

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Local art teacher's mural commemorates dedicated Burke lineman.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

Rural Murals

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Lighting Up Rural Lives

The Birth of Electric Co-ops in America



Dave Page
General Manager

In the early 20th century, much of rural America remained in darkness while cities basked in the glow of electric lights. The lack of electricity in rural areas prevented farmers and businesses from modernizing and improving their quality of life. This challenge led to the creation of the electric cooperative model—neighbors coming together to bring electricity to the countryside and transform their lives and communities.

In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) as part of his New Deal. The REA provided low-interest loans to help rural communities build the infrastructure needed to deliver electricity to areas that private utility companies found too costly to serve. Roosevelt's vision was to improve the quality of life for all Americans. The REA became a key federal initiative supported by bipartisan efforts in Congress, leading to legislation that allowed rural areas to access electricity and prosper.

Across the United States, rural residents embraced this opportunity. Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative was formed out of this movement in 1940, under the new REA program. People in rural areas, who lacked even basic conveniences, planned together and shared the costs of building the first power lines. They pooled resources, often providing their own labor to set up poles and string lines, demonstrating a powerful spirit of cooperation. Working together, these communities achieved something monumental—bringing electricity to their homes and farms, transforming their lives, and paving the way for future growth.

Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative exists to enhance the

quality of life in our service area by safely and reliably providing competitively priced electricity, products, and services to our members and the community. This purpose will continue to guide us as we adapt to the changing needs of the communities we serve.

At Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative, four core values guide how we carry out our business: integrity, accountability, innovation, and commitment to community.

Integrity is at the core of everything we do. To earn the trust of our members and co-workers, we work with professionalism and honesty, ensuring our members can rely on us for fair and ethical service.

Accountability is also key to our operations. By embracing cooperative principles, communicating plans, and taking responsibility for our actions, we work as a team to achieve our goals. We are committed to transparency and responsiveness in our relationships with members.

Innovation drives us to seek the best solutions for our community. Through education, teamwork, creativity, and new technology, we continually look for ways to provide service and value. This focus ensures we remain at the forefront of energy service delivery, meeting members' changing needs efficiently and effectively.

Finally, our commitment to community makes us more than just an electricity provider. As caring partners, we invest our time and resources to make our area a better place to live and work. Our success as a cooperative is tied to the success of the communities we serve.

Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative's mission is to provide the highest level of service, quality, and value to our members and patrons in all that we do. This

mission has guided us from our humble beginnings to where we stand today—a strong, member-driven cooperative committed to our community.

We owe gratitude to our founding members, who worked together to achieve what none could have done alone. Their vision and hard work have left a lasting legacy. Today, we also thank our current members for their continued support and trust in the cooperative. Together, we build on the foundation laid by those pioneers, working to enhance the quality of life in our community and ensure that Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative remains a trusted part of rural life for years to come.

I hope that you have a bountiful and safe harvest this fall.

As the lights came on across rural America, farm life was transformed. Farm chores previously done by hand—with the light of a lantern—became easier with electricity. So did household activities such as washing, ironing, cooking and cleaning.

Today, electricity is available to more than 99 percent of the nation's rural residents—mostly through electric co-ops. To perform their mission, electric cooperatives own and maintain 2.5 million miles—42 percent—of the nation's electric distribution lines, covering three-quarters of the nation's land mass. Their assets top \$150 billion.

Electric cooperatives provide service in a way far different than IOUs. Unlike profit-motivated companies, rural electric systems are owned and controlled by the people they serve. Rates and policies are set by member-elected boards. Customer service and billing questions are handled locally by neighbors, and money paid to co-ops stays in the community.

Thanks to formation of electric co-ops, at-cost access to electricity is now possible in rural America. Today, nearly 1,000 locally owned co-ops provide power to more than 12 percent of the nation.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

WHETSTONE VALLEY ELECTRIC

USPS 018-979)

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

WHETSTONE VALLEY COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is published monthly by Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc., PO Box 512, Milbank, SD 57252, for its members. Families subscribe to Whetstone Valley Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. Whetstone Valley Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to electric cooperative members on matters pertaining to rural electrification and better rural living.

Subscription information: Electric cooperative members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Nonmember subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. Periodicals Postage Paid at Milbank Post Office, Milbank, S.D. 57252, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Whetstone Valley Cooperative Connections, PO Box 512, Milbank, SD 57252; telephone (605) 432-5331; toll-free 1-800-568-6631; fax (605) 432-5951; e-mail energyexperts@whetstone.coop

Office hours: Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

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Design assistance by SDREA.

Mya Heinje named Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week

Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative is pleased to announce Mya Heinje was named Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week for the week of Sept. 29, 2024 – Oct 5, 2024.

Mya is the daughter of Bryce & Paula Heinje of Wilmot, South Dakota, and is currently a senior at Wilmot High School.

Mya is the senior class president, a member of the National Honor Society, Future Farmers of America, and Junior Muzzel loaders. Mya is also involved in basketball, volleyball, and track.

Tracy Ronke, the counselor at Wilmot Middle School and High School, nominated Mya for the award and gave her a well-deserved recommendation.

