

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

## Let's Go Fly a Kite

**Brookings Kite Festival  
Creates Excitement**  
Pages 8-9

**Cooperative Metering**  
Pages 12-13

*Photo Credit: Visit Brookings*



# 10 Things You Might Not Know About Power Restoration



**Dave Page**  
General Manager

Have you ever watched a video or TV show where a person is cooking a meal, and then suddenly, the meal is plated and ready to eat? That's called a jump cut.

While we wish we could "jump cut" from a power outage to power restoration, it can often take a lot more effort and people to make that happen.

As the general manager of Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative, I'm accustomed to members' questions about power outages and why it can take time to get the lights back on. Given our reliance on electricity, there's simply never a good time to be without it.

This month, I'd like to shed light on our restoration process to help our members understand what may be happening behind the scenes. Here are 10 things you might not know about restoration:

- 1. We need you.** When your power goes out, it might be just at your home or small section of a neighborhood. There is a chance we may not know about it, and no one has reported it. We rely on you to let us know if your power is out. The best way to report an outage is by calling (605) 432-5331. Someone is available to take your call 24-7.
- 2. Our employees might be affected too.** Because Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative is a local electric cooperative owned by the members we serve, our employees are local too. They are your neighbors, friends and familiar community volunteers. When you're without power, our people might be too.
- 3. It's a team effort.** Every one of Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative's employees are working to get your power restored as soon as possible. Our member services representatives are taking your calls, field staff are surveying damage and clearing hazards, dispatchers are organizing crews, and communicators are keeping everyone informed of progress or potential dangers. When your power goes out, we all work together as quickly and safely as possible to get you back to normal.
- 4. We assess the situation first.** Every outage is different, and we don't know how dangerous it is or what equipment might need to be replaced. When responding to outages, we first need to determine what happened, then figure out what materials we need and a plan for how to fix the problem(s) without compromising electric flow for the rest of our members.
- 5. Restoration is normally prioritized by the largest number of members we can get back on in the shortest amount of time.** Our crews focus on responding first to public safety issues and critical services like hospitals. Then we complete work that impacts the largest of number of people first.
- 6. Our employees face many dangers.** Besides working around high voltage electricity, our crews are on alert for weather elements, falling trees and fast-moving cars. (If you ever drive past one of our vehicles, please do so slowly.)
- 7. Flickering lights are a good thing.** Some folks mistake flickering lights for outages, but these "blinks" are important because they indicate our equipment worked and prevented a possible outage likely caused by wayward animals or stray tree limbs on the lines.
- 8. You need a backup plan.** We do our best to help those who need it, but if you depend on electricity for life support purposes, you must have a back-up plan – remember, we don't always know how long restoration efforts will take. If you're unsure what to do, call us so we can help you prepare an emergency location.
- 9. Our employees have to plan, and eat.** If you ever see our trucks in a restaurant parking lot while your power is out, know that sometimes our employees huddle in a safe, common area to map out their plan for getting your power back on. Also, our crews sometimes work long hard hours during mass outages and need to take time for meals just like everyone else.
- 10. Sometimes it's a waiting game.** Our portion of the power grid is connected to other electric utilities, and we maintain positive relationships with power providers interconnected to our system. If our outage is due to an issue from their feed into our system, we must let them do their repairs and be mindful of what they're going through to fix it.

We do our best to avoid power disruptions, but they are inevitable from time to time. If the lights go out, know that your co-op team is working as quickly and safely as possible to restore power. If you experience an outage, please let us know by reporting it by calling (605) 432-5331.

**COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS**

**WHETSTONE VALLEY ELECTRIC**

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Design assistance by SDREA.

# Scholarship Winner!

Dave Page, General Manager of Whetstone Valley Electric, presenting the \$1,000 Basin Scholarship to Aubrey Fraasch at the Milbank High School Scholarship Award Ceremony.



Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup>  
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**The office will be closed on Thursday, July 4,  
in observance of the holiday.**

# Fireworks Safety

Summer is synonymous with barbecues, parades and fireworks. The National Safety Council advises everyone to enjoy fireworks at public displays conducted by professionals, and not to use any fireworks at home. They may be legal but they are not safe.

Every year, thousands of people are injured badly enough to require medical treatment after fireworks-related incidents, with many of the injuries to children and young adults. While the majority of these incidents are due to amateurs attempting to use professional-grade, home-made or other illegal fireworks or explosives, less powerful devices like small firecrackers and sparklers can also cause significant injury.

Additionally, fireworks start an average of 19,000 fires each year.

