homestake Opera House - Lead
- Eastons Castle - Aberdeen
- Mount Marty College - Yankton



BHPI lead investigator Maurice “Mo” Miller discusses strategy with Deb Sutton and Kayleigh Johnson.

signs of fright or starts heading for the door, then it’s probably time to scam.

The Black Hills area is often considered a hotbed of paranormal activity of the kind depicted in local folklore and in the tales spun by best-

Theatre in Yankton, Eastons Castle in Aberdeen and others.

With Halloween coming up, Lewis encourages anyone interested in all things unexplained to get out and explore haunted sites and also to learn more about the history, lore and culture of different locations.

“I think people should venture out and see things for themselves and make their own determinations,” he said. “If you go out to Spirit Mound, make sure to leave an offering like a shiny rock or candy for the Little People. This will protect you from them getting followed home.”



**Russ Hohn**  
rhohn@  
oaheelectric.com

More than 900 electric cooperatives across the United States provide electricity to more than 42 million Americans. Now, co-op territories have expanded into suburban and

some urban areas of the country, which makes electric co-ops the largest electric utility network in the nation. Community friendly values mixed with the cooperative business model are what make electric co-ops strong. As a not-for-profit entity, members know they can trust their electric co-op because it was created to deliver safe, reliable and affordable electricity to member owners; not to generate money for shareholders.

Back in the 1930s, nine out of ten rural homes in America had no electricity. Going without electricity made for a life of

drudgery. In 1935, President Roosevelt signed the Rural Electrification Act which helped provide federal assistance to achieve electrification in far flung and less populated areas. Rural electrification had a profound impact on the lives of millions of Americans, transforming the way people lived and worked every day.

Rural electrification is an American success story made possible through cooperation! People in rural areas made it happen by working together to gain this important necessity.

Since 1962, NRECA International has empowered more than 160 million people worldwide to improve the quality of life by providing them safe, reliable and affordable electricity. Much the same as when electric co-ops began in America, electricity is now becoming available to far reaches of the world. Accomplished by a diverse team of engineers, rural electrification experts, financial analysts and line work employees

who design and implement this successful program, NRECA International has helped establish more than 250 electric utilities and cooperatives in 48 countries. Millions of people have benefitted from this work and NRECA International remains committed to improving education, healthcare and economic opportunities through this program. America's electric workforce is intimately connected to members, line crew and staff volunteer time and resources as a direct expression of concern for community. Co-op employees who travel far to volunteer their skills come back changed and even more committed to continue the co-op legacy. The direct link between electrification and poverty is undeniable, and NRECA International sees their program as an implementer, role model and guide for efforts to overcome energy and economic poverty.

# 2021 ANNUAL MEETING RECAP: OAHE OPERATIONS



**Matt Eldridge**  
meldridge@  
oaheelectric.com

To start off with, I would like to acquaint you with the line crew here at Oahe Electric.

Our Journeyman Linemen include: Mark Bruning (21 years), who is also our Line Foreman, Tory Smith (20 years), Dan Lettau (19 years), Duane Hjelm (13 years), Tyler Arbach (eight years), Brady Gaer (eight years), and Sid Geigle who is currently a temporary lineman (two months) and our Material Inventory/Work

Order/AMR Agent is Steve Long (six years).

All together our line crew has over 95 years of experience. They work all hours of the day and night, often in hazardous conditions away from their families, going above and beyond to restore power to their communities. These guys are the heart of your cooperative.

Now on to the projects they have been working on this past year. To start the year off, the line crew performed our annual line patrol. We work on line patrol every winter and check for things like branches growing close to power lines, broken insulators, wires frays and phase floaters, among other things. This year, the line patrol was performed in Hughes County. Next year it will be done in Sully County.

This spring we started a project just northwest of Pierre in the Dell Acres area. K&H Construction from Linton, N.D., installed three miles of three-phase underground power line. Our linemen then converted the overhead line to the underground. This project will increase the reliability of service to that area. We are still waiting on some equipment to show up so we can finish this project.

This summer the line crew were kept busy installing several new services. When the line crew were not installing new services they were performing maintenance on the power lines to keep the lights on.



**GOT A SUB METER?  
PLEASE LEAVE THE  
POWER TURNED ON.**

Most of you remember when Oahe Electric was at your home to install the sub meter. This meter allows your heating and cooling usage to be billed at the reduced rate.

