

# Central Electric

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

## Cooperative Connections

JUNE 2015 VOL. 16 NO. 2



# GEE-AYE DAIRY PUTS MILKING ROBOTS TO WORK

Pg-8

# New Generation of Members and Employees



**Loren Noess**  
General Manager

You may have noticed over the past few months, we have featured new employees joining the cooperative. Each year, your cooperative is seeing the need to hire new employees generally due to employee retirements.

Many of you already know that I'm retiring this July. When I review the list of employees who are currently working at Central Electric, I see many names with 25, 30 and over 40 years experience. Your cooperative will probably see several employee retirements in the near future. This trend is being experienced by the cooperatives in South Dakota and nationwide.

Over the next several years, our country will see a major shift in the professional landscape. Many businesses are already noticing this change as the Baby Boomer Generation moves into retirement and their children and grandchildren, members of the Millennial Generation, begin to move into the workforce and advance in their careers.

The Millennial Generation is the largest population of adults to move into the workforce since the Baby Boomer generation. They are highly educated and, after weathering a recession during or immediately after trying to break into the workforce, they are motivated by the ability to gain work experience that can turn into a meaningful and rewarding career.

Driven by values and attracted to a company's strong mission and culture over salary and compensation, Millennials are uniquely suited for careers at their local electric cooperative.

Central Electric's dedication to our community and our focus on people, not profits, make it an ideal work environment for individuals seeking to develop meaningful careers.

Within the next five years, approximately 20 percent of America's electric cooperative employees will be eligible for retirement. We are looking to the future generations to move us forward, to help us prepare for an evolving global economy and the changes that will come with new policies and regulations, both in the environmental and security sectors. We need people who will help us to do this while ensuring that we remain true to our mission statement: "Providing Reliable Electric Energy and Services at Good Value."

If you're ready to start your career or make a career change, take a closer look at electric cooperatives which are located in 47 states, and of course, we're right here at home. Building the next generation of employees is critical to maintaining the success of our mission and our business mode.

Central Electric has been in your community since 1948. Every co-op has a sacred obligation to help the next generation prepare for leading their co-op. The young have much to teach us. They are unburdened by the thoughts that plague so many organizations such as "That's not the way we do it around here." Their honesty and ideas refreshes us and challenges us to see things in a new light so that our community can continue to be attractive to young people.

As for me, after July 1, I plan to join my wife Nancy in retirement. We plan to enjoy time together traveling and visiting family. I believe it will take some time to adjust to a different pace. Your cooperative is planning an open house for me on June 26th. I hope you will take a few moments to stop, visit and enjoy a cup of coffee with me.

**JOIN US FOR AN OPEN HOUSE HONORING  
GENERAL MANAGER LOREN NOESS ON HIS RETIREMENT.  
FRIDAY, JUNE 26 AT 2:00 – 4:30 PM  
BETTS ROAD SERVICE CENTER  
25487 403RD AVE, I-90 EXIT 325, MITCHELL, SD**



# Central Electric Cooperative Connections

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Mission Statement  
Providing Reliable Energy and  
Services at a Good Value

This institution is an equal  
opportunity provider and  
employer.

## Co-op News



## Summer Storm Safety Tip

Strong summer storms can  
create dangerous situations.  
Always avoid downed power lines -  
the wire could be live, which could  
be deadly for those nearby.  
Quickly report downed power lines to  
your local electric cooperative.



America's Electric  
Cooperatives

# Drowning: It Can Happen In An Instant



**Most parents** think water safety is first and foremost on their minds whenever they are enjoying summer activities with their kids. But when the unthinkable happens and a child drowns, parents and caregivers have been known to say, “I only looked away for a second.”

## The Younger the Child, the Greater the Risk

Not including boating incidents, about 10 people die from drowning every day in the United States, according to the Centers for Disease Control. While drowning is a risk for every age group, National Safety Council statistics point to drowning being the No. 1 cause of death for children ages 1 to 4. Deaths in this age group are mostly due to a child falling into a pool or being left alone in the bathtub.

## Distractions Make for Tragedies

Parents are cautioned all the time about water safety, but drownings still occur. Always be aware and be in the present moment with your children. Following are a few water safety precautions:

- Never leave your child alone; if you have to leave, take your child with you.
- Enroll children 3 and older in swimming lessons, but remember that lessons don't make your child “drown-proof.”
- Lifeguards aren't babysitters; always keep your eyes on your child.
- Don't let children play around drains and suction fittings.
- Never consume alcohol when operating a boat and always make sure everyone is wearing approved life jackets.
- Don't underestimate the power of water; even rivers and lakes can have undertows.
- Always have a first aid kit and emergency contacts handy.
- Get training in CPR.
- If a child is missing, check the water first.

