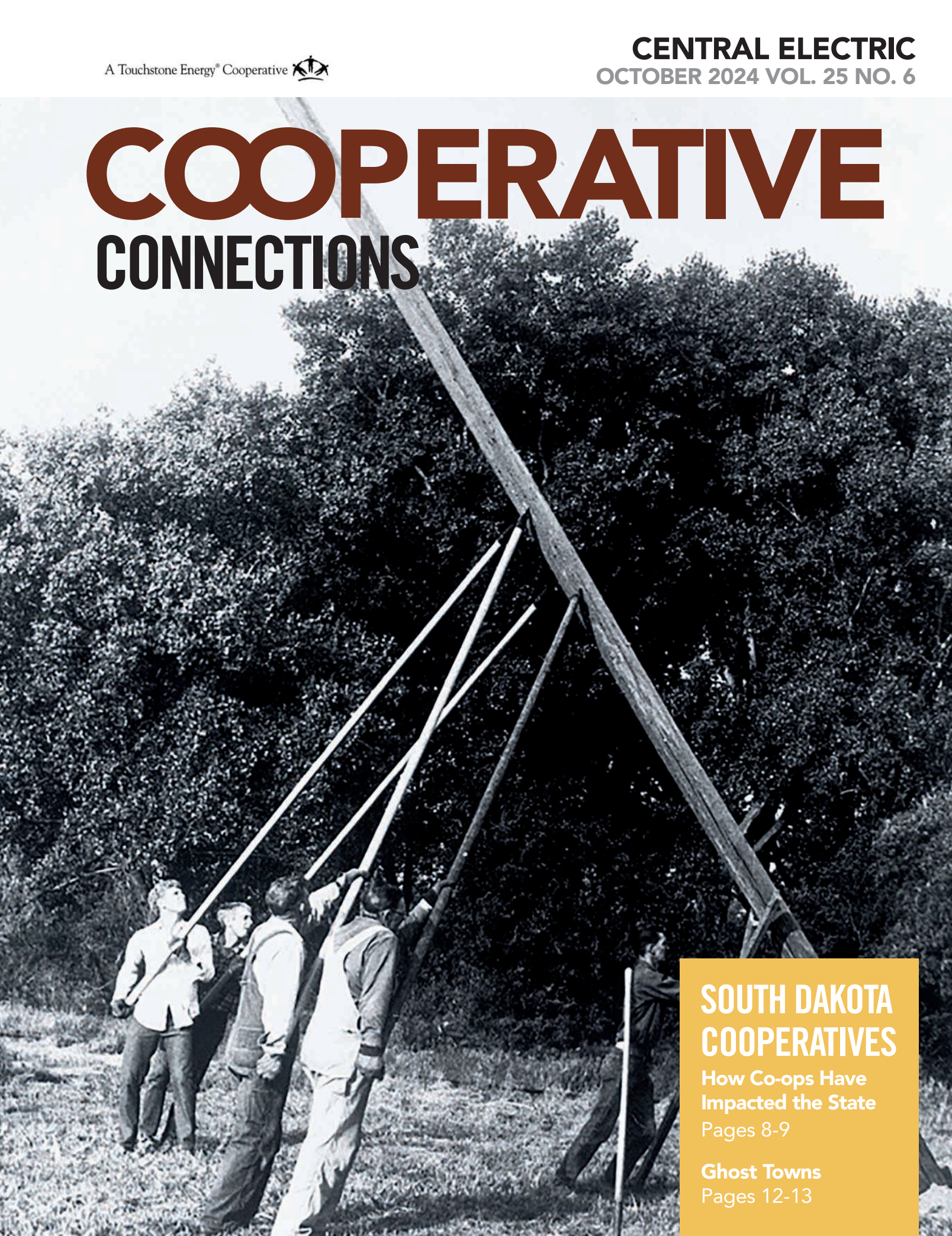


# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## **SOUTH DAKOTA COOPERATIVES**

**How Co-ops Have  
Impacted the State**  
Pages 8-9

**Ghost Towns**  
Pages 12-13

## MANAGER'S MESSAGE

# Rate Changes Expected in 2025

## The Cost to Provide Power is Rising Nationwide



**Ken Schlimgen**  
General Manager

As you may be aware, electric cooperatives across the country, including Central Electric Cooperative, are facing significant financial pressures. During our recent district meetings, I expressed concerns about the likelihood of higher wholesale power prices in 2025, and unfortunately, this now seems inevitable.

As a member-owned cooperative, we have always been committed to managing costs while ensuring

a safe and reliable supply of electricity for our members. The primary factor influencing our electric rates is the cost of wholesale power, which currently accounts for nearly 70% of our annual expenses. When these wholesale costs rise, the increase is too substantial for the cooperative to absorb, meaning it must be passed on to our membership.

Currently, about 83% of our wholesale power is supplied by Basin Electric Power Cooperative. To their credit, Basin Electric has maintained flat rates since 2017. However, to meet the growing demand for electricity, they need to make significant investments in new generation and transmission infrastructure over the next decade. Combined with rising labor, material and interest costs, this will lead to an expected increase of up to 10% in wholesale power costs from Basin Electric over the next two years. The remaining 17% of our power comes from the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), which

has announced plans to raise their rates by 14% over the same period.

Basin Electric and WAPA sell their power to East River Electric which then distributes it to us and other cooperatives. East River Electric will blend the new wholesale power costs with their own operational expenses to determine the final price that Central Electric will pay for electricity in 2025.

Like many other entities, Central Electric is also grappling with rising costs for labor and materials, as well as the need to replace aging infrastructure to maintain reliability. Recent data shows that materials for our industry now cost an average of 48% more than they did four years ago. To put this into perspective, we can only replace half a mile of power line today for the same cost as a full mile just a few years ago.

We are currently awaiting final figures from East River Electric regarding the wholesale power prices for 2025. Rest assured, we

will work diligently to keep rate increases as minimal as possible as we finalize the 2025 budget. Our aim is to establish a rate that accurately reflects the cost of delivering electricity to our members, with just enough margin to satisfy our financial obligations.

We are committed to ensuring that rates are fair for all members, so everyone pays their fair share — no more, no less. The board of directors and management appreciate your understanding and support as we make these difficult decisions. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

Until next month, stay safe.

