

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Mitchell Technical College launches careers in a wide range of fields including training for linemen like Lacreek Electric's Matt Kruid.  
*Photo by Billy Gibson*

## Tech Training

**Mitchell Technical College**  
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**Promoting tribal tourism**  
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# Looking Back and to the Future



**Dave Page**  
General Manager

## A Review of 2022

Your cooperative had another good year in 2022. Due to lower-than-expected power costs from our power supplier, we finished the year financially sound with sufficient margins to meet our financial obligations. We will strive to defer excess margins into 2023 to delay a rate increase that is called for in the financial forecast.

We completed the final year of our four-year construction work plan. Line crews constructed more than 60 new services and performed 56 service improvements for our membership as your cooperative continues to grow. We also installed nearly 30 miles of new underground power line.

Two windstorms in May of 2022 impacted our system. We were fortunate to have only sustained 20 broken poles. Two more back-to-back ice and snowstorms in December also proved to be disruptive. Overall, our system held up very well with only 10 broken poles. Our service reliability remains excellent as our crews did an outstanding job restoring power safely and quickly when outages did occur.

I'm very proud of our employees for all they accomplished in 2022, for their dedication to serving our members, and most importantly, for their commitment to safety.

## What We See for 2023

Your board of directors approved the 2023 operating budget in December. The budget calls for an increase of revenue. However, wholesale power cost reductions in December and expected power bill credits in 2023 along with careful management of local costs and margins will help to delay a rate increase. It has been more than six

years since Whetstone Valley Electric has raised rates.

This year will be another busy year for your cooperative, with projects scheduled throughout our service territory. We will begin working on projects for our new four-year work plan. We expect to build another 50 new services and provide system improvements for existing services. Crews will continue to replace aging overhead lines with underground cable. The work plan calls for an investment of \$2 million in 2023.

## Strategic plan

Your board and employees continue to deliver on the final year of our strategic plan that focuses on four strategic themes and objectives, including:

- **Maintaining the Financial Integrity of the Cooperative**
  - Maintain financial management policies for equity, plant growth and capital credits
  - Ensure equitable rates for all members
- **Providing Safe, Quality, and Reliable Electric Service**
  - Continue to improve our culture of safety
  - Maintain a public safety awareness program
- **Ensuring Business Continuity**
  - Develop well trained, high performing employees
  - Develop well trained, high performing board
- **Providing Expert Energy Solutions to our Members**
  - Leverage Technology for the benefit of our members
  - Continue training for up-to-date and relevant industry expertise

We will update our strategic plan in 2023 to set the course for the next several years.

We look forward to seeing you at our next Member Annual Meeting on March 23 at the Milbank High School.



## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### WHETSTONE VALLEY ELECTRIC

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Visit us at  
[www.whetstone.coop](http://www.whetstone.coop)

Design assistance by SDREA.



## Save the Date

Annual Meeting is March 23rd at  
Milbank High School



## RECIPES NEEDED FOR The Country Cookin' cookbook

Help us create  
another great cookbook by  
submitting your favorite recipes  
as well as recipes for the  
cookbook's "Wild Game" section.

Submit recipes via  
[ajohannsen@eastriver.coop](mailto:ajohannsen@eastriver.coop)  
or contact your local cooperative  
for more information.



Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup>  
Cooperatives

The power of human connections<sup>®</sup>

## Check out this handy electrical fire check list

Electrical Fires do not have to happen. Use this checklist to help you find and fix electrical fire hazards in your home before they can start a fire.

Smoke Alarms – Smoke alarms save lives!

- ✓ Do you have enough smoke alarms?
- ✓ Are they working?
- ✓ Do you test them?

Switches and Outlets – Be on the look-out for signs of trouble.

- ✓ Are they working?
- ✓ Do they make crackling, buzzing, or sizzling sounds?
- ✓ Are they warm to the touch?
- ✓ Do plugs fit snugly?

Cords – Never use damaged cords.

- ✓ Is there fraying or cracking?
- ✓ Are they pinched or pierced?
- ✓ Do you use extension cords all the time?
- ✓ Are cords getting enough air?

Lamps and Appliances – Use them safely.

- ✓ Are you using the right bulbs?
- ✓ Do you use space heaters safely?
- ✓ Are appliance cords protected from damage?

Electrical Panel – Know the basics.

- ✓ Do you have AFCIs?
- ✓ Have you tested your AFCIs?
- ✓ Are all circuit breakers and fuses the proper size?



## KEEPING UP WITH ELECTRIC METERING TECHNOLOGY



South Dakota's electric cooperatives recently held an electric meter school in Pierre where more than 45 co-op employees learned about the latest technology in residential and industrial kilowatt hour metering processes. Metering is a key component of providing reliable, safe and affordable power to cooperative members all across the state.