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives and Dakota News Now have joined together to recognize the achievements of high school seniors throughout the region.



“Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week” has celebrated the achievements of high school seniors since 2002. Recipients are highly motivated high school seniors who excel in both the classroom and community. This program was founded on the four pillars of Touchstone Energy: Integrity, Accountability, Innovation and a Commitment to Community.

For more information on the program please, call Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative at 605-432-5331.

Office Closed for Holidays

Whetstone Valley Electric's office will be **closed Nov. 11** in observance of Veterans Day.

Thank you to all the veterans! We deeply appreciate your service to our country.

The office will also be **closed Nov. 28-29** for Thanksgiving.

We are thankful for our loyal members!

Please call 605-432-5331 in case of an emergency.



HOLIDAY FOOD SAFETY TIPS

Rachel Dotson

USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture

It's the time of year when many families will be gathering around the dining room table savoring the flavors of their favorite holiday meals. Check out how to keep your holiday meals safe this season with a few tips from Land-grant University Extension Services.

Shopping Safely

Before shopping, check the ingredients you have at home and verify their expiration date. It is helpful to prepare a shopping list before going shopping. Make sure you have sufficient room in your refrigerator for all purchased food items. Cold foods that need refrigeration or freezing should be purchased last.

Oklahoma State University Extension advises while shopping, keep raw meat, poultry and seafood away from other foods in your grocery cart. Placing raw meat, poultry and seafood in plastic bags can be a good method to separate them from other foods. Ask a cashier to place your raw meat, poultry and seafood in a separate bag.

Safe Food Handling Practices

- When it comes to preparing meats, washing poultry and meats at home is no longer necessary and is not recommended by the USDA. University of Connecticut Extension recommends thawing meat in a refrigerator or in a cold-water bath.
- Defrost meats in the refrigerator for approximately 24 hours, depending on size, or submerge meat in its original package in cold water and allow 30 minutes of thawing time for every pound.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables thoroughly under cool running water and use a produce brush to remove surface dirt. Even wash prepackaged greens to minimize bacterial contamination.
- While preparing food, use two cutting boards: one for preparing raw meat, poultry and fish, and the other for cutting fruits and vegetables, cooked food or preparing salads.
- Don't forget to also wash hands with soap and water before and after handling food.

Storing Leftovers

Bacteria grows when the food is left out for more than

two hours at room temperature. Divide leftovers into smaller portions and store in shallow containers in the refrigerator. University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension advises reheating cooked leftovers to 165 degrees. Use a food thermometer to measure temperature accurately. Sauces, soups and gravies should be reheated by bringing them to a boil. When microwaving leftovers, make sure there are no cold spots in food where bacteria can survive.

Multistate Approach for Food Safety

Food-borne illnesses affect 48 million Americans each year. Research and education have led to major advances in food safety; however, challenges remain. Many methods that use heat or chemicals to ensure food safety are not 100% effective and can damage food color, texture, flavor and nutrients.

Researchers at 32 Land-grant Universities are collaborating on innovative solutions for food safety and quality.

Their work is helping meet consumer demand for minimally processed, additive-free food items with longer shelf lives, higher nutrient content and less potential to cause food-borne illnesses.



Farm Safety "Always Be Alert"

Clyde Manas, Age 8

Clyde Manas warns farmers and ranchers to be careful with their equipment around power lines. Thank you for your picture, Clyde! Clyde's parents are Terry and Lacey Manas, members of Bon Homme Yankton 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.

Holiday DELIGHTS

EASY CRANBERRY SALAD

Ingredients:

12 oz. fresh cranberries
 20 oz. crushed pineapple, drained (reserve juice)
 1/2 cup pineapple juice (from reserved juice)
 2 cups sugar
 3 oz. pkg cranberry jello (may also use cherry jello)
 1/4 cup maraschino cherries, finely chopped

Method

Boil cranberries with pineapple juice and sugar. When berries pop, remove from heat. Add dry jello, pineapple and cherries. Refrigerate. Keeps for up to two weeks in the refrigerator.

Elaine Rieck
 Harrisburg, S.D.

CAKE BATTER DIP

Ingredients:

8 oz. softened cream cheese
 8 oz. thawed cool whip
 1/3-2/3 cup milk
 1 box Funfetti cake mix (unprepared)
 Sprinkles

Method

Add whipped topping and cream cheese to a large mixing bowl and beat with a hand mixer until smooth and creamy.

Add cake mix and 1/3 cup milk and stir with a wooden spoon until combined. Dip will be very thick, so add more milk, a little at a time, until you get to your desired consistency. I used about 2/3 cup for my dip.

Garnish with sprinkles and serve with whatever dippers you prefer (graham crackers, animal crackers, vanilla wafers, pretzels, fresh fruit, etc.)

Kayla Beaner
 Centerville, S.D.

OPEN-FACED HOT TURKEY SANDWICHES

Ingredients:

1 container (12 oz.) turkey gravy
 8 slices cooked turkey
 1 loaf baguette bread, (12 in. long)
 1 cup fresh spinach leaves
 1 cup prepared stuffing, warmed
 1/2 cup cranberry sauce

Method

Cook gravy and turkey slices in large skillet on medium-high heat until heated through.