**ELECTRIC INDUSTRY MATERIALS  
HAVE INCREASED BY ROUGHLY 48%  
OVER THE LAST FOUR YEARS.**

**CENTRAL ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE  
CONNECTIONS**

(USPS 018-963)

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

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**Our Mission**

Provide reliable energy and services with a commitment to safety and member satisfaction.

**Non-Discrimination Statement:**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint](http://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

**Board Meeting Summary**

The board of directors met on July 15, 2024, at Central Electric Cooperative's headquarters for the regular board meeting. They reviewed reports by management including details on operations, member services, communications, service department and financials.

**BOARD REPORT**

General Manager Schlingen updated the board of directors on the East River Electric Managers' Advisory Committee, Basin Electric financials, SDREA Managers Meeting, Rural Electric Economic Development fund activities, strategic planning schedule, outpost plans, High Plains soybean plant update and estimated WAPA rate adjustments. Schlingen reviewed a capital campaign donation request from the Tokata Youth Center.

National Rural Utilities Service Cooperative Finance Corporation Regional Vice President Kristin Dolan led a discussion on equity management. Discussion followed.

Director Hofer reported on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association board meeting.

Director Loudner reported on the S.D. Rural Electric Association board meeting.

Director Wolbrink reported on East River Electric activities.

The board reviewed monthly director's expenses. The Audit Committee reviewed second quarter legal fees, attorney expenses, general manager expenses and director expenses.

**BOARD ACTION**

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to donate \$2,000 to the Tokata Youth Center capital campaign and apply for matching funds from Basin Electric and CoBank. Motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to accept second quarter general manager and director expenses. Motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve second quarter invoices for legal services. Motion carried.

There being no further business, President Wolbrink adjourned the meeting. The next board meeting was scheduled for August 19, 2024.

FINANCIAL REPORT	YEAR TO DATE JULY 2024	YEAR TO DATE JULY 2023
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales	147,584,999 kWh	144,734,117 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$ 21,565,568	\$ 20,496,979
Total Cost of Service	\$ 21,522,044	\$ 20,361,109
Operating Margins	\$ 13,524	\$ 135,870

# FIRE SAFETY

Cooking and heating are the leading causes of home fires and fire injuries, and winter months are the peak time for fire-related deaths. **Fire Prevention Week (Oct. 6-12, 2024)** is the perfect time to review and practice fire safety.

### Minimize Your Risks

The good news: Deaths from home fires in the U.S. have trended downward since the 1970s, according to Injury Facts, but even one death from a preventable fire is too many. While fire doesn't discriminate by age, it is the third leading cause of death for children 1 to 14.

**When cooking, make fire safety a priority by keeping these tips in mind:**

- Be alert; if you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, don't use the oven or stovetop.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, boiling or broiling food.
- Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stovetop.

**Heating is the second leading cause of home fires. Follow these tips:**

- Keep all flammables, like paper, clothing, bedding, drapes or rugs, at least three feet from a space heater, stove or fireplace.
- Never leave portable heaters and fireplaces unattended; turn off heaters and make sure fireplace embers are extinguished before leaving the room.
- If you must use a space heater, place it on a level, nonflammable surface, like ceramic tile, not on a rug or carpet.
- Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
- When buying a space heater, look for models that shut off automatically if the heater falls over.

### Working Smoke Alarms Are a Must

About three out of five fire deaths happen in homes without working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms are a key part of a home fire escape plan providing early warning to reduce your risk of dying in a fire. The National Fire Protection Association recommends you:

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas on the ceiling or high on the wall.
- Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen, at least 10 feet from the stove, to reduce false alarms.
- Use special alarms with strobe lights and bed shakers for

- people who are hard of hearing or deaf.
- Test smoke alarms monthly.
- Replace batteries in your smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector annually.
- Replace smoke alarms that are 10 or more years old.

### When and How to Use a Fire Extinguisher

Always put your safety first; if you are not confident in your ability to use a fire extinguisher, get out and call 9-1-1. The American Red Cross cautions you to evaluate the situation and ensure:

- Everyone has left or is leaving the home
- The fire department has been called
- The fire is small, not spreading, and there is not much smoke
- Your back is to an exit you can use quickly

### Remember the acronym PASS:

- P**ull the pin.
- A**im low at the base of the fire.
- S**queeze the handle slowly.
- S**weep the nozzle side to side.

*Source: National Safety Council*



### Power Line Safety "Watch Out for Power Lines!"

#### Archer Rindels, Age 7

Archer Rindels warns readers to be careful around power lines. Thank you for your picture, Archer! Archer's parents are Kyle and Rochelle Rindels, members of Sioux Valley Energy.

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.

# Delicious CHICKEN

## CHEESY CHICKEN BUNDLES

### Ingredients:

- 1 (11 oz.) can condensed cream of chicken soup
- 1/2 cup milk
- 3/4 cup Velveeta, shredded or cubed
- 1 (10 oz.) can chunk chicken, drained and flaked
- 1 (8 oz.) can crescent rolls

### Method

Combine soup, milk and cheese. Heat until melted and smooth. Pour into a 7x11 inch pan that has been sprayed with vegetable oil.

Separate crescents into 8 triangles. Place 2 tbsps. of chicken on wide end of crescent roll. Pinch to seal. Place on top of sauce.

Bake uncovered at 375 degrees for 25 minutes and until golden brown. Serve with sauce on top.

Yields eight chicken bundles or four servings.

**Janet Ochsner**  
Box Elder, S.D.

## CROCKPOT CHICKEN PARMESAN SOUP

### Ingredients:

- 3 boneless chicken breasts
- 1 tbsp. minced garlic
- 1 can crushed tomatoes (28 oz. can)
- 1 can tomato sauce (15 oz. can)
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. ground black pepper
- 2 tsp. Italian seasoning
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup parmesan cheese (freshly shaved)
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 8 oz. rotini pasta (uncooked)
- 1 1/2 cup shredded Mozzarella

### Method

Add the chicken breast, minced garlic, crushed tomatoes, tomato sauce, salt, pepper, Italian seasoning and chicken broth to the Crock-Pot.

Cover Crock-Pot with lid and cook on low for 6-8 hours.