To view scenes from this important training program and learn more about how electric cooperatives work to improve our communities, visit Cooperative Connections Plus by scanning the QR code at right.



## Take care when flying kites

### Jaclyn Koistinen

Jaclyn Koistinen, 11, is already thinking ahead to spring when kite-flying is a popular activity. She warns kids and adults both to take care when putting that kite in the air. Jaclyn is the daughter of Patrick and Jenilee Koistinen, members of H-D Electric based in Clear 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.



# BRUNCH SWEET BRUNCH

## CRAB QUICHE

**Ingredients:**  
 1 (6 oz.) can crab meat (rinsed and drained)  
 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese  
 1/4 c. chopped green onion (or fresh chives)  
 4 eggs.  
 1/2 tsp. salt  
 1 tsp. dry mustard  
 1 c. milk (or half-n-half)

### METHOD

Grease or spray pie pan. Combine crab, cheese and onion. Press into pie pan and up the sides. Whisk together the milk, eggs, salt and mustard. Pour mixture into pan. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake in 400 degree oven about 30 minutes or until set. Let set 5 minutes before cutting and serving.

**Elaine Rowett, Sturgis**

## PRALINE PECAN CRUNCH

**Ingredients:**  
 1 (21 oz.) box Quaker Oat Squares cereal (about 8 c.)  
 2 c. pecans  
 1/2 cup packed brown sugar  
 1 tsp. vanilla  
 1/2 c. light corn syrup  
 1/4 c. margarine  
 1/2 tsp. baking soda

### METHOD

Heat oven to 250 degrees. Mix cereal and pecans in 9x13 inch pan. Set aside. Mix corn syrup, brown sugar and margarine in glass bowl. Microwave on high 1-1/2 minutes. Stir. Microwave 1 to 1-1/2 minutes more or until boiling. Stir in vanilla and baking soda and pour over cereal mixture. Stir to coat evenly. Bake 1 hour, stirring every 20 minutes. Spread on baking sheet to cool. Break into pieces and store in airtight container.

**Nancy Stenson, Fort Pierre**

## CINNAMON APPLE BRUNCH BAKE

**Ingredients:**  
 1 can (21 oz.) apple pie filling  
 1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar  
 3 tbsp. butter, melted  
 2 tsp. McCormick® Ground Cinnamon  
 1 1/2 tbsp. McCormick® All Natural Pure Vanilla Extract  
 1 can (12 oz.) refrigerated biscuits  
 1/2 cup chopped nuts

### METHOD

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix apple pie filling, brown sugar, butter, cinnamon and vanilla in medium bowl. Spread 1/2 of the apple mixture in 2-quart shallow baking dish. Cut each biscuit into quarters. Arrange biscuit pieces, points up, over apple mixture. Spread remaining apple mixture over biscuits. Sprinkle with nuts. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until golden brown. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

**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.**

### Q: Are there ways to reduce energy use on a farm?

A: The importance of farms cannot be understated. Farmers feed our families and keep the country running, but the business brings many challenges, including risk and uncertainty. Finding ways to use less energy can reduce costs and result in energy savings for years to come.

When looking to improve farm efficiency, consider the following areas.

#### MOTORS AND PUMPS

Because motors and pumps account for a significant amount of energy use on a farm, replacing inefficient motors with efficient models can save energy and reduce costs. Adding variable frequency drives (VFDs) allow you to vary the frequency and voltage supplied to the motor or pump to adjust the motor's speed. This saves kilowatt hours and reduces load by only operating at the needed capacity. VFDs can be used in place of a phase converter, which allows use of three-phase power equipment where there is only access to single-phase power.

#### IRRIGATION

Upgrade irrigation equipment to use less water, which means less pumping and reducing the amount of water and energy consumed. The goal is to get the right amount of water where it is needed. This can be accomplished by reducing evaporation through system design and fixing leaks in the system. GPS and geographic information system technologies allow for more specific irrigation targeting. Monitor and test systems regularly to ensure maximum efficiency.

#### LIGHTS

The longer lights are on, the higher the potential for savings. Prioritize replacing incandescent or fluorescent exterior lighting on photocells or lights that stay on all night. LED lights last two to four times longer than fluorescents and 25 to 35 times longer than incandescents. That means less frequent replacement, which saves on materials and labor costs.

#### HEATER CONTROLS

In climates where engine block heaters are used to keep vehicle engines warm enough to start, adding engine block heater controls with

temperature sensors and timers will reduce electricity use. To keep water from freezing on farms with livestock, save energy by using stock tank heaters with thermostatic controls, which operate only when needed instead of running constantly. Insulated stock tanks may eliminate the need to heat water.



