

## Cooperative Connections

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# Demand, Load Management, Meters and You



**Ken Schlimgen**

General Manager

**[Demand] represents about 50% of Central Electric's cost of wholesale electricity, and you have the ability to lower it.**

Central Electric is an electric distribution cooperative, meaning the cooperative distributes or delivers electric energy to you. Central Electric does not generate the electricity, and so each month, we purchase electricity on your behalf.

Central Electric's monthly electric bill is a bit complicated with several line items, but I would like to talk about one specific component titled "demand". The reason I want to talk about "demand" is it represents about 50 percent of Central Electric's cost of wholesale electricity, and you have the ability to lower it.

Electric "demand" is measured in units called KW. One KW of electric demand is 1,000 watts of electricity, being consumed consistently over any 30-minute time period. One of the best analogies for understanding electric demand is water flow. Suppose you want to fill a 100-gallon tank with a hose that could provide 5 gallons of water per minute. The demand you put on the water system is 5 gallons for 20 minutes.

Let's say you wanted to fill the tank faster and invested in a hose that could deliver 20 gallons per minute. You can fill your

100-gallon tank in just 5 minutes, but you have created a demand of 20 as a result. In this example, the demand for water increases significantly as others want to fill their tanks all at the same.

Electric demand is similar to water flow, but it is calculated based on the average measured flow of electricity over a 30-minute time period. Higher demand requires

larger wires, transformers, substations, and generation equipment. This leaves your cooperative with higher costs which are recovered through the electric rates applied to your bill.

To lower the impact of electric demand charges, Central Electric works with the electric cooperatives of eastern South Dakota to operate a load management system. The load management system is capable of directly turning electric loads on and off.

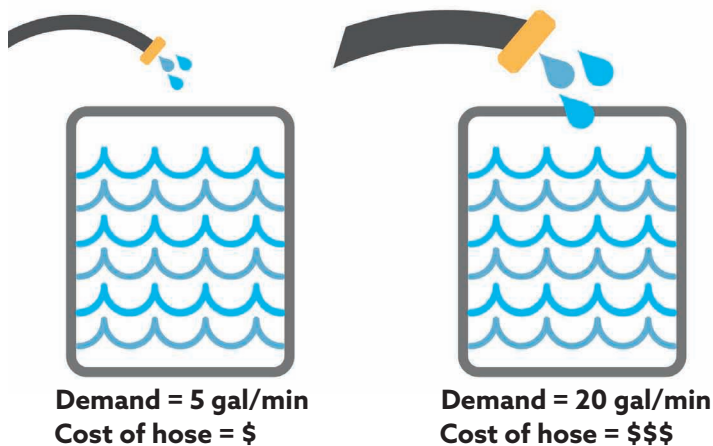
Water heaters, motors, air conditioners, and irrigation systems are examples of common electric loads that can be turned off during times of high electric demand. All of these examples are voluntarily connected to the load management system by Central Electric members to help keep electric rates as low as possible.

The load management system is operated by East River Electric Cooperative, our wholesale power provider. Load management has been operated since 1985 and has saved eastern SD cooperatives over \$188 million in avoided power costs.

Central Electric is replacing its current metering system with a cellular meter technology offered by Verizon. The new meters will provide even more data, require less infrastructure to operate, lower maintenance costs, and improve data reliability. The new meter system will be installed over the next 3-4 years. The goal is to provide our members with better information so they can better control their electrical usage and electric demand.

Central Electric's membership benefits from participation in the load management program. If you are willing to do your part in lowering electric demand costs by allowing control of your water heater or other qualifying appliances, please contact our office.

Until Next Month, Be Safe.



"Demand" equals the rate at which the hose fills the tank, or for an electric bill, the rate at which energy is consumed. Just as you need a bigger hose for more water flow, you need larger wires, transformers, substations and generation to use more electricity at the same time.





A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



(USPS 018-963)

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#### Mission Statement

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



# October is National Co-op Month.

## Cooperative Principles

Central Electric is a different kind of utility; we are a cooperative. There are seven principles that we abide by and shape our business model. **We are more than electricity.**

### 1) Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives are open to anyone willing to accept the responsibilities of membership.

### 2) Democratic Member Control

One member, one vote. Members elect their board of directors to set policies and make decisions.

### 3) Members' Economic Participation

By paying your electric bill, you contribute to the capital of the cooperative. You also receive excess margins in the form of capital credits.

### 4) Autonomy and Independence

Central Electric is an autonomus organization that makes agreements or decisions that ensures the democratic control of its members.

### 5) Education, Training, and Information

Central Electric provides education and opportunities for training for its members, employees, directors, and the general public.

