

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



## **Kuchen Country**

**German Delicacy  
Celebrates 25 Years as  
South Dakota's Official  
Dessert**

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# THE POWER OF POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Ken Schlimgen speaks during a meeting with U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson.

*Photo Credit: Frank Turner, SDREA*



**Ken Schlimgen**  
General Manager

Reliable electricity at a fair price is something we all count on. Yet, as electricity demand continues to rise and the supply of dependable power sources is at risk, a smart, forward-looking energy policy is more important than ever.

At Central Electric Cooperative, our mission goes beyond simply keeping the lights on. We're committed to making sure our member-owners have access to safe, affordable and dependable power. Part of that

commitment includes engaging with lawmakers to ensure your voice is heard at the federal level.

In April, I joined Director Mark Hofer and hundreds of electric cooperative leaders from across the nation in Washington, D.C., for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Legislative Conference. This annual event gives us a chance to meet face-to-face with elected officials and share the priorities that matter most to the cooperative and the members we serve.

Our conversations focused on real-world issues impacting cooperatives like ours—especially the growing demand for electricity and the need for a diverse mix of energy resources to keep power both reliable and affordable. We highlighted the unique role co-ops play in serving rural America and how we're investing in a resilient grid to meet future needs.

We also urged lawmakers to streamline the federal environmental permitting process, reduce overly burdensome regulations—such as the EPA's Power Plant Rule—and support timely maintenance and development of critical infrastructure. Preserving federal hydropower resources and enhancing vegetation management to prevent wildfires were other key topics we discussed.

In addition, we stressed the importance of maintaining strong federal support for programs that empower cooperatives

to serve their members. That includes the Rural Utilities Service electric loan program, FEMA disaster recovery funding, the Empowering Rural America (New ERA) program, elective pay tax credits for co-ops, and other Department of Energy infrastructure initiatives.

We're encouraged by the steps taken by President Trump's administration to support these efforts and will continue to work with Congress and the administration to advance a pro-energy agenda that puts reliability and affordability front and center.

Electricity touches nearly every part of our daily lives, even if we don't often stop to think about it. As the energy landscape continues to evolve, staying engaged on policy issues is crucial to protecting our ability to deliver safe, reliable service.

Representing Central Electric members in Washington, D.C., is a responsibility we take seriously. We appreciate the support we received from our lawmakers and will keep working to ensure your interests are well represented in the decisions that shape our energy future.

Until next month, stay safe!



Mark Hofer (left) and Ken Schlimgen visited Washington, D.C. in late April to advocate for our members. Hofer serves on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association board of directors.



## CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

(USPS 018-963)

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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.centralecc.coop](http://www.centralecc.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@centralecc.coop](mailto:cec@centralecc.coop); website: [www.centralecc.coop](http://www.centralecc.coop).

### Contact Us

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Phone: 800-477-2892 or 605-996-7516  
Website: [www.centralecc.coop](http://www.centralecc.coop)

### Our Mission

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

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## Board Meeting Summary

The board of directors met on March 17, 2025, 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 Schlimgen updated the board of directors on changes at USDA Rural Utilities Service, territory discussions, East River Electric Managers' Advisory Committee, Basin Electric updates, Rural Electric Economic Development (REED) activities, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association updates and other management initiatives.

The minutes of the Feb. 17 board meeting were approved as presented. The minutes of the Feb. 19 safety meeting were reviewed.

Luke Johnson with Eide Bailly gave a presentation on the annual audit report and shared additional information on the auditing process. Financial highlights were reviewed.

Eric Fosheim, Economic Development Manager of the REED Fund, gave a presentation about Rural Electric Economic Development loan and grant programs. Active REED loans include 168 community/housing loans and 250 business loans.

The board reviewed cooperative policies for updates.

The upcoming district meetings were discussed. Meeting dates and board petition deadlines were published in the Cooperative Connections newsletter. Official meeting notices will be mailed 10 to 25 days before each meeting per the bylaws.

Director Bechen, Director Hofer, and General Manager Schlimgen reported on NRECA Power Exchange.

Director Bechen reported on SDREA Co-op Day at the Capitol.

Director Wolbrink updated the board on the East River Electric board meeting and activities.

### Board Action

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to adopt Policy 701 – Succession Management. The motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to accept the 2024 audit report as presented. The motion carried.
- A motion was made and seconded to declare vehicle #99-106 as surplus. The motion carried. (Surplus vehicles on page 15.)

