

# Cooperative Connections

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and Go!**

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# Consider Attending Your District Meeting



**Ken Schlimgen**

General Manager

**It is worth noting that the health of the co-op and the well-being of the community are closely intertwined.**

Most of us lead busy lives especially during the Holiday Season. We find ourselves multitasking, constantly checking phones and email to keep up with the demands of modern life. Thanks to technology, we can accomplish many tasks remotely to be more efficient. And with so many pressing obligations, we like to protect our “spare” time.

Invitations to attend in-person meetings and gatherings are weighed carefully as we decide whether or not our time and effort to attend is beneficial. The answer to the question, “what’s in it for me?” must be compelling. You may think attending your electric cooperative’s district meeting would be easy to lump into the “no benefit to me” category. However, I’d ask you to think again.

An engaged membership is important to the success of your cooperative. You own it, and you have a stake in seeing it succeed. Central Electric Cooperative exists to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to its consumer-members (that’s you!). Equally important is our mission to enrich the lives of all members and to serve the long-term interests of our local communities. This is where you can help.

As a member of the community, you have a perspective that is valuable—and we invite you to share it with the cooperative. At the district meeting, we will discuss plans for 2020, challenges, and the financial health of your cooperative. Other items under consideration include rates, an option for members to purchase 100% renewable energy, a review of member programs and a question and answer period. It is worth noting that the health of the co-op and the well-being of the community are closely intertwined.

The members at district meetings in Buffalo, Brule, and Aurora Counties will vote for a board member to represent you—the members of the co-op. Board members are local consumers, just like you. The board members take their responsibilities seriously and value being transparent with their fellow members. Beginning this year, you will notice on page 3 that the board members requested to share a monthly board meeting summary. They also value the district meetings as an important way to engage with the members they represent.

While Central Electric Cooperative provides convenient electronic options for bill-paying and communication, there are times when there is no substitute for in-person engagement. When members of our community come together for a common purpose, we improve the quality of life for all in our corner of the world.

If you’ve never attended your district meeting, or if it’s been awhile, please stop by. Our co-op family looks forward to visiting with you! We’ll have food, good information and attendance prizes. We will discuss electric rates, our plan of work, and events scheduled for 2020.

Take a look on page 6 of this newsletter for your district meeting, mark your calendar and consider bringing your neighbor. I would enjoy having a full house, and I look forward to seeing you there.

With the Christmas Holiday and New Year’s Season quickly approaching, there is much for all to be thankful for. From your Board of Directors, Employees and myself, Have a Very Merry Christmas and a Great New Year.

Until Next Month, Be Safe.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

(USPS 018-963)

**Board of Directors**

- Duane Wolbrink - President
- Todd VanWalleghen - Vice President
- Bernetta Burghardt - Secretary
- Mark Reindl - Treasurer
- Mark Hofer - NRECA
- Roger Campbell
- Donita Loudner - SDREA
- Darwin "Butch" Morrison
- Jim Headley

**General Manager:** Ken Schlimgen

**Editor:** Courtney J. Deinert - courtneyd@centralec.coop

**Assistant Editor:** Patrick Soukup

CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is the monthly publication for the members of Central Electric Cooperative, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301. Families subscribe to Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. Central Electric Cooperative Connections' purpose is to provide reliable, helpful information to electric cooperative members on matters pertaining to their cooperative and living better with electricity. Also available at [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop).

This cooperative is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found on-line at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter by mail to U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202 690-7442) or e-mail at [intake@usda.gov](mailto:intake@usda.gov).

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Postmaster: Please send address changes to Central Electric Cooperative, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301. Address all other correspondence to: Cooperative Connections, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301 Telephone: (605)996-7516; Fax: (605) 996-0869; e-mail: [cec@centralec.coop](mailto:cec@centralec.coop); website: [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop).

**Office Information**

M-F 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
 800-477-2892 or  
 605-996-7516  
[www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop)



**Mission Statement**

Provide Reliable Energy & Services with a Commitment to Safety and Member Satisfaction

**BOARD MEETING SUMMARY**

**Meeting Summary**

The board of directors met on November 19, 2019 at the Betts Road Service Center for the regular board meeting.

The board approved the October 21, 2019 meeting minutes and the October safety meeting minutes. The board then reviewed monthly reports by management including details on operations, member services, communications, service department and the financials.

**Board Report**

Manager Schlimgen updated the board on the following:

- East River Manager's Meeting.
- Legislative luncheon to be held at Central Electric.
- Upcoming district meetings.
- Senate bill 66 legislative summer study.
- Discussed two potential REED loans from the Central Electric service area.
- Industry update from American Coalition for Ethanol (ACE) and POET.
- Formation of health insurance working group.
- South Dakota Wind Energy Association update.
- Reviewed registration for the "Board Leadership Certificate" training in Pierre in December.
- Requested attendance counts for the following meetings: NRECA Annual Meeting, CoBank Regional Meeting, Midwest Consumer Meeting, and SDREA Annual Meeting.

Director Wolbrink gave an update on the East River Electric Cooperative Board Meeting.

