

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Sica Hollow State Park near Sisseton is one of several hidden gems in the park system that are waiting to be discovered

## Spotlight on State Parks

Hidden treasures  
for you to discover  
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REED Fund fills  
community needs  
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# Planning for the future helps ensure fair rates and adequate system capacity



**Ken Schlimgen**  
General Manager

My daily commute to work consists of 2.5 miles through the streets of Mitchell and then another 7 miles on I-90. I enjoy getting to the office a bit early to organize my day, so I leave home shortly after 7 a.m. I avoid the busier traffic that comes later and traffic on I-90 is pretty light most of the year, with the exception of when the Sturgis motorcycle rally is in full swing.

It is easy for me to understand that our city streets and our interstate highway system are designed to safely accommodate a given number of cars or “capacity” at any given time. This is very similar to the electric utility industry. Generators, substations, and electrical lines are designed to safely deliver a pre-determined amount of power to our members. We refer to this as our system capacity.

Every component of our electric delivery system has a specific capacity that was planned for years in advance and built based on the amount of electricity that our members need. This process of planning is done annually to predict our need for electricity for the next 10 years. If the system is built too small, equipment will fail. If it is oversized, customers pay more every month for a larger system that is not needed.

Central Electric’s farm and residential rates consist of a service charge and a fee for the electricity that you use. What you do not see in your bill are the costs associated with capacity. These costs include charges for generating facilities, substations, and even the transformer in your yard. The costs of each of these assets is hidden in the service charge and the price for the electricity you use.

Central Electric has offered a load management program since 1984. This program relies on our

members voluntarily allowing the cooperative to turn off their water heaters, air conditioners, motors and other equipment during times when system capacity is peaking. This helps to control costs associated with capacity and maintain the electric rate you pay. This system saved your cooperative an estimated \$1 million in 2021. That is money we avoided paying and did not have to collect from you. If you want to learn more about this program and how you can help your cooperative manage costs, give our office a call.

Looking to the future, we will see more electric vehicles, solar systems, and wind turbines. At the same time we are getting inquiries from potential new businesses who have a large appetite for electric power. Electric cars, renewables and new business likely won’t change how much capacity our roads and streets need, but they will change how the capacity on the electric system is used.

Central Electric will complete a rate design and cost of service study this year. This study will analyze the design of your cooperatives electric rates to determine if each rate is fair to our members based on the capacity of their electric service. The study will identify potential inequities in our rate design and what changes, if any, may be necessary. The comprehensive study will take six to nine months to complete.

Your cooperative is in good financial position and has started 2022 much better than expected. Central Electric is a not-for-profit organization and there is no incentive to change electric rates until more or less revenue is needed. The study will provide a road map to identify alternatives your cooperative could use for future rate design. Rate designs that continue to recover costs fairly and incentivize the wise use of affordable and reliable electricity.

Until next month, be safe!

**CENTRAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS**

(USPS 018-963)

**Board of Directors**

Duane Wolbrink - President  
 Todd VanWalleghen - Vice President  
 Bernetta Burghardt - Secretary  
 Mark Reindl - Treasurer  
 Mark Hofer - NRECA Director  
 Roger Campbell - Director  
 Donita Loudner - SDREA Director  
 Jeff Gustafson - Director  
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 Dean Uher - Mgr. of Finance & Administration  
 Lincoln Feistner - Sales/Project Mgr.  
 Patrick Soukup - Mgr. of Member Svc. & Marketing  
 Tara Miller - Editor, Mgr. of Communications

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

**Contact Us**

Office Hours: Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
 Phone: 1-800-477-2892 or 1-605-996-7516  
 Website: [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop)

**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 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). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender. Central Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

**Board meeting summary**

The board of directors met on Dec. 20, 2021, at Central Electric Cooperative's Betts Road service center. The board approved the November 2021 meeting minutes. They then reviewed monthly reports by management including details on operations, member services, communications, service department and financials.

Discussion followed.

Directors Wolbrink, Reindl and Loudner and general manager Schlimgen gave a report on the Midwest Consumers Annual Meeting.

Directors VanWalleghen, Bechen and Burghardt gave a report on a board leadership courses.

**BOARD REPORT**

General Manager Ken Schlimgen updated the board on the following:  
 - Midwest Consumers Annual Meeting  
 - East River manager meeting  
 - Basin Electric Power Cooperative  
 - Rural Electric Economic Development committee  
 - Southwest Power Pool

The cooperative's annual legislative luncheon was then held.

Following the luncheon, Manager of Communications Miller shared information on member surveys and scholarship programs.

Director Wolbrink provided a report on the East River Electric Power Cooperative board meeting.

Director Loudner provided a report on the SDREA board meeting.

Director Hofer provided a report on National Rural Electric Association happenings.

**BOARD ACTION**

The board considered or acted upon the following:

- A motion was made and seconded to approve the Dalager Engineering agreement for 2022. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve 2021 electric bad debt write-offs in the amount of \$1,979.70. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- A motion was made and seconded to approve 2021 miscellaneous bad debt write-offs in the amount of \$2,647.96. Motion carried by unanimous vote.
- A motion was made and seconded to engage Eide Bailly for the financial audit. Motion carried by unanimous vote.

The next board meeting was scheduled for Jan. 17, 2022.

Please contact the cooperative office with any questions regarding the board meeting.

<b>FINANCIAL REPORT</b>	<b>YEAR TO DATE DEC. 2020</b>	<b>YEAR TO DATE DEC. 2021</b>
Kilowatt Hour (kWh) Sales	333,333,932 kWh	361,062,373 kWh
Electric Revenues	\$ 31,960,255	\$ 35,442,954
Total Cost of Service	\$ 31,237,162	\$ 34,289,546
Operating Margins	\$ 723,093	\$ 1,153,408

## Four shocking electrical dangers in your home

Contact with electricity can result in something as innocuous (but still painful) as a mild shock to severe injuries like nerve damage and burns. In some cases, it can even cause cardiac arrest and death. Here's a list of some of the most common shock risks inside a home.

