

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Pick of the Patch

**Pumpkin Patches Offer
Plenty of Reasons to Get
Outside this Fall**

Pages 8-9

**Ghost Town Under
Lake Oahe**

Pages 12-13

This Fall, Refresh Your Cybersecurity Habits



Dave Page
General Manager

This Fall, Refresh Your Cybersecurity Habits
As the leaves begin to change and we settle into the routines of fall, it's a good time to take stock of a few things around the house – preparing for cooler weather, checking our heating systems and getting ready for the months ahead. It's also a good time to refresh our cybersecurity habits.

October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month, but protecting your personal information is something that deserves attention all year long.

At Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative, cybersecurity is a critical part of providing safe, reliable electric service. While much of our focus is on protecting the physical systems that operate the electric grid, we also work to protect the systems and information that help us serve you – including online accounts, payment systems, member portals and outage communications.

Unfortunately, scammers are becoming more sophisticated, too. Artificial intelligence (AI) is making it easier for cyber criminals to create convincing emails, text messages, websites and even voice messages that can look and sound legitimate. The FBI has warned that generative AI can make fraudulent schemes more believable by eliminating many of the errors that once helped us identify a scam. That matters when it comes to utility scams.

A scammer may impersonate Whetstone Valley Electric and claim your account is past due, your service is about to be disconnected or you need to make an immediate payment. The message might even include our logo, use professional-looking language or direct you to a website that appears legitimate. With AI helping scammers create more convincing communications, simply looking for spelling mistakes or other obvious warning signs may no longer be enough. And these scams are not a small problem.

According to the Federal Trade Commission, consumers reported losing \$3.5 billion to

imposter scams in 2025, making these types of scams the most commonly reported type of fraud. Nearly one in three fraud reports involved an imposter scam.

So, what should you do if you receive an unexpected message claiming to be from Whetstone Valley Electric?

If a message creates a sense of urgency or threatens immediate disconnection, take a moment to verify it. Don't click the link or call the phone number provided in the message. Instead, contact Whetstone Valley Electric directly using our trusted methods. You can reach us by phone at (605) 432-5331; or by email at info@whetstone.coop.

You can also take steps to protect your online accounts before a scam occurs. Start with your password. Longer is generally better than simply adding more special characters. Choose a long, unique passphrase that is difficult for others to guess, and don't reuse a password across multiple accounts.

If the accounts you access online offer multifactor authentication (MFA), consider using it. MFA adds an extra layer of protection by requiring an additional way to verify your identity, such as a code sent to your phone or an authentication app.

Most importantly, remember that you don't have to make a payment simply because someone tells you that you do. We want you to have an opportunity to verify any unexpected request.

Whetstone Valley Electric is committed to protecting the systems that help us deliver your electricity and serve our members. You can help by protecting your own account, slowing down when something seems urgent and contacting us directly if you're unsure.

For questions about your account or payment options, contact Whetstone Valley Electric at (605) 432-5331; or by email at info@whetstone.coop. Our team will be glad to assist you.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

WHETSTONE VALLEY ELECTRIC

USPS 018-979)

Managing Editor: Emily Jonason

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:

Joel Adler – 467-1002

Vice President:

Wayne Jarman – 880-2249

Secretary:

Matt Cameron – 612-964-8909

Treasurer:

Krista Atyeo-Gortmaker – 676-2323

Paul Tostenson – 432-5233

David Behrns – 932-3722

Tom Berens – 432-5034

Paul Nelson – 949-1818

Jason Ackerman – 467-9734

General Manager:

Dave Page – davep@whetstone.coop

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.

Visit us at
www.whetstone.coop

Design assistance by SDREA.

19TH ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE

*Small donations.
BIG
difference!*

**HELP US STOCK THE LOCAL
FOOD PANTRY** 
for the upcoming winter!

 **OCTOBER 1ST - 31ST, 2026**

 **MONDAY - FRIDAY
8:00 AM - 4:30 PM**

WHAT WE NEED MOST:

**NON-PERISHABLE
FOOD ITEMS:**

- ♥ Canned Meats & Soups
- ♥ Canned Fruits & Vegetables
- ♥ Pasta, Rice & Cereal
- ♥ Peanut Butter
- ♥ Mac & Cheese
- ♥ Beans

AND

**HYGIENE
PRODUCTS:**

- ♥ Toothpaste
- ♥ Shampoo
- ♥ Soap
- ♥ Deodorant
- ♥ Toilet Paper
- ♥ Feminine Products

 **Before you donate,
take a quick peek!**

Please donate **UNEXPIRED, UNOPENED** food items so we can make sure every donation can be put to good use.

 Help us stock the local food pantry for the upcoming winter. All members can drop off non-perishable food items or hygiene products at the Whetstone Valley Electric Coop office in Milbank, SD.

You will then get your name put into a drawing for a chance to win a \$70 bill credit at WVEC in honor of National Co-op Month.

**DONATE &
YOU COULD WIN A**

\$70

BILL CREDIT

AT WVEC

**IN HONOR OF
NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH!**

TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE! 