Directors Hofer and Morrison gave an update on the Basin Electric Power Cooperative Annual Meeting.

Attorney Don Petersen led a discussion on potential bylaw revisions.

**Board Action**

The board considered and/or acted upon the following:

1. Approved the 2020 Work Plan and Budget.
2. Approved a Board Resolution to defer \$79,828 in margins from 2019 into 2020.
3. Approved revisions to large commercial rate policies 868, 869, and 871 to reflect rate changes for 2020.
4. Approved the adoption and/or revisions of Policies 820 Purchase of Renewable Energy Certificates, 301 Line and Service Extensions, 880 Service Fees, 823 Security Lighting and 201 Financial.
5. Approved a Board Resolution to retire Basin Electric Power Cooperative capital credits in the amount of \$348,964 to the membership.
6. Appointed Director Campbell as voting delegate and Director Wolbrink as alternate for the SDREA Annual Meeting.
7. Approved Inventory of Work Orders No. 224 and 224-1 for \$193,536.
8. Approved a member loan application for a geothermal system.

The next board of directors meeting will be held December 18, 2019 at the Betts Road Service Center.

*Please contact the cooperative office for more information regarding the board meeting.*

Financial Report	October 2019	Year-to-Date
kWh Sales	25,402,080 kWhs	289,670,509 kWhs
Electric Revenues	\$2,517,412	\$28,424,832
Total Cost of Service	\$2,394,452	\$27,332,248
Operating Margins	\$122,961	\$1,092,584

## Winter Electrical Safety Tips

In South Dakota and western Minnesota, December through March is a particularly hazardous time of year for storms and electrical power outages. Heavy snow, ice and wind can ravage power lines, both on the main power grid and at home. Add to that the increased use of home heating equipment such as space heaters and electric blankets and the potential for dangerous electrical hazards and home fires only intensifies.

Keep your home and loved ones safe this season by following these important winter electrical safety tips:

- **Use space heaters safely.** Keep them a minimum of three feet from furniture, bedsprings, drapes or clothes and never leave them unattended when they're on. Don't use extension cords with your space heaters and always unplug the heaters when they're not in use. Keep space heaters away from wet or damp areas and never touch a heater when your body is wet.
- **Use caution with electric blankets.** Never use an electric blanket while you're sleeping. Make sure the plug and cord are in good shape; otherwise it can pose a fire hazard. Be sure to dispose of electric blankets that have worn or damaged areas.
- **Be careful with your kitchen appliances.** While crockpots and other slow-cooking devices get a lot of use in the winter, you should never leave them turned on when no one is home. Leaving them unattended is a major fire risk. And be sure to check electrical kitchen appliances for frayed or damaged cords and plugs before use.
- **Make sure your home is equipped with functioning carbon monoxide detectors.** Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless gas that kills at high concentrations and causes serious and irreversible injuries at lower levels. Deaths from carbon monoxide poisoning increase during the winter months due to the use of common fuels like natural gas, wood and coal. Installing an inexpensive carbon monoxide detector can save your family's life.
- **Are your smoke alarms in working order?** It's important to make sure that you have an adequate number of smoke alarms throughout your home and that they are functioning properly. Simply push the test button to make sure it beeps and replace the batteries if needed.
- **Don't overload circuits or wattage.** Despite the shorter, darker days of winter, don't go above the recommended wattage for your light fixtures. Don't overload wall outlets either and only plug three-prong cords into three-prong outlets. Use extension cords sparingly and only for temporary purposes.
- **Have your home's electrical panel inspected by a licensed electrician.** Because electric usage goes up significantly in winter, you may need an upgrade in order to meet this increased demand.
- **Keep outdoor outlets closed.** Check your outdoor outlets regularly to ensure that they don't have an accumulation of ice and snow on them. Keep them cleared off and closed to avoid moisture from invading the receptacle box and causing an outage.

Source: [www.mrelectricians.us/best-winter-electrical-safety-tips](http://www.mrelectricians.us/best-winter-electrical-safety-tips)

✓ STOP AT THE BANK

✓ GRAB THE GROCERIES

✓ FIND MY POLLING PLACE

✓ REMEMBER TO VOTE

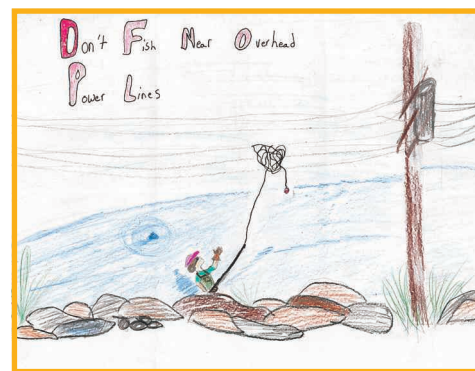


**CO-OPS VOTE**

A PROGRAM OF AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES  
WWW.VOTE.COOP

**ELECTION DAY  
NOVEMBER 3, 2020**

### KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"Don't fish near overhead power lines"**

**Lily Gums, 14 years old**

Lily is the daughter of Dave and Kathy Gums, Clear Lake, S.D. They are members of H-D Electric Cooperative, Clear Lake.