**Miranda Boutelle**  
Efficiency Services  
Group



#### EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

New farming technologies that offer efficiency possibilities include electric tractors, space heating and water heating. Equipment with information technology capabilities can aid efficiency by monitoring conditions and automating farming tasks. As with home efficiency practices, consider the equipment used most and the savings potential from upgrading or modifying existing equipment.

#### REBATES

About 80 percent of U.S. farms are located in counties served by electric cooperatives. Check with your local electric co-op to see if they offer rebates on farming equipment and energy-efficiency projects that help reduce energy use.

Improving efficiency on the farm can result in less energy use, lower bills and improved farming success during challenging financial times.



## DIRTY BOOT BAND



The Dirty Boot Band has entertained thousands of music lovers across the state and region. *Photo by DBB*

# Dirty Boot Band makes music a joyful family affair

**Billy Gibson**

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

Even The Grinch gets into the groove when the Dirty Boot Band takes the stage.

The family-based musical septet was playing a gig last December at Tiger's Tap in Fort Pierre when a fellow clad in a luminous green Grinch costume got up and danced a little jig.

That was okay with lead singer Sheridan Nickolas, who grinned at the gyrating Grinch while she kept strumming her Taylor six-string.

This particular set was one of about 50 gigs the DBB played last year with dates that found them venturing from one end of the state to the other. Audiences in places like Platte, Hayes, Mitchell and more heard the band belting out a blend of vintage country hits like Delta Dawn, Momma Tried and The Highway Song along with originals like Little Black Pickup Truck and To the Man I Loved.

They've played atop long-bed trailers, in hayfields, in senior citizen centers, shopping malls, bars and restaurants, and consider it an honor to respond to

invitations and play music for anyone wanting to have a fun time.

Hailing from the Onida and Fort Pierre area, the DBB is made up of cousins from the Weinheimer and Nickolas families who decided to form a group in the winter of 2020. The current line-up includes Jacob, Sam and Simon Weinheimer collaborating with Sheridan, Adelynn, Jace and Ty Nickolas.

Together, they work hard on honing their musical chops, memorizing lyrics, smoothing out their chord progressions, tightening their harmonies and even working on original tunes. When they're not touring around the state, the band mates are busy doing farm chores and tackling their academic subjects as students of the Seton Home Study School.

Somehow, they still find the time to compete in sports and pursue a side hustle of making baked goods and selling homemade jewelry.

Sheridan, a senior, is an ace softball pitcher and also likes to hunt.

"During hunting season, we do chores on the farm and do our school work, but



In lieu of a traditional gratuity for entertaining their audience at the Trader Days festival in Fort Pierre, members of the band received a free helicopter ride sponsored by an anonymous supporter. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

we also clean pheasants at the lodge," she said, referring to a family-owned hunting lodge, preserve and skeet range. "And in the spring it's calving season, so we're always checking on the cows."

She said the group plans on continuing to play more gigs and entertain more people as long as their limited time allows. And as they keep developing their chops, they're taking inspiration in the knowledge that their music is good enough to make a grinchy heart grow a few sizes when they play.





Mitchell Tech facilities were used for the annual electric cooperative rubber gloving school last summer. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

## Mitchell Tech prepares linemen to deliver the 'right stuff' for members

**Billy Gibson**

editor@sdrea.coop

It's rare that you find a cooperative lineman in the state of South Dakota who hasn't been through the training program at Mitchell Technical College.

Mike Puetz doesn't remember all the names and faces, but his mentorship has played a key role in turning loads of wannabe linemen into highly skilled craftsmen over the past 25 years.

Puetz serves as head of the lineman training department at MTC and is giving some thought to hanging up his hooks in the next year or so. When he reflects on his teaching career, he swells with pride at how the program has improved exponentially over time.

There have been many milestones in the emergence of the lineman education program rising to become one of the best of its kind in the country.

Back in 2018, for instance, the power line construction and maintenance school was named winner of the inaugural Siemens-Aspen Community College

STEM award. The honor is given by the Aspen Institute to eight colleges nationwide that provide "outstanding preparation" for students in high-demand jobs and provides selected schools with \$50,000 to apply toward scholarships and other forms of financial assistance.