There being no further business, President Wolbrink adjourned the meeting. The next board meeting was scheduled for April 21, 2025.

FINANCIAL REPORT	YEAR TO DATE MARCH 2025	YEAR TO DATE MARCH 2024
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales	100,376,831 kWh	98,085,631 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$ 11,174,084	\$ 10,134,677
Total Cost of Service	\$ 10,617,450	\$ 10,076,989
Operating Margins	\$ 556,634	\$ 57,688

# Summer Safety

## Mosquitoes and Ticks

*Source: American Red Cross*

Don't let mosquitoes and ticks ruin your carefree summer fun. As we spend more time outdoors for activities like camping, hiking, swimming, picnicking and barbecuing, there is a greater chance of getting bitten by mosquitoes and ticks. According to the American Mosquito Control Association there are 176 known species of mosquito in the U.S. – putting Americans at risk from coast to coast. And while mosquitoes may be the most obvious detractor from summer fun – ticks are silent but dangerous. Most active during warmer months (April to September), it is especially important to be vigilant of blacklegged ticks, more commonly known as deer ticks, especially if you live in the Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, North-central or Northwest.

Mosquitoes and ticks are more than just itchy and annoying – if infected, these pests can pose a major health risk to people by possibly transmitting diseases. Follow these tips to prevent mosquito and tick bites this summer:

- Use insect repellents containing DEET (N, N-diethyl-meta-toluamide) when you are outdoors. Be sure to follow the directions on the package.
- Consider staying indoors at dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants and tuck your pant legs into your socks or boots.



*Photo by Jimmy Chan*

- Use a rubber band or tape to hold pants against socks so that nothing can get under clothing.
- Tuck your shirt into your pants. Wear light-colored clothing to make it easier to see tiny insects or ticks.
- When hiking in woods and fields, stay in the middle of trails. Avoid underbrush and tall grass.
- If you are outdoors for a long time, check yourself several times during the day. Especially check in hairy areas of the body like the back of the neck and the scalp line.
- Inspect yourself carefully for insects or ticks after being outdoors or have someone else do it.
- If you have pets that go outdoors, spray with repellent made for their breed/type. Apply the repellent according to the label and check your pet for ticks often.
- Get rid of mosquito breeding sites by emptying sources of standing water outside of the home, such as from flowerpots, buckets and barrels.



### "Never Touch a Power Line!!"

#### Kashton Schecher, Age 7

Kashton cautions readers not to touch power lines. Thank you for your picture, Kashton! Kashton's parents are Brad and Brooke Schecher from Bison, S.D.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.



# SOUPS & SALADS

## GERMAN KRAUT SOUP

### Ingredients:

2 pork steaks  
Water  
1 diced onion  
3 stalks celery  
1 large carrot  
Butter  
6 diced potatoes  
1 qt. sauerkraut  
3 cups heavy cream  
Salt and pepper (to taste)

### Method

Gently simmer pork steaks in about three cups of water until done. (You can substitute other meat you have on hand – left over roasts or Polish sausage is nice). Dice meat. Sauté onion, celery and carrots in butter. In a Crock-Pot, add four cups of water, potatoes, sautéed veggies, diced meat and sauerkraut. Cook on low four to six hours until potatoes are tender. Add cream, salt and pepper. Transfer to a serving dish to share and enjoy!

**Kari Bevers**  
Codington-Clark Electric Member

## BLACK BEAN SALAD

### Ingredients:

3 tbsps. lemon juice  
1 clove garlic (minced)  
1/2 tsp. salt  
1/4 tsp. pepper  
3/4 tsp. ground cumin  
2 tbsps. olive oil  
(2)15 oz. cans black beans (drained and rinsed)  
1 pt. cherry tomatoes (halved)  
4 scallions or green onions  
1 yellow or green bell pepper (cut into thin strips)  
3 tbsps. fresh cilantro or parsley (chopped)

### Method

In a small bowl, stir together lemon juice, garlic, salt, pepper and cumin until salt is dissolved. Slowly whisk in oil until dressing mixture thickens. In a large bowl combine beans, tomatoes, scallions or onions, peppers and cilantro or parsley. Toss with dressing to coat. Let stand at least 15 minutes before serving. \*Makes 6 servings.