**1. Appliances.** Most shocks from household appliances occur during repairs. It's not enough to turn off an appliance before working on it - you need to unplug it to reduce risk. Large appliances are responsible for 18 percent of household electrical accidents; small appliances account for 12 percent.

There's also danger if your appliance comes into contact with water. Many of these hazards can be avoided by using a ground-fault circuit interrupter. A GFCI is a protective device installed on electrical outlets, primarily used where water is present. When the device detects an imbalance in the electric current, it turns off the power to minimize the potential for an electric shock.

**2. Ladders.** Typically, ladders present a falling hazard, but 8 percent of household shocks are also related to ladders. Electrocutation typically happens when the ladder makes contact with electrical wires. Before you use a ladder, make sure you can clearly see all power lines in the area - including those that may be hidden by tree branches. Ensure that the ladder is 10 feet away and won't contact a power line if it falls in any direction.

**3. Power tools.** Power tools account for 9 percent of consumer product-related shocks. According to OSHA, when you use power tools that are not double-insulated, are damaged or have damaged cords, you increase your chances of being injured. The chance of danger also increases when you use incompatible cords, use power tools incorrectly or use them in wet conditions. This is another situation in which GFCIs can help.

**4. Electrical outlets and extension cords.** Inserting anything that doesn't belong - screwdrivers, knives, fingers or toy cars, to name a few - into an electrical outlet can result in a dangerous electrical contact.

Use cover plates that fit properly and safety covers on all outlets. By installing tamper-resistant receptacles, outlets will have permanent security against foreign objects being inserted into the slots.

Any broken, loose or worn-out plugs, switches and light fixtures should be replaced immediately.

## WE'VE GOT CO-OP COUNTRY COVERED



We know you love to read your local edition of Cooperative Connections magazine, but you'll get more great content when you visit our video companion, Cooperative Connections Plus. Scan the QR code or search YouTube for Cooperative Connections Plus and you'll be treating yourself to an intriguing repository of videos on interesting events going on around our state. There's walleye fishing, rodeos, electric vehicles, curling, Christmas at the Capitol, the State Fair and much more. Visit us today!



## Call 811 before digging

### Amelia Swift Hawk

Amelia Swift Hawk knows that it's wise to call 811 before digging into the ground. Amelia and her parents, Michael and Alyssa Swift Hawk, are members of Moreau-Grand Electric based in Timber Lake.

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.

# SAVORY SEAFOOD

## OYSTER STEW

Ingredients:  
 1 onion, chopped  
 6 T. butter  
 2 tsp. minced garlic  
 6 cup whole milk  
 1 pint (2 cans) oysters - do not drain  
 1/4 tsp. red pepper flakes  
 1/4 tsp. paprika  
 1 tsp. parsley  
 1/4 tsp. Tabasco sauce

### METHOD

Sauté onion and garlic in butter. Stir in undrained oysters. Cook at medium heat about 5 minutes until oysters curl at the edges. Stir in milk, red pepper flakes, paprika, parsley, and Tabasco sauce. Heat to serving temperature. Serve with oyster crackers.

Jane Ham, Rapid City

## GRILLED SALMON

Ingredients:  
 1 1/2 lbs. salmon fillet cut into 6 slices  
 2 tbsp. olive oil extra virgin  
 1 lemon or lime (juice of)  
 1 tsp. smoked paprika  
 1 tsp. garlic powder  
 1 tsp. onion powder  
 1 tsp. salt  
 Ground black pepper to taste

### METHOD

In a small bowl, add olive oil, lemon juice, smoked paprika, garlic and onion powders, salt, pepper. Whisk to combine. In a shallow flat dish with edges, lay salmon slices and brush with marinade. Marinate from 10 minutes to 24 hours. Longer marinating time, more flavorful salmon. Preheat grill to 450-500. Clean grill and oil grates with oil-soaked paper towel to avoid salmon sticking to the grill. Place salmon on the grill skin side up, close the lid and grill for 4-5 minutes. Check with spatula – if salmon has grill marks and comes off easy, flip it. Cook uncovered for another 3-4 minutes or until thermometer reads 125 degrees for medium rare or 140 for medium. Serve hot or cold on top of salad, mango salsa, guacamole, brown rice or quinoa. [ifoodreal.com](http://ifoodreal.com)

## SHRIMP AND SAUSAGE JAMBALAYA

Ingredients:  
 12 ozs. fully cooked andouille sausage, cut to 1/2-inch slices  
 12 ozs. uncooked shrimp (31-40 per lb.), peeled and deveined  
 1 med. green pepper, chopped  
 1 med. onion, chopped  
 2 celery ribs, chopped  
 3 garlic cloves, minced  
 2 tsps. Creole or Cajun seasoning (paprika, with cayenne pepper, oregano, dried sweet basil)  
 1 can (14-1/2 ozs.) fire-roasted diced tomatoes, drained  
 1 cup uncooked "instant" rice  
 1 can (8 ozs.) tomato sauce  
 1/2 cup chicken broth  
 3 green onion sprigs chopped

### METHOD

Preheat oven to 425°. In a large bowl, combine all ingredients. Divide mixture among six greased 18x12-inch pieces of heavy-duty foil. Fold foil around mixture and crimp edges to seal, forming packets; place on a baking sheet. Bake until shrimp turn pink and rice is tender, 20-25 minutes. Use caution when opening packets as they will be steamy. Consider adding jalapenos to taste and/or some chopped pineapple to cool the palate. Try serving for breakfast or brunch with sumptuous eggs and biscuits.

