



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



DAKOTA ENERGY

JUNE 2025 VOL. 26 NO. 2

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Kuchen Country

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

Pages 8-9

Swimming Safely

Pages 12-13

Photo by Jacob Boyko.

Summer Temperatures and Electricity Reliability: Managing Your Energy Use



Chad Felderman
CEO/General
Manager

As summer heats up, electricity demand peaks, placing immense pressure on power grids and raising the risk of reliability issues. High temperatures lead to increased use of cooling systems and irrigation, straining electrical infrastructure and sometimes causing power outages, voltage fluctuations, or equipment damage.

When your electric cooperative talks about “beating the peak,” it’s a call for energy consumers to reduce usage during high-demand periods. By doing so, you help ease the strain on the grid, support your cooperative, and potentially lower your electric bill. Electricity generation must match consumption in real time for safe, reliable power. Every moment, a dedicated workforce monitors energy use, adjusting power production to keep the grid balanced.

UNDERSTANDING PEAK TIMES

Peak electricity demand typically occurs in the morning when people prepare for their day, and in the evening as they return home. During these periods, activities like cooking, thermostat adjustments, laundry, and dishwashing significantly increase energy consumption.

Since the price of power rises with demand, using less energy during peak hours can lower market prices for everyone and reduce grid stress.

Key Concepts in Energy Use

Demand (kW): The maximum power used at a given time.

Energy (kWh): The total power consumed over time. Understanding wattage can help you manage your usage effectively.

CHALLENGES TO ELECTRICITY RELIABILITY:

1. **High Demand:** Increased summer electricity use can overwhelm power grids, especially during peak hours.
2. **Heat-Related Failures:** High temperatures can cause transformers and other equipment to overheat, affecting efficiency and lifespan.
3. **Reduced Generation Capacity:** Power plants relying on water for cooling may face operational challenges during heatwaves, limiting production.

TIPS TO MANAGE ENERGY USE:

1. **Optimize Air Conditioning:** Use efficient thermostat settings and ceiling fans to circulate air and reduce cooling demands.
 2. **Use Window Treatments:** Block out heat with curtains or blinds during the hottest times of day.
 3. **Schedule Energy-Intensive Tasks:** Do laundry, dishwashing, and similar activities during off-peak hours.
 4. **Maintain Your HVAC System:** Regular maintenance ensures efficient operation and reduced energy use.
 5. **Time Appliance Use:** Run the dishwasher after cooking dinner or set it to start late at night. Wash clothes in the evening and dry them the next morning.
 6. **Load Management Devices:** These third-party tools remotely cycle irrigation pumps on and off during peak hours, saving energy and costs while giving users flexibility.
- By adopting these strategies, you can help relieve pressure on the power grid during summer months and ensure a more reliable energy supply. Small changes at home can make a big difference to the entire grid!

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

DAKOTA ENERGY

(USPS No. 018-949)

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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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PLANNING TO BUILD OR UPGRADE?

Whether you are looking to build a new structure or make changes to an existing structure, it is important to contact Dakota Energy in the early planning stages.

Each year, we help our members with their construction upgrades and new builds. Projects can range from pasture wells to grain storage, new outbuildings, houses and businesses. For projects of all sizes, it is important to contact Dakota Energy.

Information you will need to share with the cooperative includes the type of upgrade or new build, location timeline and power requirements. If you are unsure of these details, work with an electrician that can provide you with these specifics.

Dakota Energy wants to ensure your building project or upgrade goes as smoothly as possible, and that is why it is important to call in the early stages of planning. To discuss the electrical needs for your new project, please call 605-352-8591.

CALL 811: IT'S FREE, IT'S SIMPLE AND IT'S THE LAW



Calling 811 to have underground lines located is the law. And it's a great way to start a safe and successful project.

By state law, anyone who engages in any type of excavation must dial 811 or file their request online at www.sd811.com at least 48 hours before starting any digging project of 12 inches or deeper.

The One Call Center then notifies all utilities that may have underground facilities in the proposed digging area. This includes electrical and telephone lines, as well as utility-owned water or sewer lines.

