



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



DAKOTA ENERGY

JULY 2025 VOL. 26 NO. 3

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



SOUTH DAKOTA STAR QUILTS

**Honoring Cooperative
Legacy With
Time-honored Tradition**

Pages 8-9

Rescuing Animals

Pages 12-13

Photo by Frank Turner

Petitions for Director Elections are now available

NOMINATING PETITIONS DUE BY AUGUST 14.



Director elections will take place at the 2025 Annual Meeting on August 21, 2025.

Terms expiring in each district are:

- Tom Baruth, Beadle Electric
- Darrell Raschke, Beadle Electric
- Nick Nemec, Ree Electric

Dakota Energy uses a petition process to nominate directors. A petition must be circulated for each candidate. Candidates must be cooperative members and reside in the district they wish to represent. A designated representative of an entity may seek election, however, the representative must be a permanent, year-round resident in the district to be served.

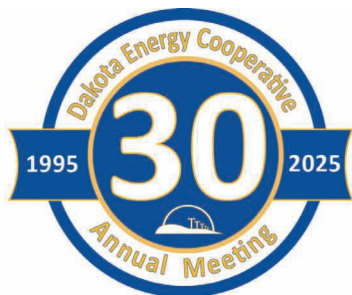
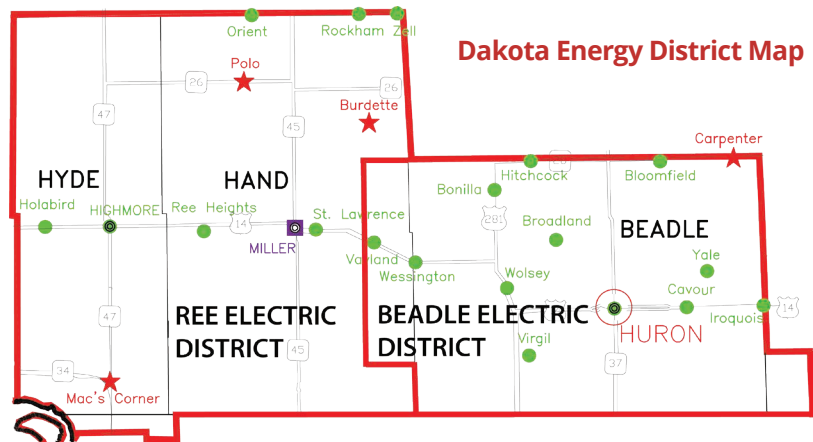
Each petition must be signed by at least 15 cooperative members.

Only one party of a joint membership may sign a petition; but not both.

Petitions are available at Dakota Energy's offices in Huron and Miller. Director petitions must be submitted at the cooperative headquarters in Huron by 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 14, 2025:

- No petition filed after August 14, 2025 shall be considered valid.

• Nominations are not permitted from the floor during the meeting. For a complete copy of Dakota Energy Cooperative's Bylaws, call 605-352-8591 or stop by the offices. The Bylaws are also available at www.dakotaenergy.coop.



**SAVE THE DATE FOR THE
DAKOTA ENERGY COOPERATIVE
ANNUAL MEETING
THURSDAY, AUGUST 21, 2025
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

**Locations: Dakota Energy Offices
Huron & Miller**

**Highmore City Auditorium
Highmore**

Format: In-Person and Drive-Thru

Question and Answer Session: 1:15 - 1:45 PM - In-Person Connected via Zoom

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

DAKOTA ENERGY

(USPS No. 018-949)

Board President: Darrell Raschke, Huron

Board of Directors

Nick Nemec, Holabird - Vice President
Tommy Baruth, Alpena - Secretary
Brian Bonebright, Wessington - Treasurer
Brian Baum, Alpena
Daniel Langbehn, Huron
JoAnn Morford, Miller
James Wangsness, 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

Dakota Energy Welcomes New Employee Zach Reber



Zach Reber joined Dakota Energy as a journeyman line worker on May 5, 2025. He graduated from Mitchell Technical College and worked for Cam Wal Electric Cooperative for three years and the City of Miller for one year after graduation. Zach grew up in Miller, so he is enjoying being back home. In his spare time, he enjoys fishing, hunting, golfing, and going to car races. Welcome, Zach!

Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Year Banquet



Olivia Resel was honored at the Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Year Banquet held at Lake Area Technical College on Saturday, May 3, 2025. She was the Scholar of the Week September 15 - 21, 2024. She is a senior at Miller High School and the daughter of Jason and Marissa Resel of Wessington. Manager of Member Services, Jeff Gilbert, along with Olivia and her parents, attended the banquet.

Playground Safety

Source: National Safety Council

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, each year, more than 200,000 children go to U.S. hospital emergency departments with injuries associated with playground equipment.

As the weather warms up and trips to the park become frequent, take a moment to familiarize yourself with the risks on playgrounds and how you can prevent injuries.

Check for Playground Hazards

Nearly 80% of playground injuries are caused by falls. Watch out for these potential hazards when taking kids to the playground, and report any hazards observed.

Improper ground surfaces: Surfaces around playground equipment should have at least 12 inches of wood chips, mulch, sand or pea gravel, or mats made of safety-tested rubber or rubber-like materials. Playgrounds should be free of exposed concrete footings, rocks or tree stumps.