Shannon Collins/Taste of Home

Please send your favorite beverage 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 2022. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

# Unclaimed capital credits

## Can you help locate these former members?

The following list of former members have unclaimed capital credits from Central Electric Cooperative. If you have a phone number or address for any of the following people, please contact our office Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 1-800-477-2892.

**A**  
 Alexander, Roger  
 Abrahamson, John  
 AO Express  
 Appearance by Rhonda  
 Argonne Elevator  
 Axemaker, Harry

**B**  
 Bainbridge, Gary  
 Bahmuller, Alton  
 Baker, Laverne  
 Barrick, Roger  
 Bely, Alice or Cummings, Joann  
 Bialas, Deb  
 Bietz, Hubert  
 Bietz, L N  
 Bijou Hills Comm Church  
 BNNRRR Farm Partnership  
 Boehnen Farms  
 Brandon, Judith  
 Breukelman, Lyle  
 Bristol Township Hall  
 Brown, Roselind  
 Bult, Peter Jr

**C**  
 Cannon River Ranch  
 Campbell, Anita  
 Carr, Raleigh B  
 Christensen, Chris  
 Cone, Ronald S  
 Connor, Matthew  
 Cope, Shirley  
 Creamer Feed & Seed Co.  
 Cross, George

**D**  
 Dakota Cheese Inc  
 Dejong, Scott  
 Dion, Brenda  
 Dorris, Mary

**E**  
 Eagleman, Leanne  
 Eller, Dorothy  
 English, Arlo  
 Estes, Glen  
 Equity One Mortgage

**F**  
 Fallis, Douglas  
 Fastnacht & Hurley – Gene  
 Fastnacht  
 Feistner, Alfred  
 Feldhaus, Ray  
 Fitzpatrick, Timothy  
 Fleury, Lorenzo or Allan  
 Fleury, Martina  
 Foxley, Eugene  
 Funk, Nelle

**G**  
 Gibbs, Chad  
 Gieseman, Eleanor  
 Goetsch, Melvin & Joan  
 Goin, Clyde III  
 Golden Pheasants Inc  
 Goos, Peter L  
 Gorman, George  
 Gorter, Nick  
 Greene, Terry  
 Grissom, Rodney  
 Grohs, Randy  
 Gruenig, Verlyn  
 Guenther, Clifford

**H**  
 Haas, James J  
 Hanson, Charlotte  
 Harmon, John  
 Harner, Cletus  
 Hartman, Rodney  
 Harty, Tim  
 Havlik, Lynn  
 Heiman, Rodney  
 Hilgenberg, Paul  
 Hirsch, Melissa  
 Hoadley, Frank  
 Hofer, Robert  
 Hook, Evelyn  
 Hopper, Richard

**J**  
 James River Lodge LLC  
 Jarman, Jeff  
 Jenos, Melissa  
 Jerlow, John  
 Jones, Laura M  
 Jones, Tom  
 Jones Ranch Grazing Assn

**K**  
 Kaufman, Tory  
 Kayser, Gene  
 Keiner, Bill  
 Kelly, Bruce  
 Kjonogaard, Ron & Carolyn  
 Klitzke, Alvin  
 Knutson, Dwight

Koch, Jay  
 Korkow, A L  
 Kothe, Dallas

**L**  
 Larson, Harry or Jerome  
 Lee, Dean D

**M**  
 Machovsky, Dennis  
 Magnuson, John D  
 Mann, Delbert  
 Masonic Temple  
 Marshall, Ardis  
 Melius, Dana  
 Meinen, Melvin  
 Mesa Medical Consulting LLC  
 Metter, Ed  
 Miller, Tony or Allan  
 Moody, Karen  
 Mosemann, Melvin  
 Mueller, Stephen  
 Myers, Iden Jr

**N**  
 Nafziger, Bill  
 Nelson, Wade  
 Nembach, Mike  
 Ness, Maynard L  
 Nicolaisen, Alan  
 Nielsen, Dane M  
 Noonan, Eugene

**O**  
 Oneal, Julie

**P**  
 Packard, Cynthia  
 Pawlitschek, Don  
 Peters, Wayne H  
 Petersen, James A  
 Pick, Bruce  
 Pickner, Debra  
 Pohawpatchoko, Chelsea  
 Pontiero, Rita

**R**  
 Ray's Bait & Tackle  
 Rhodes, Gerry B  
 Rhodes, Sharyn  
 Rose – McGraw Farm

**S**  
 Sarchet, Randy  
 Schmidt, Shane  
 Schroeder, Lydia  
 Schuman, Thomas  
 Scott, Howard  
 Siding 36 LLC  
 Siegel, Kathy

Sheely, Austin  
 Shields, Rhiannon  
 Slykhuis, Clark  
 Smith, A F Jr  
 Smith, Larry  
 Soulek, William  
 Stahl, Timothy & Rosann  
 St Martin, Chad  
 Starr Fireworks or Rich Brothers Co  
 Steichen, Todd  
 Steilen, Gary  
 Stewart, Leland  
 Stock, Maynard  
 Strand, Carol V  
 Sturdevant, Florence  
 Swanson, Fred E

**T**  
 Tammen, Harvey  
 Teeslink, Elaine  
 Thayor, Edwin  
 Thiry, Steve  
 Thompson, Delber  
 Thompson, Larry & Jackie  
 Thompson, R V  
 Thorton, Ryan  
 Tipword, Chad  
 Trabing, Rodney  
 Tradesman Housing Group  
 Tripp, James or Geradine  
 Trudeau, Randy  
 Tuffs, Melvin  
 Tysdal, Lloyd

