

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## Old Spink New Spink

SD restaurants roll  
with the changes  
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Dealing with  
drought  
Page 12

Joyce Schermer,  
Karisma Tripp and Brad  
and Lori Johannsen are  
shown at Spink Family  
Restaurant in Elk Point

# Building Brighter Relationships



**Jordan Lamb**  
jlamb@  
oaheelectric.com

I remember as a young kid dreading the end of summer and having to go back to my 'full-time job' as a student from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday. Trips to the stores to pick up school supplies and new clothes to avoid showing up to the first day of school in our summertime hobo attire. Pools closing for the year, days getting shorter and temperatures dropping down into sweater weather.

But there was always one aspect of going back to my full-time job that I enjoyed: seeing my friends and building new relationships.

**Oahe Electric Cooperative's number one priority is our relationship with our members and making sure that the members' voice is heard.**

Growing up in a rural area, a lot of friends lived outside of city limits. And unless we were going to ride our pedal bikes out to their farm – or from Onida to Sully Lake as

we did once and learned our lesson after walking bikes up and down hills – we would only see our friends on rare occasions.

Your local Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are very similar to these relationships – they are trustworthy, dependable, affordable and are built throughout the years. Oahe Electric Cooperative's number one priority is our relationship with our members and making sure that the members' voice is heard. This also is true for the relationship Oahe Electric Cooperative, East River Electric Cooperative and Basin Electric Cooperative share. We regularly attend meetings together and ensure that each other's opinions – while occasionally differing – are heard and that at the end of the day we continue to 'have each other's backs' while building a brighter future.

Oahe Electric Cooperative has set the date for our annual meeting of the members – Saturday, Sept. 18 at Sully Buttes High School in Onida, S.D. We encourage our members to attend by providing both in-person and drive through options. We look forward to seeing you all, but if you are unable to attend the annual meeting and have any questions or would just like to meet some of the staff, we always welcome visitors at our headquarters in Blunt, S.D.! Have a great rest of your summer!

## Official Notice Annual Meeting of the Members of Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc.

The annual meeting of the members of Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. will be held at the Sully Buttes High School in Onida, S.D., from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on September 18, 2021, to take action on the following matters:

1. Review of the minutes of the previous meeting.
2. Presentation and consideration of reports, officers, directors and committees.
3. Election of directors.  
In conjunction with the election of directors, for a term of three years each, the following member has been nominated for director by petition, pursuant to the bylaws:

For term of three years:

- Ken Gillaspie, Pierre, S.D.
- Brandon Haag, Pierre, S.D.
- Blaine Livermont, Pierre, S.D.
- Ross Sperry, Blunt, S.D.
- Troy Weibe, Pierre, S.D.

4. All other business that may properly come before the meeting

### OFFICIAL NOTICE

Oahe Electric Cooperative's annual meeting is accessible to the handicapped. If special assistance is needed, please contact Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 216, Blunt SD 57522 or call 1-800-640-6243

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

OAHE ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 019-042)

Board of Directors:

- James Feller - President
605-962-6207
Blaine Livermont - Treasurer
605-945-2910
Ryan Noyes - Assistant Secretary
605-280-3500
Ross Sperry - Secretary
605-280-7770
Kirk Yackley - Vice President
605-258-2412

Employees:

- Tyler Arbach - Journeyman Lineman
Mark Bruning - Line Foreman
Matt Eldridge - Operations Manager
Trudie Feldman - Custodian
Brady Gaer - Journeyman Lineman
Duane Hjelm - Journeyman Lineman
Russ Hohn - Member Services Mgr.
Sam Irvine - Office Services
Megan Jaeger - Billing Clerk
Jordan Lamb - General Manager
Dan Lettau - Journeyman Lineman
Steve Long - Material/Work Order/AMR Agent
Valerie Marso - Office Manager
Tory Smith - Journeyman Lineman

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

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Oahe Electric Cooperative Connections, PO Box 216, Blunt, SD 57522-0216; telephone (605) 962-6243; fax (605) 962-6306; e-mail oahe@oaheelectric.com; www.oaheelectric.com

Our Mission

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

A NOTE ON COOPERATIVE DEMOCRACY

As a cooperative, Oahe Electric operates as a representative democracy - meaning that the members of the cooperative control its governance through their election of the cooperative's board of directors. State law provides that in all matters put to a vote of the members, each member has and is limited to one vote. While this concept seems simple and nearly everyone agrees with it, applying the rule can have some unexpected twists. These occur in two principal areas: (1) voting by corporations and other entities and (2) voting by husbands and wives. Voting by corporations and other entities, including partnerships, LLCs, rural churches and cemetery associations, presents a problem because these entities of necessity must designate an individual to vote on their behalf. This creates a potential of conflicting with the one-member, one-vote rule if a single person attempts to vote more than one membership - if allowed it would have the undemocratic effect of allowing one individual to hold and vote multiple ballots. To prevent that, the one-member, one-vote rule has long been interpreted to limit each individual to one ballot only. Entities wishing to vote are required to designate as voting representative an individual who would not otherwise intend to vote. Although there may have been some confusion about this in the past, this one-person, one-vote rule will be adhered to in the future at all cooperative elections. In part, the purpose of this article is to provide members advance notice so that any entities desiring to vote will have the opportunity to make an appropriate designation of a voting representative. A designated voting representative must be someone who will not be voting another membership. In the case of husbands and wives, there are two rules which allow either, but not both, to vote a single membership. In cases where the husbands and wives hold a joint membership, either may cast a vote on behalf of that membership. In the case of a single membership, held by either spouse, the nonmember spouse can cast a vote of the member spouse in the absence of the member spouse. In both situations, either but not both spouses may vote. Of course, if each spouse holds an individual membership, each is entitled to vote their own membership, but not the membership of an absent spouse. Adhering to democratic principles is one of the key elements of cooperative governance. Doing so sets them apart from nearly all other business organizations. Maintaining a voting process in keeping with these democratic principles is a vital concern to all of the members.

