

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

## Keeping the Lights On

**One Lineman's  
Community Outreach**  
Pages 8-9

**Commercial  
Motor Vehicles and  
Public Safety**  
Pages 12-13



# Evolving Together: A New Chapter in Energy Efficiency



**Ken Schlimgen**  
General Manager

I don't think I need to tell you that time is a thief and change is inevitable. I started working for your cooperative as an electrician in 1985. My first responsibility was installing devices on electric water heaters that allowed the cooperative to turn them off during times of peak electrical usage.

The landscape of the energy industry is changing, with technology and politics affecting both the generation and the consumption of electricity. Central Electric has a responsibility

to adapt and evolve to meet the needs of our members. As the general manager who proudly installed our cooperative's first load management system back in 1985, I've witnessed firsthand the positive impact that innovative technology can have on the electric grid and our wallets.

That system I installed almost 40 years ago has served us well, but it will reach the end of its useful life in 2029. Over the next few months, your cooperative will launch a pilot project to test potential replacement equipment for the devices we have installed in member homes that control water heaters, air conditioners and other devices.

By participating in this pilot project, you have the chance to help shape the future of our cooperative and contribute to a more efficient and sustainable path forward.

But let's talk turkey – what's in it for you? Well, besides the warm fuzzies that come with knowing you're doing your part to

save the planet, participating in this project could also mean big savings for you and your family. By shedding load (energy usage) during peak times of consumption, we can reduce strain on the power grid, better utilize renewable power resources and lower overall electricity costs for everyone.

The ability to turn loads off or reduce electrical consumption at peak times already saves Central Electric an estimated \$1.8 million annually. With a membership of roughly 4,900, that equals annual savings of about \$367 on average for each member.

So how can you get involved? It's simple! Just raise your hand (figuratively, of course) and call our office and let us know you're interested in being part of this exciting initiative. Whether you're a technophile itching to test out the latest gadgets or simply looking to do your part to save \$ on your electric bill, we need you to be involved in this pilot project.

Being part of the pilot will mean that your cooperative will need access to your home to install and monitor this equipment. We are confident that the equipment we are testing will serve us well, but confirmation from this testing is just good business.

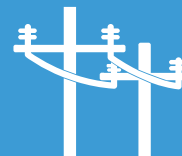
Together, we can continue to lead the way in energy innovation and efficiency, ensuring a brighter, more sustainable future for generations to come. So let's roll up our sleeves and embark on this new chapter in our cooperative's history – because when we evolve together, there's no limit to what we can achieve.

Speaking of leading the way, if you are interested in serving on Central Electric's board of directors, we have elections in Davison County and Hanson County this year. The meeting dates are below, and you can read more about director qualifications and petition deadlines on page 6. Until next month, stay safe!

## ATTEND YOUR LOCAL DISTRICT MEETING

## FAMILIES WELCOME!

Members receive one \$10 energy bill credit per household. Enjoy a free meal, cookbook, handouts and more.



### Aurora County

June 10, 2024  
Ag Building, Plankinton  
Meal @ 6:30pm  
Q&A session

### Buffalo County

June 6, 2024  
Powwow Grounds  
Fort Thompson, Meal @ Noon  
Q&A session

### Hanson County

May 23, 2024  
A1 Al's Pheasant Ranch  
Emery, Meal @ 6:30pm  
Director Election

### Miner County

May 30, 2024  
4-H Building, Howard  
Meal @ 6:30pm  
Q&A session

### Brule County

June 5, 2024  
Ag Building, Pukwana  
Meal @ 6:30pm  
Q&A session

### Davison County

May 20, 2024  
Fairgrounds Building, Mitchell  
Meal @ 6:30pm  
Director Election

### Jerauld County

May 29, 2024  
Springs Inn Cafe, W.S.  
Meal @ 6:30pm  
Q&A session

### Sanborn County

June 3, 2024  
4-H Building, Forestburg  
Meal @ 6:30pm  
Q&A session

**CENTRAL ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE  
CONNECTIONS**

(USPS 018-963)

**Board of Directors**

Aurora County - Duane Wolbrink, President  
 Brule County - Bradee Pazour  
 Buffalo County - Donita Loudner, SDREA Director  
 Davison County - Jeff Gustafson  
 Hanson County - Mark Hofer - Secretary & NRECA Director  
 Jerauld County - Mark Reindl, Treasurer  
 Miner County - Robert Banks - Director  
 Sanborn County - Todd VanWalleghen, Vice President  
 Director-At-Large - Merl Bechen

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 cooperative members on matters pertaining to their cooperative and living better with electricity. Also available at [www.centralelec.coop](http://www.centralelec.coop).

Subscription information: Central Electric Cooperative members devote 50 cents of each 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 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@centralelec.coop](mailto:cec@centralelec.coop); website: [www.centralelec.coop](http://www.centralelec.coop).