Cut baguette in half lengthwise, then cut each piece in half. Place bread, cut-side up, onto four serving plates.

Top bread evenly with spinach, turkey, stuffing, any remaining gravy and cranberry sauce.

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

Best Smart Home Tech on a Budget



Miranda Boutelle
Efficiency Services
Group

Q: How can smart home technology help me lower my power bill?

A: Smart technology can make it easier to save energy by simplifying or automating tasks. It can also optimize energy use to reduce waste and improve efficiency.

When upgrading to smart technology at home, consider the purchase cost as well as long-term savings. For example, you may pay a little more for a product with the latest technology, but it could result in significant savings each year and over the lifetime of the appliance.

Here are some smart devices that will take the work out of saving energy.

Smart thermostats save energy by automatically adjusting your heating or cooling system. For example, you can save as much as 10% a year on heating and cooling costs by adjusting your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting for eight hours a day, according to the Department of Energy (DOE).

You can program a smart thermostat to change the temperature when you are asleep or away, or use a smartphone app to adjust your thermostat settings. Some models use artificial intelligence to maximize efficiency by learning your patterns and preferences. Prices range from \$80 to \$250, depending on features. Smart thermostats do not work with all heating and cooling systems, so check compatibility before you buy.

Your water heater can also be controlled for energy savings. Installing a timer on your electric water heater can save 5% to 12% of the energy it uses by turning it off at night and when you don't need to use hot water, according to the DOE.

If you are already planning to replace your electric storage water heater with a heat pump water heater, consider a model equipped with smart technology features, including Wi-Fi capabilities for controlling it remotely or during peak demand times, viewing the amount of hot

water available and tracking energy use. There are a variety of modes, including vacation, efficiency and high demand, which produces more hot water. Some models can notify you or shut off if a leak is detected. Depending on the manufacturer and size of the unit, a smart heat pump water heater may only cost a few hundred dollars more than a standard heat pump water heater.

Smart lighting gives you the power to control lights in your home remotely or set a lighting schedule that fits your lifestyle. This can be beneficial for energy savings and provide home security benefits. If you or other members of your household are notorious for leaving lights on, smart lighting can help. Numerous features are available, including dimmable bulbs and color-changing effects.

Smart light switches are another budget-friendly way to control lighting. They're priced from about \$10 to \$50. Smart switches with dimmable options are available and can also control ceiling fans. Some have occupancy sensors that turn lights off when no movement is detected in a room.

A smart plug fits into any outlet to control whatever is plugged into it. Set them to automatically turn off and on or control them using a smartphone app. Prices range from \$8 to \$25.

A wide variety of smart shades, curtains and blinds are available, including styles with integrated controls. You can also add smart controls to your existing blinds or curtains. Both options allow you to adjust the tilt of blinds and open or close curtains. Set a schedule, control them remotely or use a voice command paired with a voice assistant, such as Alexa or Google Home. This allows you to reduce cooling needs in the summer and heating needs in the winter. Smart controls start at around \$70. To save the most energy, prioritize windows with the most incoming light.

Upgrading to smart home technologies can make it easy to use less energy at home. Choose options that make the most sense for your lifestyle to optimize savings.



Rosebud Electric Cooperative providing power in the early days.
Photo provided by the Rosebud Electric archive.

William Kindle Remembers When Electricity Came to Bull Creek

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sirea.coop

William Kindle, a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, carries vivid memories of growing up in Bull Creek, a small township just east of Winner. It was the mid-1950s: Eisenhower was president, and the Korean War had just ended. Though more than half a century has passed, Kindle remembers clearly the challenges of living without electricity.

“Growing up, we didn’t have any refrigeration,” Kindle said. “My mom used to drop our food into a well using a bucket, clear down to the water level where it was cool, and that’s where she kept her cream and butter.”

At age 10, Kindle’s life changed drastically when Rosebud Electric connected his rural, family home to the grid. The lights came on, and the days of using the water well for food preservation would soon be a memory as his father

brought home the family’s first refrigerator.

“After that, he went to town again and bought a TV, a great big old wooden thing,” Kindle laughed. “It had only one channel, KPLO.”

But electricity meant more than just connection to a grid. It brought with it a connection to the outside world through shows like “I Love Lucy,” “The Andy Griffith Show,” and Kindle’s personal favorite growing up, “Captain 11”. The show, broadcast from Sioux Falls, featured weatherman Dave Dedrick as a space captain who would introduce cartoons and play games as an after-school children’s program.

“Us kids thought that it was the greatest thing that ever happened, when we got a TV,” Kindle said.

According to Kindle, the introduction of electricity had an overwhelmingly positive impact on his rural community. The dangers of using kerosene lamps



William Kindle
Photo by Frank Turner

vanished, allowing producers to work more effectively through the night.

“I remember the first night that we had a yard light,” Kindle said. “Us kids were playing under that light,

and we couldn’t get over the fact that the whole yard was lit up. Prior to that, as soon as the sun went down, we would light the lamps and that’s all we had.”

“Everyone in the community welcomed having power,” Kindle added. “It was quite a thing.”