### Fireworks Safety Tips: If You Choose to Use Legal Fireworks

If consumer fireworks are legal to buy where you live and you choose to use them, be sure to follow the following safety tips:

- Never allow young children to handle fireworks
- Older children should use them only under close adult supervision
- Never use fireworks while impaired by drugs or alcohol
- Anyone using fireworks or standing nearby should wear protective eyewear
- Never hold lighted fireworks in your hands
- Never light them indoors
- Only use them away from people, houses and flammable material
- Never point or throw fireworks at another person
- Only light one device at a time and maintain a safe distance after lighting
- Never ignite devices in a container
- Do not try to re-light or handle malfunctioning fireworks
- Soak both spent and unused fireworks in water for a few hours before discarding
- Keep a bucket of water nearby to fully extinguish fireworks that don't go off or in case of fire
- Never use illegal fireworks

Better yet, grab a blanket and a patch of lawn, kick back and let the experts handle the fireworks show.

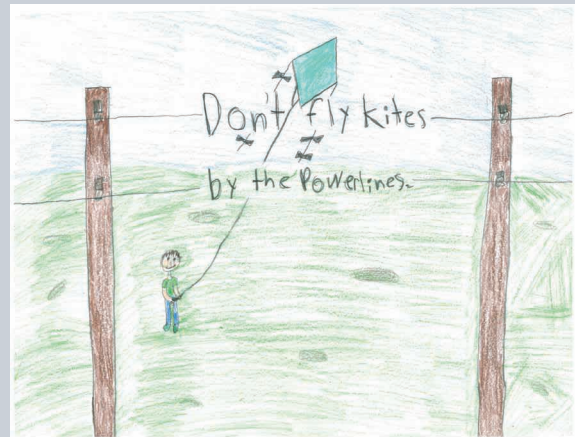
### Sparklers Are Dangerous

Every year, young children can be found along parade routes and at festivals with sparklers in hand, but sparklers are a lot more dangerous than most people think.

Sparklers burn at about 2,000 degrees – hot enough to melt some metals. Sparklers can quickly ignite clothing, and children have received severe burns from dropping sparklers on their feet. According to the National Fire Protection Association, sparklers alone account for more than 25% of emergency room visits for fireworks injuries. For children under five years of age, sparklers accounted for nearly half of the total estimated injuries.

Consider using safer alternatives, such as glow sticks, confetti poppers or colored streamers.

*Source: National Safety Council*



**“Let’s Go Fly a Kite Up to  
the Highest Heights.”**

### Eldon Femrite, Age 12

Eldon Femrite warns readers to not fly kites by power lines this summer. Eldon’s parents are Jody and Rosemary Femrite, members of Codington-Clark 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.

# DELICIOUS Desserts

## NO CHURN ICE CREAM

### Ingredients:

2 cups heavy cream  
14 oz. sweetened condensed milk  
Other mix-ins as desired

### Method

In a mixing bowl, whip heavy cream until stiff peaks form.

Mix in sweetened condensed milk and any flavors/mix-ins you like (strawberries, Oreos, lemon, vanilla extract, etc.).

Pour into loaf pan and freeze until solid (2+ hours).

Kayla Beaner  
Centerville, S.D.

## CINNAMON PECAN PIE

### Ingredients:

1 refrigerated pie crust, (from 14.1-oz. pkg.)  
3 eggs, lightly beaten  
1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar  
1 cup light corn syrup  
2 tbsps. butter, melted  
1 tbsps. cinnamon extract  
1 1/2 cups pecan pieces

### Method

Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare pie crust as directed on package for one-crust pie using 9-inch pie plate.

Mix eggs, sugar, corn syrup, butter and cinnamon flavor in large bowl until well blended. Stir in pecans.

Pour into crust. Bake 50 to 55 minutes or until knife inserted halfway between center and edge comes out clean. Cool completely on wire rack.

McCormick.com

## RHUBARB PIE

### Ingredients:

#### Crust

1-2 cups flour  
1/2 stick butter or margarine  
1/4 cup water

#### Pie

3 tbsps. butter or margarine  
1 cup sugar  
3 eggs, separated  
2 tbsps. flour  
1/2 tsp. salt  
2 1/2 cups cut rhubarb  
Smucker's caramel sundae syrup

### Method

**Crust:** Add ingredients and knead to complete pie crust. Amounts will vary due to humidity. Knead dough into pie pan and poke holes into the bottom as needed. You may make creative edges as you wish, however it is not necessary.

