

Cooperative Connections



**New Solar
Coming to S.D.**

Page 8

**Saving Lives:
Grain Bin
Safety**

Page 12

Keeping the lights on despite current challenges

Your Role for Reliable Power



Ken Schlimgen

General Manager

It would be difficult to stop Mother Nature from causing outages, but we can prevent outages caused by equipment contacting power lines.

Even though I work at an electric cooperative, like most people, I don't think much about the electricity I use. I expect the lights to come on every time I flip a switch and my appliances to work all day long.

Many of us are spending more time at home and as a result are using more electricity. We all have the expectation of an endless supply of electricity without any interruption. This expectation is a direct result of our experience. After all, the cooperative's system of generation, transmission and distribution equipment has provided reliable delivery of electricity for almost 99% of the day and night.

This is a pretty amazing accomplishment given we have thousands of miles of power lines, equipment and parts by the millions, and multiple generators working in unison so we can turn on one light bulb or operate a large manufacturing facility. All it takes is one failure in the system, and we lose our electric power supply.

In early June a strong thunderstorm with high winds damaged over 100 cooperative poles mostly in the Mt. Vernon area. It took two long days and the assistance of an additional 30 linemen with heavy equipment to rebuild almost 6 miles of powerlines. We still have permanent repairs to complete over the coming months. Central Electric's cost of this storm event is estimated to exceed \$250,000.

I want to thank our members in the Mt. Vernon area for their patience and support while crews restored power. I also want to thank the linemen that came to our aid and especially our employees. They worked long hours to get power restored quickly without a single accident. It was truly a team effort by everyone at the cooperative.

It would be difficult to stop Mother Nature from causing outages, but we can prevent outages caused by equipment contacting power lines. So far this year, there have been four occasions where someone dug into buried power lines, two excavators and one sprayer have contacted overhead power lines, and 10 occasions where farm equipment has damaged or broken poles. We can and should do better.

Each of these events cost money to the responsible party and causes the loss of electric power to many people. Although no one has been hurt, the odds tell us it is only a matter of time before someone is hurt or killed. As you work or play outdoors, be aware of where electrical equipment is located. Educate yourself, your family and others on the steps to take when equipment contacts a power line. You could save your life or the life of someone you love. You can visit www.poweringyoursafety.com to learn more.

The lobby to the cooperative headquarters is not open to the public yet. In an effort to isolate our workforce from the potential exposure of COVID19, I am being very cautious about opening the doors. Our employees have a critical mission of being able to support the reliable delivery of electricity at all hours of the day. Doing what I can to keep our employees healthy is extremely important. Please be patient and understanding while we make a slow transition to normal operations.

Most of you received a credit on your most recent electric statement. The credit is a reflection of your share, as a cooperative member/owner, of Central Electric's annual capital credit retirement. We normally issue the credit in December, but we felt an early retirement would help our members during these trying times.

We recognize that the past few months have been challenging, but please know that we are here to act as your trusted energy advisor. If you have questions about your account or are looking for ways to more efficiently use electric energy, please give us a call. Central Electric is your electric cooperative and we are here to serve you.

Until next month, take care and be safe!

CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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.

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, 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 program_intake@usda.gov.

Subscription information: Central Electric Cooperative members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Non-member subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. Periodicals Postage Paid at Central Electric Cooperative, PO Box 850, Mitchell, SD 57301, and at additional mailing offices.

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; website: 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

Our office is closed to the public until further notice due to COVID-19.

Mission Statement

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

CO-OP NEWS

Board Meeting Summary

The board of directors met on June 15, 2020 via a video call for the regular board meeting.

The board approved the May 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:

- Local COVID cases and ongoing planning to reopen the office.
- Presented a services contract among cooperatives utilizing NISC software.
- Operational updates from POET and Transcanada.
- Financial updates from East River Electric Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative.
- Economic development activities in Brule county.
- Change in NRECA Regional Meetings to online format.
- Reviewed progress from 2018 Strategic Planning Session and logistics for the

2020 Strategic Planning session.

- Requested attendance for the SDREA Board Leadership Summit.

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

Board Action

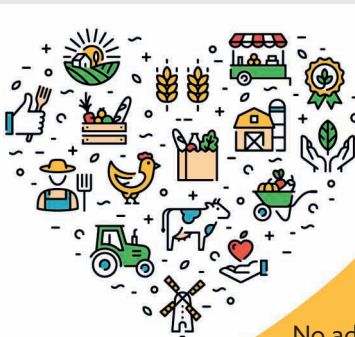
The board considered and/or acted upon the following:

1. Approved recommendation for a local REED Loan application.
2. Approved a member insurance claim.
3. Appointed Mark Hofer as delegate and Butch Morrison as alternate for the East River Annual Meeting.
4. Approved a labor only contract with Dave's Construction.
5. Approved Inventory of Work Orders No. 231 and 231-1 for \$846,495.50 and \$20,526.55.

The next board of directors meeting will be held July 20, 2020 at the Betts Road Service Center.