The safety and productivity it brought were immeasurable, transforming every facet of daily life. Kindle remembers how much the addition of consistent light affected his own family’s cattle operation.

“We ran cattle and raised hogs,” he said. “I remember when my dad got the barn wired up, because he used electricity for calving. Before we had electricity in there, we used kerosene lamps out in the barn, and they started a lot of fires – those damn things.”

Kindle’s early years were spent farming and ranching, but he devoted most of his career to the autobody and fender business, repairing cars for over 30 years. He later joined the tribal council of the Rosebud Sioux in 1989 and has since completed five terms as president, including one in an interim capacity, and three terms as vice president. Recently, he was re-elected to the council as a representative for the Swift Bear community near White River, where he lives now as a member of Cherry-Todd Electric.

As someone who has served his community for more than three decades, Kindle said he is unsure if people could ever return to a time before electricity reached their door.

“If we had to go back to those days, people couldn’t do it,” he said. “I don’t think people would adjust. It would be too difficult to go back.”



RURAL MURALS

Small Communities Showcase History and Culture Through Mural Art

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Lemmon

Visitors from all over the map flock to Lemmon each year to explore the town's plethora of fascinating exhibits, from the Petrified Wood Park to the life-size steampunk-style sculptures by local artist John Lopez.

But of all the town's unique offerings, there's one stand-out exhibit that ties everything together: Boss Cowman Square.

Lopez's life-size metal sculpture of cowboy legend George Edward Lemmon is the focal point of the square. The Boss Cowman clutches the reins of his steampunk stallion, his eyes fixed on the horizon watching for stray cattle.

"Dad Lemmon," as the town's founder is so fondly known among locals, settled the town in 1906 between the Grand River and North Dakota border. It would soon be a stop along the incoming Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, which Dad Lemmon had been recruited to platte westward.

The sculpture is accompanied by a background mural depicting a scene far away from the bustling saloons and general stores of early Lemmon. In the scene, saddled-up cowboys under the careful

watch of the Boss Cowman sculpture guide a meandering herd hundreds of heads long across a river – no problem for Dad Lemmon, whose roundup skills and knowledge of the land were legendary across the West.

In 2015, as Lopez dreamt of what would one day be Boss Cowman Square, he recruited the help of two Nigerian artists, Dotun Popoola and Jonathan Imafidor, to help bring the vision to life.

"We studied a few materials and made sure all the elements were well captured, like the kinds of trees, the way the river looks and the butte in the background," Imafidor recalled about the 2016 project.

One obstacle that posed a challenge for the traveling artists – beside the shock of South Dakota's cold spring weather – was the slight differences between the cattle they knew in Nigeria and the cattle of the American West.

"We are representational artists and we've done a lot of drawings of cows, so we kind of had an idea of what the cattle should look like," Imafidor explained. "But in Lemmon, the kind of cattle that are found in the region are a little different than what we have in Nigeria. I remember when we started painting the cattle ... John Lopez told us, 'I don't think you can find those here.' Then he brought some material for

Cowboys keep a herd of longhorns moving at the bank of the Missouri River. Visitors will notice the sculpture of Dad Lemmon turned around to keep an eye on the progress. *Photo provided by John Lopez.*

us so we were able to see the difference and then we made the corrections."

After about a month of work, the mural was completed and the Boss Cowman Square was unveiled to the public in July 2016.

Burke

In Burke, K-12 art teacher Kate Witt isn't shy about brightening up her community. The mom of four has designed and painted four murals around town, including one depicting the town's beloved utility worker, Rich Bailey.

Rich's wife, Margaret Ann Bailey, commissioned the mural after Rich's passing in 2023. The mural shows the lineman hanging onto a utility pole as he works on the power lines.

"When we came here in 1970, there wasn't a bucket truck or anything," recalled Margaret Ann. "So he climbed everything, whether it was blizzarding or lightning, and he made sure people had electricity."

The mural also features emergency vehicles, as Rich served for decades as a volunteer firefighter and an emergency medical technician. Parked beneath the lines, the rusted white pickup truck Rich drove around town that over the years became synonymous with himself.

"With this mural specifically, I felt I had

a big important job,” Witt said. “This is a man who the town really loves, and I had a big job to make something beautiful that [Margaret Ann] was going to be proud of.”

Witt incorporated her own signature styles into the mural; her white outlines make the lineman’s silhouette stand out against the more geometrically designed Missouri River bluffs and cloudy sunset in the background.

“That’s where I have a little fun, putting in the modern twist and bold colors,” Witt continued. “I put this white line around everything which made some elements almost look like they’re stickers on a wall.”

Since Witt completed the mural last August, it’s become a point of pride for Margaret Ann who says it’s a testament to her husband’s years of dedication to his community.

“There was an older gal here in town, and she called him at 2 o’clock in the morning and said ‘my air conditioner isn’t working and it’s darn hot in my house,’” Margaret Ann recalled.

She said her husband explained that his job was to fix power lines, not air conditioners. Still, he went to flip the breaker on the woman’s fuse box anyway before going back to sleep.

“That’s the kind of guy he was, and I’m proud,” Margaret Ann said.