A problem that Oahe Electric encounters from year to year is that some of these meters are being shut off. This is done by shutting off a breaker in your service panel and when this happens, the meter cannot record any usage at the reduced rate. Therefore, the electric usage consumed by your heating system is being billed to you at the regular residential rate. This causes two problems.

First, the consumers call with a high bill complaint. Second, Oahe employees have to diagnose the situation.

Oahe will try to contact the homeowner via phone. If the problem cannot be fixed via phone, then we have to visit each site and check breakers, wiring and so on.

Please make certain that all of your electric breakers are turned on.

All electronic equipment has a switch or thermostat that should be used for and during maintenance. **DO NOT SHUT OFF YOUR BREAKERS** unless it's an emergency.

# A PLACE TO GROW

Public libraries across the state continue to serve the needs of their communities as places to go for a wide range of experiences.

## South Dakota's public library system grows and adapts to an ever-changing cultural and technological landscape

**Billy Gibson**

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The state's public library system got its start even before there was a state.

In 1886, three years before South Dakota achieved statehood, the Howard Public Library was chartered and quickly became a point of pride for the people of present-day Miner County.

The contents of the library have long since been relocated to a modern facility in the town's Municipal Building, but the original structure can still be visited at Prairie Village in nearby Madison.

As the first of its kind in the state, the Howard Public Library is still a thriving entity and serves as a testament to the versatility and resiliency of the state's library system. Standing strong through world wars, recessions, depressions, funding pressures, political challenges and

changes in culture and contemporary lifestyles, South Dakota's libraries are still delivering the goods - and the books - in their respective communities.

Mary K. Schlim is the head librarian in Howard and says the community takes a lot of pride in being home to the state's first facility. She takes an optimistic view of the future of libraries...as long as they continue to adapt.

"I think libraries have a bright future," she said. "You just have to keep updating and modernizing and keeping up with the trends and the technology. We have the computers, but we're adding new books all the time. There will always be demand from people who want an actual, physical book to read. There will always be a need for libraries."

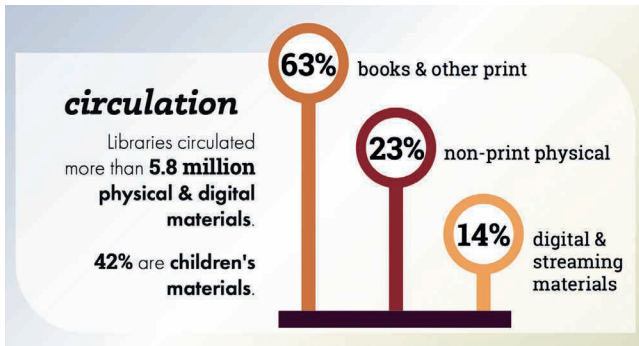
Schlim said her facility is open six days a week with more than 14,000 books on the shelves, five public

computers with internet access, 37 subscriptions to magazines and periodicals, and free WiFi access.

In the year prior to the pandemic, 3.7 million visits were made to the state's 107 public libraries while nearly half the state's residents held a library card. In 2019, more than 600 of the state's citizens were employed at a public library, and a collective 5.8 million digital and physical materials were circulated.

Brenda Hemmelman, access and development services director for the state library system, said libraries return \$4 in various programs and services for every \$1 invested. She describes libraries as a sound investment in communities large and small.

Hemmelman recently announced the distribution of nearly \$2 million in grant money disbursed to a total of 78 public, local school and academic libraries across the state. The grant money came from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.



“This will help our libraries invest in infrastructure, technology and materials that will serve their patrons through modern, innovative facilities and practices well into the future,” Hemmelman said.

Grant-funded items include the following:

- Technology to replace old computer equipment
- Podcasting equipment
- Digitization equipment
- Books, audio books, e-books
- 3D printers and other makerspace equipment
- Furniture with embedded technology
- Library automation software
- SMART boards/Promethean boards for classroom teaching and displays.

The state system also purchased an additional \$76,000 worth of audiobooks and e-books for the South Dakota



Titles to Go (SDTTG) consortium with funds from IMLS through ARPA. Hemmelman said SDTTG program usage increased 18 percent from 2019 to 2020 as users checked out more than 400,000 titles.

Hemmelman said libraries face an ongoing challenge to remain relevant and useful in a rapidly changing technological

landscape. She said libraries were fortunate to receive the recent grant money after 96 percent of the state’s facilities closed temporarily during the pandemic.

She was quick to note, however, that 86 percent continued to provide public services even though the physical facility may have been closed. More than 80 percent provided outside or curbside checkout services and all of them increased access to digital materials.