## The following rules apply to all swimmers:

- Never swim alone.
- Don't dive into unknown bodies of water.
- Don't push or jump on others.
- Be prepared for an emergency.

Every pool, every lake and every warm summer day holds the possibility of new, fun summer experiences. All you need to add is your undivided attention.

Source: *nsc.org*

IF IT'S NOT INSULATED,  
NEITHER ARE YOU.

**REPLACE, NEVER REPAIR DAMAGED EXTENSION CORDS.**

Helping members use electricity safely, that's the power of your co-op membership. Learn more from the experts themselves at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).

 Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives  
The power of human connections.®

## Kids' Corner Safety Poster

**“Don't play with electricity.”**



**Hayden McNinch,**  
Fourth-grader  
at Menno School  
District

*Hayden is the daughter of Steve and Katie Huber, Olivet, S.D. They are members of Southeastern Electric Cooperative, Marion, S.D.*

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.



# Dairy Delights



## Ice Cream in a Bag

2 T. sugar  
1 cup half and half or milk  
1/2 tsp. vanilla  
1/2 cup rock salt (regular, rock or kosher works)  
Ice cubes

Put first three ingredients in a quart-size ziplock bag and seal. Put rock salt and ice in a gallon-size bag. Add the smaller bag to the larger bag and seal. Squeeze the bag for 10 to 15 minutes.

**Mary Ellen Luikens, Tea**

## Wake-up Casserole

8 frozen hashbrown patties  
4 cups shredded Cheddar cheese  
2 cups cubed ham  
2 eggs  
1 cup milk  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/2 tsp. dry mustard

Place hashbrown patties in a single layer in a greased 10x9-inch glass dish. Sprinkle with cheese and ham. In a bowl, beat eggs, milk, salt and mustard. Pour over ham and cheese. Cover and bake at 350°F. for 1 hour. Uncover and bake an additional 15 minutes until edges are golden brown and knife inserted in center comes out clean.

**Mary Jessen, Holabird**

## Tutmaj (Armenian) Yogurt Soup

1 egg, beaten  
3 cups plain or Greek yogurt  
1 tsp. salt  
2 cups water  
1 cup flat egg noodles  
4 T. butter  
2 T. crushed dry mint  
1 small onion, diced

In a 2-quart saucepan, beat egg, yogurt and salt for 3 minutes. Add water. Cook on high, stirring constantly, until boiling. Add noodles. Lower heat and cook until noodles are tender. In fry pan, saute onions in butter until light brown. Add mint. Pour into soup. Cook for 5 minutes. When reheating soup, if too thick, add some boiling water.

**Rose Tucker, Hot Springs**

## Rapid Ruby Rhubarb

1-1/4 cups flour, divided  
1/3 cup powdered sugar  
1/2 cup butter  
2 eggs, beaten  
3/4 cup sugar  
2 cups finely chopped rhubarb

Mix together 1 cup flour, powdered sugar and butter. Press into 8x8-inch pan. Bake at 350°F. for 15 minutes. Combine eggs, sugar, remaining flour and rhubarb. Spread over hot crust. Bake 30 minutes or until set. Let cool 15 minutes before serving.

**Jan Nelson, Belle Fourche**

## Powerhouse Green Smoothie

3/4 cup seedless green grapes  
1/2 cup ripe banana slices  
1/4 cup chopped kale  
2/3 cup non-fat plain Greek yogurt  
1-1/2 tsp. canola oil  
1/2 cup ice cubes

In blender, combine all ingredients. Blend for about 30 seconds to 1 minute or until desired smoothness is achieved. Yield: 1 serving

*Nutritional information per serving: 290 calories; 7 g total fat (0.5 g saturated fat); 0 mg cholesterol; 42 g carbohydrates; 3 g fiber; 31 g sugars; 17 g protein; 75 mg sodium; 502 mg potassium*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Chocolate Chip Cheesecake Bars

1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened  
1/2 cup sugar  
1 egg  
1/2 cup coconut, if desired  
1 (16.5 oz.) roll Pillsbury® refrigerated chocolate chip cookies

In small bowl, beat cream cheese, sugar and egg until smooth. Stir in coconut. In ungreased, 8- or 9-inch square pan, break up half of cookie dough. With floured fingers, press dough evenly in bottom of pan to form crust. Spread cream cheese mixture over dough. Crumble and sprinkle remaining half of dough over cream cheese mixture. Bake at 350°F. for 35 to 40 minutes or until golden brown and firm to the touch. Cool 30 minutes. Refrigerate at least 2 hours or until chilled. Store in refrigerator.