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

Financial Report	May 2020	Year-to-Date
kWh Sales	22,424,154 kWhs	138,675,540 kWhs
Electric Revenues	\$2,323,512	\$13,727,432
Total Cost of Service	\$2,170,307	\$13,094,615
Operating Margins	\$153,204	\$632,817



**Join us for Ag
Appreciation Day**
at the Sioux Empire Fair

Wednesday, August 5, 2020
Lunch served 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



No admission ticket required

Focus on These Safe Practices Away From the Workplace

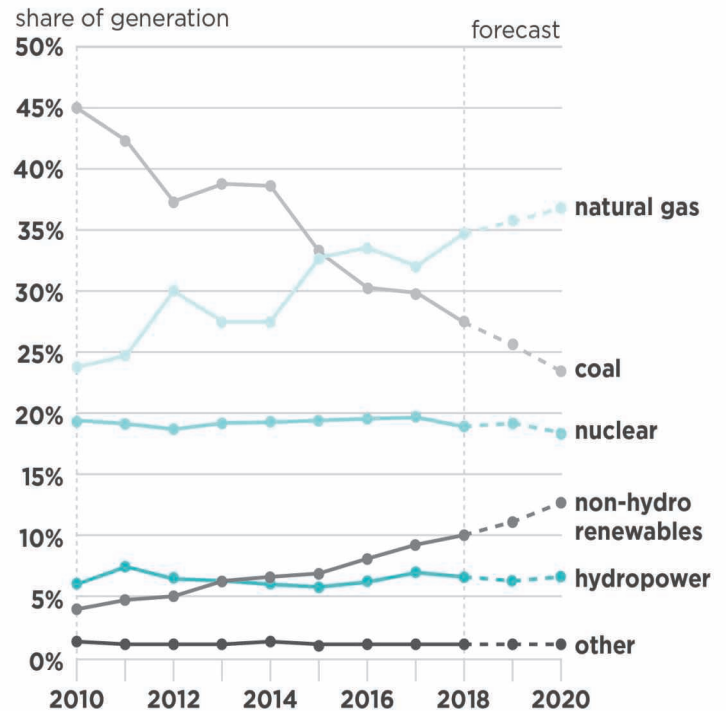
While your local electric cooperative often focuses on electrical safety and provides reminders to keep you free from harm, there are many other dangers lurking out there that don't necessarily pertain to electrical power.

Read on to see the National Safety Council's list of the top causes of preventable injuries and death away from the workplace. Keep these in mind and help protect you and your family from danger.

- **Poisoning.** In 2011, accidental poisonings overtook car crashes for the first time as the leading cause of unintentional injury-related death for all ages combined. Poisoning deaths are caused by gases, chemicals and other substances, but prescription drug overdose is by far the leading cause.
- **Vehicle crashes.** Roadway crashes are the second-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death overall in the U.S. Impaired driving, distracted driving, exceeding the speed limit and inexperience can often cause a life to be cut tragically short in the blink of an eye.
- **Falls.** Falling is the third-leading cause of unintentional injury-related death over all age groups across the country, but it's the No. 1 cause of death for those who are 65 and older who sometimes have health complications and problems with balancing.
- **Choking and suffocation.** Choking on food or other objects is a primary cause. Suffocation and choking rank higher among the elderly and infants.
- **Drowning.** This is the No. 1 cause of death for children ages 1-4, mostly due to children falling into pools or being left alone unattended in bathtubs.
- **Fires and burns.** Fires often start at night, when families are asleep and most vulnerable. A working smoke alarm will cut in half the chances of dying in a fire.
- **Natural and environmental incidents.** Weather-related disasters claim hundreds of lives per year. You should learn all you can about emergency preparedness and always have an emergency kit on hand.

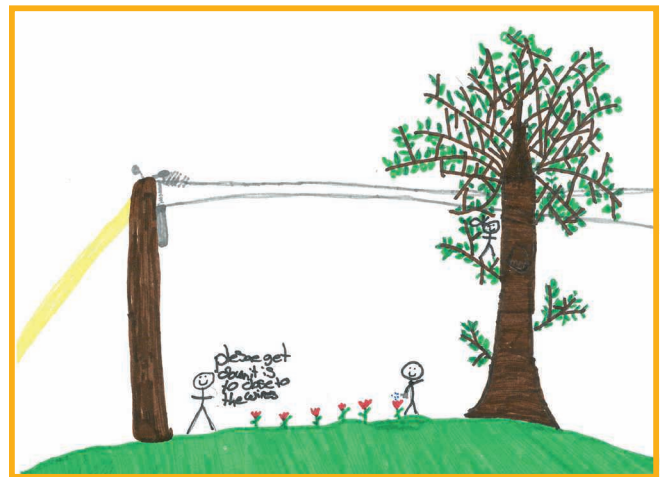
Source: National Safety Council

U.S. ELECTRICITY GENERATION BY ENERGY SOURCE (2010-2020)



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Short-Term Energy Outlook*, January 2019
 Note: Confidence interval derived from NYMEX options market information

KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"Please get down - it is too close to the wires!"

Forrest Hawk, 9 years old

Forrest Hawk is the grandson of Steve and Pru Hawk. They are members of Lacreek Electric Association, Inc., Martin, 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.