### 6) Cooperation Among Cooperatives

While Central Electric is a small business, we utilize the strength of the cooperative network to better serve our members.

### 7) Concern for Community

Central Electric invests back into its communities for economic development and sustainability.

## Employee Years of Service

**Heather Wieczorek**

October 11 - 3 years

**Jesse Baker**

October 21 - 17 years

**Dwight Keegel**

October 16 - 29 years

**Thank you for your service to the cooperative!**

## October is Fire Prevention Month

The U.S. Fire Administration reports that fires kill more than 4,000 Americans each year and approximately injure 20,000 more. U.S. fire departments respond to nearly 2 million fires each year, with three-quarters of them occurring in residences.

A home is often referred to as a safe haven. This month, make sure your home is protected from (and your family is prepared for) a fire. Here are 10 simple tips to help you avoid fires and reduce the risk of injury should one occur:

- **Smoke Alarms** – Smoke alarms are widely available and inexpensive. Install a smoke alarm on every level of your home and test it monthly.
- **Prevent Electrical Fires** – Don't overload circuits or extension cords. Cords and wires should never be placed under rugs or in high traffic areas. Avoid loose electrical connections by checking the fit of the plug in the wall outlet. If the plug loosely fits, inspect the outlet right away. A poor connection between the plug and the outlet can cause overheating and can start a fire in minutes.
- **Keep Plugs Safe** – Unplug all appliances when not in use. Follow the manufacturer's safety precautions and use your senses to spot any potential disasters. If a plug is overheating, smells strange, shorts out or sparks – the appliance should be shut off immediately, then replaced or repaired.
- **Alternate Heaters** – Make sure there is ample space around any portable heating unit. Anything that could catch fire should be at least three feet away. Inspect your chimney annually and use fire screens to help keep any fires in the fireplace.
- **Fire Safety Sprinklers** – When combined with working smoke alarms, home fire sprinklers greatly increase your chance of surviving a fire.
- **Create An Escape Route** – Create and practice your escape plan with your family from every room in the house. Practice staying low to the floor and checking for hot doors using the back of your hand.
- **Position Appliances Carefully** – Try to keep TV sets, kitchen and other appliances away from windows with curtains. If there is a wiring problem, curtains can spread a fire quickly. Additionally, keeping your appliances away from water sources (like rain coming in from windows) can help prevent wiring damage which can lead to a fire.
- **Clean Dryer Vents** – Clothes dryers often start fires in residential areas. Clean the lint filter every time you start a load of clothes to dry or after the drying cycle is complete. Make sure your exhaust duct is made of metal tubing and not plastic or foil. Clean the exhaust duct with a good quality dryer vent brush to prevent blockage and check for lint build up behind the dryer at least twice a year.
- **Be Careful Around the Holidays** – If you fill your home with lights during the holiday season, keep them away from anything that can easily catch fire. Check all of your lights prior to stringing them up and dispose of anything with frayed or exposed wires.
- **Conduct Regular Inspections** – Check all of your electronic equipment and wiring at least once a month.

Following these simple tips could potentially save your life or the life of a loved one. Pass this list on to your friends and family and make this fire prevention month count!

Source: quickenloans.com



October is National  
Co-op Month.



## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"Be careful of snow cavities over electrical boxes."**

**Avery Bauman, 10 years old**

Avery is the daughter of Pete and Bridget Bauman, Watertown, S.D. They are members of Codington-Clark Electric Cooperative, Watertown.

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.

# Perfect Pasta

## Angel Hair Pasta with Italian Sausage and Herbs

1 lb. angel hair pasta	1 tsp. McCormick Gourmet™ Parsley, Flat Leaf
1 lb. sweet Italian sausage, casing removed	1/2 tsp. McCormick Gourmet™ Organic Garlic Powder
2 T. olive oil	1/2 tsp. McCormick Gourmet™ Organic Fennel Seed
1-1/2 cups chopped red onion	1/2 tsp. Sicilian sea salt
8 oz. mushrooms, quartered	1/2 cup grated Romano cheese
1 tsp. McCormick Gourmet™ Organic Basil	
1 tsp. McCormick Gourmet™ Organic Italian Seasoning	

Cook pasta as directed on package. Drain well. Meanwhile, break up sausage in large skillet. Cook on medium-high heat 5 to 6 minutes. Remove sausage; drain fat. Rinse skillet and wipe clean. Heat oil in same skillet on medium heat. Add onions, mushrooms and seasonings; cook and stir 5 minutes. Add cooked sausage; cook and stir 5 minutes longer. Place pasta in large serving bowl. Add sausage mixture and cheese; toss to coat well. Serve with additional cheese, if desired. Makes 12 (1 cup) servings.