- David Larson, Attorney

AUTHORIZATION TO VOTE

Organization (Corporation, Business, School, Church, etc)

Address

I, \_\_\_\_\_ attest that the above organization is a member of the Cooperative and has authorized me as their voting delegate to represent them on all matters of Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. at its 70th annual meeting of members on September 18, 2021.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

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

# Be aware of overhead power lines on farms

Powerlines pose a major hazard for South Dakota farmers. Lines over roads and rural areas have a minimum clearance of 18 feet but just 12.5 feet over residential private property.

Before working in a field or around shops or grain bins, always take the time to note the location of your cooperative's power lines so that you can make sure to remain a safe distance from them and stay free from harm. To stay safe around overhead power lines, farm operators and workers must:

- Always use a spotter when operating large machinery near utility power lines.
- Use extra caution when raising augers or grain truck beds around co-op power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from power lines - at all times, and in all directions.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine the proper clearance.
- Always lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it to get added clearance.
- Call your electric cooperative immediately if a power line is sagging or is

hanging too low.

- If contact is made with a power line, remember that it is almost always safest to stay on the equipment. Make sure to warn others to stay away and call the cooperative immediately.

- The only reason to decide to make an exit is if the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, then remember to jump off the equipment with both of your feet together, avoiding touching the ground and vehicle at the same time.

Then, still keeping your feet together, "bunny hop" away from the vehicle until you reach a safe distance.

If you see someone else's equipment that has come in contact with a power line in your area, the best help you can give will be from a safe distance.

Make sure to yell out to, signal or call the equipment operator to make sure he or she remains in the vehicle, and notify your local cooperative immediately.

Please remember to follow these tips to avoid accidents during the harvest season.

## TIPS FOR A SAFE HARVEST



The Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center offers this useful checklist for farm safety called Stop-Think-Act. Take these steps to minimize injury risks during harvest season.

### Stop

- What could go wrong?
- How bad could it be?
- Has anything changed?

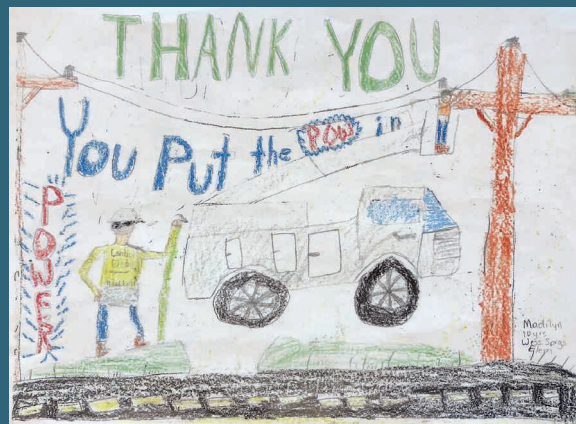
### Think

- Do I clearly understand the task?
- Am I physically and mentally ready?

- Do I have the right equipment and tools for the job?

### Act

- Make it safe.
- Use the right tools.
- Follow proper procedures.
- Reduce risks.
- Stop the task if it cannot be done safely.



## You put the 'pow' in power!

### Madilyn Gaikowski

Madilyn sends out a special note of appreciation for line workers across the state of South Dakota. She is the daughter of Gene and Loree Gaikowski. Gene serves as the Wessington Springs line foreman at Central Electric in Mitchell.

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.

# CROCKPOT CRAVINGS

## CROCKPOT APPLE BUTTER

Ingredients:

- 4 cups of sugar (more or less depending on sweetness of apples)
- 4 tsp. cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. cloves
- ¼ tsp. salt

### METHOD

Fill a 5 quart crockpot full of chopped apples (quartered or smaller), no need to peel, but do remove seeds. Tart apples are best. Top with the ingredients above. Lid won't fit at first but settles down as apples cook. Begin cooking on high and when bubbling, put heat on low and cook all night, or until thick and dark color. Stir occasionally. If need be, blend a few seconds to soften peels. Pour into jars and seal.

**Cherie Leibel, Timber Lake**

## SLOW COOKER BEEF STEW

Ingredients:

- 3 cups water
- 1 package McCormick® Classic Beef Stew Seasoning Mix Packet
- 2 lbs beef stew meat, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1/4 cup flour
- 2 cups potato chunks
- 1 1/4 cups carrot chunks
- 1 medium onion, cut into thin wedges
- 1/2 cup sliced celery

### METHOD

Mix vegetables, water and Beef Stew Seasoning Mix in slow cooker. Coat beef with flour. Stir into ingredients in slow cooker. Cover. Cook 8 hours on low or 5 hours on high until beef is tender.

[mccormick.com](http://mccormick.com)

## CROCKPOT BUTTERNUT SQUASH WITH APPLES

Ingredients:

- 1 ½ to 2 lbs. butternut squash, peeled and chopped (about 5 cups)
- 2 to 3 tart apples, chopped (about 2 cups)
- ¼ c. dried cherries or cranberries
- 1 ½ tsp. grated fresh ginger
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. nutmeg
- ½ c. apple cider
- ¼ tsp. salt

### METHOD

Combine all ingredients in your slow cooker and stir together. Cover and cook on low 3-4 hours or until squash is tender, then turn to warm until serving. Can also be baked in conventional oven at 325 degrees until fork tender. Sweet potatoes can be used instead of butternut squash if desired.