**Paula Vogel, Ethan**

## Crunchy Potato Balls

2 cups very stiff mashed potatoes  
2 cups finely chopped ham  
1 cup shredded Cheddar or Swiss cheese  
1/3 cup mayonnaise  
1 egg, beaten  
1 tsp. mustard  
1/4 tsp. pepper  
2 to 4 T. flour  
1-3/4 cups crushed corn flakes

Combine first 7 ingredients; mix well. Add enough flour to make mixture stiff. Chill. Shape into 1-inch balls. Roll in corn flakes. Place on greased baking sheet. Bake at 350°F. for 25 minutes..

**Mary Truman, Kimball**

At about 25 cents per 8-ounce serving, milk is a bargain, especially when you consider all the liquid assets inside — protein, calcium, potassium, vitamin D, vitamin B12 and more.

Source: [www.dairymakesense.com](http://www.dairymakesense.com)

*Please send your favorite dessert, salad and garden produce 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 2015. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.*

# How Does It Work?

## Oil Circuit Reclosure



**Ken Schlinggen**  
Director Of Member Services

Central Electric Cooperative's distribution system is equipped with protective devices known as oil circuit reclosers (OCRs), or breakers. OCRs respond to electric faults by switching electric power on and off.

When an electric fault occurs, a relay directs the OCR to open a switch, interrupting power to the electric fault. This momentary interruption gives the cause of the fault an opportunity to break contact, or clear itself from the power line.

After a second or two, the OCR switch closes. While the switch is open, homes and businesses on that part of the electric line experience a blink.

If the first momentary interruption clears the electric fault, the power stays on. You don't have to call for assistance, and no linemen are dispatched.

If the electric fault is still present, the process repeats. After three attempts, the OCR switch remains open, resulting in

an outage. At this point, you're without power. You and other member/owners on that section of line call us, and we dispatch linemen to investigate, make repairs, and restore power.

The OCRs, like all electrical equipment, require routine maintenance to insure proper operation and extend their useful life. Each year, Central Electric contracts with Solomon Corporation to inspect and maintain a number of our OCR's. Solomon Corporation is based out of Solomon, Kansas, and they provide OCR maintenance services for many of the electric cooperatives in South Dakota.

Central Electric linemen will collect all the OCRs that are scheduled for maintenance and bring them to the Betts Road Service Center. The OCRs have an external counter that keeps track of how often it has operated since being placed into service. The number of operations are used to determine when the OCR needs to be serviced.

Solomon Corporation provides two employees and a fully equipped, self-contained workshop housed in a large truck. Each OCR consists of electrical components submerged in mineral oil. The oil is drained, filtered and reused. The metal shell is cleaned, repainted and labeled. All the electrical components are inspected and replaced as needed. New gaskets are installed, oil is placed back into the metal shell and the OCR is reassembled and ready to be placed back into service.

Limiting momentary outages is a high priority for your cooperative. Central Electric has an aggressive maintenance



Rows of oil circuit reclosures that have been refurbished and ready to be placed back in service by Central Electric crews.



program to keep our equipment in top working order and to keep trees and branches clear of power lines.

As a member/owner of Central Electric, you can help us keep blinks to a minimum. Please be mindful of power lines and stay clear of the right-of-way when you're planting trees. If you notice trees or limbs growing too close to our lines, we'd appreciate a call.

If you're experiencing an unusual number of blinks at your home, please let us know that as well.

You can also take steps to avoid some of the frustration that accompanies momentary outages. Consider purchasing an alarm clock equipped with a battery backup. When the power blinks, your clock doesn't, and you're less likely to find yourself waking up late for school or work.

If the power blinks while you're on your computer, you can lose your data. Plugging your PC into an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) will help protect your work. The UPS will keep your PC running so you have time to save your data and get your computer shut down.



Above - The truck in the background is the mobile workshop that is used by Solomon Corporation. The inventory of OCR's shown in the foreground are part of the 145 OCR's that have been brought in for maintenance this year.



Employees from Solomon Corporation shown in their mobile workshop busy working to refurbish oil circuit reclosures for Central Electric.