**UTILITY
SCAMS**

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month, which is the perfect time to take a fresh look at your passwords. Forget the old advice about cramming passwords with symbols and random capitalization. Today's cybersecurity experts recommend using longer passphrases. A password made up of four or five unrelated words is easier to remember and much harder for criminals to crack than a short, complex password. Use a unique passphrase for every account and enable multi-factor authentication whenever available for added protection. *Source: NIST*

SAFETY IS ALWAYS IN SEASON

Fall hunting is a core memory treasured by many in South Dakota. It's a family and friend tradition that should be kept safe. This is your caring reminder to stay safe and enjoy a great hunt this season.

Simple Safety Rules for All Hunters

- Watch for posted warning signs and stay clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Know where power lines and equipment are located on the land you hunt.
- Be careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be easy to see.
- Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles; energized lines can shock or kill you.
- Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment; they can block lines and create hazards for crews.

Pheasant hunting often takes place in open fields with hedgerows and grassy strips, while dove hunting centers on fast, aerial crossings across agricultural landscapes. In both scenarios, lines may be hidden by trees or tall grass, especially near field edges and canal banks. Staying alert in these transition zones reduces the risk of an accidental encounter with electrical infrastructure.

Practical Rules for Pheasant and Dove Hunts

- Plan ahead: Check maps or ask landowners where lines and equipment are located.
- Keep a safe distance: Stay away from overhead and buried lines near fields and edges.
- Hunt with a partner: A second person can help spot hazards.
- Speak up about hazards: If you see lines or equipment, treat it as a hazard and avoid the area.
- Follow rules: Respect any posted electrical safety warnings or access restrictions.
- Share safety: Tell fellow hunters and guests about these tips.

Why These Safety Tips Matter

Power lines conduct large amounts of electricity and contact with lines or equipment can cause serious injury or death. Maintaining distance, avoiding contact with poles or lines, and not placing gear on equipment are effective practices that protect you, your hunting partners, and the line workers who keep power on.

Your electric cooperative remains committed to safe hunting. We encourage members to stay informed about local electrical safety rules and to know line locations on the lands they hunt. If you encounter hazards, report them right away so they can be addressed. Sharing these safety practices help create a culture of safety that benefits everyone.



The poster features a green camouflage pattern at the top, followed by a yellow and black diagonal hazard stripe. Below this is a target icon with a crosshair. The title "Electrical Safety Tips for Hunters" is in large, bold, white text. Below the title, a paragraph in white text reads: "We encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment while hunting. Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors." A list of six safety tips follows in white text.

Electrical Safety Tips for Hunters

We encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment while hunting. Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors.

- Keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Know where power lines and equipment are located where you hunt.
- Be vigilant in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.
- Never place deer stands on utility poles.
- Never place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment.



The drawing is on a piece of paper with a light blue sky and a yellow sun. It shows a person on the ground flying a kite. A power line with a transformer is visible in the background. The text "Don't dig or fly kites by wires!" is written in the sky area.

"Don't dig or fly kites by wires!"

Seth Raak, age 7

Seth cautions readers to not dig or fly kites around power lines. That is great advice, Seth! Thank you! Seth's parents are Nathaniel and Katie Raak, members of Central Electric Cooperative.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.

Let's Eat CAKE

SWEDISH PANCAKES

Ingredients:

1.5 cups flour, sifted
3 tbsps. sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
3 eggs
2 cups milk
2 tbsps. butter, melted

Method

Sift together flour, sugar and salt. Beat in 3 eggs until thick and piled softly. Beat in milk and butter until blended. Lightly grease griddle with butter. For each pancake, spoon about 1 tbsp. of batter on skillet. Cook over medium heat until lightly brown on each side.

Lois J. Larson
Clay-Union Electric

CREAM CHEESE CUPCAKES

Ingredients:

1 box chocolate cake mix, prepared
1 (8 oz.) package cream cheese
1/3 cup sugar
1 egg
Dash of salt
1 (6 oz.) package chocolate chips
1 can cream cheese frosting

Method

Mix cake mix according to package directions. Fill cupcake liners 1/2 full. mix the cream cheese with the sugar. Beat in egg and salt, then add chocolate chips. Drop a teaspoonful of cream cheese mixture into each cupcake. Bake as directed on package. Frost with cream cheese frosting when cool.

Elaine Rieck
Southeastern Electric

CHOCOLATE ZUCCHINI CAKE

Ingredients:

2 cups all-purpose flour
3/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
2 tsps. baking soda
1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. espresso powder (optional)
1/2 tsp. salt
1 cup canola or vegetable oil
1 cup granulated sugar
3/4 cup brown sugar, packed
4 large eggs, room temperature
1/3 cup sour cream or Greek yogurt, room temperature
2 tsps. vanilla
3 cups shredded zucchini (about 3 medium)
1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

Method

Preheat oven to 350 °F. Grease two 9x2 inch cake pans (make sure they're at least 2 inches high or one bundt pan). Whisk the flour, cocoa powder, baking soda, baking powder, espresso powder (if using) and salt together in a large bowl. In another large bowl using a handheld or stand mixer, beat the oil, granulated sugar, brown sugar, eggs, sour cream, vanilla and zucchini together until combined. Pour dry ingredients into the wet ingredients and beat on medium speed until completely combined. Beat in chocolate chips. Batter will be thick. Pour batter evenly into cake pans. Bake for around 25-32 minutes for round pans; 45 minutes for bundt pans or 9x13 pan; 18-22 minutes for cupcakes (24-30 cupcakes). To test doneness, insert a toothpick into the center of cake. If it comes out clean, it is done.