**Pie:** Soften butter or margarine and stir together with the sugar, egg yolks, flour, and salt. Beat egg whites until stiff. Add rhubarb and fold in the egg whites. Add the filling to the 8-inch, unbaked pie crust. You may add a drizzle of Smucker's sundae syrup for additional flavoring before baking. Bake in oven set at 400 until golden brown. You may also add more caramel syrup to pie after baking for ultimate effect.

Lisa Kummer Soukup  
Tea, S.D.

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.

# Signs Your HVAC is in Trouble



**Miranda Boutelle**  
Efficiency Services  
Group

**Q:** How do I know if my HVAC system is malfunctioning?

**A:** Your heating, ventilation and air conditioning system is one of the most important and expensive systems in your home. Detecting issues early can help you plan for repairs or equipment replacement.

Equipment functionality issues can affect your electricity use, which may result in higher energy bills. The age of your equipment can be a major factor in function. The lifespan of a heating and cooling system ranges from 15 to 20 years.

Proper maintenance and lower use can increase the life of the equipment. To find out the age of your system, look for the manufactured date printed on the unit's nameplate. If you can't find it, search online using the model number or call the manufacturer.

Being thrifty by nature, I typically subscribe to the notion of "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." That said, I also believe in being prepared for the inevitable. If your system is approaching or past the 20-year mark, start saving for a new system and get replacement estimates.

There are a few warning signs to watch out for if your heating and cooling system needs to be repaired or replaced:

- **Air conditioning is not as cool as usual.** If the air from your air conditioner is warm or not as cool as it usually feels, the equipment has an issue. It could be a problem with the compressor or a refrigerant leak. Contact a professional to get the issue checked. Many refrigerants, especially the ones used in older systems, are harmful to the environment. Fix leaks before adding more refrigerant. Special certifications are required for handling refrigerants, so hire a professional to ensure the work is done properly.
- **Low airflow.** If you aren't getting good airflow, it could be an easy fix, such as filter replacement or opening closed dampers. If you've made these fixes and airflow is not at normal levels, contact

a professional. There could be a bigger problem with a motor, fan or something else.

- **Bad odors.** Heating and cooling systems sometimes smell when you first start them up for the season. Those smells should be minor and dissipate quickly. Any serious smells – such as burning metal, melting plastic or noxious odors – are a sign that your system is in trouble. If you smell those odors, turn your system off immediately and contact a professional.
- **Strange noises.** There is typically noise associated with the fans and motors in heating and cooling systems. Take note of any excessive or new noises. If your system is making any clunking, clanging or whistling noises, turn it off and check the filter. If that doesn't solve it, reach out to a pro.
- **Running frequently.** Your system needs to run more to keep up on extreme weather days, but there might be an issue if it runs too often. Short cycling is when a system cycles on and off before completing the heating or cooling process. Contact a professional to diagnose this issue.

Several factors come into play when deciding to fix existing equipment or invest in new equipment. Consider the severity of the issue, repair costs, the likelihood of additional repairs, equipment lifespan and your budget.

The efficiency of your existing system is also a consideration. Heating and cooling technology improvements have come a long way in the last 20 years. Lower operation costs can offset the cost of a new system over time.

Consider your options before you are in desperate need. I recommend getting estimates from at least three contractors. Ask the contractor, "If this was your home, what type of system would you install and why?" The best solution for your home might be a different type of equipment.

# From East River to Missouri River

## Tom Boyko's 2,400-Mile Canoe Journey

Frank Turner

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What's a former CEO of East River Power Cooperative to do after they retire? For Tom Boyko, retirement after 37 years in the electric industry and serving nine years as East River's chief executive officer meant an opportunity to embark on a well-earned canoe odyssey from the headwaters of the Missouri River in Three Forks, Mont., to St. Louis, Mo., with his son, Jacob Boyko, who accompanied his father for a portion of the journey.

According to Boyko, the 2,400-mile trip had been brewing in his mind for a long time, so when he retired at the end of August 2023, he wasted no time planning and executing his adventure, jumping from his cozy office chair to his canoe in just six months.

"I grew up on the Missouri in Stanton, N.D., so I've been wanting to do this trip forever," said Boyko. "It's just something I've always wanted to do."

Boyko continued, "At first, my family didn't think I would follow through. But through the winter, I built a tank so I could sit and practice paddling, day after day. Then they realized I was going to do it. My wife and daughter actually drove Jacob and I out to Montana. They weren't sure I was going to make it all the way, and they thought we might call it quits, but we didn't."