Protein-Packed Salads

Ranch, Bacon, Parmesan Salad

1 16 oz. Farfalle (bowtie) pasta	½ cup shredded Parmesan cheese
1 cup prepared ranch dressing	1 carrot, peeled and diced
6 slices bacon	1 stalk celery, diced
	1 red onion, diced

Fill large pot with lightly salted water, bring to rolling boil over high heat. Once water is boiling, stir in bow tie pasta and return to boil. Cook pasta uncovered, stirring occasionally, until pasta has cooked through, but still firm to the bite, about 12 mins. Drain well in a colander set in the sink. Transfer to a bowl, refrigerate until cool, at least 30 mins. Place bacon in a large, deep skillet, cook over med.-high heat, turning occasionally, until evenly browned, about 10 mins. Drain bacon slices on a paper towel-lined plate, let cool, and chop. In a large salad bowl, stir together the ranch dressing, bacon, Parmesan cheese, carrot, celery, and red onion. Lightly stir in cooled pasta to coat with dressing, and refrigerate 2 hours.

Cortney Reedy, Tea, SD

Rotini Salad

1 box rotini	sliced turkey, deli style
celery, green pepper, radishes, cucumber, onion, carrots	mushrooms, chopped
	cheddar cheese, shredded

Cook rotini as directed on package. Chop vegetables. Put all ingredients into a large bowl. Add 1 bottle zesty Italian dressing. Let chill, enjoy. Can add almost any fresh vegetable.

Mary Jessen, Holabird, SD

Broccoli Bacon Salad

Dressing:	2 T. vinegar
1 cup real mayo	Brown 1 pkg. bacon, break into pieces
¼ cup sugar	

Wash two fresh heads of broccoli and cut into bite size pieces. Add ½ cup raisins, ¼ cup purple onion, 1 cup shredded cheese, pepper to taste. Mix well.

Karen Jacobs, Tolstoy, SD

Ring Tuna Salad

1 pkg. ring macaroni cooked and drained	1 cup green olives sliced
4 green onions chopped	2 6 oz. cans Albacore tuna
1 cup frozen peas cooked and drained	2 T. salad dressing mixed with 1 tsp. olive oil

Cook, drain and cool macaroni. Mix first 5 ingredients then add salad dressing and olive oil, which has been whipped together. Store in refrigerator.

Darlene Price, Prairie City, SD

Chicken, Onion, Quinoa Salad

Dressing:	1 tsp. canola oil
¼ cup apple cider vinegar	1 white onion, sliced
2 T. olive oil	3 cups baby kale
1 T. lemon juice	1 red skinned apple, chopped
1 tsp. honey	2 cups cooked chicken, chopped
1 tsp. Dijon mustard	½ tsp. salt
1-½ cups red quinoa, rinsed	¼ tsp. pepper
2-½ cups vegetable broth	

To make the dressing: In a large bowl, whisk vinegar, olive oil, lemon juice, honey and Dijon mustard until well combined. Set aside. In a saucepan, bring quinoa and broth to boil. Simmer, covered, for 12-15 minutes, or until all of the broth has been absorbed. Let cool completely. In a medium skillet, heat canola oil over medium-high heat. Saute onion for 3-5 minutes, or until it is softened and translucent. Remove from heat; let cool completely. In a large bowl, toss onion, kale, apple, chicken, salt and pepper with dressing. Stir in cooled quinoa. www.onions-usa.org.

Please send your favorite vegetarian, garden produce and pasta 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 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.



Central Prairie Solar is located next to the main office along Betts Road just west of Mitchell, S.D.

LESSONS FROM SOLAR

Solar Project Reaches 5 Years of Operation

Courtney J. Deinert

courtneyd@centralec.coop

Just south of the Central Electric headquarters, visitors have had the opportunity to explore a ground-mount solar array over the previous five years.

Central Prairie Solar was installed in July 2015 by Central Electric employees. It consists of 36 panels facing north and south with a maximum system output of 8,000 watts (8 kW) AC power per hour. Projected generation of the system was 1,400 kwh per month.

According to Manager of Member Services/Marketing Patrick Soukup, the solar array has produced an average of 80% of its projected production over the last two years.

The data gained from the project has helped Central Electric advise members on their own solar inquiries. When a member reaches out and inquires about solar, Soukup passes along several lessons:

- **Size your system appropriately.** The size of your system depends heavily on **when** you use electricity in addition to **how much** electricity you use. For the traditional household, family members use the most electricity in the morning

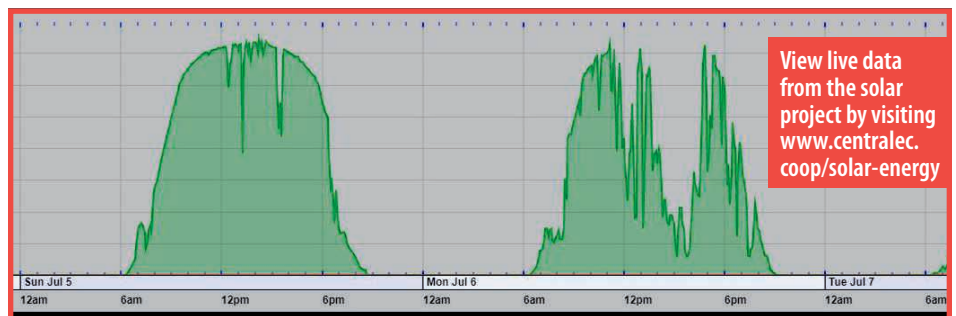
and evening. However, solar arrays reach maximum production in the middle of the day. Deciding whether to invest in batteries or sell power back to the utility can also impact project size.