Overcrowded play areas: The area under and around play equipment should be a minimum of 6 feet in all directions while swing set areas should be twice the height of the suspending bar both in back and front of the swings. Structures more than 30 inches high should be at least 9 feet apart.

Unprotected elevated areas: Platforms higher than 30 inches should have guardrails or barriers.

Head entrapment spaces: Openings between rails, bars, rungs and even ropes of cargo nets should be less than 3 1/2 inches or more than 9 inches.

Sharp points and edges: Playground equipment should be free of protruding bolt ends, "S" hooks, and other sharp points and edges.

Visit the American Academy of Pediatrics webpage on playground safety to learn more.

Avoid Strangulation Hazards

The American Academy of Pediatrics cautions that children should not wear or play with anything that could get caught on equipment and become a strangulation hazard.

- Never attach or allow children to attach ropes, jump ropes, clotheslines or pet leashes to play equipment.
- Leave sweatshirts with drawstrings and necklaces at home.
- Remove bike helmets when playing on the playground.

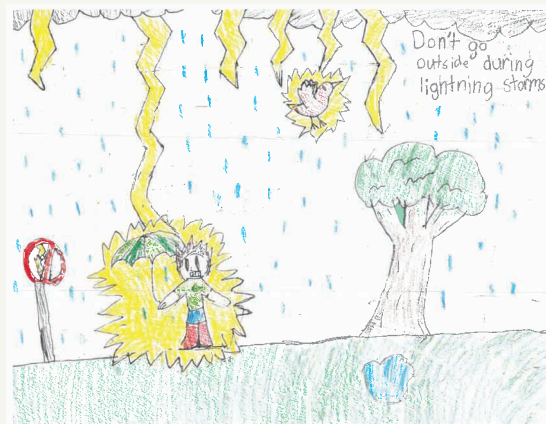
Be Cautious of Too Much Sun Exposure

Playgrounds should have full or partial sun protection between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., peak exposure time.

- Limit playtime at peak sun exposure time and know the signs of heat illnesses.
- Avoid burns; if playground equipment is hot to the touch, it is too hot for your child's bare skin.

Allow Only Age-Appropriate Activities

The Consumer Product Safety commission lists age-appropriate equipment in the Public Playground Safety Handbook. There is no substitute for parental supervision, especially for young children.



"Don't go outside during lightning storms!"

Marah Kinnunen, Age 8

Marah warns readers about the dangers of going outside during a lightning storm. Thank you for your picture, Marah! Marah's parents are Reuben and Sarine Kinnunen from Hayti, 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.

Delectable CHICKEN

CHICKEN MILANESE

Ingredients:

1 pkg. McCormick® Chicken Parmesan One Sheet Pan Seasoning Mix
1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 lb. thin-sliced boneless skinless chicken breasts
1 tbsp. oil

Method

Preheat oven to 400°F. Empty Seasoning Mix into shallow dish. Add Parmesan cheese. Brush chicken with oil. Coat evenly on both sides with Seasoning Mix. Discard any remaining Seasoning Mix.

Place chicken in single layer on foil-lined shallow baking pan sprayed with no stick cooking spray.

Bake 15 minutes or until cooked through, turn chicken halfway through cook time.

McCormick.com

SWEET AND SOUR CHICKEN

Ingredients:

3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
2 tbsps. fat or oil
1/4 cup water
2 tbsps. cornstarch
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup vinegar
20 oz. can pineapple chunks (drained, reserving juice)
3 tbsps. soy sauce
3/4 cup green pepper strips
1/4 cup onion (thinly sliced)

Method

Cube chicken into one inch squares; brown in fat. Add water. Cook in water until tender. In another pan combine cornstarch, salt, brown sugar, vinegar, pineapple juice and soy sauce.

Cook until slightly thick, stirring constantly. Pour sauce over hot chicken. Let stand at least 10 minutes. Add green pepper, onion, and pineapple chunks. Cook two to seven minutes until warmed through. Serve over hot rice. *Makes 4 servings.

Jan Grage
Clay-Union Electric Member

CHICKEN POT PIE

Ingredients:

1 pkg. prepared pie crust (top and bottom)
1/3 cup butter or margarine
1/3 cup chopped onion
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
1 3/4 cup Progresso™ chicken broth (from 32 oz. carton)
1/2 cup milk
2 1/2 cup chicken/turkey (shredded, cooked)
2 cups frozen mixed vegetables (thawed)

Method

Heat oven to 425°F. Prepare pie crusts as directed on box for two-crust pie using nine inch glass pie pan. In two quart saucepan, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion; cook two minutes, stirring frequently, until tender. Stir in flour, salt and pepper until well blended.

Gradually stir in broth and milk, cooking and stirring until bubbly and thickened. Stir in chicken and mixed vegetables. Remove from heat. Spoon chicken mixture into crust-lined pan. Top with second crust; seal edge and flute. Cut slits in several places in top crust. Bake 30 to 40 minutes or until crust is golden brown. During last 15 to 20 minutes of baking, cover crust edge with strips of foil to prevent excessive browning. Let stand five minutes before serving.

Cindy Foster
Codington-Clark Electric Member

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.

