

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Preserving Our Past

**Historical Society Unveils
New Cultural Heritage Center**

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Strength of Electric Co-ops



Dave Page
General Manager

When you think about Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative, you probably think of a local organization – and you would be right. Our employees, leadership team and board of directors all live and work in the communities we serve. What many people may not realize is that Whetstone Valley Electric is also part of a much larger network of electric cooperatives that provides valuable resources, expertise and support, ultimately benefiting our members.

Cooperation Among Cooperatives

One of the defining principles of the cooperative business model is cooperation among cooperatives. This principle is especially evident during severe weather events. When major storms threaten our area, Whetstone Valley Electric can request assistance from neighboring electric cooperatives that are not affected. Through this mutual aid network, additional line crews, trucks and equipment arrive quickly to help restore power. In return, Whetstone Valley Electric provides the same assistance whenever another cooperative calls on us.

Cooperation also strengthens our cybersecurity efforts. Our software provider, National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC), employs experts who help safeguard our digital systems and protect member information. At the local level, East River Electric Power Cooperative provides networking and cybersecurity services that enhance reliability while keeping costs affordable. By sharing these specialized resources, cooperatives can provide a higher level of protection than many could achieve independently.

Access to the larger cooperative network gives Whetstone Valley Electric the benefit of shared knowledge, proven practices and innovative solutions from across the country, making our cooperative and our community stronger.

Local Impact

Whetstone Valley Electric also partners with 27 electric cooperatives in South Dakota and western Minnesota through the Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) Fund. Established in 1996, REED is a nonprofit revolving loan fund owned and governed by its member cooperatives.

Over the past 29 years, REED has invested more than \$135 million in over 400 rural development projects. These investments support business expansion, job creation, community facilities, infrastructure improvements and other initiatives that strengthen rural economies and improve quality of life.

Global Impact

The cooperative model has also made a difference around the world. Through NRECA International, more than 120 million people in 43 countries have gained access to reliable, affordable electricity.

Hundreds of cooperative line workers, engineers and other employees have volunteered their time and expertise to help build electric systems and train local utility personnel, creating sustainable solutions that continue to benefit communities for years to come.

I am grateful for the partnership and support of our fellow cooperatives. By working together, electric cooperatives strengthen one another and better serve the members and communities that depend on us every day.



The electricians from Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative recently completed all of the electrical work for the new laundromat and bar expansion at the VFW in Milbank.

Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative also donated their time and resources to reinstall the flag poles after the expansion was complete.

Pictured left to right: Deaven Boots, Mark Haaven, Chad Pollock

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

WHETSTONE VALLEY ELECTRIC

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Paul Tostenson – 432-5233

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Tom Berens – 432-5034

Paul Nelson – 949-1818

General Manager:

Dave Page – davep@whetstone.coop

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Visit us at
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Electrical Safety Tips For Large Equipment & Farm Equipment Operators

SafeElectricity.org

Operating large equipment is a dangerous job. Among the many dangers is the threat of electric shock.

Here's a quick checklist of safety considerations for large equipment operators and farmers to keep in mind before beginning any job:

- **Make a plan each morning.** Know where power lines are in your area or around the farm, and how you plan to stay clear of them.
- **Keep machinery, equipment and yourself at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines in all directions, at all times.** Higher voltage lines require a greater distance be maintained. If you are uncertain of the voltage, maintain a distance of 18 feet.
- **Use a spotter to help you stay clear of power lines.**
- **Power lines begin to sag over the years. If sagging power lines are in your way, do not raise them.** Call your utility to fix the power lines and raise them high enough for you to work.
- **Weather should be a consideration in your daily plans.** Keep in mind that tall objects could be blown out of control by the wind, and particles in water are a good conductor of electricity. Some activities are not appropriate for a damp or windy day.
- **If you are on equipment that becomes entangled in power lines, do not step off the equipment.** When you step off the equipment, you become the path to ground and receive an electric shock that could be fatal. Stay put, call the utility for assistance, and warn others not to come near the equipment. Then wait for utility professionals to shut off electricity to the power line, and confirm it is safe to exit equipment.
- **Be sure everyone you are working with knows proper safety procedures and emergency contacts.**



As unmanned aerial systems (UAS) increasingly populate recreational and professional skies, safety remains paramount – especially near critical infrastructure such as overhead power lines. Today we reaffirm that drones should be flown in open spaces away from electrical lines and substations to prevent power outages and dangerous debris that can threaten public safety.

A drone colliding with a power line can cause outages and, if lines are downed, create serious electrical hazards for anyone nearby. Touching downed lines or debris that has fallen on fences, trees or other objects can result in severe injury or death. If you encounter downed power lines, immediately call 911 and notify emergency personnel and the utility company.

To ensure safe and compliant drone operations, follow federal registration and business-approval requirements, and stay informed about local, state and community regulations. FAA safety guidelines remain essential: Inspect your drone for damage before each flight and repair any issues prior to use. Fly at or below 400 feet unless FAA authorization or an allowed exception applies. Maintain visual line of sight; do not fly beyond it. Avoid airports, manned aircraft, stadiums and crowds of people. Do not fly for unapproved commercial purposes without FAA authorization. Refrain from flying in bad weather, including low visibility or high winds. Never fly recklessly or endanger others; violations can result in fines and penalties.

It is encouraged that drone operators plan routes

that maximize safety and minimize proximity to power infrastructure. Responsible pilots, adherence to FAA guidelines and awareness of local rules can prevent outages, injuries and potentially tragic consequences. For more information on legal requirements and best practices, consult FAA resources and your local utility providers.

Together, we can enjoy the benefits of drone technology while safeguarding our communities and critical electrical infrastructure.

As drone use expands, operators should build safety into every mission from the outset. Calibration, pre-flight checklists, and robust maintenance programs help catch issues before takeoff. Operators are encouraged to use situational awareness tools, such as real-time weather updates and wind assessments, to adjust flight plans accordingly. Community education events and outreach can foster a responsible culture among hobbyists and professionals alike, reinforcing the shared responsibility to protect power networks and nearby residents. By prioritizing safety, we preserve access to this transformative technology for all.