**Reta Eidem**  
Clay-Union Electric Member

## LASAGNA SOUP

### Ingredients:

1 lb. lean ground beef  
1 cup chopped onion  
1 can (28 oz.) petite diced tomatoes, undrained  
1 can (15 oz.) tomato sauce  
2 tbsp. garlic, herb and black pepper and sea salt all purpose seasoning  
1 container (32 oz.) chicken stock, (4 cups)  
8 oz. (about 10) lasagna noodles, broken into small pieces

### Method

Brown ground beef in large saucepan on medium heat. Drain fat. Add onion; cook and stir 2 to 3 minutes or until softened.

Stir in tomatoes, tomato sauce, Seasoning and stock. Bring to boil. Add lasagna noodle pieces; cook 6 to 7 minutes or until noodles are tender.

Ladle soup into serving bowls. Serve with dollops of ricotta cheese and sprinkle with shredded mozzarella cheese, 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 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

# LOCAL FINALISTS HONORED IN 'WHO POWERS YOU' CONTEST

Central Electric Cooperative proudly recognizes Crystal Young and Carol Hasz as finalists in the Who Powers You contest hosted by the region's Touchstone Energy® cooperatives. The contest honors community members who make a difference in the lives of others.

Young and Hasz were both featured on the Keloland Living television program. Videos of their segments are available online at [WhoPowersYouContest.com](http://WhoPowersYouContest.com).

Three final winners will be selected by a panel of judges based on the impact they have on the community. The grand prize winner will receive \$3000, the second-place winner will receive \$1500 and the third-place winner will receive \$500.

Thanks to everybody who submitted nominations for local heroes in the 'Who Powers You' contest. It's great to hear about all the incredible people making an impact throughout the region.

## Carol Hasz

Hasz has been active with Love Feast of Mitchell since it was formed in 1997. Love Feast of Mitchell is a shining community partner, serving approximately 700 meals to individuals and families in need in the greater Mitchell area every month. They also deliver meals to those who can't attend the in-person meal.

Love Feast of Mitchell also coordinates school supply donations for children and families in need. The organization is supported by 10 local churches and brightly showcases the community's compassion and support for others.

## Crystal Young

Young operates Reclamation-Ranch south of Mitchell, a therapeutic horse riding facility for veterans, families and youth. The organization strives to help individuals reach their full potential through interactions with therapeutic horses.

Reclamation-Ranch offers various opportunities for trauma survivors, special needs individuals and families to feel genuine joy and happiness. Young explained that when you leave Reclamation-Ranch, you take unconditional love, support and connection with you.





# Mitchell H.S. Senior Named Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week

Central Electric Cooperative and Mitchell High School recently recognized Lauren Hofer, daughter of Jared and Stacey Hofer, as the Touchstone Energy® Scholar of the Week for May 4-10, 2025.

Teacher Tara Waters said Hofer is a bright student who is planning for the future by completing several college courses during high school, including algebra, chemistry, composition, government, history, psychology, sociology, speech and Spanish.

Hofer participates in marching band, jazz band, concert band and pep band. She is also active with the international club, pen pals and Future Business Leaders of America. Outside the school walls, Hofer is involved with her church and youth group. After high school, she plans to pursue a degree in human biology at South Dakota State University.

“We commend Lauren for being a positive role model for other students. Her achievements at school and in the community make her an excellent choice for Scholar of the Week,” said Tara Miller, Manager of Communications for Central Electric.

Hofer receives a \$250 scholarship from Central Electric Cooperative and is eligible for additional scholarships at the Scholar of the Year banquet. She was featured on Dakota News Now on May 5. You can view her story online at [www.dakotanewsnow.com](http://www.dakotanewsnow.com) by searching Scholar of the Week

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.



Mitchell H.S. senior Lauren Hofer accepts the \$250 Scholar of the Week award.

# Wieczorek Awarded Basin Electric Employee Dependent Scholarship



Ali Wieczorek

Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Central Electric Cooperative are pleased to announce that Ali Wieczorek of Stickney has been selected as a recipient of the \$1,000 Basin Electric Power Cooperative Employee Dependent Scholarship.

Wieczorek is one of only 20 students chosen from across Basin Electric's nine-state service area to receive this prestigious award. She is the daughter of Chad and Heather Wieczorek. Heather is a customer

service representative at Central Electric.