# To the Moon

## Gee-Aye Dairy Puts Astronauts to Work

By Brenda  
Kleinjan

**A**STRONAUTS STEVE, PRINCESS, QUINCEY AND VANNA began doing the daily milking at the Gee-Aye Dairy west of Ethan, S.D., in June 2012. The four are not space cowboys but rather a team of robots that milk cows in Gary and Amy Blase's 160-head herd of Holsteins round the clock.

Adapting to the robots was a learning process for both the Blases and the cattle.

"Every cow reacts in her own way," said Gary. "It wasn't hard to get them to use the robots."

Each cow is equipped with a special collar and activity monitor that tells the robots when she was last milked and if it is time to milk again. (The cow can choose to be milked up to six times a day, depending on her lactation and milk production.)

A special pellet feed is in a trough at the milking station. As the cow feeds, an overhead 3-D camera records the cow's position in the milker. The robot's

arm slides into place and lasers locate each quarter of the cow's udder, attaching the milker. (The cow's first milking is mapped and stored in the computer, making subsequent milkings a bit quicker.)

One could argue the cows are part of the fitness craze and have their own version of a Fitbit. Just like the exercise monitor worn on millions of humans' wrists, the dairy cattle have activity monitors hanging from their numbered collars.

From those monitors, the Blases can track how many times a given cow went to milk, what the cow's temperature and weight were while being milked and how many minutes a day the cow spends in rumination. (Dairy cattle spend about 450 to 500 minutes a day chewing their cud. Departures from that range may indicate a variety of issues that may need to be addressed.) The data collected by the robots also includes the amount of time each of







trough – out of 1881’s reach. In a roughly 45 minute window, that cow has approached and been rejected by Quincey three times.

The robots also know which cattle are being treated – or doctored – for various ailments and diverts those cows’ milk to a dump tank, which is used on farm and does not enter the farm’s sellable milk supply. The robot then commences a complete wash down before the next healthy cow is milked.

Three times a day, the robots automatically shut down for a whole-system wash down.

While investigating the robots, the Blases, who married in 1972 and have been dairying ever since, visited 10 dairies in Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota. Ultimately, they decided to invest in the robots and retrofitted their existing operation.

“Dairying is always going to be labor-intensive and time-consuming,” said Amy, noting that while the robots handle the collection of milk, they don’t feed the cattle, scoop out the barn alleyways or change the animals’ bedding.”

The robots have given the Blases freedom from the clock and the parlor, though.

“It’s opened an opportunity to follow our grandkids a bit more,” noted Amy.

## MEET THE ROBOTS

**Steve:** Named in honor of an employee of the dairy who died of a heart attack on his way to work.

**Princess:** Named for the Gee-Aye Dairy’s record-producing cow, who was declared a Gold Medal Dam in August 2000. Her daughter, Princette, is set to break her production record.

**Quincey:** Named for one of the family’s top show cows, Quincey is the robot that all cows are trained on.

**Vanna:** Named for the head of one of the dairy’s top show cow families.

the cow’s quarters was milked, how much milk was produced and other pieces of data.

“We probably didn’t realize how hard it was to put it all together,” said Gary, explaining the data being recorded and displayed on the robot. “When you see this, that means what?” But, armed with the data collected, the Blases can make adjustments in their management of their herd.

As the Blases’ explain “Quincey,” the robot that serves as the primary training station for the cattle, one cow in particular seems to believe that the robot will forget her previous approaches to the milking station that morning. Cow No. 1881 has been known to attempt milking 50 times a day on her quest for the pellets that are only fed while a cow is being milked. She approaches the milking station and Quincey quickly analyzes her data and immediately swings the exit gate – and attached feeding



**Opposite page:** Gary Blase analyzes screens of data collected about his herd through the Gee-Aye Dairy’s Lely Astronaut robotic milking machines. Among the data Gary is monitoring closely is the output of one cow – Princette – who is about to break her mother’s milk production record. One of the robots is named for the mother – Princess – who produce 328,000 pounds of milk (roughly 6.5 semi tankers full) in her lifetime. **Above:** The data is used to adjust feed rations and other factors in the herd’s health. **Right:** Gary shows the milk collection area of astronaut Quincey. The monitor on the door shows real-time data collected by the robot and also allows the Blases to make adjustments. **Top:** Amy demonstrates how the touch-screen is used to guide the milker’s lasers in place for a cow’s initial milking. The process is then automatic, unless a problem occurs.