"Call 811 before you dig – always."

Laina Nelson, age 10

Laina reminds members to always call 811 before digging. Thank you for sharing your picture, Laina! Laina's parents are Nathan and Kristen Nelson – members of H-D Electric.

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.



Family FAVORITES

PARTY IN A PAN

Ingredients:

1 1/2 lbs. hamburger, browned
1 can cream of celery soup
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 box Stove Top Stuffing Mix
1 can corn, drained
3 cups mozzarella cheese,
shredded

Method

Combine the hamburger, celery soup and chicken soup in a bowl and set aside. Prepare the Stove Top Stuffing as directed on the box. Layer half the hamburger mixture, half the corn, half the stuffing and half the cheese; repeat layers again. Bake 30-40 minutes at 350°F or until cheese is melted. Makes 9x13 inch pan.

Kathy Zomer
Douglas Electric

WALLEYE WITH HORSERADISH SAUCE

Ingredients:

2 lbs. walleye fillets
1 cup Lawry's Herb & Garlic
marinade
1 tsp. Lawry's Season Salt
1 tsp. lemon pepper
1/4 cup butter
2 tbsp. horseradish
2 tsp. dill

Method

Marinate fish in herb & garlic marinade for 30 minutes. Drain. Sprinkle with season salt and lemon pepper. Bake fish until it flakes. Melt butter in saucepan. Remove from heat and add horseradish. Spoon onto fillet after cooked. Sprinkle on dill and serve.

Valerie Marso
Oahe Electric

BBQ MEATBALLS

Ingredients:

Meatballs

3# ground beef
1 can (12 oz.) evaporated milk
1 cup oatmeal
1 cup cracker crumbs
2 eggs
1/2 cup finely chopped onion
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. pepper
2 tsp. chili powder

Sauce

2 cups ketchup
1 cup brown sugar
1/2 tsp. liquid smoke, or to taste
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1/4 cup finely chopped onion

Method

Mix all meatball ingredients together and shape into meatballs. Place meatballs in a baking dish.

Mix all sauce ingredients together and pour over meatballs. Cover and bake at 350°F for one hour. The meatballs can be made ahead of time and frozen for several weeks. This makes a large batch, so it can be divided into smaller batches and frozen.

Karen Soulek
Charles Mix Electric

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 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

EFFICIENCY MATTERS FOR COMFORT



Miranda Boutelle
Efficiency Services
Group

Everybody wants a comfortable home. Did you know energy efficiency upgrades not only help you save energy, but can make your home more comfortable, too? If you find yourself continually returning to the thermostat on cold winter days or unable to find relief from heat on summer days, these are signs your home needs an efficiency upgrade.

No matter the home, energy efficiency upgrades often start with the same basic principle: Keep outside air from coming inside and keep conditioned inside air from leaking out. Insulation, air sealing, duct sealing and heating, ventilation and air conditioning upgrades can dramatically improve the comfort of your home.

A fully insulated home, including attic, walls and floor, is more comfortable. It's like a blanket for your home. Air sealing is a lesser-known efficiency upgrade that keeps air from entering and exiting the home through cracks and gaps. Some air sealing can be done from inside the home, such as using expanding foam around plumbing pipes and drains under sinks, adding gaskets to outlets on exterior walls, caulking around windows or weatherstripping around doors.

Attics and crawl spaces offer additional opportunities to reduce air leakage and increase comfort. In the attic, sealing gaps around top plates, open soffit areas, cove ceilings and balloon framing can help keep conditioned air where it belongs. In the basement or crawl space, seal around plumbing pipes and drains, vents and electrical wires. If you need help, contact a local contractor.

As a self-proclaimed energy geek, you probably aren't surprised that my first move when my husband and I bought our first home years ago was to air seal and insulate. We sealed and insulated the attic, walls and rim joists in

the basement. The difference in comfort was instant. Our house felt cozier and much more comfortable. The temperature swings from the furnace cycling on and off were dramatically reduced. The home felt warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer.

Another benefit from insulation was a surprising reduction in noise from outside. We lived about 15 minutes away from the airport and close to a busy road. When the windows and doors were closed, we could no longer hear the airplanes, and the traffic noise was almost unnoticeable.

Duct sealing can also improve the comfort of your home. Your ductwork delivers heated or cooled air in a forced-air HVAC system. If there are disconnections or leaks in the ducts, the air you paid to heat or cool may not end up where you want it. Disconnects and leaks can cause hot or cold spots in the home. An HVAC professional can inspect or test your ducts to make sure they are connected and sealed properly.

Air sealing and duct sealing can also improve the air quality in your home. Air leakage between the conditioned area of the home and the attic or crawl space can introduce dust, pollen, mold or other allergens you don't want to breathe. Reducing air leakage can reduce the chance of these things circulating throughout your home.

Upgrading to a heat pump can also boost comfort and efficiency. Heat pump technology is often about three times as efficient as electric resistance heat because it uses refrigerant to move heat instead of creating it. If you're upgrading from electric or gas heat, a heat pump can efficiently heat and cool your home, making it comfortable year-round.

If you already have a heat pump or any forced-air HVAC system, annual maintenance and regularly changing your filter maximize system operation and comfort.

Consider improving your home's comfort by completing these energy efficiency upgrades. Your family – and energy bills – will thank you.

WHO POWERS YOU?

For Dean Kueter, Community Service and Cooperative Values Run in the Family

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

When something needs to be done in a small town, it often starts with someone willing to take the lead.

In Montrose, Dean Kueter has often been that person. Through years of involvement in local organizations, veterans' projects, school efforts and community work, Kueter has built a reputation as someone willing to step up.