**V**  
 Verba, Randy  
 Veith, Cyndie A

**W**  
 Wagner, James L  
 Walter, Michael  
 Weber, Lester  
 Weeden, Gerald H  
 Weise, Jodie  
 Wells, D C  
 Wells, Kathy  
 Wells, Melody  
 Wendel, Darwin  
 Wendelboe, Kenneth  
 Westberg, Diane  
 Wipf, Lonnie  
 Wittstruck, Thomas  
 Woldt, David  
 Wooledge, Florence

**Y**  
 Yeaton, Gregg



At more than 115 years old, Tyndall Bakery has been named “Best in South Dakota” and is also mentioned in a book by Webster native Tom Brokaw. Owners Ed and Carol Radack intend to keep the legendary establishment going strong.

## Radacks keep Tyndall Bakery tradition alive

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The members of Danzig Baptist Church in Tyndall perk up when they see Ed and Carol Radack coming through the doors on Sunday morning.

They’re grateful for all the faithful work the Radacks do for the congregation and the community. They appreciate the fact that Carol volunteers her time as a Sunday School teacher and Ed has served as a church trustee and always stays involved.

But they also know that when the Radacks come around, donuts can’t be too far away.

For the past 15 years, Ed and Carol have been whipping up irresistible cakes and confections as owners of Tyndall Bakery. The establishment was opened by John Moser in downtown Tyndall in 1905 and has changed hands over the years. But during that time, the bakery has maintained its status as a go-to sweet shop. Two years ago, Taste of Home magazine proclaimed it “Best in South Dakota.”

The Radacks bought the business from Bob and Judy Rueb after Carol’s employer, Chicago Rawhide, closed its doors. Looking for something different to do, Carol decided to go from building ball bearings to baking bismarcks. When it soon became clear Carol had her hands full with interminable shifts,

Ed left his job at the Department of Transportation to offer some help and the two have been baking shoulder-to-shoulder ever since.

While they learned the business on the fly, the couple remained committed to one thing: using the recipe that’s been handed down for decades. And the regular customers make sure they stick with that plan.

“That’s what keeps a lot of the old-timers coming back,” Carol said. “It’s a good product, it’s always home-made, and we always try to deliver the best service.”

On a recent Saturday morning there was standing room only as customers lined up for the apple fritters, long johns, kolaches, cinnamon twists and bismarcks. Most of them have called ahead to make sure their special orders are filled and they don’t miss out on their favorite selections.

One of them was Mike Scheetz, owner of the bowling alley across the street. He got one armload of fresh-baked buns for his business and another armload for himself and his staff.

“They’re the best around,” Scheetz said as he grabbed a bag of Bavarians. “They know what I like so they always have it ready for me.”

Scheetz turns to go get set up for local bowling league activities and the Radacks have slight smiles on their faces that seem to say, “Another satisfied customer.”

# HIDDEN TREASURES

Despite its legacy as the site of an epic battle over good and evil, Sica Hollow State Park near Sisseton is a source of family fun for those who want to get away and enjoy the great outdoors. *Photos by SD Tourism.*

## The State Park system has seen visitation increase with new programs in place to serve the public

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

At first blush, Sica Hollow State Park might seem like someplace you'd want to avoid.

The area was named after a Dakota Sioux word used to describe something sinister and features a winding pathway called the Trail of the Spirits. There are maroon-colored bogs, sangria-tinged streams and brown foliage that reminded early tribes of the blood and flesh of their ancestors.

The undulating terrain is said to be the site of an ancient spiritual battle in which the land and the people were overcome by a malevolent force. Local legend has it that the restless souls of the dead manifest themselves as unexplained bursts of fire and light in the night, disturbing sounds of agonized wailing and the ominous beat of war drums in the distance.

Apart from the spooky stories and eerie lore, Sica Hollow turns out to be one of many "hidden gems" in the

State Park system that are found off the beaten paths.

Sica Hollow is located in the northeast corner of the state near Sisseton where you'll find rustic bridges, winding creeks, scenic waterfalls and seasonal wildflowers festooning the eight miles of hiking trails. The Trail of Spirits, which today is a self-guided interpretive foot trail, was designated as a National Recreation Trail in 1971. The park also contains the Old River Warren and Coteau des Prairies, which have been named National Natural Landmarks.

With more than 60 facilities in its fold, the State Park system has lots to offer and includes several lesser-known destinations for families to discover such as Sica Hollow, Spirit Mound and Adams Homestead in the eastern part of the state and Shadehill, Rocky Point and Llewellyn Johns out west.

The Shadehill Recreation Area near Lemmon is situated on the shores of Shadehill Reservoir, which is one of western South Dakota's few large lakes.

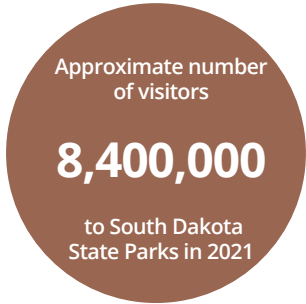


At Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area, visitors will find a monument to Hugh Glass, a hunter who survived a vicious attack by a grizzly bear in 1823.

There are 85 campsites with seven camping cabins, a group lodge, and facilities for boating, fishing, canoeing, biking, archery and more.

Nearby is the much smaller Llewellyn Johns Recreation Area with just 10 campsites and an opportunity to enjoy





a quieter and more secluded camping experience. There are points of historical interest close by as many historic figures have traveled through the area, including George Custer’s 1874 Expedition and Hugh Glass. According to first-hand accounts, in 1823 Glass was attacked by a grizzly bear, an event documented in the novel *Lord Grizzly* and recounted in the movie, *The Revenant*.