Basin Electric's employee dependent scholarship program is designed to support the educational goals of children and legal dependents of employees working for member systems such as Central Electric.

Wieczorek plans to attend Mitchell Technical College where she will pursue a degree in Radiologic Technology.



Pietz's Kuchen Kitchen & Specialties employees Amanda Garcia and Myra Bachman with owners Lori and Roger Pietz.  
Photo by Jacob Boyko

# SOUTH DAKOTA IS KUCHEN COUNTRY

## German Delicacy Celebrates 25 Years as State's Official Dessert

**Jacob Boyko**

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

On a brisk spring morning, balls of dough rise hours before the sun. One at a time, they're placed onto a press and flattened before being positioned into tins. Carefully, Lori Pietz ladles custard overtop, sprinkles in fruit, and passes off a tray of the desserts to her husband, Roger, for baking. As Roger pulls open the door of the stainless steel commercial oven, a wave of heat emanates across the kitchen. He slides the tray of five desserts onto a shelf in the oven, then removes another tray and sets it aside to cool before they begin packaging.

Roger and Lori will repeat this process at least 100 more times this morning to keep up with their customers' orders.

In the town of Scotland, northwest of Yankton, Pietz's Kuchen Kitchen & Specialties is one business that has turned South Dakotans' love for kuchen – a

delectable unification of cake, custard and pie – into a thriving business.

Kuchen, the German word for cake, has been a staple at European kitchen tables for centuries. The delicacy has stood the test of time, continuing to serve as a tea-time – or any-time – favorite across cultures and continents, especially right here in South Dakota.

"I think it's because of the population, because the greatest proportion of immigrants (in South Dakota) are the Germans from Russia," co-owner Lori Pietz said of kuchen's popularity. "There are German areas, there are Czech areas, there are Norwegian areas — but there are a lot of Germans from Russia."

Roger comes from one of those German-Russian families where the tradition of baking homemade kuchen has been passed down for generations.

"I watched my mother make kuchen as a little kid," Roger remembered. "I'd stand a little ways from the oven and I'd watch

her make it and I loved it."

Staying true to his German-Russian roots, Roger's love for kuchen never faded. After marrying Lori, Roger remembers telling her that if he could ever recreate his mother's kuchen recipe, he could probably market it and sell it.

Owning a kuchen shop was always a retirement dream, the couple recalled. But after going through several farm accidents, the Pietzs' decided to pivot in 2008. Trading plows for whisks, Pietz's Kuchen became a reality.

The operation quickly outgrew their make-shift basement kitchen, so Roger and Lori opened up a storefront and commercial kitchen in the nearby town of Scotland in 2011.

Today, the store ships an estimated 2,500 kuchen monthly to grocery stores, butcher shops, and restaurants across South Dakota and the Midwest.

Roger and Lori's kuchen offerings range from Americanized options – blueberry, peach, strawberry – to the more traditional blends of 18th and 19th century Europe, including rhubarb,



prune and cottage cheese.

Lori explained that historically kuchen was made using ingredients that were readily available, making it the ideal comfort-food and cultural dish for immigrants building their lives on South Dakota farms.

“There are a lot of Germans from Russia who brought rhubarb over with them, so they made a lot of rhubarb kuchen,” Lori said. “Flour and sugar were available, and they all had chickens and cows, so that’s kind of how it kept going.”

Lori didn’t grow up eating much kuchen. Her mother, who was of Czech descent, favored fluffy pastries called kolaches – filled with jam, poppy seeds or cream cheese.

But once Lori joined the Pietz family, she saw an opportunity to bridge both traditions. Drawing on the popularity of poppy seed kolaches in the Czech community, she created a Czech-inspired twist: poppy seed kuchen.

“There’s a lot of Czech people out there that like poppy seed kolaches,” Roger said. “And when they hear there’s poppy seed kuchen, they’re buying it.”

Kuchen’s footprint in South Dakota extends far beyond Scotland. Annual events like the Kuchen Festival in Delmont and Schmeckfest in Freeman invite locals and visitors alike to sample a variety of recipes and baking styles.

In McPherson County, the town of Eureka also has a reputation for being a kuchen-tasting hot spot, with several local kitchens offering their own takes on the dish.

South Dakotans’ love for kuchen runs so deep that it’s been codified into law; In 2000, State Sen. James Lawler, whose district included Eureka, helped lead the charge in Pierre to designate kuchen as the official state dessert.