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 281, Total Fat 13g, Cholesterol 26mg, Sodium 374mg, Protein 10g, Carbohydrates 31g, Dietary Fiber 2g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Taco Pasta Salad

1-1/2 lbs. ground beef, cooked and drained	1 pint grape tomatoes, sliced in half
4 T. taco seasoning	3 cups shredded lettuce
1 lb. rotini, cooked, drained and rinsed with cold water	2 cups shredded cheese
1/2 small onion, minced (optional)	1 bottle Catalina dressing
	1 bag nacho cheese tortilla chips, crushed

Stir together hamburger and taco seasoning. In a large bowl, combine hamburger, pasta, onions, tomatoes, lettuce and cheese. Mix in dressing. Stir in chips. Serve immediately.

**Dawn Leibel, Glencross, SD**

## Smoky BBQ Chicken Salad

1 box Betty Crocker™ Suddenly Salad® Ranch and Bacon Pasta Salad Mix	1/4 cup barbecue sauce
1/2 cup frozen corn	1 cup cherry or grape tomatoes, halved
1/4 cup mayonnaise	12 butter lettuce leaves, optional
2 cups shredded rotisserie chicken	1/4 cup chopped green onions

Empty pasta mix into a 3-quart saucepan 2/3 full of boiling water. Gently boil uncovered 12 minutes, stirring occasionally, adding corn during last 2 minutes of cooking. Drain pasta and corn; rinse with cold water. Shake to drain well. In large bowl, stir together seasoning mix, mayonnaise and barbecue sauce. Stir in pasta, corn, chicken and tomatoes. Line serving plate with lettuce leaves. Top with salad mixture; sprinkle with green onions. Serve immediately or cover and refrigerate 1 hour to chill.

**Jean Osterman, Wheaton, MN**

## Cheating Cheeseburger Macaroni

1-1/2 lbs. ground beef	1 can cheddar cheese soup
1/4 cup chopped onion	1 cup water
1/2 pkg. baby carrots, finely chopped	1/4 cup sour cream, optional
1 can cream of chicken soup	2 cups macaroni, cooked and drained

Cook ground beef and onion; drain. Add carrots and cook while macaroni is cooking. Mix soups, water and sour cream; add to hamburger. Simmer over medium heat for a few minutes. Stir in pasta. Serve immediately.

**Becki Hauser, Tripp, SD**

Please send your favorite slow cooker, holiday or soup 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 2019.

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





# TAXES FOR SCHOOLS

Local schools receive over \$1.5 million in tax revenue from electric cooperative

Central Electric Cooperative pays taxes on the total kWhs (kilowatt hours) sold annually to members. In 2018, these taxes amounted to over \$1.5 million, and that tax revenue is distributed to the school districts based on where the kWhs were sold.

Our wholesale power suppliers, East River Electric Power Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative, also pay tax on the amount of kWhs purchased by Central Electric Cooperative.

The tax paid to school districts grows as members use more electric power and more members receive service. This is just one way in which the electric cooperative benefits its local communities.

The amounts listed below include the contributions from Central Electric Cooperative, East River Electric Power Cooperative and Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

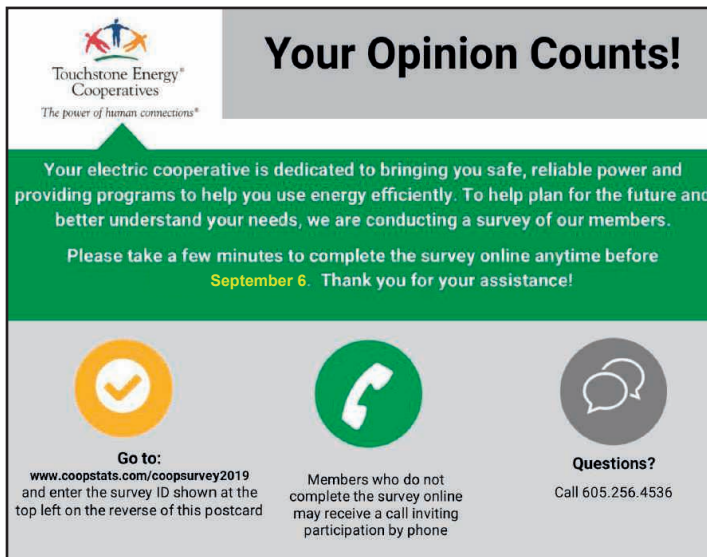
## KWH Tax Received Listed by School District

