



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

DAKOTA ENERGY
NOVEMBER 2023 VOL. 24 NO. 7

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Wings of Valor

A Veteran's Hunting
Retreat

Pages 8-9

Celebrating American
Indian Heritage

Pages 12-13

Capital Credit Refund Approved by the Board

How Capital Credits Work



At the end of each year, if Dakota Energy Cooperative has received more revenue than was necessary to cover expenses, the difference is allocated back to members as capital credits based on their share of electricity purchased.



When the co-op's financial condition permits, the board of directors may decide to retire, or pay back, some of the capital credits. **This year, part of outstanding capital credits from Dakota Energy's year 2005 will be retired, as well as part of East River's from years 2002, 2003, and 2004 and part of Basin Electric's outstanding capital credits from years 2004 and 2005.**



Capital credits are returned to active members in the form of a **BILL CREDIT** on their November electric bill they will receive the first part of December 2023.

Account Number:				Service Address:				
Meter #	Billing Period	Days	Readings	Meter	kWh	Rate		
20428	From 10/01/22 To 10/31/22	30	Present 21829 Previous 21359	Multiplier 40	Usage 18,800	61		
Previous Account Activity			Current Activity					
Previous Balance			\$1,539.46	Facility Charge		\$105.00		
Payment Received - Thank You			-\$1,539.46	Energy Charge		18,800 kWh @ 0.04800	\$902.40	
Balance Forward			\$0.00	Non-Coincidental Demand		79.46 kWh @ 3.00000	\$238.20	
				Capital Credit Refund			-\$915.97	
				State Sales Tax		\$56.05		
				Current Charges		\$385.68		
Total Amount Due					\$385.68			
					DUE DATE 11/25/2022			

Former members who no longer have service from Dakota Energy will receive checks at the current address on file at Dakota Energy.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Shining a light on Dakota Energy's dedicated staff



Daniel Vetsch

Q&A W/ DAKOTA ENERGY'S APPRENTICE LINE WORKER

How long have you been working with Dakota Energy?

I have worked for Dakota Energy for one year and six months.

What's the most interesting thing you've learned since starting work at Dakota Energy?

The effort it takes to keep our electrical grid running.

What does your job entail?

Constructing and maintaining DEC's distribution system and secondary services.

What motivates you to get up and go to work every day?

To further my knowledge of electrical systems and provide for myself.

What do you love most about Dakota Energy?

Being able to work with a great group of employees.

How would you describe Dakota Energy in three words?

Hard working employees.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

DAKOTA ENERGY

(USPS No. 018-949)

Board President: Darrell Raschke, Huron

Board of Directors

- Nick Nemeč, Holabird - Vice President
- Tommy Baruth, Alpena - Secretary
- Brian Bonebright, Wessington - Treasurer
- Brian Baum, Alpena
- Chase Binger, Hitchcock
- Todd Bushong, Tulare
- Chad Dearborn, Miller

CEO/General Manager: Chad Felderman

Manager of Operations: Matt Zomer

Manager of Finance & Administration: Mike Moncur

Manager of Human Resources & Communications: Jodene Decker

Dakota Energy Cooperative Connections is the monthly publication for the members of Dakota Energy Cooperative, PO Box 830, 40294 US Hwy 14, Huron, SD 57350. Members subscribe to Cooperative Connections as part of their electric cooperative membership. The purpose of Dakota Energy Cooperative Connections is to provide reliable, helpful information to electric cooperative members on electric cooperative matters and better rural living.

Subscription information: Dakota Energy Cooperative members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Non-member subscriptions are available for \$12 annually. USPS No. 0819-949 Periodicals Postage Paid at Huron, SD 57350. Postmaster: Please send address changes to Dakota Energy Cooperative Connections, PO Box 830, Huron, SD 57350; telephone (605) 352-8591; fax (605) 524-7064; email dakotaenergy@dakotaenergy.coop

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

www.dakotaenergy.com
 Facebook @dakotaenergy
 Twitter @DakotaEC



BOARD ELECTS NEW OFFICERS

The Board of Directors met on September 29, 2023, for their regular monthly meeting where they held the annual reorganization for election of officers. The Board elected new officers for the next year.



Darrell Raschke
President



Nick Nemeč
Vice-President



Tom Baruth
Secretary



Brian Bonebright
Treasurer

Why it's good to see co-op workers on your property



Dakota Energy employees and contractors work throughout our service territory, in the rights-of-way, easements, and across your private property and driveways. We're working to ensure reliable power for you and your neighbors, and that means we must cross your property from time to time.

You may see us:

- Making routine repairs
- Replacing meters
- Trimming trees and brush
- Restoring power outages
- Locating buried utilities for construction and digging projects
- Working to upgrade poles, wires, transformers and equipment
- Inspecting lines, power poles, transformer boxes and equipment

All field work, except emergency power restoration, is conducted during normal working hours, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Every effort is made to avoid damage and unnecessary intrusion. If you have concerns about our work, contact us at 605-352-8591.