Lawler, who once served as a judge for a local kuchen contest in Eureka, said the bill was part of a broader push to support local industries and breathe new life into small towns.

“The town of Eureka really got behind me and supported that bill,” Lawler recalled. “Those women up there got together and made enough kuchen for the whole legislature, and we fed them all and got the bill passed.”

A framed commemorative print of that bill hangs on the wall by the checkout counter in Roger and Lori’s shop – a tribute to all of the kuchen fans who have made their business what it is today.

“If you asked me 15 years ago what our business was going to be...I’d have said we’d sell a few,” Roger laughed. “I thought if it flopped, my friends would buy some from me and they wouldn’t let me down. Never did I anticipate this. Never. It’s just unbelievable.”

## The Germans From Russia

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Russian leaders made an appeal to German families to emigrate to Russia, promising land, religious freedom and military service exemptions.

According to the Prairie Public Broadcasting documentary, *The Germans From Russia: Children of the Steppe*, Children of the Prairie, the first wave of German immigrants arrived in 1764 during the reign of Catherine the Great. For Catherine, this was strategic; adding population to the sparser areas of her empire not only developed Russia’s agricultural economy, but also helped create a buffer against invaders from central Asia.

The settlements dotted the Volga River in Russia and the Black Sea in modern Ukraine and Crimea. The German villages closely resembled the communities they left behind as well as the ones they’d later build on the American prairie, with distinct churches and earth-brick houses.

While the Germans held onto their language, culture, and customs, Slavic influence gives the Germans from Russia a distinct identity. One notable difference is in their kuchen. While the traditional German dish resembles a yeast-based fruit cake, the eastern version is typically richer and made with custard.

Later in the 19th century, the special privileges German settlers had been granted were slowly being eroded. The Germans’ special status was lowered to that of common peasants, they could now be drafted into the Russian army, and were forced to assimilate to the Russian language and education system.

Many German settlers left their villages in Russia to start over once again in North America and South America, while those remaining in Russia would go on to suffer through civil and world wars and the man-made Holodomor famine during the 20th century.

The Germans who had settled the banks of the Volga River went on to populate large swaths of Nebraska, Kansas and Colorado, while the Germans from the Black Sea region primarily settled the Dakota Territory and Canada – bringing kuchen with them.



Fruit is sprinkled over the dough, followed by a ladle of custard. Lori Pietz uses a scale to ensure nutrition labeling is precise.

*Photo by Olivia Opland*

# Honoring Our Workforce



## June 22 is National HVAC Technician Day

Shoutout our heating and cooling team for always keeping it cool. HVAC services are available to members and non-members. Pictured from left to right: HVAC Technician Rylee [REDACTED], HVAC Technician Tanner [REDACTED], Lead HVAC Technician Aaron [REDACTED] and Service Department Manager Lincoln [REDACTED]



## June 28 is National Logistics Day

National Logistics Day is a time to recognize our resident warehouse logistics experts, Andrew [REDACTED] (right) and Evan [REDACTED] (left). They work diligently to make sure inventory is here when our crews need it. Their knowledge and dedication is sincerely appreciated.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## Employee Years of Service



**Rodney [REDACTED]**  
Journeyman Electrician  
13 years on May 1



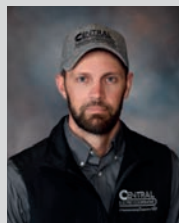
**Dusty [REDACTED]**  
Line Superintendent  
30 years on May 8



**Dustin [REDACTED]**  
Staking Technician  
18 years on May 16



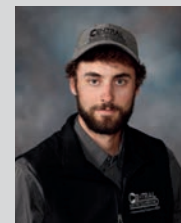
**Paul [REDACTED]**  
Plankinton Area Lineworker  
24 years on May 21



**Aaron [REDACTED]**  
Lead HVAC Technician  
15 years on May 24



**Brian [REDACTED]**  
Manager of Operations  
39 years on June 9



**Daniel [REDACTED]**  
Kimball Area Lineworker  
6 years on June 10



**Gene [REDACTED]**  
Wessington Springs Area Foreman  
8 years on June 12



**Gary [REDACTED]**  
Plankinton Area Lineworker  
3 years on June 16



**Tanner [REDACTED]**  
HVAC Technician  
1 year on June 18



## School Project Highlights Powerline Safety



**Patrick Soukup**

Manager of Member Services & Marketing

Bridgewater-Emery High School senior Braxton Burnham tapped into his interest in electricity to educate his fellow students. In an effort to enhance community safety, he worked with teacher Nicole VanLear to launch a comprehensive senior project focused on powerline safety awareness.