Having read the journals of Lewis and Clark, Boyko wanted to follow in the pioneering duo's footsteps along the Missouri River. However, instead of relying on the historic travelers' accommodations, Boyko took a more modern approach to his journey with modern provisions, including a canoe packed to the brim with packets of chicken and tuna, boxes of mac and cheese, a valuable cache of instant coffee, a tent, two propane stoves, and many other supplies.

"I got ahold of David Miller's book, *The Complete Paddler*, and he really went through, step-by-step, what he experienced when he went down the Missouri River," said Boyko. "He logged the locations of the campgrounds and included a lot of great information, so it was a great book to have with."

Armed with the knowledge to navigate hordes of flies and mosquitos, unpredictable summer storms, and the channels of the Missouri River, Boyko launched his expedition on May 16 with his son, who had just graduated college with a degree in Journalism from South Dakota State University. Jacob had also just won a Pulitzer fellowship for a writing project about the Matanza Riachuelo River in Buenos Aires, Argentina. As a result, Jacob left the Missouri River expedition in Williston, N.D., to explore his own river-centric journey in Argentina. The rest of the trip, Tom tackled solo.

"When you get to be a dad like me, you just so appreciate the



Tom Boyko stands with his son, Jacob, at Tobacco Gardens Resort & Marina, a campground in McKenzie County, N.D. Photo submitted by Tom Boyko.

opportunity to do something like this with your son," said Boyko. "He enjoyed it, and he plans to finish the trip at some point in his life. And the cool thing is that every guy my age I met on the trip said the same thing, 'I wish I could have done that with my son.' I was very fortunate, and I very much appreciate that he came with me."

Although Boyko tackled most of the trip by himself, he did have help along the way. Boyko received help from family, friends, and co-workers from the co-op industry when portaging his canoe over the many dams along the way.

"My brother portaged me around Garrison Dam," said Boyko. "Jordan Lamb, the general manager of Oahe Electric, helped me portage Oahe Dam. Russell Gall with Charles-Mix Electric and Ervin Fink, a former director of East River, helped me through Fort Randall. Stephanie Horst with Bon Homme Yankton paddled Lewis and Clark Lake with me. Even my family came down and to help me portage Gavin's Point. It was great to see friends and family along the way."

Even bolstered by the help of friends, the trip wasn't always smooth sailing. Over the course of his 98-day journey, Boyko traversed strong winds and high waves on Lake Oahe, which forced him to ground his canoe and camp along the beaches of the reservoir. He drifted through oppressive 114-degree heat in Missouri and navigated past large barge traffic. There was even a rowdy raccoon who helped himself to some mac and cheese — all part of the adventure.

"I started packing the canoe when it became evident that a raccoon had been in my canoe during the night and ate through one of my food dry bags leaving mac and cheese noodles and orange cheese throughout the boat," wrote Boyko in his travel journal. "What a mess."

But it wasn't all bad. Boyko said he met some great people and found some real gems along the way.

"I worked for the Western Area Power Association for many years, so I was very familiar with the river and the dams... but when you are actually canoeing it, you get a different appreciation," said Boyko. "It's a beautiful river."

# KITE FESTIVAL



*Photo Credit: Visit Brookings*

## Let's Go Fly a Kite

**Shannon Marvel**

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The sky becomes more of an art canvas during the Brookings Kite Festival. For the last 25 years, kite fliers from across the country gather to let their art take flight at the festival.

One of those artists is Mike Gee of North Dakota.

“We go down there to Brookings and really like the kite flying field there. It’s just nice to come down and fly kites with friends who also enjoy flying kites,” Gee said.

Gee flies what’s called “show kites”, which are big, inflatable kites that can span 20 feet across the sky.

