



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



DAKOTA ENERGY
JANUARY 2025 VOL. 25 NO. 9

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Forecasting the Future

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Rate Change Approved by the Board of Directors

Last month you learned about the increases in power costs coming to Dakota Energy and its members. Basin Electric, WAPA, and East River Electric have now all approved rate increases for their 2025 budgets. In turn, the Dakota Energy Board of Directors approved a rate increase and the 2025 budget at the November board meeting. For Dakota Energy to sustain operations and meet financial obligations, an average rate increase of 12% will be applied throughout all classes. As a not-for-profit cooperative, we strive every day to hold down costs while still providing the safe and reliable service you expect. However, wholesale power costs are Dakota Energy's single largest expense and represent about 72 cents of every dollar on your electric bill every month.

For example, a residential member taking advantage of the heat rate, and using an average of 1,500 kWh currently has a total cost of \$170.25. With the new rate, the total cost for that heat rate member comes to \$187.80, which is an increase of \$17.55 or 10.30%. For residential members not on the heat rate, and using the average of 1,500 kWh, the current cost is \$187.50. With the new rate the total cost comes to \$210.00, which is

an increase of \$22.50 or 12.00%.

The rate increase will go into effect on January 1, 2025. Adjusting rates helps us manage power cost pressures fairly, making sure we have the resources to serve every member. Our goal continues to be to operate as safely, reliably, and efficiently as possible to provide you with the best value for your energy needs.

To remain flexible, Dakota Energy offers a variety of payment options; members can choose one that works best for their budget. Budget Billing helps avoid bill fluctuations by calculating an average of the previous 12 months' usage into an even monthly payment. SmartHub – Pay Now – Automatic Bill Payment – Pay by Phone are great electronic payment options, too. More information is available on our website www.dakotaenergy.coop. You may also stop in the office and drop off your payment at the counter or in the convenient drop box.

Thank you in advance for your understanding and support. Feel free to give us a call with any questions or concerns. Below is a chart of the approved rate changes.

2025 Rate Changes

RATE CLASS	CURRENT RATE	NEW RATE
Farm/Residential	\$0.125/kWh	\$0.140/kWh
Electric Heat	\$0.065/kWh	\$0.070/kWh
Irrigation	\$0.095/kWh	\$0.110/kWh
Three-Phase Commerical	\$0.048/kWh	\$0.054/kWh

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

DAKOTA ENERGY

(USPS No. 018-949)

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Tommy Baruth, Alpena - Secretary
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James Wangness, Miller
Doug Schaefer, Orient

CEO/General Manager: Chad Felderman

Manager of Operations: Matt Zomer

Manager of Finance & Administration:
Eric Hasart

Manager of Human Resources & Communications: Jodene Decker

Manager of Member Services: Jeff Gilbert

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.

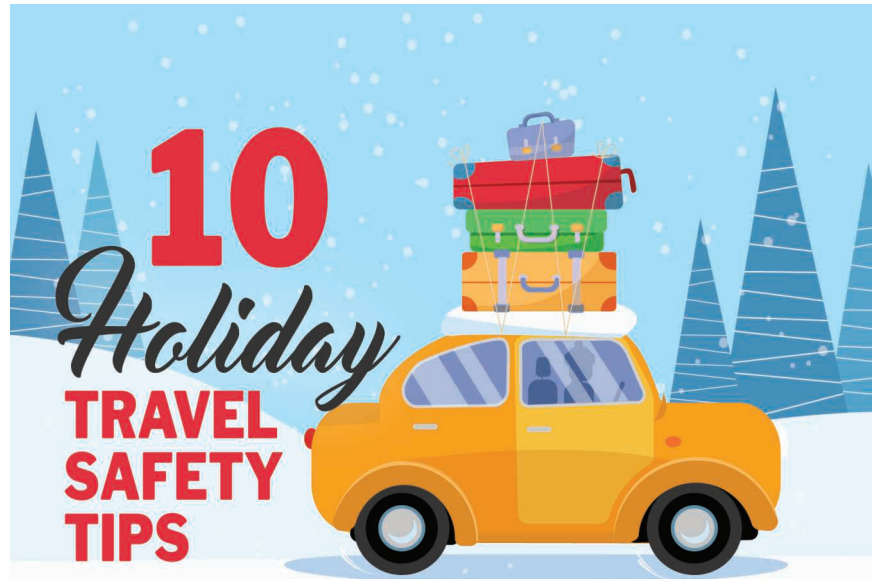
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DAKOTA ENERGY COOPERATIVE, INC.
HURON, SD 57350



Millions take to the highways over the holidays, making it one of the busiest travel times of the year.

