A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

DAKOTA ENERGY
SEPTEMBER 2025 VOL. 26 NO. 5

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

Antler Shed Hunting

Photo submitted by Kelly O'Bryan

2025 Annual Meeting Gives Cooperative Members the Chance to Vote

The Official Notice was mailed to the membership as an insert included in their July bill, which was mailed the first week of August.

Director Elections:

There are three director positions up for election on Thursday, August 21, 2025. Each director term is for three years. The three director positions are:

BEADLE AREA - (Two positions) held by:
Tommy Baruth, Alpena
Darrell Raschke, Huron

REE AREA - (One position) held by:
Nick Nemec, Holabird

Three candidates have filed a director petition.

BEADLE AREA:

Schaun Schnathorst

Schaun Schnathorst lives north of Huron. He is a graduate of Huron High School and Staples Technical College. Schaun works for the City of Huron in the Engineering Department and spent 25 years in metal fabrication and design. He has extensive experience working with contractors on numerous projects throughout his career.

Schaun owns and operates Xtreme GraphiX, a successful custom paint shop north of Huron. He has held the positions of President for the Windriders ABATE and Chairman of the South Dakota BBQ Championship.

Schaun enjoys traveling to NHRA races, competing on drag bikes, smoking and cooking a variety of foods, and spending time with family.

Schaun and his wife, Shelley, have been married for 37 years. They share a daughter, Cassandra, and numerous grandchildren.

Darrell Raschke

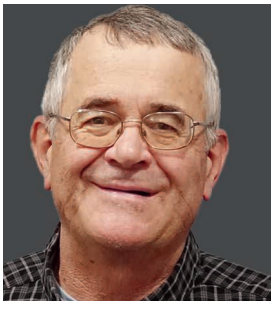
Darrell Raschke lives north of Huron. He graduated from Gregory High School and Huron College with a B.S. in Business Administration and Mass Communications.

He served in the South Dakota National Guard and worked at Armour Foods, the South Department of Transportation, Division of Engineering Right of Way Program, Land Management Specialist for the Office of School and Public Lands, and as Manager at James River Water Development District.

Darrell is the owner of Darrell Raschke Trucking.

He currently serves on the Board of Directors of Mid-Dakota Rural Water and the Upper Missouri Water Users Association.

Darrell has previously served on the Boards of the American Legion, Beadle County Sportsman's Club, and South Dakota Rural Water State Association, East River Electric Power Cooperative and South Dakota Rural Electric Association.



Nick Nemec

REE AREA:

Nick Nemec is a 5th generation farmer/rancher in central South Dakota

He is a graduate of Highmore High School and the University of South Dakota BS mathematics. Nick is a graduate of the United States Marine Corps Officer Candidate School. He was a active-duty United States Marine Corps and served as a member of the United States Marine Corps Reserve. Nick was a former member of South Dakota House of Representatives.

He currently serves as a board member of Avera-Hand County Hospital and South Dakota Rural Electric Association.

Nick is married to Mary Jo (Zilverberg) and has 4 daughters, and 7 grandchildren. He is a member of the Farmers Union, Saint Mary Catholic Church, and Knights of Columbus.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

DAKOTA ENERGY

(USPS No. 018-949)

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 Cooperative 1995 30 Years 2025 Annual Meeting

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 to be held at all three locations:
Time: 1:15 - 1:45 PM
Format: In-Person and Connected via Zoom

DAKOTA ENERGY COOPERATIVE, INC.

Emergency Preparedness: Are You Ready for a Disaster?

Source: National Safety Council

National Preparedness Month, sponsored by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and held annually in September, is a good reminder that natural and man-made disasters can strike at any time. It's important to have a planned response when you're at work, on vacation or on the road.