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

# Super Soups

## Leftover Turkey Chowder

4 slices bacon, chopped	1/4 cup flour
1/2 cup chopped onion	2 cups half-and-half
2 cups water	2 cups cubed cooked turkey
4 medium red potatoes, cut in 1/2-inch cubes (about 2 cups)	1 (8 3/4 oz.) can whole kernel corn, undrained
1 pkg. McCormick® Turkey Gravy Mix	1 tsp. McCormick® Sage, Rubbed

Cook bacon in large saucepan on medium heat until crisp. Add onion; cook and stir 3 minutes. Add water and potatoes. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 5 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Stir gravy mix and flour in medium bowl. Stir in half-and-half with wire whisk until smooth. Stir mixture into saucepan. Add turkey, corn and sage. Bring to boil on medium heat. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Makes 8 (1 cup) servings.

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 258, Fiber 1g, Protein 16g, Cholesterol 68mg, Total Fat 14g, Sodium 427mg, Carbohydrates 17g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Crockpot Potato Soup

1 (30 oz.) bag hash browns	1/2 cup chopped onion
3 (14 oz.) cans chicken broth	1/4 tsp. pepper
1 can cream of chicken soup	1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese

Combine first 5 ingredients in crockpot. Cook on LOW 6 to 8 hours. Add cream cheese 1 hour before serving.

**Bonnie Weber, Aberdeen, SD**

## Taco Soup

1 lb. ground beef, browned and drained	1 (10.75 oz.) can tomato soup
1 can chili beans, undrained	1 soup can water
1 pkg. taco seasoning	Tomato juice

Combine all ingredients; heat through. Serve with shredded cheese, corn chips or crackers if desired.

**Velma Schmitz, Bonesteel, SD**

## Curried Pumpkin Soup

8 oz. sliced fresh or canned mushrooms	1 (15 oz.) can pumpkin
1/2 cup chopped onion	1 (12 oz.) can evaporated milk
2 T. butter	2 T. honey
2 T. flour	1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
1 tsp. curry powder	Salt and pepper
3 cups vegetable broth	

In a large saucepan, saute mushrooms and onions in butter until tender. Stir in flour and curry powder until blended. Gradually add broth. Bring to a boil; cook and stir 2 minutes or until thickened. Add pumpkin, milk, honey, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Heat through.

**White Tail Ridge Bed & Breakfast, Hermosa, SD**

## Cheddar-Ham Chowder

2 cups water	1/4 cup butter
2 cups cubed potatoes	1/4 cup flour
1/2 cup sliced carrots	2 cups milk
1/2 cup sliced celery	2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese
1/4 cup chopped onion	1 (16 oz.) can corn, drained
1 tsp. salt	1-1/2 cups cubed, cooked ham
1/4 tsp. pepper	

In a large saucepan, bring first 7 ingredients to a boil; reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 8 to 10 minutes or until vegetables are just tender; remove from heat but do not drain. Meanwhile, in a medium saucepan, melt butter and blend in flour. Add milk all at once, cooking and stirring until thickened and bubbly. Add cheese, stirring until melted. Stir into undrained vegetable mixture. Return large saucepan to heat; add corn and ham. Heat through, stirring occasionally.

**Diane Fode, Rapid City, SD**

Please send your favorite brunch, seafood or appetizer/ beverage recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3).

Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in June 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

A Local Meeting Coming to You

# District Meeting Dates

Mark your calendar for your local district meeting! The meal begins at 6:30 P.M. with a presentation to follow at 7:00 P.M. Each member in attendance will receive a \$10 energy certificate. **Please consider bringing a non-perishable item for the food pantry. Donations will be collected at each meeting.**

Members residing in the districts of Aurora, Brule and Buffalo county are scheduled to conduct director elections this year. The deadlines to request and return petitions has passed. For more information, visit [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop) or contact our office.

District Meeting	Meeting Date	Location
Aurora County	January 2, 2020	Ag Building, Plankinton, SD
Brule County	January 6, 2020	Ag Building, Pukwana, SD
Buffalo County	January 7, 2020	St. Joseph Catholic Church Hall, Fort Thompson, SD
Hanson County	January 9, 2020	St. Mary's Catholic Parish Hall, Alexandria, SD
Jerauld County	January 13, 2020	Springs Inn, Wessington Springs, SD
Sanborn County	January 14, 2020	4-H Building, Forestburg, SD
Miner County	January 21, 2020	4-H Building, Howard, SD
Davison County	January 23, 2020	4-H Fairgrounds, Mitchell, SD

## Members Receive \$848,964 in Cooperative Margins

# Capital Credit Retirement

Last month, your cooperative announced a \$500,00 capital credit retirement with allocations from Central Electric Cooperative and East River Electric Cooperative.

At the November board meeting, the Board of Directors approved an additional \$348,964 capital credit retirement from Basin Electric Power Cooperative. **In summary, members received a total retirement of \$848,964 in capital credits in December.**

Any member who had service in 2018 or prior received a capital credit retirement. Members with active accounts received their refund as a credit on their December bill. By doing this, your member-owned cooperative saved the cost of printing and mailing checks.