**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.**

# DON'T BE A WALDO



**Valerie Marso**  
vmarso@  
oaheelectric.com

This time of year usually means lots of projects going on at Oahe Electric. And, unfortunately, sometimes in the process of completing these projects, we need to disrupt your power. Generally, we will provide you with notice of these outages so you can plan accordingly.

A couple of things we have been finding lately when we make phone calls to give this notice are:

1. MANY people have disconnected their landline phone and we have no other contact numbers listed, therefore are not able to give them a warning that they will be without power.
2. The number of people who work from in-home offices has definitely increased and they do not have a backup plan for their power being disrupted.

Have you ever seen those books where you try to find Waldo? He wears a red and white stripe shirt and is in an extremely detailed illustration with lots of other people. Well, that's exactly who you don't want to be when it comes to a planned power outage. We totally get that your electric company is probably the last place on your mind to inform that you changed/disconnected a phone number. And it probably isn't an issue until it's an issue! For instance, when you're in the middle of loading/unloading a grain bin and unexpectedly lose power probably isn't the ideal time to find out that we don't have any valid phone numbers for you. The good news is that there are a few ways to update your information to ensure we can contact you when needed and they are all pretty quick and painless:

1. If you receive a monthly billing statement in the mail, tear off the bottom portion and return it with your payment. On the back, there is a place for you to update your contact information. When we receive your payment, we will update our records.
2. Give us a call at 1.800.640.6243 and we can update your information right over the phone.

3. If you are signed up for SmartHub, you can log in and update your information anytime.

4. Email us at [oahe@oaheelectric.com](mailto:oahe@oaheelectric.com) and tell us what phone numbers you want on your account.

I think we can all agree that it is beneficial to have a heads up if you aren't going to have power for a while, right? And the last thing you want is to be cut off during an important presentation when you're working from home. Which also brings me to my next point. If you haven't planned how you are going to get on that video call or log in to your software system without power – you might want to keep reading. Whether you are relatively new to waking up and walking a few steps to work, or if you are well seasoned, there are a couple of options that might help keep things sailing smoothly.

If you have any equipment that is sensitive to power fluctuation (computers, elaborate gaming consoles, printers, etc.) you should seriously consider purchasing an uninterruptible power supply (UPS). A UPS offers power protection for connected electronics. When power is interrupted, or fluctuates outside safe levels, a UPS will instantly provide clean battery backup power and surge protection for plugged-in, sensitive equipment. It also provides an opportunity for you to shut down the device properly instead of the power being terminated abruptly.

We make our best efforts to provide all our consumers with consistent, reliable service but sometimes things beyond our control may prevent us from supplying power 100 percent of the time. Planes, trains and automobiles accidentally run into poles (ok probably not trains). Tornadoes happen in South Dakota. Equipment fails. It is kind of crazy how reliant we have become on electricity. When we were cleaning the vault, we found letters from members notifying Oahe Electric that they were out of power. Letters! That meant they were without power for several days, maybe even more than a week! Could you imagine that nowadays? Not a chance that would fly. If you have a circumstance that requires you needing a constant power supply, it would be a good idea for you to invest in a generator and have a secondary plan in the case of an extended outage.

Oahe Electric Cooperative's mission is

to provide members with extraordinary value and we are committed to meeting the highest standards of customer service and satisfaction. We do business with accountability, integrity, innovation and commitment to community. By providing us with current contact information and taking precautions for service disruption you are helping us achieve these goals. Enjoy the rest of your summer!

## THANK YOU



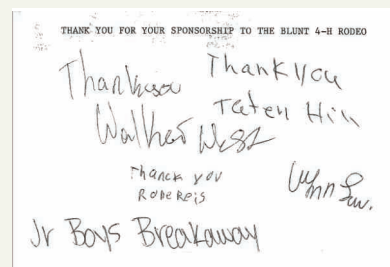
"Dear friends at Oahe Electric, The Junior Class and 2021 Post Prom Committee would like to express our sincere gratitude for your generous cash donation. Thanks to your contribution, the students from TF Riggs were able to plan and promote a fun and safe post prom event. In our eyes, it was a huge success! Your generosity is greatly appreciated and we are hopeful to have your continued support in the years to come.

Thanks again! You truly make a difference!

Sincerely,  
Oksana, TF Riggs Class President 20-21

"Want to thank you so much for the insulated bag with all the goodies in it. Will sure appreciate them all and will use them.

-Sherry Badger"



## WINNER OF QUESTION OF THE MONTH

The Question of the Month winners for the July 2021 publication were Kenneth and Sherry Badger. They correctly answered the question, "When are director petitions due?" with the answer being Wednesday, Aug. 4, 2021!

Congratulations and we hope you enjoy your prizes!

## QUESTION OF THE MONTH

This month's question is:

Which animal is responsible for the most power blinks nationwide?

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!

# Understanding Power Surges and Blinks



**Matt Eldridge**  
meldridge@oaheelectric.com

Have you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you've likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power surge or blink. While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

### What's a power surge?

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances of a power waveform that can damage, degrade or destroy electronic equipment within your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage; however, power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts – this can be extremely damaging to your electronic equipment.

Surges can be caused by internal sources, like HVAC systems with variable frequency drives, or external sources, like lightning and damage to power lines and transformers.

Oahe Electric encourages all members to install surge protective devices (such as surge protector power strips or uninterruptible power supplies) to safeguard your sensitive electronics. If you're experiencing frequent surges in your home or business and you believe the cause is internal, contact a qualified electrician to inspect your electrical system.

### What's a power blink?

Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they're typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a variety of instances, like squirrels, birds or other small animals contacting an energized power

line; tree branches touching a power line; or lightning and other similar events. In fact, when it comes to power disruptions caused by critters, squirrels reign supreme. In 2019 alone, squirrels were responsible for more than 1,200 outages nationwide!

Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breakers are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are actually good because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

Regardless of the cause, Oahe Electric crews will be on their way to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs after a power outage. And you can help too! Any time you experience repeated disruptions to your electric service, please let us know by calling 1-800-640-6243.

## POLE TESTING BEING DONE IN AREA

Oahe Electric would like to let their consumers know that there will be pole testing being done in Southeast Hughes County starting in Mid-September. RAM Utilities will be testing approximately 5,000 poles in that area. If you have any questions, please call the office at 1-800-640-6243.





# RISING FROM THE ASHES

Rhonda Otten, along with her husband and three sons, has worked to keep Spink Family Restaurant open for business.  
 Photos by Billy Gibson

## Spink restaurant emerges strong from hardships brought by fire and pandemic

**Billy Gibson**  
 billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Old Spink. New Spink.  
 That’s how Rhonda Otten variously refers to her restaurant, depending on whether she’s alluding to the Spink Café that burned down in 2019 or the Spink Family restaurant that was throttled by the pandemic but is thriving today.

For more than 20 years, the Spink Café was a big draw in the township located in Union County. The eatery was known for its Friday night fish fries during Lent, Sunday dinners and its famous Spinkburger. The 80-year-old structure had recently been re-decorated with a 50s theme, featuring old LPs, vinyl album covers on the wall and pictures of Elvis Presley.

But life for Otten and her husband Sam changed in November of 2019 when the area’s most

popular attraction was totally consumed by fire.

The way the Ottens saw it, there was no option but to rebuild. But the planned resurrection of the business wouldn’t occur in the confines of Spink. The new iteration, renamed Spink Family Restaurant, would be located in the old American Legion hall in downtown Elk Point.

By all accounts, the “new Spink” wasn’t so easy to bring forth from the ashes. Two weeks after working hard to get the new facility ready for business in Elk Point, the pandemic hit and threatened to dash the Ottens’ hopes for good.

“The fire was in November, we made the decision to keep going in December, and we re-opened in March. We were open for two weeks when the pandemic hit, Rhonda said. “Those two weeks were very, very busy. It was a madhouse in

here. We had a lot more space and we were finally getting in the groove.”

Facing the same problems as just about every restaurant owner in the state and nation, the Ottens were forced to hit the pause button and try to figure out the next step to take. They closed for a month, regrouped, and then returned to offer carry-out service only.

Members of the community rallied to support the restaurant, including employees at Union County Electric located just two blocks away.

According to Union County Electric General Manager Matt Klein, the cooperative always strives to support other local businesses that help the community thrive.

“At lunchtime you’re likely to see some of our guys eating there,” Klein said. “When they had carry-out, we ordered food for meetings and just did what we could to help – just like we do with other members of the community. We help whenever and wherever we can.”





Server Karisma Tripp tends to another satisfied customer at Spink Family Restaurant in Elk Point.

Rhonda said it was inspiring to see the town pull together to face the impact of the pandemic, and also to help the business survive after the back-to-back calamities.



Cody Olson, center, enjoys lunch with his co-workers from Valley Ag Supply.

“The community really supported us and we’re very grateful for that,” she said. “But we’ve seen this many times before; people watching out for each other and helping when there’s a need. That’s what really pushed us through.”

One regular patron who is happy to see the new Spink succeeding is Joyce Schermer. She occupied a table in the restaurant one recent lunch hour along with her son Brad Johannsen and his wife Lori. The Johannsens are regular visitors to the

area from Sedona, Ariz., and always make a point to stop at Spink, preferring the hot beef sandwich and the prime rib sandwich.

“It’s always good every time you come,” said Schermer, a resident of Akron who opted for her go-to French Dip. “You’re never disappointed in the food or the service. It’s wonderful.”

Also enjoying a lunchtime meal were several employees of Valley Ag Supply. The company is located a half mile from the old Spink building that was destroyed by fire.

“We used to go there all the time and we were disappointed when it burned down. You could see our fertilizer plant from there,” said Cody Olson while noshing on the French Dip. “Now there’s no place to go. So, we just drive into town because it’s so good. It’s great that they came back and are still operating.”

As for “old Spink,” the Ottens are still trying to figure out what to do with the heap left in the wake of the conflagration. The building had an upstairs apartment where several members of the family lived at



various times through the years.

“It’s going to have to be torn down eventually, but we just don’t want to let it go,” Rhonda said. “There are so many memories attached to that place; both of our parents were such a big part of it.”

She emphasized that while the restaurant is in a new location, the food is the same as before. The Ottens, who have always used family recipes, depend on all three of their sons – ages 17 through 23 – to handle the cooking to maintain consistency on a daily basis.

“The secret to our success is that the five of us do all the cooking here. We use time-proven family recipes that have been popular for decades,” Rhonda said.

## Minutes of the Sixty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the Membership of Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc.

### October 3, 2020

The sixty-ninth annual meeting of the members of the Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. (hereinafter called the Cooperative) was held at Sully Buttes High School in Onida, Sully County South Dakota on the 3rd day of October, 2020, pursuant to provisions of the bylaws and upon notice having been given by the secretary to all of the members of the Cooperative.

The drive thru voting polls were declared open by Attorney David Larson at 4pm.

A quorum was achieved with 304 registered members present, out of a total of 2,049 members.

Included in the Annual Meeting Program were brief reports from General Manager, Rodney Haag, welcoming members to the annual meeting; Office Manager, Valerie Marso stating that the cooperative is in good financial condition; Operations Manager, Matthew Eldridge, reporting on projects the line crew have been working on; and Member Services Manager Russell Hohn, reporting on Oahe Electric's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Also recognized were the years of service contributed by the following individuals: Blaine Livermont, Director, 5 years; Steve Long, Material/WO/

AMR Agent, 5 years; Brady Gaer, Journeyman Lineman, 10 years; Valerie Marso, Office Manager, 20 years; and Mark Bruning, Line Foreman, 25 years.