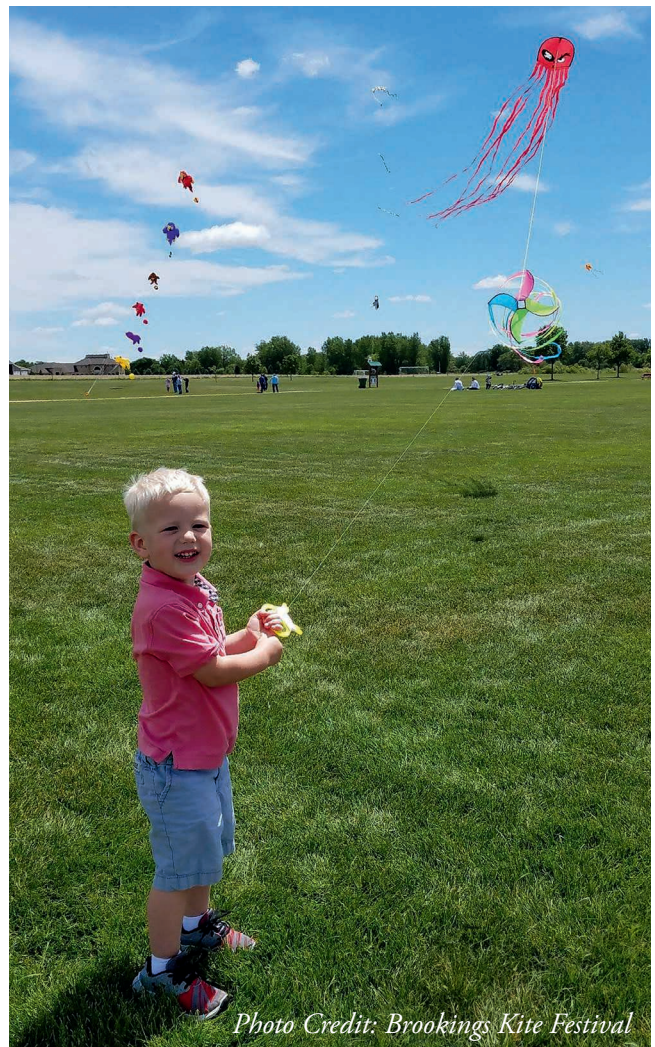
There are other kites flown during the festival, including soft kites, stick kites and sport kites.

A sport kite is one that is attached to two or four lines. Often they’ll be flown in teams and perform maneuvers in the sky.

“If you talk about crazy kites, there’s a wide variety. There are so many different creative people building things in creative ways,” Gee said. “It is definitely an art. It’s what you put on the canvas that makes it special.”

The kites are typically made with nylon, sail making cloth that doesn’t stretch.

“You can’t just go to the fabric store and buy tent fabric. We have a couple different weights of fabrics we use. And you need that tail on there to keep the kite stable,” Gee said.



*Photo Credit: Brookings Kite Festival*





*Photo Credit: Brookings Register*

Sally Damm Norby, of the Brookings Optimists Club, said the festival got its start when Lynn Versher, former director of the South Dakota Art Museum, approached Optimist member Bill Flynn about creating a joint effort to bring big kites to Brookings.

“This volunteer organization aims to make a positive impact on the lives of youth and communities. The Brookings club’s primary focus is on advancing the opportunities and programs for youth events that are encouraging with exceptional supportive outcomes. The Brookings Optimist Kite Festival offers a comprehensive learning experience that incorporates expressions of culture, science, creativity, civic involvement, and is

environmentally friendly,” Norby said.

Youth are encouraged to come down and learn how to make a kite of their own, with professional guidance.

Gee said he encourages visitors to come up to kite fliers to ask questions or strike up a conversation.

“One thing I really like about kite flying is it seems like no matter who you talk to on the field, someone can relate to an experience of flying a kite,” Gee said. “When we start flying kites, it brings back memories of when other folks were kids flying kites. It’s kind of emotional for some people.”

This year’s event will take place on June 22-23 at the Fishback Soccer Park in Brookings.

Gee said this location is a safe spot to fly kites, and well away from any electrical line hazards.

“If you’ve flown kites long enough, you have a story about power lines. When you hit a line, you call the power company, and they advise you of what to do. The best thing to do is avoid those wires. I always think, ‘If my line breaks, which way is my kite going to go and what’s over there,’” Gee said.

Gee encourages visitors to come down to the Brookings Kite Festival with their lawn chairs and blankets and stay for more than just a half hour.

“The thing is when the wind changes direction or speed, the kites change. There’s just so much going on throughout the day. You’ve really got to sit back and pay attention,” Gee said.



*Photo Credit: Visit Brookings*

# Unclaimed Capital Credit Checks

The unclaimed capital credit list represents credit checks that Whetstone Valley Electric mailed to members. These checks were returned by United States Postal service for various reasons. After 6 years of not being claimed a letter has been mailed. This Is a Notice of Forfeiture of Unclaimed cash pursuant to SDCL 47-16-54 through SDCL 47-16-57. You are hereby notified that the unclaimed cash you are entitled to shall be forfeited pursuant to the above statutes, unless said unclaimed cash is claimed and proper evidence of ownership is submitted to Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative.