That work did not go unnoticed. Tara Miller, manager of communications at Central Electric Cooperative and a former Montrose Area Foundation board member, saw Kueter's impact and nominated him for the fifth annual regional Who Powers You? contest.

Hosted by the region's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, the contest recognizes local people and organizations making a difference in their communities. Kueter, a Southeastern Electric Cooperative member, was selected as Southeastern Electric's finalist.

"You do those things because you see there's a need and you want to make a difference in your community," Kueter said. "It was meaningful to be recognized for that."

In her nomination, Miller highlighted Kueter's work with the Montrose Area Foundation, his leadership with the local American Legion Post, his 20 years with the Montrose Fire Department and his passion for education and accessibility.

Kueter grew up outside nearby Humboldt and later served as superintendent for the Montrose School District before joining the Cornbelt Educational Cooperative. He is entering his 14th year with the education

cooperative, which serves nine school districts by providing special education and related services, including speech therapy.

"It's really a high-need area," Kueter said. Demand for specialized services continues to grow, while schools struggle to find qualified people for those roles.

Much of Kueter's volunteer work has centered on places and organizations that bring people together. He currently serves as commander of the local American Legion Post, which he said is more than a veterans organization in Montrose. It serves as a gathering place for the community, hosting dances, birthday parties, anniversaries, graduations and other events.

"It truly is a community hub and community center for everyone," Kueter said.

The post is improving the Veterans Memorial on Main Street through fundraising, new statues and landscaping. The Montrose Area Foundation has also supported local causes ranging from the fire department to school projects, youth programs and the swimming pool.

"People are oftentimes more than willing to help," he said. "They just need to be asked, and they want their time to be valued. So, if you call on them to come help with something, you need to make sure you have a job for them to do."

For Kueter, the cooperative connection extends beyond his own contest recognition. His family has also been honored through Southeastern Electric Cooperative's Touchstone Energy programs.

Both of Kueter's children, Kellen and Hallie, have been active in their school, church and community, taking on leadership roles through FFA, student



Dean Kueter, a Southeastern Electric Cooperative member and Montrose-area community leader, was selected as a finalist in the regional Who Powers You? contest.

council and the National Honor Society while also volunteering with local organizations.

Kellen was named a Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week, received a 2024 Southeastern Electric scholarship and was later selected as Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Year. Hallie was also named a Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week.

"Obviously, it's a proud parent moment," Kueter said. "Anytime your kid gets any type of recognition, it makes you feel good as a parent."

Kueter said he knows many people connected to Southeastern Electric, including lineworkers and family members who work in the electric cooperative world. As a member-owner, he said the cooperative connection is part of the broader network of relationships that tie rural communities together.

"I'm surrounded by great people who work hard to improve our community," Kueter said. "It takes a lot of people working together to have successful projects. I am just glad to be a part of the team doing this positive work in our community."



SOUTH DAKOTA
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A PAST FIT FOR THE FUTURE

A new lobby welcomes visitors to the Cultural Heritage Center.

Photo by Jacob Boyko

Cultural Center & State Museum Reopens After Extensive Renovation

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

After more than two years spent closed for renovation, South Dakota's state museum and cultural center is back up and running to share the story of South Dakota and its people with visitors from across the state and beyond.

The iconic museum built into the Pierre hillside held its grand reopening July 1 in time for the nation's 250th birthday, showing off new exhibits, a gift shop and an expansion that includes a larger meeting room and more space for its archives.

For Museum Director David Grabitske, the reopening marks a new chapter for the South Dakota State Historical Society, which oversees both the museum and state archives housed there. But it also honors the first laws set forth by the Dakota Territory's first territorial legislature, outlining specific steps and functions for historical preservation for untold future generations of its citizens.

According to Grabitske, many of the

first Dakotan settlers were determined to preserve the history they were making day by day as settlers on the vast American frontier.

"The first three acts [by the territorial legislature] were all about transferring property at the end of life – it's all about inheritance," Grabitske explained. "The fourth act of the territory created the historical society. In my mind, the fourth act goes along with those first three acts; it's about how we give things to the future."

Establishing a historical society demonstrated confidence that there would be a future for the Dakota Territory – complete with a permanent population that would live, grow and prosper there.

"We have a mantra around here," Grabitske said. "We collect today for tomorrow's history."

What that sentiment has amounted to is a sprawling collection of more than 17,000 cubic feet of paper, 50 terabytes of data on its servers, and more than 35,000 individual objects.

"The very first collections that arrived were in 1863, and we still have those in our library," Grabitske said. "They were

library books – 514 of them in 11 boxes."

In the process of collecting and disseminating information, historical societies at the time would collect and make copies of books to trade with other historical societies to expand their collections and diffuse knowledge across a wider area and reduce the risk of losing records to fire.

You'll find those 160 years' worth of books, deeds, contracts and reports



On the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Little Bighorn, Curator of Collections Katy L. Schmidt holds a can found on the battlefield.

Photo by Jacob Boyko

throughout the high-ceilinged, climate-controlled archive wing of the building – but you'll also find objects that aren't necessarily old or inherently valuable.

"The reason we add something into our collection is because it's historic, and what we mean by historic is it has significance and integrity," Grabitske explained. "Something being 'old' just fixes it in time. What makes something historic is that it is significant – it tells the story of people in South Dakota, and it has integrity, which means a certain completeness to tell that story."

To illustrate the point, Grabitske described a recent addition to the museum's collection – a painted tire with the words "no hunting."

"You see these things going down the road [in South Dakota], and we realized we were missing [one for the museum]," he explained. "We found one near Timber Lake which had a story. The lady who gave it to us (family of Dorothy Dopp, courtesy of the Timber Lake & Area Museum) had put it up in 1967 and she had faithfully painted it over the years and knew the dates she had painted it. We don't need 400 of these tires – we need one to represent the whole state."

Visitors to the museum this summer can experience the first three rooms of the updated exhibits. These sections house a welcome area, 'What is History?' exhibit and a gallery. The remaining sections are slated for completion in December 2026 and will feature exhibits on South Dakota's environment, people, politics, conflicts and more.