- **Keep your electric cooperative in the conversation.** Any member generating power that feeds back onto Central Electric's system requires a signed agreement. Additionally, Soukup can help you understand how your electric bill would change.
- **Contact your local officials.** Solar installation can impact taxes, property value, and may require certain permits. Check your local requirements.
- **Work with a reputable company.** Although Central Prairie Solar was manufactured with a warranty, the company has since gone bankrupt. While solar is here to stay, the tech-

nology and industry are still rapidly changing. Make sure you work with a certified company that will support you after installation.

- **Installing solar should only be done after energy efficiency upgrades.** Focusing on energy efficient improvements such as insulation, sealing leaks, efficient appliances, and updated lighting will produce a quicker return on investment than solar alone. Additionally, it would maximize the impact that solar generation has on your usage and electric bill.

For individualized advice on how solar would work for you, contact our office. Your cooperative exists to serve its member-owners and will give you advice with your best interests in mind.



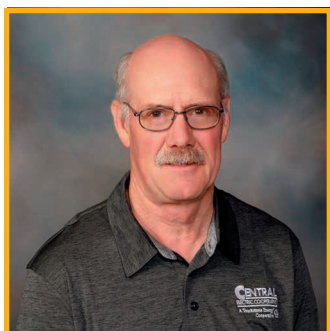
Employee Years of Service



Tim Olinger
Journeyman Lineman
August 6 - 2 years



Patrick Soukup
Manager of Member Services/Marketing
August 17 - 5 years



Doug Schley
Metering Systems Coordinator
August 26 - 35 years



Craig Sealey
Journeyman Lineman
August 27 - 2 years

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) **County Fair Food & Fuel, Mitchell, SD;**
\$.05 discount/gallon of fuel.
- 2) **Dakota Sunset, Mitchell, SD;**
\$.05 discount/gallon of fuel.
- 3) **Daylight Donuts & Coffee, Mitchell, SD;**
Donut & regular coffee for \$1.00.
- 4) **Der Platz - Bill & Ila's Bed & Breakfast, Mitchell, SD;**
\$10 off stay.
- 5) **Double D Body Shop, Woonsocket, SD;**
\$5 off windshield repair.
- 6) **Gene's Photography, Mitchell, SD;**
1/2 price on session fees.
- 7) **Genevieve's Print*Art*Design, Wessington Springs, SD;**
15% off labor for services.
- 8) **Graham's Interstate Sinclair, Mitchell, SD;**
\$.07 off gallon/fuel.

For a full list of ways to save, visit www.connections.coop.

To request a card or become a participating business, visit www.centralelec.coop or call 800-477-2892 or 605-996-7516.



Interested in 100% Renewable Energy? Ask about our



Sign up for the REC Program and purchase Renewable Energy Certificates for \$1.00 per 1,000 kwhs used. You will receive a certificate and window decal for utilizing 100% renewable energy and supporting renewables. Contact us or visit www.centralelec.coop for more information.



Wild Springs Solar Farm will capture the sun's rays to produce electrical power for South Dakota homes, farms and businesses.

CATCHING RAYS

Wild Springs Solar Farm to Produce Renewable Power

Billy Gibson

Contributing Writer

Business leaders know that diversification is the key to containing costs and surviving sharp economic slumps over the long haul.

That's especially true when it comes to producing the power that keeps South Dakotans supplied with the juice they need to run their homes, farms, irrigation pumps, offices and shops.

Those utilities tasked with keeping the power flowing day and night look for diversification when determining the raw materials they'll use to generate electricity.

The ability to draw from a variety of available resources – coal, natural gas, solar, wind, hydro, biomass, etc. – stabilizes the production process and helps to levelize costs as market rates for any or all of these resources rise and fall over time. This “all-of-the-above” strategy, in turn, makes it easier for producers to engage in long-range forecasting, planning and purchasing for the ultimate benefit of consumers.

That's why it made perfect financial sense for Basin Electric to strike a power purchase agreement with Geronimo Energy, a renewable power generation developer based in Minnesota.

Geronimo Energy is in the early phases of constructing a solar farm called Wild Springs that is expected to generate 128 megawatts (MW) of clean renewable power. When construction is completed in 2022, the \$190 million facility will be the largest grid-scale solar installation in South Dakota.

According to Basin Electric officials, the not-for-profit wholesale power provider jumped at the opportunity to join forces with Geronimo Energy and expand its renewable power portfolio.

“We are excited about adding large-scale solar to our already



Vic Simmons, CEO of Rushmore Electric, delivers a presentation on the Wild Springs Solar Farm.

diverse generation mix,” said Basin CEO and General Manager Paul Sukut. “The board’s decision to add solar to our resource portfolio is to continue with our all-of-the-above strategy, as well as solar generation becoming a more economic energy source.”

Basin Electric transmits electricity to 141 member co-op distribution systems in nine states. It also transmits wholesale power to two South Dakota generation and transmission (G&T) co-ops: Rushmore Electric and East River Electric. Those two G&Ts then transmit the power supply to their respective distribution cooperatives. Rushmore Electric is the power provider for West River Electric, which is the closest distribution co-op in proximity to the solar farm. West River Electric owns more than 2,500 miles of power lines and poles in western South Dakota.

Wild Springs will be built on more than 1,000 acres within West River’s service area near the town of New Underwood in Pennington County and will help stabilize costs for thousands of

ratepayers throughout the region.

West River CEO/General Manager Dick Johnson said he's happy to have a new neighbor and that the project has garnered the support of community leaders as it will create roughly 150 construction jobs. But he said he's even happier for the members who will benefit from the renewable power generated by the solar farm.

