



COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



South Dakota Art

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2022 Oahe Electric Cooperative Wrap Up



Jordan Lamb
Chief Executive Officer

Oahe Electric Cooperative and its membership had an extremely busy 2022 year. We connected more than 70 new services, continued our overhead to underground conversions, and maintained an extremely balanced budget. This upcoming 2023 year will pose many challenges as well as opportunities for our membership that we would love to discuss with you.

Operations Highlights for 2022 – Oahe Staff continues to be aggressive applying for grant awards available through local counties, state and federal to offset costs to our members. We have been successful on several grants in 2022, including approximately 10 miles of three-phase trunk distribution lines to convert 1950s overhead to underground buried conductor. The general cost for three-phase buried projects ranges anywhere from \$110,000 – \$150,000 per mile. This hardens our system for storm events, improves reliability to our members across the entire system, and improves our ability to perform load transfers during planned and unplanned outages. We have several more applications submitted and are optimistic about potential future grant opportunities.

Material pricing and lead times both remain abnormally high. We have geared up additional inventory for necessity equipment – meters, transformers, conductor to meet current aging system replacement along with new load additions in our service territory. Our staff has done an excellent job hedging material lead times while balancing financial impacts of additional equipment inventory thus far, and we will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

Financial Forecast – Oahe had a great year and kept rates flat throughout with no unforeseen increases. Our financial staff recently increased our revenue deferral amount to provide rate stability and prevent future mid-year rate changes for the upcoming several years. Increasing our revenue deferral largely resulted from excess margins upstream at both Basin Electric Cooperative and East River Electric Cooperative. These margins resulted from abnormally cold winters accompanied by high natural gas pricing and high fertilizer and commodity pricing. At a time when other utilities were over-leveraged with non-dispatchable renewables, our cooperatives maintained a blended generation portfolio that allowed us to hedge financial risk as well as aide other utilities during generation shortfall. Our upcoming 10-year financial forecast remains stable, even under our worst assumptions, and likely will continue to see rate increases far outpaced by inflation as they have the past four years.

We look forward to an exciting 2023 with potential for new load types and new technology emerging in our area. Two of these large projects include a data mining facility and also a carbon capture facility. We have received several new plans for housing development in our service territory as well that provide stability in our rate forecasts and housing opportunities in our area that allow for job growth. Thank you for your active member participation in 2022 and we look forward to operating our member owned cooperative together with you in 2023!

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

OAHE ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 019-042)

Board of Directors:

James Feller – Vice President
605.962.6207
Brandon Haag – Assistant Secretary
605.215.6758
Ryan Noyes – Treasurer
605.280.3500
Ross Sperry – Secretary
605.280.7770
Kirk Yackley – President
605.258.2412

Employees:

Tyler Arbach – Journeyman Lineman
Austin Bergeson – Journeyman Lineman
Mark Bruning – Line Foreman
Matt Eldridge – Chief Operations Officer
Trudie Feldman – Custodian
Brady Gaer – Journeyman Lineman
Sidney Geigle – Journeyman Lineman
Sam Irvine – Administrative Services Specialist
Megan Jaeger – Membership Director
Les Job – Journeyman Lineman
Jordan Lamb – Chief Executive Officer
Dan Lettau – Journeyman Lineman
Steve Long – Power Supply Specialist
Valerie Marso – Chief Financial Officer
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.

Supporting Our Schools



Valerie Marso
Office Manager

In February, Oahe Electric, along with cooperatives throughout the state, submitted a report to the South Dakota Department of Revenue reflecting our Kilowatt Hour Tax Liability. The Kilowatt Hour Tax Liability is a tax cooperatives pay based on the number of kilowatt-hours sold in each school district.

At the beginning of June, payments will be made to each county's treasurer's office, which will then be forwarded directly on to the school districts. Based on 2022 ABO Schools, Pierre School District and the Highmore-Harrold School will receive over \$462,000 in tax revenue from Oahe Electric and their power suppliers, Basin Electric Power Cooperative and East River Electric Power Cooperative. Schools may receive funds from multiple cooperatives based on the district map and

cooperative boundaries.

Commitment to Community – just another important aspect that sets your electric cooperative apart.

School District	Total Customers	KWH Sold	KWH Tax Liability
Agar-Blunt-Onida	1,364	263,887,932	\$ 283,739.45
Pierre	1,702	141,289,432	\$ 151,918.22
Highmore-Harrold	286	25,029,337	\$ 26,912.22
Potter Co.	3	30,160	\$ 32.43
TOTAL	3,355	430,236,861	\$ 462,602.32

Help Wanted

Oahe Electric needs assistance with keeping our rock beds and landscaping in tip-top shape this summer. We are looking for a hardworking group or individual who will periodically weed the areas around our headquarters. Please contact us at 1.800.640.6243 or oahe@oaheelectric.com with a proposal for yourself or your group.