**Contact Us**

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
 Phone: 1-800-477-2892 or 1-605-996-7516

**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 Jan. 22, 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 activities, Rural Electric Economic Development activities, strategic planning, revenue deferral and other management initiatives.

Upcoming activities include planning new outpost facilities and implementing the NOVA portal for distributed energy resources such as wind and solar.

Director Loudner reported on S.D. Rural Electric Association activities.

Director Wolbrink reported on the East River Electric board meeting.

**BOARD ACTION**

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to adopt a resolution to amend the approved revenue deferral plan to provide the following revenue recognition: \$200,000 in 2023 and \$1,000,000 from 2024 to 2026. Motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to donate \$1,000 to NRECA International. Motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to declare the following vehicles as surplus: unit #99-101 2011 Ford F-350 Super Duty pickup, unit #99-103 2013 Chevrolet Express 2500, unit #99-81 2006 Sterling A9500 semi and unit #81-1 2006 Trail King flatbed trailer. Motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to send up to two employees to the NRECA Legislative Conference. Motion carried.
- The board of directors reviewed the quarterly legal fees and attorney expenses. A motion was made and seconded to approve the 4th quarter 2023 invoices for legal services. Motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve the committee's recommendation that the manager's and directors' expenses for the 4th quarter of 2023 be accepted. Motion carried.

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

FINANCIAL REPORT	YEAR TO DATE JAN. 2023	YEAR TO DATE JAN. 2024
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales	33,517,876 kWh	37,492,883 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$ 3,228,784	\$ 3,743,263
Total Cost of Service	\$ 2,775,779	\$ 3,640,765
Operating Margins	\$ 453,005	\$ 102,499

# Break Dirt Without Breaking the Law

As the warmer spring temperatures cause the ground to thaw, contractors and homeowners alike are likely to begin on projects that require some sort of digging.

By law, anyone who is digging in South Dakota needs to call 811 and have a locate ticket in their hand before moving any ground. If you're not the one that's digging and you've hired a landscaper to do the work instead, that landscaper should have a ticket in their name.

When someone calls 811, the call goes through a center in Dallas, Texas. That call center then notifies utilities in the area, according to South Dakota 811 Executive Director Codi Gregg.

An excavator or digger has to allow 48 hours for the utilities in the area they plan to dig into to come on site and mark the location of those underground utilities. On average, there are five to eight utilities notified per call.

If there's a potential loss of life or property, the allowed response time is shortened to a maximum of two hours during normal business hours.

"When the ticket goes in, the excavator is given a list of the utilities that are involved or are working or that are in that area where they're working," Gregg explained.

Those companies that own the utilities will make marks that identify the location. Those flags are also color coded according to the type of utility. As more and more overhead electrical lines are converted to underground lines, it's imperative that anyone who plans on doing a project that requires digging call 8-1-1 to avoid a dangerous and deadly situation.

"It's a free phone call for the excavator to make. There's no real reason for them not to make the phone call other than not being aware of it," Gregg said.

Kristie Fiegen, South Dakota Public Utilities Commission Chairwoman, echoed Gregg's comments, stating that making the call to 811 is the "most important and easiest call anyone can make before starting a digging project."

"This simple and imperative effort will help to prevent damages to vital underground utilities and safeguard critical services that our residents and economy depend on," Fiegen said. "During the 2024 construction season, I urge everyone to call 811 before you dig and protect all South Dakotans by abiding by our state laws and making safety our highest priority."

- Last year, there were 176,984 notices to the 811 Center of work occurring.
- South Dakota's 811 laws were established in 1993.
- In 2017, South Dakota 811 added damage reporting to our laws, stating if there was a damage, disturbance, or a dislocation of a utility – 811 was to be contacted to report the damage. It was also added that 911 was to be contacted first if there was a leak.
- Free accounts are offered upon request, allowing account holders to enter locate tickets themselves without calling an agent.
- A total of 1,944 utilities were reportedly damaged in 2023. Of that total, 375 excavators did not have a previous ticket.
- According to Common Ground Alliance's Damage Information Reporting Tool (DIRT) Report, the annual rate of damages to buried infrastructure costs the U.S. a staggering \$30 billion every year and 60% of nationwide damages to underground utilities are caused specifically by professional contractors not contacting 811 prior to digging.



## Don't Fly Drones Near Power Lines

### Lyndon Kaski, Age 8

Lyndon Kaski warns readers to stay away from power lines when flying drones. Great advice! Lyndon's parents are Jonathan and Amanda Kaski, members of Kingsbury Electric Cooperative.

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.

# SALSA SAVORY

## FRESH SALSA

### Ingredients:

4-6 med. to large tomatoes, seeded and chopped  
 1 med. onion, chopped  
 4 fresh jalapenos, seeded and finely chopped\*  
 1 clove garlic, crushed  
 1 tbsp. dried parsley or fresh cilantro to taste  
 1 tsp. salt

### Method

\*To prevent jalapenos from burning your fingers, lightly rub fingers with shortening, especially around fingernails.  
 Serve with tortilla chips.