The facility is expected to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 85,000 metric tons annually, which is the equivalent of taking 18,000 cars off the road every year.

"We're excited that West River's service area will be home to the Wild Springs Solar Project," said Johnson. "This solar energy project will benefit our cooperative family, as well as our local communities. As not-for-profit co-ops that are owned by our members, everything we do goes back to the people we serve."

Johnson pointed out that the project is expected to produce \$17 million in economic benefits through its first 20 years in terms of tax revenue, job creation and contributions to charitable funds. The list of benefits also includes an education fund that plans to donate \$500,000 to local school districts.

Officials at Rushmore Electric said the power purchase agreement is a perfect fit in line with the cooperative's mission and long-term strategy.

"Our cooperative network is always looking to ensure we have a mix of power resources to meet the needs of our membership and renewable energy is an important part of that strategy," said General Manager Vic Simmons. "This project is an important strategic step as we look to the future in continuing our strong history of providing safe, affordable and reliable power."

Geronimo Energy recently completed the 200 MW Crocker Wind Farm in Clark County and also developed the Pierre Solar Project, a joint effort with the City of Pierre and Missouri River Energy Services in Hughes County.

Geronimo Energy President David Reamer said industry analysts often tend to doubt the viability of solar power in the region, but he said the Wild Springs project shows that consumers in more northern climates can also benefit from the renewable resource.

7 Efficient Home Improvement Projects to Help Save Money

The best home upgrades make spaces more livable and energy-efficient and are also cost-effective. Making energy-efficient improvements is a savvy way to save money on utility bills, curb energy consumption and add to the house's value. Consider a variety of home improvement projects, both big and small, that can reduce the financial burden of maintaining your home throughout the year and improve energy efficiency.

Add Insulation - A cost-effective way to save on heating and cooling bills is adding a layer of insulation in the attic where heat loss is typically greatest due to hot air rising. While many newer homes are adequately insulated, those that are several decades old (or older) may benefit from an upgrade in not only the attic but other common problem areas where air can escape such as basements, crawl spaces, fireplaces and ductwork.

Seal Doors and Windows - Windows and doors are common culprits for energy loss. While a complete replacement of doors and windows can be pricey, adding exterior caulk and weather stripping to fill in gaps where air can escape around these openings can make a noticeable difference for a fraction of the cost and make it cheaper to heat and cool your home.

Install Skylights - Skylights are a cost-effective option for transforming any room with natural light while also saving energy. For example, Sun Tunnel Skylights can be installed in 90 minutes and funnel natural light from the roof through the attic and into the room below with an aesthetic that resembles recessed lighting. Customizable with six diffuser film styles to complement interior design, the skylights can make a home more energy-efficient by reducing reliance on artificial lighting.



Reflective Window Film - When the sun shines through windows, it can heat up the home's interior quickly and trigger the air conditioner to turn on. Window coverings, such as blackout curtains, can help, but adding low-e reflective window film to your windowpanes, particularly southern-facing ones, can provide an additional shield from the sun and reduce energy costs.

Install a Programmable Thermostat - A programmable thermostat is an efficient way to control the climate inside your home. Today's smart thermostats not only let homeowners control temperatures from their smart devices but can also learn daily habits and adjust the temperature accordingly with no other manual adjustments necessary.

Replace Appliances - Because appliances like refrigerators and ovens are major energy users, investing in more efficient models provides both cost and energy savings. Additionally, homes more than 15 years old could benefit from updates to the air conditioner or heater as systems 15-20 years old or older may be candidates for replacement.

Ceiling Fans - In comparison to running your air conditioner consistently, the cost of running a ceiling fan (or several) is significantly less. Particularly on days that may not require cooling the entire house completely, fans can provide a gentle breeze and circulate air in the spaces you use most often. Simply adjust the switch to the counterclockwise position to ensure it's pushing air downward during warmer months.

For more information and home improvement ideas, visit whyskylights.com/livelifghter.

JUNE WIND STORM

Nearly 1,400 Members Lose Power

Courtney J. Deinert

courtneyd@centralec.coop

“After a storm like this, our first goal is to make sure downed lines are de-energized to keep everyone safe.”

An early storm on Tuesday, June 9 knocked out power to members near Mount Vernon and Stickney.

Local residents took shelter between 6:00 and 6:30 A.M. as straight-line winds brought down power poles, lines, grain bins, sheds, uprooted whole trees, and damaged homes and equipment.

Nearly 1,400 Central Electric Cooperative members were out of power following the storm. As Central Electric surveyed the damage, crews quickly determined they had over 100 broken poles from the strong winds.

Wholesale power supplier East River Electric Cooperative and the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) also sustained significant damage to transmission lines in the area. Edinger Brother Partnership measured wind speeds at 94 miles per hour near their grain bin site just north of Mount Vernon.

“After a storm like this, our first goal is to make sure downed lines are de-energized to keep everyone safe,” said Brian Bultje, Manager of Operations. “Then, we begin restoring power based on which lines will bring on the most amount of people and work from there.”



A line of 3-phase power lines snapped over NE of Mount Vernon

Tuesday morning, crews prioritized clearing power lines off of roads, including Interstate 90 and Highway 16 near Mount Vernon, in order to allow traffic to safely pass.

Unfortunately, many drivers had already driven over the power lines across the road, which damaged the line and was also extremely dangerous.