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ANDERSON, DEAN	EKERN, RICHARD	JETTY, TOM	MESSAGE FOR AMERICA EVANG
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## Unclaimed Capital Credit Checks, Continued

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 RENVILLE, RODNEY  
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 SMILEY SHEPHERD ESTATE  
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SNOOK, JAMES  
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### NATIONAL GRILLING MONTH WORD SEARCH

July is National Grilling Month! Can you find all the words associated with grilling in the puzzle below? Use the word bank as a guide.

B H C D F T N U Z R B J R Q G  
 O A U F O N H R K Q S H E F V  
 M A R N X U J O R W Z N M B L  
 W M G B F B X L F P O K M V Z  
 X S J A E Z K M O R F S U B T  
 E S R P N Q I V P H P R S H V  
 X C D L L F U A L A C B K P J  
 V K J N A E B E T M E V K V X  
 J X O Y E K D U T B C H N I J  
 W N P T B I L C P U T Y T Y F  
 N C C N J A R O C R C G C D A  
 Y T W V C Z A F W G M E W B M  
 O D G R I L L A R E O U X W I  
 U L T K U S Q N V R S Q U B L  
 L E T K S O Q R G O D T O H Y



**WORD BANK**  
 Hamburger  
 Spatula  
 Hot Dog  
 Friends  
 Summer  
 Apron  
 Grill  
 Barbeque  
 Family  
 Tongs

Cooking outdoors is a fun way to spend time with friends and family! By cooking outside, you can save energy indoors and keep your home cooler.

### ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Electricity used to operate major appliances accounts for a significant portion of your home energy use.

Here's an easy way to lighten the load on your clothes dryer. Before you dry a load of damp clothing, toss in a clean, dry towel. The towel will absorb excess water, shortening the drying time. If your dryer does not include an autosense feature to determine drying time, remember to reduce the timer to about half of what you normally would. Remove the towel about 15 minutes after the cycle begins. Shorter drying times will extend the life of your dryer and save energy.

### DO NOT TAMPER WITH YOUR ELECTRIC METER.



- Never break a meter seal.
- Never open a meter base.
- Never remove a meter or alter an entrance cable in any manner.

If you know or suspect that someone has tampered with their meter, please let us know.



# COOPERATIVE METERING

**Roger Lawien**

More than 40 cooperative linemen and metering specialists gathered in Pierre for South Dakota Rural Electric's Meter School. This two-day gathering offers the opportunity to enhance skills, build a community of professionals, and learn the nuances of metering. As our need for more energy continues to grow, so does how we properly meter consumption.

Modern electric meters do much more than keep track of the electricity we consume. Correct electric metering is also essential for grid reliability and stability. Accurate measurements aid your cooperative in identifying and addressing issues such as voltage fluctuations or load imbalances promptly.

This proactive approach enhances the resilience of the electrical grid, reducing the likelihood of outages and ensuring a continuous and reliable power supply. At its core, accurate metering ensures fair and precise billing, preventing financial disputes and establishing trust between cooperatives and members.

From an economic standpoint, correct electric metering plays a pivotal role in resource allocation allowing member owned cooperatives to better understand consumption patterns, enabling them to optimize energy distribution and invest strategically in infrastructure development. This, in turn, leads to more efficient operations, cost savings, and improved overall service quality.

Precise metering supports energy conservation.

Members can sign into their account online, view consumption. Armed with accurate usage data they are empowered to make informed decisions about their energy consumption. This encourages responsible energy usage practices, reducing waste and lowering overall demand.

Metering guru and instructor John Pollard said it best. "These training schools are important. Metering is a craft handed down from generation to generation. With the advances of solid-state metering, these students are the supreme candidates to lead us into the future."

Your electric cooperative is your partner in getting it done!



2023 SDREA Meter School Instructors Photo by Roger Lawien

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# What is a Smart Meter?

A smart meter is a common term for Automated Metering Infrastructure, or AMI. These are connected devices that transmit information back to the electric utility's meter data management system and the information collected is used primarily for billing and outage response purposes. Smart meters started to be installed about 25 years ago. Individual utilities have different aged systems, but all electric cooperatives in South Dakota have two-way communication with every meter in the system.

## What advantages do Smart Meters bring?

Before smart meters were installed, customers were required to read their own analog meter and report their monthly usage for billing purposes, or a utility employee would physically travel to every home, farm or business in their large service territories to read usage data. Smart Meters take the burden off customers and employees, saving time and money for all consumers. In some cases, the aggregated energy usage information from their home can be visible to the customer via the Internet or a phone application.