Ginny Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

RECIPE CORRECTION THE BEST APPLE CRISP

Ingredients:

6 cups sliced apples
1 1/2 cups white sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon
6 tbsps. flour

Topping (makes enough for two pans)

2 cups flour
2 cups brown sugar
2 cups soft butter
1 tsp. baking powder
3 cups oatmeal

Method

Mix ingredients in a bowl and place in a 9x12 glass baking dish. Mix topping ingredients together until crumbly and sprinkle over apple mixture. Don't pack. Bake at 350 F for 1 hour or until apples are done.

Ginny Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy

TIPS TO SEAL DUCTWORK FOR SAVINGS



Miranda Boutelle
Efficiency Services
Group

If you live in a home with a forced air furnace, the biggest energy waster may be out of sight. Improve your home's efficiency and comfort by repairing and sealing ductwork.

Around 20% to 30% of the air you pay to heat or cool is lost through leaks, holes or poorly installed ductwork in the average home, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. This results in wasted energy and uncomfortable homes, regardless of the thermostat setting.

Properly sealing ducts can reduce wasted energy by delivering conditioned air where you want it inside the home. If you have a room that is cold in winter and hot in summer, the culprit might be a leaky or disconnected duct.

Duct sealing also helps with indoor air quality. Leaking return ducts can pull air from the spaces they run through, such as attics and crawl spaces. You don't want to breathe in dirt, dust and insulation. If you have gas appliances, such as a gas water heater, dryer or furnace, leaking return ducts can inadvertently cause backdraft, introducing combustion gases back into the home instead of outdoors where they belong.

You can seal ducts yourself or hire a professional. For a do-it-yourself approach, start with a visual inspection to determine your duct type. Most homes have flexible or metal ducts.

Metal ductwork comes in various shapes and sizes, including round and rectangular, and with various options for turns and connections. Ducts should be insulated when they run through unconditioned spaces, such as crawl spaces, attics and garages. If your metal ducts are insulated, you must remove the insulation to properly seal them, then reinsulate.

Flexible ducts typically have an inner and outer layer with insulation in between. The inner layer is made of bendable plastic reinforced with wire, like a stretched-out Slinky covered in plastic. The outer layer holds the insulation in place. The inner

liner in flexible ducts can become brittle over time, cracking easily and causing leaks. If your inner liner is in bad shape, replace the flexible duct.

Check for any obvious disconnections, gaps, extra bends or sagging ducts. Improve airflow by using short, straight, taut runs. Avoid sags and excess turns.

Metal ductwork should be fastened together at each joint using sheet metal screws. Make sure your ducts are properly supported to keep the joints from separating over time.

For flexible ducts, use Panduit straps. These are heavy-duty nylon zip ties that offer long-term durability and a tensioning tool specifically designed to tighten them.

When it comes to sealing ducts, use products designed for the job. Seal every joint and seam using duct-sealing mastic – a thick paste that can be applied with a paintbrush or gloved hand. When it dries, mastic creates a flexible, airtight seal, eliminating duct leakage. Use mesh tape to bridge larger gaps before applying mastic. Remove register covers inside the home to seal the joints and seams there. You also want a good seal where the duct meets drywall or flooring.

In easier-to-reach areas, you can opt to use UL-listed foil-backed tape designed for ductwork.

Do not use duct tape. Fluctuations in temperature cause the adhesive to fail.

Duct sealing is messy, so make sure to protect yourself and your home. Use drop cloths to protect flooring. Metal tape and the edges of metal ducts are sharp, so put on coated work or garden gloves underneath nitrile or latex disposable gloves. To protect your arms, wear a long-sleeve shirt tucked into your gloves or a long sock with the toes cut out.

After air sealing, have an HVAC professional test the airflow during your next annual maintenance visit.

If you don't feel comfortable getting your hands dirty, hire a professional. Most companies that install ductwork or heating and cooling systems can also seal ducts.

Sealing your ductwork gives you peace of mind that your home is not wasting energy or introducing unhealthy air into your living space.

THE WORLD'S LARGEST PHEASANT

Co-op Director Recalls Fixing Up Huron Landmark

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

In east-central South Dakota, a roadside monument pays homage to one of the region's largest economic drivers: the ring-necked pheasant.

Towering 40 feet above U.S. Highway 14, the "World's Largest Pheasant" has watched over Huron since 1959, when it was built to welcome pheasant hunters to the James River Valley.

In the nearly 70 years since the pheasant was first perched at the Dakota Inn, it has become a South Dakota landmark, attracting visitors from across the country.



Schaun Schnathorst

"It's iconic," explained Schaun Schnathorst, assistant engineer for the City of Huron and director for Dakota Energy Cooperative. "It's in travel guides; it's definitely a destination spot. There's always people stopping to take photos of it."

Schnathorst witnessed the bird's popularity firsthand in 2011, when he and his brother, Bob Carlson, were commissioned to restore the gargantuan fiberglass pheasant to its 1950s glory.

"The thing is 28 feet tall, and it's on top of a 12-foot-tall building, so it's 40 feet tall at the very top of the pheasant's head," Schnathorst said. "For a guy hanging out [of the basket of a bucket truck] with a paint gun trying to paint stuff, it wasn't very fun. There were times I had to open the door of the basket and pretty much lay on the bottom and paint."

The pheasant's survival through nearly seven decades of South Dakota weather is a testament to its construction. Its body was built with steel mesh welded to supports, while massive steel rods inside its legs extend deep into the ground to keep it upright in the wind.