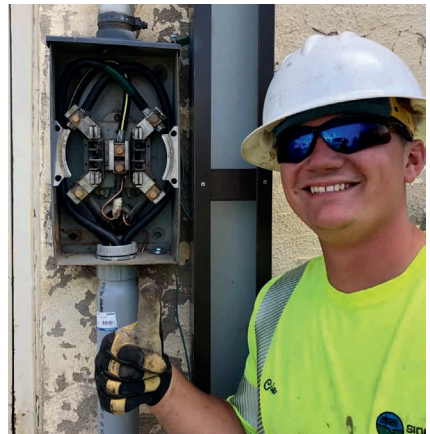
"That was definitely a shock," Puetz said. "There's a lot of good programs out there, and for us to be chosen for that prestigious award was unbelievable. We work hard to be able to say we have a very strong program, and that just gave us some validation that we're moving in the right direction. It's icing on the cake."

Mark Patterson, manager of loss control services at the South Dakota Rural Electric Association based in Pierre, has worked with Puetz for 15 years. He's hard-pressed to find many co-op linemen who haven't trained under Puetz.

"Mike has been around so long, and I'd estimate about 80 percent of the electric co-op linemen out there today have been trained by him," Patterson said. "They do a fantastic job of teaching the fundamentals, whether a student ends

up at a municipal, an investor-owned or a co-op. And our superintendents do an exceptional job of working with the graduates to help them gain the field experience they need to serve our members with a mindset of safety and efficiency."

Over the years, Puetz said, MTC has not only distinguished itself among similar programs but has also greatly expanded its array of academic and technical career tracks. There are tracks for construction and manufacturing, business and service industries, health sciences, engineering technologies and agriculture and transportation.



Sioux Valley Energy's Cole Anderson learned his trade at MTC.





At left, Mike Puetz has trained hundreds of future linemen. Above, Mitchell Technical College is well equipped to give electric linemen the real-world skills they need to succeed. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Cole Anderson is a lineman at Sioux Valley Energy based in Madison. He graduated from the training program four years ago and recalls why he selected MTC to learn the ropes of line work.

“I had an uncle who was a lineman in another state and I knew that’s what I always wanted to do,” said Anderson, a graduate of Chester Area High School. “I started looking at schools and noticed they had limited positions open and they were always taken very quickly. That told me how good their reputation was.”

Anderson received his certification in May of 2018, joined the cooperative as a 1,000 hour lineman, and eventually worked his way into a journeyman position.

Oddly enough, he met Puetz a year before he enrolled at MTC. While still in high school, Anderson was on a tour of the facility when he happened to encounter Puetz in the hallway. The two shook hands and after a brief conversation, Puetz said: “If I don’t see you here next year, I’m coming to track you down.”

Anderson said he finds himself frequently relying on his lineman education and remembering the things Puetz taught him, including those lessons that don’t necessarily have to do with line work.

“I think he’s awesome. He’s big on work ethic and he always told us that no matter what we did in life, a good work ethic will allow you to accomplish your goals and stand out from the rest,” Anderson said. “He also had a thing about belts. You had to wear a belt. If he saw you and you didn’t have one on, he’d take his off and give it to you.”

Anderson and his wife, Sarah, recently built a new home outside of Madison and are expecting a baby boy in March. He said he’s grateful for the outstanding

instruction he received during his education phase and is also thankful to have a position at an outstanding organization within the electric cooperative system.

“I just feel fortunate. It’s been a great experience all the way through,” he said. “I think it’s a privilege to be able to do a job I enjoy and to work with professionals who know their craft, and an organization that is focused on delivering the highest quality service to its members.”

For more information about MTC, visit [www.mitchelltech.edu](http://www.mitchelltech.edu).



MTC is a prime training ground for future co-op linemen. *Photo by Billy Gibson*



# Attention High School Juniors and Seniors Win a Trip to Washington, D.C.

Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative will once again sponsor a high school junior or senior on an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. Each June, more than 1,800 high school juniors and seniors travel to Washington, D.C., to participate in the Rural Electric Youth Tour. During the week, they learn about Washington, D.C., government, cooperative philosophy, and rural electrification. The students are selected and sponsored by their local rural electric cooperatives. The South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) coordinates arrangements for the South Dakota students.

Some of the sites that toured are the Lincoln Memorial, National Cathedral, The White House, Air and Space Museum, Washington Monument, U.S. Capitol, Ford's Theatre, The Kennedy Center, the Metro, Arlington National Cemetery, Mount Vernon, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, The Smithsonian, Iwo Jima Statue, National Archives, U.S Supreme Court, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Students will participate in a breakfast briefing with the South Dakota Congressional Delegation.

## Who is Eligible?

All area high school junior or senior whose parents are members of Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative.

## What Does It Cost?

Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative, along with the other local electric cooperatives that participate in the weeklong event, funds the tour. The funding for the tour provides for each participant's transportation, room and board, entertainment, and sightseeing events. Students are required to provide their spending money (snacks and souvenirs).