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.

Spring Planting Safety

Farming equipment has become more massive and technologically advanced over time. While these welcome improvements help farmers cover more ground in less time, taller equipment and longer extensions can bring added challenges around power lines.

As farmers prepare to enter the fields for planting, we urge everyone working in the agricultural field to be alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines, poles and other electrical equipment.



Follow the 10-foot distance rule

To stay safe around overhead power lines, follow safe work practices at all times to help prevent serious and even deadly accidents. Start by making sure everyone knows to maintain a minimum 10-foot clearance from power lines.

This 10-foot rule applies not only to the area underneath the power line, but to the full 360 degrees around it. Not only can electricity change paths if direct contact is made, it can also happen when someone or something gets too close to a power line, and the current jumps, also known as arcing.

Other precautions

In addition to the 10-foot rule, take these steps to help decrease the chances of an electrical-related incident:

- If your machinery or vehicle comes in contact with a power line, do not get out of the cab because you could be electrocuted. Instead, stay where you are and call 9-1-1 to dispatch the appropriate utility to deenergize the power.
- If it is not safe to stay in the cab due to fire or smoke, make

a solid, clean jump with both feet landing at the same time. Hop away with feet together as far as you can.

- If you come across an accident or incident near a downed power line, alert individuals (from at least 50 feet away) to stay in the cab or vehicle as long as there is no imminent danger. Call 9-1-1 and do not approach the scene.
- Have a daily meeting with staff to go over possible hazards. Map out and review routes where equipment will be moved and ensure it will clear power lines.
- Teach anyone working with or for you (including family members and seasonal employees) about power line awareness and proper clearance distance.
- When working around power lines, always use a spotter, who has a broader vantage point than the person in the cab.
- Visually inspect overhead lines, which may not meet height codes due to age or pole damage. If a wire is hanging low, never try to move it; instead, contact your electric utility for assistance.
- Lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.



Take care when plugging in appliances

Stella Nilson

Stella Nilson gives good advice on circuit safety. Overloading circuits is a major cause of residential fires, and she warns people to take care when plugging in appliances. Stella is the daughter of Kyle and Alision Nilson, members of Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber Lake.

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.



SEAFOOD SPECIALTY

SEAFOOD PARTY DIP**Ingredients:**

1 pkg. mock crab sticks
 1 pkg. mock crab pieces
 1 pkg. mock lobster
 1 pkg. salad shrimp
 1 can water chestnuts
 1 medium onion (optional)
 1 c. real mayonnaise
 2 pkg. Philly cream cheese
 Dried parsley, garlic powder, salt, and pepper to taste

METHOD

Grind crab, lobster, shrimp, and water chestnuts. Chop onion. Using a mixer, blend mayo and cream cheese until smooth. Add parsley, garlic powder, salt, and pepper to taste. Combine with seafood. Mix well and refrigerate. Serve with various kinds of crackers.

Kari Larson Reder, Warner, S.D.

WALLEYE CAKES**Ingredients:**

8 oz. walleye (cooked, cooled, and flaked)
 1 1/2 c. mayonnaise
 4 eggs
 1 c. cooked wild rice
 1/2 c. Parmesan cheese
 4 green onions (chopped)
 1 sleeve saltine crackers (crushed)
 1 tsp. crushed garlic
 2 tsps. seasonings (salt, pepper)
 2 tbsp. oil or butter

METHOD

In large bowl, combine walleye, mayo, rice, onion, garlic, and cheese. Add eggs and seasonings. Fold in crushed saltines until the mixture is firm enough to form cakes. Fry in olive oil for 2-3 minutes on each side or until crispy. Serve with topping: 1/2 c. mayo, 1 tsp. garlic powder, and 1 oz. crumbled blue cheese. Mix together.

Dar Duncan, Milbank, S.D.

SHRIMP PASTA**Ingredients:**

1 can (14 1/2 oz.) diced tomatoes, undrained
 1 can (6 oz.) tomato paste
 1 c. water
 2 tsps. sugar
 1 tsp. basil leaves
 1 tsp. garlic powder
 1 tsp. oregano leaves
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 1/4 tsp. crushed red pepper
 8 oz. pasta, such as linguine or spaghetti
 1 lb. medium shrimp, peeled and deveined

METHOD

Mix tomatoes, tomato paste, water, sugar, basil, garlic powder, oregano, salt and red pepper in large saucepan. Bring to boil on medium-high heat. Reduce heat to low; simmer, uncovered, 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Meanwhile, cook pasta as directed on package, adding shrimp during last 3 minutes of cooking. Drain. Return pasta and shrimp to saucepot. Pour tomato sauce over shrimp and pasta. Toss gently to coat well. Serve immediately with shredded Parmesan cheese, if desired.

mccormick.com

Please send your favorite 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 2023. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Sign Up for Auto Pay and Win \$50

Auto Pay

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

With the automatic bill payment plan, you won't have to spend time writing or mailing checks. Plus, your bill will be paid on time, even when you are on vacation. Actually, paying your utility bill won't take any time at all! Each month, the amount due for your electric bill will be paid automatically from your checking/savings account or credit or debit card. The payment will be listed on your monthly account statement and on your next bill from Oahe Electric. Members who have already discovered how easy auto pay is have already been entered in to a separate drawing for a chance to win \$50! No additional work required! This is just our way of saying thank you for participating in the program.

