



COOPERATIVE

CONNECTIONS



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Happy Spring, Oahe Members!



Jordan Lamb
Chief Executive Officer

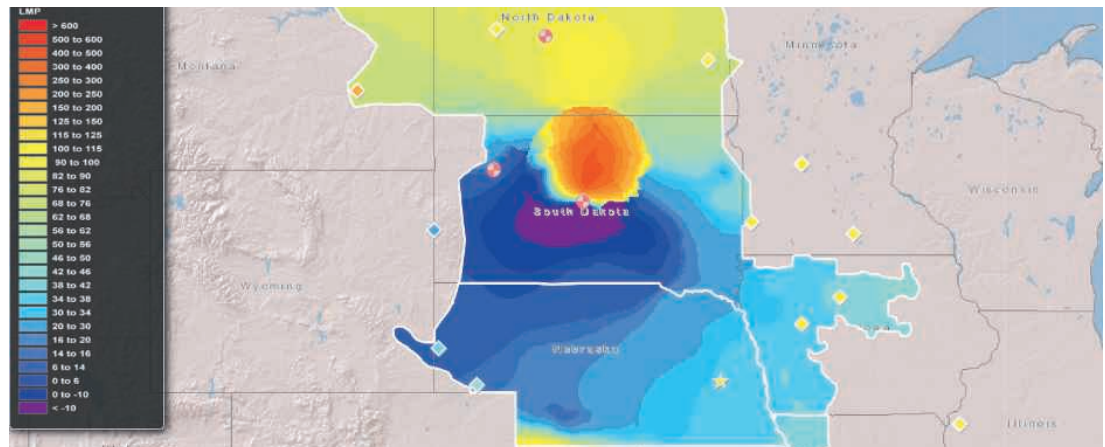
Oahe Electric Cooperative anticipates a busy spring and summer construction season. We have several new housing projects ‘in the works’, several large loads (both data center and fertilizer plants), and also grants to continue our efforts to convert overhead to underground line.

A few misconceptions that we frequently hear from our members include, “What happens when we run out of electricity due to load growth? How many people will this load employ? Where can they get housing for employees?” These are great questions from you – our members – that Oahe frequently asks upcoming projects also. Housing is a concern for our area that we take very seriously.

Why do new loads want to come to Oahe Electric Cooperative’s service territory marks the biggest question we receive. The answer is simple yet complex.

1. South Dakota’s business environment attracts people that want to provide value to communities. Us South Dakotans appreciate each other and look out for each other, and we do not assess a state income tax.
2. Recreation. Central South Dakota has the beautiful Missouri River and people enjoy traveling here to spend time as a vacation even if they are ‘working’ developing new projects.
3. Basin, East River and Oahe Electric Cooperatives provide stability in rates that other utilities, especially investor-owned utilities, typically do not provide.
4. OUR MEMBERS! Since the 1950s, our members have helped to build projects from the Oahe Dam to transmission lines cross country in areas that investment companies and banks did not want to serve, to provide equal and comparatively better service than someone in downtown Chicago would receive. This value added is our infrastructure – whether its electricity , water, sewer, cable, fiber-optic or telecom services, rural communities value member owners and appreciate new businesses coming into our areas to stimulate growth.

Will we run out of electricity? Not anytime soon. We have a tremendous amount of transmission access in an area that provides downward pressure on overall rates due to the heavy generation export as shown in the pricing contour map below:



What maintains future stable rates and low pricing areas? YOU, OUR MEMBERS. We must continue to spend money responsibly and continue to build out our infrastructure as our predecessors have – and God willing – our successors will.

Thank you for being active members in the growth of our local communities, it has garnished projects I never would have thought imaginable for our areas and provides value for our future generations.

-Jordan

**COOPERATIVE
CONNECTIONS**
OAHE ELECTRIC

(USPS No. 019-042)

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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.

Prioritize Safety Year-Round

At Oahe Electric Cooperative, we recognize Electrical Safety Month every May, but we also know the importance of practicing safety year-round. From our co-op crews to you, the consumer-members we serve, we recognize that everyone has a part to play in prioritizing safety.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured or electrocuted as a result of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes. Many of these accidents are preventable. Electricity is a necessity, and it powers our daily lives. But we know first-hand how dangerous electricity can be because we work with it 365 days a year.

To Oahe Electric, safety is more than a catchphrase. It's all of our responsibility to keep employees safe. Additionally, we want to help keep you and all members of our community safe. That's why you'll see Oahe Electric hosting safety demonstrations at community events and in schools throughout the year, to demonstrate the dangers of electricity. We discuss emergency scenarios, such as what to do in a car accident involving a utility pole and downed power lines. We caution students on the dangers of pad-mounted transformers and overloading circuits with too many electronic devices.