If you're traveling by car this season, **follow these safety tips:**

1. Prepare Your Home

Cancel mail, pause deliveries and have someone check on your home. In snowy areas, arrange for snow removal.

2. Reduce Fire Risks

Unplug nonessential electrical devices and check smoke detectors.

3. Don't Overshare

Don't share your travel plans on social media until after you are home.

4. Inspect Your Car

Ensure tires are inflated and carry jumper cables, as cold weather can drain batteries.

5. Pack an Emergency Kit

Include a car phone charger, blankets, food and water, coats and a flashlight with batteries.

6. Check the Weather

Check the weather before and during your trip to avoid storms.

7. Buckle Up & Slow Down

Increase your following distance to safely navigate slick roads and allow extra time to get to your destination.

8. Take Frequent Breaks

Winter driving challenges can be tiring. Stop every few hours to stay alert and stay hydrated to avoid fatigue.

9. Share Your Itinerary

Let family or friends know your travel plans, whether you're on your way out or heading back home.

10. Put That Phone Away

Avoid distractions—winter driving requires your full attention.

Learn more at:

Safe Electricity.org



Snow Safety

There is no end to the terms for “really big snowstorm,” and those terms come in handy, particularly in America’s snowiest cities. Just check out these average annual snowfall totals in towns of at least 10,000 residents, according to the Farmer’s Almanac:

Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan – 119.3 inches
Syracuse, New York – 114.3 inches
Juneau, Alaska – 93.6 inches
Flagstaff, Arizona – 87.6 inches
Duluth, Minnesota – 83.5 inches
Erie, Pennsylvania – 80.9 inches
Burlington, Vermont – 80.2 inches
Muskegon, Michigan – 79.3 inches
Casper, Wyoming – 77 inches
Portland, Maine – 70 inches

But with really big snow storms – and even everyday, run-of-the-mill snowfalls – comes a risk of death by shoveling. Nationwide, snow shoveling is responsible for thousands of injuries and as many as 100 deaths each year.

So, why so many deaths? Shoveling snow is just another household chore, right?

Not really, says the American Heart Association. While most people won’t have a problem, shoveling snow can put some people at risk of heart attack. Sudden exertion, like moving hundreds of pounds of snow after being sedentary for several months, can put a big strain on the heart. Pushing a heavy snow blower also can cause injury.

And, there’s the cold factor. Cold weather can increase heart rate and blood pressure. It can make blood clot more easily and constrict arteries, which decreases blood supply. This is true even in healthy people. Individuals over the age of 40 or who are relatively inactive should be particularly careful.

National Safety Council recommends the following tips to shovel safely:

- Do not shovel after eating or while smoking.
- Take it slow and stretch out before you begin.
- Shovel only fresh, powdery snow; it’s lighter.
- Push the snow rather than lifting it.
- If you do lift it, use a small shovel or only partially fill the shovel.

- Lift with your legs, not your back.
- Do not work to the point of exhaustion.
- Know the signs of a heart attack, stop immediately and call 911 if you’re experiencing any of them; every minute counts.

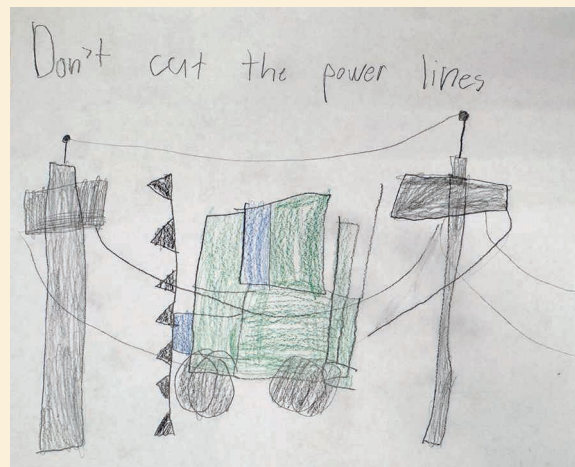
Don’t pick up that shovel without a doctor’s permission if you have a history of heart disease. A clear driveway is not worth your life.