SmartHub and Online Bill Pay

You can also view and pay your bill online the day they are generated. Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc members have the opportunity to view their bills online. Subscribers are able to sign up to receive an e-statement and access our new account management tool by going to our website – www.oaheelectric.com, clicking on the

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

Budget Billing

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

Auto Pay, SmartHub/Online Bill Pay and Budget Billing are just a few ways to make bill paying more convenient – use them together or separately. Just fill out the form below and return it to Oahe Electric, PO Box 216, Blunt, S.D., 57522 by **May 27, 2023**, to have your electric bill deducted from your checking or savings account and for your chance to win \$50!

(Please Print)

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

Name _____

Address _____

Daytime Phone _____

Member Account Number(s) _____

(List all account numbers you want paid automatically)

Please deduct my Automatic Bill Payment from my:

☐ Checking Account (or) ☐ Savings Account (or) ☐ Credit/Debit Card

Be sure to include a voided check with this form.

Bank Account Number _____

Bank Name _____

Bank Address _____

Bank Phone Number _____

Bank Routing Number _____

OR

Type of Card Used for Payment: ☐ Mastercard (or) ☐ Visa (or) ☐ Discover

Card Number: _____ Exp. Date: _____

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

Signature

Date

Small Change Can Make a BIG Difference

What is Operation Round Up? Operation Round Up® is just what the name implies: each month, Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. simply “rounds up” the electric bills of voluntarily participating members to the next highest dollar. For example, a member’s monthly bill of \$132.68 would automatically be rounded up to \$133, with the additional 32 cents going to the Operation Round Up Fund.

How do I participate? Oahe Electric’s Operation Round Up® program is an opt-out program – meaning that you are automatically enrolled, with nothing else needing done to participate! If you have not interested in donating, you can call the office at 1-800-640-6243 and request to be removed from the program.

How much will it cost members? The most a member can contribute is 99 cents per month x 12 months = \$11.88/year – this doesn’t sound like much, but with this small change, thousands of dollars can be generated and will mean a big difference to the people and organizations in our area.

Where will the money go? All Operation Round Up® donations are placed in a trust and are administered by an independent Board of Trustees. The board is made up of community leaders who serve on a voluntary basis. The board evaluates all requests for funds, determines who will receive funding and how all Operation Round Up® funds will be distributed.

Who is eligible for funds? The funds are used to address charitable community needs, whether it is disaster relief for an individual, or an organization funding a special project. Since the program’s first disbursement in 2009, the program has distributed over \$108,000. The region served by the fund is primarily the electrical area served by Oahe Electric

Cooperative, Inc., including Hughes and Sully counties.

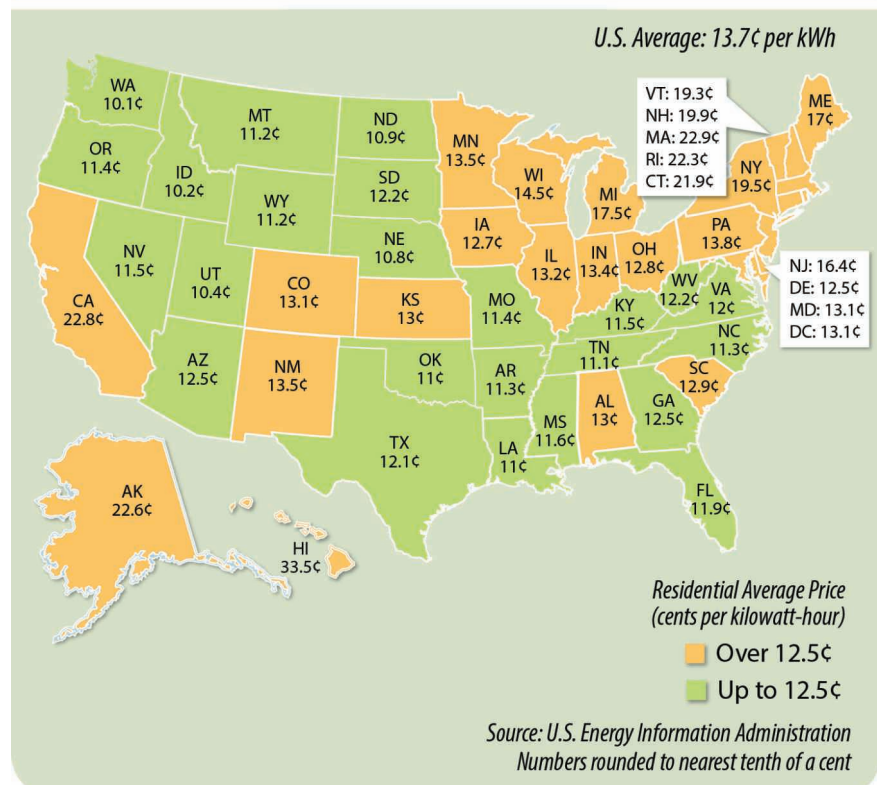
How do I apply for funds? The easy-to-complete applications for funding are currently available and can be requested by phone at 605-962-6243. Applications can also be found on our website at www.oaheelectric.com. All applications are due by **April 30, 2022**. Completed applications may be mailed to: Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc., P.O. Box 216, Blunt, SD 57522, faxed to: 605-962-6306, or emailed to: oahe@oaheelectric.com. After the deadline, the Board of Trustees will meet and allocate the funds to those they feel are in the most need.