<b>BRIDGEWATER-EMERY</b>	6,929.62	<b>MITCHELL</b>	295,309.93
<b>CHAMBERLAIN</b>	110,604.60	<b>MOUNT VERNON</b>	33,443.74
<b>CORISCA-STICKNEY</b>	18,417.19	<b>OLDHAM-RAMONA</b>	1,444.91
<b>ETHAN</b>	16,817.69	<b>PARKSTON</b>	5,114.44
<b>HANSON</b>	47,950.43	<b>PLANKINTON</b>	52,821.46
<b>HOWARD</b>	357,583.94	<b>PLATTE-GEDDES</b>	14,146.91
<b>HURON</b>	1,670.69	<b>SANBORN CENTRAL</b>	38,067.36
<b>KIMBALL</b>	55,924.21	<b>WESSINGTON</b>	54,227.04
<b>MADISON CENTRAL</b>	599.08	<b>SPRINGS</b>	20,540.14
<b>MCCOOK CENTRAL</b>	1,139.83	<b>WHITE LAKE</b>	20,159.59
<b>MILLER</b>	272.67	<b>WOONSOCKET</b>	\$ 1,153,185.47

# Select Members Contacted for Survey

East River Electric Cooperative and Basin Electric Cooperative are both conducting surveys on behalf of Central Electric and their member cooperatives.

In early August, some of Central Electric's members received a postcard (shown below) on behalf of East River informing them of the survey and offering the option to complete the survey online.



**Your Opinion Counts!**

Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup> Cooperatives  
The power of human connections<sup>®</sup>

Your electric cooperative is dedicated to bringing you safe, reliable power and providing programs to help you use energy efficiently. To help plan for the future and better understand your needs, we are conducting a survey of our members.

Please take a few minutes to complete the survey online anytime before **September 6**. Thank you for your assistance!

**Go to:**  
[www.coopstats.com/coopsurvey2019](http://www.coopstats.com/coopsurvey2019)  
and enter the survey ID shown at the top left on the reverse of this postcard

Members who do not complete the survey online may receive a call inviting participation by phone

**Questions?**  
Call 605.256.4536

Members who received the postcard but did not fill out the survey online may receive a phone call survey at some point in September.

In October or early November, some members will also receive a survey via mail on behalf of Basin Electric. Please take time to respond to these requests. We value your feedback and time in helping us to better meet your needs!

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Heating requires more energy than any other system in your home, typically making up about 42% of your energy bill. With proper equipment maintenance and upgrades like additional insulation and air sealing, you can save about 30% on your energy bill.

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



# Local Discounts with your Co-op Connections<sup>®</sup> Card



Your cooperative membership earns you discounts at local participating businesses.

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

- 1) **M & H, Mitchell, SD;**  
\$.05 off a gallon of gas.
- 2) **Mega Wash, Mitchell, SD;**  
\$1.00 off automatic car wash at 800 E Kay, 1911 N Main, or 601 E. Spruce. Discount only valid when attendants are on duty. Cannot be combined with any other discounts.
- 3) **Merchandise Outlet, Mitchell, SD;**  
10% off pair of boots, some exclusions apply. Not valid with other discounts.
- 4) **Miedema Sanitation, Mitchell, SD;**  
10% off rolloff construction boxes.
- 5) **Mitchell Econolodge Motel, Mitchell, SD;**  
10% discount.
- 6) **Mitchell KOA, Mitchell, SD;**  
10% discount May 1 - October 30, excluding holiday weekends.
- 7) **Mueller Lumber Company, Mitchell, SD;**  
15% off regular priced hardware store merchandise and lumber; excludes power tools.

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.







Renville-Sibley Co-op Power Association Journeyman Lineman Clint Olson is a member of the Olivia Area Technical Rescue Team. Olson is in the center front holding the dalmation dog.

# HELPING OUT AT NEW HEIGHTS AND TIGHT SPACES

## Co-op Employees Among Local Emergency Responders

Brenda Kleinjan

editor@sdrea.coop

As the chief of the Olivia, Minn., Area Technical Response Team, Renville-Sibley Co-op Power Association journeyman lineman Clint Olson combines some of his experience with the Danube, Minn.-based cooperative with his 15 years as a member of the Olivia Fire Department.

Olson joined the OFD after being asked repeatedly by then-members of the volunteer fire department.

"To be honest, the main reason for joining the OFD was so I wouldn't be bugged anymore by past firemen asking me to join every time I saw them in public. Looking back, I am glad I did," Olson said.

Olson was tapped to lead the newly formed rescue team which was established in January 2019. The team is specialized in high-angle and low-angle (confined space) rescues.