Snow Blower Safety

In addition to possible heart strain from pushing a heavy snow blower, stay safe with these tips:

- If the blower jams, turn it off.
- Keep your hands away from the moving parts.
- Be aware of the carbon monoxide risk of running a snow blower in an enclosed space.
- Add fuel outdoors, before starting, and never add fuel when it is running.
- Never leave it unattended when it is running.

Source: National Safety Council



“Don’t Cut the Power Lines!”

David Raak, Age 7 ½

David Raak cautions readers to be careful when working around power lines. Thank you for your picture, David! David’s parents are Nathaniel and Katie Raak, members of Central Electric.

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.

Crockpot GREATNESS

CROCKPOT CORN

Ingredients:

3 16-oz. packages frozen corn
8 oz. cream cheese
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter
2 tbsps. sugar
2 tbsps. water

Method

Place corn in crockpot. Cut cream cheese and butter into small cubes. Add cream cheese, butter, sugar and water to corn. Stir. Cook on high for 45 minutes. Stir. Turn to low and cook for three more hours, stirring occasionally.

Elaine Rieck
Harrisburg, S.D.

CROCKPOT BAKED BEANS

Ingredients:

2 cans black beans
2 cans red beans (drained)
2 cans great northern
1 can baked beans with brown sugar
1 lb. diced ham
1 heaping tsp. mustard (regular)
2 full tbsps. ketchup
Garlic powder (optional)
1 small onion (chopped)

Method

Mix all ingredients in crockpot except ham. Cook 2 hours on high. Mix in ham and cook another hour on high. Enjoy!

Rose Tucker
Hot Springs, S.D.

CHICKEN FIESTA SLOW COOKER RECIPE

Ingredients:

2 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breasts
1 package slow cooker fiesta chicken seasoning mix
2 cans (14 1/2 oz. each) diced tomatoes, undrained
1 can (15 3/4 oz.) whole kernel corn, drained
1 can (15 oz.) black beans, drained and rinsed

Method

Place chicken in slow cooker. Mix seasoning, tomatoes, corn and beans until blended. Pour over chicken. Cover. Cook eight hours on LOW or four hours on HIGH. Remove chicken from slow cooker. Shred chicken, using two forks. Return chicken to slow cooker; mix well. Serve over cooked rice with assorted toppings, if desired.

McCormick.com

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

Scholarships Available

Application deadline
is January 29, 2025

DAKOTA ENERGY HAS SCHOLARSHIPS FOR COLLEGE OR TECHNICAL SCHOOL FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

Dakota Energy believes strongly in the future of area students and takes pride in helping develop rural leaders. To recognize the achievements of students and future leaders, Dakota Energy is offering \$5,000 in scholarships to qualifying high school seniors.

COOPERATIVE SCHOLARSHIPS:

- \$1,000 for a future line worker attending Mitchell Technical Institute's (MTI) Power Line & Maintenance program
- \$1,000 for a future electrician attending MTI's Electrical Construction and Maintenance program
- \$1,000 Basin Electric/Dakota Energy scholarship
- Four \$500 Dakota Energy scholarships for students attending a South Dakota university or technical school

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

To qualify, an applicant's parent(s) must be a member of Dakota Energy Cooperative.

Applicants must be planning to be enrolled in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited, two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school. Scholarship recipients are selected based on academic record, leadership, school and community involvement, an appraisal from a counselor, advisor or instructor who knows the student well, and an essay.

HOW DO I APPLY?

Scholarship applications are available at the local high school guidance office or on the cooperative website by scanning the QR code.



Submit applications to:

Dakota Energy Cooperative

PO Box 830

Huron, SD 57350

Email: dakotaenergy@dakotaenergy.coop

OCTOBER 2024

The Board of Directors met on Tuesday, October 22, 2024, with Directors Baruth, Baum, Bonebright, Langbehn, Nemeč, Raschke, Schaefer, and Wangsness present. Manager Felderman and employees Decker, Gilbert, Hasart, Picek, Rakness, and Zomer were present.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Felderman reported on the following items:

- Monthly energy sales and revenue
- Basin Electric
- WAPA
- TransCanada/South Bow
- CRC
- GHDC
- SDREA
- NRECA Power plant rule
- East River budget
- 2025 Capital credits

OFFICE SERVICES REPORT

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

- Financial reports for September
- Capital credit distribution options
- Large load rate letters
- Sunshine Bible Academy FEMA project update
- Work order inspection scheduled
- Renewable energy credits