How do I get involved? There are currently two, five-year Board of Trustees position openings. Trustees normally have to commit one afternoon a year to review fund request applications in person, with the possibility of correspondence regarding emergency fund requests throughout the year. If you are interested in offering your time to this endeavor, please contact Samantha Irvine, Operation Round Up Coordinator, at 1.800.640.6243 or oahe@oaheelectric.com.

Together, by giving a few cents each month, Oahe Electric members can make a big impact on life in our area!

Average Prices for Residential Electricity

2021 figures, in cents per kWh



TRASHYARD TREASURES

Lee Lindsley of Piedmont turns trash into treasure when he isn't on the clock working for the South Dakota Department of Transportation.

South Dakota Man Welds Junkyard Scraps Into Pieces of Art

Frank Turner

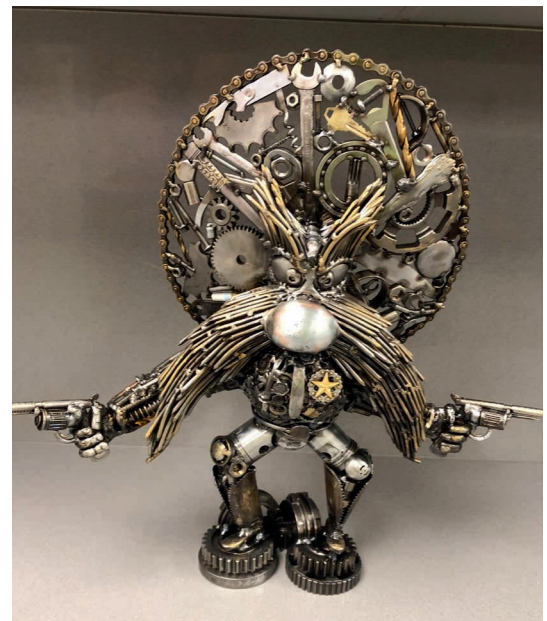
frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Lee Lindsley has a real talent for welding trash into treasure. Given the time, Lindsley can sculpt even the most unwanted junkyard scrap – busted gears, rusted lug nuts and mangled bicycle chains – into an artistic masterpiece.

By day, Lindsley works as a region inspector for the South Dakota Department of Transportation in the Black Hills, but by night, he can be found in his shop putting hours of work into his metallic puzzles, welding them together piece by piece.

When not on the clock, Lindsley is busy tackling his next project, investing anywhere from 30 to 100 hours into each sculpture. The end result often portrays a snapshot of rural life in the Black Hills: a life-size hunting dog made from a mix of old tools and spent rifle rounds, a miniature snowmobile standing on a displaced piston and a gun-slinging Yosemite Sam with a beard fashioned from old nails.

“Metal sculpting is some-



Famous cartoon character Yosemite Sam is one of Lindsley's favorite metal creations.

thing that anyone can do if they put their mind to it,” said Lindsley. “All I do is throw parts of junk together.”

In many ways, Lindsley’s passion for sculpting and welding echoes the resourcefulness of the very artwork he makes. When Lindsley began his metal sculpting journey, he didn’t have a formal education or even a background in art to guide him. Instead, he relied on his welding skills and the bits of scrap he had available to make his remarkable artwork.

“It’s hard to put a price on these pieces, but if my artwork does sell, I want to donate a portion of the sale to a charity.”