Dakota Energy will locate any of its underground lines as a free service. However, the free service does not include locating any privately owned lines you may have installed. Many electricians, including Dakota Energy's electricians, or private locating companies can mark these consumer-owned lines. If you would like Dakota Energy to locate your consumer-owned lines, call 605-352-8591.

Summer Safety

Mosquitoes and Ticks

Source: American Red Cross

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

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

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



Photo by Jimmy Chan

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



"Never Touch a Power Line!!"

Kashton Schecher, Age 7

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

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

SOUPS & SALADS

GERMAN KRAUT SOUP

Ingredients:

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

Method

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

Kari Bevers
Codington-Clark Electric Member

BLACK BEAN SALAD

Ingredients:

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

Method

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

Reta Eidem
Clay-Union Electric Member

LASAGNA SOUP

Ingredients:

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

Method

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

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

Ladle soup into serving bowls. Serve with dollops of ricotta cheese and sprinkle with shredded mozzarella cheese, if desired.

McCormick.com

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

YOUTH

\$1,000 Scholarships Awarded



Logan Gerrits

\$1,000 Basin Electric
Employee Scholarship

Logan graduated from Huron High School. He was an honor student, active in music, school board tech, drama, and newsletter. He plans to attend Dakota State University and pursue a degree in Software Engineering. His parents are DEC's Electrician Foreman Trevor and Stephanie Gerrits, Huron.



Jaycee Baruth

\$1,000 Basin Electric
Member Scholarship

Jaycee graduated from Woonsocket High School. She was an honor student, active in sports, class officer, FFA, Girls State Representative and a Regent Scholar. She attends Northern State University majoring in Accounting and Agricultural Business. Her parents are Rob and Melissa Baruth of Alpena.



Keaton Zomer

\$1,000 Dakota Energy
Electrician Scholarship

Keaton graduated from Wolsey-Wessington High School. He was an honor student, active in sports, FFA, oral interp, church and youth group. He plans to attend Mitchell Technical College in the fall to major in Electrical Construction and Maintenance Program. His parents are Matt and Kerri Zomer of Huron.

\$500 Dakota Energy Scholarships Awarded



Brooklyn Baloun

Brooklyn graduated from Highmore-Harrold High School. She was an honor student, active in sports, FCCLA, HOSA, FFA, FBLA, Girls State Representative, Student Council, and church. She plans to attend Augustana University's Biology program. Her parents are Dillon and Nikki Baloun of Highmore.



Rachel Boomsma

Rachel graduated from Wolsey-Wessington High School. She was an honor student, active in sports, FFA, HOSA, Student Council, Competitive Cheer and church. She is enrolled in South Dakota State University's Radiologic Technology program. Her parents are Andy and Julie Boomsma of Wolsey.



Logan Gerrits

Logan graduated from Huron High School. He was an honor student, active in music, school board tech, drama, and newsletter. He plans to attend Dakota State University and pursue a degree in Software Engineering. His parents are Trevor and Stephanie Gerrits, Huron.



Hannah Schoenfelder

Hannah graduated from Huron High School. She was an honor student, active in sports, FFA, music, 4-H, Huron Youth Leadership Council, and church. She plans to attend South Dakota State University's Music Education program. Her parents are Tom and Amy Schoenfelder of Cavour.

MARCH 2025

The Board of Directors met on Tuesday, March 25, 2025, with Directors Baruth, Baum, Bonebright, Langbehn, Morford, Nemec, 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
- East River
- SDREA
- Border States supply chain
- GHDC
- CRC
- Four line workers went to Burt County Public Power District, NE, to help restore power after winter storm
- 2024 Audit presentation was given by Elijah Houchens, Ketel Thorstenson
- 2025-2028 Strategic Plan

OFFICE SERVICES REPORT

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

- Financial reports
- Workman’s Compensation annual audit
- SAMS account renewal
- EIA - 861 survey
- Federated insurance renewal
- 2024 year end report
- 2024 outside consultant report
- Potential provider switch for iPads

OPERATIONS REPORT

Manager of Operations Zomer reported on the following items:

- Construction, maintenance and retirement activities
- Pole changes
- SCADA device programmed
- Tree trimming
- Heat testing underground
- Construction work plan
- February outages

MEMBER SERVICES REPORT

Manager of Member Services Gilbert reported on the following items:

- Wiring department workload
- Potential hazards
- Load control savings

HUMAN RESOURCES/ COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

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

- Scholarships awarded
- Upcoming events
- 1,000 hour temporary position
- Youth tour participants

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT

Information Technology Administrator Rakness reported on the following items:

- Computers
- SCADA pilot program
- Website/Cybersecurity

BOARD ACTION

The following items were acted upon:

- Accepted the reports presented
- Approved the purchase of a 2025 For F550 Extended Cab truck.
- Approved the following donations:
 - * \$2,500 SD State Fair Sponsorship,
 - * \$500 SD Timed Event Rodeo,
 - * \$250 Cavour Fire Department’s CO2 equipment fund.
- Approved the 2024 audit report.
- Approved the 2025-2028 Strategic Plan
- Approved policies No. 020 Board Functions, No. 027 Ethics and No. 041 Sale of Retail Material and Equipment

BOARD REPORTS

Director Raschke reported on East River’s March 2025 regular board meeting.

Next monthly board meeting is May 27, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in the Huron office.

Year-to-Date Financial Report

	Mar-25	Year-to-Date
Total Revenue	\$2,066,426	\$7,134,263
Cost of Power	\$1,370,910	\$4,860,466
Operating Expenses	\$623,355	\$1,955,953
Total Margins	\$170,752	\$672,667
KwH’s Purchased.....	20,609,325	69,037,001
Services in Place		3,637
Miles of Line		2,533
Members per Mile		1.44

Wholesale power costs, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for 80.97% of DEC’s total cost of service.

Dakota Energy Cooperative

2025 Annual Meeting

Thursday, August 21, 2025



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

SOUTH DAKOTA IS KUCHEN COUNTRY

German Delicacy Celebrates 25 Years as State's Official Dessert

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

her make it and I loved it."

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

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

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

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

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

prune and cottage cheese.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Germans From Russia

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Photo by Olivia Opland



SPRAYER **BOOM WIDTH: 90'-130'**

Sprayers have a large turning radius, and the booms when raised are approximately 8' off the ground.

FARMING DANGER

LARGE FARMING EQUIPMENT AND POWERLINES DON'T MIX

COOPERATIVES across the state are seeing an increase in powerlines being struck by farm machinery, due to the newer machinery being taller and wider.

The standard powerline over farmland is 18 feet high. Some new combines, grain carts and augers easily eclipse that height. Additionally, the travel height of air seeders and the height of booms on sprayers when raised to take corners also put them in danger of impacting powerlines. Some new sprayers also

automatically raise the booms when cornering, which already has caused powerline hits.

Please take the time to look at the information on this page, and if you think your equipment may be taller than the powerlines on your property, call Dakota Energy BEFORE you accidentally get too close. Remember, a single-phase line that runs over your property can carry a dangerous 7,200 volts of electricity.

A FEW COMMONLY USED OVERSIZED MACHINES

REMEMBER: TYPICAL ROAD AND FIELD ELECTRICAL POWERLINE HEIGHT IS 18'



LOADER

APPROXIMATE OPERATING HEIGHT: 15'6" (bucket raised)



GRAIN CART

APPROXIMATE OPERATING HEIGHTS: 16'6" TO 17'9"



COMBINE

APPROXIMATE OPERATING HEIGHT: 16'6"

AIR SEEDER

ROAD TRAVEL HEIGHT: 19'

**TYPICAL ROAD AND FIELD
LINE HEIGHT: 18'**



REMINDER

Contact your electric cooperative if you operate oversized equipment and need powerlines raised, before an accident can happen.