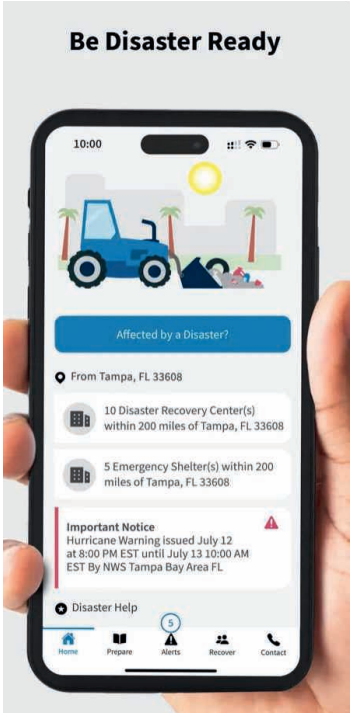
In 2022, 69,473 weather-related events resulted in 813 deaths and 1,718 injuries. Winter weather, heat, floods and hurricanes resulted in the most deaths that year, according to Injury Facts.

The National Safety Council offers safety tips specific on preparing for earthquakes, floods, hurricanes and tornadoes, and how to minimize fire risks.

Federal agencies, like Ready.gov and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration also are valuable resources for emergency preparedness. When you face a natural or man-made emergency, try to stay informed through radio, TV or the Internet. In some cases, however, cable, electric and cell phone service will be disabled, making communication nearly impossible. The National Safety Council recommends the following general precautions that apply to many disaster situations:

- Make sure at least one family member knows first aid and CPR.
- Download the FEMA app for resources, weather alerts and safety tips.
- Have a family communication plan in place; all members of the family should review and practice the plan.
- Have all family members' and other important phone numbers written down or memorized.
- Have an emergency kit in your car and at least three days of food and water at home.
- Be sure to store all important documents – birth certificates, insurance policies, etc. – in a fire-proof safe or safety deposit box.
- Know how to shut off utilities.

The official FEMA mobile app offers critical resources and real-time alerts to help you prepare for emergencies, stay safe during disasters, and navigate recovery afterward. With features like customizable emergency checklists, shelter locations, disaster recovery centers, and direct access to emergency alerts, the app is a comprehensive tool for personal and family safety planning.



"Don't drive tractors into power lines."

Darcy Welsh, Age 9

Darcy cautions readers while driving tractors near power lines. Great picture, Darcy! Darcy's parents are Ryan and Rachel Welsh from Oral, 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.

Fruit SPECIALS

FROZEN FRUIT FIESTA

Ingredients:

1 6-oz. frozen orange juice concentrate
2 10-oz. frozen strawberries
2 cans pineapple with juice (1 tidbits, 1 crushed)
3-4 bananas, sliced
1/4 cup lemon juice
1 cup sugar
1 1/2 cup cold water

Method

Mix all together in a large bowl.

Freeze in individual cups. Set out at room temperature for 1-2 hours before serving.

Optional: pour sour or 7-Up on top before serving.

Ginny Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy

PEACH RHUBARB CRISP

Filling:

3/4 cup sugar
3 tbsps. flour
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1/8 tsp. salt
3 cups rhubarb (sliced, fresh or frozen)
2 1/2 cups chopped fresh or frozen unsweetened peaches

Topping:

1/2 cup flour
1/2 cup oatmeal
1/2 cup brown sugar
3/4 tsp. cinnamon
1/8 tsp. salt
5 tbsps. butter (cold)

Method

Combine the filling ingredients and fruit. Transfer to a greased 11"x7" baking dish. In a small bowl, combine the topping ingredients; cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Sprinkle over fruit. Bake at 375°F for 30 to 35 minutes until bubbly and browned.

*Recipe can be cut in half and bake in 8" x 8" pan.