For some members, the capital credit refund resulted in a small or no balance due, shown as a negative amount or with "CR" next to the amount due on the bill. Credits were only issued on current charges and not any past due balances.

For prepaid accounts, the credit was automatically applied against the balance. You can check your balance by logging into SmartHub, calling the IVR at 855-730-8707 or contacting our office. For budget billing accounts, the credit reduced the monthly budget amount.

Inactive members were mailed checks for amounts over \$10 (lesser amounts will carryover to the next retirement).

When transferring service out of your name or moving off the service territory, ensure that Central Electric has your updated contact information for future capital credit payments.

Cooperative members are "owners" of the cooperative. As a non-profit cooperative, any margins are allocated back to members each year. Funds are retained by the cooperative to maintain cash flow and good financial standing. Then, the Board of Directors approves capital credit retirements when financially possible.

Remember to keep a copy of your retirement for your records. If you have questions, please contact our office.

**At the November board meeting, the Board of Directors approved an additional \$348,964 capital credit retirement.**

# Employee Years of Service



**Mick Poncelet**  
Journeyman Lineman  
January 3 - 36 years



**Anthony Roth**  
Journeyman Lineman  
January 3 - 15 years



**Kevin Johnson**  
Journeyman Electrician  
January 16 - 14 years



**Ken Schlimgen**  
General Manager  
January 28 - 35 years

## Holiday Closings

Our office will be closed on the following days in observance of the holiday season:

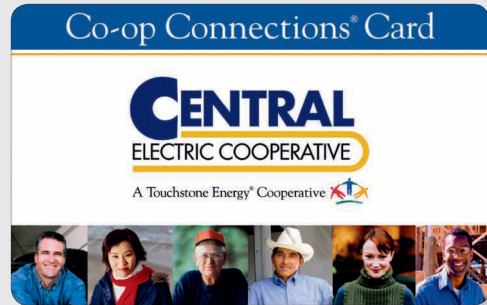
**Christmas Eve,  
December 24**

**Christmas,  
December 25**

**New Year's Day,  
January 1**



## Local Discounts with your Co-op Connections® Card



Your cooperative membership earns you discounts at local participating businesses.

Simply show your Co-op Connections Discount Card and save.

- 1) **Aero Dyna Kleen Services, Mitchell, SD;**  
\$20 off on furnace and duct cleaning; 10% off on carpet cleaning.
- 2) **AmericInn Lodge & Suites, Chamberlain, SD;**  
10% off rack rate (not valid with any other offer).
- 3) **America's Mattress, Mitchell, SD;**  
Free sheets with qualifying purchase of \$500 or greater (1 set).
- 4) **BBBB's Distributing, Mitchell, SD;**  
\$100 off any vinyl fence or railing purchase of \$1,000 or more OR \$100 off any regular priced stove or fireplace.
- 5) **Blessings Repeated, Plankinton, SD;**  
20% off a purchase of \$10 or more.
- 6) **Buckshots, Letcher, SD;**  
\$1.00 off all Buckshot Burgers.
- 7) **Casey's General Store, 701 N Main St, Mitchell, SD;**  
Free 12 oz coffee or 32 oz fountain pop with 8 gallon fuel purchase.
- 8) **County Fair Food & Fuel, Mitchell, SD;**  
\$.05 discount/gallon of fuel.

For a full list of ways to save, visit [www.connections.coop](http://www.connections.coop).

To request a card or become a participating business, visit [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop) or call 800-477-2892 or 605-996-7516.





Electric cooperatives are offering more than \$100,000 in scholarships for area students.

## COLLEGE AHEAD?

### Electric Cooperatives Offer Scholarships to Fuel College, Technical School Aspirations

**Brenda Kleinjan**

[editor@sdrea.coop](mailto:editor@sdrea.coop)

For more than 30 years, South Dakota's electric cooperatives have been helping fund the continuing education dreams of students planning to attend four-year colleges or technical schools.

Over the decades, the scholarships have funded students on their way to careers in education, medicine, government, energy and everything in between.

Through the Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship Program, each cooperative that is a Basin Electric member cooperative awards a \$1,000 scholarship to the dependent of a co-op member. Additional scholarships through the program are available to the dependents of co-op employees

Several cooperatives offer scholarships to individuals to become electric line workers or electricians. These scholarships, in addition to those awarded by the South Dakota Rural Electric Line Superintendents Association, amount to more than \$10,000.





# Future Engineer?

## Nationwide Scholarship Available

Since its inception three years ago, the Glenn English National Cooperative Leadership Foundation Scholarship Committee has awarded almost \$10,000 in scholarships to individuals pursuing a career in engineering.

This annual opportunity would not be possible without the foresight and generous contributions of the IEEE: Rural Electric Power Committee (REPC). Together, we hope to support future engineers with an interest and passion for defining and solving the electric utility challenges of the future, specifically in the rural parts of America.