Attorney Larson declared the drive thru voting polls closed promptly at 6pm.

Attorney's Larson and Hegge then conducted the director election procedure. In keeping with the traditions at the cooperative, Attorney Larson announced the names of the successful candidates who were declared elected as directors to serve three year terms: Ryan Noyes and Kirk Yackley.

Voting ballots also called for approval of the minutes of the annual meeting of October 5, 2019. These minutes were printed in the annual meeting programs. The minutes were approved without changes.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, the meeting was adjourned.

## Get To Know Your Director Candidates



### Troy Weibe

#### 1. What do you do for a living?

For 26 years my work has been in education. I began as an elementary guidance counselor along with a drug and alcohol coordinator for 14 rural schools in western South Dakota. In returning to school in order to obtain a Master's degree in school administration I also taught middle and high school social studies courses in

Beresford, S.D. From there, my family and I moved to Miller, S.D., where I taught middle school social studies and coached for three years. It was a pleasure to be able to move back to my home community of Pierre as the assistant principal of Georgia Morse Middle School. In the time as assistant for six years I went back to school and obtained my specialist degree certifying me to be a school superintendent. I spent eight more years at Georgia Morse as the head principal and then moved to the district's administration building seven years ago as the Director of Education where I continue to work.

#### 2. Tell us about your family.

Born and raised in Pierre I experienced a positive school experience and was exposed to all things outdoors and have found many enjoyable pastimes which keep me in central South Dakota. My wife of 25 years, Jeri, grew up in Blunt, S.D., and graduated from ABO School District in Onida. Her family continues to farm/ranch just outside of Blunt. Together, Jeri and I have three children. Our daughter Raegan, whom is the youngest, just graduated high school and will be attending the University of South Dakota in Vermillion this fall; Nicholas, our middle son, recently graduated from South Dakota State University and works and resides in Pierre, and our oldest Kevin Peery and his wife Kara, along with their daughter

Rylee, reside in Pierre. I also have a sibling that lives in Fort Pierre and my mother who resides in the Spring Creek area. We are very fortunate to have our family near as we enjoy time together as much as our busy schedules allow.

#### 3. What inspired you to want to serve on the Oahe Electric Cooperative Board?

Moving into the county in recent years and being new to an electric cooperative, I have learned more about how cooperatives function and co-exist with other providers. Also, learning of the importance of a well-managed cooperative and the dedicated staff it takes to make it all work effective and efficient. Having served on other boards and currently volunteering on two boards, I feel it is important to be involved. I understand policy reviews, the role of boards within an organization and the impact decisions made can have on employees and customers. Being in management roles in my occupation, one of the most important tasks is to hire good people and create a culture of integrity and an environment where people want to work and serve their communities each day.

#### 4. Give us three adjectives that "sum you up."

**Diligent** – in that I am actively engaged in my work. I pay attention to details and take pride in doing things correctly. Diligent where I am going to do what I say I am going to do. **Focused** – I am persistent on completing a task and not getting derailed or giving up when difficult. Being able to stay focused on goals that may take weeks or months to accomplish and have the ability to problem solve through situations, seek new ideas from others, communicate and keep the end product in mind. **Empathy** – I am able to understand other's situations and opinions allowing me to gain perspective. With empathy, I can listen and understand issues, statements, concerns and build relationships with individuals in wide variety of settings.

# Get to Know Your Director Candidates, Continued



## Ross Sperry

### 1. What do you do for a living?

My brother and I run a grain farm. We raise wheat, corn, sunflowers and soybeans.

### 2. Tell us about your family:

My wife, Nancy, and I are on our second marriages. Between us we have five children and nine grandkids.

### 3. What inspired you to want to serve on the Oahe Electric Cooperative Board?

As a current director I am focused on Oahe Electric serving our community. I like seeing the growth of our homes, farms and industries, knowing that our co-op had a role in that.

### 4. Give me three adjectives that "Sum you up."

Conscientious, Dedicated, Progressive



## Ken Gillaspie

### 1. What do you do for a living?

I am currently retired. I do volunteer work at the moose lodge in Fort Pierre. I also fill in for the meals on wheels program in Fort Pierre.

### 2. Tell us about your family.

I am single. I am from a family of 10 children so I keep busy with nieces and nephews in my spare time.

### 3. What inspired you to want to serve on the Oahe Electric Cooperative Board?

I was encouraged to run for the board by fellow consumers. I have been on co-op power for the biggest part of my life and have always been interested in how they operate. I have the time necessary to apply to the position.

### 4. Give us three adjectives that "sum you up."

Dedicated, Passionate, Fair

## Blaine Livermont

### 1. What do you do for a living?

I'm retired after two years at Golden West Telephone and 33 years at IBM.

### 2. Tell us about your family.

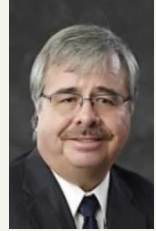
I've been married to Shirly Weischedel Barber for 16 years. Together we have six kids and 14 grandkids.

### 3. What inspired you to want to serve on the Oahe Electric Cooperative Board?

My father-in-law, Jake Weischedel, always was putting the idea into my head, so I could take his spot when he retired from the Oahe board.

### 4. Give us three adjectives that "sum you up."

- A guy who likes to have a good laugh
- Likes to read, think and always look at problems from a third person point of view
- Treat others as I would want to be treated



## Brandon Haag

### 1. What do you do for a living?

I've been in the agricultural industry for the last 18 years. For the past seven years I've worked for Corteva Agri-Science as a territory manager covering central and western South Dakota. I supply retailers with herbicide products who then supply our local growers.