- Smart Meters can be used to pinpoint exact locations of power outages more quickly by transmitting an “out of power” notification, meaning a faster response time to outages.
- Smart Meters allow information to be shared with individual consumers about their energy usage – allowing them to find energy efficiency opportunities or potential problems in their home.
- Smart Meters improve electric service reliability and power quality. Information obtained from the automated meters often identifies problems that can be repaired before they cause an outage.
- Information can be used by engineers to more effectively and appropriately size lines and transformers, saving the cooperative and members money.

## What information does a Smart Meter record?

Automated meters record an electronic kilowatt-hour (kWh) reading, the date and time of energy usage, the overall peak demand of the electric account, if the meter has been tampered with, and the number of times the meter has experienced a loss of power.

## Security of information

Electric cooperatives do not sell or share consumer data. Cooperatives abide by all laws regarding the privacy, protection and disclosure of personal information. The meters and associated communications systems are equipped with security features to prevent unauthorized access.

## Are there potential health impacts from a smart meter?

Research conducted by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), the Utilities Telecom Council (UTC) and other similar groups have shown no health impacts from automated meters. The radio frequencies emitted by digital meters are well below the maximum recommended in federal guidelines. A digital meter equipped to send and receive data has an RF density hundreds of times lower than the RF density of a cell phone, and the meters are installed on the outside of homes or buildings.



# Paddling to the Arctic

## The Legacy of Dick Davidson and the South Dakota Canoe and Kayak Association

**Frank Turner**

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

### GOALS

To travel from South Dakota to the Arctic by canoe in one season. This is obviously no small challenge. If the season is giving, the added goals of reaching Alaska and even reaching both the Arctic Ocean (Beaufort Sea) and the Pacific Ocean (Bering Sea) would be added as noted later in 'Trip Segments'.

### PARTY

A party of one in a solo canoe (at this time and likely during the trip).

### GEAR

All gear will be carried at the start of the trip and only replacement gear (hopefully none) will be purchased in route. The gear must and will serve in all conditions of the trip, including weather ranging from hot, sultry days to possible blizzard conditions, including canoeing circumstances like numerous whitewater ascents and great lakes travel.

### FOOD

Most food will be purchased in route. Resupply points will range from modern to basic. The incidence of points, after Lake Winnipeg, will range from several days to three or four weeks.

### SUPPORT

None.

These are the original notes of outdoor activist and local canoe legend Dick Davidson, detailing his ambitious 1988 journey from South Dakota to the Arctic Circle by canoe. Embarking from Big Stone Lake, the 58-year-old from Sioux Falls attempted to paddle and portage his canoe 4,300 miles over several months through Canadian rivers and streams. Unfortunately, fires and drought in Manitoba prevented him from seeing reaching his goal. Even still, the ambitious journey captured Davidson's commitment to living a life dedicated to outdoor expeditions.

Davidson passed away in Sioux Falls in 2009, but his legacy and passion for canoeing live on through what is now known as the South Dakota Canoe and Kayak Association, a nonprofit

outdoor recreation organization he founded in 1981. Unlike his solo adventures through the Canadian wilderness, Davidson established the association alongside several co-founders, canoe enthusiasts, and friends, including founding member Dave Greenlee of Sioux Falls.

Although the group participated in races, canoe building, and conservation activism, Greenlee noted that the group mainly gathered mostly “for the sheer fun of canoeing.”

But they weren't just enthusiasts, this group of committed canoers were fanatics, appealing to all types of canoers from time-tested adventurers like Davidson to the casual outdoor enthusiast. Many of the founding members of the club would look for any opportunity to canoe, even taking to streams in near-freezing temperatures.

“Sometimes in the early spring season when the ice was still out, we would check the rain gauges after a quick rain to see if there was enough flow to enable a quick opening run for our canoes over the ice,” said Greenlee.

Another founding member, Tom Behrend, recalled crafting his own canoes and paddles from scratch, often gifting his creations to friends and enthusiasts for just the cost of the supplies.

“I would hold a class every year on how to build a canoe,” said Behrend. “A group of 10 to 15 of our members would meet every Thursday night in the winter time in somebody's heated garage. We would build these beautiful canoes with caned seats and all the goodies and then raffle them off once they were finished. It was a great way to raise money for the nonprofit.”

For the less devout, the association offered events catered to amateurs, offering downstream floats and river-bound birdwatches. Greenlee recalled organizing an introductory canoeing instructional for blind individuals. The experience, he said, was incredibly rewarding, both the participants and the instructor had something to learn.