In an interview with KELOLAND News on Tuesday, Area Foreman Tim Harrington recounted the previous day for the crews: “Started about midnight last night, got home about three in the morning and then started again about six.”

By Tuesday evening, all but approximately 100 members were restored, and these members went without power overnight.



Central Electric sustained over 100 broken poles from the June wind storm



7 Essential Tips for Construction Safety Near Power Lines



By Wednesday evening just short of 10:45 P.M., all residences had power again after being out for up to 40 hours.

In addition to their 23 linemen, Central Electric called in an additional 30 line workers from Highline Construction to assist with repairs.

Area residents reported three to four inches or more in their rain gauges. Wet, saturated roads challenged power crews, residents, and farmers as they drove around to restore power, check crops or pasture. Many roads needed to be temporarily closed to clear power poles, line or debris from the area or due to deteriorating road conditions.

With the potential for more severe weather this summer, please remember the following safety tips:

- Avoid all downed power lines. Never approach them by foot or drive over them with a vehicle.
- If you rely on a sump pump, arrange for a battery backup or generator to ensure you can run your sump pump in case of an extended outage.
- Exercise your generator. Make sure your generator will run when you need it to so you aren't troubleshooting it while in the dark.
- Prior to severe weather, keep your electronics charged and fill your vehicle's gas tank.
- Keep non-perishable food on hand that can be easily prepared in case of a power outage.
- Other emergency kit items to compile include flashlights, first aid kit, bottled water, medications, and clean clothing or blankets.

For more information on outage preparation or updates during an outage, visit our website at www.centralec.coop.

Construction workers often work in dangerous settings. Follow these essential tips to stay safe when working near electrical equipment.

1) Call 811

A few days before the start of any digging project, be sure to call 811 to prevent damage to underground lines.

2) Assess the Worksite

Take inventory of any potential hazards, making sure to look up and around to determine the location of overhead power lines. Take extra precautions when operating heavy equipment that may interfere with the overhead lines.

3) Contact the Electric Co-op

Always contact the local electric co-op before working near overhead power lines. The utility will coordinate with you to ensure it's safe to work around their electrical equipment.

4) Be Proactive

Treat all power lines as energized. Work with the local electric co-op to safely operate equipment near power lines.

5) Know What to Do

If your equipment contacts a power line, stay in the cab and call 911. If you must exit due to a fire, fold your arms across your chest and jump out, taking care to not touch the ground and the equipment at the same time. Shuffle or hop with your feet together until you're at least 40 feet away.

6) Keep a Look-Out

Always use a spotter when operating heavy equipment near overhead power lines. This spotter should have no responsibilities other than keeping a look out for safety concerns.

7) Follow OSHA Guidelines

Comply with all OSHA requirements and applicable state and federal safety regulations.



Due to recent unusual weather patterns, grain bin safety is more important than ever.

GRAIN BIN SAFETY

Unusually wet year makes grain bin safety on the farm more important than ever

Susan Smith

Contributing Writer

Wet conditions during last year's harvest meant grain went into bins under conditions that aren't ideal.

Wet grain can cause crusting or bridging in bins. Producers try to scrape the crust away from the side, causing a landslide of grain sucking the producer in as it falls. Or they could be working in a bin not realizing they are standing on a bridge of grain that when it falls has nothing beneath it but air. This can also cause entrapment.

Many of these accidents happen in winter and early spring, said Beth Locken, director of safety and environmental at Agtegra Cooperative in Aberdeen. She calls that time period the second harvest when farmers are cleaning out bins for the coming year's crops. While South Dakota and North Dakota don't see the number of entrapment accidents as corn-belt states like Iowa and Illinois, grain bin entrapments are not picky, Locken said.

"We've already seen one (death in South Dakota) in 2020 already and that's too many," she said.

During the third week in February 2020, decreed by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue as National Grain Bin Safety Week, Christopher Bauman died at his farm near Elkton while emptying corn. Bauman had a wife and three children.

After Bauman died, Locken and Scott Wheelhouse, safety director of the Agfirst Farmers Cooperative in Aurora, began



Training is an important element in responding to grain bin accidents on the farm.

talking about creating a local day-long seminar on grain bin safety. The morning would focus on a refresher course for first responders who already are trained to rescue someone trapped in a grain bin but maybe haven't had hands-on experience recently, Wheelhouse said. In the afternoon, producers from the area would get information on general grain bin safety and use of rescue equipment.

"We really want to emphasize we don't just want your business, we want your friendship," Wheelhouse said. "We want you alive."

AgTegra sold grain bin entry kits at cost to local producers this year, a service Wheelhouse would like to offer his customers as well. The kits sell for \$460 and include resources on how to use them.

"Mostly the benefit we get out of it is hoping we can educate the family and keep them safe," Locken said.

Purdue University releases an annual report on entrapment injuries and fatalities. The number increased by 9.8 percent in 2019. From 2017 to 2018 the number jumped 23 percent. In the last decade, 370 people died in grain bin accidents.

The number of grain bin accidents increased nearly 10 percent in 2019.



About 10 years ago, Agtegra donated to fire departments in its coverage area grain bin rescue tubes that fit around a submerged person. That includes about 70 departments in northeast and northwest North Dakota and areas along Highways 12 and 281 and I-90. Agtegra deployed a technical rescue team for the last 10 years.