### 2. Tell us about your family.

My wife Cori and I live near Pierre with our children, Archie (10), Tillie (seven) and Otto (five). We live in Falcon Ridge estates with our four dogs and embrace the chaos. Both my wife and I are from the area with her growing up in Pierre and I in Blunt. We like being close to family while raising our kids in this great area.

### 3. What inspired you to want to serve on the Oahe Electric Cooperative Board?

I feel like Oahe Electric has been somewhat family my whole life. My father recently retired after 43 years of service. I think it would be an honor to sit on the board and help steer Oahe Electric to a bright and successful future.

### 4. Give us three adjectives that "sum you up."

- Dependable** – I take pride in being someone who can be counted on. Being reliable is an important trait. It's as simple as "do what you say you're going to do."
- Honest** – From my upbringing, to years in sales, honesty is one adjective that has followed me. You can't lead or gain peoples trust without being an honest person yourself.
- Motivated** – I've always been a high energy and friendly individual. Nothing has changed with time. Along with being a family man and working full-time, I pride myself on helping the local youth. I volunteer time to be the president of our youth wrestling club. I've also coached wrestling, football and baseball for the past five years



# LEARNING FROM ADVERSITY



The Dakota Lakes Research Farm produces information helpful to farmers and ranchers dealing with drought. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

## SDSU agriculture researcher Dwayne Beck looks for better ways to gain higher yields through crop rotations and other techniques

**Billy Gibson**

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

The drought conditions that gripped the state through the summer months caused difficulty for farmers and ranchers. The drought in 2012 also made it difficult to grow and harvest a productive crop.

But it's the drought that occurred in 1988 that Dwayne Beck remembers most. Beck, 70, is a researcher with SDSU who runs the Dakota Lakes research farm near Canning.

According to the National Integrated Drought Information System, as of June 23 more than 97 percent of South Dakota and all of Minnesota were categorized as "abnormally dry."

As someone who considers himself a seasoned investigator and problem solver, Beck looks at the current drought conditions as an

opportunity to learn.

So, what exactly did the farming and ranching community learn in 1988 when adverse weather conditions caused an estimated \$60 billion in agricultural damage across the U.S.?

"We learned not to do tillage," Beck responds without hesitation. "This drought is about the worse I've seen since 1988, and we learned then that in this part of the country if you till, you're screwed. No-till gives you a chance to have a decent crop and run a viable farming operation."

And the key to succeeding without tilling is proper crop rotation. That's what keeps Beck and other researchers busy.

On a recent afternoon, Melanie Caffe and her assistant Nick Paul were operating a small combine to gather their test crops laid out in strips measuring five feet wide by 20

feet long. Caffe, a native of France, is an ag professor at SDSU, while Paul is a local farmer and research technician.

The two-member team moved from section to section, cleaning out the collection bin as they went to keep the samples from being contaminated and corrupting the research data. The samples were



Dwayne Beck runs the Dakota Farms research facility near Canning.



Melanie Caffe and Nick Paul collect samples from a field at the Dakota Farms Research Station near Canning.

bagged and taken into the lab where Caffe and Paul planned to perform fertility experiments with the goal of developing varieties with higher yield, higher quality and stronger drought resistance.

Much of the research centers around maximizing yields through effective crop rotations. Beck has spent much of his career considering the ways farming was conducted 100 or more years ago and how it can be improved.

“The Natives grew crops before the Spaniards came and brought horses. They were all no-tillers because they didn’t have cows and horses to pull the plows. They grew 13 different kinds of corn, beans, squash and sunflowers. They were very successful. The settlers never asked anyone how to grow crops here, they just got out their plow and started turning over the soil.”

Beck has seen the wonders of crop rotation in his research. Some of his fields are rotated five ways.

“Good rotations can produce a lack of disturbance in places where you don’t have a lot of water. Our research shows 99 percent of resistance issues could be solved with better crop rotations. There are fields where we haven’t used insecticides for 18 years.”

Beck said his methods aren’t always adopted by industry but he continues to gather data and push out the information obtained through research.

“The nice about being a research guy is you always have more things to learn,” he said. “The more you research, the more you don’t know, but we’re always looking for answers.”

## HOPS GROWERS NAVIGATING THEIR WAY THROUGH CHANGING INDUSTRY

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

In many ways, Ryan Heine is like the average South Dakota farmer. He frets about the weather, plans for the future, worries about finances, watches the markets and is constantly trying to find a buyer for the crop he hopes will make.

But his crop is unlike most of the others that emerge from the South Dakota soil. Heine is owner of 6th Meridian Hop Farm near Yankton. His is one of six such farms left in the state growing hops for brewers to transform into craft beer.

Heine also sees his work as different compared to most farmers – he relies on his nose a lot.

“There’s a lot of experimenting with different aromas.

There are so many flavor profiles and varieties of hops that are used in creating craft beer,” he said. “There’s a vast palette of different aromas, and the market will dictate what consumers prefer.”

Ryan and his wife Michelle launched their hop operation in 2014, leaving Omaha and returning to the small family farm near Yankton in pursuit of a more grounded lifestyle for their five children.

“We wanted to get out of the city and back to our farming roots,” said Ryan, who works remotely as an electrical engineer for a company out of Minneapolis.

Ryan’s interest in growing the essential elements of craft beer began when he was a student at Parks College in St. Louis, Mo. He went out with his friends and found most of what was offered at bars, pubs and restaurants was bland and uninspiring. He knew he liked the flavor of beer and he knew he liked the simplicity of the farming lifestyle.

“So I started doing some home brewing and found that it was a fun hobby to pursue. Now we have one of the biggest operations in the state,” he said.