Shred the chicken. Stir in the shredded parmesan cheese, heavy whipping cream and rotini pasta. Cover and cook on low for 30 minutes.

Top the individual soup servings with mozzarella cheese.

**Kayla Beaner**  
Centerville, S.D.

## BUTTER CHICKEN

### Ingredients:

- 4 tsps. Garam Masala blend
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp. ground ginger
- 1/2 tsp. ground turmeric
- 1/8 tsp. crushed red pepper
- 4 tbsps. butter, divided
- 1 can (14.5 oz.) petite diced tomatoes
- 1 med. red onion, chopped
- 1 1/4 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 tsp. sea salt

### Method

Mix Garam Masala, garlic, ginger, turmeric and crushed red pepper in small bowl. Heat large non-stick skillet on medium heat. Toast seasoning mixture 1 min. or just until fragrant, stirring constantly. Add 2 tbsps. of the butter to skillet, swirling to melt. Add onion; cook and stir 2 to 3 mins. until softened. Stir in tomatoes; cook 5 mins. Carefully transfer mixture to blender container; cover. Blend until smooth, scraping sides as needed. Return pureed sauce to skillet. Bring to simmer on med.-low heat. Add chicken; cook 8 to 10 minutes or until chicken is cooked though, stirring occasionally. Stir in remaining butter, cream and salt until well blended. Simmer on med.-low heat 2 to 3 minutes until sauce is slightly thickened. Stir in additional crushed red pepper to taste and serve with hot cooked basmati rice or warm naan bread, if desired. Garnish with fresh cilantro leaves, if desired.

**McCormick.com**

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2024. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.



## Petersen Selected for Cooperative Hall of Fame

Referred to as one of the premier business and cooperative attorneys in South Dakota, Don Petersen was recently inducted into the South Dakota Cooperative Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame is the highest honor that the cooperative community bestows upon individuals who have made significant contributions to cooperatives in South Dakota.

Petersen began acting as legal counsel to Intercounty Electric Cooperative in 1990. He was an integral part of the merger process with Tri-County Electric Cooperative. The two cooperatives became Central Electric Cooperative in 2000, where Petersen still serves. Petersen's counsel guided Central Electric through several challenges, including relocating its headquarters in 2012, hiring a new general manager in 2015, launching Operation Round-Up and constructing multiple service centers.

Over the past 32 years, Petersen has contributed to economic development throughout the region. He has assisted

Central Electric, Dakota Energy and Douglas Electric with an estimated 18 USDA Rural Utility Service loan applications. Petersen's expertise in economic development helped cooperatives obtain more than a dozen USDA zero-interest loans for fire departments, development corporations, schools, medical facilities and city governments to improve our local quality of life.

Petersen also played a part in obtaining more than 50 loans through the Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) Loan Fund to help fund new businesses and business expansions within the cooperative's footprint.

Petersen's commitment to the Mitchell community and beyond is evident through his extensive board and volunteer service. He has lent his expertise to various organizations, including the Mitchell Area Development Corporation, Avera Queen of Peace, Abbot House Foundation, Mitchell United Way, Oscar Howe Art Center, Mitchell Area Charitable Foundation, City of Mitchell Planning Commission, South Dakota State Bar Business Law Committee, Dakota Mental Health and the Mitchell Red Cross. He has also coached Little League, volunteered for Special Olympics and taught business law classes at Dakota Wesleyan University.

For over 35 years, Petersen has been the key advisor and consultant to the Mitchell Area Development Corporation on every major development project in the Mitchell community. He is a trusted counsel for Central Electric and many small businesses with their expansions, acquisitions and government relations. His work on legal and cooperative issues has greatly benefited electric cooperative consumers across South Dakota.

Congratulations to Don Petersen on this monumental achievement! The Cooperative Hall of Fame program is sponsored by CHS, Inc., the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives, South Dakota Association of Telephone Cooperatives, South Dakota Farmers Union and South Dakota Rural Electric Association.



Dennis Rensch, Edward Mallett and Don Petersen were inducted into the South Dakota Cooperative Hall of Fame in August. Rensch was nominated by Madison Farmers Elevator, Mallett was nominated by CHS and Petersen was nominated by Central Electric Cooperative.

(Photo Credit: South Dakota Association of Cooperatives)



Herman and Nina Rosenau Photo credit: Shannon Marvel

## WWII Veteran Remembers How Electricity Modernized Life on the Farm

**JJ Martin and Shannon Marvel**

For the last 66 years, Herman Rosenau has been thankful he hasn't had to pump water for the cows by hand at his farm and ranch near Glad Valley.

In 1957, Rosenau became one of the first members of Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative in Timber Lake, S.D.

Coming of age at the tail end of World War II, Rosenau bore witness to some major world changes. As rural South Dakota started electrifying, Europe and East Asia were in turmoil. Before shipping off for the war, Rosenau's life was all manual labor. After seeing the metamorphosis that the other half of the world went through, Rosenau watched his own world drastically change. Electricity slowly spread out across the Moreau-Grand service area like lightning in slow motion.

With a mischievous smile, Rosenau

sat down at the kitchen table with his morning coffee to discuss how he remembered the lights coming on at his home. After haying all morning, he was happy for a break.

"Things changed not all overnight, but pretty steady," Rosenau said. "We got an electric refrigerator, then we got electricity out of a pump jack on the well. Everything kept growing little by little."

Before electricity, Rosenau recalls watering the cows with a windmill in the water tank.

"And when the wind didn't blow, you pumped the water by hand," Rosenau said.

He remembers when the first electric bills totaled around \$7 per month.

"Well, story of my life was a pitchfork and a team of horses until around 1947," he said with a laugh.

With electricity becoming available

to rural folks in South Dakota, Rosenau recalled being able to purchase a deep freeze. That electric appliance allowed him to store food, particularly beef, for long periods of time and saved him the 70-mile round-trip to Lemmon to the meat locker.