For more information on the Cultural Heritage Center and the South Dakota State Historical Society, visit history.sd.gov.



An exhibit showcasing the famous people of South Dakota.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



This plaster doll (left) was gifted to South Dakota by Japan in 1927 to commemorate the United States' 150th birthday. Fifty years later, for the nation's 200th birthday, Japan gifted South Dakota another doll (right).
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Museum Director and South Dakota State Historical Society Assistant Director David Grabitske walks through the extensive art archive, revealing a painting of an electrical lineman working through a winter storm.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Grabitske demonstrates the new movable shelves installed over tracks within the floor. This upgrade will maximize the available archival space.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

Unclaimed Capital Credits

The following list of people have capital credits that were undeliverable in May 2026. The capital credit retirement was for 2005 & portions of 2006, 2008, & 2009.

Abraham Brooke - Agency Village, SD
 Adams Amber - Sisseton, SD
 Adams Katherine - Minneapolis, MN
 Adams Tony - Fergus Falls, MN
 Allen Teresa - Wilmot, SD
 Amos Betty - Peever, SD
 Amos Norby - Peever, SD
 Anderson Dale - Labolt, SD
 Anderson Tracy - Nampa, ID
 Anfinson Morris Estate - Sherman, SD
 Angerhofer Abby - Milbank, SD
 Arndt Bennett - Lake Villa, IL
 Bagola Stephanie - Sisseton, SD
 Baker Becky - Luverne, MN
 Barse Stanley - Summit, SD
 Barse Jr Stan - Summit, SD
 Bearstail Arlene - Bismarck, ND
 Beutler Roy - Ortonville, MN
 Big Stone II Project - Bismarck, ND
 Big Stone Wilderness - Sauk Centre, MN
 Bien Nicole - Agency Village, SD
 Bissonette Sophia - Waubay, SD
 Blackthunder April - Agency Village, SD
 Blackthunder Katherine - Hankinson, ND
 Bolin Rodney - Watertown, SD
 Bolin-Owen Carole - Watertown, SD
 Boran Shannen - Milbank, SD
 Boyd Leroy - Peever, SD
 Bronson David - Watertown, SD
 Brown Todd - Sisseton, SD
 Bryan Crane Jane - England
 Buck Tim - Dallas, TX
 Bull Donald - Milbank, SD
 Bursheim Whitney - Agency Village, SD
 Cadotte Nicole - Bismarck, ND
 Caster Ed - Everett, WA
 Catlett Lee - Kalispell, MT
 Cink Alvin - Tigard, OR
 Cleveland Jeanna - Waubay, SD
 Clown Jr Blaine - Grenville, SD
 Cook Ronald - Agency Village, SD
 Cooper Daniel - Agency Village, SD
 Currence Julie - Leota, MN
 Decoteau Darrell - Agency Village, SD
 Demarrias Cory - Peever, SD
 Dockter Charles - Marietta, MN
 Dockter Darrell - Watertown, SD
 Donnell Jason - Sioux Falls, SD
 Donnell Jennifer - Sisseton, SD
 Dorsch Michael - Sheridan, WY
 Drum Colette - Sisseton, SD
 Dumarce Lennie - Grenville, SD
 Eagle Robert - Waubay, SD

Easterby Sandra - Sisseton, SD
 Epeneter Tim - Dawson, MN
 Fay David - Turbotville, PA
 Fitzpatrick Catherine - Milbank, SD
 Folz Delmon - Seeley, CA
 Foss Bertha - Wilmot, SD
 Fransen Raymond - Clear Lake, SD
 Friessen Leonard - Sioux Falls, SD
 Fritz Harriet - Big Stone City, SD
 Gangone Frank - Farmington, MN
 Gangone Louis - Wagner, SD
 Glomstad Chastity - Milbank, SD
 Goodsell Julia - Sisseton, SD
 Gramm Farms Richard Gramm
 Hancock, MN
 Griffith Kathryn - Sioux Falls, SD
 Hacker Lucille - Sisseton, SD
 Hagan Loretta - Florence, SD
 Halbert Henry - Sisseton, SD
 Hansen Marlo - Big Lake, MN
 Hanson James - Reedsport, OR
 Hawkins George - Sioux City, IA
 Hayes Clarice - Sisseton, SD
 Heiman Nicole - Milbank, SD
 Helm Lois - Brandon, SD
 Heminger Alex - Sisseton, SD
 Hendrickson Christopher -
 Montevideo, MN
 Hernandez Joel - Milbank, SD
 Heyde Mark - Mesa, AZ
 Hill Irvin - Sisseton, SD
 Hill Mavis - Sisseton, SD
 Hill-George Charnel - Las Vegas, NV
 Hofhenke Geraldine - Watertown, SD
 Holgerson Albert - Concord, MA
 Holland Roger - Milbank, SD
 Hopkins Trina - Milbank, SD
 Howard Steve - Brandon, SD
 Ironheart Sheila - Watertown, SD
 Johnson Derrick - Mound, MN
 Johnson Robin - Sisseton, SD
 Johnson Mark S - Grinnell, IA
 Johnson Wilbur - Strandburg, SD
 KD&B Investments Kevin Brovold -
 Alexandria, MN
 Kampeska Lesley - Sisseton, SD
 Kasuske Rick - Corona, SD
 Keeble Daphne - Sisseton, SD
 Keeble Everett - Sisseton, SD
 Keoke Levette - Sisseton, SD
 Kilborn Township Hall - Wilmot, SD
 King Cedric - Sioux Falls, SD
 Kolb Kenneth - Independence, MN
 Kurten Bernard - Halsey, OR
 Kveene John - Pt Charlotte, FL
 Labelle Joan - Aberdeen, SD
 Lafontaine Britney - Sisseton, SD
 Lafontaine Jason - Sisseton, SD
 Lafromboise Jason - Sisseton, SD
 Lamis Lina - Sioux Falls, SD
 Laplante Jeffrey - Sioux Falls, SD
 Lappegard Stephanie - Beresford, SD
 Larsen Richard - Champlin, MN