The educational event took place on April 7, and it featured a high-voltage powerline safety demonstration by Sioux Valley Energy, Southeastern Electric and Central Electric. The demonstration emphasized the importance of staying safe around powerlines.

Powerlines are an essential part of our infrastructure, delivering electricity to homes and businesses. However, they also pose significant risks if not approached with caution.

At Central Electric, we believe that knowledge is power, and by educating students about powerline safety, we can prevent accidents and save lives. High-voltage dangers exist at school, at home, on the road and on the farm. We were happy to help bring this important issue to light.

Thanks to our friends at Sioux Valley Energy and Southeastern Electric for assisting with this event and making Braxton's senior project a success.



Sioux Valley Energy brought a high-voltage trailer and equipment to assist with the demonstration. Approximately 150 students learned about powerline safety as a result of Braxton's senior project.



Braxton and his mom, Angie, were interviewed by news outlets the day of the event.



Braxton geared up like a lineworker in between safety presentations.

## Basin Electric Bus Tour for Members

July 16-18, 2025



Call 1-800-477-2892 for more information.



# SWIMMING SAFELY

## Tips to Ensure Your Family Swims Safe This Summer

**Jacob Boyko**

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

The leading cause of death for American children under the age of five: drowning.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 4,000 fatal drownings occur each year in the U.S., with the number of deaths sharply increasing in May and reaching a peak in July.

And according to Consumer Affairs, that number has been on the rise since 2020, especially among young children.

Whether at a waterpark, lake, backyard pool, or even a hot tub, being safety-aware and educating others can prevent drownings and other pool accidents and save lives.

According to Holly Hardy, aquatics director for the Oahe Family YMCA in Pierre, safety begins with supervision.

“Somebody should always be observing the water when there are kids in a pool,”

Hardy said. “It doesn’t matter if it’s our (YMCA) pool, a backyard pool, or the river. There needs to be a person there that’s responsible for watching the kids.”

At the YMCA’s pool, lifeguards who aren’t sure about a child’s swimming skills can have them do a swim test, where the child has to either show they can swim the length of the pool or remain in the shallow end.

“At our (YMCA) pool, we have those big slides and kids want to go down them because their buddies are going down them, and they want to go down but they can’t swim,” Hardy explained. “That’s where we pull the most people out of the water – the slide or the diving board.”

The YMCA lifeguards also have a rule against seeing how long you can hold your breath – children can hyperventilate before submerging and faint, which is called a

hypoxic blackout. Hardy also stresses the importance of swimming lessons, since understanding basics like how to float, swim, exit water and feeling oriented and calm are critical for water safety. She recommends to begin swimming lessons as soon as possible – The YMCA offers swimming lessons for children as young as six months old.

But swimming lessons are not a substitute for properly securing a pool.

According to Consumer Affairs, 87% of fatal drownings for the 0-5 age range occur in backyard pools.

That’s why a sturdy fence and self-latching gate around the pool area are still essential for preventing accidents. Even temporary mesh fence options can work in some instances.

Additionally, submersion alarms and door alarms can audibly alert you when someone enters the pool or pool area.

By communicating the pool safety rules to children and guests, as well as taking preventive measures to prevent accidents in the first place, you may be saving lives.



# Pool Safety Checklist

## Is there supervision?

- All children should be under responsible adult supervision.
- Designate “water watchers” and minimize distractions.
- Keep a phone close by for calling 911.
- Always swim with a buddy – Never alone.
- Keep throwing equipment or reaching equipment nearby.
- Consider CPR training – it could save a life.

## Can everybody in the pool swim?

- Ensure everyone in the pool can at least swim from one end of the pool and back.
- Weak or new swimmers should keep to shallow water and use flotation aids.
- Parents should stay close – preferably within arm’s reach – to weak or new swimmers.
- Sign up for swimming lessons – it’s a lifesaving skill.

## Are there safety barriers?

- Install and maintain a proper fence and self-latching gate around the pool.
- Consider a door alarm and pool alarm for an audible alert when someone enters the pool or pool area.
- Hot tubs should have properly-latched covers.