For Hemmelman, those indicators point to a promising future for the state’s public library system.

## STATE LIBRARY DIGITIZES 41 VOLUMES OF SOUTH DAKOTA HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS



As the South Dakota State Historical Society celebrates its 120th year, the South Dakota State Library has digitized all 41 volumes of the South Dakota Historical Collections. From 1902 to 1982, this series was published biennially by the Department of History (now the South Dakota State Historical Society) as part of its mission to collect, preserve and make accessible the history of the state. All 41 volumes are now available via the Featured Collections section of the South Dakota State Library’s Digital Collections.

These volumes cover a wide array of topics and are a valuable resource for students, teachers, and scholarly researchers. Six editors presided over the South Dakota Historical Collections during its run, including Doane Robinson, Will G. Robinson and Dayton Canaday. Their different editing styles and interests are evident throughout the volumes. Taken as a whole, the series represents an evolution in perspectives on the state’s history, heritage and culture. In 1989, an index to the collection was compiled and published to aid researchers.

The South Dakota State Library serves as the state’s depository for current and historical state agency publications, some of which go back to territorial days.

The South Dakota State Library’s Digital Collections reflect the history and culture of South Dakota. Primarily of interest to librarians, researchers, and genealogists, the digital collections include newspaper articles, South Dakota library photographs, state government annual reports and research reports, South Dakota Codified Laws, Session Laws, House and Senate Journals and more. Access the collections at: [sdsdl-montage.auto-graphics.com/](https://sdsdl-montage.auto-graphics.com/).

# CRAZY ABOUT CO-OPS



Entertainer and Mount Vernon Mayor Weston Frank bears a co-op logo on his forearm in memory of his great grandfather.

## South Dakota's cooperative leaders leave a legacy of service in local communities throughout the state

**Billy Gibson**

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Some people place a lot of faith and belief in the cooperative way of doing business.

And then some people don't mind letting the world know exactly where they stand on cooperatives and what they represent.

When Weston Frank pulls up his shirt sleeve, everyone can see how much cooperatives mean to him. He has the word "COOP" tattooed in big, bold letters right there on his forearm.

Frank, who is mayor of Mount Vernon and an entertainer well-known throughout the state, had the cooperative logo inked into his arm for a special reason. He got the tat in memory of his great grandfather,

Howard Frank, who started working at the ag co-op in Wessington Springs after his gas station business burned to the ground. He eventually retired from the co-op in the mid-1990s.

When Weston Frank takes a glance at that image on his arm, he remembers a man who had earned the respect of everyone in his community.

"I love the double circle co-op logo because it's something my great grandfather wore every day. Everyone knew him as a kind and quiet man who would help anyone. He'd stay late to get a job done, then head out to the 281 Junction on Sunday afternoon at the drop of a hat to help a stranded stranger. I never met one person who had something bad to say about him."

As for Weston Frank, the co-op symbol has an even deeper meaning than the memory of his great grandfather.

"That logo stands for a time when men did what they said they would. You could trust the word of your fellow man, and the local co-op board. I have on occasion caught grief from some folks who associate the double circle with poor memories and situations. I always apologize that they feel that way, but the co-op provided for my family for many years without incident. For me, the logo helps me remember the man, the good he did and the love he had for his family."

Cooperatives have been part of South Dakota's landscape for well over 100 years, and have an estimated annual economic impact of \$8 to \$10 billion. Collectively, cooperatives provide an estimated 16,000 jobs for South Dakotans, and contribute almost \$600 million in tax revenue to the state.



The cooperative spirit also runs through the veins of Brenda Forman, executive director of the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives. Her introduction to the co-op world came early in life when she was a girl growing up in Gettysburg where both her grandfather and father served on the Cenex board of directors.

**“THAT LOGO STANDS FOR A TIME WHEN MEN DID WHAT THEY SAID THEY WOULD. YOU COULD TRUST THE WORD OF YOUR FELLOW MAN, AND THE LOCAL CO-OP BOARD.”**

At the age of 14, Forman landed her first job at the local Cenex station and worked there through high school and college, often filling a spot on the spraying crew. She joined the co-op association 25 years ago and has carried on the mission of serving the association’s members and lauding the many benefits of cooperative businesses, including telecommunications, farm supply, marketing and electric organizations.