Electricity is an integral part of modern life. Given the prevalence of electrical devices, tools and appliances, we'd like to pass along a few practical electrical safety tips.

Frayed wires pose a serious safety hazard. Power cords can become damaged or frayed from age, heavy use or excessive current flow through the wiring. If cords become frayed or cut, replace them, as they could cause a shock when handled.

Avoid overloading circuits. Circuits can only cope with a limited amount of electricity. Overload happens when you draw more electricity than a circuit can safely handle—by having too many devices running on one circuit.

Label circuit breakers to understand the circuits in your home. Contact a qualified electrician if your home is more than 40 years old and you need to install multiple large appliances that consume large amounts of electricity.

Use extension cords properly. Never plug an extension cord into another extension cord. If you “daisy chain” them together, it could lead to overheating, creating a potential fire hazard. Don't exceed the wattage of the cord. Doing so also creates a risk of overloading the cord and creating a fire hazard. Extension cords should not be used as permanent solutions. If you need additional outlets, contact a licensed electrician to help.

We encourage you to talk with your kids about playing it safe and smart around electricity. Help them be aware of overhead power lines near where they play outdoors.

Our top priority is providing an uninterrupted energy supply 24/7, 365 days per year. But equally important is keeping our community safe around electricity.

Your Safety Matters

Prevent home electrical fires

Eight out of 10 fire-related deaths occur at home – the place that embodies comfort and security. That’s why it’s important to take steps to keep everyone safe.

Faulty or deteriorating electrical cords are a top cause of fires at home. Cords that become frayed or cracked can send sparks to flammable surfaces. Check your cords to ensure that they are in good shape, and replace any that are worn.

In addition, make sure you are not overloading circuits. If you’ve been in your home for more than 10 years, have your circuit breaker box inspected by a licensed electrician to tighten loose connections and check for overloaded circuits.



Homes with copper wiring need to be inspected every 20 years, and homes with aluminum wiring should be inspected every five years.

Check all Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) outlets several times each year by pushing the test/reset button to be sure they are working properly.

If breakers are continually tripping or if fuses are blowing frequently, that’s a sign of potential trouble. The cause could be old wiring unable to handle the load demand of today’s modern appliances. If needed, ask a licensed electrician to install additional circuits for safety.

Use surge protectors and power bars to help prevent overloading an electrical outlet, plugging no more than three cords into the strip.

May is National Electrical Safety Month. We urge you to take the time and steps needed to lower the risks of electrical fires. Keep your family safe.



Stay Away from Power Lines

Weston Koistinen, Age 6

Weston Koistinen warns readers to be safe by staying away from power lines. Weston’s parents are Dion and Stephanie Koistinen, members of H-D Electric Cooperative.

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.

SUMMER CASSEROLES

BREAKFAST CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

- 1 5 oz. package croutons, any flavor
- 2 cup sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 lb. sausage, fried and drained
- 9 eggs
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 1 tbsp. mustard

Method

Spray 9x13 pan with vegetable oil. Arrange croutons on bottom. Sprinkle cheese over croutons and put sausage over cheese. Combine eggs, milk and mustard. Beat to blend and pour into pan. Bake covered at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

Janet Ochsner
Box Elder, S.D.

CHICKEN CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

- 1 package Chicken Stove Top Stuffing mix
- 3 cups cooked cut up chicken
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 2/3 cup milk
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 cups chicken broth

Method

Grease a 9x13 pan and put 1/2 of the stuffing mix in the pan. Cover with chicken. Combine soups and milk and spoon over chicken. Spread other 1/2 of stuffing over the top. Pour 2 cups of chicken broth over all and spread with beaten eggs. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour.

Gail Lee
Brookings, S.D.

TACO CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 lbs. ground beef
- 1 package taco seasoning mix
- 1 can (16 oz.) pinto beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (15 oz.) tomato sauce
- 1 can (11 oz.) whole kernel corn, drained
- 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1 cup coarsely crushed tortilla chips

Method

Preheat oven to 400°F. Brown meat in large skillet on medium-high heat. Drain fat. Stir in seasoning mix, beans, tomato sauce and corn. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low; simmer 5 minutes. Spoon into 2-quart baking dish. Sprinkle with cheese and tortilla chips. Bake 5 to 10 minutes or until cheese is melted. Serve with assorted toppings, if desired.

McCormick

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 2024. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Looking for an easy way to manage home energy use? Smart plugs are inexpensive and offer convenient solutions for scheduling and controlling your favorite electronic devices.

With smart plugs, you can easily manage your coffee maker, lighting, home office equipment, video game consoles and more. Smart plugs can help you manage devices through a smart phone app, your home assistant or voice control. By conveniently powering off or scheduling devices, you can save energy (and money!).