Powering Dakota Energy's Future



Chad Felderman
CEO/General
Manager

At Dakota Energy, our priority isn't profit, it's you. As a member-owned electric cooperative, we are committed to ensuring a resilient and reliable power supply. Whether you're flipping a light switch, watching your favorite TV show, or drying a load of laundry, you can count on Dakota Energy to deliver the electricity you need.

To maintain this reliability, we proactively strengthen our electrical grid and prepare for extreme weather challenges. With summer temperatures soaring, energy demand increases, making conservation efforts more important than ever. Small steps—like adjusting your thermostat or using appliances efficiently—can lower your electric bills while supporting grid stability.

HOW WE ENSURE RELIABILITY

- **Pole Testing:** Each year, we inspect 10% of Dakota Energy's system for damage, rot, and irregularities. Our crews also check hardware and identify vulnerabilities requiring immediate attention.
- **Tree Trimming:** Growing trees and storm damage pose risks to power lines. Our teams regularly trim trees near electrical equipment, creating service orders to address potential hazards before they become emergencies.
- **Preventive Maintenance:** Frequent inspections keep our equipment in peak condition. By monitoring the health of our system in real time, we can quickly address issues and prevent disruptions.
- **Grid Modernization:** We continually invest in upgrading infrastructure, improving reliability, and planning disaster response strategies to ensure power stays on when you need it most.



Girls compete against the boys to see who can build the pole-top first.

YOUTH EDUCATION

Recently, Dakota Energy participated in career fairs and job shadowing opportunities. We participated in the Miller and Huron Area career fairs and the Huron Middle School Career Day events. Employees hosted a senior from Miller High School who shadowed our line workers. The 7th-grade students from Huron observed demonstrations of equipment, pole climbing, and a pole-top contest. Dakota Energy takes pride in being active in our communities and educating our youth!

SAFETY FIRST

As summer arrives and outdoor activities increase, safety remains a top priority. Please stay vigilant regarding electrical equipment, report any irregularities, and slow down in roadside work zones. Moving over and allowing space for our crews helps protect the workers who keep our system running smoothly.

At Dakota Energy, safety isn't just a policy; it's a culture. Our employees live it daily, and we're proud to share that commitment with you, our member-owners.

APRIL 2025

The Board of Directors met on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, with Directors Baruth, Baum, Bonebright, Langbehn, Morford, Nemec, Raschke, Schaefer, and Wangsness present. Manager Felderman and Employees Decker, Feldhaus, Gilbert, Hasart, Picek, Rakness, and Zomer were present.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Felderman reported on the following items:

- Monthly energy sales and revenue
- SDREA
- Basin Electric
- CRC
- GHDC
- USDA Rural Development compliance review
- Beadle County Commission Meeting
- Air conditioning rate
- Basin large load presentation

OFFICE SERVICES REPORT

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

- Financial reports
- Contingency plan
- CFC loan advance
- Financial forecast update
- SDREA Office Managers and Accountants Meeting
- US Census integrated economic survey
- Capital credit retirement formulas

OPERATIONS REPORT

Manager of Operations Zomer reported on the following items:

- Construction, maintenance and retirement activities

- Pole changes
- Installed reactors on Wolsey substation
- Working on construction work plan with Power System Engineering
- Installing three-phase underground west of Miller
- Ethanol plant primary metering meeting

MEMBER SERVICES REPORT

Manager of Member Services Gilbert reported on the following items:

- Wiring department workload
- Potential hazards
- Load control savings
- SDREA Member Services Meeting
- Pre-construction contractor meeting

HUMAN RESOURCES/ COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

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

- Youth scholarships and tour
- Upcoming community events
- 1,000 hour temporary position filled
- "Who Powers You" contest
- Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Year banquet
- Farm safety advertisement

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT

Information Technology Administrator Rakness reported on the following items:

- Computers
- Server update
- Website/Cybersecurity

BOARD ACTION

The following items were acted upon:

- Accepted the reports presented
- Approved Mitchell Technical College expansion donation for \$2,000 annually for five years.
- Approved policies on alcohol-free and drug-free workplace testing and procedures for DOT and Non-DOT regulated employees.

BOARD REPORTS

Director Nemec reported on the SDREA's March 2025 regular board meeting.

Director Raschke reported on East River's April 2025 regular board meeting.

Directors Langbehn, Baum, Morford, Bonebright, Wangsness and Schaefer reported on the March 31 - April 2 Credentialed Cooperative Director courses in Pierre.

Next monthly board meeting is July 23, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in the Huron office.

Year-to-Date Financial Report

	Apr-25	Year-to-Date
Total Revenue	\$1,934,800	\$9,069,063
Cost of Power	\$1,366,488	\$6,226,954
Operating Expenses	\$654,632	\$2,610,585
Total Margins	\$12,260	\$684,926
KwH's Purchased	15,794,446	84,831,447
Services in Place		3,638
Miles of Line		2,533
Members per Mile		1.44

Wholesale power costs, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for 80.94% of DEC's total cost of service.