Lawrence Kim - Peever, SD
 Leclaire Estate Iva - Tulsa, OK
 Lemon Marc - Ocala, FL
 Lewis Steve - Wilmot, SD
 Loeffelholz Al - Lake Park, IA
 Lohnes Tabetha - Shakopee, MN
 Ludvigson Marlyce - Dawson, MN
 Lufkins Amanda - Sisseton, SD
 Lufkins Wayne - Watertown, SD
 Mackey Bill - Red Wing, MN
 Maher Connie - Hawarden, IA
 Manlove Howard - Vail, AZ
 Marks Steven - Peever, SD
 Marley Charles - Holloway, MN
 Martinez Jr Jose - Aberdeen, SD
 Martinson James - Dayton, TN
 Max Travis - Sisseton, SD
 McClain Judy - Council Bluffs, IA
 McClelland Dorothy - Watertown, SD
 McGinnis Dorothy - Sioux Falls, SD
 Melchert Katherine - Hankinson, ND
 Mercado Lora - Peever, SD
 Mericom Corp Mike Painter -
 Lake Forrest, CA
 Michaelis L T - Mandan, ND
 Miller Daniel - Prior Lake, MN
 Miller Jeremy - Union City, OH
 Nanaeto Lance - Tecumseh, OK
 Nash Douglas - Eagan, MN
 Nelson Cheryl - Carver, MN
 Nelson Dennis - South St Paul, MN
 Nelson Jennie - Milbank, SD
 Nelson Irene - Sisseton, SD
 Nord Steve - Riverside, CA
 Norris Patline - Cloquet, MN
 Nowick Harold - Stockholm, SD
 Nowick Farms - Stockholm, SD
 Odegard Sandra - Keystone, SD
 Ollerich Thomas - Hartford, SD
 Olson Juli - Denver, CO
 One Road Beau - Agency Village, SD
 Owen Allan - Peever, SD
 Owen Elizabeth - Sioux Falls, SD
 Owen Howard - Rosholt, SD
 Owen Patricia - Flandreau, SD
 Palacio-Littleghost Lenore -
 Watertown, SD
 Parker Naomi - Sisseton, SD
 Parmeter Michael - Hastings, MN
 Pond Rory - Aurora, SD
 Pope Dorsey - Council Bluffs, IA
 Prisinger Darren - Wilmot, SD
 Provost James - Peever, SD
 Pufahl James - Milbank, SD
 Pumpkinseed Jolene - Agency Village, SD
 Rabine Augusta - Watertown, SD
 Rademaker Paulette - Watertown, SD
 Radtke Robert - Milbank, SD
 Red Owl Edward - Sisseton, SD
 Redenius Leland - East Peoria, IL
 Renville Brian - Sisseton, SD
 Renville Byron - Peever, SD
 Renville Pam - Agency Village, SD

Rethke Diane - Maple Lake, MN
 Richotte Debora - Sisseton, SD
 Roberts Violet - Milbank, SD
 Runnels Sara - Agency Village, SD
 Ruppel Margaret - Summit, SD
 Schaunaman Robin - Billings, MT
 Schmidt Linda - Windom, MN
 Schoenrock Caril - Peever, SD
 Schumacher Adam - Milbank, SD
 Schwab Stanley - Parker, AZ
 Scriver Neil - Sturdevant, WI
 Seaboy Charlene - Agency Village, SD
 Seaboy Danny - Sisseton, SD
 Shepherd Smiley - Wilmot, SD
 Simon Lee - Browns Valley, MN
 Smith Michele - Rome, GA
 Spinnie Grace - New Athens, IL
 Strang David - Watertown, SD
 Stultz David - Deltona, FL
 Squittel Coat Kardsten - Faulkton, SD
 Swanson Kelly - Sioux Falls, SD
 Swenson Clara - Anchorage, AK
 Swenson Jay - Victoria, MN
 Thie Travis - Sioux Falls, SD
 Thomas Haug Annabelle - Aurora, CO
 Thompson Brian - Madison, SD
 Thompson Monte - Browns Valley, MN
 Thompson Winona - Agency Village, SD
 Tietjen Danny - Brookings, SD
 Van Beek Randy - Twin Brooks, SD
 Van Dover Kenneth - Westport, SD
 Van Hout Darwin - Woodland Park, CO
 Van Hout Joe - Milbank, SD
 Vanlith Kristine - Omaha, NE
 Voight Chad - Sioux Falls, SD
 Vosberg Jerry - Wilmot, SD
 Vreim Glenn - Alachua, FL
 Wanna Carmen - Sisseton, SD
 Watkins Dan - Havana, IL
 Weed Dana - Milbank, SD
 Welberg Brian - Marvin, SD
 Wellnitz Larry - Watertown, SD
 Wenzlick Kenneth - Helenville, WI
 West Lathan - Pine, AZ
 West Mark - Pine, AZ
 Whaley Jim - Sioux Falls, SD
 Wheaton Dumont Coop - Nassau, MN
 Whempner Wayne - Hettinger, ND
 White Belva - Peever, SD
 White Darrell - Agency Village, SD
 White Dean - Daphne, AL
 White Kim - Sisseton, SD
 White Richard - Sisseton, SD
 White Winona - Peever, SD
 Wika Donita - Sisseton, SD
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 Wood Todd - Plymouth, MN
 Zetina Jasmine - Peever, SD



Make 'Hitting the Hay' a Priority During Harvest

For Many Farmers, Fall Requires Long Days in the Field With Little Rest

SafeElectricity.org

The pressure to harvest as much as possible during fall harvest, combined with fatigue and looming deadlines, can increase the risk of potential hazards.

Safety and health of workers, including making time for sleep, should be a priority when considering a farm's productivity, according to Josie Rudolphi, University of Illinois Extension associate research scientist.