OPERATIONS REPORT

Manager of Operations Zomer reported on the following items:

- Construction, maintenance and retirement activities
- Two mile overhead retirement
- Pole changes
- Service rebuilds

- Reactors set on Polo west circuit
- Pole testing is complete
- Chapman Meter testers
- Dakota substation maintenance
- Retirement of AMR equipment
- Dakota Provisions backup transformer status

MEMBER SERVICES REPORT

Manager of Member Services Gilbert reported on the following items:

- Wiring department workload
- Potential hazards
- Load control savings
- First responder training

HUMAN RESOURCES/ COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

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

- 2025 Group benefits enrollment
- DOT testing
- Safety education materials
- First responder training
- Demand education for consumers

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT

Information Technology Administrator Rakness reported on the following items:

- Venture Communications termination of fiber
- Vulnerability assessment

- Miller server decommissioned
- Website/Cybersecurity

BOARD ACTION

The following items were acted upon:

- Accepted the reports presented
- Appointed JoAnn Morford to fill the vacant board position
- Approved policies

BOARD REPORTS

Director Raschke reported on East River's October 2024 regular board meeting.

Director Nemeč reported on SDREA's September 2024 regular board meeting.

Next monthly board meeting is December 19, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. in the Huron office.

Year-to-Date Financial Report		
	Oct-24	Year-to-Date
Total Revenue	\$2,200,425	\$21,726,690
Cost of Power	\$1,544,711	\$15,564,333
Operating Expenses	\$634,230	\$6,150,796
Total Margins	\$137,712	\$1,182,750
KwH's Purchased.....	21,962,926	216,331,650
Services in Place		3,629
Miles of Line		2,533
Members per Mile		1.43



PLANNING AHEAD



An aerial view of the Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV near Williston, N.D. Photo submitted by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

FORECASTING THE FUTURE

Basin Electric's Vision for Reliable Energy

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Keeping the lights on in a dynamic world isn't as simple as flipping a switch. It requires a forward-thinking approach, almost like gazing into a crystal ball, to anticipate future energy demand. Energy infrastructure projects begin long before the first shovel breaks ground, and it's a challenge that Basin Electric Power Cooperative confronts every day to ensure consistent and

reliable power amid an ever-changing landscape of new technologies and growing membership.

A new plant or transmission line can take years of planning and coordination by Basin Electric and its member cooperatives. The process is similar to predicting the weather; it all begins with a forecast to determine what energy demand is brewing on the horizon.

Basin Electric works with the members and other stakeholders to

develop highly accurate load forecasts. Those load forecasts are then compared against our existing resource portfolio. If any gaps are identified, resource alternatives are identified and reviewed against each other to arrive at the best resource portfolio outcome.

"Once a need for a new generation project or transmission project has been identified, Basin Electric assembles a project team," explained Matt Ehrman, vice president of engineering and construction at Basin Electric.

"Developing and defining project scope is vital to project success as it's really the foundation for the project," Ehrman continued. "Good upfront planning minimizes project execution

risks later, so Basin places a lot of emphasis on the development work that happens before any detailed engineering design can begin.”

Basin Electric is currently undertaking one of its largest single-site electric generation projects in the last 40 years near Williston, North Dakota, known as Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV. Once completed, this project will add 580 megawatts of natural gas generation capacity to Basin Electric’s energy portfolio. Although the project broke ground in March 2023, planning for the project began in 2021, standing as a testament to the cooperative’s long-term mindset and commitment to meeting its load forecast.

So what goes into the planning of such a major project? Ehrman says everything from identifying project objectives to permitting and contracting strategies to engineering studies all take place within the years leading up to new infrastructure.

“In the case of a generation project, the project site, fuel, water, and transmission sources are identified during the project development phase,” Ehrman said. “After the development phase is complete, the more detailed engineering design work can begin. This is when the engineers really begin to dig into the details of how to arrange and interconnect all of the many different types of equipment



The first gas turbine delivery for Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV. Photo submitted by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

required for a given project. Eventually, those design details are used to develop construction specifications, contractors are selected and construction begins.”