SOUTH DAKOTA STAR QUILTS

Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative directors present retiring manager Melissa Maher (left) with a star quilt.
Photo by JJ Martin

Honoring Cooperative Legacy With Time-honored Tradition

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sreda.coop

Across the prairie, few gifts carry as much meaning as a star quilt. For many, these quilts are more than just blankets – they are acts of honor. Rooted in Native American culture, particularly among Lakota, Dakota and other tribes of South Dakota, star quilts have long been used to mark some of life’s largest milestones, including graduations, marriages, memorials and moments of deep community respect.

Electric cooperative leaders Donovan Young Man, a former director of Lacreek Electric who was honored shortly before his passing earlier this year, and Melissa Maher, the former manager of Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative, recently accepted star quilts from their cooperatives in recognition of their many years of service to their member-owners.

So what makes the star quilt such an honor? According to International Quilt Museum Collections Manager Jamie Swartz, the quilts are special because they take an incredible amount of skill and experience to assemble.

Many star quilts are block quilts, constructed from dozens or even hundreds of small fabric pieces carefully cut and stitched together. At the heart of the design is an eight-pointed star, a

shape that demands near-perfect precision.

“There are so many small pieces that make up a star quilt,” Swartz said. “When you are combining so many small pieces together to make a large, over-all design, there is more room for error. A small mismeasurement can create bumps, ripples or puckers in the patchwork.”

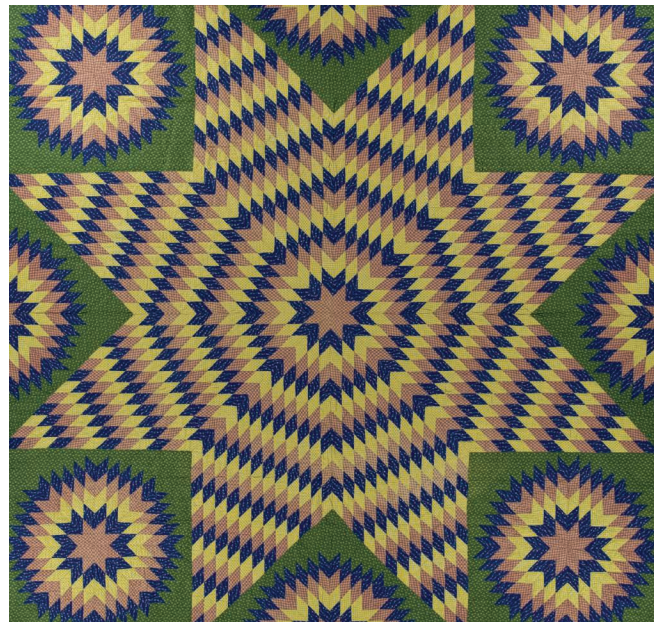


Photo Courtesy of the International Quilt Museum, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1997.007.0123

That level of precision, care and time-honored tradition a star quilt represents is a part of what makes it such a meaningful gift. In recent years, the practice of gifting star quilts has been embraced by some electric cooperatives as a way to express a deep appreciation for their employees who have dedicated a lifetime of work to their cooperatives and communities.

Remembering Donovan Young Man

Before his passing earlier this year, Donovan Young Man was honored by his cooperative at the Lacreek Electric annual meeting with a star quilt for his 31 years of service to Lacreek Electric, serving as a director for both his cooperative and the South Dakota Rural Electric Association. Specifically, the cooperative honored Donovan's commitment to both his cooperative and community.

Lacreek Electric CEO Josh Fanning said Young Man was known for both his calm and steady presence, and his exceptional ability to bridge tribal relations, fostering understanding and unity within the community.

In his community, Donovan was known for his profound impact on his community's youth. For 41 years, he devoted himself to the Oglala Lakota County School District, leaving a lasting legacy of dedication, education, and empowerment for the youth. Beyond education, Donovan served his community in many other ways, including as a member of the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council.

"Donovan had a lasting impact on our cooperative," Fanning said. "His wisdom, leadership, and steady guidance helped shape its direction and strengthen its foundation. His contributions will be remembered and felt for years to come."

"We chose a star quilt because gifting one is a deeply meaningful gesture in our area – an expression of profound respect, honor and the warmth of community," Fanning continued. "In many Indigenous cultures, the star quilt represents the highest form of recognition, symbolizing heartfelt gratitude for the recipient's enduring contributions. It also serves as a guiding light, reflecting the inspiration and direction they provide for future generations."

Honoring Melissa Maher

Moreau-Grand Electric honored Melissa Maher with a star quilt at the co-ops annual meeting in October for her 40 years of service at the cooperative. In addition to Maher, the cooperative also presented Larry Hieb with a quilt for his 55 combined years of service as both an employee and director.

Maher joined the cooperative in 1984 as manager's secretary. Through the years, Maher remained with the cooperative, serving as the member service director and later Moreau-Grand Electric's manager, the first woman to hold this title.

"I've always loved star quilts, what they stand for – the celebration and honoring of someone with an heirloom that they can enjoy for hopefully generations to come," she said.

Maher first experienced the star quilt tradition through her



Lacreek Electric employees gift director Donovan Young Man a star quilt to celebrate his 31 years of service to the electric cooperative.

Photos by Mandy Scherer



mother, who taught kindergarten at Cheyenne-Eagle Butte School. As a teacher in the Eagle Butte community, her mother received star quilts from several of her students' families.