Nick Harrington, communications manager for Game, Fish and Parks, reports that the system is stronger and more popular than ever. Last year more than 8.4 million visitors passed through the parks, representing a 25 percent increase in visitation over the nine-year average. Custer State Park, the system’s most popular spot, saw a 3 percent increase in attendance with more than 2.3 million visitors.

Seventy-seven percent of visitors rated their camping experience as an A with 43 out of the 48 areas surveyed receiving the top rating.

To keep the momentum moving along, the State Park system has added 15 new facilities from a new Bison Center at Custer State Park to an improved boat ramp at West Whitlock Recreation Area.

And just in time for the spring and summer camping season there is a new and improved way of helping campers navigate the parks and outdoor facilities. Through [www.gooutdoorsouthdakota.com](http://www.gooutdoorsouthdakota.com), customers can secure a camping reservation or buy an annual park



Sica Hollow is one of the “hidden gems” in the state park system where visitors can commune with nature while learning about local lore.

entrance license while also purchasing hunting and fishing licenses all from the same transaction. A new mobile app provides 360 degree views of the more than 4,000 campsites in the system.

The Department of Tourism has also launched a free mobile pass called South Dakota Great Finds that helps users explore the state’s many attractions, including hidden treasures like Sica Hollow. The pass can be accessed at [travelsouthdakota.com](http://travelsouthdakota.com), and there is no app to download.


According to Department of Tourism Secretary Jim Hagen, “This mobile experience allows us to better highlight what truly makes up the great state of South Dakota. It showcases rural America, unexpected businesses and parks, and gets people off the beaten path to discover something new.”

Search for “Go Outdoors South Dakota” to find GFP’s official mobile app for iOS and Android.


## Top 10 most visited state parks in 2021

1. Custer State Park
2. Lewis & Clark Recreation Area
3. Spring Creek Recreation Area
4. Oahe Downstream Recreation Area
5. Cow Creek Recreation Area
6. Angostura Recreation Area
7. Roy Lake State Park
8. Farm Island Recreation Area
9. Springfield Recreation Area
10. Newton Hills State Park

**YEARS OF SERVICE**



**Norton Truman**  
Journeyman Lineworker  
Kimball Crew  
16 years on March 1



**Lindsey Wilson**  
Customer Service Rep.  
Betts Road Office  
7 years on March 2

# Rebates and incentives available for members

## Electric Heating Equipment Rebate

Members may be eligible to receive a \$600 cash payment for installation of an energy star electric heat pump system. The structure must receive electric service from the cooperative and each structure is limited to one rebate.

## Water Heater Rebates

Members may be eligible to receive a rebate of \$9 per gallon of capacity, provided the water heating unit meets specified requirements as defined by the cooperative.

## Third-Party Irrigation or Grain Bin Dryer Management Systems

Members may be eligible for a \$750 rebate for a third-party remotely managed irrigation or grain drying system. The equipment must meet specified requirements as defined by the cooperative.

## Member Loan Program

Low-interest loans are available for qualifying members who are installing new electric heating equipment or completing a weatherization project. The maximum loan amount is \$20,000 or 80 percent of the installation cost.

Certain conditions must be met to qualify for rebates and incentive programs. Please contact Patrick Soukup, Manager of Member Services and Marketing, at 1-800-477-2892 for details regarding cooperative rebates and incentives.

# Washington, D.C. Youth Tour trip cancelled

Due to heightened covid-19 restrictions in the nation's capital, South Dakota's electric cooperatives are not participating in the 2022 National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth Tour. We are instead planning a summer event for high school students that would have been eligible to apply

for the Washington, D.C., trip.

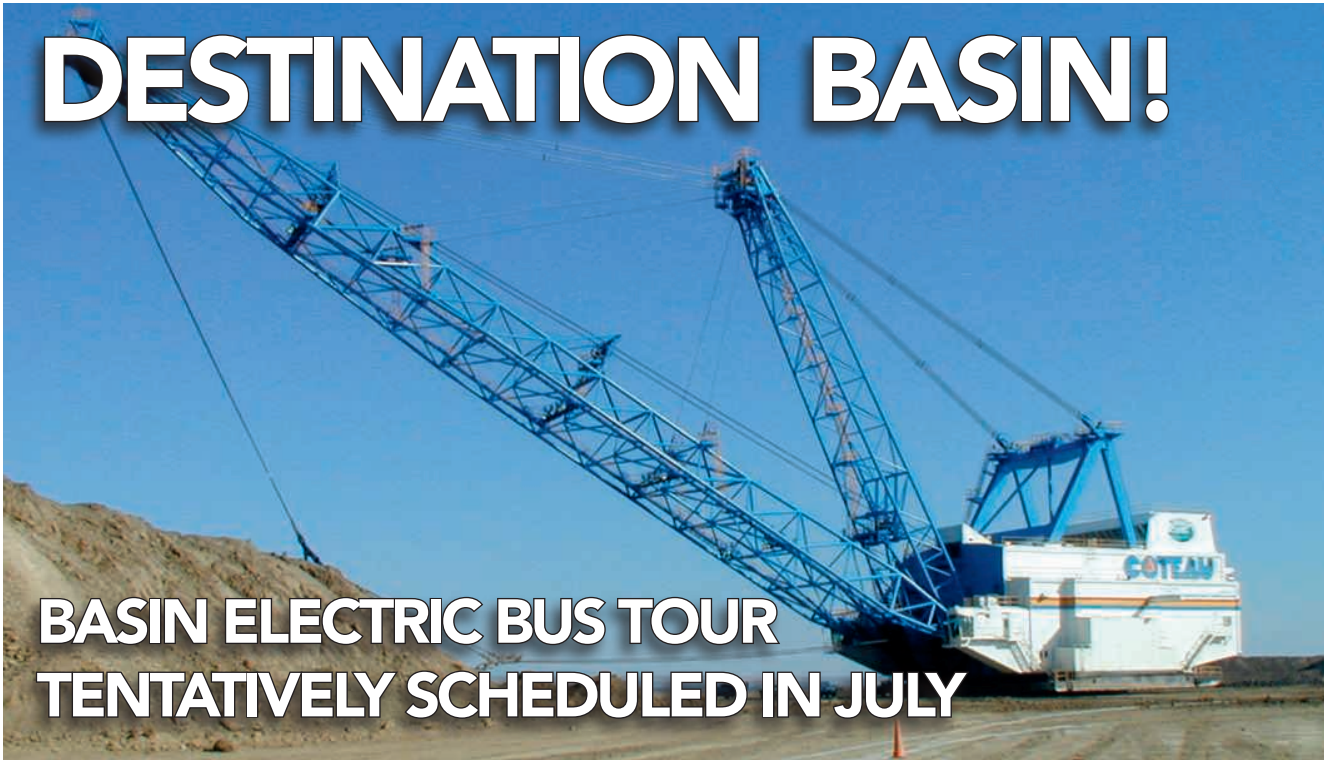
Central Electric Cooperative will continue supporting valuable youth programs that enhance the skills, knowledge and character of our future leaders.