It was Lindsley’s second cousin Chris Degen, a teacher at Mitchell Technical College, who inspired Lindsley’s first foray into metal sculpting four years ago. Degen recalls gifting Lindsley’s son, a former lineman, a simple lineman made from nuts and bolts during the holidays. The quirky Christmas gift became a catalyst for the two to start creating new projects and bouncing new ideas off each other. According to Degen, Lindsley just ran away with the idea.

“He went crazy with it,” Degen laughed. “Lee started making sculptures that went way above and beyond what I was doing. I would put an hour into my project, and he would put one hundred into his.”

Taking another step forward in his hobby, Lindsley began researching works and art pieces posted online by world-famous metal sculptors, including metal sculptors John Lopez – a South Dakotan – and Brian Mock, whose masterpieces provided Lindsley a roadmap of what can be accomplished.

Since embarking on his metal sculpting journey, Lindsley has completed more than 18 metal sculptures, and his hobby continues to blossom. For the first time ever, Lindsley put one of his sculptures

up for sale in A1 Al’s Pheasant Ranch in Emery S.D. Since November, Lindsley’s metal hunting dog has stood proudly in one of the ranch’s hunting cabins, waiting for a buyer, and although the dog hasn’t left the shelf just yet, Lindsley said he is

excited to see his work out in the open and visible to the public eye.

“It’s hard to put a price on these pieces, but if my artwork does sell, I want to donate a portion of the sale to a charity,” he said. “We will see what happens.”



Lindsley’s metal German shepherd sits proudly in his workshop.



GENERATOR SAFETY

Position portable generators at least 25 feet outside the home, away from doors, windows and vents that can allow CO to enter the home.

Play it Safe: 10 Do's and Don'ts When Using Portable Generators



Matt Eldridge
Operations
Manager

Storm season is upon us, which means greater potential for power outages. If you're planning to use a portable generator in the event of an outage, we want to remind you to play it safe.

With proper use and maintenance, portable generators can provide great convenience during an outage. However, when generators are used incorrectly, they can be extremely hazardous. In a 2022 report, the Consumer Product Safety Commission estimated 85 U.S. consumers die every year from carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning caused by gasoline-powered portable generators.

Here are 10 do's and don'ts to keep in mind when using portable generators:

1. **DO:** Install backup CO alarms.

2. **DO:** Keep children and pets away from portable generators at all times.
3. **DO:** Position generators at least 25 feet outside the home, away from doors, windows and vents that can allow CO to enter the home.
4. **DO:** Ensure your generator is properly grounded. Use a portable ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to prevent electric shock injuries.
5. **DO:** Use three-pronged extension cords that are rated to handle the load of the generator. Inspect extension cords for cuts, frays or other damage before use.
6. **DON'T:** Operate a generator inside your home or an enclosed (or partially-enclosed) space. Generators produce high levels of CO, which can be deadly.
7. **DON'T:** Open windows or doors while the generator is running.
8. **DON'T:** Rely on generators as

a full-time source of power. They should only be used temporarily or in emergency situations to power essential equipment or appliances.

9. **DON'T:** Overload generators. They should only be used to power essential equipment. Make sure your generator can handle the load of the items you plan to power.
10. **DON'T:** Connect generators directly into household wiring unless you have an appropriate transfer switch installed. If a generator is connected to a home's wiring without a transfer switch, power can backfeed along power lines and electrocute utility lineworkers making repairs.

While generators provide convenience during power outages, they can quickly become hazardous – even deadly – if improperly operated. Before you operate a portable generator, be sure to thoroughly read the owner's manual for important safety information and tips.

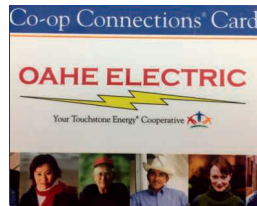
If you have questions about proper use of portable generators, we're here to help. Give us a call.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Washing windows and screens is a great way to practice energy efficiency during spring cleaning. Clean windows and screens make your home brighter by allowing more sunlight in, reducing the need for lamps and fixtures.

Clean screens also allow more fresh air in the home when the windows are open to recycle indoor air. Natural light and clean air are energy savers, and they enhance overall health and productivity.

Source: energy.gov



Cooperative Connections Card Program Vendors

Automotive

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

Food/Convenience Store

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

Health/Fitness and Beauty

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

Slumberland Furniture	605-945-1997	Pierre	20% off any regular priced Lazy Boy items. Excluding special orders.
Lee Real Estate	605-222-6003	Perre	Receive a FREE Comparable Market Analysis for real estate properties, which gives members current market values for home, land and commercial properties.