Training paid off during a March grain entrapment.

The team membership and training is widespread for Agtegra employees and first responders.

"Immediate response is of the essence," Locken said. "If something happens on a farmer's bin site, they're not going to call AgTegra, they're going to call the fire department," Locken said.

That widespread training paid off during a March grain entrapment near Pierre.

"We were there providing guidance and additional equipment. We were inside the bin with the fire department just trying to get the victim out of there," she said. "We worked for about five hours and that was a successful response. Not all of them are like that, unfortunately."

The first rule of grain bin safety is not to go into the bin in the first place.

"We always say any time someone needs to go into a bin, stop and talk about it," Locken said. "Have absolutely more than one person there. Make sure the person has a harness and rope attached to the harness and to something attached to the bin that's not going to move."

Locken said turning off equipment like an auger is another good rule of thumb. That way grain isn't being pulled out of the bin as a person works in it.

John Keimig, SDSU Extension Youth Safety Field Specialist, conducts safety programs for 4-H youth. He educates children of producers so they know the rules and can keep an eye on their parents. Most producers know the risks of working around grain bins, he said, but might not consider them during the high pressure of a typical farm day.

"Adults know better," he said. "We get in a hurry. We don't always think and particularly in grain storage that can become very bad very quickly. By working together, we can help each other out if we have to go into a bin and we can save lives."

The risks of working around grain bins may be forgotten during the high pressure of an average work day on the farm.



State officials say the problem of meth addiction disproportionately affects women and Native American populations.

METH. WE TREAT IT.

Front Line Treatment Providers Stay Focused on Their Goal

By Billy Gibson

Contributing Writer

To a public growing desensitized to increasingly sensational news accounts, one particular police report stood out.

Probably because of the cattle prod.

Back in June, Sioux Falls police arrested a couple accused of using a cattle prod to discipline their four children, ages 11 to 17. The astonishing accusations also included the couple giving methamphetamine and marijuana to the youngsters in their charge.

It was another in a steady stream of stories serving as an indication of the widespread use of methamphetamine and the deleterious effects of drug abuse in the state.

Meth, especially, is a social and public health menace that has not mysteriously disappeared since the coronavirus outbreak, although it has morphed a bit as the pandemic has spread.

State and federal officials report that the impact of the virus has brought both good news and bad news.

On one hand, the curtailing of international and national travel, the economic downturn and the tightening of borders have all combined to reduce the supply of the powerful drug on city and rural streets.

On the other hand, the street price for the drug is escalating due to increased demand and shortened supply. As those hooked on the drug seek any means of securing it and as general anxiety levels rise, officials fear that a jump in criminal activity is inevitable.

In Los Angeles, for example, meth prices doubled recently as narcotic traffic from Mexican cartels slowed down significantly.



Price increases were also seen in states like Virginia, West Virginia, New Mexico, Kentucky, Tennessee and many others.

While the world turned its attention to the coronavirus earlier this year and now braces for a second wave, others dedicated to battling meth abuse over the long haul have never steered their focus away from their goals.

A statewide campaign to raise awareness of the meth problem was launched last fall as officials began recognizing that the manufacture, distribution and consumption of meth was becoming a plague for far too many South Dakotans. The troubling trend was placing both rural towns and the larger population centers at risk.

The campaign was in response to disturbing figures that painted the picture of a national and international progression that was finally at the point of breaching the state's borders in record numbers.

For instance, officials reported that in 2018 more than 3,600 individuals were arrested in the state for possessing, transporting or



COVID-19 has not slowed the problem of meth addiction

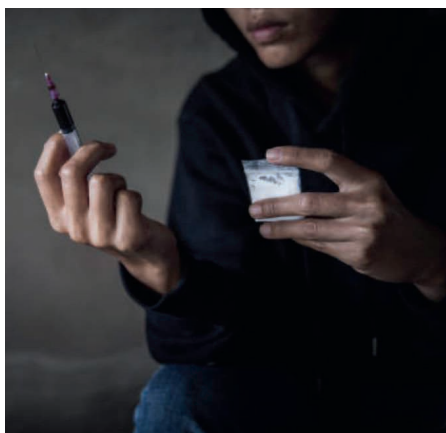
distributing a collective 100 lbs. of methamphetamine. The Centers for Disease Control proclaimed that meth was taking the lives of more South Dakotans than any other illegal drug and that twice as many teens from 12 to 17 years old were using meth compared to the national average.

Additionally, 83 percent of court admissions for controlled substances in 2019 involved meth, as the state saw a 200 percent increase in people seeking treatment with the primary diagnosis of meth addiction between 2014 and 2018.

Meanwhile, law enforcement seized 24 lbs. of meth in the Rapid City area in 2018, over 20 lbs. in Sioux Falls, and almost 1 lb. in Pierre. It takes just .0003 lb. of the drug to cause a fatal overdose. From January to August of 2019, there were 2,243 meth-related arrests across 50 counties. In 2002, that number was just 467.

More recently, figures show that meth is impacting Native American and female populations at a disproportionate level.

For instance, officials report that more than 90 percent of inmates at the South Dakota Women's Prison in Pierre are substance abusers. Overall, roughly



"Don't think you can't get help, because there are many options out there."

Carol Regier

one-third of those inmates incarcerated in the state prison system are there because of some form of drug addiction.

Recently, the female inmates have campaigned to push for more programs to help addicts within the system.