Source: energystar.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.
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	\$100 off a single item of \$599.99 or more. Some exclusions apply. See store for details.
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

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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Wish Upon a Crawdad

Curtis Condon's children's literature illuminates electric cooperative history

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

What happens when you blend the rich history of electric cooperatives with the picturesque landscapes of rural America and the magic of fiction storytelling? Curtis W. Condon, a former writer and editor for electric cooperative magazines, finds the answer in his vibrant children's novel, "Wish Upon a Crawdad." This coming-of-age story combines these unlikely elements through the eyes of the main character, 12-year-old Ruby Mae Ryan, during the late Great Depression years in rural Oregon.

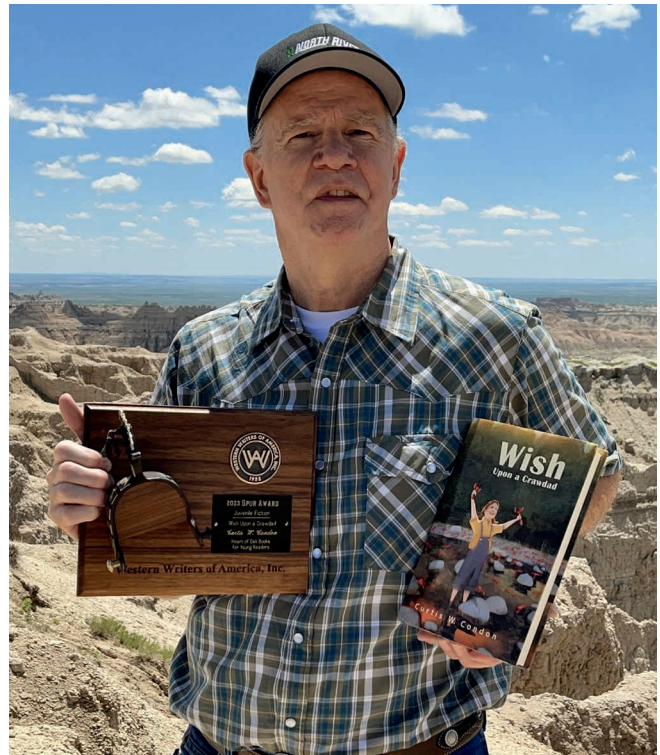
The book, highlighting Ruby's outdoor adventures, explores personal growth while giving testimony to rural electrification in American history. Before writing children's literature, Condon spent more than 27 years in the electric co-op industry as an editor and writer for *Ruralite*, a magazine for electric cooperatives and their members in the Northwest. His time there, conducting interviews and writing, familiarized Condon with the history of rural electrification in the U.S.

"I fell in love with the concept of the electric co-op. Electric co-ops have such a fantastic history and a wonderful story to tell, and I wanted to tell that in this book," said Condon.

This history began with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's determination to lead America out of the Great Depression. Deciding that electrification would play a central role in the process, the president established the Rural Electrification Administration through an executive order in the face of strong dismay from private utility companies. The president's order set the stage for the current network of member-owned electric cooperatives we recognize today, which bring electricity to rural homes that would otherwise be powerless.

However, "Wish Upon a Crawdad" doesn't tell the story of presidents and executive orders. Instead, the book focuses on the very real impact rural electrification had on Ruby, her family, and her community.

"It's about a girl who grows up without electricity until she is 12 years old, and she likes to wish upon crawdads the way that people wish upon stars," Condon explained. "One of the wishes is to get electricity, and that dream comes true because her mom



Curtis W. Condon, author of "Wish Upon a Crawdad," accepts the 2023 Western Writers of America Spur Award, an award presented to Condon in Rapid City, S.D.

and dad get together with their neighbors and create an electric co-op."

Condon's own upbringing in Oregon inspires the book's setting, filled with his memories of crawdad-filled pools, temperate forests and rural dirt roads. While set in the 1940s, many of Ruby's experiences reflect those of Condon's own family.

"My grandmother remembered when electricity was first introduced to her community. She considered electricity to be one of the greatest wonders of the world," said Condon.

Together, Condon's childhood and passion for electric cooperative history set the stage for "Wish Upon a Crawdad," his first children's book, fulfilling a dream he had held onto for years.

"Since I was twelve years old, I knew I wanted to be a children's book writer. It took me 30 years of doing a different kind of writing, but I finally got there," said Condon.

Fulfilling a childhood dream, Condon's book was published in 2022, and his passions and life history began connecting with readers. Although the target audience of the book is children ages 9 to 12, Condon said readers of all ages are enjoying Ruby's story.

Since publication, "Wish Upon a Crawdad" has won the 2023 Western Writers of America Spur Award, an award presented to Condon in Rapid City, S.D. Other awards include the 2023 Will Rogers Medallion Award, the 2023 First Horizon Award, and the 2023 Eric Hoffer Book Award. The book has a presence in libraries across 37 states, including South Dakota.