Linda Hubbard  
 Rapid City, S.D.

## LUANN'S FRESH SALSA

### Ingredients:

4 med. tomatoes, peeled and chopped  
 1/4 cup finely chopped onion  
 1/4 cup finely chopped green pepper  
 1-2 tbsps. jalapeno or other hot pepper, seeded and finely chopped  
 1 tsp. salt  
 pepper to taste  
 1 tbsp. lime juice or red wine vinegar  
 1-2 tps. catsup  
 dash garlic powder  
 dash cayenne pepper  
 1-2 tps. sugar  
 cilantro ( optional)

### Method

Mix all ingredients. Serve with any tortilla or corn chips for dipping. Will keep approximately 1 week in the refrigerator.

Nancy Stenson  
 Fort Pierre, S.D.

## TAMARIND PASILLA MANGO PINEAPPLE SALSA

### Ingredients:

1 1/4 cups diced fresh pineapple  
 1 large mango, pitted and diced (about 1 1/4 cup)  
 1 small red onion, diced  
 1 small red bell pepper, diced  
 1/4 cup finely chopped fresh cilantro  
 1 med. jalapeño pepper, seeded and finely chopped  
 2 cloves fresh garlic, minced  
 3 tbsps. fresh lime juice  
 1 tbsp. honey  
 4 1/2 teaspoons Tamarind Naturally Flavored & Pasilla Chile Seasoning

### Method

Mix all ingredients in medium bowl. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes before serving. Stir before serving. Serve with tortilla chips or use to top tacos or nachos.

McCormick

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.

# Upcoming District Meetings & Elections

Eight local district meetings are planned in May and June. The meetings provide members with a chance to learn about cooperative happenings and have discussions with management and board members.

The meetings will be held in the evening, except for Buffalo County which will offer a noon meal. All registered members will receive a \$10 electric bill credit for attending.

Members residing in Davison County and Hanson County with an interest in serving on the Board of Directors may take out a nominating petition at Central Electric Cooperative's Betts Road office west of Mitchell. See the petition filing dates provided below.

To be considered for a director position in your respective county, completed petitions must be returned by the petition due date before the close of the business at 4:30 p.m. central time. When filed, director petitions must have the signatures of at least 10 Central Electric Cooperative, Inc. members from the director district in which the candidate is seeking election. Completed petitions must be filed at least 40 days prior to the District Meeting.

District 4, Davison County, is currently represented by Jeff Gustafson of Ethan, who is eligible for reelection. District 5, Hanson County, is currently represented by Mark Hofer of Spencer, who is eligible for reelection.

District	Meeting Date	Meeting Location	Petition Available	Petition Due
1- Aurora County	June 10, 2024	Ag Building, Plankinton, SD	election in 2026	not applicable
2- Brule County	June 5, 2024	4-H Building, Pukwana, SD	election in 2026	not applicable
3- Buffalo County	June 6, 2024	Powwow Grounds, Fort Thompson, SD	election in 2026	not applicable
4- Davison County	May 20, 2024	Fairgrounds Building, Mitchell, SD	<b>March 21, 2024</b>	<b>April 10, 2024</b>
5- Hanson County	May 23, 2024	A1 Al's Pheasant Ranch, Emery, SD	<b>March 25, 2024</b>	<b>April 12, 2024</b>
6- Jerauld County	May 29, 2024	Springs Inn, Wessington Springs, SD	election in 2025	not applicable
7- Miner County	May 30, 2024	4-H Building, Howard, SD	election in 2025	not applicable
8- Sanborn County	June 3, 2024	4-H Building, Forestburg, SD	election in 2025	not applicable
At-Large	September 10, 2024	Annual Mtg, Corn Palace, Mitchell, SD	<b>July 12, 2024</b>	<b>August 1, 2024</b>

## Board Member Eligibility Guidelines

Are you considering running for a position on the Central Electric Cooperative Board of Directors? Davison, Hanson and at-large director terms expire in 2024. Director nominating petition deadlines are noted in the table above.

Serving on the board of directors for an electric cooperative involves committing yourself to the following standards and guidelines. Central Electric Cooperative Directors must:

- Be a cooperative member in good standing
- Be willing and able to commit to 25+ working days per year to fulfill their duties
- Attend at least 10 out of 12 regular board meetings each year (usually the third Monday each month)
- Pass a background check that indicates no felonies within the last five years
- Permanently reside in the district
- Have their primary residence served by Central Electric Cooperative or meet corporate qualifications
- Not be a close relative of an existing director unless the director will cease serving within one year

- Not be a close relative of an existing cooperative officer, employee, agent or representative
- Not be employed by or materially affiliated with another director
- Not be affiliated with an individual or entity directly and substantially competing with the cooperative
- Not sell goods or services in substantial quantity to the cooperative or its members
- Obtain director certification from National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
- Comply with other reasonable qualifications determined by the board

This is a general snapshot of director eligibility guidelines. A full list of director eligibility requirements is available in the cooperative's bylaws which can be viewed at online at [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop). Please contact General Manager Ken Schlimgen at 1-800-477-2892 if you have director eligibility questions.