# Summer Vacation Savings

You've prepared everything from the flip flops and snacks to sunscreen and pit stops...but have you prepped your home for vacation? Follow this checklist to optimize energy savings while you're away:

1) **Turn Up Your Thermostat.** Turn your thermostat to 85 degrees. Heating and cooling costs account for over half of electricity costs. For every degree the temperature is raised, homeowners save 2% in energy costs. Also be sure to turn off any running ceiling fans. If you'd like to be able to control your thermostat while away, you can install a Bryant HouseWise Thermostat. This allows you to control your thermostat on a mobile device so you can return home to a comfortable temperature. Contact Lincoln Feistner for more information.

2) **Set Lights on a Timer.** An unlit house may signal that you are not home and attract criminal activity. Instead of leaving lights on that run all day and night, set lights on a timer to run for only several hours at night. For further savings, install energy efficient CFL or LED light bulbs.

3) **Shut Off Circuit to Water Heater.** No need to heat a tank of water while you're away. Turn off the switch on the breaker box for your water heater. For gas water heaters, turn off the gas valve.

4) **Turn up or Turn off Refrigerator.** Your refrigerator is a kWh guzzling machine. While away, we recommend removing perishable items, turning off the ice-maker, and bumping up the refrigerator temperature to 42 degrees and the freezer to 5 degrees. To help maintain a cool internal temperature, place bottles/jugs of water or bags of ice inside. If you plan to be away for longer than 1 month, consider unplugging your refrigerator. Remove food, wipe clean, and place an open box of baking soda inside to fight odors. Leave the doors open. To prevent the growth of mold and mildew, turn off the icemaker and water supply valve to the refrigerator. Drain the water dispenser reservoir if needed. Place a towel underneath/in front of the refrigerator to catch any extra draining water.

5) **Unplug Electronics.** Unplug any unnecessary electronics or appliances while away. Even while turned off, these devices still use electricity when plugged in. Devices to unplug include TVs, entertainment centers, computers, lamps, electric razors or blow dryers, microwaves, toasters, coffee pots, digital clocks, and cell phone or laptop chargers.

6) **Close Your Curtains/Blinds.** Be sure to close curtains and lower blinds to prevent heat gain. Using reflective sheeting or white-plastic backed curtains further fights the summer sun.

7) **Track Usage via SmartHub.** With SmartHub, you can track your daily and even hourly usage. By comparing usage before and during your vacation, you can better understand what you're using electricity on or locate hidden energy wasters that used electricity while you were away. Sign up for SmartHub by visiting [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop).

So while you're away on a fishing trip or with the kids at Disneyland, make sure your home gets a "vacation" too. Your electric bill will thank you!

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



I'm saving money by adjusting my thermostat before I go on vacation. What can you do? Find out how the little changes add up at [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com).



# Can You Locate These People?

These past members were mailed Capital Credit checks, and the checks were returned to our office or were never cashed. If you know of a correct address or telephone number, please contact our office at 605-996-7516 or 800-477-2892.

Aberle, Gabriel (Allen) %Nancy Aberle  
 Altheide, Skylar  
 Anderson Laverne %Shirley Anderson  
 Asbenson, Luray  
 Bainbridge, Ron % Ethel Bainbridge  
 Baker Estate, Donald %Clara Baker  
 Berg, Jean  
 Bergheim, June  
 Bonanza Sign %Claudia Dockter  
 Bordeaux-Orr, Carole  
 Boston, Tom & Regina %Roger Ihrig  
 Brown, Joyce  
 Buchholz, Kenneth  
 Buehler, Jerome %Martha Buehler  
 Cadwell, James & Maureen  
 Carlin, Thomas  
 Carter, Jean  
 Casey, Dan  
 Cassens, Cecil  
 Chance, Dennis  
 Christensen, Beth  
 Christensen, Lyle; Janice Christensen  
 Clift, Lola  
 Collins, Vernon & Heather  
 Cooper, Joyce  
 Cornell Intervention Inc % Jeff Reavy  
 Dakota Acres  
 Dakota Alumican %Darin Moke  
 Dalldorf, Billy  
 Dobras, Joe  
 Dooley, Bob & Lisa  
 Drake, Norman  
 Dusek, Joe %Lawrence Dusek  
 Eare, Deanna  
 Eaton, Austin  
 Erickson, James  
 Ewing, Glen  
 Eyer Estate, Glen  
 Fenske, Eugene  
 Forst, Arthur  
 Fridley, Natalie C  
 Frye, George H  
 Geidel, Norbert  
 Gosmire, Donald % Ilene Thompson  
 Gosmire, Gerald % Ilene Thompson  
 Grabenstein, Barry D  
 Grogan Jr, C M