Tabor

Where in South Dakota can you find roses, ears of corn, a cardinal and Czech kolaches all in one mural?

Only in Tabor, probably.

Commissioned for the town’s 150th anniversary in 2022, the colorful mural on the sidewall of the local library meanders through the community’s history. From the heavy Czech influence of the earliest settlers represented by pastries and roses to the school’s original mascot, the cardinals, Robbie Jelsma worked very intentionally to portray the town in a way only a knowledgeable local artist could.

Growing up in nearby Springfield, Jelsma is no stranger to Tabor and its famous Czech Days, which draws thousands of people from across the country for the three-day celebration.

“I wanted to represent Czech Days and the Czech culture, so I did my own

research,” Jelsma said.

He incorporated roses, which are the national flower of the Czech Republic, as well as the fluffy pastries with fruit in the middle called kolaches.

He also incorporated local history—Tabor’s school mascot was the cardinal before merging with Springfield and Tyndall to form Bon Homme School District.

When he’s not painting murals, Jelsma is a highly sought-after tattoo artist specializing in more realistic styles. For him, the highlights of the Tabor mural is the level of depth and realism he achieved in his roses and clouds.

The hardest part of painting the mural is working with the elements, as there’s a laundry list of work that needs to be done on the surface before any real painting can begin: washing; smoothing; primer.

On top of that, unpredictable Midwestern weather requires a careful eye on the weather radar for any outdoor painting projects, Jelsma said.

“We started about early October so the fall was just getting started, and you never know in South Dakota if the weather is going to hold out or if you’ll get an early snow or strong wind,” he recalled about his three and a half weeks working on the project.

For Jelsma, the finished mural is as big of a point of pride for him, having been selected and commissioned for the work, as it is for the people of Tabor who get to show it off every summer during Czech Days.

“It’s cool I was thought of for the project,” Jelsma said. “It’s an art project that I think just lights everybody up a little bit when you drive down main street and you see something like that in a small town.”



Artist Robbie Jelsma puts the finishing touches on his mural ahead of the 2022 unveiling. Photo provided by Robbie Jelsma.

Co-op 101: What It Means to Be a Member of an Electric Co-op

Wells Rural Electric Co.

Being part of a cooperative means being part of something special. More than 40,000 cooperative businesses serve more than 120 million people nationwide.

No matter where Americans choose to live today, most can get electric service – and at a price close to the cost of providing it to them.

But that wasn't always the case. Prior to 1935, life in rural America generally started at sunrise and ended at sunset. That's because nine out of 10 rural homes had no electric service.

While it was technically possible to deliver electricity to rural areas, it was not deemed necessary or economically feasible by the investor-owned utilities of that day. The bottom line is that it was not profitable to the power companies to extend service to sparsely populated country homes.

Rural residents close to a power company's line were required to pay the full cost of connecting their homes to the system. In many cases, that fee was nearly twice the annual farm income.

Once that initial investment was made, rural consumers discovered they would have to pay double the rate of urban customers. In some cases, the charge was as high as 40 cents per kilowatt-hour.

Given such exorbitant prices, the IOUs ensured rural America remained in the dark.

In 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's rural electrification program began to change that practice, transforming

reach and economically well-off rural areas. That strategy ensured they would maximize their profits.

Ironically, even with access to federal money, most IOUs still were not interested in extending service to rural areas. If rural America was to have access to electricity, rural residents discovered they would have to make it happen themselves.

Hungry for electricity, rural residents journeyed up and down country roads, seeking support for development of electric cooperatives.

Most of the loan recipients were newly formed rural electric cooperatives.

By the end of 1948, more than 40,000 consumers a month were being connected to co-op lines. In 1949, REA- financed co-ops energized 184,000 miles of electric line – nearly 700 miles a working day.

As the lights came on across rural America, farm life was transformed. Farm chores previously done by hand – with the light of a lantern – became easier with electricity. So did household activities such as washing, ironing, cooking and cleaning.

Today, electricity is available to more than 99% of the nation's rural residents – mostly through electric co-ops. To perform their mission, electric cooperatives own and maintain 2.5 million miles – 42% – of the nation's electric distribution lines, covering three-quarters of the nation's land mass. Their assets top \$150 billion.

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UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

1. Publication Title: **Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative Connections**

2. Issue Frequency: **Monthly**

3. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®):
1101 E 4th Ave, PO Box 512
Milbank, SD 57252-0512

4. Issue Frequency: **Monthly**

5. Number of Issues Published Annually: **12**

6. Annual Subscription Price: **\$6.00/ISSUE/12 ISSUES/ANNUAL**

7. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Do not leave blank):
1101 E 4th Ave, PO Box 512
Milbank, SD 57252-0512

8. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank):
Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative
1101 E 4th Ave, PO Box 512
Milbank, SD 57252-0512

9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank):
Publisher: Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative
Editor: Emily Johnson
Managing Editor: Emily Johnson

10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of all individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)
Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative
1101 E 4th Ave, PO Box 512, Milbank, SD 57252-0512

11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owring or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box None

12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)
 Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
 Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months