Sally Florey
Charles Mix Electric

CHERRY ICE CREAM DESSERT

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cup Rice Krispies, crushed
1/4 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup melted butter
1 cup grated coconut
1/4 cup chopped nuts
1-quart vanilla ice cream
1 cup cherry pie mix

Method

1. Melt butter in frying pan. Add coconut and toast, stirring constantly as it burns easily. Cool
2. Add nuts, brown sugar and crushed rice Krispies. Mix together.
3. Press 2/3 of crumb mixture into a buttered 9x9 inch pan.
4. Soften ice cream and spread over crumb mixture then top remaining crumbs.
5. Freeze well. Cut in squares and top with cherry pie mix.
6. Can be served with any other toppings. Serves 6-8.

Rowena A. Wipf
Northern Electric

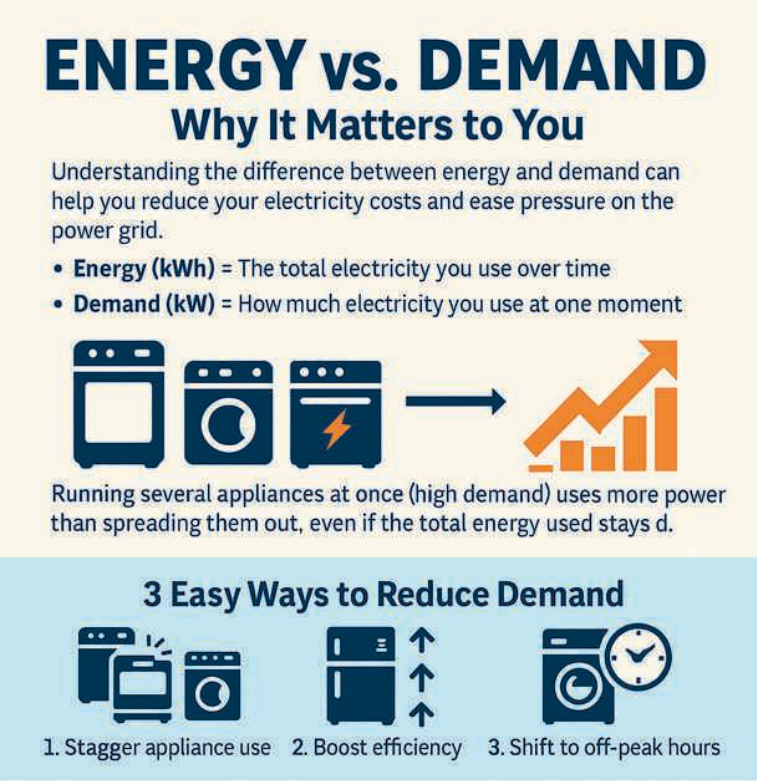
Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Do You Know the Difference Between Energy and Demand and Why It Matters to You?

Understanding the difference between energy and demand and how to manage both can significantly impact your electric bill and reduce the strain on the power grid.

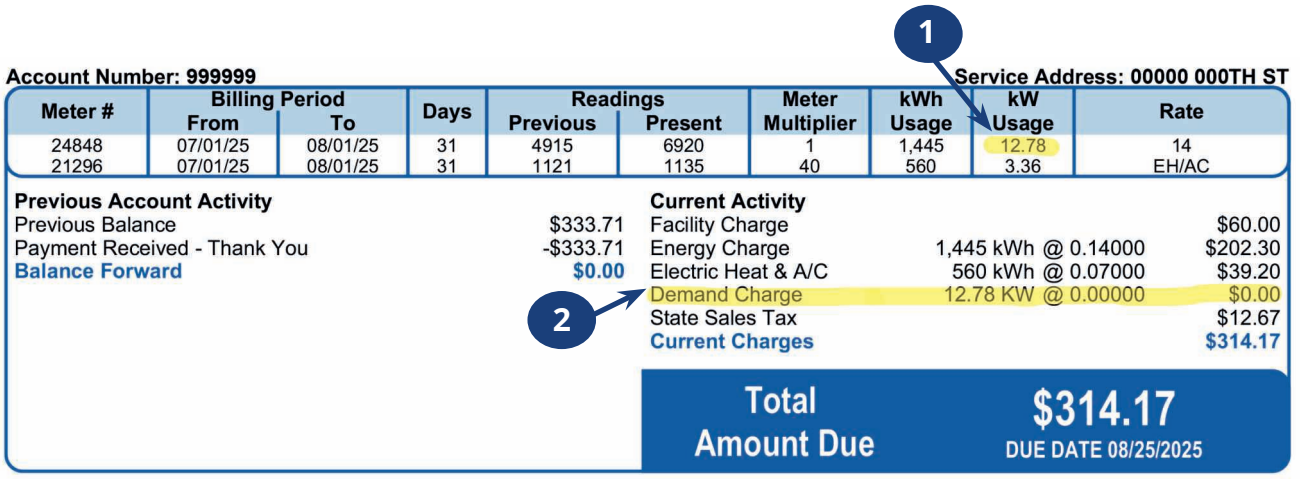
Energy (kWh) = Total electricity you use over time
Example: running your dishwasher for an hour uses about 1–2 kWh.