"Rushing and cutting corners can lead to injury, which no one has time for, especially during the harvest," Rudolphi says.

Rudolphi grew up on a farm and has researched the sleep habits of farmers. She says that getting proper rest can make a huge difference in staying safe, but during the time crunch of harvest season, farmers sacrifice sleep to work late into the night.

"Sleep deficiency has been associated with increased injury, reduced reaction time, and reduced concentration," Rudolphi says. "All of which could impact health and safety, as well as productivity."

The demands of harvest are stressful and lack of sleep can intensify that and lead to errors in the fields or even on the roads.

To improve sleep, Rudolphi advises farmers go to bed and wake up at regular times when possible. They can use rainy days to catch up on sleep.

Other sleep health tips include:

- Create a bedroom environment that encourages sleep; keep it quiet, dark, and cool.
- Limit electronic device use.
- Avoid large meals, caffeine, and alcohol before bedtime.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TIP OF THE MONTH

August heat can put your air conditioner to the test, making it a great time to check your system's air filter. A dirty, clogged filter restricts airflow, forcing your cooling system to work harder than necessary to keep your home comfortable. That extra strain can reduce efficiency, increase energy use and contribute to unnecessary wear and tear on equipment. Inspect your filter monthly during periods of heavy air conditioner use and replace it if it appears dirty. A clean filter supports efficient operation and can even enhance indoor air quality – helping you stay cool and comfortable during the hottest days of summer.



CO-OP SUMMER OUTREACH

Join Us at S.D. State Fair, Dakotafest, Minn. Farmfest

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Attention all co-op members! If you're heading to the South Dakota State Fair, Dakotafest or Farmfest this summer, stop by the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives booths for some great family fun and a chance to win a prize!

Make sure you fill out your coupon on the back of this magazine and bring it with you to the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives booth at the South Dakota State Fair or Dakotafest for your chance to win one of two electric grills sponsored by Karl's TV & Appliance.

South Dakota State Fair – Sept. 3, 2026

South Dakota's electric cooperatives will host the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives booth at the South Dakota State Fair in Huron, Thursday, Sept. 3, 2026.

This one-day event will feature a slew of energy-themed activities, from bucket truck rides lifting you more than 50 feet above the state fairgrounds to an interactive pole climbing demonstration complete with real spiked boots and climbing gear that linemen use every day on the job. We've also partnered up with South Dakota One Call to remind you to always call 811 before you start digging – but your kids are welcome to use our mini excavator in our sandbox to uncover buried treasure!

While you're here, check out our on-site displays for select highly efficient, all-electric heat pumps and mini-splits, water heaters, yard tools and more!

Find our booth near the Horticulture Building.

Dakotafest – Aug. 18-20, 2026

You'll want to stop by the South Dakota Touchstone Energy Cooperatives building at Dakotafest in Mitchell, Aug. 18-20!

Join us for fresh-off-the-grill brats, oven-baked cookies and freezie pops as you learn about the latest in home energy savings and efficiency. We'll have other cool stuff for you to check out, including an automatic lawn mower, a solar panel display and an EGO Power+ Portable Power Station.

Minnesota Farmfest – Aug. 4-6, 2026

Minnesota members, come visit your electric cooperative at Minnesota Farmfest near Redwood Falls, Aug. 4-6, 2026. Members may enter a raffle drawing for one of five battery-operated yard tools. We'll even have the high-voltage trailer on site for a live demonstration to remind visitors to be safe around overhead and buried power lines.



Kids perfected their utility pole climbing skills at the South Dakota State Fair.

Photo by Jacob Boyko



Touchstone Energy Cooperatives host a booth at Dakotafest in 2025.

Submitted Photo



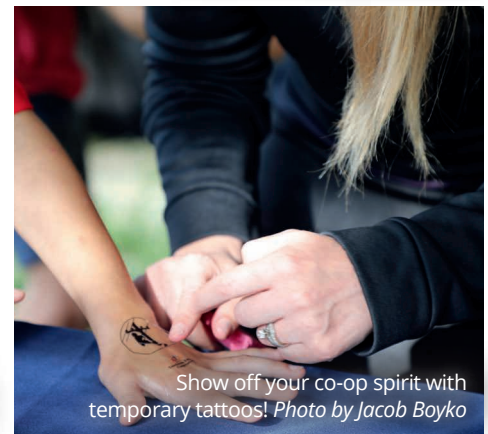
Charles Mix Electric Lineman Joe Michael shows off the bucket truck at the State Fair.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Fairgoers get a lineman's view of the State Fair! *Photo by Jacob Boyko*



A future lineman readies for his climb.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