## When is it Held?

The week-long trip will

be held on June 17-23, 2023. Participants will meet for an orientation meeting on Saturday, June 17 in Sioux Falls. Then, the group will fly to D.C. on Sunday, June 18, and return to South Dakota on Friday, June 23. A commercial bus will be used for transportation while in D.C.

## How do I Qualify?

Each Entrant must submit an essay, not to exceed 500 words, on the following topic: "If chosen as a youth tour delegate, you will be traveling to Washington, D.C. to experience and learn about America's rich history. What moment in American history do you wish you had been a part of, and what would you have contributed?" All essays must be typed and include a cover sheet that states the title of the essay, the entrant's name and address, name of parent or guardian, and the name of your school.

Information may be picked up from Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative, 1101 East 4th Ave, Milbank, SD 57252.

**YOUTH TOUR**

Fly with 40+ S.D. teens and meet 1,800 from across the nation during this fast-paced week!

Ask Us How to Apply!

Join the FUN!  
**June 17-23, 2023**  
*(Best of all, it's free thanks to your local electric cooperative!)*



## 2023 Director Election to be Held in March

Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative is making plans for its 81st annual membership meeting. The 2023 annual meeting will be held on Thursday, March 23 at the Milbank High School.

This year, three members must be selected to serve on the board of directors, all for three-year terms. The districts with open seats are as follows:

- **District 1:** Dry Wood Lake, Goodwill, Easter, Agency and Lawrence Townships
- **District 2:** Becker, Lee and Lake Townships
- **District 5:** Osceola, Kilborn, Mazeppa, Twin Brooks and Leola Townships

Without a candidate for District 2, it will become vacant as of the date of the next annual meeting due to term limitations of no more than five consecutive terms or a total of fifteen consecutive years set forth in Article IV, Section 2 of the cooperative bylaws.

Director nominations are by petition only. Petition forms are available at our headquarters at 1101 East Fourth Avenue in Milbank. A candidate must be a bona fide resident of the district and return a petition with at least six (6) signatures from current members of the same district to the Whetstone office not less than 40 days prior to the annual meeting or Monday February 13, 2023 at 12:00 noon.

Because of publication deadlines, in order to have a candidate profile published in the March issue of Cooperative Connections, petitions should be submitted at or prior to February 1, 2023.

The process for becoming a Director for Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc. (WVEC) is contained in the Cooperative bylaws Article IV. Each candidate for a director position should carefully read the bylaws and understand the

procedures. The bylaws can be found on our website, whetstone.coop or by contacting our office.

The Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative board serves on behalf of the membership to provide oversight and strategic governance, while day-to-day operations are led by the cooperative general manager. The board is responsible for sending representatives to the associations of which the cooperative is a member. Directors are expected to attend education seminars and may be asked to serve on other associated cooperative boards. Directors may be asked to lobby and remain informed on pertinent legislative issues. Reading and studying is necessary to keep informed of current issues and how they may affect the co-op. It is the responsibility of the board to evaluate and develop long-term strategic plans to assure the financial and operational stability of the cooperative. Directors should expect to commit about 30 days per year for cooperative related activities.

In addition to the rewards of being a director, there are some important responsibilities. A director must:

- Be prepared to abide by and uphold the bylaws of the cooperative
- Be open to new ideas and have a desire to learn
- Be able to understand and engage members as their expectations change
- Be adept at analyzing complex options to make sound decisions

If you are interested in learning more about what it means to be director, please feel free to contact a board member or our General Manager.

### Audra Johnson Bids Co-op Farewell

Audra Johnson turned in her keys and pushed in her chair for the last time ending her 19-year employment with Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative. Audra began working for WVEC Dec. 1, 2003, as a Customer Service Representative. She has also worked as an Accounting Clerk during her time at the cooperative.

Audra reflected, "I have really enjoyed working with customers and trying to help them with questions or concerns." Whether she was greeting customers or fellow employees she had a ready smile and a willing ear to listen.

One of the greatest things about working for a co-op Audra stated is not only your fellow employees but the network of co-ops and co-op organizations that all work together to serve their membership. She said it is like being part of a larger family.

She also reminisced on some memorable storms over the years and commented, "The electricians and line department are super stars when it comes to getting consumers back on!"

Audra and her husband, Darwin, have a family farming operation in the rural LaBolt area. This is where they raised their three daughters: Rachel, Paige and Jenna. Audra said she plans to enjoy some extra family time and maybe sneak in a little traveling with her free time.

Audra commented, "I have enjoyed my time at Whetstone Valley Electric and will miss my co-workers and the customers I have come to know."

Thank you Audra for your dedication to the WVEC customers for the past 19 years.