Heine’s time on the farm is spent fussing over flavor and aroma profiles, acid levels, yeast growth, oil content, insect invasions, disease infections and more. He and Michelle do all the growing, harvesting, processing, drying, pulverizing, preserving, pressing and packaging.

He finds markets by visiting with brewers, forging relationships across the region and even keeping in touch with his college buddies.

“There are some college roommates I’ve kept in touch with who are brewers and we’re always talking about how to improve our products,” he said. “Hops growers are down to just a handful in the state, but for those who have survived, I think the outlook is good.”



# Meet the Neumans

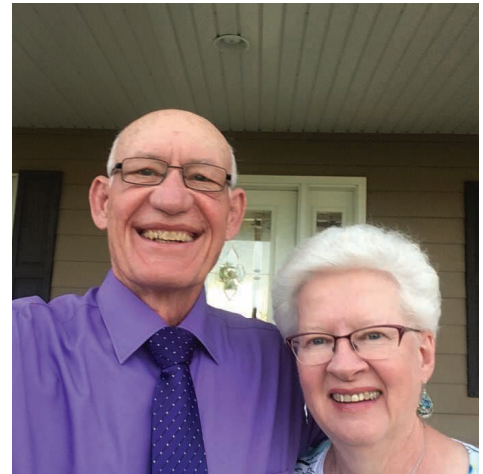
## A routine call leads to an interesting visit with members of Oahe Electric Cooperative



**Russ Hohn**  
rhohn@  
oaheelectric.com

Spring of 2021, I called Rod Neuman regarding his sub meter being without power. I informed Rod that the meter cannot work properly without having power and asked if he was home. The Neumans were traveling at the time but would be home the following week. My second attempt proved successful, and we met at their home the following day. After introducing myself to Rod, he showed me where their breaker panel was located and I began to search for the meter issue. I enjoy meeting new people, and soon Rod and I were visiting. I asked if he was retired or working and that is where this story began. Within minutes I

was intrigued and knew that I had more questions to ask. After resolving the meter issue, Rod introduced to his wife Marta. Over a cup of coffee and several dessert bars that Martha made (they were yummy) I learned more about this couple and asked if they would share their profession with Oahe Electric members. They kindly agreed. Oahe Electric would like to thank Rod and Marta Neuman for their teaching and coaching careers. Please enjoy the following.



## Rod Neuman

I was born in June of 1950 in Clear Lake, S.D., and raised on a small family farm. My educational career started by attending Hillcrest School, a small rural school in Deuel County. After completing grades 1-8 at Hillcrest I attended Clear Lake High School and graduated in 1968. While in high school, I participated in football and wrestling. At that time all the schools that had wrestling competed in the same class. My senior year was memorable because we defeated the defending state champions from Brookings in a dual at Brookings. We also defeated them in the district tournament held in Brookings and finished second to Watertown, qualifying 11 of the 12 weight classes for the region

tournament. After high school, I attended Northern State College in Aberdeen (now NSU). While at Northern, I wrestled for the Wolves. During my freshman year we captured the SDIC Championship and had runner-up finishes my sophomore and junior years. My junior year we recorded an 18-3 dual record. I earned a BS in education with majors in industrial arts and physical education. Upon graduation, my wife Marta and I moved to Canistota to start our teaching careers. I taught 7-12 industrial arts classes and coached football, wrestling and boys track. After our fourth year at Canistota, we moved to Faulkton. I continued my coaching and teaching career and Marta started a daycare business out of our home. At Faulkton my role changed over the years. I

While in Faulkton, I coached football as an assistant and head coach for 15 seasons and was fortunate to help coach a state runner-up football team. In wrestling, I was blessed with many talented athletes and got the thrill of coaching several state place winners and champions.

**I am humbly honored for the recognition but for me it was all about seeing kids have fun and succeed.**

In 1999, I was honored to coach the North All-Star Wrestling team to a dual win over the South team. I loved coaching the individual sports and in track and field I coached many outstanding individuals. I coached varsity boys track for five seasons. After one year out of coaching football, I was asked to coach junior high girls track. Faulkton was a member of three conferences at that time. My junior high girls captured five LCAC championships, nine NCAC Championships and 16 CSDC Championships. In 1995 I was asked to coach the high school cross country program and ended up coaching three sports again – during which time I was fortunate enough to coach the State B Championship cross

SDIC Champs at NSU. Rod is in the back row, 4th person from the left.



taught at the high school level until the mid-1980s. School enrollment was dropping and as staff cuts occurred my role changed. At the time of my retirement in 2005, I was teaching K-8 physical education, sophomore physical education and health class, small engines class and computer drafting.



State Championship Cross Country team. Rod and Marta's daughter Sarah was part of that team (front row right side).

country team of 1996. I was honored with the title of South Dakota Cross Country Coach of the Year because of a talented group of girls. In 2009, I was inducted into the South Dakota Wrestling Hall of Fame. I am humbly honored for the recognition but for me it was all about seeing kids have fun and succeed.

In 2005, Marta and I moved to Pierre. While in Pierre I worked in the private sector for a few years and took a break from education after 32 years of teaching. In 2009, I received a call from McKinley Elementary Principal Rob Coverdale asking me to come in for an interview for a special education tutor position at McKinley. I accepted the position and started a 10-year career with the Pierre School District. It was exciting starting a new role in education again. Truthfully, I was pretty nervous my first year since I had not worked in special education before. Luckily my role at Faulkton allowed me to teach students K-12 so I was able to draw from past educational experience and having a love for working with young people I became comfortable in my new position. McKinley started an after school program so I joined the team of teachers in that program and was able to use my physical education experience in the program teaching archery and playground supervision teaching games. The boys and a few girls loved flag football. When McKinley closed, Mrs. Albright and the rest of the SPED staff were gracious enough to ask me to go with them to Kennedy Elementary where I worked for four more years. In 2019, I decided to pull the plug and go into full retirement, which was a very tough decision. I have been so blessed by all the experiences I have had in education from growing up in Clear Lake to finishing my career here in Pierre.