Seeing the joy it brought her mother, Maher continued the star quilt tradition into her years at the cooperative, gifting quilts to retirees of the cooperative, gifting dozens of star quilts made by quilt maker Bonnie LeBeaux to employees of the co-op, honoring retirements, directors, and even key members of the construction crew that helped build the new Moreau-Grand Electric office.

"It's hard to guess how many star quilts I have gifted over the years," Maher said. "Probably dozens if I had to guess."

The tradition came full circle at her retirement party when Moreau-Grand Electric presented Mellisa a star quilt of her own.

"We wanted to honor her 40 years of service and highlight abilities as a manager," said Paul Lawrence, a director of Moreau-Grand Electric. "It's a way of conveying that she led with honor and integrity, and she did exactly that."



Upgrading your Home's Electrical System

What Dakota Energy Cooperative members need to know.



Jeff Gilbert
Manager Member Services

Your home's electrical system is the backbone of modern convenience, but as technology advances and energy demands increase, it's essential to ensure your wiring, panel, and safeguards are up to the task. Here's how to determine if an upgrade is needed, what proactive steps to take, and key questions to ask your electrician.

SIGNS YOUR ELECTRICAL SYSTEM MAY NEED AN UPGRADE

Aging homes often have outdated electrical systems that may struggle to power today's high-energy appliances and electronics. If your

breakers frequently trip or fuses blow, it could mean your circuits are overloaded. Flickering or dimming lights, especially when using multiple appliances, may indicate faulty wiring. Outlets and switch plates that feel warm suggest unsafe electrical conditions. A lack of Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) or Arc-Fault Circuit Interrupter (AFCI) protection also signals that your system may not meet modern safety standards. Additionally, if your electrical panel has no room for expansion, adding new circuits may require an upgrade.

PROACTIVE STEPS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Rather than waiting for electrical failures, homeowners can take proactive steps to safeguard and modernize their systems. Scheduling an electrical inspection with a licensed electrician can help assess your system's condition and identify necessary updates. Upgrading your electrical panel to a higher capacity ensures support for additional circuits and smart home technology. Investing in whole-home surge protection prevents damage from power fluctuations. Choosing energy-efficient appliances can also reduce strain on your electrical system while lowering energy costs.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR ELECTRICIAN

When discussing upgrades, it's important to ask the right questions to ensure your home is set up safely and efficiently. Start by asking whether your wiring meets current safety codes and what panel capacity will best accommodate future expansion. You may also need dedicated circuits for high-powered appliances, so it's worth discussing whether installation is necessary. Smart home electrical features, such as automated lighting and energy-efficient outlets, can enhance convenience and efficiency. Additionally, ask how improvements to your system can optimize energy efficiency, lowering electricity costs over time.

NEW TECHNOLOGY & INCREASED ELECTRICAL DEMANDS

Modern homes rely on more electricity than ever before, making electrical upgrades essential

for keeping pace. As electric vehicles, solar panels, and smart devices become more common, homeowners must ensure their electrical systems can handle the increased demand. Integrating advanced circuit monitoring, battery storage, and energy-efficient lighting can enhance reliability and sustainability.

ELECTRIC PANELS: THE BACKBONE OF YOUR SYSTEM

Your electrical panel is the control center of your home's power distribution. Upgrading to a 200-amp or higher panel ensures reliable performance, supports emerging technologies, and prevents circuit overloads. A well-maintained panel allows homeowners to expand their electrical capacity without worrying about limitations.

SURGE PROTECTION: A SMALL INVESTMENT FOR BIG PROTECTION

Power surges caused by storms or utility fluctuations can damage electronics and appliances, resulting in costly repairs or replacements. Installing whole-home surge protection provides an affordable yet effective safeguard, ensuring the longevity and reliability of your electrical system. A small investment in surge protection can save homeowners from significant expenses in the future.