### Dates & Deadlines:

- Applications will be accepted starting on Dec. 14, 2019.
- The deadline for application submission is 11:59 p.m. EST on May 15, 2020.
- Winners are selected by a scholarship committee and announced after the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association summer board meeting in Mid-July, 2020.
- Awards are distributed in August/September, 2020.

### Eligibility Requirements

- Must be a US Citizen
- Applicant must be enrolled in an ABET, four-year program of electrical engineering or electrical engineering technology, and have at least a 'B' average in major subjects.
- Applicant must be enrolled as a full-time student.
- Applicant must have already received academic credits equal to at least one year of college.

### Essay Requirement Information

- To be considered for the Engineers of the Future Scholarship, you must submit an essay using the following requirements as your guide:
  - Essays need to be between 1,000 and 1,500 words.
  - Essays must describe, in detail, plans to pursue a career as an electrical engineer, with an emphasis in electric power, in an electrical utility serving a rural area.
  - Essays must demonstrate knowledge of the unique challenges facing the electric industry in Rural America and describe how you might address these issues as an engineer.

But, the majority of scholarship money available from the region's electric cooperatives are not tied to a specific program of study.

A study released this summer by WalletHub.com found that South Dakota has the highest rate of student loan debt of any state in the country while Minnesota finished sixth on the list.

The study, performed by consumer finance website WalletHub.com, had researchers analyze 12 different measures of indebtedness, including average student debt, number of students with debt, and unemployment rate.

South Dakota had the highest proportion of students with debt, and was fourth highest when it

came to percentage of student loan borrowers over age 50.

Some of the scholarships offered by electric cooperatives require that students be in high school, while other scholarships are designed for students that may be returning to school.

Additionally,

students selected to represent their local electric cooperative on the Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., are eligible for a \$10,000 Glenn English Foundation Scholarship. Students can apply for the undergraduate scholarship once they have completed one semester of college or technical school.

Deadlines for local scholarships vary, so check with your local electric cooperative for details.

**South Dakota led the nation in student loan debt, according to a national study.**

Of the scholarships being offered by electric cooperatives, more than \$10,000 is dedicated to students seeking energy-related careers.



# Scholarships Available in amounts of \$1,000

Central Electric Cooperative is offering three (3) scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each, as sponsored by Basin Electric Power Cooperative and the family of the late Jay Headley.

## Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship

Basin Electric Power Cooperative is awarding one (1) \$1,000 scholarship to a dependent of a member-cooperative member-owner.

To be eligible, a student must be

- 1) a dependent of a member-owner whose primary residence receives electric service from Central Electric Cooperative;
- 2) Enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited post-secondary institution; and
- 3) a U.S. citizen.

## Jay Headley Memorial Scholarships

The family of the late Jay Headley of White Lake, SD is awarding two (2) \$1,000 scholarships in honor of his memory.

To be eligible, a student must be

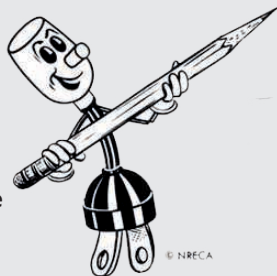
- 1) a dependent of a member-owner whose primary residence receives electric service from Central Electric Cooperative;
- 2) Pursuing a bachelor's of science degree in an agricultural related field; and
- 3) a U.S. citizen.

## How to Apply

Applications are available at [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop) or by contacting our office.

Scholarships can be emailed to [cec@centralec.coop](mailto:cec@centralec.coop) or mailed to Central Electric Cooperative, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301.

Applications are due by February 1, 2020.



# Youth Program Applications Available

## Empower Youth

Current high school freshmen and sophomores are encouraged to apply for the summer leadership program "Empower Youth." Empower Youth's mission is to help high school students recognize their leadership potential and instill the cooperative mindset of bettering the world around them!



The program includes two (2) one-day leadership workshops during the summer. Program participants also attend the South Dakota Youth Excursion to Bismarck, ND on July 27-30, 2020. During Youth Excursion, students will tour the Great Plains Synfuels Plant, the Freedom Coal Mine and Antelope Valley Station electric power plant. Evenings will be spent swimming, dancing and shopping with new friends from other rural electric cooperatives across the state.

To be eligible, you must be a high school freshman or sophomore who permanently resides within Aurora, Brule, Buffalo, Jerauld, Sanborn, Miner, Davison, or Hanson counties of South Dakota or be the dependent of a Central Electric member. One student from each county or director district may be selected.

To apply, fill out an application available at [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop). Applications are due by February 1, 2020.

## Washington, D.C. Youth Tour

Attention high school juniors! You have a chance to take a trip-of-a-lifetime to Washington, D.C. The chosen representatives will travel to Washington, D.C., along with 1,800 other students from Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives throughout the U.S. and take part in the Rural Electric Youth Tour on June 18-26, 2020.

Sightseeing tours will include the Lincoln Memorial, National Cathedral, White House, FDR Memorial, Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, Arlington National Cemetery, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

To be eligible, you must be a high school junior who permanently resides within Aurora, Brule, Buffalo, Jerauld, Sanborn, Miner, Davison, or Hanson counties or be the dependent of a Central Electric member.