Demand (kW) = How much electricity you use at one specific moment
Example: running your dishwasher, dryer, and oven all at once spikes your demand.



Why does this matter? Because high demand at peak times puts pressure on the grid and your co-op leading to potential reliability issues and higher purchased power costs.

SAMPLE BILL WITH DEMAND USAGE AND CHARGE INFORMATION



Dakota Energy has added more information to each member's bill. Demand is measured in kilowatts (kW), while usage is measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh). The demand charge will display the highest demand for the month. As shown above, No. 1, is the main meter's peak for the month, at 12.78 kW. No. 2, shows the Demand Charge for 12.78 kW. Currently, there is no charge for kW, but it provides a reading for your reference and education.

As the cooperative world shifts toward charging all members for demand, Dakota Energy is exploring this concept for future rate structures. Including a demand reading on the bill helps members understand how their energy usage behaviors influence their monthly demand. Demand can vary daily, hourly, and seasonally.

JUNE 2025

The Board of Directors met on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, with Directors Baruth, Baum, Bonebright, Langbehn, Morford, Nemec, Raschke, Schaefers, and Wangsness present. Manager Felderman and Employees Decker, Gilbert, Hasart, Moore, Picek, Rakness, and Zomer were present.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Felderman reported on the following items:

- Monthly energy sales and revenue
- South Dakota Rural Electric Association Manager's Meeting
- East River Electric
- Basin Electric
- Federated Insurance
- 811 information
- Greater Huron Development Corporation
- Western Area Power Administration
- Large load eligibility criteria and onboarding process

OFFICE SERVICES REPORT

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

- Financial reports
- Gross kWh tax paid
- Initial stages of 2026 budget
- 2025 capital budget update

OPERATIONS REPORT

Manager of Operations Zomer reported on the following items:

- Construction, maintenance and retirement activities
- Pole changes
- Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition trip savers
- Rerouted underground for bridge projects
- Rebuilt 14 services
- Larson Digging
- Construction work plan
- Mid-Dakota Rural Water voltage issues
- Outage report

MEMBER SERVICES REPORT

Manager of Member Services Gilbert reported on the following items:

- Wiring department workload
- Potential hazards
- Load control savings
- Youth presentations
- New load control website and system

HUMAN RESOURCES/ COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

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

- Youth tour
- Electrician position filled
- Annual Meeting

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT

Information Technology Administrator Rakness reported on the following items:

- Form 6 reclosure
- Annual meeting
- PCI Compliance Assessment
- Website/Cybersecurity

BOARD ACTION

The following items were acted upon:

- Accepted the reports presented.
- Approved a $500 donation to South Dakota State 4-H Finals Rodeo.
- Appointed Directors Langbehn as the voting delegate and Wangsness as the alternate voting delegate for the East River Electric Power Cooperative Annual Meeting in Sioux Falls.
- Nominated Director Raschke as Dakota Energy's representative on the East River Electric Power Cooperative's Board of Directors.
- Appointed Directors Wangsness as the voting delegate and Langbehn the alternate voting delegate for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Region 5 & 6 Meeting in Wisconsin.