We appreciate your cooperation.

Drowsy Driving

Drowsy Driving Prevention Week (Nov. 5-11, 2023), held every year during the first full week of November, is a good time to remember that drowsy driving is impaired driving.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about 1 in 25 adult drivers report having fallen asleep while driving in the previous 30 days, and many more admit to driving when they were sleep-deprived.

These startling figures show how prevalent drowsy driving is. What drivers may not realize is how much drowsy driving puts themselves – and others – at risk. In fact, an estimated 6,400 people died annually in crashes involving drowsy driving, according to the National Sleep Foundation.

Impact of Drowsiness on Driving

Driving while drowsy is similar to driving under influence of alcohol.

- Drivers' reaction times, awareness of hazards and ability to sustain attention all worsen the drowsier the driver.
- Driving after going more than 20 hours without sleep is the equivalent of driving with a blood-alcohol concentration of 0.08% – the U.S. legal limit.
- You are three times more likely to be in a car crash if you are fatigued.

A driver might not even know when he or she is fatigued because signs of fatigue are hard to identify. Some people may also experience micro-sleep – short, involuntary periods of inattention. In the 4 or 5 seconds a driver experiences micro-sleep, at highway speed, the vehicle will travel the length of a football field.

Prevalence of Drowsy Driving Crashes

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that every year about 100,000 police-reported, drowsy-driving crashes result in nearly 800 fatalities and about 50,000 injuries. The real number may be much higher, however, as it is difficult to determine whether a driver was drowsy at the time of a crash.

A study by the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety estimated that 328,000 drowsy driving crashes occur annually. That's more than three times the police-reported number. The same study found that 109,000 of those drowsy driving crashes resulted in an injury and about 6,400 were fatal. The researchers suggest the prevalence of drowsy driving fatalities is more than 350% greater than reported.

Beyond the human toll is the economic one. NHTSA estimates fatigue-related crashes resulting in injury or death cost society \$109 billion annually, not including property damage.

Interventions for Drowsy Driving

Drowsy driving affects everyone, including adolescents and teens, who are not getting enough sleep (according to the CDC, it is recommended that teens get 8-10 hours of sleep each night). That means interventions focusing on this age group can help reduce drowsy

driving. One such intervention is for parents to incorporate discussions and rules on drowsy driving while completing their parent-teen driving agreements.

Other ways to reduce drowsy driving include:

- **Crash avoidance technologies:** New and existing safety technologies, such as drowsiness alert and lane departure warnings, can detect common drowsy driving patterns and warn drivers to stay in their lane or take a break
- **University interventions:** College students receive less than average sleep, with some estimates at less than six hours a night; education programs aimed at college students may help curb drowsy driving and instill healthier behaviors that can last into adulthood
- **Getting more sleep:** According to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine and the Sleep Research Society, adults should get seven or more hours of sleep each night
- **Medication labels:** An article by Consumer Reports found that side-effect warnings are not always clear; new labeling guidelines may help drivers understand when to drive or not drive after taking these medications
- **Employers:** Workplaces with strong off-the-job safety and health programs can include key information on getting sufficient sleep and refraining from driving drowsy

Source: National Safety Council



Don't Fly Kites Near Power Lines!

Jason Willman, Age 9

Jason Willman advises people it's not safe to fly kites around power lines. Jason is the son of Dave and April Willman from Yankton, S.D., members of Clay-Union Electric Corporation.

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.

EASY CROCKPOT CREATIONS

MOM'S ROAST

Ingredients:

3-5 lbs. beef roast
1 can beefy mushroom soup
1 pkg. au jus (dry)

Method

Place roast in crock pot at bedtime. Mix au jus and soup together and pour over the roast. Cook on low. Roast will be ready to serve in its own gravy for dinner tomorrow.

Elaine Rieck
Harrisburg, S.D.

CREAMY GARDEN ROTINI

Ingredients:

1 lb. cooked and drained sausage or beef
1 large can (26 oz.) cream of chicken soup
1 soup can of milk
1 can (14.5 oz.) chicken broth soup
1 tbsp. Italian seasoning
1 cup fresh mushrooms
6 cups fresh spinach
1 pkg. Garden Rotini

Method

Add ingredients in the order given to the instant pot. Pressure cook on high for 20 minutes. Allow pressure to reduce to normal for 10 minutes, then serve! You will need an instant pot for this recipe!

Jean Cave
Sioux Falls, S.D.