# Director Election Bylaws

## Section 4.05. Director Nominations.

A. Nominating Petitions. An individual desiring to be a nominee for a Director position for which an incumbent Director's Director term is expiring must take out a nominating petition ("Nominating Petition") no more than sixty (60) days prior to any Member meeting at which Members are scheduled to elect Directors. Said member shall return the completed Nominating Petition to the Cooperative at least forty (40) days prior to the Member meeting at which Members are scheduled to elect Directors. The completed Nominating Petition shall contain the following:

1. The name of the Nominating Petition Nominee;
2. The Director position for which the Nominating Petition Nominee will run; and
3. The printed names, addresses, and telephone numbers, and original signatures, of at least ten (10) Members residing in the Director District in which said nominee is seeking a directorship, or if for the Director-at-large, ten (10) Members residing in the Cooperative Service Area. After verifying that a Nominating Petition complies with this Bylaw, the Cooperative shall post the Nominating Petition nominees at the Cooperative's principal office.

B. Notice of Director Nominations. At least ten (10) days nor more than twenty-five (25) days prior to any Member meeting at which Members are scheduled to elect Directors, the Cooperative shall notify Members of the:

1. Director positions for which the incumbent Director's Director term is expiring; and
2. Names and corresponding Director positions of all Nominating Petition Nominees;

## Section 4.06. Director Elections.

Members located or residing in each Director District shall elect Directors as follows:

1. For District Director positions at the District Meeting for which the incumbent Director's term is expiring.
2. For the Director-at-large position at the Annual Meeting by all Members located or residing in the Cooperative Service Area.
3. From the Nominating Petition Nominees.
4. By Member written ballot.

At the Director District meeting by Members residing in said Director District by Member's written ballot, except for the Director-at-large who shall be elected at the annual meeting by Members located or residing in the Cooperative Service Area by Member written ballot.

By a plurality of the votes cast by a quorum of Members present in person who are entitled to vote for the Director position. In case of a tie Director vote with only two (2) candidates running for the Director position, the Director elected shall be determined by

a drawing by lot which, for purposes of these Bylaws, shall mean that a piece of paper will be marked with an "X" by a Cooperative representative/employee and placed in a receptacle along with other pieces of paper the same size, one (1) piece for each person involved with the tie. Each person involved in the tie will draw a piece of paper, and the person drawing the piece of paper with the "X" will be the winner of the election.

The persons involved in the tie will draw lots in the same order as their names appear on the ballot. In case of a tie and there are more than two (2) candidates running for the Director position, the number of Directors tying for first position will have a run-off election, and the Director receiving a plurality of the votes cast shall be elected. In the event of another tie of two (2) or more candidates, the Director elected shall be determined by a drawing by lot, the process of which is set forth above.

A quorum at any Member meetings, to include a Director District meeting and/or an Annual Meeting, shall consist of the minimum number of Members required by South Dakota law at the time of such meeting. If a quorum is not present within one (1) hour after the appointed time, no meeting shall be held. If an election of Directors is not held, a special Member meeting at which Members are scheduled to elect Directors shall be held within a reasonable time.

Tellers shall be appointed to collect and count the ballots.

If only one (1) nominating petition has been turned in for a Director position for which the incumbent Director's Director term is expiring, no election shall be held in that District and the Nominating Petition nominee shall be deemed elected as the Director from said District.

Names of Nominating Petition nominees shall be printed on ballots in an order determined by drawing prior to the printing of the ballots.

If no petition is filed, then the board will appoint an individual to fill the open position on the board pursuant to Section 4.10 of these Bylaws.

## 4.07. Director Terms.

A Director's term is three (3) years ("Director term"). A Director elected at a District Meeting or at the Annual Meeting will be seated as a Director at the commencement of the first Regular Monthly Board Meeting following the Annual Member Meeting. The Cooperative shall stagger Director terms by dividing the total number of authorized Directors elected from the Director Districts into three (3) groups of three (3) Directors each. Members thereafter will annually elect one (1) Director group. Decreasing the number of Directors or length of Director terms may not shorten an incumbent Director's Director term. Despite the expiration of a Director term, the Director continues to serve until a new Director is elected, or until the number of Directors is decreased. Unless otherwise provided in these Bylaws, the Director term of a Director filling a vacant Director's position is the remaining unexpired Director Term of the vacant Director's position.



Elliot and Janaye Rayman at their second annual Barefoot Fitness Memorial Day fundraiser.