The team is made up of firemen all from different towns in



Many rural and small town fire departments throughout the Dakotas and western Minnesota rely on volunteers to fill the ranks of the much-needed service.



Renville County, Minn. The county is home of several large ag industries, such as the Southern Minnesota Sugar Beet Cooperative and several large seed plants along with large bin set ups.

“We saw a need for the Technical Response Team years ago and never could spark enough interest from the other towns in the county for funding. Finally, Olivia stepped up and funded the start up,” said Olson. “We firemen have trained in the past with some high-angle rescue trainings but knew it wasn’t proper and knew it’s a need being in a rural community.”

Right after the team was established, the first call came in of a conscious victim who fell 40 feet down into a concrete seed bin.

“There was no access from the bottom. After assessing the situation, we were able to get the victim up using ropes and mechanical advantage systems which consists of pulleys and anchor points through a small four foot by four foot access door. From there, we were able to rig a rope system on the catwalk outside in order to lower the victim to the ground 75 feet below,” Olson said.

“Looking back, this is the first rescue like this in our area and we are glad we had the

training and equipment to complete the task,” Olson said.

There are multiple regular trainings and extra trainings that go along with the fire department and the Olivia Area Technical

**“Being in a smaller agriculture and rural community, fire departments in our area are struggling to fill positions, whether its lack of interest or time.”**

rescue team, Olson said. The fire department trains twice a month while the OATRT team trains once a month.

Olson notes there is a need for more volunteers in fire departments and ambulance crews.

“Being in a smaller agriculture and rural community, fire departments in our area, are struggling to fill positions, whether its lack of interest or time,” Olson said.

To try to maximize departments’ effectiveness, departments have been training with our surrounding departments and assisting in mutual aid calls.

“I highly recommend if you can join a local EMS in your community the benefits are self-rewarding. The knowledge you learn can be beneficial for you to share with your coworkers also no matter what field you are in.”

The knowledge base that co-op linemen bring to a volunteer fire department can be beneficial, Olson noted, especially when it comes to electrical hazard recognition.

“Multiple trainings have been done internally with our department on what action to take if a live wire is involved and also know where the disconnects are located and types of disconnects need to be opened in order to isolate before the utility company arrives,” Olson said.

Olson is one of three employees of Renville-Sibley who are members of their fire department or technical team. Fellow journeymen linemen Brayden Fischer and Brandon Ochs are volunteer firefighters

“I describe it has a brotherhood similar as a brotherhood at your electric cooperative,” Olson said.



RSCPA Journeyman Lineman Brayden Fischer is in the back row, fourth from right, while Journeyman Lineman Clint Olson is second from the left in the first row. Not pictured is Journeyman Lineman Brandon Ochs.

## Line construction and pole testing in progress

# Wet Conditions Cause Delay



**Brian Bultje**

Manager of Operations

The theme this summer has been “flexibility.” As you know, a wet spring disrupted plans for many, and in our case, line construction and maintenance.

Crews continued to make repairs into the summer from the March and April ice storms as they could access areas. We also delayed our annual schedule of pole testing and tree trimming to try and avoid tearing up roads or ditches. Wet conditions are still very prevalent as we’re out and about working.

In our 2019-2022 advanced work plan, we mapped with our engineer to address areas of aging line to upgrade for reliability and efficiency.

Around the end of May, our contractor Larson Digging, Inc. arrived and has since completed the following:

- 5.75 mile line north of Fort Thompson;
- 7 mile line of both single phase and three phase south of Chamberlain;
- 1.25 mile project west of Stickney from storm damage;
- 1,200 foot boring for overhead conversion to underground line south of Mitchell;
- 10 miles completed and another 11 miles in progress NE of Woonsocket.

Central Electric crews are also working on an overhead to underground line conversion near Howard. Again, wet conditions are really stalling construction.

Around the beginning of September, pole testing was scheduled to begin in Hanson County. We have contracted with SBS Inspections again this year. They will be operating out of white pickups and ATVs marked with Central Electric signs. Crews planned to begin around Emery and Fulton and will move south to southwest. Testing is scheduled to take approximately four weeks.

In addition to the scheduled construction, crews have restored outages and made repairs from a couple high wind storms this summer. They are also working on requests for new services such as homes, grain bins, shops and wells. These are being delayed as well, so we thank our members for your understanding and patience.

We continue to be flexible and meet our members’ needs as they arise. One of those needs includes raising any clearance issues to fields. As we approach harvest, I encourage you to look out for power lines. Talk to everyone on your operation about respecting power lines and what to do if you contact a power line. Thank you for your cooperation in keeping everyone safe and our power reliable.