# NATIVE TOURISM

## Native Tourism Alliance shines spotlight on tribal nation culture

**Billy Gibson**

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

Sure, many of the 15 million travelers who visit South Dakota each year may have marveled at the Mount Rushmore Memorial, snapped a selfie at Wall Drug or beheld the fast-moving waters in Falls Park.

But how many of them have witnessed the whirling splendor of a wacipi, the traditional Native American celebration of life? How many have paused to watch a Native artist crafting a colorful piece of beaded jewelry?

Several years ago, a blind spot was noticed in the Department of Tourism's efforts to attract visitors – not much attention was being focused on the state's nine federally-recognized tribal nations.

In an effort to address that oversight, the department teamed up with the George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies

and the tribes to develop a sustainable indigenous tourism industry by letting visitors know there are many points of interest available for exploration far beyond the beaten paths.

The five-year plan has been described as a “groundbreaking endeavor” and is one of the first initiatives of its kind under the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act and was unveiled in August of 2021. More than 60 state, local and federal organizations collaborated to formulate the strategy as a catalyst for economic growth.

“I think the Alliance is a potential revenue source for our tribes, and it’s a way for us to generate income, alleviate poverty and help conserve our natural resources and culture,” said Dew Bad Warrior-Ganje, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

The plan identified five guiding principles:

### Native Tourism Alliance

**CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX TRIBE**  
PO Box 590, Eagle Butte, SD 57625  
605-964-4155

**CROW CREEK SIOUX TRIBE**  
PO Box 50, Fort Thompson, SD 57339  
605-245-2221

**FLANDREAU SANTEE SIOUX TRIBE**  
PO Box 283, Flandreau, SD 57028-0283  
605-997-3891

**LOWER BRULE SIOUX TRIBE**  
PO Box 187, Lower Brule, SD 57548  
605-473-5561

**OGLALA SIOUX TRIBE**  
PO Box 2070, Pine Ridge, SD 57770  
605-867-5821

**ROSEBUD SIOUX TRIBE**  
PO Box 430, Rosebud, SD 57570  
605-747-2381

**SISSETON WAHPETON OYATE**  
PO Box 509, Agency Village, SD 57262  
605-698-3911

**STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE**  
PO Box D, Fort Yates, ND 58538  
701-854-8500

**YANKTON SIOUX TRIBE**  
PO Box 1153, Wagner, SD 57380  
605-384-3641



- 
- Unity - Reunification of the Očhéthi Šakówi Oyate through shared history, commonalities, and collaboration on developing regional tourism.
  - Preservation - Promotion of art and culture in order to enhance self-identity and pride as well as preserve the culture, including language and traditional knowledge.
  - Woksape - Recognition of Elders as the driving force of traditional knowledge and wisdom in the development of regional tourism and educating the youth to be stewards of the language and culture.
  - Education - Creation of cross-cultural bridges and educating the World about Native American communities.
  - Self-sufficiency - Development of opportunities for Tribal Nations to become self-sufficient and create pathways to enhance livelihood.

Organizers gathered together and developed detailed goals and methods to achieve those goals. Planners were forced to start from the ground floor as not much data existed to determine the present status of Indigenous tourism.

They initially identified a “rich mix” of 145 existing natural, cultural and heritage attractions and special events to promote, in addition to potential agritourism initiatives.

Nearing the halfway point in the plan’s prescribed timetable, stakeholders report substantial progress and greater interest from visitors seeking an authentic cultural experience.

Calvin Bloemendaal, who has represented the South Dakota Department of Tourism in the Alliance from its inception, pointed out several specific measures of success.

Chief among them is the creation of a nine-day motorcoach tour of tribal territory that starts in Rapid City and terminates in Bismarck. The tour, coordinated with assistance by the tourism department, will begin this summer and will be operated through Destination America and Trafalgar Tours.

“It’s one of the first tours of its kind,” Bloemendaal said. “Destination America caters to an upscale clientele of individuals who like to travel a lot and have been to a lot of places. They’re looking for something unique and interesting they haven’t seen before.”

He also mentioned the progress that has been made in building a network of support for tribal tourism and the development of themed destination experiences.

There’s also a marketing guide that is part of the department’s general ongoing promotional efforts. More than 30,000 of the helpful guides were printed and are being distributed at visitor centers, trade shows and other industry events.

“I was at a trade show in Denver and people were extremely interested in this idea and gravitating toward it. The guide is an effective tool that inspires people to visit,” he said. “We’re making a lot of headway as far as putting together pitches and itineraries to attract more tour operators to the state.”







# CULTURE ON DISPLAY

The Mead Cultural Center has a variety of exhibits and programs to appeal to every interest. *Photos by Mead Museum*

## Mead Cultural Education Center has something for every interest

**Billy Gibson**

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The action seems to never cease at the Mead Cultural Education Center in Yankton.