Patsy Besson helps package fresh cuts of meat at the Wall Meat Processing plant.
Photo Credit: Shannon Marvel

Wall Meats Revives Local Meatcutting in South Dakota Through New Underwood Expansion

Shannon Marvel

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A local meat processing plant is expanding its footprint in Pennington County in a way that will put more locally produced protein on dinner tables and bolster the local meat processing workforce throughout South Dakota.

The man behind this plan is local business owner Ken Charfauros, who owns Wall Meat Processing, which has locations in Wall and Rapid City.

Charfauros is currently raising funds through a capital drive campaign to finance the construction of a 30,000 square foot meat processing facility in New Underwood. The new facility will help train the next generation of meat processors through a partnership with Western Dakota Tech in Rapid City.

“We are at \$2.8 million in our drive. We also have the \$3.3 million USDA Rural Development grant, which is a meat and poultry expansion plan grant. We are about \$200,000 short of our goal,” Charfauros said.

He added that the New Underwood processing plant will also use funding from the Meat and Poultry Intermediary Lending Program (MPILP), which according to the USDA’s website “provides grant funding to intermediary lenders who finance – or plan to finance – the start-up, expansion, or operation of slaughter, or other processing of meat and poultry. The objective of the MPILP is to strengthen the financing capacity for independent meat processors, and to create a more resilient, diverse, and secure U.S. food supply chain.”

Charfauros said he’s still meeting with potential investors and has a financial team focused on creating relationships with local ag producers.

“After we get our capital drive, the plan itself will be about \$21 million,” he added. “And then we start the project. The groundbreaking is going to happen in about a year and the facility will begin operations six months after that.”

Charfauros said he expects to purchase the property to site the new plant this spring.

Returning to a Passion

Wall Meats Processing opened for business 57 years ago, but

Charfauros took ownership over the facility in 2017. His passion for meat cutting began when he was a teenager while working for a local meat plant in Delaware.

“It was my high school job and I loved it. After I graduated high school, I felt that my country needed me, so I joined the Air Force and did 30 years. But I always missed that part of my life,” Charfauros recalled.

“A guy that taught me how to cut was like my second dad, and I always wanted to come back to it. My son had just graduated from South Dakota State University, and I had retired from the Air Force. That’s when we decided to buy a plant.”

His son manages the store in Rapid City while Ken’s three nephews help run the family’s businesses in Wall, which include Wall Meats and the Red Rock restaurant.

Supporting Local Producers

Building the new facility has been a challenging venture that’s been years in the making.

“We started building this plan about four years ago, then COVID hit and got in our way. Then, we were lucky enough to get those grant awards last year, and ever since we have been working diligently to get the format right,” Charfauros said.

“I have drawings. I have an equipment list all put together — everything is ready to go except for this capital drive that we are undergoing.”

Charfauros said he has been meeting with both potential and locked-in investors daily over the last year to produce the required financing.

“We have met with over 600 people with 99 percent of those people being producers, because this is all for them. This plant offers them premium pricing above the market rates,” Charfauros said.

While the cattle market is high now, Charfauros remains realistic that the market can change for the worse.

While he hopes the market remains high enough for producers to survive, his partnership with producers will serve as

added security. That means the partnership must be tightknit.

He knows he cannot do it alone.

Reviving a Dying Art

“Meat cutting is a dying art, and we teach meat processing at our store in Rapid City to bring that art back. We’re trying to fight for that industry as it is,” he said.

Three meat processing students are currently being taught at the Rapid City facility through a partnership with Western Dakota Tech, which recently began offering the two-year program.

Pam Stillman-Rokusek, director of communications and marketing at Western Dakota Tech, said three students are currently enrolled in the Meat Processing program. Of those three, two will graduate in May.

But the college is still working on more outreach.

“Enrollment has been a bit low in the program, so the plan is for a hiatus this fall. They’ll revamp the curriculum. Then, we will certainly do additional outreach. We have done advertising, gone to the schools. We have reached out to 4-H

groups and done some traveling, but we need to turn it up a notch to produce more students in the program. That is our goal,” Stillman-Rokusek said.

Despite the Meat Processing program being put on hiatus, the school will still ensure that the remaining student completes the program while actively working on developing the program and outreach methods.

“There’s such a high need for meat processors and we’re looking at different ways to fill that gap. It’s something we’re committed to doing,” she added.

The goal is to enroll at least five students in the following school years when the program restarts.

The learning center that will be built within the New Underwood facility will also teach producers, in addition to students, the art of meat cutting.

“We are trying to bring that industry back to what it should be—regionally processed protein,” Charfauros said.

“That means we must build the environment to spark that passion. In anything you do, you need to learn how to do it the right way.”