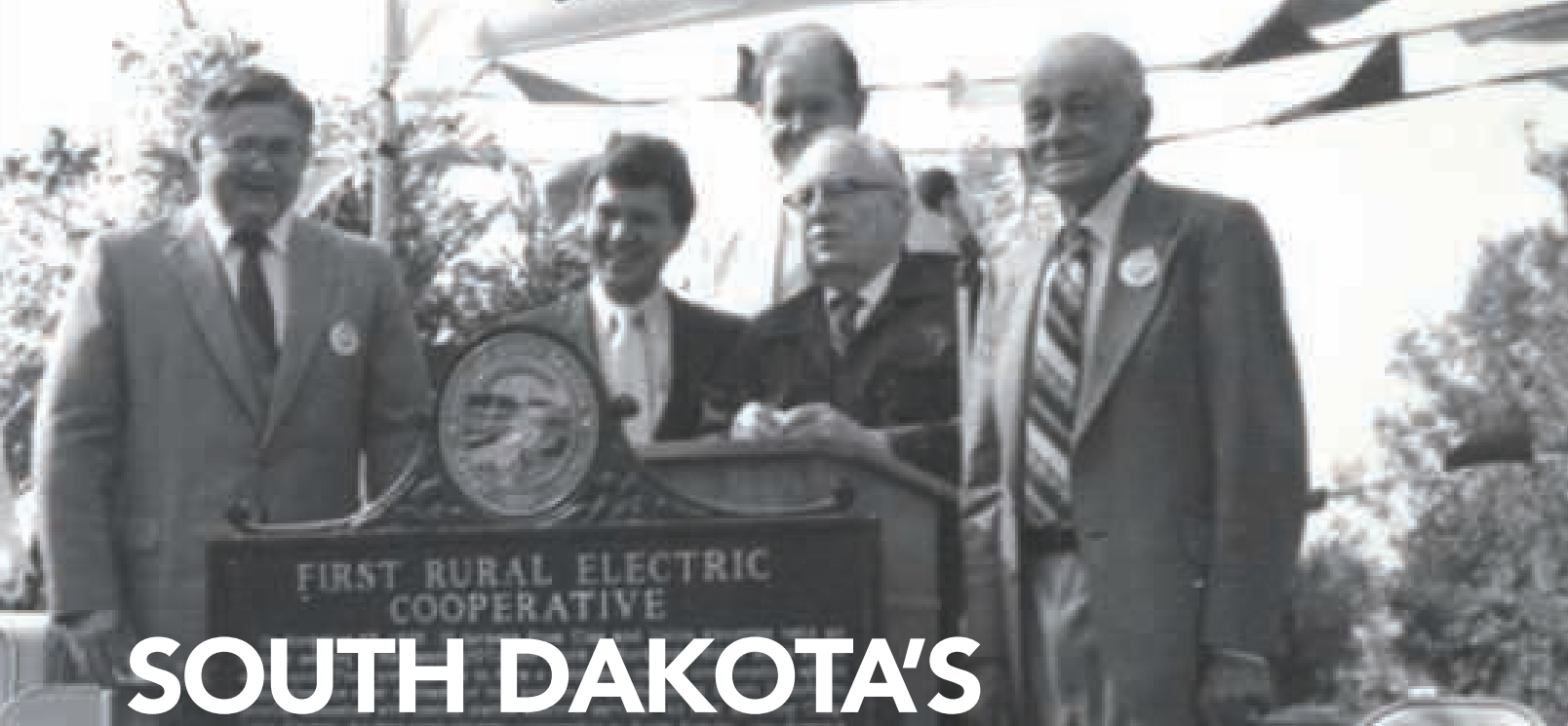
Rosenau is not one to forget how thankful he is for having access to electricity and freedom. The electricity reached his home a few years after he returned home from serving in the Army. The World War II veteran said he went in at the time of the Belgian Bulge.

"I went to the Texas Infantry in the spring when it looked like the war in Europe was getting under control," Rosenau said.

"I was in Manila when they dropped them two little eggs on Japan. And if they hadn't done that, I don't think I'd be here. Because they told us if we have to go ashore in Japan, we will lose a half million to a million boys going ashore. That's the total population of South Dakota."



Linemen placing poles in the early days at Moreau-Grand Electric.



# SOUTH DAKOTA'S COOPERATIVES

## Jacob Boyko

[jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop](mailto:jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop)

Picture life in rural South Dakota 100 years ago. Each morning, families woke before dawn to work by the flicker of kerosene lamps, hand-pumped water to fill a gas-powered wringer-washer, and retrieved breakfast ingredients from a dripping ice box. Looming in the backs of producers' minds were fears that the market would trend downward and they may not be able to cover their debts, or even harvest their fields.

Today, South Dakota's rural farmers and ranchers enjoy virtually all of the accommodations of modern living their suburban counterparts enjoy. Past luxuries like running water, full-time electricity, internet and telephone are now standard, and many farmers enjoy stronger economic security compared to the past's tumultuous markets.

That's because for over 100 years, rural South Dakotans have pooled their resources by forming cooperatives that level out some of the disparities between rural and urban life. Thanks to members' ingenuity, rural America is not just a viable, but a thriving place to live and work.

## The First Cooperatives

The first cooperatives in South Dakota were agriculture-focused. Far too often, an

oversupply of goods led to price crashes, resulting in farmers unable to economically harvest crops or market livestock. This led to tremendous waste and crushed livelihoods.

As producers grew weary of the uncertain market, they organized to collectively market and distribute their products: they coordinated, shared risk and pooled resources.

South Dakota's earliest farm supply and marketing cooperatives started popping up a little after the turn of the 20th century. The South Dakota Secretary of State's office lists Lake Andes Farmers Cooperative, formed in 1909, as the oldest ongoing cooperative in the state.

During this early period, cooperatives operated in a legal gray area. Since producers working collectively in a cooperative setting could be viewed as monopolistic or collusive, they were under careful watch by the Federal Trade Commission as well as their larger competitors.

That changed in 1922 with the passage of the Capper-Volstead Act.

"Capper-Volstead allowed producers to come together and market their products and not be in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act," explained Brenda Forman, South Dakota Association of Cooperatives executive director. "[Cooperatives] were not considered to be a monopoly as long as they were a cooperative association formed

Clay-Union Electric Corporation was the first electric cooperative in South Dakota.

by producers, owned by the members, one member gets one vote in cooperative elections, etc."

The presence of ag cooperatives surged in the 1930s as producers looked for stability during the Great Depression, the South Dakota Farmers Union says. With effectiveness proven, the cooperative strategy has stuck around since.