Grosz, John  
 Hansberger, Tim  
 Harmsen, Craig & Suzy  
 Hartman, Glenda  
 Hawk, Lyle  
 Hinkle, Arthur  
 Hoscheid, Carl  
 Hubbard, Virginia  
 Hulteng, Paul D  
 Iburg, Steve  
 Isburg Estate, Rachel % Hester Fleury  
 Job, Rueben  
 Kinsley, Darrell  
 Klein, Robert  
 Kommes, Mrs M J  
 Kraus, John  
 Krumvieda, Richard  
 Logan, Ryan  
 Long, Kenneth %Zerline Long  
 Love, Terry  
 Lynch, Larry  
 Marshall, Cindy  
 Mayberry, Reed  
 McIntyre Estate, Will % Deb McIntyre  
 Midwest Mobile Communications  
 % L Friestad  
 Mixon, Shawn  
 Muilenburg, John D  
 Nielsen, Brent & Debra  
 Norton, Richard  
 Olson, Craig  
 Pence, Clinton L  
 Pietz, Kenneth  
 Plamp, L W  
 Pohlen, Bryan  
 Pommer Bros  
 Rasmussen, Kim  
 Russell, Bernard  
 Reifers, Gregg G  
 Roduner Estate, Raymond  
 Sawyer, Gloria  
 Schaefer, Arnold  
 Scheller, Scott P  
 Scherschligt, Don  
 Schimke, Reinhold % Fern Vogt  
 Schmidt Theodore F %Steven Schmidt  
 Schmidt, Lauri

Schrooten, Allan %Ardis Schrooten  
 Schuldt, Clarence T %Darlene Horsley  
 Scott, Glen C  
 Scott, Jon  
 Scott, Michael A  
 Shields, Alyce % Bobbie Ziegler  
 Shields, Janis  
 Sievert, Ryan  
 Silver Creek Twp Hall %Lewis Larson  
 Skinner, Ron E  
 Smallwood, Thomas  
 Smith, George D (Bridgewater)  
 Smith, Sherry  
 Sperlich, Harlan  
 Stanley, Glenn A  
 Stenson, Stanic  
 Surma, Barbara  
 Swanson, Edwin  
 Swenson, Robert  
 Taylor, I W  
 Thome Estate, Joe %Delores Guindon  
 Thompson, Paul  
 Timberlake, Paul  
 Tri-State Ag  
 Vanderlinde, Tony %Edna Vanderlinde  
 Venners, Ted  
 Veverka, Steve  
 Wagner, Lisa  
 Waldner, William  
 Washechek, Gary  
 Webster, Merritt  
 Weinberg, Owen  
 Weisser, Myron %Angie Harberts  
 Weisser, Bruce  
 Wesleyan Sioux Chapel  
 %Wslyn Minstrs  
 Wicks, Wade  
 Wieczorek, James  
 Willard, Ray  
 Winker, Nancy  
 With Horn, Scott & Kella  
 Wulf, Larry

# Helping Community Gardens Grow

By  
Brenda Kleinjan

**M**ISTRESS MARY MIGHT HAVE BEEN CONTRARY IN getting her garden to grow, but community gardens are bringing young and old together to develop local foods and provide training to upcoming gardeners.

“Community gardens keep popping up all over the state. I maintain a list, but I’m sure it’s just a small portion of what’s out there,” said Chris Zdorovtsov, South Dakota State University Extension community development field specialist with the SDSU Consumer Sciences Department.

“I have about 70 on my list, but I think that’s only a portion – probably only half to a third of what’s out there,” said Zdorovtsov.

“Community gardens are creating a place for people to grow food for themselves when they may not otherwise have the land to do so or if they don’t have the equipment to till up a space,” she said,

noting that the garden spaces can be an ideal setting for older South Dakotans to continue gardening.

SDSU Extension has four key programs designed to foster community and youth-oriented gardening.

First is the **Community and Family Extension Leaders Children’s Gardening \$150 Mini Grants**. Available each spring, the grants help educational garden projects fund seeds, plants, small garden equipment or other programming materials. The grant is offered to any school-age group, K-12, with preference given to after-school and out-of-school time programs. Participants must partner with SDSU Extension through a Master Gardener, a county 4-H youth program advisor, FNP/EFNEP assistant or other connection.