Wall Meat Processing plant, established in 1957. Photo Credit: Shannon Marvel

What is making my bill so high?



Valerie Marso
Chief Financial Officer

We get lots of calls every year regarding electric bills and the amount due. “Why is my bill so high?” or “Why did you charge me so much?” Ultimately, the amount of your bill is a direct reflection of your usage derived from your living habits. Being aware of what drives your usage puts you more in control of what that amount due looks like each month when you open your statement.

The next questions resemble “what can I do to lower my bill?” If you want to identify which appliance in your home is costing you the most, we have a kill-a-watt power monitor available to you for assistance. Whatever appliance you are wondering about gets plugged into this unit and it records the usage until unplugged. Then you can analyze the data (we can assist you if you would like) and literally only takes seconds to set up – anyone can do it!

What are some scenarios that can create more than usual usage? Here are a few very common examples, but every situation can vary.

When it is cold out, your heating system works harder to maintain a comfortable temperature inside your house. The colder it is, the larger difference between outside temp and desired inside temp = more usage to satisfy your thermostat. Adjusting it just a few degrees can make a difference. Some people will throw on an extra layer and some will turn up the heat. Personal preferences and habits directly affect your usage. Check into getting a programmable thermostat

to help reduce usage when you aren't home.

What else can create additional/exceptional usage? Heaters that are plugged into a regular 110v outlet. They seem harmless enough. But something to keep in mind- these are being billed at the regular rate instead of the heating/cooling rate – which is nearly half the price. Cumulatively that will make a difference. If you have one running downstairs to take off the chill, in each bedroom or in the porch, beware of the additional usage that is being created even though it's “just a small heater”.

Plugging in vehicles can also create some large usage that people generally don't realize is happening - until they receive their bill and we talk through what has changed from their “average” bills to this one. A great way to control your usage in this scenario is to use a timer instead of plugging in your tractor/vehicle when you get home and then unplugging it the next day/ time you go to use it. This will result in hundreds of fewer hours of usage over the winter, yet it is still ready to go when you need it.

Garage fridges and freezers are a lot of times “old”, not very energy efficient and a culprit of a high bill. Appliances have come a long way over the last several years as far as efficiency is concerned. So even though older appliances seem to be working just fine, the amount of energy you save could be enough to justify an upgrade.

If you have any concerns or are questioning how much a particular electric item costs you per month to operate, we can help you! Stop by anytime to borrow our kill-a-watt hour meter we have available for our members use.

Landscaping 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@oahelectric.com with a proposal for yourself or your group.

COVE HEAT SALE

Oahe Electric is offering great deals on our remaining Cove Heat inventory!
Call 1.800.640.6243 today to learn more!

Spring Signals Busy Construction Season for Oahe Electric



Matt Eldridge
Chief Operations
Officer

As the temperatures begin to rise and the snow starts to melt, signaling the arrival of spring in central South Dakota, Oahe Electric is gearing up for a bustling construction season. With several projects lined up, we are set to enhance our infrastructure and ensure reliable power delivery to our members.

Partnering with K&H Electric from Linton, N.D., we are slated to embark on a significant endeavor beginning in April, weather permitting. K&H Electric will undertake the plowing of six miles of three-phase underground wire to the north of the Buckeye Substation, located on 293rd Ave. Following the completion of the plowing phase, Oahe Electric will take charge of terminating the cable and retiring the overhead line, marking a considerable upgrade in our infrastructure.

In addition to this major project, we are actively engaged in our pole testing rotation, a crucial aspect of ensuring the safety

and reliability of our distribution system. Every pole in our system undergoes testing every ten years, and this year, the focus is on the southwest part of the service territory. Scheduled for mid-June, Exo, Inc. from Minnesota will commence the pole testing process, with approximately 130 poles remaining to be changed out from last year's testing cycle.

Acknowledging the importance of vegetation management in maintaining uninterrupted power supply, we have enlisted the support of Dakota Tree Company from Aberdeen, S.D. Over the past few years, amidst heightened construction activities, tree trimming has taken a back seat. However, with the assistance of Dakota Tree Company, we aim to address this backlog by efficiently cutting and pruning trees within our service territory.

As Oahe Electric gears up for a busy construction season, residents can expect to witness increased activity across the service territory as we work tirelessly to modernize our infrastructure and ensure the continued delivery of reliable electricity.



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.



CYBERSECURITY ON THE GRID

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Imagine sitting at your desk on a typical Monday morning. You have logged into your computer with coffee in hand, ready to tackle the day. But as you begin, your computer displays an ominous message: “Your files have been encrypted. Pay a ransom to regain access.” It’s not just your computer; your co-workers have received the same message. Overnight, the entire office has fallen victim

to a ransomware attack that has locked away critical data. Your office computers will remain unusable until a payment is made.