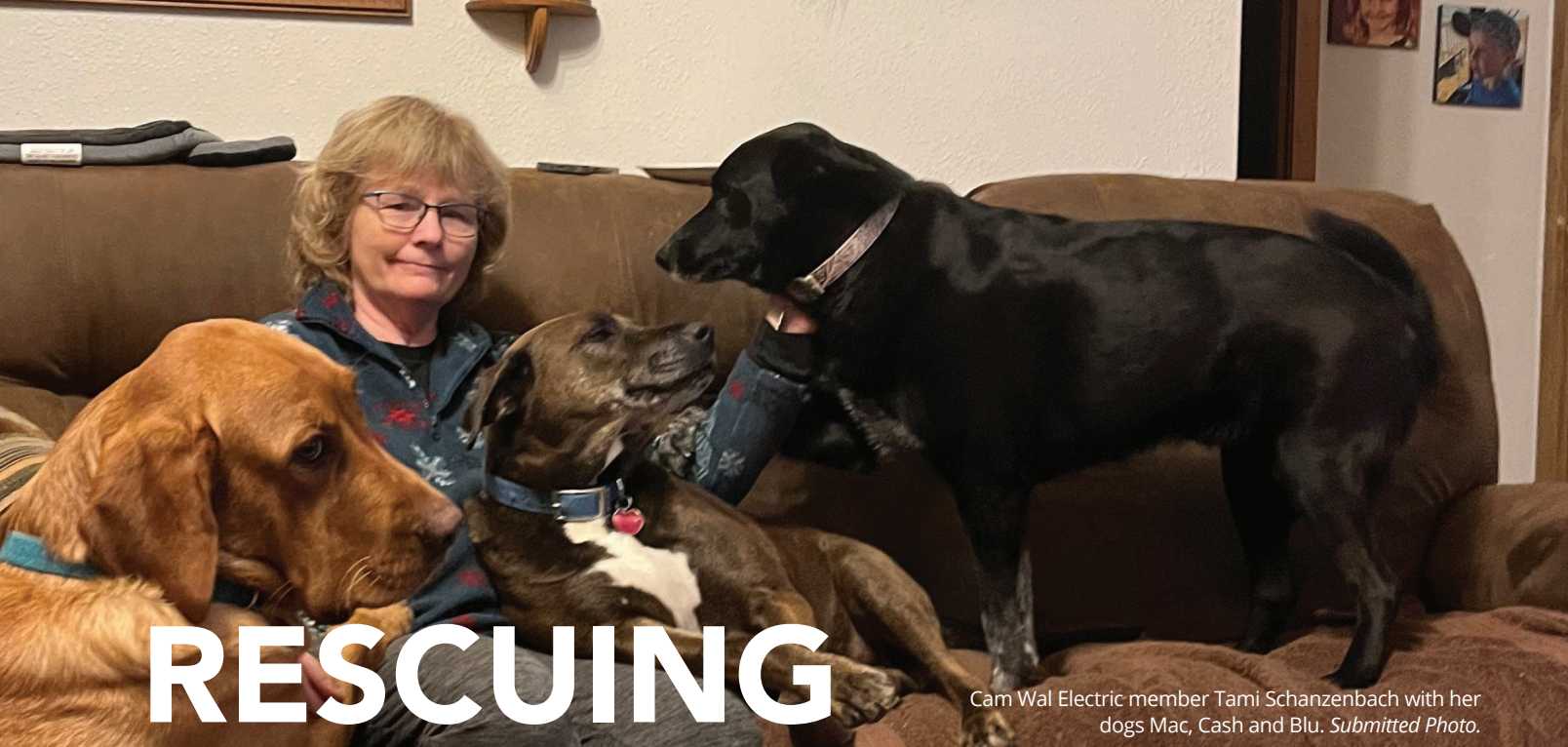
For Dakota Energy Cooperative members, investing in an upgraded electrical system ensures safety, efficiency, and preparedness for the future. Staying ahead of growing energy demands and technological changes will help ensure that your home's power works for you, not against you.



Energy-efficient appliances can optimize your energy use, lowering electricity costs.

If you have any questions about your home's electrical needs, call Dakota Energy's Member Services to visit with a qualified electrician at 605-352-8591.





Cam Wal Electric member Tami Schanzenbach with her dogs Mac, Cash and Blu. *Submitted Photo.*

RESCUING ANIMALS

Co-op Members Foster and Support Pets In Need

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Tami Schanzenbach has always wanted to help animals.

From her earliest days in Aberdeen where she worked as a veterinary technician and helped start the Aberdeen Area Humane Society, to her later Pets N Stuff store in Mobridge, Tami's focus has always been on humans' furry companions and getting them into loving homes.

And even after a long career and a so-called retirement, she still finds ways to help. Through the Wamakaskan Onisca Humane Society, she opens her home to animals in need.

"I'm a foster failure," Tami laughed, admitting three of her own beloved pet dogs were originally supposed to be adopted out.

Served by Cam Wal Electric, Tami's home near Selby is the halfway point for countless animals on their journey from neglect, abuse and homelessness to their forever homes.

"If I have a person that calls me, if someone has found a dog, I ask initially

if they're able to help me with taking care of that dog for a little bit until we can determine whether it belongs to somebody," she explained.

The pets will go to a foster home for the time being — Tami credits volunteers like her friend Annie Walker, a member of Moreau-Grand Electric from the McIntosh area, for stepping up and opening her home to foster animals.

"One day, Tami had a picture of a litter of puppies that needed to be bottle fed," Walker said about her first fostering experience.

"I figured it would be something myself and my children would be up to, and ever since then, I keep taking some animals from time to time."

If the dog isn't claimed, the rehoming process begins, starting with veterinary care.

"We go through and we vaccinate and treat the animal and do what's needed to be able to make that puppy or dog available for adoption," Tami continued.

Sadly, the circumstances in which she receives them usually aren't pleasant.

The pets come from around Selby, many from the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River reservations, where they're often found abandoned. Tami recalls coming upon shocking discoveries, like "bait dogs" used to train fighting dogs in the Bismarck area.

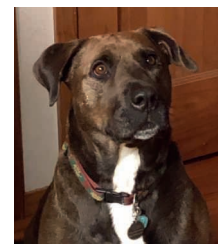
"People will steal puppies and kitties and train their pitbulls for fights, and they have a dog that's called a bait dog," she explained. "And that you see in our area as well ... days where [multiple] people are missing their dogs. People are coming in and stealing them and using them as bait dogs."

That's what Tami suspects happened to Cash, a 7-year-old pitbull/lab cross found "in the middle of nowhere" covered in pellet shots and bite marks.