“I had been asked a couple of times to lead a canoeing instructional for the Girl Scouts,” said Greenlee. “Then somebody said, ‘We have a group of individuals who are visually impaired who want to learn what canoeing is like.’ I was used to teaching young kids who just want to get out on the water and flail around and paddle, but this group was actually interested in learning about the canoe.”

Greenlee continued, “I remember taking one of the individuals out onto the water and saying ‘I'm going to turn to the left here and now we are facing West.’ He said, ‘I know that.’ So, I asked, ‘How do you know that?’ And he said, ‘I know the direction because I can feel the sun on my face.’ How many times had I been in a canoe, looking at the shore and landmarks, but I never realized that I could close my eyes and tell which direction I was going by feeling the sun on my face... He was teaching me.”

Today, the South Dakota Canoe and Kayak Association is still the state's premier paddling group, promoting safety,



A photo from an old article in the Argus Leader highlighting the preparations of Davidson's attempted 4,300 mile trip to the Arctic Circle by canoe. Photo by Mike Roemer, circa 1988. Courtesy of the Argus Leader.

education, conservation, and paddling outdoors. With roughly 100 members from across the state, the association centers around amateur paddling events, safety and outreach. Recent safety efforts include entry-level canoeing lessons and the association's recent WEAR IT campaign, which successfully installed more than 50 safety signs along recreation areas of the Missouri River encouraging kayakers and canoers to wear lifejackets.

“We host educational pool sessions across the state in Watertown and Sioux Falls where we practice falling out of the kayak and canoe and getting back in,” said Pat Wellner, the association's current president. “It's all about encouraging safe practices while enjoying the outdoors.”

Wellner encouraged outdoor enthusiasts of all levels to join the association by visiting the association's website at [sdcka.org](http://sdcka.org).

“Having the lakes and rivers of South Dakota is a great way to see the state from a different perspective that many don't get to see,” said Wellner. “If anyone is interested in becoming a member, I would encourage them to check out the website, and when you are on the water, please wear a life jacket.”

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Your E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_



**Aug. 24**  
**2024 McCrossan Boys Ranch Xtreme Event Rodeo**  
McCrossan Boys Ranch Campus  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-339-1203

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.

**JULY 1-4**  
**Annual Black Hills Roundup**  
7 p.m.  
Black Hills Roundup Grounds  
Belle Fourche, SD  
605-723-2010  
blackhillsroundup.com

**JULY 5-7, 12-14, 19-21**  
**Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant**  
Prairie Girl: Laura's Dakota Stories  
Gates open 6 p.m.  
Performance at 8 p.m.  
\$15 adults, \$10 kids 6-12  
Theater on the Prairie  
De Smet, SD

**JULY 5-7**  
**Badlands Astronomy Festival**  
10 a.m.-11:30 p.m.  
Ben Reifel Visitor Center  
Interior, SD  
605-433-5243

**JULY 7-12**  
**Deadwood 3 Wheeler Rally**  
All day  
Deadwood Event Complex  
Deadwood, SD  
800-274-1876 ext 1103

**JULY 13**  
**Sanford Lab Neutrino Day**  
9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Sanford Lab Visitor Center  
Lead, SD  
605-722-8650

**JULY 14-18**  
**Dakota 600**  
8 -11 a.m.  
Black Hills National Forest  
Rapid City, SD  
605-645-1756  
dakota600.com

**July 19**  
**Zucchini Fest**  
5 p.m.  
Main Street  
Bristol, SD  
605-590-0000

**JULY 19-20**  
**Storybook Land Festival**  
4-8:30 p.m. on Friday  
10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Saturday  
Storybook Land in Wylie Park  
Aberdeen, SD  
605-626-7015

**JULY 19-20**  
**Farley Fest**  
All day  
Lake Farley Park  
Milbank, SD  
605-432-6656

**JULY 19-20**  
**Cookin' on Kameska**  
All day  
Admission \$10  
Stokes-Thomas Lake City Park  
on Lake Kameska  
Watertown, SD  
605-886-5814

**JULY 26-28**  
**Bruce Honey Days**  
5k walk/run, parade,  
cookouts, craft show, 3-on-3  
basketball tournament, street  
dance and more.  
Jay Street  
Bruce, SD  
605-627-5671

**AUG. 10-11**  
**Twin Brooks Threshing Show**  
Featuring Oliver  
Twin Brooks, SD  
605-880-2884

**AUG. 6-8**  
**IDEAg's Farmfest**  
8 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Redwood County, MN  
651-316-4369

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