Today, there are 63 farm supply and marketing cooperatives serving over 130 South Dakota communities, Forman said.

Those same visionaries who established the first ag cooperatives identified another need that was not being met. Using the same cooperative model that changed their lives once already, farmers would bring power to the prairie.

## Electricity

Before energy infrastructure was widespread, many small towns in South Dakota relied on local power plants. However, with distribution lines only serving the city, living even a mile or two out of town was the difference between flipping a light switch and carrying a lantern.

Despite requests from farmers to run lines to their homes – some of whom even offered to pay installation costs – most municipalities and investor-owned utilities (IOUs) refused because undertaking the effort didn't lead to any meaningful profit.

Even many of the state's elected representatives seemed resigned to the idea



that the future of energy for their farming constituents was tied to on-site generation, like the modest Delco–Light plants that could power a few small appliances and light bulbs. To them, it seemed laughable that there was any feasible way to run lines in a state where the service would average out to a sparse 2.2 customers per mile of line, and for many, that was the end of the conversation.

The narrative changed when President Franklin D. Roosevelt expanded his New Deal programs to modernize rural America, creating the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) to finance ambitious projects.

The profit-minded IOUs were largely uninterested in expanding into sparse territory for mealy returns, and little progress was made toward Roosevelt's vision.

In 1936, once it was apparent IOUs wouldn't be making the foray into rural territories as farmers had hoped they would, Roosevelt signed the Rural Electrification Act. Now, cooperatives could organize and receive REA loans while the IOUs idled.

A group of 17 farmers from Clay and Union counties jumped at the opportunity to finally bring their homes into the modern age. Just months after the REA was established, and at a time when just 5% of South Dakota farms had power, the group hatched out a plan to secure an REA loan for their newly-formed Fairview Rural Electric System, today Clay-Union Electric Corporation.

Going door to door and collecting \$5 sign-ons from neighbors ranging from ecstatic to skeptical, the cooperative finally got the REA's green light and received a \$70,000 loan to build 67 miles of line that would serve about 300 members, according to a 1936 Argus Leader report.

The success of South Dakota's first electric cooperative brought hope to still more than 90% of South Dakota farmers without power. It wasn't long before dozens more newly-formed cooperatives were each going door to door collecting sign-on fees to secure their own REA loans.

## Serving Everyone

In 1946, roughly 10 years after the state's first electric cooperative debuted, rural farmers and ranchers from the state's

remote northwest corner met in Lemmon to form their own cooperative. The board understood securing a loan from REA to serve such a vast and sparse territory would be a big ask, so they opted to charge members a \$10 monthly minimum, which was twice the minimum rate of most South Dakota cooperatives, and equal to about \$170 today.

Even so, would-be members agreed to the terms of the longshot project and paid their \$5 membership fee. Despite federal hesitation about the feasibility of such a project, the REA loan was approved.

Grand Electric Cooperative received more than \$1.8 million over two loans that would build 1,127 miles of line and serve 948 members. The investment amounted to one of the REA's largest and riskiest yet in the state, but proved to be a success.

Cooperative members did the impossible; the wires in northwest South Dakota had finally been energized. Board members then eyed another ambitious goal – bringing telephone to Northwest South Dakota.

West River Cooperative Telephone Company was formed as a separate entity, but in the spirit of cooperation, the telephone and electric cooperative would be jointly operated. The two would, and still to this day, share a building, staff and infrastructure.

“Up here, we cover almost 8,000 square miles and have 4,000 miles of wire, but we only have 1,800 members,” explained Eric Kahler, the cooperatives' joint general manager. “When you look at the economics of this type of service territory, if you're in the business to make money, you're not going to be too successful here. The cooperative model is really the only model that could work here.”

And the community knows that fact and is grateful for their cooperative, says Patricia Palmer, who has spent much of her last 63 years working in Grand Electric and West River Telephone's member services.

“They're thankful,” she said. “Very thankful. We have a terrific telephone work crew and line department. At times, they work tirelessly in horrible weather conditions... You can't believe the thank you notes that we get.”

Growing up on a farm near McIntosh, Palmer has a firsthand account of the impact

of cooperatives. And she says it's one she will never forget.

The night she watched her family's farmhouse light up for the first time was also the beginning of a new chapter, she recalled. A chapter with an automatic washer, a refrigerator and a toaster.

As times change, cooperatives continue to be at the forefront of bringing service that might otherwise be out of reach.

“When I came to the cooperative, it was just telephone and electricity, and now we have high-speed internet and TV,” Palmer said. “Over the years, the cooperative has really grown!”

## Other Applications

The cooperative model is also used in many other sectors; there are 34 South Dakota credit unions that offer member-owners better interest rates and reduced fees compared to for-profit banks.

Even some rural water systems, while not wholly cooperatives themselves, borrow some of the cooperative fundamentals to make serving large areas more practical.

“Cooperatives are pretty significant in the impact they've had,” Forman said. “And the other cooperatives we have – there are daycare co-ops, food co-ops, education co-ops – there's a number of different structures that the cooperative model has been used for, because of that ownership and one member, one vote.”

Today, there are 141 cooperatives in the state, providing more than 78,500 jobs, \$2.8 billion in worker salaries and \$3.9 billion in gross domestic product (GDP), according to a South Dakota State University study titled *The Economic Impact of Cooperatives in South Dakota*.

That means cooperatives contribute almost 13% of South Dakota jobs, more than 11% of salaries, and 6.2% of the state's entire GDP.

“In a cooperative, your board is local,” Forman said. “[The co-op board and employees] support and participate in sports functions, 4-H barbecues, you may go to church with them, or they may be at family dinner. Which means when something is a concern or challenge, you have somebody to go to and you have contacts close that know you and understand the system.”



# Plugged In With Patrick



**Patrick Soukup**  
Manager of Member Services and Marketing

The last month has been incredibly busy with Dakotafest and the State Fair. We had the Ford F-150 Lightning electric vehicle (EV) and Polaris Ranger Kinetic electric side-by-side on display at Dakotafest and answered member questions about each unit.

Central Electric is now tracking the cost per mile on the Ford Lightning. It has good data to pull from regarding usage, and we will share updated information each month.