"It took a long time for him to trust and know he's going to be okay here," Tami said. "And I don't



Annie Walker with rescue, Layla. *Submitted Photo.*



Cash, who was used as a "bait dog," was adopted by Tami. *Submitted Photo*

blame him, because he's never been taken care of.

Tami has made it her mission to end the cycle of animal neglect and abuse where she's able by sterilizing the pets coming into her care before they're adopted out. She also sponsors sterilizations for other peoples' pets.

"We just had about 12 dogs that we sponsored to be spayed at the local vet," she said. "We had a lady that helped me with a donation and wanted it geared toward people that couldn't afford to have their animals spayed and neutered ... We have so many people that always have two litters per year."

Stopping the cycle also means barriers to adoption – if someone isn't a good fit, there's a chance that animal will be surrendered back to the rescue and the process will start from the beginning.

Tami conducts interviews with potential pet owners with hopes of finding a perfect match.

She added that she sometimes steers people with busy and demanding schedules away from getting dogs. A cat – famously independent – is often a better fit, she said.

Tami also employs sustainable adoption practices she says make for better-behaved dogs – eight weeks is generally the earliest age when she'll allow adoptions to occur.

"We have puppy socialization that occurs" when the puppies are little, she explained. "They wrestle and play with their siblings, and they create a lot of socialization that way. And there's a lot of research that has proven that if you keep them with their siblings during that period of time, they make a heck of a lot better dog going forth, because they've been through that socialization."

Jen Uecker, Board President of the Pierre/Fort Pierre Area Humane Society, also known as Paws Animal Rescue, says without volunteers like Tami and Annie, shelters like hers would be overrun and rescuing animals from abandonment wouldn't be possible.

"We rely heavily on volunteers to help ease the burden of our limited staff and resources," Uecker said. "The foster volunteers open their home to these animals not really knowing a whole lot

about them, their demeanor, where they came from, or anything, and they open their homes to help them feel comfortable and confident until they're ready for their new forever family."

Tami encourages people to volunteer, support their local rescues, adopt if they're able and above all, love their pets.

"There are a lot of dogs and cats and it's just not their fault – they get the bad end of things," Walker said. "Tami is super dedicated ... She's always willing to step in and help these animals find a better life."

For Tami, it all comes down to giving that love back.

"They provide unconditional love to humans, and sometimes we forget that," she said. "We work all day ... When you come home, you need to spend some time with your pets."

HUMANE SOCIETY & SANCTUARY DIRECTORY

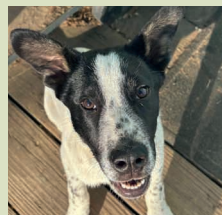
Wamakaskan Onsica (Mobridge).....	(605) 850-8430
Paws Animal Rescue (Pierre).....	(605) 223-2287
Sioux Falls Area Humane Society.....	(605) 338-4441
Humane Society of the Black Hills (Rapid City)....	(605) 394-4170
Battle Mountain Humane Society (Hot Springs)....	(605) 745-7283
Beadle County Humane Society (Huron).....	(605) 352-8955
Aberdeen Area Humane Society.....	(605) 226-1200
Glacial Lakes Humane Society (Watertown).....	(605) 882-2247
Brookings Regional Humane Society.....	(605) 697-7387
Western Hills Humane Society (Spearfish).....	(605) 642-1576
Heartland Humane Society (Yankton).....	(605) 664-4244
Siouxland Humane Society (Sioux City).....	(712) 252-2614
Mitchell Animal Rescue.....	(605) 770-2170
Oglala Pet Project (Kyle).....	(605) 455-1518
Wakpá Wašté Animal Shelter (Eagle Butte).....	(605) 964-7387
Fur and Purr Cat Shelter (Milbank).....	(605) 432-4505
Lake Traverse Animal Rescue (Sisseton).....	(605) 742-0219

Tami says her most rewarding rescue was Fez, an 8-week-old shepherd/collie cross found with mange, a skin disease caused by mites. She said she refused to give on Fez, who is now a healthy dog with a full coat of hair.
Submitted Photo.

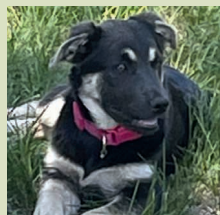


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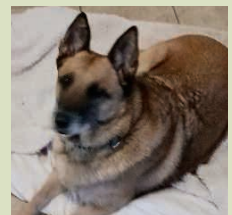
Buddy



Margot



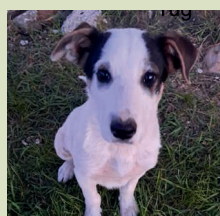
Chopper



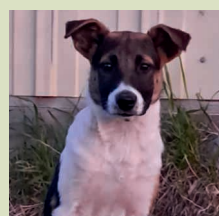
Eliza



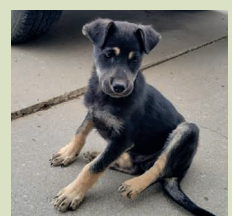
Agnes



Tug



Scooter



Leo



Central Electric Cooperative's distribution lines power members' farms and ranches throughout much of Central South Dakota.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

REMEMBERING WHEN THE LIGHTS CAME ON

Central South Dakota Rancher Looks Back to Days Before Power

Jacob Boyko

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Near Big Bend Dam in central South Dakota, farmer and rancher Clayton Knippling works the same land his father and grandfather had decades before.