BOARD REPORTS

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

Year-to-Date Financial Report

	Jun-25	Year-to-Date
Total Revenue	$2,002,322	$12,944,954
Cost of Power	$1,448,834	$8,972,652
Operating Expenses	$646,675	$3,848,785
Total Margins	$162,976	$951,541
KwH's Purchased	18,214,877	120,359,654
Services in Place		3,640
Miles of Line		2,533
Members per Mile		1.44

Wholesale power costs, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for 80.1% of DEC's total cost of service.

NOTICE:

MONTHLY BOARD MEETING DATES

10:00 AM - HURON

TUESDAY, AUGUST 26

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28

Kelly O'Bryan of Winner shows off his impressive collection of deer and elk sheds alongside his shed-hunting Labrador, Skye.
Photos submitted by Kelly O'Bryan

SHED HUNTING

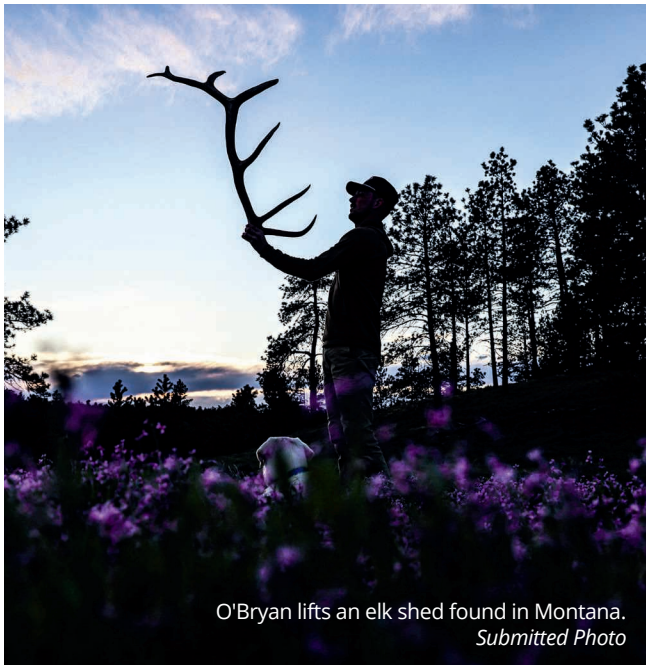
Prairie Miles and Antler Piles

Frank Turner
frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Rosebud Electric member Kelly O'Bryan of Winner regularly hikes mile after mile of open prairie in search of the perfect shed. But he isn't looking for a place to store his garden tools or lawnmower – instead, he's after antlers. Each spring, deer and elk naturally shed their antlers, leaving behind prized treasures for shed hunters like O'Bryan to find.

O'Bryan jumped into the shed hunting hobby in 2020, during the social distancing months of the pandemic, after a friend invited him on a shed hunt in Montana. When O'Bryan found his first deer shed, he uncovered more than just a pair of antlers – he discovered a new passion.

"It was during the time when you couldn't go out and do anything, so you just had to make your own fun and find stuff to do," he laughed. "I just fell in love with covering as many miles as I possibly could each season, trying to pinpoint sheds. It's just like an Easter egg hunt."



O'Bryan lifts an elk shed found in Montana.
Submitted Photo

Shortly after, O'Bryan fully committed to the hobby and added the ultimate scavenger to his team: a white lab named Skye. According to O'Bryan, it didn't take long for the dog to become an invaluable shed-hunting partner.

"I got Skye as a puppy, and I knew as soon as I got her, I

would train her to be a shed dog," he said. "I taught her to sit and stay while I hid sheds all around the house. When she found one, I would give her lots of positive reinforcement. She figured it out just like that."