I was always blessed with special people in my life from the teachers who

shaped me as a student, to the teammates I competed with as an athlete, to the wonderful talented teachers and administrators I worked with in every school I worked at. Many people are responsible for taking this rookie under their wings and mentoring me along the way. It is rewarding for me to see some of my former students go into carpentry, drafting, teaching and coaching and use some of the skills I tried to teach them. Teaching, whether in the classroom or in the athletic arena, is the most rewarding occupation I ever had. Hopefully I was able to give back a little of what was given to me along this journey in education.

## Marta Neuman

I was born in 1951, and raised in Volga, S.D., graduating from Slowe Valley High School in 1969. From there, it was on to Northern State University in Aberdeen, where I earned a BS in elementary education with an art minor. While at NSU, I met Rod, and we were married in 1972. Our first teaching positions took us to Canistota where I taught high school art classes, and kindergarten. Rod taught and coached at the high school there. Then, in 1976, we moved to Faulkton, where Rod taught and coached and I operated a daycare in our home for the next 11 years. During this time, I also worked part-time for the VoWac Publishing Co. as their artist, creating teaching materials. Our two children were born and raised at Faulkton, and when our youngest entered kindergarten I rejoined the teaching profession at nearby Polo. My teaching duties included high school art, grades 1-2 combination, and Chapter One classes.

**I am thankful for all those along the way who influenced me; it is my hope that in turn I have had positive influences on my students as well as other educators.**

In 2005, we moved to Pierre and built a new home a few miles north

of town. I was employed at the S.D. Department of Education in 2005 as an administrative assistant, until my retirement in 2019. One of the many rewarding parts of my job was working with Indian Education, where I helped to organize and manage the S.D. Indian Education Summit. This is an annual three-day conference event attended each year by 150-400 educators from S.D. and surrounding states. It is a great venue for speakers, shared programs, cross-cultural understandings and student involvement.

Over the years, my roles in education have changed. I am thankful for all those along the way who influenced me; it is my hope that in turn I have had positive influences on my students as well as other educators. Classroom teaching was very rewarding, and so was my work developing VoWac materials and my work in the Office of Indian Education. The overall goal is to promote education as a lifelong learning experience.

Retirement days are busy for us, spending time with family and friends. Our two children are each married and each have two children, and we get together with them whenever we can. Seeing our children grow up and become successful, caring adults now raising their own children, is so rewarding. Rod and I also enjoy gardening, camping and fishing together. At our church, I have been active with the quilters, the handbell choir and Bible studies.

Marta being recognized by the Dept. of Tribal Relations. The plaque read "For Dedication to State-Tribal Relations" and was presented by Governor Kristi Noem on Feb. 27, 2019.



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South Dakota State Fair  
September 2-6, 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.

**AUGUST 25-29**  
**Corn Palace Festival**  
604 N Main Street, Mitchell, SD, 605-995-8430

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

**AUGUST 27-28**  
**Sizzlin' Summer Nights**  
Main Street, Aberdeen, SD, 605-226-3441

**AUGUST 27-29**  
**Fall River Hot Air Balloon Festival**  
Hot Springs Municipal Airport, Hot Springs, SD, 605-745-4140

**AUGUST 28**  
**McCrossan Boys Ranch Xtreme Event Rodeo**  
McCrossan Boys Ranch Campus, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-339-1203

**SEPTEMBER 2-6**  
**South Dakota State Fair**  
State Fairgrounds, Huron, SD, 605-353-7340

**SEPTEMBER 9-12**  
**SD State Senior Games**  
Watertown, SD, Contact Howard at 605-491-0635 for more information

**SEPTEMBER 10**  
**Mickelson Star Trail**  
Rochford Trailhead, Hill City, SD, register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mickelson-star-trail-night-tickets-140121383831>

**SEPTEMBER 10-11**  
**Ribs, Rods & Rock n' Roll**  
Main Street, Vermillion, SD, 605-624-2021

**SEPTEMBER 11-12**  
**Fall Harvest Festival**  
Delmont, SD, 605-928-3792

**SEPTEMBER 12**  
**Annual Antique Car & Tractor Parade**  
Main Street, Farmer, SD, 605-239-4498

**SEPTEMBER 17-18**  
**Deadwood Jam**  
Main Street, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

**SEPTEMBER 18**  
**Health Connect Fair**  
Sanford Pentagon, Sioux Falls, SD, 888-761-5437

**SEPTEMBER 18-19**  
**Northeast South Dakota Celtic Faire and Games**  
37925 Youth Camp Road, Aberdeen, SD, 605-380-5828

**SEPTEMBER 23-25**  
**Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup & Arts Festival**  
13329 US Highway 16A, Custer, SD, 605-255-4515

**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](mailto:mennopowershow@yahoo.com) for more details

**OCTOBER 1-3**  
**SiouxperCon**  
1201 N West Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD, visit [siouxpercon.com](http://siouxpercon.com) for more details and tickets

**OCTOBER 8-10**  
**2021 Black Hills Powwow**  
Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-341-0925

**OCTOBER 9-10**  
**Sioux Falls Quilters' Guild Bi-annual Quilt Show**  
1201 N West Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD, for more info visit [siouxfallsquiltersguild.com](http://siouxfallsquiltersguild.com) or send an email to [sfqg2021show@gmail.com](mailto:sfqg2021show@gmail.com)

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