CROCKPOT CASHEW CHICKEN

Ingredients:

1 pkg. slow cookers limited edition cashew chicken seasoning
2 lbs. boneless skinless chicken thighs, cubed
1 cup frozen chopped onion and pepper blend
1/3 cup water
3 tbsps. soy sauce
2 tbsps. ketchup
1 cup cashew pieces
2 green onions, finely chopped

Method

Place chicken and vegetables in slow cooker. Mix seasoning, water, soy sauce, and ketchup in bowl until well blended. Pour over chicken and vegetables; stir to coat. Cover. Cook eight hours on low or four hours on high. Stir in cashews. Sprinkle with green onions. Serve over cooked rice, if desired. If cooking on low, decrease water to 1/4 cup.

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 2023. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

PREPARE FOR HEATING SEASON



Heating Season Energy Saving Tips

INSTALL A PROGRAMMABLE THERMOSTAT

Programmable thermostats can make your heating and cooling system operate more efficiently. The thermostats are easy to install, and ENERGY STAR estimates you can save as much as 10 percent on heating and cooling costs by properly using one. Set it to the recommended temperatures and enjoy the savings.

CHECK, CLEAN, OR REPLACE HEATING FILTERS

Check filters monthly and change them at least every three months. A dirty air filter slows down air flow and makes a system work harder, thereby wasting energy.

WEATHERSTRIP WINDOWS AND DOORS

Windows and doors top the list of culprits for air leaks that lower the energy efficiency of your house.

CHANGE THE ROTATION OF CEILING FANS

Ceiling fans are not just for summer cooling. In the winter, they can also be used to rotate airflow so that heat rising into a high ceiling is blown back down toward the room's occupants. In the winter, the fan should spin counter clockwise. This redistribution of warm air makes a room feel warm and more comfortable, helping to save on heating costs. To change the rotation of the fan, use the toggle switch on the motor housing.

CHECK YOUR ATTIC INSULATION

Attics should have a minimum of 11 inches of fiberglass insulation. Without it, heat will be lost through the upper level of the home.

CLOSE THE VENTS AND DOORS TO UNUSED ROOMS

If you have a room that you rarely use, close the vent and door. This will direct the heat to the occupied parts of the home.

Statement of Ownership - Cooperative Connections

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

1. Publication Title: Dakota Energy Cooperative Connections

2. Issue Frequency: Quarterly

3. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: 09/27/2023

4. Annual Subscription Price: \$4.00/Members/12.00/Non-Mem

5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 4

6. Annual Circulation: 2276

7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer): Dakota Energy Cooperative, Inc. 40394 US Hwy 14, P.O. Box 630, Huron, SD 57350-0330

8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer): Dakota Energy Cooperative, Inc. P.O. Box 630, Huron, SD 57350-0330

9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor: Publisher: Dakota Energy Cooperative, Inc. P.O. Box 630, Huron, SD 57350-0330; Editor: Jordene Decker, Dakota Energy Cooperative, Inc. P.O. Box 630, Huron, SD 57350-0330; Managing Editor: Jordene Decker, Dakota Energy Cooperative, Inc. P.O. Box 630, Huron, SD 57350-0330

10. Owner: Dakota Energy Cooperative, Inc.

11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None

12. Tax Status: For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates. (Check one) Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months

PS Form 3526, July 2014 (Page 1 of 4) (see instructions page 4) PSN 7530-01-005-9011 PRIVACY NOTICE: See our privacy policy at www.usps.com

13. Publication Title: Dakota Energy Cooperative Connections

14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: 09/27/2023

15. Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)		
1. Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	2276	2285
2. Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	-	-
3. Paid Distribution Outside the Mail (including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®)	-	-
4. Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	-	-
c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))	2276	2285
d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)		
1. Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	36	36
2. Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	-	-
3. Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	-	-
4. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	-	-
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3), and (4))	36	36
f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)	2276	2285
g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))		
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)	2276	2285
i. Payment of postage by addressee (15f divided by 15f times 150)	98	98

* If you are claiming electronic copies, go to line 16 on page 3. If you are not claiming electronic copies, skip to line 17 on page 3.

PS Form 3526, July 2014 (Page 2 of 4)

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

16. Electronic Copy Circulation

16. Electronic Copy Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
a. Paid Electronic Copies	-	-
b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	2276	2285
c. Total Paid Distribution (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	2276	2285
d. Payment Paid (Both Paid & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16b x 100)	98	98

I certify that 65% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are paid above a nominal price.

17. Publication of Statement of Ownership: The publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the 15/1/23 issue of the publication. Publication not required.