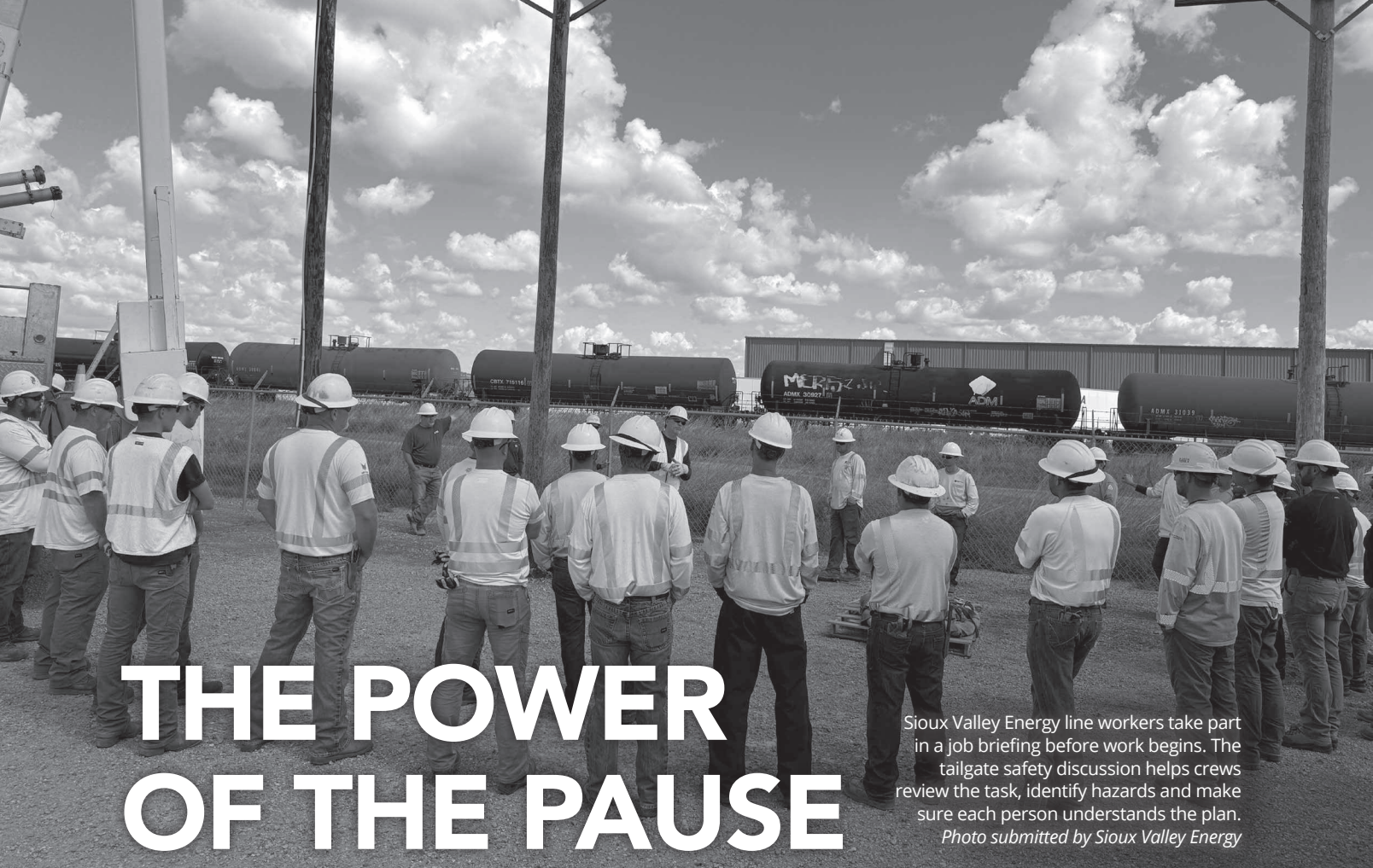
Show off your co-op spirit with temporary tattoos! *Photo by Jacob Boyko*



A line forms for bucket truck rides.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Booth visitors can win prizes by playing Plinko.
Submitted Photo



THE POWER OF THE PAUSE

Sioux Valley Energy line workers take part in a job briefing before work begins. The tailgate safety discussion helps crews review the task, identify hazards and make sure each person understands the plan.
Photo submitted by Sioux Valley Energy

How Job Briefings Help Co-ops Think Through Safety

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Before an electric cooperative line crew begins work, the job starts with a pause.

The pause may only take a few minutes, but for crews working around energized equipment, changing weather and other hazards, those few minutes matter.

Before the first step of the job, line crews gather for a tailgate safety session – a documented pre-job briefing where they identify the task, hazards, protective equipment and plan.

For Travis Denison, manager of safety at Sioux Valley Energy, that conversation is one of the most important tools crews have to fight complacency.

“It forces our professionals to stop and go through the steps of the job they’re going to do and identify the hazards with each of

those steps,” Denison said.

Despite the casual name, a tailgate safety session is not a public demonstration or a quick conversation at the back of a pickup. It is a documented briefing used by crews before work begins. The goal is to slow down and communicate, making sure that everyone is focused on the work in front of them.

“These are jobs that our crews do every day, but all of a sudden something in the environment can change. There can be hazards that the crew didn’t talk about or recognize, and somebody can get hurt,” Denison said. “That job briefing or tailgate session is made to stop the crews, make them aware of their surroundings, talk about the job and each of the hazards, and discuss how they’re going to protect themselves.”

Denison’s focus on safety also runs in the

family. His brother, Joe Denison, is a loss control professional with SDREA – the same role Travis previously held before joining Sioux Valley Energy. Both came to safety work after years around line crews and firsthand experience with the risks of electric utility work.

“We were both linemen,” Travis said. “The more experienced you get as a lineman, the more you recognize the mistakes you made as an apprentice. You see the shortcuts that maybe you made yourself or that you see other linemen make.”

So how does a tailgate safety session actually work? The details change with the job, but the idea is the same: slow the job down before it starts.

For instance, if a crew is conducting a pole top rescue training, the briefing begins before anyone climbs. The crew identifies the emergency location, the people involved and who is leading the job and the protective equipment required.

Then they talk through the work itself. If the crew is practicing a mock mayday call or using a rescue manikin, they also talk through what could go wrong during the training. Someone could strain a muscle. A climber could make blunt contact with a pole or hardware. A falling object could injure someone below. Even a knife or hook could create its own hazard if people are not paying attention.

"We list the job, the steps of the job, the personal protective equipment we'll use and the energy sources," Travis said. "We talk about anything to do with the job before we start, so everybody's on the same page."

For Denison, the value of a job briefing is not limited to line crews. Members do not need a formal briefing form before starting work at home or on the farm, but they can use the same pattern to stay safe – name the job, look at the location, identify the equipment involved and talk through what could go wrong.

At home, that might mean looking up before raising a ladder, checking for power lines before trimming trees or calling 811

before digging a post hole, planting trees, building a deck or installing a sign.

That message is especially important on the farm, when large equipment may operate near overhead power lines.

"Be aware of the power lines," he said. "Have that talk. Communicate. Make the people you are working with aware of the potential dangers around them."