The work he and his wife, Evelyn, and two sons do on the sprawling acre family ranch looks very different than it did back then, though. That's because today the ranch has electricity.

Back in the 1940s and early 1950s,

having electricity was a luxury enjoyed almost exclusively by people in towns and cities, or rural folks who happened to live along major highways. With their homestead several miles northeast of Fort Thompson, the Knippings understood their odds of getting connected to a utility were slim for the time being. Their lives were powered by an old diesel generator out in the barn – enough to keep the kitchen refrigerator humming and a couple of light bulbs lit.

“I remember being told, ‘Shut that

refrigerator door! You're wasting cold air!’” Knippling laughed, thinking back to that overworked generator.

But as soon as the electric cooperative crews visited the ranch, that generator was permanently retired and would never run again.

Knippling thought back to that day in the early 1950s when he was about six years old. He remembers watching the trench-diggers from Tri-County Electric – merged into Central Electric in 2000 – trench their way to each outbuilding. Hours later, he would see those buildings shining bright in the darkness for the first time ever.

Having electricity didn't change the work out in the fields. Knippling said a lot of the work is the same in 2025 as it was in 1955. But back at the homestead, Tri-County Electric brought the Knippling ranch into the

20th century.

“We even had a welder after that,” Knippling recalled. “That took 220 volts, and I don’t think our old generator was putting off that. We could then fix our own iron.”

Electricity was a game-changer for the Knippings’ water needs. Seizing the opportunity, they dug a new, deeper well with an electric pump for better quality water and ran lines out to each building.

“[Before we had electricity] there was a stool and a nail where a tin cup sat, and there was a bucket of water and everybody that came through would drink out of that cup, so if somebody got a cold, we all got it,” Knippling laughed.

“Electricity allowed us to put in a pressure tank and then run the water lines to every house so we weren’t carrying a bucket anymore.”

The ranch also transitioned to all-electric pivot irrigation and pumps along the Missouri River. Today, Knippling Land and Cattle

irrigates 1,300 acres of farm land – an unimaginable figure before there was co-op power.

In the winter, the new electric block heaters for the diesel engines ensured there was always at least one tractor that would start up.

Life was just a little bit brighter, warmer and simpler with co-op power.

An advocate for rural life and progression, Clayton has also served the last 42 years on the board of directors for Midstate Communications, the local member-owned telecom cooperative, in an effort to equalize the disparities between urban and rural life.

“It changed the world back in the ‘50s when electricity came,” Clayton said. “A lot of kids left the farm because it was too rural. If you came from a farm, you didn’t want to come back. After electricity came, it became easier for younger people to stay on the farm.”



Clayton Knippling farms and raises cattle southeast of Fort Thompson on the same ranchland where he grew up, just 15 miles from his childhood home where Tri-County Electric first hooked up their power in the early 1950s.

Photo by Jacob Boyko



Pivot irrigation systems, like the one shown here along S.D. Highway 50 southeast of Fort Thompson, use electricity to rotate on a center pivot. Use of the systems can increase yields while reducing wasted water.

Photo by Jacob Boyko

REGISTER TO WIN!

Bring this coupon and mailing label to the Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives booth at Dakotafest or the South Dakota State Fair to win a prize!

Your Phone Number: _____

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JULY 16-20

Danish Days

Dancing, food, parade, etc.
Viborg, 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.

JUNE 20-21

Huron MS Fundraiser

1-Mile FunWalk
2-Man Scramble
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

JULY 9-12

Aberdeen Senior Games

605-626-7015

JULY 11-12

Frontier Days

White River, SD

JULY 12

39th Annual Spearfish Canyon Half Marathon & 5K

7 a.m.
Spearfish, SD
605-722-4558

JULY 12

Friendship Days Vendor Market

BBQ Cook Off, Prize Raffle
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
White Lake, SD

JULY 12

Fedora Fire Department Annual Appreciation Day

5 p.m.
Meal, Pie Auction & Bingo
Fedora, SD

JULY 17-20

Danish Days

Danville Heritage Museum
Viborg, SD
danvilleheritage.com

JULY 19

6th Annual Wakonda

American Legion Tractor Pull

3 p.m. Start
4 p.m. Kids Pedal Pull
Wakonda, SD

JULY 19-21

Burke Stampede Rodeo

Stampede Arena
Burke, SD
605-840-0824

JULY 25-27

Winner Elk's 56th Annual Rodeo to Benefit LifeScape

Tripp Co. Fairgrounds
Winner, SD
605-842-5830

JULY 25-27

Clear Lake Days

Clear Lake, SD
ClearLakeDays.com

JULY 26

Planes, Trains, & Automobiles

Car Show, Train Rides, Flyovers
10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Prairie Village
Madison, SD

JULY 26

South Dakota Chislic Festival

10 a.m.-9 p.m.
Freeman, SD
www.sdchislicfestival.com

JULY 26

Richmond Lake Association's Annual Pontoon Poker Run

Aberdeen, SD
605-225-0609

JULY 26

3rd Annual Car Show

11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Alpena, 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.