Watch for more information regarding summer youth leadership activities as details become available.



# DESTINATION BASIN!

**BASIN ELECTRIC BUS TOUR  
TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED IN JULY**



After taking a couple years off due to covid-19 restrictions, Central Electric Cooperative's Basin Electric Bus Tour is tentatively scheduled to hit the road again July 13-15, 2022.

Bus tour participation is dependent upon Basin Electric's ability to host group tours amidst covid-19 concerns.

Members who have not attended past tours are given first chance to participate. All other members will be placed on a standby list and will be contacted if openings become available.

For more information, call and talk to Manager Member Services and Marketing Patrick Soukup at 1-800-477-2892 or visit [www.centralec.coop/basin-electric-bus-tour](http://www.centralec.coop/basin-electric-bus-tour).

We look forward to bringing the bus tour back, under the condition that Basin Electric allows groups to visit this summer.

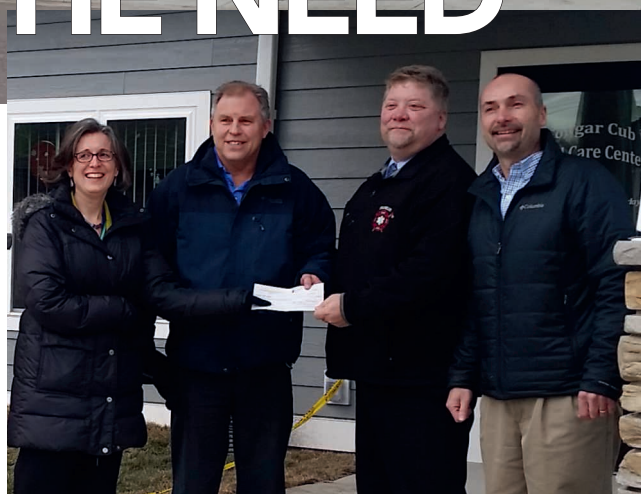




# REED FILLS THE NEED

Pictured at right, Renville-Sibley Co-op Power CEO DeeAnne Newville (left), presents a check to the local Community Center and Cougar Club daycare facility in Franklin, MN, through the electric cooperative REED Fund.

## Electric cooperative REED Fund helps meet many needs for communities in South Dakota and western Minnesota



### Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Leaders of the Garretson community northeast of Sioux Falls had the vision for a much-needed expansion of the small town's non-profit daycare center. Since cobbling together two older structures in 2019 and taking in more tykes, it was apparent that the current white-hot demand for childcare was going to necessitate yet another expansion.

So they set their jaws, put together a plan and mustered up the will to make it happen for the sake of local families and the greater good of the community.

Now, all they needed was a miracle.

That miracle came in the form of a random conversation that took place between Blue Dragon Academy Board Member Kris Frerk and Sioux Metro Growth Alliance CEO Jesse Fonkert.

Frerk was in full fret mode over a lack of funding for the project, but it turned

out Fonkert had a fail-safe solution.

Through his contacts Angie Neises at East River Electric and Jay Buchholz at Sioux Valley Energy, Fonkert was aware of the Rural Electric Economic Development Fund, or REED Fund. He knew it was a valuable financial resource made available by electric co-ops in South Dakota and western Minnesota just for this kind of project.

Bottom line: Blue Dragon Academy will begin work in April with plans to complete the 3,500-sq. ft. project in November. Best of all, nearly 40 more families in and around the town of Garretson will have access to quality child care services.

While Frerk doesn't recall any trumpets blaring or harps playing in the background, she contends that her off-hand discussion with Fonkert was delivered by divine intervention.

"It's a pure miracle," she said. "We had been putting feelers out for funding because we have a big need in this area.

When I got that information from Jesse, it was just like a miracle. We jumped on it, we got accepted by the REED Fund Board and now we're ready to get the work done."

Blue Dragon secured a low-interest REED loan for nearly \$700,000. The non-profit organization is required to match \$239,000. Now Frerk and her crew are heavy on the fund-raising trail and have already received tremendous support from many donors in the community, she said. The Blue Dragon Board hopes to pay the debt off early with plans to hire five or six more workers once the project is complete.