18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner: Jordene Decker, Editor 09/27/2023

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

PS Form 3526, July 2014 (Page 3 of 4) PRIVACY NOTICE: See our privacy policy at www.usps.com

AUGUST 2023

The Board of Directors met on Tuesday, August 22, 2023, with Directors Binger, Bushong, Dearborn, Duxbury, Micheel, Nemecek, Peterson, and Raschke present. Manager Felderman and Employees Decker, Hasart, Moncur, Picek, Rakness, and Zomer were present.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Felderman reported on the following items:

- Energy sales and revenue
- CRC dispatch
- Basin Electric
- Greater Huron Development Corporation
- Annual Meeting
- IT Administrator Rakness reviewed the 2024 Technology Plan

OFFICE SERVICES REPORT

Manager of Finance and Administration Moncur and Employee Hasart reported on the following items:

- Financial reports for July
- Capital Credit allocation and distribution options
- 2022 Form 990
- CoBank line of credit renewal
- Mitigation environmental process
- KRTA Ratio review

OPERATIONS REPORT

Manager of Operations Zomer reported on the following items:

- Construction, maintenance, and retirement activities
- Pole testing - 2,500 poles were tested; 32 rejects with an overall rejection rate of 1.3 percent
- Main meter changes

- Overhead line rebuild
- New feed to Huron Energy
- Grounds and hotstick testing

MEMBER SERVICES REPORT

Manager Felderman reported on the following items:

- Wiring department workload
- Potential hazards
- Load control program
- Submeter changes

HUMAN RESOURCES/ COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Manager of HR/Communications Decker reported on the following items:

- 2024 Rates for group benefits and pension plans
- Touchstone Energy Mid-Year Value report
- Community events

- Annual Meeting
- Cybersecurity report

BOARD ACTION

The following items were acted upon:

- Accepted the reports presented
- Approved donations
- Approved revised policies
- Approved 2024 Capital and Construction Budget

BOARD REPORTS

Director Raschke reported on East River's August 2023 regular board meeting.

Directors who attended reported on the Basin Annual Meeting.

Next monthly board meeting is October 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. at the Huron office.

Year-to-Date Financial Report		
	Aug-23	Year-to-Date
Total Revenue	\$2,206,894	\$16,757,402
Cost of Power	\$1,610,452	\$11,896,559
Operating Expenses	\$499,556	\$4,776,846
Total Margins	\$84,151	\$1,430,758
KwH's Purchased	22,286,207	166,348,085
Services in Place		3,609
Miles of Line		2,532
Members per Mile		1.43

YOUR DATA IS SECURE

Whether you pay your electric bill through SmartHub or by phone with a credit card, be assured that we have the security of your data covered. DEC complies with the Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standard Compliance standards. These are worldwide requirements that are designed to prevent fraud through increased data controls.





Veterans enjoying their stay at Wings of Valor.

WINGS OF VALOR

A Veteran's Retreat

Shannon Marvel

shannon.marvel@sdrea.coop

Wings of Valor Lodge isn't just a hunting retreat offering veterans a good time and a free pheasant hunt, it's a place for them to come home.

The non-profit organization offers all U.S. military veterans an all-expense paid hunt in the heart of pheasant country, about five miles south of Parker, South Dakota.

The organization runs almost entirely on volunteers, donations and sponsorships and has already served more than 500 veterans from over 40 states since it began operations in 2019.

Sean Adams, the organization's president and co-founder, said the idea to open a hunting lodge came after discussions with the organization's now-CEO Bruce Weller back in 2018.

Weller owned a private hunting lodge called Birds, Bucks and Berries, and was host to Adams and other veterans during his annual veterans' hunt.

"Bruce was saying how the veterans' hunt was always the best day of the year, so I said, we can make every day the best day of the year if you want," said Adams.

Adams, who was grievously injured while serving in Afghanistan resulting in a double amputation of his legs in 2012, said he was well-versed in the non-profit community by the time he and Weller began discussing opening a hunting lodge that served veterans.

"I know pretty much how it works. If you do what you say, do it on time, do it well, serve veterans with a level of professionalism, and have a little faith, people will come," Adams said.

"From that conversation to Nov. 1, 2019, we worked on build site plans that I designed with one of the volunteers. We took a pavilion area that (Weller) used for weddings and put chalk lines everywhere, which is how we mapped out a building plan."

Adams said he rolled his wheelchair around each room, and if he hit a chalk line, he'd remark the line to ensure it was handicap accessible. That was in



Above: CPL USMC (RET) Sean Adams

Right: Sean Adams recovers in a hospital after suffering serious injuries in an IED explosion in Afghanistan in 2011.



January of 2019. Eleven months later, the lodge had been built and a group of veterans came to hunt under the newly established Wings of Valor Lodge.

Adams said a premise of Wings of Valor Lodge is to welcome veterans' home to something that's not chaotic, a place where they can find purpose and peace.

There's no religious angle, nor any requirements other than having taken the oath to serve our country for a veteran to have their travel expenses and entire hunting trip paid for by the non-profit.

"My generation fought in a war that was religious based," Adams explained. "We do have a spiritual setting, but we don't press anything. We never want a veteran to feel that they are oppressed by any sort of a faith."

Whether a veteran is religious, Christian, Muslim, atheist, or simply spiritual, they will be amongst others who understand what they've been through.