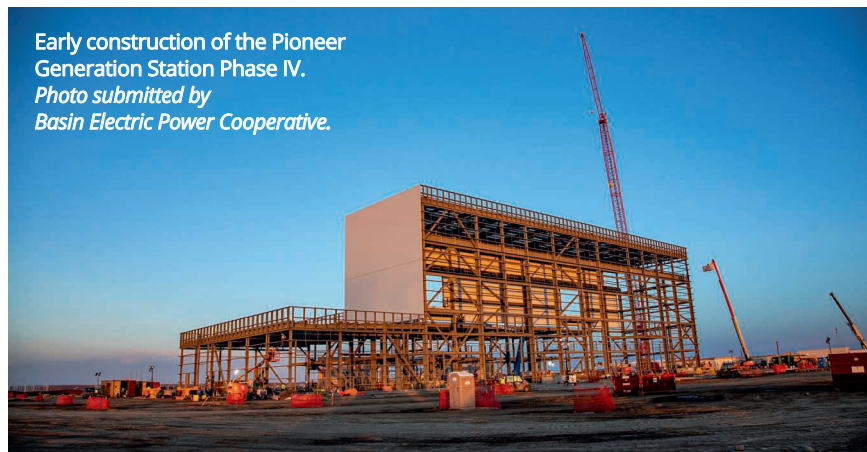
Beyond the demanding complexity of the project itself, Basin Electric’s project team must also navigate regulatory matters and policy. While many projects share similarities, no two are identical when navigating federal, state, and local permitting requirements.

“Large generation and transmission projects can take years to permit, and the permitting duration depends on the project,” Ehrman said. “Basin’s


teams have successfully permitted and executed many projects over the years and as a result have learned a lot about those processes in our service territory.”

Slated to be operational in 2025, Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV will come on board during a time when electricity demand is increasing significantly. The completion of the project will expand Basin Electric’s resource portfolio, which uses a vast diversity of generation resources to serve its member cooperatives. Even still, Ehrman said it still takes a massive effort to stay prepared for what the future may bring.

“Planning and building energy infrastructure is a massive team effort that involves teams from Basin and its membership,” he said. “These are complex projects, and there are challenges involved in all phases of the projects. Basin has extremely talented, dedicated and hard-working teams developing these projects that really enjoy working out all the technical and non-technical details while mitigating risks to achieve success and deliver the best possible outcome for the membership.”



Early construction of the Pioneer Generation Station Phase IV. Photo submitted by Basin Electric Power Cooperative.



Conserve energy by keeping your washer and dryer clean

Did you know washers and dryers account for around 10% of household energy consumption? Keeping them in top condition helps your clothes smell fresh and keeps your energy bills in check. Here's a quick guide to maintaining your washer and dryer.

FRESHEN UP YOUR WASHING MACHINE

Regular maintenance of your washing machine is not just a chore, it's a proactive step towards conserving energy. A clean machine works efficiently, saving you both time and money. So, roll up your sleeves and let's get started!

- Leave the washing machine door open after each use to dry between uses.
- Empty the washer quickly after use.
- Do not overload your washing machine. Overloading can prevent the load from getting a proper clean, cause an unbalanced machine, and put extra stress on your machine

- Inspect hoses and connections for wear and tear.
- Inspect door seals and wipe them clean.
- Clean the lint filter, which may be located near the top of the wash tub, to prevent blockages that could force the machine to use more energy.
- Occasionally, give your machine a deep clean. Your machine's cleaning cycle can help it run smoothly and operate at its most energy-efficient level.

KEEP YOUR DRYER IN PRIME CONDITION

Like your washing machine, your dryer requires regular maintenance to operate efficiently and safely.

- Clean the lint trap after every load. A clogged vent restricts airflow, forcing your dryer to run hotter and longer and using more energy. Lint buildup can also increase drying times and cause fire hazards.

- Clean dryer vents annually to reduce the risk of fires. In the U.S., dryer fires occur roughly every 30 minutes, often due to clogged vents. Using your vacuum attachments and brushes, clear the vent of lint and debris, and always ensure your vent cover is free of blockages. This prevents moisture from returning to your home, which could lead to mold and mildew.
- Clean the dryer drum. Unplug the dryer before cleaning the drum with a soft cloth, a bit of dish soap, and water. Make sure to dry it completely to avoid any residual moisture from fabric softeners or dryer sheets.

Regular cleaning of your washer and dryer not only keeps them running efficiently but also plays a significant role in conserving energy. It's a small step that can make a big difference.