Between three very popular permanent exhibits, community-based special events and temporary displays that come and go, the constant swirl of activity keeps Rob Marlow on his toes.

Marlow is program director at the museum, which is known affectionately to local supporters and frequenters as “The Mead.” He was finally catching his breath after the Christmastime crush when he and his team had to quickly turn their attention to installing a new traveling exhibit called “Crossroads: Changes in Rural America,” the product of a collaboration between the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street program and the South Dakota Humanities Council.

Previously, the touring exhibit spent several months on display at the South Dakota Agricultural Heritage Museum

on the SDSU campus in Brookings and will show at The Mead through the first week of March.

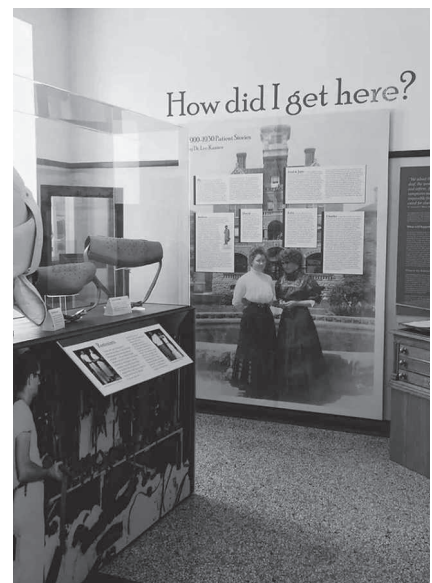
Other stops include the Sturgis Public Library from March 11 through April 30 and the Fort Sisseton Historic State Park from May 6 through June 25.

Marlow explained that the exhibit describes how the U.S. population has shifted away from rural and agrarian communities and moved toward more urban and suburban centers since 1900. It showcases the many ways agriculture-based towns and villages across the country have responded to those changes and in many cases have thrived.

As they’ve felt the impact of the long-term demographic trends, rural communities have been pro-active and intentional in finding new opportunities for growth, innovation and economic development.

“A lot of people who don’t live in rural towns have a perception that they’re barely hanging on by a thread, and that’s not always the situation. The reality is that while it hasn’t been easy,

farmers and ranchers and small town leaders have rolled up their sleeves and met these challenges head-on, to the point that we see many folks coming back to a lifestyle with a slower pace, more freedom, more comfort and more room to roam. It’s really a super success



A display focusing on the historic Yankton State Hospital is a popular attraction at the Mead Cultural Education Center in Yankton.





This display was created by the local Lego club and attracted a lot of interest during the Christmas season. *Photos by Mead Museum*

story, and this exhibit shows that. We're excited to have it here at The Mead," Marlow said.

Meanwhile, curious crowds continue to flock to the museum's three permanent exhibits, which include Yankton State Hospital: Minds, Methods and Medicine; Journey Forward: Connecting Cultures; and the Children's Transportation Museum.

Marlow said visitors and guests generally have a special fascination with the story of how the Mead Building in Yankton was once home to the state's largest mental health facility for women.

The permanent display designed by Jane Bobzin, Carol Ryan and Stan Hoffart opened in 2020 and tracks the history of the facility that dates back to 1879.

It highlights the accomplishments of hospital superintendent Dr. Leonard Mead and Dr. Leo Kanner, considered to be the "Father of American Child Psychiatry" for his innovative work in the field of autism.

"We get a lot of positive reviews and feedback about that display. People walk away learning a lot about the history of the facility and how the hospital provided treatment for those with mental disorders at the time," Marlow said.

Throughout the calendar year, the facility hosts a variety of seasonal events and activities such as the Hall of Trees held each year from Thanksgiving to Christmas.

This past Christmas, nearly 70 local businesses, social organizations and other sponsors decorated trees to reflect the spirit of the season. More than 1,300 visitors cast their vote for best-of-show by dropping a token in a box in front of their favorite tree. Registration fees paid by the competing tree decorators go toward providing free museum admission to those 17 and under.