"No veteran is broken, they just need to come home," Adams said.

"God did not call the qualified, he called the unqualified that were willing to do

whatever was asked. Don't think because you did something overseas that your any worse than the pastor in the pulpit. We're all sinners on this earth."

Nature is also a powerful tool that Adams believes helps mend the mind, body and spirit. It's peaceful, which he said is the type of environment veterans need.

"You need all those to regroup yourself back in society. It's really hard to come out of a war, or wars, and describe that to the average human being," Adams said.

The lodge has hosted veterans of World War II, the Korean War and Vietnam to veterans who have served in the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Operation Desert Storm.

Many of the veterans that have come to the lodge have never had a chance to heal or "come home", Adams said.

Some of those men were Marines that Adams served with directly a decade ago.

"They saw me in an IED blast. They didn't have time to heal. They were able to see that I was okay and it was time for them to start healing. They had given enough to the country. It was time to start the healing process," Adams said.

"We also had a veteran talk about Vietnam. He hadn't talked about it since 1968," Adams said.

Combat veterans, regardless of where they served or experienced warfare, establish a connection with one another at the lodge.

Older veterans find purpose in helping their younger counterparts. Adams said the connection can be overwhelming at times for the Vietnam veterans because of the newfound sense of purpose they find in these interactions.

Adams said raising kids and having companionship with your wife or husband is meaningful to veterans, but they often go without the relationships they had with their fellow soldiers they had beside them in the heat of battle.

"Giving someone millions of dollars, houses, or trip – that's great. But that's only mending the problem. Giving someone a sense of purpose is something we have to do," Adams said.

"When the Vietnam veterans tell my generation 'I get it, and it won't last forever', it gives the Vietnam guys a sense of purpose. The longer you hold it in the deeper it gets. That's something we realized at Walter Reed. We started getting off our medications the more we talked about what happened."

Adams said any veteran who wants to come and hunt at the Wings of Valor Lodge need only apply.

Individual applications come to the lodge free of charge. That means the organization will cover the cost of travel and any other expenses incurred to ensure the veteran doesn't pay a dime out of their own pocket.

To apply for a hunt or learn more about Wings of Valor Lodge, go to www.wingsofvalorlodge.org.



A handicap accessible bedroom at Wings of Valor lodge



BEWARE OF DAMAGED POWER EQUIPMENT

Energy can spread like ripples on a pond.

The transmission and distribution of power is safe and reliable most of the time.

However, storms, critters and car accidents can damage energized utility equipment such as power lines, poles and padmount transformers (green boxes). Not only can this cause minor inconveniences, like service interruptions and road closures, it can also create life-threatening situations when energy invisibly spreads like ripples on a pond.

Here is what can occur when utility equipment is damaged:

- **Step potential** happens when a person walks from one voltage

“ripple” to another and their feet experience a difference in voltage.

- **Touch potential** happens when someone touches something at one voltage and steps on or contacts something else at a different voltage.

Both types of potential can cause serious internal and external injuries and death, since electric current enters the body at one point and exits at another.

How to stay safe

Take precautions near downed power lines, poles or other damaged power equipment. Always assume damaged power equipment is energized; it can

look lifeless and harmless and still be live.

Besides accidents, storms and animal interferences, another hazardous situation may occur when equipment or extensions get too close to or contact power equipment. **To stay safe around damaged utility equipment:**

- Stay inside your vehicle or cab.
- Call 9-1-1.
- Report damaged power equipment to a dispatcher.
- Only exit if you see smoke or there is a fire.

If you must exit due to a fire, carefully do the following:

- Cross your arms and make a clean jump out.
- Do not touch the vehicle and the ground at the same time.
- Make solid hops with your feet together as far away as you can.
- If you are unable to hop, shuffle away without lifting your feet.

- Do not return to the vehicle.

If you are near the scene:

- Do not approach the scene to help.
- Stay at least 50 feet away.
- Do not lean on or touch anything.

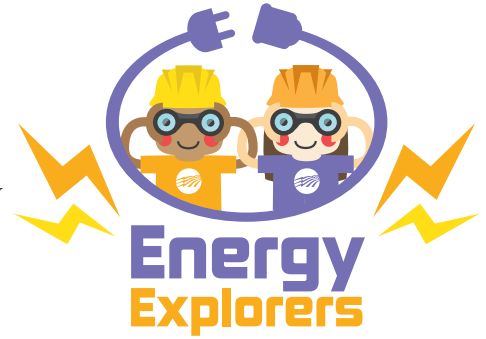
Never approach a downed power line or pole or a damaged padmount transformer.

For more electrical safety tips, visit SafeElectricity.org.