**The theme this summer has been “flexibility.”**

Below: Crews replace poles north of Mount Vernon after a high wind storm on August 17.





# BUDGET BILLING:

A fixed bill you can count on.

Roller coasters can be fun--but not when it's your electric bill!

If you can relate, consider signing up for Budget Billing.

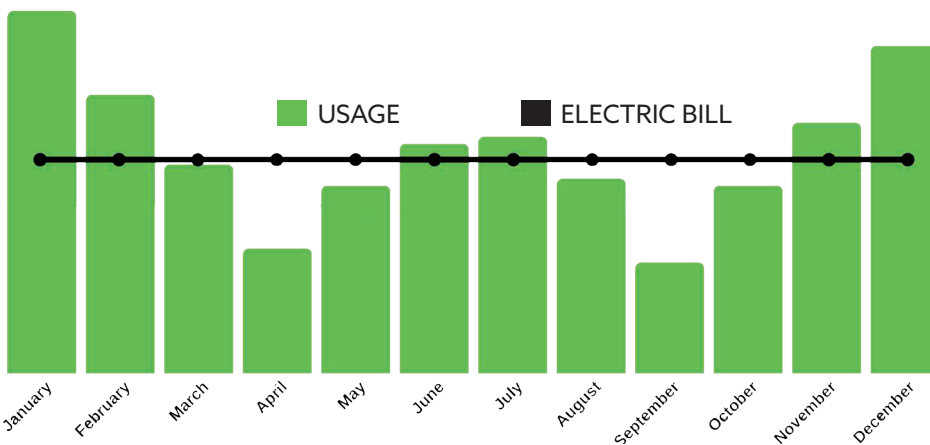
Budget Billing is a program that allows members to pay a fixed billing amount each month and evenly spread the cost of electricity throughout the year.

The fixed amount is calculated based on your average usage for the 12 months.

Each May and November, the budget billing amount is evaluated according to your actual usage and changed if needed.

You may request to be removed from the budget billing plan at any time, but will be responsible for the bill in full at that time.

For more information, contact our office at 800-477-2892, 605-996-7516, [billinggroup@centralec.coop](mailto:billinggroup@centralec.coop) or visit [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop).



## Sign Up to win a KMIT Harvest Lunch!

Stop by the Central Electric office to nominate yourself or someone else for a KMIT 105.9 Harvest Lunch.

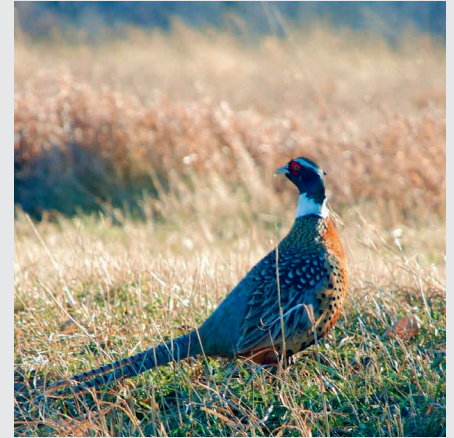
The selected farmer will win lunch for him/herself and 10 of their employees, neighbors, friends or family.

Central Electric and KMIT will deliver lunch to your operation and conduct a short on-air radio interview.

If you would like to sign up for a chance to win but are unable to get to our office, give us a call at 800-477-2892 or 605-996-7516 or visit [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop).



## Preparing for Hunters



### Expecting hunters to arrive soon?

**Be sure to check any water heaters, heating and cooling systems, and security lights before they arrive.**

By checking the equipment ahead of time, you can avoid inconvenient, costly emergency repairs and ensure maximum comfort for your guests.

For any issues, give Central Electric a call at 800-477-2892 or 605-996-7516, and our team of technicians can help.

# Your Unique Source of Power

Paul Wesslund

NRECA

**Electric cooperatives belong to the people they serve – that would be you and your neighbors.**

You have a unique story to tell about yourself because you are part of an electric cooperative community. But if you're like a lot of electric co-op members, you might not feel you know enough to tell that story well. So, here's some help.

About one in 10 Americans receives their power the way you do, from an electric co-op. Electric co-ops belong to the people they serve – that would be you and your neighbors. Electric co-ops were first developed in the 1930s because city utilities, owned by investors wanting to make a profit, ignored rural America – they didn't think there was enough money to be earned there. So, people in rural communities met with each other and formed their own local electric co-ops.