To apply, students must complete an essay, not to exceed 1,000 words, on the following topic: "As a member-owned, not-for-profit utility, Central Electric Cooperative strives to improve the quality of life for our members. Discuss the benefits of your cooperative membership."

The deadline is February 1, 2020. For more information, visit [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop).



# OPERATION ROUND-UP® FUNDS AWARDED

The Operation Round-Up Board of Trustees met on November 12, 2019 to review applications for funding. The committee awarded \$13,000 to eight organizations:



1. **Aurora County 4-H Leaders**, \$1,000 for an AED;
2. **Buffalo County Rural Fire Protection District 1**, \$1,000 for gloves;
3. **City of Wessington Springs Pool Task Force**, \$2,500 towards an ADA accessible entrance and concessions area;
4. **Ethan Historical Society**, \$1,000 for lighting and flooring;
5. **Hanson County Child Protection Team**, \$1,000 for the Angel Tree Program;
6. **Mitchell Area Historical Society**, \$1,500 for building repairs;
7. **Mitchell United Way**, \$2,500 to launch 211 for Sanborn, Hanson, Aurora and Davison counties;
8. **Plankinton Pool Improvement Committee**, \$2,500 towards the new bathhouse;

Operation Round-Up grants are funded by Central Electric members who voluntarily round-up their electric bill to the nearest dollar. **Thank you to our members for your generosity.**

Since the program's initiation in 2015, Operation Round-Up has awarded over \$95,000 to local projects.

The next application deadline is May 1, 2020. For more information about the program, visit [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop) or call 800-477-2892.

# Heating Help Is Available

The Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) helps eligible South Dakotans pay for home heating costs. Energy assistance may not pay for all your home heating costs, but it will help ease the strain of the heating season. Energy assistance is available from October 1 - May 15.



Eligibility for the program is based on: 1) Number of people in household, 2) Gross income of everyone in household, 3) Type of heating for the home, 4) Geographic area you live in.

Applications can be obtained by calling **1-800-233-8503**, online at <http://dss.sd.gov/economicassistance/energyassistance/lowincome.aspx> or at the local Department of Social Services office.

## Services to Discontinue for 2020

### "No Charge" Security Light Maintenance

Beginning January 1, 2020, Central Electric will no longer provide free security light repair, including photo eye or bulb replacement at no charge.

Central Electric will continue to service and install security lights. Any security light installations, maintenance, or repairs will be charged at our regular service rate.

### ENERGY STAR® Appliance Rebate

The ENERGY STAR Appliance Rebate will be discontinued for 2020.

For any questions or concerns regarding cooperative services, please contact our office.



# Technical Schools, Colleges Ready the Workforce

Variety of programs offered for in-demand careers

**Brenda Kleinjan**

editor@sdrea.coop

Each year, more than 10,000 people head to area technical schools and technical colleges to develop the skills employers in the region are seeking.

South Dakota's four technical schools – Lake Area Technical Institute in Watertown, Mitchell Technical Institute in Mitchell, Southeast Technical Institute in Sioux Falls and Western Dakota Technical Institute in Rapid City – have been serving students in the region for the last century, with three of the schools starting in 1968 and the fourth starting in 1969. Neighboring states have similar offerings at schools within easy driving distance of South Dakota.

This fall, Lake Area's campus at Watertown, S.D., was at capacity with 2,228 students. The school notes that students have a 99 percent placement rate after graduation.

Nearly 1,200 students attend Mitchell Tech which notes that 99 percent of its graduates find employment or continue their education. The school also notes that 82 percent of its grads stay in the Rushmore State.

For Southeast Tech's 2017-2018 graduates, the school said that 95 percent are employed or continuing their education, with 95 percent of those employed were employed in a field related to their Southeast Tech program.

Western Dakota Tech is the only technical college serving the western half of the state. It notes that 96 percent of its most recent graduates are working, continuing their education or enlisting in the military.



Among the programs offered at Mitchell Technical Institute in Mitchell, S.D., is South Dakota's only power line program for training future line workers.

## National Leaders

Technical colleges across the region have been recognized for excellence in their field.

The \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, awarded every two years, is the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges. With a singular focus on student success, the Prize highlights institutions with outstanding achievements in four areas: student learning, certificate and degree completion, employment and earnings, and high-levels of access and success for students of color and low-income students.

In November, the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program named the nation's top 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges.

Eleven schools based in Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota made the list:

# Minnesota West Community & Technical College

Technical education needs in southwestern Minnesota have been served by the campuses of Minnesota West Community and Technical College for more than 75 years.

The college has five campuses: Canby, Granite Falls, Jackson, Pipestone and Worthington in addition to centers in Luverne and Marshall.

The college offers a wide array of ever-changing programs and services, including career and transfer preparation, industry and customized training, community education, athletics, performing arts, student organizations, clubs, and personal enrichment. The school provides students opportunities to earn an associate degree, diploma or certificate in more than 60 disciplines, plus convenient campus locations throughout southwest Minnesota as well as online learning opportunities.