When reviewing the data, remember the vehicle we are charging and driving is the Ford Lightning, which is a half-ton 4-wheel drive pickup. A smaller EV, such as the Ford Mustang Mach-E, may cost less per mile. We are also using the rate of 12 cents per kilowatt hour. These details need to be considered.

Charging data from the pickup is becoming very useful. We have found the rate or capacity of the Ford Level 2 charger is 18.5 kilowatts, which is about the same as running a 20-horsepower motor. Not all vehicles have this charging option, but it's one of the reasons we purchased the Ford Lightning. We now have data to demonstrate the impact of this type of charger on our system.

So, let's talk about the different EV charging options. Most EVs come with a standard charger. You can charge with a Level 1 option, which is just 120 volts, and it would take days to charge the batteries to full capacity. Everyone has this option in most of their garages or outside their homes.

The next option for charging is Level 2. This option will charge most EVs in roughly 8 to 10 hours. Members should have a specific outlet for a Level 2 charger: a 50-amp 230-volt 4-wire outlet. This is a common outlet for most electric ranges in our homes. This outlet is not common in most garages unless you are a mechanic or a farmer.

So, is your home ready for EV charging? You should not need another EV charger besides the one that comes standard with the EV. However, you will need an outlet to charge from, meaning a 120-volt outlet or the 50-amp 230-volt option.

With that in mind, please contact your electric cooperative and let us know of new energy demands that come with new equipment, such as an EV charger. Thanks for taking the time to read this, and let's hope for a nice long Fall season.

## 2022 Ford F-150 Lightning Energy Expense

Month	Average Temp	Miles Driven	Energy Used (KWH)	Charging Cost	Cost Per Mile
Apr-24	49	519	519	\$ 62.28	\$ 0.120
May-24	61	652	521	\$ 62.52	\$ 0.096
Jun-24	70	1211	577	\$ 69.24	\$ 0.057
Jul-24	74	801	492	\$ 82.58	\$ 0.103
Aug-24	71	681	482	\$ 57.84	\$ 0.085

## Reasons to Celebrate!

**National Information Technology (IT) Professionals Day** is Sept. 17, making it a great time to recognize IT Systems Manager Ryan Mueller and IT Systems Coordinator Kelly Kidwiler. Their contributions help us protect member information and streamline workflows across all departments.

**National Tradesmen Day** is Sept. 20. For this occasion, we recognize the electricians in our service department and other employees who previously worked as electricians for their contributions as tradesmen.



**Kelly** IT Systems Coordinator  
**Ryan** IT Systems Manager  
**Brandon** Electrician, Appliance Repair Technician  
**Ryan** Electrician  
**Kyle** Electrician  
**Kevin** Electrician  
**Dave** Electrician, Metering & Load Management Technician  
**Patrick** Electrician, Manager of Member Services  
**Ken** Electrician, General Manager  
**Rodney** Electrician

# Heating & Cooling Technician Hired

In August, Central Electric welcomed a new team member to the service department. Rylee [redacted] brings eight years of work experience in the heating and cooling industry.



Rylee [redacted]

[redacted] graduated from Mitchell Technical College in 2018 with a degree in heating and cooling technology. He worked at Tessiers from 2016-2023, and more recently at Direct Digital Controls. We are excited to have [redacted] on the team.

If you need maintenance performed on an existing heating and cooling system, or if you need a new system installed, we can help. Members and non-members can call Central Electric for an estimate on heating and cooling services.



## Employee Years of Service



Jonathan [redacted]  
Plankinton Area Foreman  
14 years on Sept. 1



Ryan [redacted]  
IT Systems Manager  
9 years on Sept. 1



Dave [redacted]  
Metering & Load Mngmt. Technician  
6 years on Sept. 10



Andrew [redacted]  
Materials & Plant Supervisor  
8 years on Sept. 12



Lincoln [redacted]  
Sales & Project Manager  
23 years on Sept. 17



Heather [redacted]  
Customer Service Representative  
8 years on Oct. 11



Jesse [redacted]  
Kimball Area Foreman  
22 years on Oct. 21

Thanks for your dedication!

# GHOST TOWNS

## South Dakota's History Remembered

Jacob Boyko

Scattered across open fields and through narrow mountain gulches, a careful eye can spot many of South Dakota's nearly 250 long-lost prairie villages and prospecting towns.

Many of these communities were once thriving outposts, railroad hubs, farming villages and mining towns, but were dealt their final blows by the hardships of the dust bowl, changes to railroad systems and the depletion of natural resources.

Most of the towns are long forgotten, their existence marked only by the rotted shell of an old wood barn or a crumbling foundation poking up from the ground.

Thanks to the work of local historical societies who have pieced together the history of the communities' "booms and busts" through old newspaper clippings, plat maps and land records, we can get a glimpse into the lives of the first rural South Dakotans and learn about the communities that once bustled with life.

### Galena

Unique among a cavalcade of abandoned Black Hills gold-rush towns, Galena's roots are in its silver. The town was settled in the late 1870s after prospectors Patrick Donegan and John F. Cochran discovered layers of lead and silver ore near Bear Butte Creek while searching for gold deposits.

The U.S. government removed the two men from the area in accordance with Native American treaties. However,

their exile turned out to be short-lived. Donegan and Cochran returned shortly after to mine their claim as more and more gold-hungry settlers tested the increasingly unenforceable treaties.

The claim, which would later become the Sitting Bull mine, turned out to be a mother lode, according to Galena Historical Society member Jeff Jacobsen.

Over the next several years, other mining operations popped up in the gulch as the miners' families made Galena their new home. The town soon had multiple houses, a hotel, restaurant, stores, a catholic church, cemetery and school, attracting new settlers through its peak between 1881 and 1883.

Arriving from Chicago in hopes of expanding his fortune, Col. John Davey soon became a Galena mining heavyweight, buying up claims along the Bear Butte Creek, including the Sitting Bull claim.

Davey's more than 125-man operation was running smoothly until trouble arose from a claim dispute. The owners of the nearby Richmond claim suspected Davey was digging too far into the hill and mining their silver. Davey claimed he was following the path of the ore, which according to mining law, he was allowed to follow onto another claim. The Richmond claim owners said the law didn't apply to a horizontal blanket formation of ore, like the one in Galena.