Sioux Valley Energy has also worked to carry that message to members through radio ads, videos and public outreach. The cooperative has shared reminders about overhead power lines, green boxes, construction work and the importance of locating underground utilities before digging. At times, Sioux Valley Energy has also partnered with Southeastern Electric Cooperative on public safety messaging.

Denison said the goal is similar to a crew's tailgate session: get people thinking before something goes wrong.

"Think about what you're doing," Denison said.

SDREA - Job Briefing			
Aerial Unit Testing			
Cooperative: <u>Thompson Center Coop</u>	Date of the Testing: <u>6-30-26</u>	Cooperative System Location: <u>L24C72</u>	
Emergency Location: <u>Substation #440</u>	Temperature: <u>76</u>	Humidity: <u>68%</u>	Voltage: <u>7200</u>
<u>Section 14 Township - 112N Range - 48west</u>			
Type of Personnel Involved:			
☒ Line Superintendent	☒ Lead Lineman	☒ SDREA Loss Control:	☒ Foreman
☒ Journeyman	☒ Groundman	☒ Contractor	☒ Apprentice
Work Procedures:			
☒ Person In Charge of the Aerial Unit Testing:	☒ Safe Location for Testing	☒ Set Up Traffic Control Devices if Necessary	☒ Position Aerial Unit Next to Energized Line
☒ Ground Each Truck to System Neutral	☒ Competent Aerial Unit Operator Identified	☒ Inspect the Aerial Unit Boom Condition	☒ Install Skarshaug Tester
☒ Aerial Unit will be tested for 3-5 minutes	☒ Retract Boom to de-energizing test unit	☒ Rubber Gloves Shall be Worn by	☒ Remove Skarshaug Tester from Boom
☒ Removal of the Truck Ground from System U	☒ Repeat for the next Aerial Unit		
Personal Protective Equipment			
☒ Truck Grounds	☒ Work Area Protection Devices	☒ Rubber Gloves	☒ Hot-Sticks
☒ Safety Glasses	☒ High Visibility Vest	☒ Flagger Personnel	☒ Aerial Unit Tester
			☒ Hard Hats
			☒ Strobes or Beacons
Special Tools & Equipment Required			
☒ Aerial Unit Tester	☒ Spotting Scope	☒ Stop Watch/Watch	
Potential Hazards			
☒ Contact Energized Lines with Equipment	☒ Vehicular Traffic	☒ Discharge of Hot or Burning Oil	
Energy Source Control			
☒ Substation	☒ Sectionalizer	☒ OCR	☒ Installed 1 Shot
☒ Fuse Cutout	☒ SCADA	☒ Electronic VFI	☒ Other:
Personal at Job Site			
Signature	Signature	Signature	
<u>Joe Denison</u>	<u>Brad Reber</u>		
<u>Danny Savage</u>	<u>Tony Surana</u>		
<u>Billy Bob</u>	<u>Lynne Beckel</u>		
<u>Herb Church</u>	<u>Larry Hardin</u>		
<u>Joan Pike</u>	<u>Derek Donson</u>		

This mock SDREA job briefing form, created for illustration, shows how line crews may document pre-job planning before aerial unit testing. The example highlights the kinds of details crews review before work begins, including location, personnel, work procedures, protective equipment, tools, energy controls and potential hazards.

REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Dakotafest or the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: _____ Dakotafest – Find us in the Touchstone Energy Building!
Your Email Address: _____ S.D. State Fair – Find us in the Horticulture Park!

WIDER OWNED BY THOSE WE SERVE
WAYS AND COOL OFF IN OUR
LEARNING ABOUT ELECTRICITY



AUG. 18-20
Dakotafest
2300 E. Spruce St.
Mitchell, SD

JULY 30
Spurs Grand Classic
Equestrian Competition
9 a.m.
Aberdeen, SD
605-226-1099

AUG. 1-2
51st Annual Pioneer Power
Threshing Show
MN Machinery Museum
Hanley Falls, MN
507-828-5437

AUG. 4-6
Farmfest 2026
8-a.m.-4 p.m.
Gilfillan Estate
28269 MN Hwy. 67
Morgan, MN
ideagroup.com/farmfest

AUG. 5
Ag Appreciation Day
11 a.m.-1 p.m.
Sioux Empire Fair
Sioux Falls, SD

AUG. 8
Peever 125th Celebration
9 a.m.-12 p.m.
Parade, Bean Bag Tournament,
Tractor Pull, Street Dance
Peever, SD

AUG. 8-9
South Dakota Senior Games
Events for People Ages 50+
Huron, SD
Register by July 26
SouthDakotaSeniorGames.org
605-295-2039
sdsrgames@gmail.com

AUG. 9
Czech Heritage Festival
8-a.m.-4 p.m.
Bechyn, MN
320-522-1218

AUG. 12-14
Renville County Fair
10 a.m. daily
Thurs.: Family-a-Fair Night (3-7 p.m.)
Renville County Fairgrounds
Bird Island, MN
renvillecountyfair.org

AUG. 15
Sunflower Festival
Highmore, SD
605-478-0123

AUG. 15
Melon Festival
Car Show, Live Music,
Bean Bag Tournament
Forestburg, SD
605-770-2132

AUG. 22
McCrossan Boys Ranch
Xtreme Event Challenge
3:30 p.m.
McCrossan Boys Ranch
Sioux Falls, SD
605-339-1203

AUG. 22
2026 Yankton Bull Riding
7:30 p.m.
Yankton Rodeo Grounds
Yankton, SD
605-760-4217

AUG. 27-30
Steam Threshing Jamboree
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

SEPT. 1-6
20th Annual Sturgis
Mustang Rally
Sturgis, SD
SturgisMustangRally.com

SEPT. 3
Touchstone Energy Cooperatives
at the South Dakota State Fair
9 a.m.-5 p.m.
State Fairgrounds –
Horticulture Park
Huron, SD
605-224-8823

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: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.