The school boasts of its small class sizes, personalized attention and focused, hands-on learning. Its technical programs provide students with the practical skills to begin successful careers in a variety of industries immediately upon graduation. Liberal arts programs at Minnesota West are a great starting point for careers or further study in numerous fields. Credits earned in our associate of arts and associate of science programs are designed for seamless transfer to other Minnesota State institutions.



Lake Area Tech in Watertown was nationally recognized as a top community college.

## ■ MINNESOTA

- Alexandria Technical and Community College
- Minnesota State Community and Technical College
- Northland Community and Technical College
- Ridgewater College
- Saint Paul College

## ■ NEBRASKA

- Central Community College
- Northeast Community College

## ■ NORTH DAKOTA

- Bismarck State College
- North Dakota State College of Science

## ■ SOUTH DAKOTA

- Mitchell Technical Institute
- Southeast Technical Institute

Based on strong and improving student outcomes – including in learning, completion rates, employment rates and earnings, and equity – 15 percent of community colleges nationwide have been invited to apply for the Aspen Prize. Data show that over the last two years, student retention, graduation rates, and degree completion have improved at the top tier of 150 Aspen Prize-eligible colleges.

The 150 community colleges named in November 2019 as eligible to compete for the 2021 Prize were selected from a pool of nearly 1,000 public two-year colleges nationwide using publicly available data on student outcomes. Located in 39 states in urban, rural, and suburban areas,

serving as few as 500 students and as many as 75,000 students, these colleges represent the diversity and depth of the community college sector.

The top 10 finalists for the 2021 Aspen Prize will be named in May 2020. The Aspen Institute will then conduct site visits to each of the finalists and collect additional quantitative data, including employment and earnings data. A distinguished jury will make award decisions in

**Lake Area Technical School in Watertown, S.D., was the 2017 Aspen Prize winner, the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges.**

spring 2021.

Lake Area Technical School in Watertown, South Dakota, was the 2017 Aspen Prize winner. In the 2017-2018 school year, Minnesota West was one of 150 top community colleges nationwide competing for the Aspen Prize while MTI was a 2019 Top 10 finalist.

# Three DIY Efficiency Projects to Tackle This Year



**Patrick Soukup**

Manager of Member Services/Marketing

**If your dryer vent hose is too long, your dryer is working harder than it has to, using more energy than necessary.**

A New Year brings new opportunities to save energy—and money. You may think energy efficiency upgrades require a great deal of time and expense, but that's not always the case.

If you're interested in making your home more efficient but don't want to break the bank, there are several DIY projects you can tackle to increase energy savings. Let's take a look at three inexpensive efficiency upgrades that can help you save energy throughout the year.

## Trim Dryer Vent

*Level of difficulty: easy. Supplies needed: tin snips, gloves, measuring tape and masking tape. Estimated Cost: about \$25 depending on the supplies you already have.*

If your dryer vent hose is too long, your dryer is working harder than it has to, using more energy than necessary. The vent hose should be long enough for you to pull the dryer out a couple feet from the wall, but the shape of the hose should form a line—it should not have a lot of slack, with twists and curves. A shorter, unobstructed vent hose increases the efficiency of your dryer, dries clothing faster and reduces lint buildup, which can create potential fire hazards.

Simply measure, mark and trim the hose to the desired length, then reattach the hose to your dryer and exterior vent. If you're unsure about the hose length, check out YouTube.com for a quick video tutorial.



## Seal Air Leaks

*Level of difficulty: moderate. Supplies needed: caulk and caulk gun, weather stripping, gloves, putty knife, paper towels. Estimated Cost: \$25 to \$50 depending on the materials you purchase.*

Sealing air leaks in your

home can help you save 10% to 20% on heating and cooling bills. Apply caulk around windows, doors, electrical wiring and plumbing to seal in conditioned air. You should also weather strip exterior doors, which can keep out drafts and help you control energy costs. Types of caulking and weather stripping materials vary, but ask your local hardware or home store for assistance if you're unsure about the supplies you need. For more information, the Department of Energy provides step-by-step instructions for caulking and weather stripping: <https://bit.ly/2Kesu6W>

## Insulate Attic Stairs Opening

*Level of difficulty: moderate. Supplies needed (if you build the box yourself): rigid foam board, faced blanket insulation, tape for foam board, measuring tape, utility knife, caulk and caulk gun, plywood. Estimated Cost: \$50 to \$100.*

A properly insulated attic is one of the best ways to optimize energy savings and comfort in your home, but many homeowners don't consider insulating the attic stairs, or the opening to your attic space. Even a well-insulated attic can leak air through the stair opening, but luckily, there's an easy fix.

An insulated cover box can seal and insulate the attic stairs opening. You can build your own insulated cover box or purchase a pre-built box or kit from a local home improvement store like Home Depot or Lowe's for about \$60. If you decide to build your own, check out these step-by-step instructions from the Department of Energy: <https://bit.ly/36YNCYQ>. It should also be noted, if your attic opening is located in a garage that you do not heat and cool, this upgrade will not be as effective.

Saving energy doesn't have to be hard. With a little time and effort, you can maximize energy savings and increase the comfort of your home. To learn about additional ways to save, contact Central Electric.