Services

Apryl's Animal House	605-224-9203	Perre	10% off a grooming or boarding
Inman's Water Technologies	605-224-5111	Pierre	Receive a 10% discount on the rental price of a water softener and/or reverse osmosis drinking water system by paying a year in advance. Receive 10% off of the purchase price of a new water softener or reverse osmosis drinking water system when you mention this ad. Payments made by credit cards do not qualify for discounts/specials.
Olson Plumbing Inc.	605-224-6436	Pierre	\$50 discount on any electric boiler, Marathon water heater, or fireplace
Small Engine House	605-224-5815	Pierre	10% off parts and labor

Sports/Recreation

Teton River Traders Gun Shop LLC	605-224-1371	Ft. Pierre	2% discount. Payments made by credit cards do not qualify for discount.
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Retail

Fastenal	605-224-4060	Pierre	10% off of fasteners and 5% off on all other products
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THE STORY OF DUDE DAD

Taylor and Heidi Calmus play with their kids (Theo, Juno and Otto) on a playset Taylor built. The family will welcome another baby in March.

Howard Grows More Than Corn

Tara Miller

Central Electric Cooperative

His kids may only know him as dad, but Jimmy Kimmel, the entire internet and 7 million followers can't be wrong – Howard native Taylor Calmus has evolved into a new-age celebrity. Better known as Dude Dad, Calmus is an accomplished actor, video producer, digital content creator, author, builder, television show host and comedian. Besides making regular appearances on Jimmy Kimmel Live, Calmus has also shared the screen with home remodeling experts Chip and Joanna Gaines, acclaimed actor Anthony Anderson and several YouTube stars.

Calmus is the son of Larry and Julie Calmus. He grew up west of Howard with siblings Zach and Maggie, and graduated from Howard High School in 2005. He now lives in Fort Collins, CO, but Calmus credits much of his creativity to his rural upbringing.

"Growing up in rural South Dakota was awesome because it forced us to create our own fun. My parents were big advocates of that. They would say, 'Go outside and

find something to do.' It enabled us to be creative," Calmus said.

His mom, Julie, agrees. "We were sticklers. We didn't let them play Nintendo or watch tv all day." Instead, the kids often spent time outside constructing BMX bike ramps, among other things.

Building Strong Connections

Now a dad himself, Calmus enjoys putting his ingenuity and building skills to work for his kids. "Building things with your kids is one of the best ways to bond with them," he said. "I've made carnival rides, backyard bike parks, multiple tree houses, a boat, just so many things. Being a dad gives you permission to imagine the impossible like kids do. It allows me to connect with them."

Calmus and his wife Heidi, who is originally from Fargo, have three children and another baby due in March. Heidi is often the subject of her husband's videos. Calmus puts his acting skills to work, sporting a long brunette wig as he comedically embellishes her life. Luckily, Heidi is a good sport, and they often share reaction videos in which she critiques his performance.

The couple went on tour this year, performing comedy shows as a team in North Dakota, South Dakota and Colorado. Calmus said without his wife, they would not have experienced this level of success. "Heidi believed in me before I did. Without her, Dude Dad wouldn't exist today."

The Evolution of Dude Dad

Success didn't happen overnight, Calmus explained. Early on, he would often pick up work doing set construction for tv shows and movie projects to make ends meet.

"When I moved away, I worked hard to make it in Hollywood as an actor, and I had some success," he said. "Then, when Heidi was pregnant with our second child, it was clear to me that I needed to do something more stable to support a family. That's when we created Dude Dad."

Mastering the Dude Dad brand took a great deal of time and commitment. Calmus constantly brainstormed new ideas for videos that would align with the brand and appeal to viewers. After all, the more views his content generates, the more income he earns from paid advertising on the various platforms.

A humble individual, Calmus doesn't necessarily consider himself famous. He said, "I think my content caught on faster in



Taylor and Heidi perform stand-up comedy as a team. They recently sold out shows in Fargo, Sioux Falls, and Fort Collins.

South Dakota because I have family here.”

But the numbers don't lie. Dude Dad content has more than 1 billion views on Facebook and roughly 150 million views on YouTube. So, his reach is far greater than just the state of South Dakota.

“With TikTok and other apps, there are a billion new creators every year, so it's a challenge all the time,” Calmus said. “Anybody can make videos online now, but not everybody can stand in front of an audience and perform comedy. It's been a fun and rewarding challenge. Now we get to see the people who are connecting with our content.”

Calmus authored a book entitled “A Dude's Guide to Baby Size” to help expectant dads understand their baby's size throughout pregnancy. He shares guy-friendly size comparisons for reference, such as a lug nut, a tape measure, a pound of ground beef and a football.

Giving Back

Because of his success, Calmus has been able to give back in unique ways. In 2019, he partnered with HGTV “Fixer Upper” star Chip Gaines to raise \$1.49 million for St. Jude's Children's Hospital. This partnership led to Calmus's television show, Super Dad, where he helps other dads build custom backyard play areas for their children.

Calmus is also a champion for Horizon Health Foundation's Smiles for Miles program. He helped the non-profit raise more than \$20,000 in a single day to provide free dental care for local kids.