Since then, O'Bryan and Skye have become seasoned shed hunters. In 2024 alone, the pair found 152 whitetail sheds, 25 mule deer sheds, nine elk sheds and 16 complete skulls – called "dead heads" – which resemble an English-style mount. Many of their best finds come from long days spent in remote country, often covering 10 to 15 miles in a single outing.

O'Bryan's collection of sheds has grown into an impressive heap of bone and tines that continues to grow each season. Like many in the shed hunting community, he has found creative ways to showcase his finds with his most festive being an antler-adorned
Christmas tree.

Others in the shed hunting community use their collection for art projects, crafting everything from knife handles to chandeliers. Some even trade or sell antlers to crafters, collectors, or pet product makers, giving shed hunting both recreational and economic appeal. Although O'Bryan does not sell his finds, he does cut up broken and damaged antlers for dog chews, gifting them to friends, family and his own favorite shed-hunting friend.

O'Bryan also has a few tips for beginners, drawn from miles of experience.

He says spring is the best time to search – antlers are freshly shed, and the grass is still short enough to give hunters a clear view. A good pair of binoculars is another must-have, helping spot antlers from a distance when the terrain allows for a higher vantage point.

And once you've found one shed, don't assume the hunt is over. Whitetail deer are often in groups and antlers are often dropped in pairs so it's worth taking the time to thoroughly scan the surroundings.

"You aren't going to be finding many sheds unless you are willing to put on the miles," he said. "The more you hike, the more you are likely to find sheds."

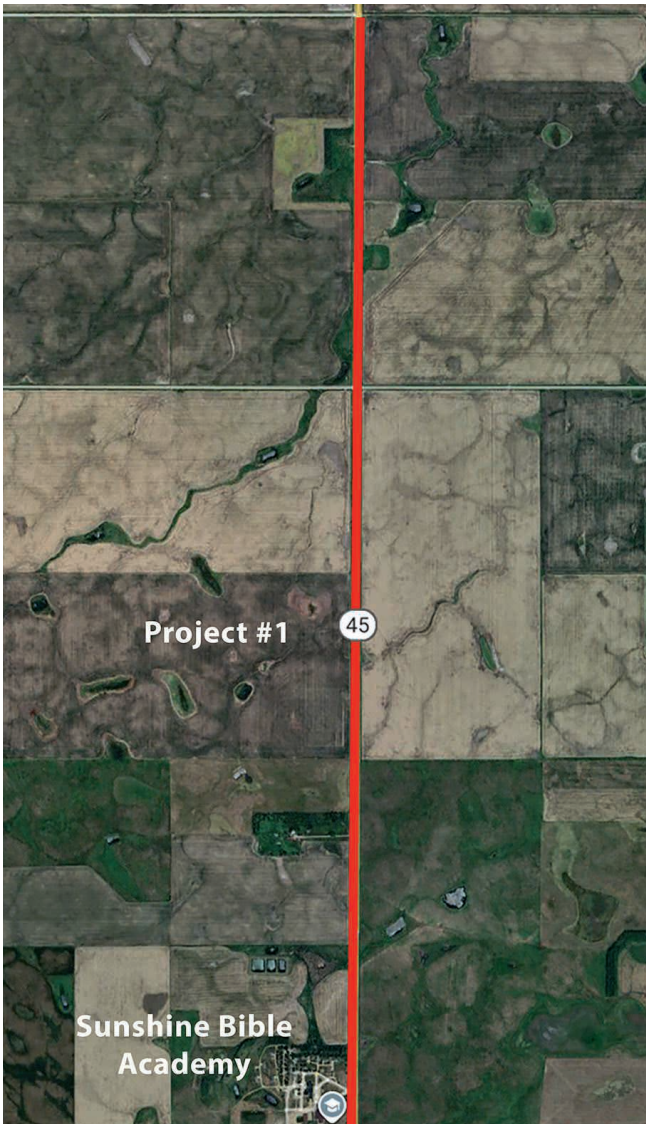
More photos of O'Bryan's collection and other hunting trophies can be found on his Instagram page: @db_huntin.