Next up is the **SDSU Extension Seed Bank** which offers educational gardens across the state of South Dakota 20 vegetable seed packets. The





donated seeds are intended for newly starting and established educational gardens for youth or adults.

The **South Dakota School Garden Grant** provided by SDSU Extension is available to help newly starting school gardens launch programs focused on growing and consuming fruits and vegetables. This program provides K-12 schools with funding and development support to help them launch successful garden projects. Award winners will receive project development coaching from SDSU Extension staff, 20 seed packets and \$1,000 for purchasing construction supplies, tools/equipment, plants and programming materials.

**Kids Gardening Grants and Fundraising** is a comprehensive list of national grants and deadlines related to youth and community gardening.

Zdorovtsov noted that communities of all sizes are taking advantage of the various programs. "Some of the smallest towns are providing some of these sites."

Interest in community gardening goes back generations.

"The whole era of the World War II-era Victory Garden brought gardening back as an important means for food production," said Zdorovtsov.

While many people had backyard gardens, gardens were also tilled up in some public places to "plant, plant, plant."

While the Victory Gardens may be first to come to mind, Zdorovtsov noted that in the early 1890s, vacant lots in Detroit, Mich., were used for the unemployed to grow food to feed their families and create income.

"School gardens extended from then until the 1920s and there was a movement during World War I for a war garden campaign," she said.

The Depression also brought relief and sustenance gardening for food and income, followed by the more well-known Victory Gardens.

"Then it drifted away, but then in the 1970s, community gardens started to happen again with interest in starting urban gardens," she said. In 1978, the Community Garden Association was formed.

"I've seen interest every year; it's been consistent since I started in this position in 2008. There are one to three new ones each year in Sioux Falls, S.D., and Rapid City, S.D., but also in smaller communities like Wakonda, S.D., and Arlington, S.D.," Zdorovtsov said. "In general there are probably more than there were 15 years; probably the newer trend is incorporating them into schools and curriculum."

The South Dakota Discovery Center in Pierre has gardens that have benefited from the grants, including the center's model square-foot gardens.

"The purpose of the gardens is to demonstrate that a lot of produce can be grown in a small space, for little expense and provide family's access to fresh vegetables," said Kristie Maher, SDDC executive director. "Each spring students help plant gardens. Often they make seed starter mats, paper towels upon which they glue the proper number of seeds properly spaced out. Two of the gardens feature hoop greenhouse roofs to help the seeds get started. During the growing season, SDDC guests are welcome to help weed, water and harvest and to use their senses to explore the various plants.

"Gardening goes hand-in-hand with the South Dakota Harvest of the Month ([www.sdharvestofthemonth.org](http://www.sdharvestofthemonth.org)) program that shares tasting opportunities and health benefits in order to encourage kids and families to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables," said Maher.

Interested in starting a community garden? SDSU Extension provides coaching to teams interested in starting successful community gardens. The teams can assist local planners with guidance on garden models, site selection, overcoming challenges, budgeting, applications and guidelines. A development workbook: *Diggin' the Dirt, Community*, is also available. Communities are also welcome to request online webinars on community garden topics. More info at: <http://igrow.org/community-development/local-foods/community-gardens>

## CFEL Children's Garden Grants

**Ten youth and school gardens** received funding this spring to launch or enhance garden programs across the South Dakota. SDSU Extension and the Community and Family Extension Leaders (CFEL) provided funding for the \$150 mini-grants.

The gardens can use the funds to purchase seeds, plants or small garden equipment or utilize the award to purchase programming materials. Garden programs must have an SDSU Extension partner, such as a Master Gardener, a county 4-H youth program advisor, or FNP/EFNEP assistant. They must provide programming to a school-age group, K-12, incorporate hands-on learning experiences for a six- to 12-week period and incorporate plant science and nutrition education topics.

### 2015 Awardees:

- Bad Nation Rustlers 4-H, Ft. Thompson
- Bon Homme 4-H Jr. Garden Club, Tyndall
- Centerville FFA, Centerville
- EmBe, Sioux Falls
- Kennebec Women's Club-Community Garden, Kennebec
- Lutheran Social Services of S.D. — New Beginnings Center, Aberdeen
- North Rapid Community Schools, Rapid City
- Oahe YMCA, Pierre
- St. Elizabeth Seton Elementary School, Rapid City
- Youth and Family Services, Inc., Rapid City