Most recently, Taylor and Heidi performed

a live show in Fort Collins and donated the proceeds to a neighborhood family who sadly lost their father.

“He left behind two little kids who are friends with our kids, and we just wanted to be there for them however we could,” Calmus shared.

Making the Family Proud

Reggie Gassman, Calmus's uncle, is the Manager of Customer Electrical Services at Sioux Valley Energy in eastern South Dakota. He said he's proud of his nephew's accomplishments.

“When the kids were little, Taylor and Zach were already making home movies. His success creating videos doesn't surprise me at all,” Gassman said. “He takes something from normal, everyday life and sees it from a different angle.”

Gassman joked, “I told Taylor acting genes run in the family because I was named best actor in the junior class play. That's like the Emmys of Canova!”

Calmus said both sides of his family – Calmus and Gassman – are naturally funny and talented in different ways. While Gassmans are widely known for their baseball skills, his uncle Kurt (and his mustache) have famously inspired some of Dude Dad's most iconic characters.

He's Still Just Taylor

Despite his growing list of accomplishments, he's still the same guy his family knows and loves.

Calmus's mom Julie shared, “Since he was two years old, Taylor was always entertaining people and goofing around. His older brother Zach is just as clever, so there's always laughter when the family gets together. It's pretty cool he's been able to make a living doing that.”

She said when strangers recognize her son as Dude Dad, she chuckles. “He's still just Taylor to us.”



“Husbands of Target” is a viral video with more than 80 million views that Taylor developed in collaboration with other digital content creators.

ONLINE SAFETY

Information provided by KidsHealth.org from Nemours Children's Health. © 1995-2021. The Nemours Foundation/KidsHealth®

Keeping your kids safe online

The Internet can be wonderful for kids. They can use it to research school reports, communicate with teachers and other kids, and play interactive games.

But online access also comes with risks, like inappropriate content, cyberbullying, and online predators. Using social media apps and websites where kids interact, predators may pose as a child or teen looking to make a new friend. They might prod the child to exchange personal information, such as address and phone number, or encourage kids to call them, seeing their phone number via caller ID.

Parents should be aware of what their kids see and hear online, who they meet, and what they share about themselves. Talk with your kids, use tools to protect them, and keep an eye on their activities.

Online Protection Tools

Online tools let you control your kids' access to adult material and help protect them from Internet predators. Many Internet service providers (ISPs) provide parent-control options. You

can also get software that helps block access to sites and restricts personal information from being sent online. Other programs can monitor and track online activity.

Getting Involved in Kids' Online Activities

More important than blocking objectionable material is teaching your kids safe and responsible online behavior, and keeping an eye on their Internet use.

Basic guidelines to share with your kids for safe online use:

- Follow the family rules, and those set by the Internet service provider.
- Never post or trade personal pictures.
- Never reveal personal information, such as address, phone number, or school name or location.
- Use only a screen name and don't share passwords (other than with parents).

- Never agree to get together in person with anyone met online without parent approval and/or supervision.
- Never respond to a threatening email, message, post, or text.
- Always tell a parent or other trusted adult about any communication or conversation that was scary or hurtful.

Basic guidelines for parental supervision:

- Spend time online together to teach your kids appropriate online behavior.
- Keep the computer in a common area where you can watch and monitor its use, not in individual bedrooms. Monitor any time spent on smartphones or tablets.
- Bookmark kids' favorite sites for easy access.
- Check your credit card and phone bills for unfamiliar account charges.
- Find out what, if any, online protection is offered by your child's school, after-school center, friends' homes, or any place



where kids could use a computer without your supervision.

- Take your child seriously if he or she reports an uncomfortable online exchange.

If you're aware of the sending, use, or viewing of child pornography online, call the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at (800) 843-5678 or go online to their CyberTipline. They'll make sure the info is forwarded to law enforcement officials for investigation. Contact your local law enforcement agency or the FBI if your child has received child pornography via the Internet.

Watch for warning signs of a child being targeted by an online predator. These can include:

- Spending long hours online,

especially at night

- Phone calls from people you don't know
- Unsolicited gifts arriving in the mail
- Your child suddenly turning off the computer or other device when you walk into the room
- Withdrawal from family life and reluctance to discuss online activities

Talk to your kids! Keep an open line of communication and make sure that they feel comfortable turning to you when they have problems online.