"It got hit by lightning at some point in time, and when I went to restore its head, it had a giant chunk of concrete blown out of it," Schnathorst recalled.

The weeks-long restoration presented several other challenges.

"Way back in the day ... people would go by during hunting season and shoot it with a shotgun when they were drunk in the middle of the night," Schnathorst continued. "There were three arrows sticking out of it."



An access door beneath the pheasant had also allowed area pigeons to shelter inside for years, turning the roadside sculpture into their own avian temple.

"The fecal matter was rotting out the bottom of the fiberglass," Schnathorst said, recalling the dismal condition inside the bird.

Luckily, the damage was repairable. Schnathorst installed a one-way door to evict the squatting pigeons and replaced several sections of fiberglass.

When it came time to paint, Schnathorst said the bird's back was the hardest area to reach from his lift, requiring constant repositioning and leaning out of the lift's basket.

"You just really couldn't get that close to it," he said. "But the scariest part is the head. When there's any kind of wind at all, it's moving and you're moving too, and it isn't always at the same pace!"

Schnathorst's work on larger-than-life animals extends beyond Huron's giant pheasant, having repainted Prostrullo Auto Mall's iconic bison statues at the dealerships in Huron and Madison.

"I had two car trailers, one statue on each trailer," he chuckled. "That was really cool living out in the country and having these two giant buffaloes in my yard. It was quite a conversation starter until we got them done!"

MORE PHEASANT FACTS

- The pheasant is 28 feet tall (on a 12-foot-tall roof) and measures 40 feet long from its beak to tail.
- The pheasant weighs more than 22 tons.
- Sculptor RF Jacobs of Gooding, Idaho, constructed the pheasant at a cost of about \$23,000.
- The pheasant was dedicated October 18, 1959, and christened by South Dakota Gov. Joe Foss.
- Other South Dakota communities including Gregory, Redfield, Brookings, and Chamberlain also host their own larger-than-life pheasants.



PICK OF THE PATCH

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sirea.coop

South Dakota Pumpkin Patches Offer Plenty of Reasons to Get Outside this Fall

Cooler air, changing leaves and the search for the perfect pumpkin all mark the arrival of the autumn season. Across South Dakota, fall weekends bring families to farms and orchards for corn mazes, apple picking and hayrides.

But putting together a few weeks of fall fun takes months of work behind the scenes.

Pumpkin patches and orchards are preparing to welcome visitors for another season of pumpkins, games and family traditions.

Country Apple Orchard – Harrisburg, S.D.

By the time visitors arrive at Country Apple Orchard near Harrisburg, owner Greg Jones and his crew have already brought in three semi loads of straw bales and about 6,000 bushels of corn.

It's all part of preparing for a fall season

that lasts just a couple of months but requires work throughout the year.

"The property is kind of a full-time, year-round job," Jones said.

The orchard has been around for more than 30 years, and Jones is six years into owning the operation. Since taking over, he has expanded the pumpkin patches and added many of the attractions that now make up the orchard's fall festival.

The season opens Sept. 4 and runs through October, beginning with apple picking in September before pumpkins take center stage in October. Weekend festivities include zip lines, apple cannons, hay bale mazes, corn mazes, corn pits and, new this year, fresh-cut flowers.

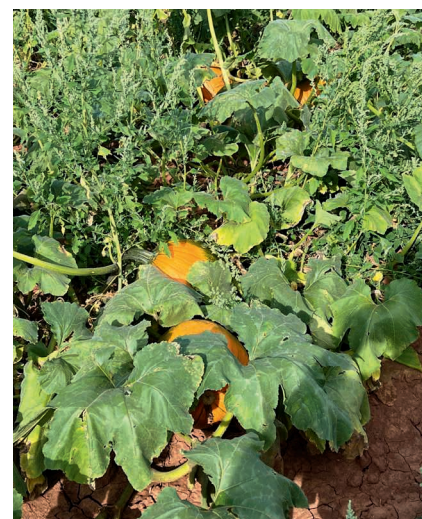
Country Apple Orchard is also a member of Southeastern Electric Cooperative, which helps power the operation through the busy fall season. Keeping everything running takes about

Lucas Hartshorn, owner of Lil' Harvester's Pumpkin Patch, and his family opening the patch for last year's fall season.
Photo submitted by Lucas Hartshorn

60 seasonal employees. Once the crowds disappear, that workforce drops to Jones and one other worker.

The effort appears to keep families coming back.

"They love coming out and they come out multiple times," Jones said, adding that some families with season passes



Pumpkins grow in the field at Lil' Harvester's Pumpkin Patch near Rapid City.
Photo submitted by Lucas Hartshorn

return nearly every weekend throughout the season.

Mazing Acres – Yankton, S.D.

What started as a small family project has grown into roughly 35 acres of fall festivities outside Yankton.

Scott and Molly Nedved opened Mazing Acres with their family in 2020. At the time, the idea was to create a small hobby farm that could teach their children the value of hard work while giving the community something new to enjoy.

“It’s grown more than we thought it would,” Molly laughed.

Today, Mazing Acres, a member of Bon Homme Yankton Electric Association, includes six acres of pumpkins, a five-acre corn maze, a flower patch and several attractions. Visitors can take a hayrack ride, watch pig races, play in the corn pit or try the apple cannons.