13. Publication Title: **Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative Connections**

14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: **09/25/2024**

15. Extent and Nature of Circulation

a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	2529	2529	2529
(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)			
(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS (e.g., Paid Class Mail®)			
(4) Paid Distribution in Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS			
a. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 1b(1), (2), (3), and (4))	2529	2529	2529
b. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By first-class mail)	74	74	74
(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541			
(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541			
(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)			
(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)			
b. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 1b(1), (2), (3), and (4))	74	74	74
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 1b and 1c)	2603	2603	2603
g. Copies and Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers at page K02)			
h. Total (Sum of 1f and g)	2603	2603	2603
i. Payment Paid (USPS uses 100)	97%	97%	97%

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16. Electronic Copy Circulation

a. Paid Electronic Copies		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
(1) Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	2529	2529	2529
(2) Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	2603	2603	2603
(3) Percent Paid (Paid Print + Electronic Copies) (16a divided by 16c x 100)	97%	97%	97%

I certify that 95% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are paid above a nominal price.

17. Publication of Statement of Ownership
 If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed on the **11-20-24** issue of this publication. Publication not required.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: **Emily Johnson** Date: **9/25/24**

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Submit to be entered into a drawing for 1 of 2 \$100 Visa gift cards

Submit recipes to graphics@eastriver.coop or contact your local co-op for more information.

the country through federal low-interest Rural Electrification Administration loans designed to electrify all of America.

But electrifying the country wasn't easy. For years, power companies ignored all but a few heavily populated, easy-to-

Attention High School Sophomores & Juniors

Win a Trip to Washington, D.C.

Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative will once again sponsor high school students that will be juniors and seniors for the 2025-2026 school year, on an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. Each June, over 1,800 high school juniors and seniors travel to Washington, D.C., to participate in the Rural Electric Youth Tour. Throughout the week, participants will explore about Washington, D.C., learning about government, cooperative philosophy and rural electrification. The students are selected and sponsored by their local rural electric cooperatives with the South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) coordinating the trip for South Dakota students.

Tour highlights include the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument, U.S. Capitol, Ford's Theatre, Arlington National Cemetery, Mount Vernon, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Iwo Jima Statue, National Archives, U.S Supreme Court, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial among other exciting sites. Students will also participate in a briefing with the South Dakota Congressional Delegation and a river boat cruise across the Potomac River.

Who is Eligible? All area high school juniors and seniors for the 2025-2026 school year, whose parents are members of Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative.

What Does It Cost? Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative, along with the other participating



SD YOUTH TOUR

2025 June 15-21

Who Can Apply?
High school juniors & seniors who are electric co-op members

Join students from across South Dakota for a free, once-in-a-lifetime trip to Washington, D.C., sponsored by your rural electric cooperative. **Contact** your local cooperative for more details and application information!

local electric cooperatives fully fund the tour. The tour covers each participant's transportation, accommodations, meals, entertainment, and sightseeing events. Students are required to provide their spending money (for snacks, souvenirs, etc.).

When is it Held? The weeklong trip will take place from June 15-21, 2025. Participants will meet for an orientation meeting on Sunday, June 15 at the Brandon Golf Course. The group will bus to Minneapolis and then fly the next morning to D.C. on Monday, June 16, and return to South Dakota on Saturday, June 21.

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: "What are the primary energy challenges facing the American Government today?" 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.



PREPARING FOR WINTER WEATHER

Jacob Boyko

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As we near the frigid winter months of South Dakota, it's important for you and loved ones to stay ready for an emergency.

Even though power outages are rare, a loss of electricity can affect modern lives in critical ways; In an instant, you may no longer be able to heat your home, prepare food or access critical information.

It's crucial to prepare for power outages and other general emergencies by keeping supplies in both your home and vehicles as well as making sure you and your loved ones have a plan in place.

Brad Reiners, director of communications for the state Department of Public Safety, encourages South Dakotans to stock

up on essentials like food, water and batteries prior to the winter months.

"Make sure you have enough food and water for at least three days, and each person in the household should have one gallon of water per day," Reiners said.

State DPS recommends keeping non-perishable food items like pasta, canned goods and nutritious snacks that don't require refrigeration and don't need to be heated or cooked before consumption.

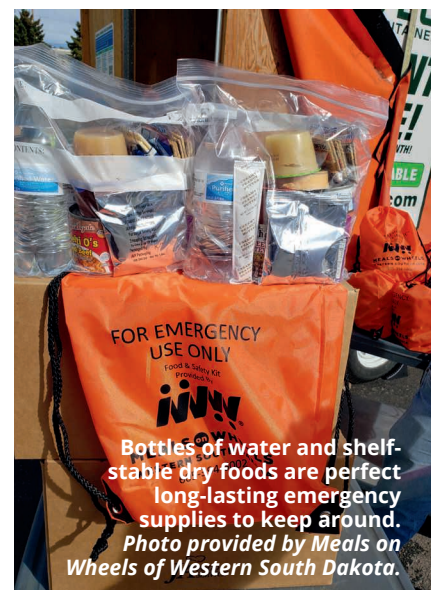
"Never use gas powered generators, grills or portable stoves indoors, as they can produce dangerous levels of carbon monoxide," Reiner added.