## One Lineman's After-hours Outreach

**Frank Turner**

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Across the state, linemen are charged with keeping South Dakota's power going. It's a big responsibility: troubleshooting electrical systems, operating heavy equipment, and maintaining power lines. These workers are frequently asked to navigate high voltage and confront dangerous challenges in all kinds of extreme weather. In the face of these challenges, it takes a truly community-minded individual to ensure the community's lights stay on. Many of these crucial workers demonstrate their commitment to their community daily, both during and outside of work hours.

Butte Electric Journeyman Lineman Elliot Rayman, who has been with the cooperative for seven years, serves as just one example of an electric cooperative employee who has pulled extra hours for his local community of Spearfish, S.D. In addition to his role as a lineman, Elliot wears many hats in his community beyond just the hard hat of a co-op employee. He is a veteran of the National Guard, having served a deployment overseas. Elliot and his wife, Janaye, are also deeply involved in their community as the owners of Barefoot Fitness, a gym in the Spearfish community. Janaye, a cancer survivor, operates the gym and is an integral part of their community efforts.

Janaye and Elliot purchased Barefoot Fitness in 2018, fulfilling Janaye's long-standing dream of owning a gym. Shortly after their purchase, the couple learned that Janaye's cancer, previously in remission, had metastasized into Stage 4 breast cancer.

"In 2020, I had reoccurrence everywhere – brain, lungs, liver, bones," said Janaye. "Since then, I have been on a mission every day to heal and recover. It's also been my goal to help others every single day, day in and day out, and that's



what keeps me going. That's my job and it's what I love to do, so I'm not stopping."

"My wife is an inspiration to many people," added Elliot. "She is the strongest person I know."

Undeterred, Elliot and Janaye decided to press on and use their gym as a platform to engage with their local community. Despite Janaye's ongoing battle with breast cancer, the two started a new Barefoot Fitness tradition – an annual Memorial Day fundraiser to benefit South Dakota's gold star families, the families of fallen soldiers.

"After a few years of owning the gym, we decided we needed to give back to the community, because the community had really been there for us through everything," said Elliot. "We knew we had the ability and the platform to give back to the community through Barefoot Fitness, so we settled on a Memorial Day fundraiser that would benefit gold star families in our state."

This May, Elliot and Janaye will host their fourth Barefoot Fitness Memorial Day fundraiser. Like previous years, the event will feature local catering from Spearfish businesses, such as Spearfish Brewing Company and Timmons Market. The event will also include an optional community workout for all ages.

"We kick off our day with the National Guard leading the pledge of allegiance and national anthem," said Janaye. "We do a prayer, and then we do our Memorial Day workout. It's a team workout that people are encouraged to complete with their family or friends."

According to Janaye and Elliot, the team workout is about more than just breaking a sweat. Instead, it's about remembering those who gave their lives for this country.

"You always hear about people doing things for veterans, but you never hear about the story on the other side of

that – the families," Janaye said. "A lot of times the family is forgotten so we really want to honor the families that also made a sacrifice."

At the end of the day, Elliot and Janaye said none of their efforts would be possible without the support they have received from the Spearfish community, the veteran community,

and the electric cooperative community.

"Butte Electric and the co-op world have helped us out so much," said Elliot. "The culture of the co-op community is huge: there is brotherhood – it's the way people help each other out. You just can't ask for a better group of people, and that's the same way with the veteran world."



Janaye and Elliot lead a community workout session, challenging participants to complete 300 weighted ball throws.



# Emery Senior named Scholar of the Week

Central Electric Cooperative and Bridgewater-Emery High School are pleased to recognize Quinton Berg, the son of Bob and Heidi Berg of Emery, as the Touchstone Energy® Scholar of the Week for Feb. 18-24, 2024.

Bridgewater-Emery High School band director Tim Zorr nominated Berg for Scholar of the Week. Zorr said Berg has strong leadership skills and he excels in academics, band, one-act play, 4-H and FFA. He serves as the Klever Klovers 4-H Club President and has received numerous awards for activities related to livestock and livestock judging. In his spare time, Berg helps with community initiatives such as the FFA petting zoo and local fundraisers. He is also the voice of the Bridgewater-Emery Huskies football and basketball games on YouTube.

“Quinton has accomplished a great deal during his high school career, and I think this is just the beginning for him. He definitely has a bright future ahead,” said Tara Miller, Manager of Communications at Central Electric.

The Scholar of the Week program is a partnership between Dakota News Now, Central Electric and other local Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives that captures the commitment electric cooperatives have to the communities they serve.

Berg received a \$250 scholarship from Central Electric Cooperative and he is eligible for additional scholarships this spring at the annual Scholar of the Year banquet. He was featured on Dakota News Now on Monday, Feb. 19. You can find his story online at [dakotane.wsnow.com](http://dakotane.wsnow.com) by clicking “Scholar of the Week” at the top of the website.