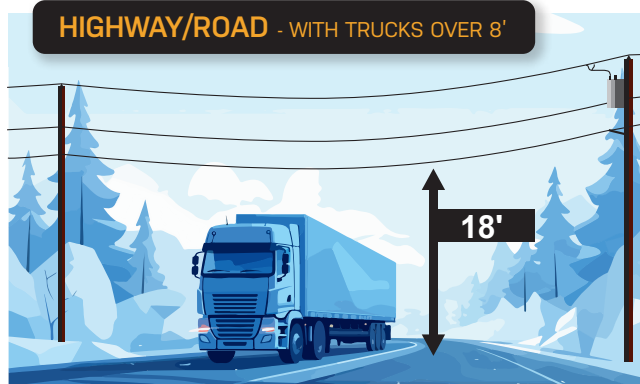
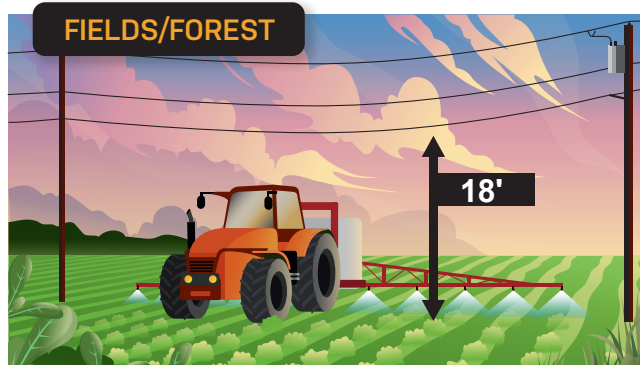
SAFETY TIPS

- 1 Maintain a 10-foot clearance around all utility equipment in all directions.
- 2 Use a spotter and deployed flags to maintain safe distances from powerlines and other equipment when doing field work.
- 3 If your equipment makes contact with an energized or downed powerline, contact your co-op immediately by phone and remain inside the vehicle until the power line is de-energized. In case of smoke or fire, exit the cab by making a solid jump out of the cab, without touching it at the same time, and hop away to safety.
- 4 Consider equipment and cargo extensions of your vehicle. Lumber, hay, tree limbs, irrigation pipe and even bulk materials can conduct electricity, so keep them out of contact with electrical equipment.

SOURCE: SAFE ELECTRICITY

TYPICAL LINE HEIGHTS

VERTICAL CLEARANCE AT LARGEST VERTICAL SAG



SWIMMING SAFELY

Tips to Ensure Your Family Swims Safe This Summer

Jacob Boyko

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pool Safety Checklist

Is there supervision?

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

Can everybody in the pool swim?

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

Are there safety barriers?

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

Recognize hazards.

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

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

Remind your children and guests...

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

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

SOURDOUGH STORIES

Two Families Sharing a Timeless Bread With Their Communities

Jocelyn Johnson

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Forming a fragrant blend of taste, craftsmanship and wholefoods, sourdough bread is bonding local communities together as a historical favorite.

As the surge of sourdough makes its way into current trends, the story is not new. It's been enjoyed throughout history as one of the first forms of bread. Today, sourdough is also a labor of love.


Katie Smith, member of Oahe Electric Cooperative and owner of 605 Sourdough Company – a cottage bakery in Pierre, S.D., believes sourdough may be a little more labor intensive, but is worth the effort.

She clarified that unlike modern bread with yeast, sourdough relies on water, flour and time for a natural fermentation process. The progression of creating a sourdough starter and making your first loaf of bread may take six weeks up to three months.

"It's a process, for sure," Smith said. "And that's our labor of love. One of our favorite things is being able to send a piece of us into every home and have our bread shared with family and friends – creating that togetherness culture of family. We're all so busy anymore, and life gets busy. When we hear that somebody got to sit down and eat our bread, whether it be through grilled cheese, French toast...whatever it may be...it always makes our day."

Zoey Smith, Katie's 5-year-old daughter, is also a chef in her mom's kitchen. Her favorite flavor of sourdough bread is called the ZoZo.

"The ZoZo I created myself," Zoey said. "It's made with Everything but the Bagel seasoning



Zoey Smith presents a beautiful loaf of sourdough bread she helped bake.
Photo submitted by Katie Smith.

and cheese. It's very yummy."