### 2014 Awardees:

- 4-H Youth Community Garden, Meade County 4-H, Sturgis
- Andes Central Afterschool Program and Charles Mix Co. 4-H, Lake Andes
- Christian Center Daycare, Sioux Falls
- Harding County School District and Harding County 4-H, Buffalo
- Lemmon Jr. Master Gardeners, Lemmon
- Lutheran Social Services of S.D. — New Beginnings Center, Aberdeen
- M&M Day Care and Jungle After School Program, Huron
- North Rapid Community Schools, Rapid City
- Rosebud Juvenile Detention Center, White River
- South Dakota Discovery Center, Pierre
- Wall Afterschool Program-WASP, Wall
- Wounded Knee School District, Manderson

# Extreme Giveaway!

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**Lincoln Feistner**  
Sales Project Manager

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### May 23-24

Wessington Springs SDRA  
Foothills Rodeo, 4-H Rodeo  
Grounds, 6 p.m., Saturday and  
2 p.m. Sunday, Contact Larry  
Powell, Rodeo Club president,  
at 605-539-9611

### May 30

Game, Fish and Parks  
Family Outdoor Recreation  
Day, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Jerauld County Trap Club  
Wessington Springs, SD  
Contact Lynn Geuke at  
605-942-7698

PHOTO COURTESY OF PAUL MAMMENGGA



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.

## Events of Special Note

### June 13

Outdoor Purple Martin Festival  
Columbia, SD, 605-396-2381

### June 14

Father's Day Golf Tournament  
Wessington Springs, SD  
Contact Springs Country Club  
at 605-539-1944

### June 4–August 13

Music in the Garden  
Thursday evenings only  
Refreshments 6 p.m.  
Music 7 to 8 p.m.  
Opera House  
Wessington Springs, SD  
605-539-1169

### June 11-13

Kyle Evans Memorial Wagon  
Train, Wessington Springs to  
Gann Valley, Contact Mark  
Reindl at 605-539-0014 or  
mreindl@venturecomm.net  
or Brian Bergeleen at  
605-350-3742

### June 13

Game Fish & Parks Family  
Outdoor Recreation Day  
9 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Jerauld County Trap Club  
Wessington Springs, SD  
Contact Lynn Geuke at  
605-942-7698

### June 13

Gann Valley's 130 Year  
Celebration, 10 a.m. Parade

1 p.m. Pedal Pull, Petting Zoo  
4-Wheeler Obstacle course  
and more activities; 5 p.m.  
Free will supper at Fire Hall  
9 p.m. Dance at Fire Hall  
Gann Valley, SD, Contact Carol  
Grabin at 605-293-3212 or  
605-293-3277

### June 18

Tornado Remembrance Event  
5 p.m., Wessington Springs  
Contact Wessington Springs  
City Hall at 605-539-1691

### June 19-20

Prairie Hills Art Show  
Friday 7 to 9 p.m. and  
Saturday noon to 4 p.m.  
Opera House,  
Wessington Springs, SD  
Contact Julie Barber  
at 605-539-9471

### June 26-28

Scavenger's Journey from  
Plankinton to Presho  
Contact Amy Bultsma at  
605-942-7781  
scavengersjourney.com/#!

### June 29

Jerauld/Buffalo County 4-H  
Horse Show, Jerauld County  
4-H Rodeo Grounds  
Wessington Springs, SD  
Contact Julie Barber  
at 605-539-9471

### July 3

Blue & Gold Golf Tournament  
Wessington Springs, SD  
Contact Springs Country Club  
at 605-539-1944

### July 3-5

Dakota Running Irons (Cowboy  
Mounted Shooters), Jerauld  
Co. 4-H Rodeo Grounds  
Wessington Springs, SD  
Contact Craig Shryock  
at 605-730-1979

### July 4

Annual Wessington Springs 4th  
of July Parade & Events  
Contact Area Chamber and  
Development at 605-539-1929

### July 4

W.S. Fireman's Street Dance  
9 p.m. to 1 a.m., WS Fire Hall  
Wessington Springs, SD  
Contact Fire Chief Jim Vavra  
at 605-539-9018

### July 4

Patriotic Organ Concert  
4 p.m., David Salmen  
Residence, 38569 SD Hwy 34  
Wessington Springs, SD  
Tickets \$25, Contact David  
Salmen at 605-354-1694 or  
orgn2nr@aol.com

### July 11-12

Arts Expo, SD Hall of Fame  
Building, Chamberlain, SD  
605-234-6149

### August 13-16

American Island Days  
American Creek Campground  
Chamberlain, SD  
<http://americanislanddays.com>