## Recognize hazards.

- Stay away from drains and water intake pipes, as body parts, hair, jewelry, and loose clothing can get pulled in. Drains should have anti-entanglement drain covers, and pumps should have accessible shut-offs.
- Ensure tiles, handrails, anti-slip pads, and ladders are properly installed and maintained.

- Electrical work should be done by a qualified electrician. Chargers, extension cords and other electronics should be kept away from the pool area.
- Check your pool water regularly to avoid illness from contaminants and chemical burns.
- Avoid slips and falls by picking up pool toys and other hazards. Do not run or roughhouse near the pool.
- If you’re not sober, don’t swim.
- Diving can result in serious injury. Make sure others know when a pool is not safe for diving.
- Store pool chemicals and additives somewhere inaccessible to children.
- Ensure proper lighting is installed around the pool area and never swim in the dark.
- Consider an animal escape ramp for pets and wild animals.

## Remind your children and guests...

Establish pool-safe rules for your children and any guests at your home. Remind your children to...

- Never swim without permission and supervision. Other children are not supervisors.
- Don’t enter a pool area or go near water alone.
- Never roughhouse or run in the pool area.
- Never dive in shallow water.
- Stay away from chemicals and additives.
- Keep the pool area tidy and hazard-free.
- Keep electrical devices and cords away from the pool area.
- Never hyperventilate or try and see how long you can hold your breath underwater. Hyperventilating can induce fainting, called hypoxic blackouts and lead to drowning.

# Safety Training held for EMTs and Firefighters



A high-voltage demonstration highlights the dangers associated with power lines.



**Tara Miller**  
Manager of  
Communications

When an emergency strikes, first responders put themselves on the front lines to protect their communities, often facing hidden dangers like downed

power lines and damaged electrical equipment. Preparing for electrical risks is an essential step in keeping others safe when approaching the scene of an accident or a fire.

In an effort to educate emergency personnel, Central Electric hosted safety training at its headquarters west of Mitchell on April 23.

Participants included firefighters and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) from Armour, Brandon, Canova, Carhage, Centerville, Corsica, Delmont, Ethan, Fedora, Mount Vernon, Parker, Plankinton, Rosedale Colony, Sioux Falls, Wagner, White Lake and Woonsocket.

Brian Bultje, Central Electric's Manager of Operations, led the session by sharing examples of common electrical meters and explaining protocols for safely disconnecting power.

"When there's a structure fire, power will typically need to be disconnected," Bultje said. "In some cases, there could be multiple electric utilities. If you are unable to locate the main electrical disconnect or the meter is mounted

on the structure, please contact your emergency dispatch center so they can assist in contacting the correct electric provider."

"Pulling electric meters is not recommended," Bultje cautioned. "Removing a meter does not guarantee the power is off."

He added that response time depends on when the utility is notified. Bultje explained that when a lineworker receives an emergency call, they stop what they're doing, change into flame-resistant clothing, travel to the shop to gather the necessary equipment and then drive to the emergency scene. They work as quickly as possible, but it takes time for crews to arrive.

After Bultje's presentation, Mark Johnston of Regions Hospital Burn Center in Saint Paul, Minn., discussed electrical burns from a medical perspective. He explained how electrocution can affect the human body and treatment methods for burn patients.

The training concluded with a high-voltage demonstration, emphasizing the destructive power of electricity and the damage it can cause. By the end of the session, attendees gained insight and knowledge to help keep themselves and others safe during emergencies.

Thanks to the first responders who took time out of their schedules to attend this specialized training.

Mark Johnston of Regions Hospital Burn Center spoke about electrical burns. He explained how electrocution can affect the human body and treatment methods for burn patients.





# SURPLUS VEHICLE AUCTION

## JUNE 11, 2025

The vehicles pictured below were declared surplus and will be sold to the highest bidder at Central Electric's Betts Road office on Wednesday, June 11, at 10:00 a.m. The vehicles will be accessible for viewing one hour prior to the sale. Bidding is open to the public.

For more information about the surplus vehicle auction, contact Andrew Baier or Lincoln Feistner at 605-996-7516.

**When:** June 11 at 10:00 a.m. Central Time.

**Where:** Central Electric Cooperative headquarters, 25487 403rd Avenue, Mitchell S.D.

(Interstate 90, Betts Road exit 325, half mile south.)