THE STEPS TO RESTORING POWER

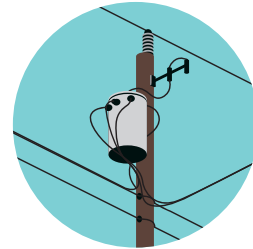
When the power goes out, line crews work hard to restore electricity as quickly and safely as possible. To ensure the process is done efficiently, line crews follow specific steps to restore power. Can you order the steps below to match how power is restored?



Hint: Check your work in the answer key.

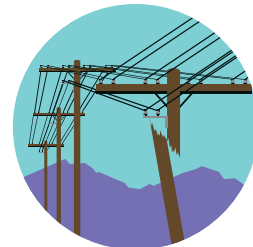
STEP #

Tap lines are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers that are either mounted on utility poles or placed on pads for underground electric service.



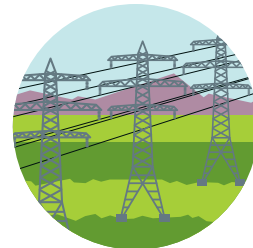
STEP #

Distribution power lines are inspected. These are the lines you typically see on the side of the road that deliver power to communities.



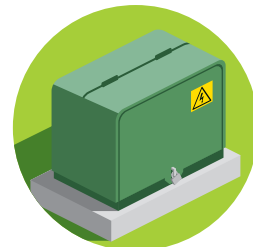
STEP #

Large, high-voltage transmission lines are inspected for damage. These power lines deliver large amounts of electricity over great distances.



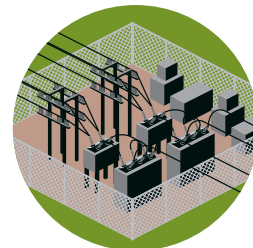
STEP #

Service lines are inspected. These are the power lines that run **between the transformer and your home**.



STEP #

Distribution substations are inspected. These facilities lower the voltage of power, then send power to distribution lines.



Answer Key: 4, 3, 1, 5, 2



Dignity courtesy of Travel South Dakota

DIGNITY

Celebrating American Indian Heritage

Scott Waltman

Rising from the prairie land as it gives way to bluffs on the east side of the Missouri River is a spectacular sculpture commemorating both South Dakota's 125 anniversary and the state's original inhabitants.

Dignity of the Earth and Sky was built by Sturgis-based sculptor Dale Claude Lamphere, who used to be the state's poet laureate.

The sculpture was erected in 2016 after Norm and Eunabel McKie announced it as a gift to South Dakota upon the state's quasiquintennial in 2014.

Dignity towers 50 feet above the ground, beckoning motorists as they travel along Interstate 90. From the

east, it's the gateway to West River en route to the beautiful Black Hills. From the west, it's a sign to travelers that they are closer to the Minnesota border than the state's most popular playgrounds that range from Wall to Spearfish to Hot Springs.

Ashley Riehle of Sylvania, Ohio, which is on the northwestern outskirts of Toledo and just south of the Michigan

border, said the stretch of I-90 alone makes South Dakota one of the best road trip states in the nation.

She visited South Dakota in 2021, driving from Sioux Falls to the Black Hills and back and twice stopping at the Dignity monument. She planned to visit the sculpture during her drive but said the Chamberlain area also doubled as a logical place to take a break.

As a history buff, Riehle appreciates





Jeremy and Stacey Waltner of Freeman visit the Dignity of Earth and Sky sculpture in 2018.

both the beauty and the significance of Dignity.

“I thought it was great that South Dakota acknowledges the first people that occupied the state,” she said.

Many states don’t, she said, and she doesn’t know of any such significant recognitions in Ohio or Michigan.

Jeremy Waltner of Freeman, South Dakota, also appreciates the sculpture on multiple levels.

“It is as impressive as you can imagine just in terms of both size and impact,” he said.

Being a South Dakotan, he knew of Dignity and that he wanted to visit. But he also wanted to make sure his wife Stacey, daughter Ella and son Oliver could share the experience. They stopped during a trip west in summer 2018.

The sculpture pays homage to South Dakota’s Native American population, setting it apart from so many other tourist stops in the state, Waltner said.

“It’s education as much as it is art,” he said, adding that the context behind Dignity is critical.

Three Native American women from Rapid City served as models for the sculpture, which was created east of the town in an isolated area along the Cheyenne River.

Lamphere’s other creations include work in the South Dakota State Capitol in Pierre and the Arch of Dreams in Sioux Falls. He’s done commissioned portraits of Bob and Dolores Hope, Burl Ives, Walter Annenberg, George and Eleanor McGovern and others, according to his website.

For Dignity, he had a specific goal.

“I wanted something that would really honor the indigenous people of the Great Plains, and I kept that in mind all the time. I made the work reflect the name that it has of Dignity, and I think that’s part of what makes it work so well,” Lamphere has said of his creation.

Riehle noted that the star quilt Dignity wears has meaning.