DIFFERENT DEMAND FOR EVERY SEASON

Electric usage varies among members, depending on household size, appliances and seasons. Seasonal changes are the most common reason members notice a change in their electric bills. Watch your energy use patterns as the seasons change so you won't be surprised by larger electric bills. Your highest demand season may be different from other members depending on your home and appliances.

When you look at your energy costs, it's important to evaluate 12 months worth of bills-incorporating the ups and downs in usage from all seasons. It's not uncommon for members to save money for 10 months out of the year, but see seasonal spikes due to air conditioning or heat.



SUMMER DEMAND

- Air conditioning
- Hot tubs
- Irrigation motors
- Power tools or compressors



WINTER DEMAND

- Electric heat/portable space heaters
- Electric fireplaces
- Stock tank or engine block heaters
- Drain gutter tapes
- Decor and lighting

Snowmageddon, Snowpocalypse, SnOMG!

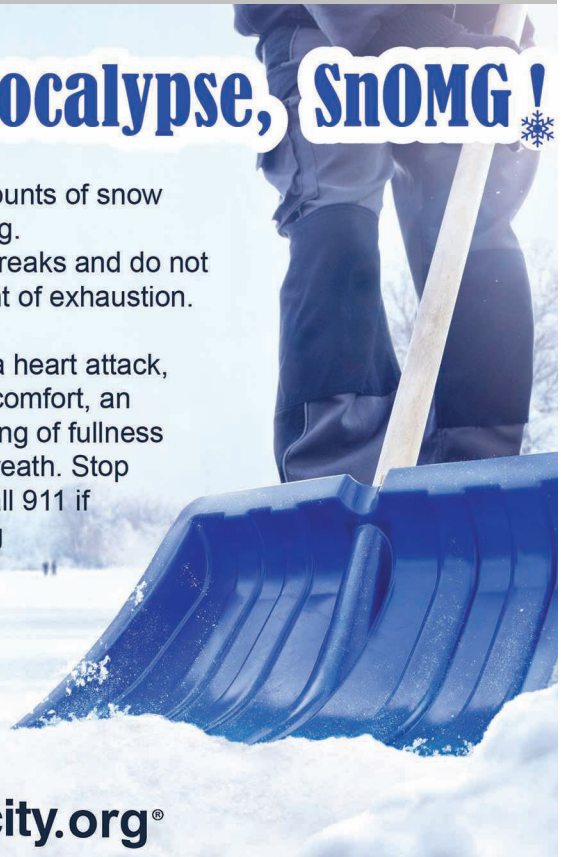
Whether it's a big snow storm or an everyday snowfall – there's a risk of death by shoveling. Sudden exertion after being sedentary for several months can put a big strain on the heart. Pushing a heavy snow blower can also cause injury.

Shoveling heavy, wet snow can cause back injuries and heart attacks. So don't push yourself!

- ❄️ Dress warmly, covering your head, fingers and toes.
- ❄️ Take it slow and stretch before you begin.
- ❄️ Stay hydrated and don't shovel after eating or while smoking.
- ❄️ Shovel only fresh, powdery snow; it's lighter.

- ❄️ Push small amounts of snow rather than lifting.
- ❄️ Take frequent breaks and do not work to the point of exhaustion.

Know the signs of a heart attack, including chest discomfort, an uncomfortable feeling of fullness and shortness of breath. Stop immediately and call 911 if you're experiencing symptoms; every minute counts.





LOOKING AHEAD

An aerial view of the Wild Springs Solar Project near New Underwood, S.D. Photo submitted by East River Electric

Wind Energy Association Changes Name, Advocates For All Renewables

Jacob Boyko
jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

The South Dakota Wind Energy Association is getting a fresh coat of paint this year with a rebrand that will expand the association’s advocacy mission to include more forms of renewable energy.

As solar energy generation in the state increases with new and upcoming projects, expanding the association — now called the South Dakota Renewable Energy Association — to include other forms of renewable energy and battery storage was the clear way forward according to association president and Sioux Valley Energy Director Gary Fish.

“The association started out as being very wind oriented, and that’s our legacy,” Fish explained. “But we also have somewhat migrated to having an energy portfolio where wind coexists

with coal, natural gas and solar, and that was the driver behind changing our name.”

The change comes in the wake of South Dakota’s first large-scale solar farm near New Underwood, which began commercial operation in March 2024. Basin Electric Power Cooperative will purchase 114 megawatts of the 128-megawatt renewable project.