The corn maze, sponsored by First Dakota National Bank, changes design each year. For 2026, the design celebrates the nation’s 250th anniversary.

Although the festival lasts only several weekends, planning starts almost as soon as the previous season ends. The family reviews what worked, attends industry



A family poses for a photo in the giant pumpkin chair at Mazing Acres.

Photo submitted by Molly Nedved

conferences and selects the next year’s pumpkin varieties in late fall. By August, Scott said preparing the farm becomes “an all-day affair every day until we open.”

Visitors will notice a few changes this year. Saturday hours are being extended until 8 p.m., allowing families to experience the farm after dark, and a new tiny-town area will feature themed playhouses for younger children.

Mazing Acres opens Sept. 19 and runs through Halloween.

“We want to be something for every age,” Molly said. “Not just for the kids.”

Lil’ Harvester’s Pumpkin Patch – Rapid City, S.D.

At Lil’ Harvester’s Pumpkin Patch south of Rapid City, the Hartshorn family’s fall tradition started in 2013 with pumpkins planted by hand.

Since then, owner Lucas Hartshorn said the patch has grown to about 11 acres.

Hartshorn started the pumpkin patch with his parents, Lyle and Donna, after his father retired. The family wanted a way to keep farming while creating an event they could enjoy with their children.

“We were looking for something to do with the kids in the fall,” Hartshorn said.

At the time, pumpkin patches were harder to find around Rapid City. After

visiting one themselves, the family decided they could create a similar experience on their own farm.

Each year brought something new. Planting pumpkins by hand eventually gave way to a planter, while the patch grew to include a petting zoo, bounce houses, wagon rides, a sandbox and other activities.

Lil’ Harvester’s, a member of Black Hills Electric Cooperative, also opens during the week for school field trips, where students get a closer look at agriculture. Hartshorn said demonstrations may focus on pumpkins or the differences between sweet corn, field corn and popcorn, including how each is grown. For Hartshorn, that mix of farming, education and family time remains at the heart of the patch.

“They get to come out to the farm and learn something,” Hartshorn said.

Across South Dakota, there are several more pumpkin patches and fall festivities similar to those put on by Country Apple Orchard, Mazing Acres and Lil’ Harvester’s Pumpkin Patch. Whether it’s a small hobby farm or a dedicated agritourism operation, each one offers its own take on fall traditions that continue to draw families back year after year.



Visitors of all ages can find something to enjoy at Mazing Acres near Yankton, including the farm’s giant slides.

Photo submitted by Molly Nedved

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

TIP OF THE MONTH

Don't let phantom energy haunt your electric bill this October. Many electronics continue using electricity even when they're turned off. TVs, gaming systems, coffee makers and phone chargers can quietly draw power around the clock. While each device uses only a small amount, the energy waste can add up over time. Before heading out for Halloween fun, unplug devices you don't use regularly or plug them into a smart power strip that automatically cuts power when equipment is off. It's a simple trick that can help keep phantom energy waste in check.

Source: Dept. of Energy

LOOK OUT, LOOK UP!

Watch for overhead power lines.
They're closer than you think.



IF YOUR EQUIPMENT CONTACTS A POWER LINE



STAY PUT

Stay inside the cab.
DO NOT EXIT.
Call 911 and
Whetstone Valley Electric.
Warn others to stay away.



JUMP CLEAR

Only if you must exit
because of fire.
Jump with your feet together.
Never touch the equipment
and the ground at the same time.



STAY AWAY

Move away by shuffling
or hopping with your
feet together.
Keep everyone away until
utility crews say it is safe.



EMERGENCY - CALL
605-432-5331 • 800-568-6631
Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative

SAFE AROUND POWER LINES. SAFE AROUND HERE.

FALL INTO Energy Savings!

Find the energy-saving words hidden below.
Then use these tips around your home to save energy and stay comfortable all season long!

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

WORD LIST

- ENERGY
- EFFICIENCY
- INSULATION
- DRAFTS
- AIR SEALS
- VENTS
- HEATING
- THERMOSTAT
- FILTERS
- WEATHERSTRIPPING
- CAULKING
- MAINTENANCE
- LIGHTING
- WINDOWS
- SAVINGS
- CONSERVE
- RENEWABLES
- POWER STRIPS
- COMFORT
- SEALING



ENERGY-SAVING TIP

Small steps add up!
Simple choices today can lower
your energy use, reduce your bills
and help keep our community
strong for generations to come.



Did You Know?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that air sealing and insulation can reduce average heating and cooling costs by about **15%**.
Source: energystar.gov



SEAL DRAFTS



INSULATE YOUR ATTIC



CHANGE FILTERS



USE ENERGY-SMART LIGHTS



SET YOUR THERMOSTAT

Every little bit helps!

A MORE EFFICIENT HOME MEANS
A MORE COMFORTABLE YOU.

COZY UP, SAVE ENERGY

Easy ways to prepare your home for the heating season

Cooler temperatures and shorter days are a sure sign that winter is on the way. Fall is the perfect time to give your home a quick energy-efficiency checkup before your heating system starts working overtime.

A few simple steps now can help keep warm air inside and cold air outside where it belongs.



Small steps today can lead to big comfort and energy savings all winter long.



STOP THE DRAFTS

Feel a chilly breeze around a window or door? Small gaps and cracks can let heated air escape. Check the weatherstripping around doors and windows, and replace worn materials or caulking as needed.