It’s comprised of more than 100 blue diamonds as Dignity holds it behind her back in her outstretched arms.

In Native American culture, star quilts are a sign of respect and are often given as gifts to honor somebody for a substantial achievement in their life.

Including the quilt was a nice touch that took some planning, Riehle said, because it’s a direct tie to the Lakota culture.

While there is a plaque at Dignity that briefly tells the story of the sculpture, Waltner said he’s not sure most people realize the history.

In fact, he said, he’s not sure if most people set out to visit Dignity or just happen across her as they zip through the heart of the state on the interstate.

“It’s South Dakota’s greatest conversational piece outside of two gigantic granite carvings in the Black Hills,” Waltner said, referring to Mount Rushmore and the Crazy Horse Memorial.

Either way, he said, people who take time to admire the grand piece of art wind up learning a little bit.

When he stopped with his family, he said there was a good crowd of people visiting about the sculpture, smiling as they looked on in awe and waiting in line so they could get their pictures taken

with Dignity.

Waltner said he has stopped to see the sculpture twice on his own.

Riehle met friends from Denver and Chicago in the Black Hills as part of her trip. She had been to South Dakota before but got to see and do much more in 2021. She visited Sioux Falls, Mitchell’s Corn Palace, Deadwood, the Badlands, Wall Drug, Spearfish Canyon, Custer State Park, the Chapel in the Hills, Pactola Lake, Palisades State Park and other popular places.

All were fun, but Dignity was special, she said, because it is a reflection of the true foundation of South Dakota’s history.

“So much history focuses on when the white settlers got there,” Riehle said.

Dignity is deeper.

The McKies donated \$1 million to the Dignity project. Less than a decade later, that investment helps the thousands upon thousands of people who stop just east of Chamberlain each year take a moment to remember and acknowledge the rich history of South Dakota’s first citizens.

Additional Facts:

- November is National American Indian Heritage Month. It’s a time to remember and celebrate the important contributions of Native people and their cultures, traditions, and histories.
- The first state to declare and celebrate an American Indian Day was New York on the second Saturday in May 1916.
- In 1990, the month of November was approved by a joint resolution and signed by President George H. W. Bush as “National American Indian Heritage Month.”
- Central Electric Cooperative proudly powers Dignity and the rest area where thousands of visitors stop each year to celebrate the beauty of the American Indian.



Scott Pudwill, director of the Aberdeen Public School District's A-TEC Academy shows school board members one of three electric vehicles purchased for the academy's automotive class. *Photo courtesy of The Aberdeen Insider*

The Rise of Career and Technical Education

Scott Waltman

Many high school graduates in South Dakota are veering from the traditional path to college and a four-year degree.

Career and technical education classes continue to grow in popularity with school districts expanding their offerings and academies and seeing more students interested in those classes.

During the 2021-22 school year, there were 25,282 South Dakota public school students taking some type of career or technical training class, according to information from the South Dakota Department of Education. That number includes students who took more than one class.

Those are the most recent complete numbers available from the state.

More and more, those classes get young people prepared for jobs that offer

good wages and benefits. The perception of what, decades ago, was called “tech school” has changed, and the number of students taking classes that focus on agriculture, manufacturing, hospitality and tourism, and architecture and construction continues to rise.

In recent months, the Aberdeen Public School District expanded its A-TEC Academy on the campus of Central High School. The project cost roughly \$3.6 million.

New spaces for agriculture, family and consumer sciences, networking, and broadcast courses were added, though the district offers other career and technical education classes.

The agriculture program is especially popular, said Scott Pudwill, the district's A-TEC Academy director.

Before the expansion, he said, all of the ag classes were in one room. Now, ag

classes have a multipurpose space with tables and sinks and the academy has a new greenhouse.

Students were starting to put plant beds together at the end of September and, Pudwill said, the kids will be able to monitor them during the winter months with the new facility.

He said ag classes average about 105 students per term, which is nine weeks. The automotive program is almost as popular with about 400 students taking classes over the course of a school year, he said.

Career and technical education classes are also popular in the Harrisburg School District, said Breanne Lynch, the district's career and technical education coordinator.

Harrisburg offers classes in 13 of the 16 clusters the state has, she said, and about half of the 1,700 students in grades nine through 12 take career and tech classes.

If you included internships, work-based learning and other options, about 90% of high school students have a career or technical education-related class or experience during their four years, Lynch said.

The district continues to offer more

options. For example, Lynch said, a home builders academy opened in 2019. That first year, students built a full house. Now, they are working on tiny homes that will eventually go to veterans, she said.

In Aberdeen, A-TEC students have built cabins for the city's Wylie Park campground.

Both districts have partnerships with their local home builders associations.

Harrisburg's automotive program teams with Schulte Subaru in town. As is the case with many career and technical education classes, that gives students the chance to get hands-on experience.