## Farm Safety Reminder

Each year, Central Electric crews respond to incidents involving farm machinery contacting poles, power lines and electrical equipment.

Remember to look up and look out for overhead and underground electrical equipment during planting season. If you contact a power line, please follow these safety guidelines.

- STAY PUT and CALL 911 or your electric utility. Stay in the tractor or vehicle.
- If there’s a fire, JUMP CLEAR from the equipment. To avoid electrocution, do not touch the equipment and the ground at the same time.
- SHUFFLE with your feet together or HOP at least 40 feet away from the equipment. Walking or running puts you at risk for electrocution.

Accidents can happen to anyone, and many occur while completing routine activities that are performed on a regular basis. This is a dangerous situation that can be avoided.



Quinton Berg of Emery was recognized as the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week from February 18-24.



## Nominate a Person or Group that is Making a Difference!

Nominations are now open for the “Who Powers You” contest being hosted by the region’s Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives, including Central Electric. The annual Who Powers You contest seeks to highlight local figures who are making a difference in the community.

Cooperative members and residents who live or work within the service area of the region’s Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are eligible to be nominated. Nominations will be accepted through April 7. Three final winners will be selected by a panel of judges based on the impact they have on the community.

Weekly finalists will be featured on Keloland Living starting March 14, and the contest winners will be announced on Keloland Living on May 30. The grand prize winner will receive \$3,000, the second place winner will receive \$1,500 and the third place winner will receive \$500.

Tara Miller, Manager of Communications at Central Electric, said, “The Who Powers You contest highlights our commitment to the communities and member-owners we serve. We know that our co-op community is filled with people making a difference. Let’s celebrate them!”

Laura Klock of Ethan was awarded \$1,500 in last year’s contest for impacting lives through Helping With Horsepower. Past nominees in Central Electric’s area include Crow Creek Sioux Tribe Chairman Peter Lengkeek for his leadership and efforts to improve quality of life, LeAnn Moe of Alexandria for educating youth on seatbelt use and mental health and Rita Little Thunder of Howard for touching lives at a local daycare.

To learn more about the Who Powers You contest and nominate a person or group from your community, visit [WhoPowersYouContest.com](http://WhoPowersYouContest.com).

## April is National Safe Digging Month

The S.D. Public Utilities Commission recognizes April as National Safe Digging Month and encourages South Dakotans to call 811 before beginning any digging project.

### ABOUT 811

A quick phone call to 811 at least two business days before you dig starts the process of getting underground utility lines marked. S.D. One Call Center personnel then notifies affected utility companies, and underground utility lines are marked for free.

### WHEN TO CALL 811

- Before planting trees or shrubs
- Before excavating a garden area
- Before installing a mailbox
- Before putting in a fence
- Before building a deck or patio

### WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T CALL?

You could be fined. Besides that, failure to call before digging may result in an unintentional hit, leading to repair costs, utility outages, severe injury or death. Knowing the location of underground utility lines before the project begins will help prevent unfortunate situations.





SDHP Trooper Megan Koch stands by her patrol vehicle. Koch works within the state's Motor Carrier Division. *Photo Credit: Shannon Marvel*

# COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLES AND PUBLIC SAFETY

**Shannon Marvel**

shannon.marvel@sdrea.coop

When commercial motor vehicles come into the state of South Dakota, it's the job of the South Dakota Highway Patrol's Motor Carrier Division to ensure the drivers of those vehicles have the necessary paperwork, permits and documents.

The task is one of public safety.

Making sure the carriers are adhering to safe driving practices is just another way to ensure that everyone is as safe as they can be while driving on the state's roadways.

South Dakota Highway Patrol

Trooper Megan Koch is one of the officers who works within the motor carrier division.

"Our main focus is making sure the motor carriers or trucks are safe on the roadways and keeping everybody else safe. It helps them perform their job of carrying their property or passengers across the state lines and within the state. We help make sure that they can do that job," Koch explained.

Mainly, Koch works specifically with commercial motor vehicles that carry over a certain weight or property of monetary value within the state or interstate.

"When we do an inspection on a driver, we're checking a bunch of different things. Weight sometimes is one of them, but not always. It just depends on the situation," Koch said.

"They have to have certain paperwork with them and they are required to follow certain rules. It depends on what they're doing."

The dependent variables include whether a carrier is traveling with goods within the state or going out of the state and how far away they are from the hub, or where they leave every day or go home to every day.

Koch also checks their paperwork to ensure the drivers are within compliance of state law.

"They have to follow certain hours that they can work so that they don't get tired while driving. It's a big thing that we follow for safety," Koch said.

"We also check things like

equipment violations, headlights, taillights, tires, you know, stuff that makes them safe on the roadway and keeps them safe. We'll also check for things such as bad driving behavior, if they're not staying within their own lane, using blinkers, not properly stopping at stop sign – stuff like that. So, if we see something like that, we can initiate an inspection."