Don't forget less obvious spots. Openings around plumbing, wiring and other areas where things pass through walls can also let air out.



SHOW YOUR HEATING SYSTEM SOME LOVE

Before the cold really settles in, check your furnace or heating system. Replace or clean filters as recommended, and make sure furniture, rugs and other items aren't blocking vents or registers.

If your system is due for routine maintenance, fall is a great time to schedule it.



LOOK UP!

Your attic could be one of your biggest energy-saving opportunities. Proper insulation helps keep heated air inside your home instead of letting it escape through the roof.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that air sealing and insulation can reduce average heating and cooling costs by about 15%.

Source: energystar.gov



LET THE SUNSHINE IN

On sunny fall days, open curtains and blinds to let natural sunlight warm your home. When the sun goes down, close them to help reduce heat loss through your windows.

It's an easy energy-saving trick — and it's free!



DON'T FORGET THE FANS

If your ceiling fans have a reverse setting, switch them to rotate clockwise at a low speed during the heating season. This can help circulate warm air that rises toward the ceiling.



YOUR FALL ENERGY CHECKUP



- ☐ Check heating-system filters
- ☐ Seal drafts around windows and doors
- ☐ Check attic insulation
- ☐ Clear heating vents and registers
- ☐ Inspect weatherstripping
- ☐ Reverse ceiling fans
- ☐ Schedule heating-system maintenance

A little preparation now can help make your home more comfortable when the temperatures drop.



Small steps. Big difference.

Before winter arrives, take a little time to walk through your home and look for opportunities to save. Seal those drafts. Check your filters. Look at your insulation. Make sure your heating system is ready.

Small steps add up to lower energy use, lower bills and a cozier home!



LOST BENEATH OAHE

The Rise, Fall and Disappearance of a South Dakota Ghost Town

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdsu.edu

Beneath the waves of Lake Oahe lies more than dead trees and walleye. Just below the surface near Akaska sit the remnants of LeBeau, an early 1900s railroad town once filled with immense promise and prosperity, whose story is worthy of its own Wild West feature film.

For years, Caroline Thorsen has collected the history of her great-grandfather, Antoine Le Beau, and the town that bore his name. Through Thorsen's collection and research by railroad historian Don Hofsommer in "A Promise Broken: LeBeau and the Railroad," we can dive beneath the waters of Lake Oahe and dredge up the story of LeBeau's dramatic rise and fall.

A French Fur Trader

The story of the ghost town of LeBeau begins with Antoine Le Beau Sr., a French fur trader whose journey in the mid-1800s took him from France to Quebec, Canada, then to St. Louis, Missouri and eventually up the Missouri River to what is now South Dakota.

"As I unfortunately did not know [Antoine], I hope he is remembered as being a brave gentleman who crossed the ocean from France to come to America and eventually become friends with the Native Americans, married in Native Tradition," said Thorsen, Le Beau's great-granddaughter.

The woman Antoine married was Mary Little Thunder, a member of the Two Kettle Band of Sioux. Antoine himself was later one of several Frenchmen adopted

into the Sioux Tribe at a Great Sioux Council, where he was given the name "Ogless," or "Red Shirt."

Le Beau worked with the American Fur Company before establishing a trading post along the Missouri River near present-day Akaska. The post became the foundation of a small town that would eventually bear his name and become a brief, yet bright, gateway to the West.

The Railroad

By the time the railroad arrived, Antoine Le Beau Sr. was gone, but the town was quickly gaining the reputation of a small metropolis. In 1907, the Minneapolis & St. Louis Railway (M&StL) reached LeBeau, connecting the small Missouri River settlement to Watertown and markets farther east.

"As LeBeau prospered, so did the M&StL's westernmost extension; as LeBeau withered, so did its railroad," Hofsommer writes.

Cattle companies from Texas had taken notice of both LeBeau and the grasslands west of the Missouri. Once they learned cattle thrived west of the river, they began moving large herds into the region. Through its railroad, LeBeau offered those ranchers a new route to market.

The next trick was getting the cattle across the river. On the west side of the Missouri, large holding pens could accommodate as many as 3,500 animals. From there, cattle crossed the river aboard the Scotty Philip, a steam-powered ferry. Once across, they could be loaded directly onto eastbound rail cars.

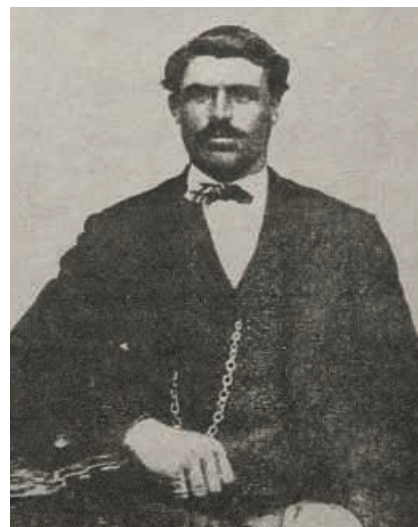
The mouth of Swan Creek on Lake Oahe where the ghost town of LeBeau resides under the waves. *Photo by Frank Turner*

In 1908, roughly 24,000 cattle passed through LeBeau on their way to and from the West River ranges, representing about \$1 million in livestock at the time. The feat helped cement the town's place as a major cattle-shipping point on the Missouri.