The association began with the

leadership of East River Electric Power Cooperative in the mid-2000s as the generation and transmission co-op looked for ways to develop wind generation in the state to serve its growing member utilities and bring economic development and job opportunities to the state.

“Wind energy was at that time starting to become a more viable utility-scale source of power generation,” said Chris Studer, chief member and public relations officer at East River Electric.

A look on the ground as crews prepare the Wild Springs Solar Project for power generation. Photo submitted by East River Electric



“East River led an effort to build an association of stakeholders in South Dakota that can help advocate for the wind industry.”

It’s a mission that’s propelled South Dakota to being the state with the third highest renewable energy makeup, with more than 54% of in-state power generated from renewable wind and solar resources.

“We’ve gone from essentially zero wind energy to more than 3,000 megawatts of installed capacity in the state,” Studer said. “We have far surpassed what our original goal was.”

In the South Dakota Wind Energy Association’s initial stages, the board was composed mostly of utilities and developers focused on studying potential economic benefits and the infrastructure needs that come with increasing generation.

“I think everyone knew we had a great wind resource, but the real issue was having additional transmission to get the power out,” Fish said. “Could we build

the towers? Yes. Could we get the power to market? That was the challenge.”

As the association successfully made the case for wind energy, the membership grew to include other G&Ts and investor-owned utilities, landowner groups, turbine manufacturers, servicing companies and others from the wind energy supply chain.

One of the first large-scale renewable energy wins for the South Dakota Wind Energy Association and rural electric cooperatives was the 2011 commissioning of the 172-megawatt Crow Lake Project north of White Lake, South Dakota. The association membership helped support the launch of South Dakota Wind Partners to bring local residents an opportunity to invest in and own several turbines in the project.

According to East River Electric, the program generated about \$16 million worth of local investment.

“It was a very unique and successful

project that the South Dakota Wind Energy Association had involvement in and advocated for,” Studer said. “The people that invested got tax equity benefits over time, and after about 10 years they sold it back to Basin Electric and got their investments back.”

Moving forward, the association will continue to advocate for a renewable energy-friendly business environment to propel South Dakota energy projects forward.

“South Dakota Renewable Energy Association is here to make sure our state’s tax policies are fair, that developers still want to come here and develop renewable energy projects, and that there’s a market for all of the supply chain that’s needed for wind energy and now for solar, as well as the necessary transmission,” Studer continued.

A new South Dakota Renewable Energy Association website and promotional material will debut within the next several months.



The Crow Lake Wind Project near White Lake, S.D., is the largest wind project owned solely by a cooperative in the United States. The \$363 million wind project went into operation in 2011.

Photo submitted by East River Electric



RENEWABLE ENERGY

Purchasing Credits Means Renewable Energy Anywhere

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Did you know there's a way your home or business can operate with 100% renewable energy?

With renewable energy credits, or RECs, electric cooperative members can purchase the renewable aspects of their utility's energy and run on 100% green energy without needing to install on-site solar panels or wind generation.

"A REC is a renewable attribute of a megawatt hour of electricity," explained

Ted Smith, vice president of engineering and operations at Sioux Valley Energy. "One megawatt hour produced by any renewable generator provides one REC."

Basin Electric Power Cooperative – the generation and transmission cooperative that sells electricity to South Dakota's rural electric cooperatives – reported about 21% of its energy sales in 2023 was renewable energy. Since it's impossible to pinpoint the exact generation origin of each individual electron moving along a distribution line and entering a home or business, there's no way to tell what

is actually being powered by renewable energy and what isn't.

However, by having a renewable energy credit program where members can claim rights to the renewable energy generated, members who participate can affirm they are being powered by renewable energy. It's kind of like "calling dibs" on something; everybody is purchasing reliable power, but the members who "call dibs" are purchasing the renewable power.

One Sioux Valley Energy member that makes use of the renewable energy credit program is Marmen Energy in Brandon, South Dakota. Through the program, the wind tower manufacturer's operations are powered 100% by renewable energy.

"We get all renewable energy to power our facility," Marmen Energy Plant Manager Danny Lueders said. "We build renewable energy wind towers – how

could we not get the renewable energy credit program?”

At a scale like Marmen’s, which produces between 300 and 400 wind towers annually, being 100% renewable is a statistic that not only makes a statement, but increases demand for more renewable energy.