Koch, a Plankinton native whose father was a truck driver, said the division is typically checking brake lines and lights.

In South Dakota, there are four main ports of entry. The ports are located along Interstate 29 in Jefferson and Sisseton, and along Interstate 90 in Sioux Falls and Tilford.

Each carrier is issued a "safety score," which is assessed by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

"That's based on whether or not they have the proper paperwork, if they're driving within their hours, if they have the proper equipment and whether or not they've received any driving or alcohol violations," Koch said.

If a driver has a high enough safety score, they aren't required by law to stop at a port for inspection.

Overall, it all comes down to keeping the roadways safe for everyone, regardless of what type of vehicle they are driving.

"These rules and laws are in place for a reason. They have to be extra alert and awake while they're driving and that all of their equipment works properly. If you're driving a very heavy, large vehicle, you need excellent brakes. You have to be able to stop in time. That is the main reason we're checking all these things. It helps everybody on the road."

The division also works

with rural electric cooperatives when oversized loads travel along the state's highway system, according to Lieutenant Austin Schmitz, District Four Assistant Commander with the South Dakota Highway Patrol.

Sometimes oversized loads require that overhead power lines be moved out of the way to let the carrier pass through.

"As a district we do work with a lot of the cooperatives such as East River Electric. We all get together when planning for oversized loads coming through our area," Schmitz said.

"They usually run the route first and let us know what lines they need to move."

That was the case when a massive generator was moved across the state. The generator was so heavy and huge that the truck carrying it could only travel 30 miles per hour. That truck was also equipped with over a hundred tires, Schmitz said.

"That generator came through Watertown a couple of years ago and we've got some more coming in two or

three years," Schmitz said, referring to the multi-million pound machines.

"The planning for those started last year. That equipment will be coming in through the Great Lakes on a ship. They'll pick them up there and then they'll move through our state then Wyoming, Montana, however they can go," Schmitz said.

The truck carrying the heavy equipment is too big to go across most bridges and overpasses, so finding a route that allows the machinery to snake across the country is tricky.

While moving huge pieces of machinery can be one of the more interesting parts of the job, it's the flexibility of the job that Koch enjoys most.

"I get to pick and choose where I want to go for the day. I get to do something a little bit different every day. Because, I mean, nothing is ever the same," Koch said.

"It's kind of nice to be able to do that and make the day what you want of it."



A SDHP officer has the latest technology at his or her fingertips to ensure trucks on South Dakota roads are operating safely. Photo Credit: South Dakota Highway Patrol

# Grants Available for Community Projects

Grant applications for Central Electric Cooperative's Operation Round-Up® program are due May 1, 2024. Through Operation Round-Up, funds are awarded 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.

Past projects supported through Operation Round-Up have included community AEDs, fire department equipment upgrades, 4-H projects, youth programs, public beautification efforts, community building upgrades and various non-profit projects.

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 approximately \$185,000 to support projects.

Local residents from the cooperative's eight-county territory serve on the board of trustees that awards grant funds. Julie Dykstra of Stickney represents Aurora County, Clarissa Glaus of Chamberlain represents Brule County, Yvette Isburg of Fort Thompson represents Buffalo County, David Jorgenson of Mitchell represents Davison County, LeAnn Moe of Alexandria represents Hanson County, Amber Kolousek of Wessington Springs represents Jerauld County, Tami Moore of Howard represents Miner County, Dawna VanOvershelde of Letcher represents Sanborn County and Merl Bechen of Mitchell represents the cooperative board.

Complete funding guidelines and a fillable application can be found online by visiting [centralec.coop/operation-round-up](http://centralec.coop/operation-round-up) or by calling the office at 1-800-477-2892. We look forward to learning about projects in and around our local communities!



Wessington Springs Athletic Boosters received a grant for tables and chairs for the new Springs Rec Center. Central Electric's board of directors also collaborated with industry partners to donate funds to Build Springs, Inc. for rec center appliances.



Bridgewater-Emery School's Career & Technical Education Program received a grant to help purchase a welder.



Artesian Volunteer Fire Department received a grant to purchase new nozzles, hoses and safety equipment.



Chamberlain's Helping Ends Meet Food Program received a grant for its youth nutrition initiative.



Sleep in Heavenly Peace of Mitchell received a grant to help purchase supplies for its youth bed building program.

# APRIL 8 IS LINEWORKER APPRECIATION DAY

Lineworker Al Spader, pictured above, has been keeping the lights on for members in the Howard area since 1987.

Every year on the second Monday in April, we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day, a day dedicated to honoring the brave individuals who work tirelessly to power our lives. In 2024, as we commemorate this day, let's take a moment to recognize the invaluable contributions of lineworkers and the dangers they face daily.

One crucial aspect of honoring lineworkers is recognizing the significance of safety training to mitigate the risks they face. Lineworkers undergo extensive training that equips them with the knowledge and skills necessary to work safely in hazardous environments.