Cottage bakeries are popping up in many rural communities as more people prefer buying locally made food sources.

Lydia Mueller, member of Grand Electric Cooperative and owner of South Dakota Sourdough – a cottage bakery in Buffalo, S.D., acknowledged a renewed interest in sourdough for many people.

"It's a healthy alternative," Mueller said. We raise our own meat, and we like to know where our food comes from. In South Dakota, people are very proud of having home-raised beef. I'm kind of the same way with my bread. I like to buy local and fresh."

Mueller is originally from Wisconsin but became familiar with sourdough while living in Switzerland a few years ago. The knowledge she gained there, she brought to South Dakota and now sells her craft locally.

"South Dakota actually has a really cool history with sourdough, especially when we had the pioneers traveling," Mueller said. "Sourdough bread was an easy thing to make – like biscuits or bread or something you cook on the fire. You did that with sourdough, because you could not buy commercial yeast."

Mueller recognized a boom in sourdough's popularity since the COVID-19 pandemic but attributed the ongoing interest to health-conscious lifestyles.

"I think people are noticing that we are having a food problem in America," Mueller said. "They're realizing that we are almost like in a pandemic with food – with obesity, with diabetes, with all these weird diseases."

Both Smith and Mueller believe the art of making



Lydia Mueller, owner of South Dakota Sourdough, enjoys baking fresh foods with her kids. Photo submitted by Lydia Mueller.

sourdough is a commitment but not as complicated as it may seem.

"People have been making sourdough since the dawn of bread," Mueller said. "It's just leavened bread. Sourdough is minimalistic and simple to make. You just have to start."



Katie Smith, owner of 605 Sourdough Co., prepares dough with her daughter, Zoey. Photo submitted by Katie Smith.



JUNE 19-21
Czech Days
 Music, Dancing, Foods & Parades
 Tabor, SD

Photo courtesy of 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.

MAY 24-SEPT. 13
Buggy Museum
 Free Buggy Rides + More
 Saturdays 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Stockholm, SD
 605-938-4192

JUNE 5
Danish Constitution Day Celebration
 6:15 p.m.-9 p.m.
 Danish Folk Dancing & Music
 Viborg, SD
 danevilleheritage.com

JUNE 5, 7
Wheel Jam
 7 p.m.
 Dakota State Fair Speedway
 Huron, SD

JUNE 6
Northern Bull Riding Tour
 6:30 p.m.
 Madison, SD
 www.prairievillage.org

JUNE 6
Joy Fest
 John Mogen Piano Performance
 7 p.m. CDT
 Okaton, SD
 cristenjoyphotography.com

JUNE 6-8
SDHSRA Regional Rodeos
 Buffalo, Huron, Wall, Kadoka, SD
 www.sdhsra.com

JUNE 7
Car Show & Kids Carnival
 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
 202 2nd St. SE
 Watertown, SD

JUNE 7
Prairie Village Tractor Pull
 3 p.m.
 Madison, SD
 www.prairievillage.org

JUNE 11
Agricultural Women's Day
 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Agar-Blunt-Onida School
 Onida, SD
 605-769-0013

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

JUNE 13-15
SDHSRA Regional Rodeos
 Dupree, Watertown,
 New Underwood, Winner, SD

JUNE 13-15
Ipswich Trail Days
 Ipswich, SD
 ipswichtraildays.com
 ipswichtraildays@gmail.com

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

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

JUNE 17-21
SDHSRA State Finals Rodeo
 Fort Pierre, SD

JUNE 20-22
Farley Fest
 Milbank, SD
 605-432-6656
 www.farleyfest.com

JUNE 21
1-Mile FunWalk
 8 a.m.
2-Man Scramble
 9 a.m.
 Huron Country Club
 Huron, SD
 605-350-5922

JUNE 25-28
Crystal Springs Rodeo
 Clear Lake, SD
 605-874-2996

JUNE 27-28
Buckhorn Rodeo
 Britton, SD
 605-880-5077

JUNE 27-29
Leola Rhubarb Festival
 Leola, SD

JUNE 27-29
Bowdle Tower Days
 Bowdle, SD

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