For East River Electric Economic Development Director Eric Fosheim, it was another day at the office. His job is to match the money with the need, and he says many recipients respond with the enthusiasm and gratitude Frerk expresses when they receive funds.

He does fall just short of uttering the "M" word, however.

“It’s extremely satisfying to be in a position to help people solve problems and overcome challenges in their communities,” Fosheim said. “We try to work together with folks to cut through the red tape and bureaucratic impediments and come up with clever ways to get projects across the finish line. This is all made possible through the electric cooperatives and the fact that they take their responsibilities and obligations to their communities very seriously.”

The REED Fund has backed scores of projects and loaned out more than \$100 million since it was established in 1996. Fosheim sees it as the perfect tool for promoting local economic growth, improving infrastructure, enhancing community facilities and contributing to job, business and wealth creation.

Funds have gone to retail and service businesses, industrial parks and office facilities, fire protection projects, manufacturing firms, housing projects, health care facilities and more.

Approximate amount of money  
**\$100 million**  
 loaned through the electric cooperative REED Fund

Chris Larson, general manager at Clay-Union Electric in Vermillion, and his board tapped REED funds to support the Wakonda Heritage Manor assisted living facility. They also worked with the business to secure a zero-interest loan through the USDA’s Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program.

“It’s truly an honor for us to have this tremendous resource available to help improve the lives of our members and the community at-large,” Larson said.

The real meaning of the REED program came to light when he and the board visited the place.

“We viewed the improvements they’d made, and heard from the people there about how it enhanced their quality of life. It really warms your heart to know you’re part of a co-op system that can have a positive impact on families and businesses. It just shows how much of a difference we can make when we all work together, pool our resources and get things done.”

East River cooperatives serving western Minnesota have also participated in the program. As with the Garretson community, parents in Franklin, MN, also had a need for a daycare center.

[www.reedfund.coop](http://www.reedfund.coop)

RURAL ELECTRIC ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND

REED FUND

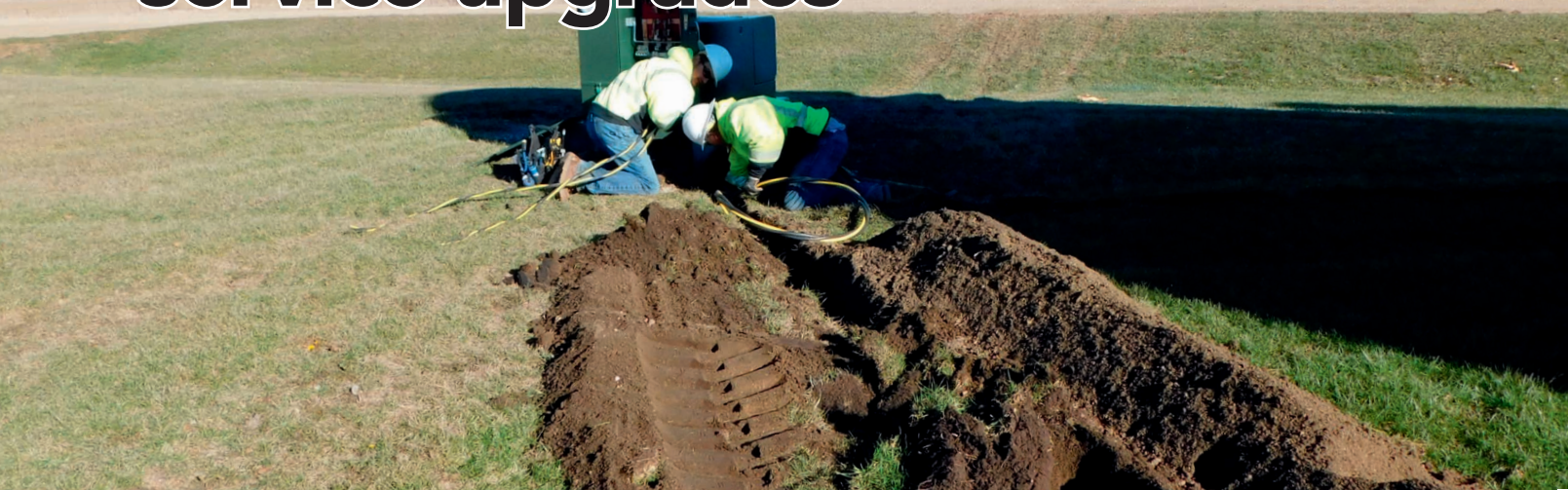


The Cougar Cub Child Care Center was launched with the help of REED funds obtained through Renville-Sibley Co-op Power after two of the town’s three daycare facilities closed.

Renville-Sibley CEO DeeAnne Neville said, “We were happy to help fill the gap. Concern for community is one of the seven cooperative principles. It’s an example of the city, school and economic development coming together for the good of the people in our rural communities.”

For more information about the REED Loan program, visit [www.reedfund.coop](http://www.reedfund.coop).

# Material shortages could delay new construction and service upgrades



**Brian Bultje**  
Manager of Operations



**Lincoln Feistner**  
Sales & Project Manager

Central Electric has taken a series of calculated steps to help alleviate supply concerns for those we serve. However, ongoing material constraints and extended delivery timeframes make it critical that you contact us early to discuss any upgrades or new construction.

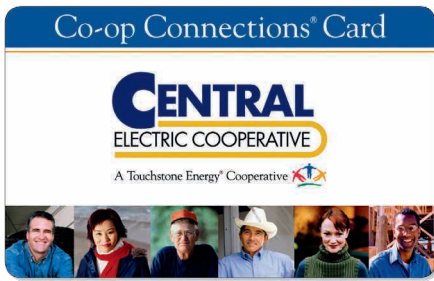
Transformers, generators, metering equipment, wire, fuses and electrical conduit are just a few of the shortages we face in 2022. Some crucial materials have been ordered well into the future, but our suppliers cannot guarantee delivery.