This scenario, among others, has become a primary concern for workplaces everywhere, including electric cooperatives. As a result, local co-ops are taking action in the cybersecurity space to prevent bad actors from disrupting the critical goal of delivering power that is safe, affordable and reliable to their members. Electric co-ops are focused

on enhancing cybersecurity resilience and readiness to defend against potential cyber threats.

Co-ops are routinely monitoring and managing cyber risks, working with federal and local law enforcement agencies and the North American Electric Reliability Corp. to protect critical infrastructure. By working as a network, co-ops are enhancing grid resilience, ensuring reliable electricity for their members.

According to an FBI Internet Crime Report, the U.S. reported more than \$12.5 billion in annual losses in 2023 due to cyberattacks like the one described. A significant number of these attacks target the elderly and vulnerable. When breaking down the losses by age group, individuals aged

20 to 29 accounted for \$360.7 million of the total losses, while those 60 and older incurred losses of \$3.4 billion in 2023 alone.

And it's not just about the money. These attacks also have the potential to undermine the stability of entire systems, including the electrical grid. This year, directors of the FBI, NSA, and CISA testified before Congress about Chinese Communist Party hacking groups that had gained access to the electric grid and other critical infrastructure to "wreak havoc and cause real-world harm to American citizens and communities."

"Many cyberattacks are conducted by criminals trying to steal money or collect a ransom," explains Chief Security and Compliance Officer Daniel Graham of Basin Electric Power Cooperative. "Nation-states

target electric utilities for different reasons. Some nation-states want to steal intellectual property. Others want to be able to disrupt our electric grid."

So how is it done? To execute their schemes, bad actors employ a long list of complex strategies and techniques, such as phishing, data breaches and malware to adversely impact their targets. Business email compromise, one of the most common techniques, occurs when an impostor poses as a legitimate business contact, seeking to steal sensitive information such as credit card numbers, bank account information or login credentials.

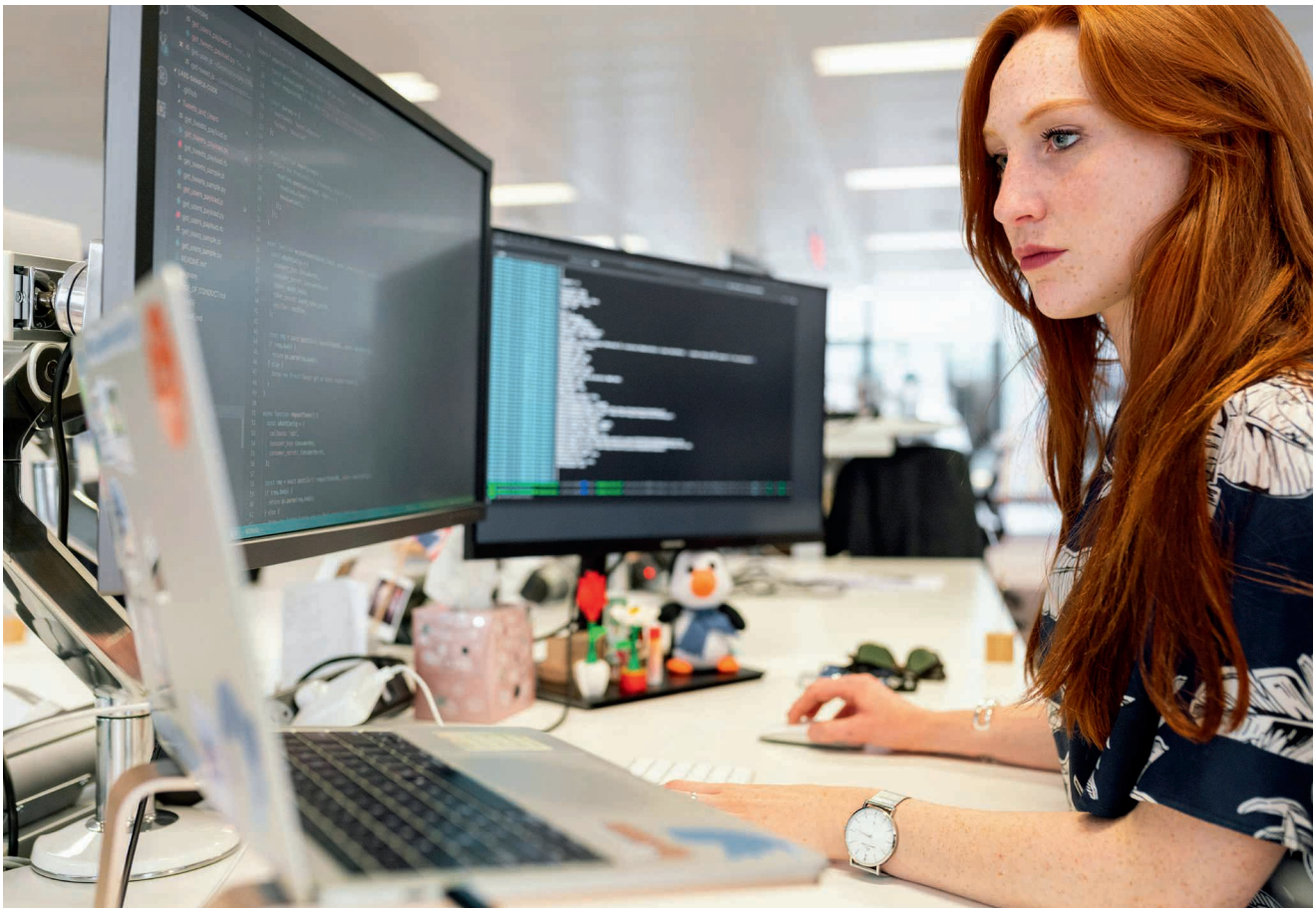
Luckily, co-ops are implementing a variety of tools, policies and training to help mitigate attacks and secure the grid. Programs like NRECA's Co-op Cyber Goals Program help co-ops build fundamental cybersecurity