A lengthy court battle ensued, and the judge shut down the Sitting Bull mine

until the ruling. Galena was suspended in controversy as many of the townsfolk found themselves out of work.

Thus began Galena's rocky "boom and bust" cycle, Jacobsen explained.

"The boom time was when Col. Davey and other mines were producing, and then the lawsuit shut that down and you have a bust," he said.

The judge ruled against Davey, and the operation never recovered. Galena would never again be the bustling town it was in the early 1880s.

"In 1892, some more people came into town and tried to start up again, so that was a boom, and then they went bankrupt, so there's a bust," Jacobsen continued. "There's like three or four cycles like that in Galena."

By the mid 1930s, the town had seen its final bust. The mining wasn't comparable to the riches of the past, and interest in the gulch slowly started to fade. The tracks were removed and the school house closed in 1943.

Today, Galena is the best-preserved Ghost Town in South Dakota. On the second Saturday of each June, visitors can tour the town, visit the maintained graveyard and go inside the newly-restored schoolhouse, courtesy of the Galena Historical Society.

"It just kind of stands out," Jacobsen said. "Galena is just one of the very few silver mining areas in the Black Hills when almost everyone else was trying for gold."



Galena School  
Photo Credit: Galena Historical Society

## Did You Know

In 1947, Deadwood resident Ollie Wiswell came across an orphaned coyote pup while he was out on a hike. He gave the pup, named Tootsie, to Fred and Esther Borsch of Galena. Tootsie gained fame as the mascot for the Borschs' Deadwood liquor store, famously appearing on the store's sign. Fred taught Tootsie to howl along to his singing, and the two recorded the album "South Dakota Tootsie."

Tootsie, at this point a South Dakota mascot, rode through parades, was featured in an airline advertising campaign, and even embarked on a nationwide tour where she visited the White House and performed for President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Vice President Richard Nixon.

Gov. George Mickelson, a fan of Tootsie himself, signed legislation in 1949 making the coyote the state's official animal. Tootsie died in 1959 and is buried near her home in Galena.

## Argonne

About nine miles northwest of Howard, just off state Highway 25, lay the remains of the ill-fated farming community, Argonne.

Marked by a blue historical sign, travelers-by can catch a glimpse of the town's massive cement bank vault with its swinging iron door, an old silo bearing the town's name, several concrete foundations, and a house falling into its own footprint.

The town's founder, Dr. Louis Gotthelf, was a Prussian-born physician who emigrated to the United States in the aftermath of the Prussian revolution. Gotthelf staked his claim in 1881 and established the townsite in 1886.

The town was originally called St. Mary's, named after Gotthelf's daughter, and was strategically positioned along the Chicago and North Western railroad, with the streets running parallel to the railroad rather than the traditional east-west layout. Confusion with another St. Mary's led to the residents voting to change the name to Argonne in 1920, which was chosen to honor local soldiers who had served in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive during World War I.

Despite having what should have been a prime location, Argonne failed to grow to Gotthelf's satisfaction, and he left with his family for Parker in 1889.

A 1919 land boom in South Dakota finally turned things around for Argonne, Miner County Historical Society member George Justice Forster said.

"Most of the growth that happened initially was when it kind of took off as a

trade center," he explained. "Suddenly the town had a railway depot, lumberyard, farmer's cooperative and general store."

In the early 20s, Argonne's population boomed to about 100 residents, and the town offered new amenities including a school, blacksmith and post office.

Argonne's peak was short-lived, and by 1930 the population had fallen to about 65 residents.

When Doug Jerlow moved to town in 1953, much of what was built in the town's prime was left abandoned, and most of the businesses that did remain were struggling.

"It was past the peak," Jerlow recounted. "One general store closed when the post office inside it closed, and that was an elderly lady who ran that and lived in a house by herself. The Haxby family's store was open for maybe a year or two after that."

Though the town was facing a bleak outlook, there remained one huge point of pride for Argonne: high school basketball.

Delbert Gillam, also known as the

Argonne Ace, led the Argonne Arrows to a 10-1 start in his junior year in 1953. Gillam also broke the state record for the most points scored by a player in a single game, making 31 field goals and 10 free throws, scoring 72. Argonne still holds this record.

The high school closed in 1956, but the community limped on for a few more years before the grade school closed in 1970 when the railroad picked up and left.

Doug Jerlow's family, the last residents of Argonne, left town that same year.

Jerlow pointed out that while many other communities along the rail line like Unityville, Canova, Carthage, and Esmond struggled to recover from the abandonment of the line, for Argonne, it was the death blow.

Now, Forster and other members of the Miner County Historical Society are working to preserve the history of Argonne.

A historical marker will soon be placed east of Argonne on state Highway 25 that will tell the story of Argonne from its founding to its final household.

Though Jerlow now lives near Madison, he still farms near Argonne and owns most of the former townsite. As the unofficial mayor of Argonne, as Jerlow sometimes calls himself, he wants to keep the memory of his childhood hometown alive.

"It was just a nice community to grow up in," he said. "Those small communities, I think it's becoming harder to find them anymore."



Argonne Arrows  
Photo Credit: Miner County Historical Society



**CUT  
CORN  
NOT  
CORNERS**

Time is a precious commodity, especially during harvest. However, cutting safety corners while harvesting around power lines can be deadly. Taking a moment to be prepared can help prevent catastrophic accidents. Knowing what to do if an accident does occur can be the difference between life and death.

**RE-ENERGIZING  
SAFETY**



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Contact your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative or visit **YourCoopPower.com** to find safety tips and make a plan.

# Grants Available for Community Projects



Grant applications for Central Electric Cooperative's Operation Round-Up® program are due Nov. 1, 2024. Through Operation Round-Up, funds are awarded twice each year to organizations that benefit area communities.

Applicants do not need to be members of Central Electric Cooperative, but eligible projects should have a positive impact in Central Electric's territory which includes Aurora, Brule, Buffalo, Davison, Hanson, Jerauld, Miner and Sanborn County.

Operation Round-Up is a voluntary program in which members round their electric bill up to the next whole dollar each month, and the extra cents are used to fund grants. A number of cooperative employees and board members also contribute to the fund. Since 2015, Central Electric members, employees and board members have invested more than \$200,000 to support projects.