As you prepare, remember to be proactive about your health. Have your medical prescriptions refilled in advance of a severe storm and keep a battery bank charged so you can power your cell phone in case you need to

access telehealth services, emergency services or access critical information.

In your car, keep warm blankets, winter clothes, snacks, a shovel, flashlight and a set of jumper cables in case you get stranded.

"It's also advisable to check your tires for proper inflation and tread, and make sure your windshield wipers are in good condition with freeze-resistant washer fluid," Reiners added.



Bottles of water and shelf-stable dry foods are perfect long-lasting emergency supplies to keep around.
Photo provided by Meals on Wheels of Western South Dakota.

If you plan to rely on a generator or wood burning stove for heat if the power goes out, check beforehand that your equipment is in safe working order, and you have enough fuel to last several days.

Keeping warm clothes, blankets and sleeping bags at the ready can be lifesaving if you're unable to heat your home.

Meals on Wheels here to help with Blizzard Bags

For senior citizens, some of this advice is easier said than done. Meals on Wheels of Western South Dakota understands that better than anyone, and they have come up with a solution.

“Blizzard Bags” have been a part of the organization’s lineup for over 20 years now and include some of the essentials seniors need when hunkering down for severe weather.

“We deliver shelf-stable meals for seniors who, especially in rural areas, may not have access to food for a while if their electricity goes out,” said Jennifer Paschke, regional manager for Meals on Wheels of Western South Dakota. “We provide five meals in those bags they can use during a loss of power or being stranded in their homes due to weather.”

The food supplied is generally items that don’t require a heat source, like packages of tuna salad and crackers, protein bars or cans with a pop-top seal so no can opener is required, Paschke said.

The bags also include water and other donated supplies like batteries and flashlights from local businesses, including some rural electric cooperatives.

“The biggest success story I know in

my area is a couple of years ago when they had tornados in Philip,” Paschke remembered. “The water we provided [in the blizzard bags] were some of the only sources of water some of those people had. Just having that food and water can be a godsend for some people.”

Blizzard Bags are available to seniors age 60 and up who are a part of the Meals on Wheels program. The bags cost roughly \$20 to put together, according to Pascke, and are funded in part by community donors. The organization provides home deliveries for seniors living in both cities and rural areas.

Anyone interested in getting service or helping with the cause can contact Meals on Wheels of Western South Dakota at (605) 394-6002.



Meals On Wheels of Western South Dakota provides blizzard bags to seniors in case weather conditions affect normal delivery. Photo provided by Meals on Wheels of Western South Dakota.



EMPOWERING THE FUTURE

The Impact of Local Electric Cooperative Youth Programs

Frank Turner
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It is a core tenet of rural electric cooperatives to inform the public – particularly young people – about the nature and benefits of cooperation. Electric cooperatives have a long history of engaging youth in South Dakota through cooperative-sponsored youth

experiences, including trips like the annual Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., Youth Excursion in North Dakota, and Youth Leadership Conference at the annual NRECA PowerXchange conference.

These opportunities provide many South Dakota students with their first travel experiences outside the state. For

Youth Tour participants Mallory Gant, left, and Madison Robertson pose for a photo at the FDR Memorial in Washington, D.C.
Photo by Frank Turner.

many, it's their first time flying on an airplane. Students not only gain valuable insights into rural electric cooperatives and energy, but they also learn basic life skills, such as how to navigate a city or use public transportation.

Former SDREA communications director Brenda Kleinjan, now a communications specialist with Sioux Valley Energy, was the driving force behind many of these programs through her 20 years of youth engagement for South Dakota cooperatives. From 2000 to 2019, Kleinjan coordinated and facilitated the many youth trips sponsored by electric cooperatives, leading hundreds of students to explore the impact of rural electricity on Capitol Hill and energy generation in North

Dakota over the course of her career.

According to Kleinjan, many alumni of the electric cooperative youth programs have gone on to achieve great things.

“These trips are an investment that our co-ops are making for not only our youth and their families, but our state and regions’ future,” Kleinjan said. “We are tapping into the drive of our most energetic teenagers with the idea of encouraging them to explore their world, their communities and their future.”

Youth Tour

Since 1963, South Dakota electric cooperatives have sponsored youth trips to Washington, D.C., each June for the annual Youth Tour. This year, Mallory Gant was one of 36 students from South Dakota who participated in a weeklong exploration of the nation’s capital, learning about the cooperative network and rural electrification. Sponsored by Charles Mix Electric, Gant visited the many memorials and monuments of the capital city and met South Dakota’s congressmen in the U.S. Capitol to ask questions.

Gant, who lives on farm and ranch outside Platte, made the most of her time by making new friends while experiencing the history of sites like Ford’s Theater, Mount Vernon and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

“It was definitely an eye-opening experience – to be able to fly on a plane and visit these huge cities,” Gant said. “A big part of the trip for me was meeting the friends I made along the way. Since the trip, I’ve seen them at volleyball and FFA events. When you go on the trip, you are out there with people you don’t know, so you are forced to get out of your comfort zone and meet new people. I think it sparked a lot of friendships for me.”