The 2022 Hall of Trees exhibit also included a 1,400-piece Lego display built by the Yankton Community

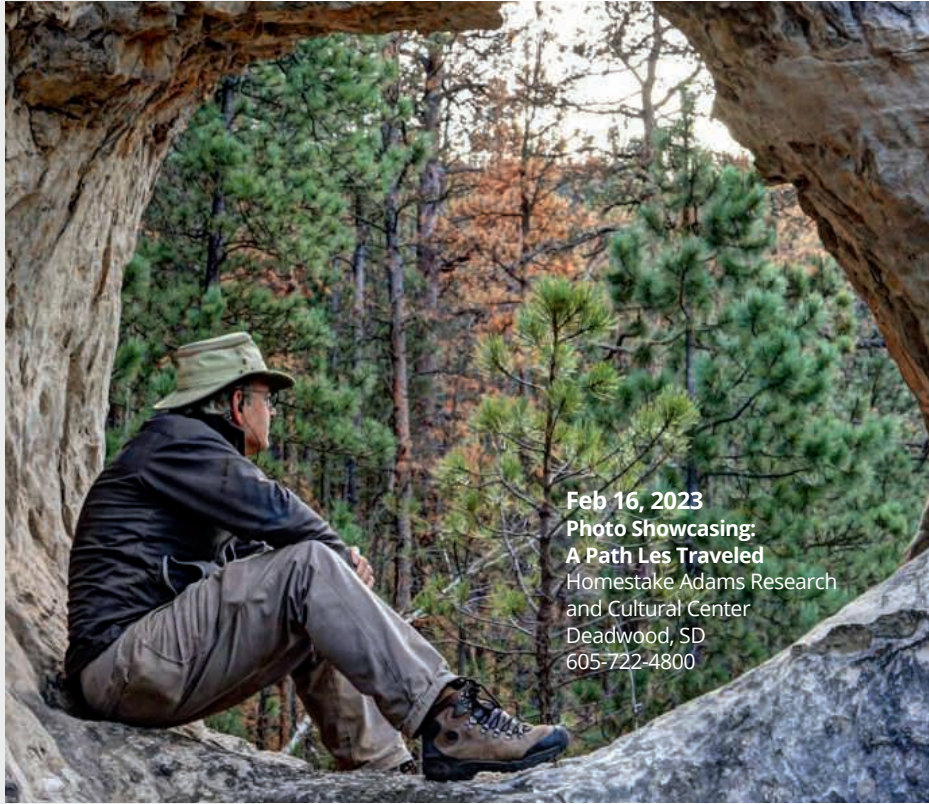
**"There's a lot to see and explore at the Mead Building. We feel like the discovery process is something that never ends."**

*- Rob Marlow*

Library Lego Club led by local brickmeister Tom Cihak. Last year's display featured an assortment of Tonka trucks.

Another popular seasonal event occurs during Halloween and is centered around "haunted history" tours of the Mead Building and an "overnight experience" where guests gather together with their sleeping bags and snacks, share ghost stories and listen for signs of any paranormal activity taking place in the crooks and crevices of the structure.

"There's a lot to see and explore at the Mead Building," Marlow said. "We feel like the discovery process is something that never ends."



**Feb 16, 2023**  
**Photo Showcasing:**  
**A Path Les Traveled**  
 Homestake Adams Research  
 and Cultural Center  
 Deadwood, SD  
 605-722-4800

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.

**FEB. 3-4**  
**TOOTSIE**  
 Show Dates:  
 Feb. 3, 7:30 p.m.  
 Feb. 4, 2 p.m.  
 Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m.  
 Washington Pavilion  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-367-6000

**FEB. 4**  
**Lake Hendricks Fishing Derby**  
 9 a.m. registration  
 Hendricks City Public  
 Lake Access  
 Hendricks, MN  
 507-828-2113

**FEB. 4**  
**James River Gobblers**  
**Hunting Heritage Banquet**  
 Highland Conference Center  
 Mitchell, SD  
 605-999-3208

**FEB. 10-11**  
**Mardi Gras Weekend**  
 Mardi Gras Events & Parade  
 Sponsored by Deadwood  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 Main Street  
 Deadwood, SD

**FEB. 11**  
**Songs of Romance**  
 7:30 p.m.  
 Washington Pavilion  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-367-6000

**FEB. 16**  
**Photo Showcasing:**  
**A Path Les Traveled**  
 12 p.m.-1 p.m.  
 Homestake Adams Research  
 and Cultural Center  
 Deadwood, SD  
 605-722-4800

**FEB. 24**  
**Calamity's Shindig**  
 6 p.m.-9 p.m.  
 Homestake Adams Research  
 and Cultural Center  
 Deadwood, SD  
 605-722-4800

**FEB. 28**  
**BIG Career & Internship Fair**  
 10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
 Ramkota Hotel  
 Sioux Falls, SD

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

**MARCH 18**  
**Shamrock Shuffle Fun Run**  
 12 p.m.  
 Main Street  
 Presho, SD

**MARCH 25-26**  
**Greater Sioux Falls Model**  
**Train Show**  
 Multi-Cultural Center  
 Sioux Falls, SD

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

**APRIL 1**  
**Mozart Requiem**  
 7:30 p.m.  
 Washington Pavilion  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-367-6000

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