Complete funding guidelines and a fillable Operation Round-Up grant application can be found online at [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop) under member programs.

## Safety Training & Equipment Testing

Central Electric performs regular training and equipment testing to help ensure the safety of our workforce and our members. Here are some pictures from a recent training day that included exercises for bucket rescue, pole top rescue and dielectric testing on the trucks.



Electrician Ryan [redacted] positions his equipment for bucket rescue training.



Mitchell Area Foreman Tony [redacted] performs pole top rescue training.



Wessington Springs Area Foreman Gene [redacted] performs pole top rescue training.



Crews perform annual dielectric testing on their trucks to ensure safety.

# GUIDED BY OUR PRINCIPLES

The cooperative principle of democratic member control is demonstrated through director elections. Pictured above, Davison County Director Jeff Gustafson speaks at the district meeting after being reelected this year.



**Tara Miller**  
Manager of  
Communications

October is National Cooperative Month, a time to celebrate the unique business model that prioritizes community, collaboration and member empowerment. Across the United States, cooperatives of all types come together to highlight the importance of working collectively for the greater good.

For electric cooperative members, this month is an opportunity to recognize the vital role your cooperative plays in bringing reliable, affordable electricity to previously underserved areas. As we celebrate National Cooperative Month, it's important to reflect on the guiding principles that make member-owned cooperatives so unique.

## **VOLUNTARY & OPEN MEMBERSHIP**

By maintaining voluntary and open membership, cooperatives remain inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of their communities. This principle ensures that everyone in the community has access to the services and benefits provided by the cooperative.

## **DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL**

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by the members. Elected board members are accountable to the membership. Each member has one vote, regardless of the amount of electricity they use, ensuring equality in decision-making.

## **MEMBER ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION**

Members contribute to the capital of the cooperative. Surpluses or margins are allocated for cooperative development or returned to members as capital credits. This principle ensures that the cooperative operates for the benefit of its members rather than for profit.

## **AUTONOMY & INDEPENDENCE**

Cooperatives are independent organizations controlled by their members. If cooperatives enter into agreements with other organizations, they do so in a way that ensures democratic control by their members and maintains their autonomy. This independence allows cooperatives to prioritize their members' needs without external influence.

## **EDUCATION, TRAINING & INFORMATION**

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected directors and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperative. This principle emphasizes the importance of informed and engaged members in the success of the cooperative.

## **COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES**

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, regional and national structures. By collaborating, cooperatives can achieve greater economic influence, benefiting their members and communities.

## **CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY**

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members. This principle underscores the cooperative's role in improving the quality of life in the communities they serve.

Cooperatives were formed when neighbors came together to solve a problem and stand up for the greater good. These principles guide Central Electric in its mission to provide reliable energy and services with a commitment to safety and member satisfaction. We extend our gratitude to Central Electric's member-owners during National Cooperative Month.

**SEPT. 14-OCT. 27**  
**Mazing Acres Fall Festival**  
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.  
30851 433rd Ave.  
Yankton, SD  
605-760-2759



To have your event listed on this page, send complete information, including date, event, place and contact to your local electric cooperative. Include your name, address and daytime telephone number. Information must be submitted at least eight weeks prior to your event. Please call ahead to confirm date, time and location of event.

**OCT. 4-5**  
**Holman Acres Pumpkin Fest and Vendor Show**  
Philip, SD  
605-441-1060

**OCT. 4-5**  
**25th Annual Pumpkin Fest**  
Webster, SD  
<https://webstersd.com/home>

**OCT. 5-6**  
**Run Crazy Horse Marathons**  
Crazy Horse  
[www.runcrazyhorse.com](http://www.runcrazyhorse.com)

**OCT. 5-6**  
**Magic Needlers Quilt Show**  
Codington County Extension Complex  
Watertown, SD  
605-881-3273

**OCT. 5-6**  
**The Black Market**  
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-332-6004

**OCT. 6**  
**Giant Pumpkin Festival**  
Bentley Memorial Building  
Bison, SD  
Enter Pumpkins by 11:30 a.m.  
605-244-5475

**OCT. 11-12**  
**Junkin' Market Days**  
Ramkota Exhibit Hall  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-941-4958

**OCT. 19**  
**Buffalo County Fall Ball**  
Live Music and Food  
8 p.m.  
Fire Hall  
Gann Valley, SD

**OCT. 25-27**  
**Forest of Fears Haunted Trail**  
7 p.m.-10 p.m.  
Reclamation-Ranch  
40787 259th St.  
Mitchell, SD

**OCT. 26**  
**Hill City Children's Boo Bash and Pumpkin Festival**  
Hill City, SD  
605-574-2368

**OCT. 26**  
**Hartford Women of Today Fall Craft Fair**  
9 a.m.-3 p.m.  
West Central Becker Center  
Hartford, SD  
605-359-2049

**OCT. 26**  
**Owl-O-Ween**  
Noon-5 p.m.  
Black Hills Raptor Center  
Caputa, SD  
605-391-2511

**OCT. 31**  
**Treat Street**  
5:30 p.m.-7 p.m.  
Milbank, SD  
605-432-6656  
[MilbankSD.com/Chamber](http://MilbankSD.com/Chamber)

**NOV. 2**  
**Fall Fling Craft Show**  
10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Dakota Christian School  
Corsica, SD  
605-366-7940

**NOV. 2**  
**Reliance Christmas Carousel**  
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Legion Hall  
Reliance, SD  
605-730-0553

**NOV. 8**  
**Plankinton Dueling Pianos Fundraiser**  
Ag Building  
Plankinton, SD  
[Facebook.com/PlankintonServiceClub](https://Facebook.com/PlankintonServiceClub)

**NOV. 10**  
**29th Annual Lutefisk, Meatball & Lefse Supper**  
4 p.m.-7 p.m.  
Trinity Lutheran Church  
Chamberlain, SD  
605-730-0553

**NOV. 22-23**  
**Holiday Arts Christmas Craft Show**  
Davison County Fairgrounds  
Mitchell, SD  
605-359-2049

**NOV. 30**  
**A Hometown Christmas Market**  
2 p.m.-6 p.m.  
Main St.  
Elk Point, SD

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