Her father, Richard Mangin, held a position on the Cenex board for



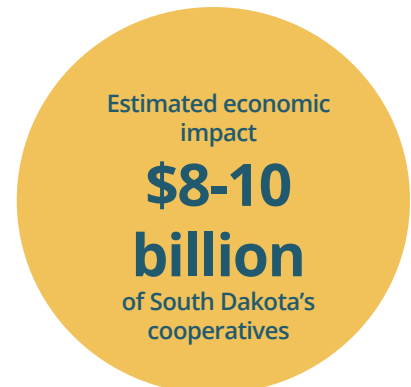
South Dakota Cooperative Association Hall of Famer Charles Birkholt served as general manager of Cam Wal Electric Cooperative for the last eight of his 45 years there. After retiring from Cam Wal, Birkholt served on the board of Venture Telecommunications.

25 years. At the end of December each year, she would accompany her dad down to the co-op to help take inventory.

“On the way over we’d talk about the co-op and how it got started and why he served on the board, to help people,” Forman recalled. “Something that touched me deeply happened when a gentleman came up to me once and I told him I was from Gettysburg. He said he knew my dad and they worked on the Cenex board together. He looked around at the other people and told them I come from good stock. That was one heckuva of a compliment, coming from someone who thought that much of my dad and granddad and their involvement in the co-op.”

Charles Birkholt is a member of the SDAC Hall of Fame and has served consumers of both a telecommunications co-op and an electric co-op. Back in 1952, Birkholt joined Cam Wal Electric in Selby as a groundsman at the rate of 85 cents an hour. He climbed his way up to manager and recalls farmers complaining about their \$5 monthly power bills. He later retired after 45 years of service at Cam Wal.

But Birkholt wasn’t done yet. Shortly after retiring 20 years ago, he joined the board of Venture Communications.



“I enjoyed working at both co-ops and being able to see things on both sides of the board table,” he said. “It gives you different things to think about and makes you understand you have to keep an open mind. But in both positions, you’re working to improve the service and your relationship with your members.”

Birkholt said he encourages all cooperative members, employees and leaders across the state to pause a moment during Co-op Month in October to reflect on the importance of these not-for-profit organizations.

“The consumer is our primary goal, our only reason for existing. That is very unique and isn’t the case for investor-owned enterprises. We’re the underdogs, so that just means we have to work harder,” he said.



**Pheasant Hunting Season  
Opening Day  
October 16, 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.

**SEPTEMBER 25**

**Great Downtown Pumpkin Festival**  
526 Main Street, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

**SEPTEMBER 25-26**

**Menno Pioneer Power Show**  
Menno, SD, contact Daniel at mennopowershow@yahoo.com for more details

**SEPTEMBER 25-26**

**Reza: Edge of Illusion**  
Oscar Larson Performing Arts Center, Brookings, SD, tickets on sale at <http://www.RezaLive.com>

**SEPTEMBER 30**

**7th Annual Taste of Sioux Falls**  
Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

**SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 3**

**Festival of Books**  
Various Locations, Deadwood, SD, 605-688-6113

**OCTOBER 1-2**

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

**OCTOBER 1-3**

**SiouxperCon**  
1201 N West Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD, visit [siouxpercon.com](http://siouxpercon.com) for more details and tickets

**OCTOBER 2-3**

**Fort Pierre Horse Races**  
Stanley County Fairgrounds, Fort Pierre, SD, 605-223-2178

**OCTOBER 7-10**

**Annual Great Scarecrow Festival**  
Campbell Park, Huron, SD, 605-354-0491

**OCTOBER 8-9**

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

**OCTOBER 8-10**

**Pumpkin Festival**  
Country Apple Orchard, Harrisburg, SD, 605-743-2424

**OCTOBER 9-10**

**Sioux Falls Quilters' Guild Bi-annual Quilt Show - "Fall in Love with Quilting"**  
Sioux Falls Convention Center, Sioux Falls, SD, for more info visit [siouxfallsquiltersguild.com](http://siouxfallsquiltersguild.com) or send an email to [sfqg2021show@gmail.com](mailto:sfqg2021show@gmail.com)

**OCTOBER 11**

**Native American Day Celebration**  
Crazy Horse Memorial, Crazy Horse, SD, 605-673-4681

**OCTOBER 16-17**

**Heartland Quilter's Guild**  
Highland Conference Center, Mitchell SD, Contact Karen at 605-996-6726 for more info

**OCTOBER 16-17**

**KELOLAND Living Arts & Crafts Show**  
Best Western Plus Exhibit Hall & Annex, Sioux Falls, SD, email [events@keloland.com](mailto:events@keloland.com) for more info

**OCTOBER 22-23**

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

**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

**NOVEMBER 13**

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

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