“It makes sense for us to have it and support that industry all the way through,” Lueders continued. “It’s an industry we’re heavily involved with and we want to do everything we can to support and promote that industry.”

Support for renewable energy through the REC program has other benefits; the extra funds Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative generated from selling allocated RECs made it possible to purchase a solar demonstration trailer to educate the public about the benefits and drawbacks of solar energy and the need for a diversified mix of energy resources.

“We sell the RECs on the open market so others can satisfy their renewable mandates and so we can fund future renewable energy projects,” Rushmore Electric CFO Mark Miller added.

On the market, RECs vary in price, usually between \$1 and \$3. The generation source – wind, solar, hydro, geothermal, waste heat recovery – as well as the year the REC’s production year affect the commodity’s value.

“They have a shelf life,” Miller explained. “They’re valuable in the first year because some states mandate RECs that are current.”

States like Minnesota with renewable energy standards require utilities to retire their RECs to meet the energy standards, or buy

credits on the market to reach the mandated renewable energy percentage of their energy mix.

In South Dakota, a state without renewable energy mandates but with more than 54% of in-state power generated by renewable resources, the Marmen Energy CEO simply believes continuing to support renewable energy is the right thing to do.

“South Dakota is a strong proponent of renewable energy,” Lueders said. “The amount of industry renewables are supporting throughout the state of South Dakota is a strong issue, from an economic footprint and continuing to grow South Dakota’s self-reliance on homemade energy.”

(Right) Jay Buchholz, Key Account & Community Relations Executive for Sioux Valley Energy, presents Marmen Energy employees Vincent Trudel, Chief Operating Officer, Yannick Laroche, Fabrication Manager, with renewable energy credit certificates.



(Below) Marmen Energy’s Brandon, S.D., manufacturing plant purchases renewable energy credits to cover 100% of its operations, meaning all wind towers produced here are built using 100% renewable energy. *Images submitted by Sioux Valley Energy*



REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo to win a Blackstone electric grill!

Your Phone Number: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____



JAN. 11
Snow Queen Coronation
7 p.m.
Aberdeen Civic Theater
Aberdeen, SD
SDSnowQueen.com

Photo courtesy of South Dakota Snow Queen Festival

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.

UNTIL DEC. 26
Christmas at the Capitol
8 a.m.-10 p.m.
Pierre, SD
605-773-3178

UNTIL DEC. 29
Trees & Trains Exhibit at SD State Railroad Museum
Hill City, SD
605-665-3636

UNTIL DEC. 31
Olde Tyme Christmas at participating businesses, Lane of Lights Viewing
Hill City, SD

UNTIL DEC. 31
Garden Glow at McCrory Gardens
5-9 p.m.
Brookings, SD

UNTIL DEC. 31
Hall of Trees
12-4 p.m. Mon.-Sat.
The Mead Museum
Yankton, SD

DEC. 31
American Legion Post 15 Save the Last Dance 2024
8 p.m.-12:30 a.m.
El Riad Shrine
Sioux Falls, SD
605-336-3470

DEC. 31-JAN. 1
New Year's Eve in Deadwood
Deadwood, SD
800-999-1876

JAN. 5, FEB. 2
American Legion Post 15 Pancake Breakfast
8:30 a.m.-12 p.m.
1600 W. Russel St.
Sioux Falls, SD
605-336-3470

JAN. 7-9
Dakota Farm Show
Tue. & Wed. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Thurs. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
USD DakotaDome
Vermillion, SD

JAN. 11.
Coats for Kids Bowling Tournament
Meadowood Lanes
Rapid City, SD
605-393-2081

JAN. 15
46th Ranchers Workshop
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Community Events Center
White River, SD
605-259-3252 ext. 3

JAN. 18
Breakin' the Winter Blues Chili Cookoff
Main Street
Hill City, SD

JAN. 26
Souper Supper Fundraiser Rapid Valley United Methodist Church
5:30-7:30 p.m.
Tickets \$6
5103 Longview Dr.
Rapid City, SD

JAN. 31-FEB. 8
Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo
Central States Fairground
Rapid City, SD
605-355-3861

FEB. 14-17
11th Annual Frost Fest
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Brookings, SD
605-692-7444

FEB. 22
Bellator Titans Charter Casino Night Fundraiser
6-11 p.m.
316 2nd St.
Aberdeen, SD

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