They learn about electrical hazards and proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Regular drills and ongoing education reinforce safe practices,

emphasizing the importance of staying vigilant and following protocols.

By prioritizing safety training, the cooperative strives to minimize accidents and ensure that all of our employees, including lineworkers, return home to their loved ones at the end of each day.

This dedication to safety underscores the profound commitment to protecting the well-being of lineworkers, further highlighting their invaluable contributions to our communities.

As we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Day in 2024, let's express our gratitude to these unsung heroes who work diligently, often risking their lives, to ensure our safety and comfort. Their commitment to service and sacrifice deserves our utmost respect and appreciation.

## Dangers Of The Job

### Electrical Risks:

Lineworkers deal with high-voltage electricity, which poses a significant risk of electrocution. Even with safety measures in place, accidents can happen, highlighting the inherent danger of the job.

### Height Hazards:

Working at great heights on utility poles or in bucket trucks exposes lineworkers to the risk of falls. Wind, slippery surfaces and unstable structures add to the perilous nature of their work environment.

### Adverse Weather Conditions:

Lineworkers often work in extreme weather conditions, including storms, blizzards and freezing temperatures. These conditions not only make their job more challenging but also increase the risk of accidents and injuries.

### Fatigue and Stress:

The demanding nature of the job, including long hours and emergency callouts, can lead to fatigue and stress. Despite these challenges, lineworkers remain dedicated to their duty of keeping the power on, and we can't thank them enough.



Thanks to the operations department and line crews for working safely to keep the lights on!  
Top, from left: Paul Koch, Jesse Baker, Norton Truman, Dusty Cole. Front, from left: Brian Bultje, Jonathan Reichert, Dustin Weier, Gary Trisco, Chase Phillips, Daniel Koupal, Tim Olinger, Cody Riggs, Joey Poppens, Craig Sealey, Chandler Bakley, Tony Roth, Davis Mathison, Tim Neises, DuWayne Moore, Al Spader, Dusty Roskens, Gene Gaikowski.



**APRIL 5-7, 2024**  
**PBR: Unleash the Beast**  
 Denny Sanford  
 PREMIER Center  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**March 23**  
**Kiwanis Spaghetti Dinner**  
 11 am - 2pm  
 Mitchell Tech Campus Center  
 Building  
 Mitchell, SD

**March 23-24**  
**Special Olympics of SD State  
 Basketball Tournament**  
 Mitchell, SD  
 SOSD.org

**APRIL 2**  
**Clay-Union Electric  
 Ribbon Cutting & Open  
 House**  
 3 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.  
 31321 SD Hwy. 19  
 Vermillion, SD

**APRIL 5**  
**A Night at the Races  
 fundraiser for Safe Place of  
 Eastern SD**  
 6:30 p.m.  
 Highland Conference Center  
 Mitchell, SD

**APRIL 5-7**  
**71st Annual Hayes Play:  
 Under a Cowboy Moon**  
 7 p.m.  
 Hayes Community Hall  
 Hayes, SD

**APRIL 13**  
**Front Porch 605 Shop Hop**  
 9 a.m.  
 Groton, SD

**APRIL 20**  
**Groton Firemen's Spring  
 Social**  
 7 p.m.  
 Groton Fire Station  
 Groton, SD

**APRIL 21**  
**Fiddle & Popular Song**  
 2 p.m.  
 Gayville Hall  
 Gayville, SD

**APRIL 26**  
**Mitchell Technical  
 College Alumni Cornhole  
 Tournament**  
 6:30 p.m.  
 World's Only Corn Palace  
 Mitchell, SD  
 www.mitchelltech.edu/  
 foundation

**APRIL 27**  
**66th Annual Lions Pancake  
 Jamboree**  
 7 a.m.-1 p.m.  
 Masonic Hall  
 112 E 5th Ave.  
 Mitchell, SD

**MAY 4-5**  
**Flea Market**  
 9 a.m.-6 p.m.  
 605-770-2411  
 Rustic Designs & More  
 Ethan, SD

**MAY 4-12**  
**Spring Show**  
 9 a.m.-6 p.m.  
 605-770-2411  
 Rustic Designs & More  
 Ethan, SD

**MAY 11**  
**Opening Day**  
 1880 Train  
 Hill City, SD

**MAY 18**  
**Booth Day**  
 10 a.m.  
 D.C. Booth Fish Hatchery  
 Spearfish, SD

**JUNE 21-23**  
**Scavenger's Journey**  
 Yard sales, farmer's markets &  
 specialty shops  
 Wall to Wagner  
 www.scavengersjourney.com

**JUNE 22**  
**Alexandria Car Show**  
 Sponsored by Alexandria Fire  
 District  
 Facebook.com/  
 alexandriafiredistrictSD  
 Alexandria, SD

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.

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