Inmate Heather Shooter, who belongs to the Cheyenne River Sioux tribe, is one of several convicts who have been instrumental in an initiative called Sober is Sacred, in which inspirational speakers, performers and other guests call for additional counseling and treatment programs to help those hooked on meth. The program follows a similar one launched at the Mike Durfee State Prison for men in Springfield called Fathers Against Meth.

Shooter said that when her time is served this fall she plans to enter the Full Circle Substance Abuse Center in Rapid City and spread the message of a drug-free life.

Dave Flute, the state's Secretary of Tribal Affairs and former Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribal chairman, has described the meth plague as having reached epidemic proportions on the state's reservations. He spoke last fall at the second State-Tribal Meth Summit in Mission and assured the audience that the governor's administration is working closely with Native American tribes to combat the problem.

Carol Regier, CEO of the Keystone Treatment Center with facilities in Canton and Sioux Falls, said her program often works with tribal communities in South Dakota and surrounding states. She echoed Flute's comments that the governor's office has been deeply engaged.

"We've had discussions with the governor and the state has been very supportive of our work, going back to the Rounds administration," she said, noting, "But we did make up our own catch phrase: 'Meth. We Treat It.'"

She pegged meth abuse as "by far" the most toxic culprit when it comes to addiction and the social maladies that

spring from it.

"Besides alcohol, meth is our number one problem. It's very addictive and caustic and people who get hooked rarely defeat it without qualified help," she said.

Regier said the in-patient program offered at Keystone typically lasts a month to 45 days and includes components of the 12-step Narcotics Anonymous plan. It also



focuses on spiritual, physical and mental health, she said. After therapy, patients are supported and encouraged to participate in after-care and continued counseling.

Keystone has 126 beds, and Regier said there is a steady stream of patients seeking treatment for their addiction. The pace hasn't slowed with the coronavirus.

"There was a period where it seemed people were afraid to come in, but they've started to come in now," she said. "We've seen an escalation in alcohol and drug abuse during the pandemic as people are having to deal with loneliness, joblessness, personal relationships and other drastic changes in their lives and in the country."

From her vantage point standing on the front lines of the drug addiction battle, Regier strikes a positive tone. She encourages those who feel they need treatment to get it. She assures that most treatment plans are covered by medical insurance and that grants and other resources are available to help addicts break free from the grip of addictions.

"Don't think you can't get help, because there are many options out there. We hear heartbreaking stories, but on the good side we see people who have turned their lives around," she said. "For all of us committed to helping drug addicts get well, we have the same commitment: getting people back to normal so they can live healthier, more fulfilling lives. Treatment works."

Register to Win!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: _____
Your E-mail Address: _____

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

September 3-5

South Dakota State Fair:
Perfect Vision of Fun,
1060 3rd St. SW, Huron, SD
800-529-0900
www.sdstatefair.com

July 21-25

98th Annual Days of '76 PRCA
Rodeo, Arena, Deadwood,
SD, 1-888-838-BULL,
www.DAYSOF76.com

July 26

15th Annual Car Show
Langford, SD, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
605-493-6597

July 31-August 1

Senior Games, Yankton,
SD, Contact Kristi Hauer at
605-665-4685

July 31-August 1

Plein Air & Arts in the Garden,
Wessington Springs, SD,
605-354-3826

August 1

Rockin' Ribfest BBQ
Competition, Wessington
Springs, SD, 605-505-1135

August 1

Foothills Classic, Wessington
Springs, SD, 605-350-1687

August 1, 22

The Murder of Miss Kitty
Comedy Mystery Dinner
Theatre, Holiday Inn Express
& Suites, Deadwood, SD,
605-580-5799

August 8-9

Threshing Show, Twin Brooks,
SD, www.threshingshow.com



August 8-10:
Red Power Round Up
Fairgrounds, Huron, SD
605-460-0197

Photo courtesy: South Dakota Department of Agriculture

August 8-10

Red Power Round Up,
Fairgrounds, Huron, SD,
605-460-0197

August 9

Online Only Bechyn Czech
Festival, Online Concert,
7 p.m., Bechyn,
Minn., 320-522-1218
www.facebook.com/Bechyn-
MinnesotaWorld

August 14-16

Astronomy Festival, Badlands
National Park, Wall, SD,
605-433-5241

August 21-22

Harvest Festival, Elkton, SD,
605-524-2681

August 22

World of Outlaw Sprint Car
Races plus Wissota MWM,
Dakota State Fair Speedway,
Huron, SD, 605-352-4848

September 7

Hidewood Valley Steam
Threshing Show, 1 p.m.,
47326 183rd Ave., Clear Lake,
SD, 605-881-8405

September 12-13

Fall Harvest Festival,
Delmont, SD, 605-928-3792,
www.twinriversoldiron.org

September 13

20th Annual Antique Tractor
and Car Parade, 1 p.m.,
Farmer, SD, 605-239-4498

September 25-27

Coal Springs Threshing
Bee Featuring Massy Harris
Tractors, Meadow, SD,
605-788-2229

September 26

10th Annual ROCS Fall
Festival, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.,
Springfield, SD,
605-464-7379

September 26

Wheelin' to Wall, Wall
Community Center, Wall, SD

October 7-8

Energize! Explore Innovative
Rural Communities
Conference, Milbank, SD,
<https://extension.sdstate.edu>

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.