Transformers, for example, now have delivery dates ranging from 12 months to 24 months into the future. Generators also have extended timeframes for delivery. Depending on the size of equipment required for your project, other options may need to be considered.

In addition, large manufacturers are enforcing strict allocations and material allowances that are out of our control due to the market conditions.

These are examples of obstacles members could face if they need electrical work completed this year. To avoid added stress on your upcoming project, we encourage you to contact us today at 1-800-477-2892 and start the planning process. The sooner you call us, the better off you will be in terms of getting the right materials for the job.

We appreciate your patience as we navigate ongoing supply challenges together!



CHA  
CHING!

## Members Shop Local and Save

Your cooperative membership earns you discounts at participating businesses. Download the Co-op Connections app from the app store or obtain a card by contacting our office. For more information, call 1-800-477-2892 or email [cec@centralec.coop](mailto:cec@centralec.coop).

A list of local discounts can be viewed on our website by visiting [www.centralec.coop](http://www.centralec.coop) and selecting Member Programs on the main menu.

BUSINESS	TOWN	DISCOUNT
County Fair Food & Fuel	Mitchell	5 cents per gallon discount on fuel
Dakota Sunset	Mitchell	5 cents per gallon discount on fuel
Daylight Donuts & Coffee	Mitchell	Donut and regular coffee for \$1
Gene's Photography	Mitchell	1/2 price on session fees
Genevieve's Print *Art* Design	Wessington Springs	15% off labor for services
Hair Expressions Salon	Chamberlain	\$25 off first set eyelash extensions; \$20 off spa facial with microdermabrasion

This program is FREE for participating businesses. To add your company to the list, contact Tara Miller, Manager of Communications at 1-800-477-2892 or visit [centralec.coop](http://centralec.coop) and browse Member Programs. Central Electric looks forward to helping you attract new customers this year.



**TELL  
US WHO  
POWERS  
YOU!**

We know our co-op community is filled with people making a difference. Let's celebrate them! Nominate a member or employee of your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative who goes above and beyond. **They could win up to \$3,000!**



Nominate your local hero at [WHOPOWERSYOUCONTEST.COM](http://WHOPOWERSYOUCONTEST.COM)



**March 12**  
**28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride and Tour**  
 Spearfish Canyon Lodge, Lead, SD

*Photo by Travel South Dakota*

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.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

**FEBRUARY 25-26**  
**Women in Blue Jeans Conference**

Highland Conference Center, Mitchell, SD, [www.womeninbluejeans.org](http://www.womeninbluejeans.org)

**FEBRUARY 25-27, MARCH 3-5**  
**Making God Laugh**

Grand Opera House, Pierre, SD, 605-224-7826

**FEBRUARY 26**  
**The Music of John Williams**

Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

**MARCH 3-5**  
**Pro Snocross Races**

Days of '76 Rodeo Grounds, Deadwood, SD, 800-344-8826, [www.deadwood.com/event/pro-snocross-races/](http://www.deadwood.com/event/pro-snocross-races/)

**MARCH 4-6**  
**Home & Garden Show**

Brown County Fairgrounds, Aberdeen, SD, 605-225-2055

**MARCH 5**  
**I Hate Winter Cornhole Tournament**

Scherr Howe Arena, Mobridge, SD, [www.mobridge.org/Corn-Hole-Tournament](http://www.mobridge.org/Corn-Hole-Tournament)

**MARCH 5**  
**Mountain West® Whiskey Festival**

Rushmore Hotel, Rapid City, SD, [www.mountainwestwhiskeyfestival.com](http://www.mountainwestwhiskeyfestival.com)

**MARCH 5**  
**Road 2 Destruction Tour**

The Monument Summit Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

**MARCH 5-8**  
**2022 Summit League Men's and Women's Basketball Championships**

Denny Sanford Premier Center, Sioux Falls, SD, [www.thesummitleague.org/tickets](http://www.thesummitleague.org/tickets)

**MARCH 10**  
**Singing in the Rain: Dinner & A Movie**

Goss Opera House, Watertown, SD, 605-753-0200

**MARCH 10**  
**TobyMac Hits Deep Tour**

The Monument Summit Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

**MARCH 10-13**  
**Annual Sioux Empire Sportsmen's Show**

Denny Sanford Premier Center, Sioux Falls, SD, [www.siouxfalls.sportshow.com](http://www.siouxfalls.sportshow.com)

**MARCH 12**  
**28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride & Tour**

Spearfish Canyon Lodge, Lead, SD, [www.28below.com](http://www.28below.com)

**MARCH 12**  
**Meraki Dance Competition & Convention**

Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

**MARCH 12-13**  
**Hill City's Antique and Railroad Show & Sale**

440 Main Street, Hill City, SD, 605-574-2821 or 605-877-6629

**MARCH 18-19**  
**St. Patrick's Day Weekend**

Main Street, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

**MARCH 18-19**  
**Sioux Empire Arts & Crafts Show**

W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-332-6000

**MARCH 18-19, 25-26**  
**Schmeckfest**

748 S Main Street, Freeman, SD, 605-925-4237

**MARCH 19**  
**Dakota Coffee Festival**

Denny Sanford Premier Center, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

**MARCH 19**  
**St. Patrick's Day Celebration**

Various Locations, Watertown, SD, 605-886-5814

**MARCH 26**  
**Annual Ag Day**

Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

**APRIL 30-MAY 8**  
**Country Crafts: Rustic Designs and More**

41450 264th Street, Ethan, SD, 605-770-2411

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