measures, such as employee training, developing cyber incident response plans, and regular self-assessment. These strategies help co-ops reduce the risk of a successful cyberattack in the ongoing battle against cybercrime.

"Additionally, co-ops can conduct cybersecurity exercises to determine the effectiveness of current defenses and practice responses," Graham says.

Despite these efforts, the threat of a successful cyberattack persists, making vigilance an essential component of effective cybersecurity.

"If you see something suspicious, report it to your cooperative," explains Graham. "Electric co-ops are an essential part of our country's critical infrastructure. We can best protect our electric grid by working with each other."



Oahe Awards \$6,000 in Scholarships

Oahe Electric Cooperative, Inc. has awarded **Broch Zeeb** a \$2,000 scholarship, which is funded by Oahe Electric and Basin Electric Power Cooperative of Bismarck, N.D., and is for use during the 2024-2025 school year.

Broch is a senior at Stanley County High School in Ft. Pierre. Some of the activities he participates in are National Honor Society, Fellowship of Christian Athletes, as well as football and basketball, for which he has been a captain for the past two years. He has also helped to raise money for, and participated in, trips to Jaurez, Mexico, to assist in building houses for homeless families. While he is yet undecided on what college he will attend this fall, he plans on obtaining a degree related to business, sports medicine, or coaching. He is the son of Brian and Shannon Zeeb of Pierre.



Broch Zeeb

Congratulations, Broch. Keep up the great work!

In addition to the \$2,000 scholarship with Basin Electric, Oahe Electric also awarded an additional \$4,000 in scholarships. The scholarships were awarded to Sapphire Wyatt, Aleise Christopherson and Jarron Beck, seniors at TF Riggs High School in Pierre, and Ashton Griese, a freshman at Augustana University.

Sapphire Wyatt is involved in National Honor Society and the Gov2Gov Leadership program, as well as being a longtime member of Community Bible Church, where she participates in AWANA, Youth Group and has volunteered at Vacation Bible School for several years. She has completed an EMT course and will be taking her NREMT test, which will allow her to practice as an EMT. Her intention is to enlist in the SD Air National Guard in March, followed by attending basic military training and advanced individual training to become a health services management technician. She will then enroll at USD where she plans on obtaining her Bachelor of Science in Nursing, while completing her prerequisites for PA school. Sapphire is the daughter of Joseph and Rachel Wyatt of Pierre.



Sapphire Wyatt

Congratulations, Sapphire! we wish you the best of luck in your career goals.

Aleise Christopherson participates in National Honor Society, Gov2Gov Leadership program, Future Business Leaders of America, volleyball (team captain), basketball (team captain), track, and Opening Minds through Art, as well as volunteering at elementary schools, Feeding South Dakota, and being a Vitalent blood donor. She plans on attending Augustana University to study nursing, with her end goal being to complete a nurse anesthetist program and become a CRNA. Aleise is the daughter of Dustin and Susan Christopherson of Pierre.



Aleise Christopherson

Congratulations, Aleise! we hope you realize your dreams and find much success.

Jarron Beck is a captain on his Oahe Capitals hockey team, as well as participating in National Honor Society, the Gov2Gov Leadership program and soccer. He also spends his time volunteering at Feeding South Dakota and assisting with the youth hockey program. Jarron plans on attending SDSU where he will work on attaining a degree in biology, which he will use to pursue a career in the dental field. He is the son of Ryan and Kellie Beck of Pierre.



Jarron Beck

Congratulations on your achievements, Jarron, and best of luck with your future goals!