# Merry Christmas & Happy New Year

*We wish you a safe and happy holiday season  
and send our sincerest thanks for support.*

*From your neighbors at Central Electric Cooperative*

**CENTRAL**  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



## October 19-January 5

Pheasant Hunting Season, Statewide, Pierre, SD, 605-223-7660

## November 22-January 5

Winter Wonderland, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-275-6060

## November 26-December 26

Christmas at the Capitol, Pierre, SD, 605-773-3178

## December 15-March 31

South Dakota snowmobile trails season, Lead, SD, 605-584-3896

## December 19-21

Strawbale Winery Twilight Flights, Renner, SD, 605-543-5071

## December 21-24, 27-28

1880 Train Holiday Express, Hill City, SD, 605-574-2222

## December 31

Make-A-Wish New Year's Eve Benefit and Dance, Ramkota Hotel & Convention Center, Doors Open at 7 p.m., Aberdeen, SD, 605-370-4588

## January 3

Foothills Cattle Producers Roundup with Guest Speaker Corbitt Wall of DV Auction, Meal 6 p.m., Speaker 7 p.m., American Legion, Wessington Springs, SD, Contact 605-539-1929 or wsprings@venturecomm.net

## January 5-6

Foothills Pheasant Fest, Calcutta on Jan. 5, Hunt on Jan. 6, Wessington Springs, SD, Contact 605-539-1929 or wsprings@venturecomm.net

## January 10

Taste of Sturgis, Sturgis City Auditorium, Sturgis, SD, 605-347-3233

## January 24-25: Pro Snocross Races, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

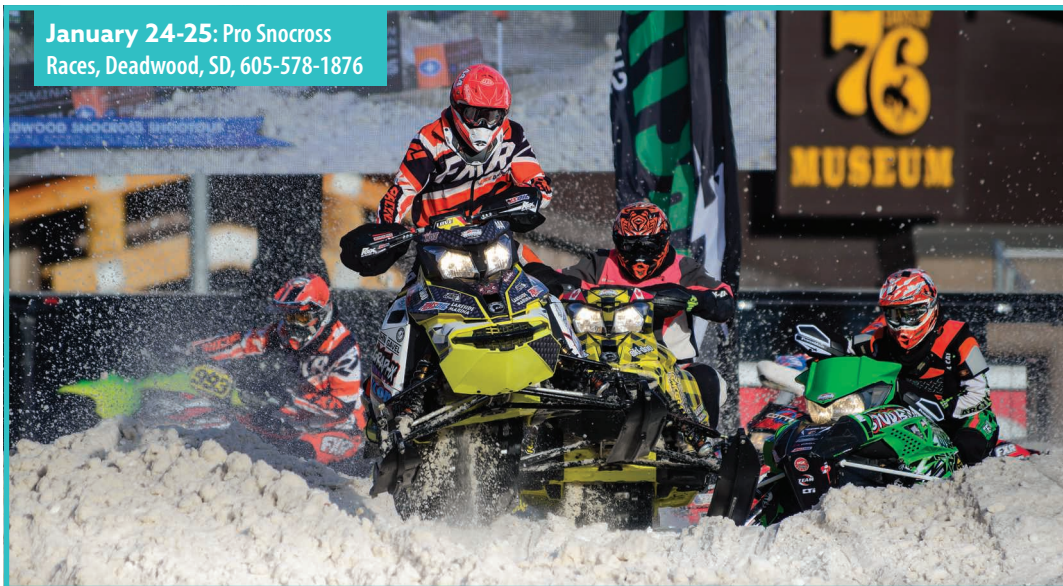


Photo courtesy: travelsouthdakota.com

## January 12

Yoga on the Ice, Main Street Square, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

## January 14-15

Paw Patrol Live! Race to the Rescue, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

## January 16-17

Media One Funkski, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-339-0000

## January 17

Justin Moore & Tracy Lawrence, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

## January 18

Lakota Games on Ice, Prehistoric Indian Village, Mitchell SD, 605-996-5473

## January 18

Heroes Skate Day, Main Street Square, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

## January 31-February 2

12th Annual Winterfest of Wheels, Convention Center, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-231-3100

## January 31-February 2

Winterfest, Lead, SD, 605-584-1100

## January 31-February 9

Annual Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo, Rapid City, SD, 605-355-3861

## February 1

Lake Hendricks Fishing Derby, Hendricks, MN, 507-828-2113

## February 1

James River Gobblers Hunting Heritage Banquet, Doors open 5 p.m., Banquet 6:30 p.m., Highland Conference Center, Mitchell, SD, Contact John at 605-999-3208

## February 1

Living History Fair, Lake Area Technical Institute, Watertown, SD, 605-693-4589, dhuebner@itctel.com

## February 10-16

Frost Fest, Brookings, SD, 605-692-6125

## February 14

Snow Ball, Brookings, SD, 605-692-6700

## February 17

30th Annual Farm and Home Show, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Elementary School, Wessington Springs, SD

## February 21

KORN and Breaking Benjamin, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

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.