**How to Bid:** Interested parties must be present or have a bidder representative present. If multiple interested parties are present, an auction will begin. Payment is expected in full at the conclusion of the sale.

### 2004 CHEVROLET SILVERADO 1500



8 Cylinder 4.8 Liter Gas Engine  
192,950 Miles  
2 Wheel Drive  
Suggested Opening Bid: \$1,750

Contact Andrew Baier at 605-996-7516 for more information about this vehicle.

### 2008 CHEVROLET EXPRESS VAN



8 Cylinder 6.0 Liter Gas Engine  
214,000 Miles  
Roll down ladder rack. Slide out storage bins. Shelving.  
Suggested Opening Bid: \$3,000

Contact Lincoln Feistner at 605-996-7516 for more information about this vehicle.



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.

**MAY 29**  
**Central Electric Davison Co.**  
**District Meeting**  
 Meal 6:00-6:30 p.m.  
 Fairgrounds Building  
 Mitchell, SD

**MAY 29-31**  
**HuntSAFE Course**  
 Davison County Fairgrounds &  
 Mitchell Trap Club  
 Mitchell, SD  
 605-770-5555  
[gfp.sd.gov/hunter-education](http://gfp.sd.gov/hunter-education)

**MAY 31**  
**Howard Headers Car Club**  
**11th Annual Car Show**  
 11 a.m. - 2:30 p.m on Main Street  
 Howard, SD  
[Facebook.com/HowardHeaders](https://www.facebook.com/HowardHeaders)

**JUNE 5**  
**Central Electric Buffalo Co.**  
**District Meeting**  
 Meal at IHS Health Fair  
 Fort Thompson, SD

**JUNE 6**  
**Northern Bull Riding Tour**  
 6:30 p.m.  
 Madison, SD  
[www.prairievillage.org](http://www.prairievillage.org)

**JUNE 7**  
**Prairie Village Tractor Pull**  
 3 p.m.  
 Madison, SD

**JUNE 9**  
**Central Electric Hanson Co.**  
**District Meeting**  
 Meal 6:00-6:30 p.m.  
 A1 Al's Pheasant Ranch  
 Emery, SD

**JUNE 12-14**  
**Gumbo Ridge Wagon Train**  
 Murdo, SD  
 605-530-3638

**JUNE 12-15**  
**Powderhorn Ranch Regulators**  
**Outlaw Gauntlet Shoot**  
 7 a.m.-7 p.m.  
 Mitchell Gun Club  
 Mitchell, SD

**JUNE 14**  
**Roslyn Vinegar Festival**  
 Roslyn, SD  
 320-808-8873

**JUNE 15, 29**  
**1880 Train Old West Shootout**  
 5 p.m.  
 Hill City, SD

**JUNE 16**  
**Central Electric Brule Co.**  
**District Meeting**  
 Meal 6:00-6:30 p.m.  
 Ag Building  
 Pukwana, SD

**JUNE 18**  
**Central Electric Aurora Co.**  
**District Meeting**  
 Meal 6:00-6:30 p.m.  
 Ag Building  
 Plankinton, SD

**JUNE 20-22**  
**Scavenger's Journey**  
 Rummage from Wall to Armour  
[www.scavengersjourney.com](http://www.scavengersjourney.com)

**JUNE 20, 27, JULY 11**  
**River City Friday Nights**  
 6 p.m.  
 Music & Fun  
 Main Street  
 Chamberlain, SD

**JUNE 21**  
**Gann Valley 140th Celebration**  
 Car show, parade  
 Gann Valley, SD

**JUNE 21**  
**Little Tikes Daycare Vendor Fair**  
 10 a.m.-3 p.m.  
 Main Street  
 Alexandria, SD

**JUNE 26-29**  
**Donnie Days**  
 Rodeo, Monster Trucks,  
 Bean Bags & More  
 Stickney, SD

**JULY 4**  
**Rock the Bluffs Fireworks Show**  
 Missouri River  
 Chamberlain, SD  
[chamberlainsd.com](http://chamberlainsd.com)

**JULY 17-20**  
**Corn Palace Stampede Rodeo**  
 Stampede Park  
 Mitchell, SD

**Note: We publish contact information as provided. If no phone number is given, none will be listed. Please call ahead to verify the event is still being held.**