October is National Co-op Month, the time of year when cooperatives across the country celebrate the many ways co-ops are unique and more importantly, the members they serve. This year, we're focusing on our ties to the local community. Your co-op was built by the community, for the community, so let's take a look at what that means for you, the members of the co-op.

**Your co-op is here to stay.** Since the co-op belongs to the members it serves with safe, reliable, affordable energy, it's not going to move out of the country, or even across the state. It's staying right where it is.

**Your co-op knows you.** No two co-ops are alike. Across the country, there are more than 900 electric co-ops. Because each of those co-ops belongs to the people who live there, the co-op listens to the community they are a part of. Whether it's

working with the latest energy efficiency technologies or keeping the electric grid safe and secure, your electric co-op can offer solutions that make the most sense locally.


**Your co-op cares about your community.** The co-op's top priority is to power the community. It is not owned by far-away, or even nearby, investors looking only for a good return on their money. Your co-op also partners with local organizations on community events, fundraisers, youth programs and more. We're your friends and neighbors. By investing in the local community, your electric co-op supports economic development and prosperity for all, right here at home.

And these are just a few ways you and your electric co-op are one of a kind.





# THE POWER OF COMMUNITY



At your electric co-op, we're proud to be a part of it, bringing people together by providing energy for all the things you love.



# SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS

## Electric Co-ops Seek to Protect Service Territory Boundaries During SD Legislative Summer Study Hearings

**Ben Dunsmoor**

[bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop](mailto:bdunsmoor@northernelectric.coop)

South Dakota's electric cooperatives are working to find solutions and bring fairness to the state law that governs electric service territory.

The South Dakota Legislature's Electric Services in an Annexed Area Interim Study Committee ('SB 66 Interim Committee') has met twice during the summer to listen to testimony and search for answers regarding an exception in state law which allows municipal electric systems to take the service territory of other utilities in annexed areas. The interim legislative committee, also known as a summer study committee, was formed to examine the issue following the 2019 legislative session.

"We believe that, when given a chance, summer studies can be an effective means of addressing complex subjects and produce workable solutions," South Dakota Rural Electric Association General Manager Ed Anderson said.

There are three types of electric service providers in the state. South Dakota is served by electric cooperatives, investor-owned utilities (i.e. Northwestern Energy, Xcel Energy, and Black Hills Energy), and 35 cities which operate their own municipal electric systems. Electric cooperatives and investor-owned utilities must collaborate and agree upon changes in service territory boundaries established by the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission (PUC). However, current law allows the 35 municipal governments with electric utilities to expand their service boundaries into annexed areas and take territory from incumbent electric providers. Electric cooperatives argue that this exception for municipal electric systems favors the government taking of private enterprise.

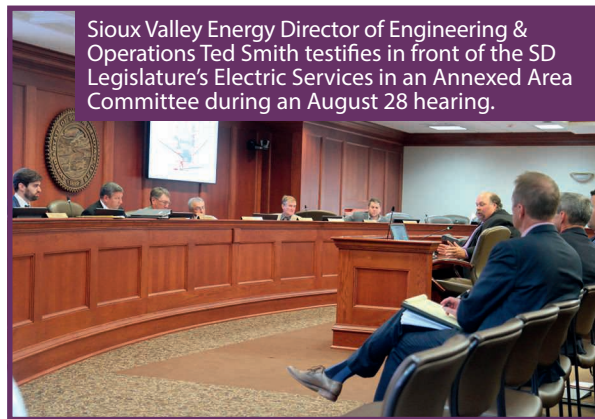
"This issue is not about annexation. Co-ops support annexation," Anderson

said. "However, annexation and the taking of service territory of an incumbent utility are not tied together. There are too many examples of successful growth without a municipal electric system to think otherwise. The continued vitality of cities large and small across South Dakota is important to electric cooperatives."

SDREA attempted to change this exception during the 2019 South Dakota Legislative Session, but the issue was referred to a summer study through the passage of Senate Bill 66 (SB 66). The first hearing of the committee was held at the state capitol in Pierre on July 25. Co-op managers from Sioux Valley Energy, Codington-Clark Electric Cooperative, and Clay-Union Electric testified in front of the committee during the July 25 hearing. Those three co-ops have experienced the issue firsthand because the communities of Watertown, Brookings, Madison, and Vermillion all operate their own municipal electric systems.

The second hearing of the committee was held on August 28. During the August meeting, representatives of the electric cooperatives and investor-owned utilities presented responses to a series of research questions that were posed by the SB 66 Interim Committee. The municipal utilities presented testimony during the second hearing and time was also allowed for public testimony. The meeting ended with a discussion regarding possible solutions to the issue of territorial takings by municipal utilities.