Youth Leadership Council

In addition to Youth Tour, Gant was selected as this year’s South Dakota representative for the annual Youth

Leadership Council. As the state’s sole representative, Gant will join 43 other young leaders at the NRECA PowerXchange Conference in Atlanta from March 7-12 next spring.

“From the first moment of being a representative, I had to introduce myself to a room of almost 2,000 kids,” Gant said. “It really put me on the spot, but it was really cool to be able to know I was capable of doing that.”

Leading up to the event, Gant is working to complete a creative and engaging community project by setting up an agriculture-focused electric safety booth at the upcoming South Dakota 4-H Land and Range Judging Contest with Charles Mix Electric, her sponsoring electric cooperative.

Gant will also prepare and deliver a short speech at a Charles Mix Electric meeting for the opportunity to be chosen as the 2025 Youth Leadership Council National Spokesperson. If chosen, Gant will deliver a speech in Atlanta Georgia at the PowerXChange Conference.

“I think the whole experience has made me a more vocal and outgoing person,” Gant said.

Youth Excursion

Erica Fitzhugh is one of many alumni from the rural electric youth program whose life has been shaped by her experience traveling to North Dakota to learn about electricity generation.

In 2005, Northern Electric sponsored Fitzhugh, then a high school junior, on a trip to tour energy infrastructure in Beulah, North Dakota.

Fitzhugh vividly recalls visiting Basin Electric Power Cooperative’s complex, where electricity is generated and transmitted to homes and businesses, as well as the Freedom Mine, the nation’s largest lignite coal mine by deliveries.

“I remember standing in the bucket of the dragline for a photo and thinking it was an amazing experience,” Fitzhugh said.

Her connection to the local electric cooperative continued after the trip. As a member of 4-H, Fitzhugh attended monthly meetings hosted at Northern Electric’s office. Each year, she would write thank-you letters to Jim Moore, Northern Electric’s CEO at the time, for supporting their program and hosting their meetings.

Years later, Northern Electric awarded Fitzhugh The Northern Electric Scholarship when she was a high school senior. That investment paid off when Moore later hired Fitzhugh as the Northern Electric director of communications.

“Jim Moore was the person who hired me, and I had handwritten him thank you letters in high school for the 4-H club,” said Fitzhugh, now a communications specialist for Southeastern Electric Cooperative.

Interested in Local Youth Opportunities?

Whether it’s scholarships, Youth Tour or Youth Excursion, there are several youth events and opportunities catered to young electric co-op members that continue to thrive. Please contact your local co-op to learn more about these ongoing youth opportunities.



NOV. 22-JAN.5
 Winter Wonderland
 Nightly - 5 p.m.-12 a.m.
 Falls Park
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-275-6060

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.

OCT. 26
Mortimer's Monstrous Halloween
 3 p.m.-6 p.m.
 Oakwood Lakes State Park
 605-627-5441

NOV. 2
Wall Community Craft Show
 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Wall, SD
 605-279-2665

NOV. 2
Fall Fling Craft Show
 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Dakota Christian School
 Corsica, SD
 605-366-7940

NOV. 8-9
Sioux Empire Arts & Crafts Show
 Friday, 12 p.m.-8 p.m.
 Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-332-6004

NOV. 9
Deadwood's Big Whiskey Festival
 4 p.m.-8 p.m.
 Main Street
 Deadwood, SD

NOV. 9
Christmas at the Homestead
 12 p.m.-4 p.m.
 North Sioux City, SD
 605-232-0873

NOV. 9-10
Zonta Craft & Vendor Show
 Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Sunday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Ramkota Hotel
 Pierre, SD
 605-280-1511

NOV. 16
Festival of Trees
 6 p.m.
 Lead, SD
 605-584-2067

NOV. 23-24
Winterfest: A Winter Arts Festival
 Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Sunday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Aberdeen, SD

NOV. 30
A Hometown Christmas Market
 2 p.m.-6 p.m.
 Main Street
 Elk Point, SD

NOV. 29-DEC. 29
Trees & Trains Exhibit at SD State Railroad Museum
 Hill City, SD
 605-665-3636

DEC. 1
A Christmas Carol
 2 p.m.
 Gayville Music Hall
 Gayville, SD
 605-624-2859

DEC. 5
Christmas on the Prairie
 4 p.m.
 Main Street
 Miller, SD

DEC. 5
Holiday Festival of Lights
 4 p.m.-7:30 p.m.
 Yankton, SD
 605-665-3636

DEC. 6-8, 13-15
A Sherlock Carol
 Dec. 6-7, 13-14, 7:30 p.m.
 Dec. 8, 15, 2:30 p.m.
 Corson, SD
 mightycorson.com

DEC. 7
KJAM Parade of Lights
 5:30 p.m.
 Madison, SD
 605-256-4514

DEC. 7
Santa Day
 2 p.m.
 Stockholm Buggy Museum
 Stockholm, SD
 605-467-3940

DEC. 7-31
Garden Glow at McCrory Gardens
 5 p.m.-9 p.m.
 Brookings, SD
 605-688-6707

DEC. 14
Parade of Lights
 Wessington, SD
 605-359-2049

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