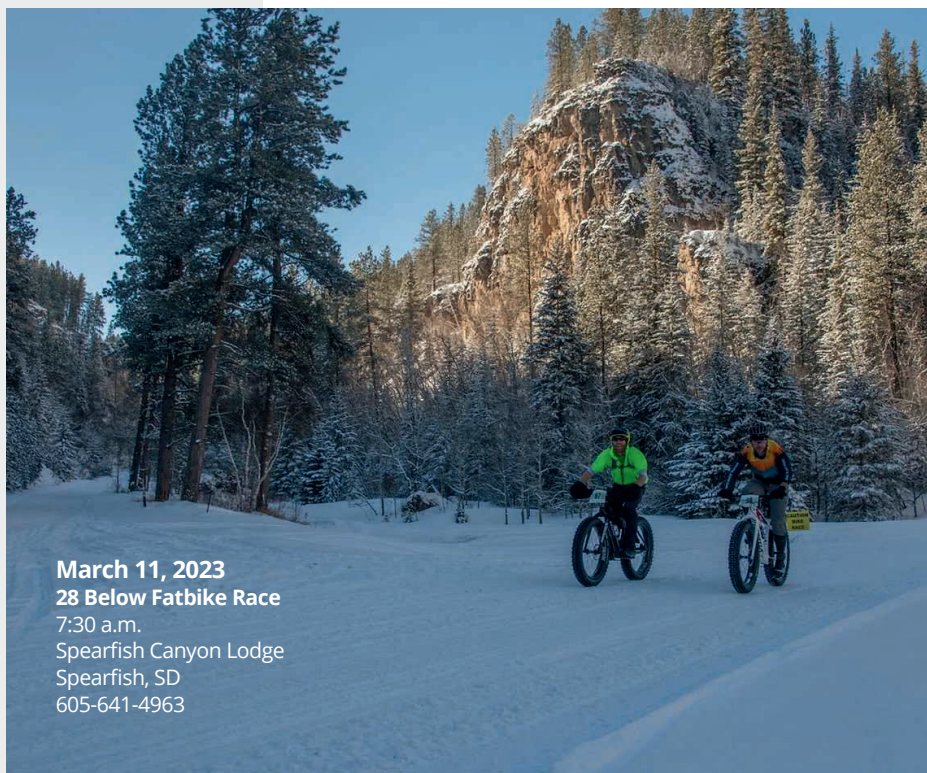
The Internet and Teens

As kids get older, it gets a little trickier to monitor their time spent online. They may carry a smartphone with them at all times. They probably want – and

need – some privacy. This is healthy and normal, as they're becoming more independent from their parents. The Internet can provide a safe "virtual" environment for exploring some newfound freedom if precautions are taken.

Talk about the sites and apps teens use and their online experiences. Discuss the dangers of interacting with strangers online and remind them that people online don't always tell the truth. Explain that passwords are there to protect against things like identity theft. They should never share them with anyone, even a boyfriend, girlfriend, or best friend.

Taking an active role in your kids' online activities helps ensure that they benefit from them without being exposed to the potential dangers.



March 11, 2023
28 Below Fatbike Race
 7:30 a.m.
 Spearfish Canyon Lodge
 Spearfish, SD
 605-641-4963

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.

MARCH 1-7
"In Flanders Fields" Art Exhibit & Silent Auction
 Vermillion Public Library
 Vermillion, SD
 605-658-6654

MARCH 4
Annual Ag Day
 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
 Washington Pavilion
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-6000

MARCH 4
Hill City Arts Council: Live On Stage
 5:30 p.m.
 High Country Guest Ranch
 Hill City, SD
 605-574-2810

MARCH 11
28 Below Fatbike Race
 7:30 a.m.
 Spearfish Canyon Lodge
 Spearfish, SD

MARCH 11-12
Philip Area Annual 2023 Gun Show
 March 11: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 March 12: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
 American Legion Hall
 Philip, SD
 605-859-2135

MARCH 18
Shamrock Shuffle Fun Run
 12 p.m.
 Main Street
 Presho, SD
 605-895-2559

MARCH 18
Shriners Kids Fun Day
 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Scherr-Howe Event Center
 Mobridge, SD

MARCH 18
Hill City Arts Council: Live On Stage
 5:30 p.m.
 High Country Guest Ranch
 Hill City, SD

MARCH 21
Knee High Naturalist: Birds
 Peter Norbeck Outdoor Education Center
 Custer, SD

MARCH 24-25
Schmeckfest
 Freeman Academy Campus
 Freeman, SD
 605-321-7351

MARCH 30
"The Wildest Banquet Auction in the Midwest"
 5:30 p.m.
 South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-339-1203

MARCH 31-APRIL 2
70th Annual Hayes Play: Trouble in Tumbleweed
 Hayes Community Hall
 Hayes, SD
 605-280-6556

APRIL 1
East Dakota Chapter NWTF 30th Banquet
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-940-0702

APRIL 2-4
"The Psychic-a Murder Mystery of Sorts" Community Theater Performance
 Town Players Theater
 Watertown, SD
 605-882-2076

APRIL 21-22
Junkin' Market Days, Spring Market
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Building
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-941-4958

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