A Bustling Town

By the end of the season, LeBeau featured two banks, a newspaper, a drugstore, a general store and a local saloon. The growing town also boasted two lumberyards, a grain elevator and a livery, along with prominent businesses like the Idle Hour billiard and pool parlor, the Hotel LeBeau and Arcade Hotel. For entertainment, residents could even catch a show at Zimmer's Opera House.

As the town grew, M&StL officials planned to continue the rail line west of the



French fur trapper Antoine Le Beau Sr.
Photo submitted by Caroline Thorsen

Missouri by building a bridge across the Missouri, hinting at a long expansion all the way to the West Coast. The excitement only reinforced the idea that LeBeau was destined to become the gate to the west.

The buzz captured the attention of Murdo MacKenzie, general manager of the Matador Land and Cattle Company, and his wealthy son, Dode. Described as a likable and fine young man – while sober – Dode moved to LeBeau in his early 20s to oversee Matador's South Dakota operations.

A Questionable Killing

At the end of the 1909 shipping season, Dode MacKenzie began frequenting LeBeau's saloons. On Dec. 11, he was shot and killed by Bud Stephens, who was tending the bar that morning at Phil DuFran's saloon.

Local accounts of what happened that day – and of Dode MacKenzie's character – differ greatly. One local official described MacKenzie as a stand-up individual, while another local woman said he was known to shoot behind the heels of women in the town when "spirits took him."

Exactly what happened on Dec. 11 will never be known, but according to the version later presented by Stephens' defense at trial, MacKenzie became furious when Stephens failed to hear him order a drink. Rebuffed, MacKenzie crossed the street to purchase what he believed were



The paddle-wheeler Scotty Philip loads cattle at LeBeau, S.D., to be fattened on grasslands west of the Missouri River. For about three years, LeBeau was one of the Northwest's most important cattle-shipping towns.
Photo courtesy of the South Dakota Historical Society

.45-caliber shells, loaded his gun, walked back, pointed it at Stephens and pulled the trigger twice. As the story goes, MacKenzie had accidentally purchased .38-caliber shells, which failed to fire and instead plopped onto the floor. It was then that Stephens reached for his gun and began firing, killing the young MacKenzie.

A Dying Town

The trial resulted in Stephens' acquittal, drawing the ire of Dode MacKenzie's father and the Matador Cattle Company. The company effectively boycotted LeBeau, and no Matador cattle ever entered the town again.

Within months of the trial, a suspicious fire made matters worse. Although fires weren't uncommon in the Wild West, townsfolk discovered that the fire hose, telephone and telegraph lines had all been cut prior to the fire. No arsonist was ever caught.

The bad luck didn't stop there. A competing rail line to the north completed a bridge across the Missouri at Mobridge, undercutting LeBeau's stream of West River cattle. By 1924, M&StL abandoned the town, tearing out its segment of rail line. Within a year, the post office closed.

Beneath Lake Oahe

LeBeau had been a ghost town for decades when Lake Oahe came for what was left.

Construction of Oahe Dam near Pierre began in 1948 as part of a massive federal effort to control flooding and generate hydroelectric power along the Missouri River. In August 1958, the river was closed at the dam and the newly created reservoir began to fill.

As the water rose, it eventually covered the old LeBeau townsite near the mouth of Swan Creek. The empty foundations, cellar holes and remnants of the once-bustling railroad town disappeared beneath Lake Oahe. Unlike most ghost towns in South Dakota that faded away with time, LeBeau vanished beneath the Missouri.



A crowd gathers around a band near the railroad in LeBeau, S.D., with the depot and Missouri River visible in the distance. About a year after this photo was taken, the town installed 10-foot-wide concrete sidewalks along Main Street.
Photo courtesy of the South Dakota Historical Society.



A PRETTY SWEET IDEA

Doland Teen Finds Success as Ice Cream Entrepreneur

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Noah Felderman has long enjoyed staying at his grandparents' cabin at Lake Poinsett, north of Arlington, S.D. But during the summer of 2020, the 12-year-old faced a dilemma many kids did during the COVID-19 era.

What is there to do today?

"I was there every weekend – almost every day – and people were talking about ice cream," Noah said. "I thought, 'Hey, I could try to make something out of this.'"

After drawing up a business plan with his grandparents and borrowing their orange side-by-side, Noah drove – or, rather, had an adult drive him – around to sell ice cream bars out of a small chest freezer.

"He was 12 years old and not able to drive, so this was a family event," Noah's dad, Chad, said with a chuckle.

Driving to different campgrounds and neighborhoods around the lake, Noah's business – Feldy's Ice Cream – became a hit with residents, cabin owners, and weekend campers.

The next summer, hoping to keep the momentum going, 13-year-old Noah found and purchased a retired school bus.

"We found a really good deal – this bus needed some work just to get going and be operational so that's how we snagged it," Noah explained. The Feldermans completely overhauled the bus to turn it into a fully-equipped ice

cream truck, even giving it a custom orange paint job to craft a recognizable brand and pay homage to his grandparents' orange side-by-side that started it all.

Photo by Jacob Boyko

cream truck, even giving it a custom orange paint job to craft a recognizable brand and pay homage to his grandparents' orange side-by-side that started it all.

That was the summer things really started to take off for Feldy's Ice Cream.

"I called the State of South Dakota asking about tax law, and they said they didn't have time for prank calls," Noah laughed.