Lynch said that when Schulte buys cars at auction, students have the chance to diagnose what problems there might be. They also do basic work like change the oil on district staff cars. That gives them experience in what it's like to work at a quick stop, she said.

Harrisburg students in the business management and administration cluster operate the Roar Store at the school. It offers snacks and drinks to students when meals aren't being served, Lynch said. For managing the store, including tasks like working with wholesalers to purchase products, the kids are paid in Roar Bucks they can spend at the store.

The aim of all of the career and technical education classes is to prepare students for the workforce, Lynch said. Workforce development is a prime focus of state leaders, she said.

Aberdeen Central's A-TEC Academy had a shop before the expansion. But students will get to try their hand at something new this school year.

The auto curriculum now has three electric cars, Pudwill said. Students will be able to build them, then the vehicles can be taken apart and used in future years.

Once finished, the cars will look somewhat like a dune buggy, he said. But they can be licensed and driven on streets and roads.

Even if students who take career and technical education classes choose another profession, they'll still have the skills to, for

example, make home or vehicle repairs, Pudwill said.

For those who go onto a postsecondary school, many of the programs are one or two years, Pudwill said. So students get into the workforce quicker while accruing less debt than they would at a traditional four-year college or university, he said.

Bobbie Jo Donovan is the college and career readiness manager for the Rapid City Public School District and past president of the South Dakota Association for Career and Technical Education. The number of high school students taking those courses is certainly on the uptick, she said.

One of the biggest challenges is finding qualified, certified teachers to lead the classes, she said.

Sometimes there's a community member with a strong background in a profession who isn't certified but would make a good teaching candidate, Donovan said. The state has programs to help those folks, who, because of their career experience, can often offer a wealth of knowledge to students, she said.

So many careers can start in high school with career and tech classes, Donovan said, and school districts want to be able to help those young people, she said.

Lynch said the Harrisburg district also offers opportunities to students in kindergarten

through eighth grade. Career learning can begin as early as age 4, so keeping students interested and curious in career and technical education options will pay dividends in the future, she said.

"We also know that students who take multiple CTE classes are more engaged in learning and see a higher graduation rate," said Nancy Van Der Weide, public information specialist with the state Department of education.

"Statewide, 82% of high school students graduated on time in the 2021-22 school year, but 94% of students who were actively involved in CTE graduated on time," she said.



Harrisburg students working on a car in the automotive class. Photo courtesy of Harrisburg School District



Students in the Harrisburg School District's home builders academy have built a full house. Photo courtesy of John Klemme



Nov. 2-4
Huron Ringneck Festival and Bird Dog Challenge
 Huron, SD
 605-352-0000

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

OCT. 24-28
Grey Goose Halloween Display
 6 p.m.
 19988 Grey Goose Rd.
 Pierre, SD

OCT. 28
Hill City Children's Boo Bash and Pumpkin Festival
 Hill City Visitor's Center
 Hill City, SD
 605-574-2368

OCT. 28-29
Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Association
 Ramkota Hotel Exhibit Hall
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-731-9155

NOV. 3
Plankinton Service Club Fun Night
 7 p.m.
 Aurora County Ag Building
 Plankinton, SD

NOV. 4-5
Benson's Flea Market
 W.H. Lyons Fairgrounds
 Sioux Falls, SD

NOV. 5
American Legion Post 15 Pancake Breakfast
 8:30 a.m.
 S.D. Military Heritage Alliance Building
 Sioux Falls, SD

NOV. 5
Turkey Dinner/ Silent Auction
 11:45 a.m.
 RVUMC
 Rapid City, SD

NOV. 10-12
Christmas at the Barn
 10 a.m.
 Groton, SD

NOV. 10-11
Sioux Empire Arts & Crafts Show
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds
 Sioux Falls, SD

NOV. 11
Sisseton Area Merchants & Crafters Holiday Extravaganza
 Sisseton, SD

NOV. 12
Lutefisk, Lefse & Meatball
 4-7 p.m.
 Trinity Lutheran Church
 Chamberlain, SD
 605-730-0553

NOV. 24
Parade of Lights
 7 p.m.
 Dakota Avenue
 Huron, SD

NOV. 25
Mid-Winter Fair
 Gregory Auditorium
 Gregory, SD
 605-830-9778

NOV. 30-DEC. 3
Hatchery Holidays
 D.C. Booth Fish Hatchery
 Spearfish, SD

DEC. 2
6th Annual Holiday Party, Tour of Homes, Silent Auction
 4 p.m.
 Olive Grove Golf Course
 Groton, SD

DEC. 8-9
Alexandria's Winter Festival
 5 p.m.
 Alexandria, SD

DEC. 8-9
Junkin' Market Days
 W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds Expo Center
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-941-4958

DEC. 17
Christmas Cantata
 3 p.m.
 Hermosa United Church of Christ
 Hermosa, SD

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