"All parties are in agreement that we have very, very good high-quality electric service," SB 66 Interim Committee Chairman Sen. Alan Solano (R-Rapid City) said during the August 28 hearing. "Good people in South Dakota can sit down and work through a lot of things."



Sioux Valley Energy Director of Engineering & Operations Ted Smith testifies in front of the SD Legislature's Electric Services in an Annexed Area Committee during an August 28 hearing.

Solano would like all sides of the issue to bring forward potential solutions to the problems that have been caused by the inequities in current state law. The SB 66 Interim Committee will review the solutions and work toward a formal legislative recommendation in October or November. Any final recommendation that is adopted by the SB 66 Interim Committee will be considered by the full legislature when lawmakers return to Pierre for the 2020 South Dakota Legislative Session in January.

"We believe the important work of the committee and the integrity of the process is best served when participants on all sides of an issue are committed to working together to find solutions," Anderson said. "We are committed to working with the committee to find a sustainable solution to a real problem."

The SB 66 Interim Committee is chaired by Sen. Solano with Rep. Thomas Brunner (R-Nisland) serving as co-chair of the panel. Sen. Lee Schoenbeck (R-Watertown), Sen. Susan Wismer (D-Britton), Sen. Jordan Youngberg (R-Chester), Rep. Shawn Bordeaux (D-Mission), Rep. Kirk Chaffee (R-Whitewood), Rep. Spencer Gosch (R-Glenham), and Rep. Tim Reed (R-Brookings) also serve on the committee.

The committee will hold a third meeting to discuss potential solutions and recommendations later this fall. A date has yet to be determined.





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Mitchell Farmer's Market, Featuring fresh produce, meats, eggs, baked goods, handcrafted items and more, 4:30 to 7 p.m., Corn Palace Plaza, Main Street, Mitchell, SD

## September 18-22

Sanford International Golf Tournament, Sioux Falls, SD, 877-748-3376

## September 19-21

St. Joseph's Indian School Powwow, Chamberlain, SD, 605-234-3452

## September 20-22

German-Russian Schmeckfest, Eureka, SD, 605-284-2332

## September 21

Annual Watertown Radio Chili Cook-off, Watertown, SD, 605-882-6269

## September 21

AgriCulture on the Square, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. MDT, Free, Main Street Square, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-1722

## September 21-22

North Country Fiber Fair, Watertown, SD, 605-956-7909

## September 21-22

Northern Plains Indian Art Market, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-856-8193

## September 21-22

Pioneer Power and Toy Show, Menno, SD, [www.pioneeracres.com](http://www.pioneeracres.com)

## September 25-28

Black Hills Plein Air Paint-Out, Hill City, SD, 605-645-7196



Photo courtesy: Oahe Electric Cooperative

## September 26-28

Buffalo Roundup Arts Festival, Opens at 10 a.m., Game Lodge grounds, Custer State Park, Custer, SD, 605-255-4541

## September 26-29

South Dakota Film Festival, Aberdeen, SD, 605-725-2697

## September 27

56th Annual Buffalo Roundup, 6:15 a.m., Buffalo corrals, Custer State Park, Custer, SD, 605-255-4515

## September 27-28

Corn Palace Challenge Bulls and Broncs PRCA Extreme, Mitchell, SD, 605-995-8430

## September 27-29

SiouxperCon, Sioux Falls, SD, [www.siouxpercon.com](http://www.siouxpercon.com)

## September 28

Wheelin' to Wall, Wall, SD, 605-685-3882

## September 28

Living History Fall Festival, Groton, SD, 605-715-7117

## September 29

Fall Volksmarch at Crazy Horse Memorial, Crazy Horse, SD, 605-673-4681

## October 3-6

South Dakota Festival of Books, Brookings, SD, 605-688-6113

## October 5

Harvest Festival, Chamberlain, SD, 605-234-4416

## October 5

Prairie Village Hobo Marlin Pumpkin Train, Madison, SD, 605-256-3644

## October 11-13

Black Hills Powwow, Rapid City, SD, 605-341-0925

## October 11-13

Black Hills Horse Expo, Rapid City, SD

## October 19

4th Annual Fall Festival, East Pierre Landscape and Garden Center, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Pierre, SD, 605-224-8832

## November 9

14th Annual Shopping Extravaganza, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Davison County Fairgrounds, Mitchell, SD, Contact Cindy Foster at 605-996-8563

## November 10

Trinity Lutheran Church 25th Annual Lutefisk, Lefse and Meatball Supper, 4 to 7 p.m., Chamberlain, SD, 605-730-0553

**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.**