Feldy's Ice Cream serves stocks many flavors – vanilla, caramel, raspberry chip, Oreo, and classic mint chocolate chip, to name a few.

Photo by Jacob Boyko

Covering more ground in the bus than he could with the side-by-side, the determined teenager became a familiar face and started building connections in the Lake Poinsett area.

"Someone said if I ever want to do an event, I could come cater the staff at the Madison hospital," Noah recalled. "So that's what I went out and did."

Word spread quickly. After Madison Regional Health, Noah visited Prairie Lakes Hospital in Watertown, then Huron Regional Medical Center.

He continued, "Once we were there, we served staff that were having their own private events, like weddings, so then they'd reach out to us and see if we'd want to cater their wedding. It just kind of kept growing."

As demand for ice cream grew, Noah purchased a small building at Lake Poinsett to open a permanent ice cream shop and also allow them the space to expand their offerings, serving Saturday morning waffle breakfasts and statewide favorites like Black Hills Bagels and Flyboy Donuts.

Six years since starting the business, Feldy's Ice Cream has become a seven-days-per-week summer commitment for Noah. Today, the 18-year-old operates an ice cream truck, ice cream trailer and the Lake Poinsett location.

For staffing, Noah turned to area high schools.

"We hit hard at the local schools – Castlewood, Estelline, Arlington, Hamlin, Watertown, Brookings," Noah recalled. "We'd go to the school, give them some free ice cream coupons, and encourage them to apply for a summer job."

Noah currently employs 17 part-time summer workers.

"I never imagined that (the business) would grow into what I'm doing now on a day-to-day basis," he reflected. "I've learned that you can have a plan, and the plan's not always going to go how you want. A machine will break down, and then you're sitting there fixing it and figuring out how you're going to get to this event on time. You learn to take things as they come."

After graduating this past spring, Noah enrolled at Lake Area Technical College in Watertown to pursue training in law enforcement. He hopes to pair that training with a pilot's license and pursue a career in aviation law enforcement.

But that doesn't mean he's finished with ice cream.

"I'll take it year by year," Noah said. "I don't have any plans to shut down or slow down operation. It's definitely something I'm going to continue doing."

Noah's dad, Chad Felderman, who also serves as CEO at Dakota Energy Cooperative, praised his son's work ethic and thanked the surrounding communities for supporting the business.

"You can't not be proud of Noah," Chad said. "With all of the connections he's made in different communities and businesses, when I introduce myself, I don't introduce myself as Chad – I introduce myself as Noah's dad or Feldy's Ice Cream's dad."



Spink County Sheriff's Deputy Wyatt Anderson visits Feldy's Ice Cream at a stop at the Spink County Courthouse in Redfield.

Photo by Jacob Boyko



Chad assists Noah as he prepares a large order of ice cream cups at Eastern Star retirement home in Redfield.

Photo by Jacob Boyko



Twelve-year-old Noah started his business at Lake Poinsett.

Photo submitted by Chad Felderman



OCT. 31
Yankton's Harvest Halloween
 Yankton, SD
www.harvesthalloween.com

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. 2-3
Public Ghost Investigation
 Fort Sisseton State Park
 Langford, SD
 605-910-4465

OCT. 2-3
Pumpkin Festival
 Vendor Fair & Lighted Parade
 Webster, SD
 605-345-4668
wac@webstersd.com

OCT. 3
Pumpkin Train/ SoDak Vendor Showcase
 Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

OCT. 3
Fall Harvest Farmers Market
 9 a.m.
 Centennial Park
 Hot Springs, SD

OCT. 3-4
The Black Market
 Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.,
 Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Bldg.
 Sioux Falls, SD

OCT. 4
St. Anthony's Fall Bazaar
 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Swiss Steak 12-1:30 p.m.
 Hoven, SD

OCT. 10
Tabor Church Quilt & Craft Auction
 Sandwich & Pie Supper
 620 E. Hwy. 12
 Webster, SD
 605-880-3377

OCT. 16
Eureka Chamber Open House
 1:30-3:30 p.m.
 707 G Ave.
 Eureka, SD
 605-230-1777

OCT. 16-17
Haunted Fort
 Sat: Trick or Treat
 Fort Sisseton State Park
 Langford, SD
 605-910-4465

OCT. 17
Faulkton Area Arts Council Craft Fair
 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Faulkton School
 Faulkton, SD
 605-380-8444

OCT. 30
Downtown Trunk or Treat
 Groton, SD
 605-397-8422

OCT. 31
Treat Street
 Main Street
 Milbank, SD

OCT. 31
Webster Chamber Trunk or Treat
 Webster Armory
 Webster, SD
 605-345-4668
wac@webstersd.com

OCT. 31
Lantern Tour
 Fort Sisseton State Park
 Langford, SD
 605-910-4465

OCT. 31
Britton Action Club Trunk or Treat
 Benefitting Marshall County Food Pantry
 5:30-7 p.m.
 Britton Event Center
 Britton, SD
 605-622-0431

NOV. 12
The Satin Dollz
 Patriotic Female Vocal & Dance Quintet
 7 p.m.
 Johnson Fine Arts Center
aberdeencommunityconcerts.org

NOV. 14
Kick-Off to Christmas & Santa Shop
 10 a.m.-2:45 p.m.
 7 p.m. Parade
 Eureka, SD
 605-230-1777

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