While in high school, **Ashton Griese** was involved in National Honor Society, the Gov2Gov Leadership program, as well as hockey (team captain) and soccer. Ashton plans on continuing his education at Augustana University, where he is majoring in Finance. Ashton is the son of Chad and Sandra Griese of Pierre.



Ashton Griese

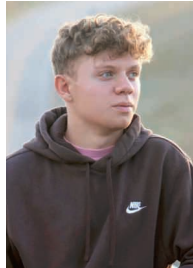
Congratulations, Ashton, and good luck achieving your goals, we wish you the best of luck on your journey!

Oahe Electric Awards \$1,000 Lineman Scholarship

Oahe Electric is pleased to announce that it has awarded it's \$1,000 Lineman Scholarship to **Riley Pfeifer!**

Riley is a senior at TF Riggs High School in Pierre. He enjoys hunting, camping, and being outdoors, which makes this an excellent career choice for him. He plays hockey for the Oahe Capitals and is employed by Hartman & Pahl Farms. Riley plans on attending Mitchell Technical College's Powerline Construction and Maintenance Program for the 2024 fall semester.

Congratulations Riley! We are very excited for you to begin your journey and we hope you'll find success and happiness in the Journeyman Lineman profession!



Riley Pfeifer

Who's Graduating This Spring?

We know we have many seniors in our service territory who will be graduating in the near future, and we want to hear from you!

Send Oahe Electric a graduation announcement at PO Box 216, Blunt, SD 57522, and you might just receive a graduation gift back!

Thank You Messages

Dear Scholarship Committee,
Thank you for selecting me to receive this scholarship funded by Oahe Electric. It will be very useful as I enter my second year at Augustana University with my finance major.

Greatly appreciated,
Ashton Griese

Thank you for choosing me for your lineman scholarship. I will graduate in May and will attend the Power Line Construction and Maintenance program at Mitchell Technical College in the fall of 2024. This summer I hope to be working in my field of study and gain experience towards my future career.

Riley Pfeifer

Thank you so much for supporting me financially with this generous scholarship! It will help me tremendously as I begin my next chapter.

Aleise Christopherson

Next year, I plan to attend USD to get my bachelor's degree, after which I plan on going to PA school. I am very grateful to be receiving this scholarship.

Yours truly,
Sapphire Wyatt

I wanted to thank all of you from Oahe Electric for this awesome scholarship opportunity and award. I am humbled and honored to have received your letter explaining I have been selected for a \$2000 Scholarship. This is amazing. Thank you so much! Please thank those who worked on the Scholarship Committee!

Broch Zeeb



MAY 11, 2024
Cinco de Mayo Fiesta
 Falls Park
 Sioux Falls, SD

MAY 4
Consignment Auction
 Historic Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

MAY 5
Opening Day
 Historic Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

MAY 18
Booth Day
 10 a.m.
 D.C. Booth Fish Hatchery
 Spearfish, SD

JUNE 1
**Miss Prairie Village/Miss
 Prairie Princess Pageant**
 Historic Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

JUNE 6
**14th Annual Ag Women's
 Day**
 GracePoint Wesleyan Church
 1420 Orchard Dr.
 Brookings, SD

JUNE 6
"Wild Race Car Night"
Wheel Jam
 7 p.m.
 Dakota State Fair Speedway
 Huron, SD

JUNE 8
"Challenge Cup XXII"
Wheel Jam
 7 p.m.
 Dakota State Fair Speedway
 Huron, SD

JUNE 8
Antique Tractor Pull
 Historic Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

JUNE 9
Brookings Car Show
 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Pioneer Park
 Brookings, SD
www.brookingscarshow.org

JUNE 13
IHS Health Fair
 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
 Fort Thompson, SD

JUNE 15
1st Annual CheeseFest
 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.
 Farm Life Creamery
 Ethan, SD

JUNE 21-23
Scavenger's Journey
 Yard sales, farmer's markets &
 specialty shops
 Wall to Wagner
www.scavengersjourney.com

JULY 20
S.D. MCC Relief Sale
**Food Court, Bake Sale, Live
 Auction & Silent Auction**
 Free Admission & Parking
 Pioneer Hall
 Freeman, SD
 605-925-7009

JULY 20-21
Charles Mix Saddle Club
 SDREA Rodeo
 Geddes, SD
 605-680-2763

JULY 26-28
Bruce Honey Days
 Facebook & Instagram
 Bruce, SD
 605-627-5671

JULY 31-AUG. 3
4-H & FFA Livestock Shows
Carnival Rides & Games
 Pipestone, MN

AUG. 9
Northern Bull Riding Tour
Finals & Bull-a-Rama
 Geddes, SD
 605-680-2763

AUG. 17
"Harvest of Champions"
 7 p.m.
 Dakota State Fair Speedway
 Huron, SD

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.

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