(Above) O'Bryan praises Skye for a lifetime of discovering antlers. (Below) O'Bryan and Skye show their white tail antler finds from a winter shed hunt. *Submitted Photo*

Constructing Our Future: 2025 Highlights and Future Projects

2025 has been another busy year with construction projects, pole changes, new services, and rebuilds. The construction projects were aimed at modernizing and strengthening our electric distribution system. From replacing aging overhead infrastructure to expanding our underground network, our team has worked diligently to enhance reliability, improve safety, and prepare our system for future growth. These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to delivering dependable service while investing in long-term system reliability.

Over the past year, we successfully completed several critical infrastructure upgrades that have greatly improved the reliability and efficiency of our electric distribution system. These efforts included replacing five miles of three-phase overhead line, installing thirteen miles of underground distribution, and converting two miles of single-phase overhead line to underground. Each project was carefully planned and executed to improve system performance, reduce maintenance, and support long-term service reliability for our members.



Project #1 - This project, located south of Miller, involved replacing three miles of three-phase overhead lines with underground cables. It will improve reliability and support future growth. This was a Federal Emergency Management Administration mitigation project where Dakota Energy was awarded $198,540 upon completion.

Project #2 - This project was located west of Miller. It involved converting eight miles of single-phase underground cable to three-phase underground for commercial loadings and will serve as a backbone feeder in the Miller, Ree Heights, and Highmore areas.

Project #3 - This project involved replacing five and one-half miles of underground infrastructure installed in the 1980s and is located south of St. Lawrence. This upgrade will enhance service reliability and increase loading capacity, ensuring our infrastructure meets future demands.

Project #4 - Located south of Wessington, the project is scheduled for completion this fall. It involves the conversion of two miles of three-phase overhead to underground. By improving reliability and expanding capacity, we're investing in a stronger, more resilient system that supports our community's growth for years to come.

Project #5 - This project, located south of Huron, is scheduled for completion this fall. It involves converting two miles of single-phase overhead lines to underground, which will improve service reliability. These improvements are not just about today, they are about building a smarter, more reliable system that's ready for tomorrow's challenges.

HARNESSING AI

Electric Cooperatives Explore What's Next for AI

Frank Turner
frank.turner@sdrea.coop

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming an increasingly popular tool for many industries and even in our daily lives. It has the potential to bring many opportunities, and a few challenges, to electric cooperatives. But machine learning takes time, and cooperatives are still in the process of determining how AI can be effectively used.

Like any new technology, AI brings with it a mix of potential and uncertainty. It's a hot topic — sometimes exciting, sometimes a little intimidating. But for electric cooperatives, the focus isn't on the buzz. It's on the basics: What problems can it solve? What efficiencies can it create? And how do cooperatives make sure they are using it safely?

That measured, practical approach is what's guiding East River Electric Power Cooperative, a wholesale power supply cooperative which serves 25-member distribution systems in eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota, as it explores how AI might support the operations of its member cooperatives now and into the future.

Right now, most electric cooperatives in South Dakota have not yet integrated artificial intelligence into their operations or systems. But that doesn't mean the technology is being ignored. Across the state, many co-ops are watching AI developments closely, asking questions, and exploring how these tools might be used in the future. The focus remains on learning first — before implementing anything that could affect system reliability or member service.

At East River Electric Power Cooperative, that learning process is already well underway. According to Jeff May, chief information officer with East River Electric, the co-op has spent the past several years researching what AI has to offer. Their approach has been to identify practical, secure applications that could help improve efficiency, support employees in their day-to-day work, and ultimately benefit members.

"With the explosion of AI applications and models for both personal and professional uses, we've been exploring ways that East River Electric and our members can harness the power of AI while making sure that our data is secure from a cybersecurity perspective," said May.

Because AI technology has the potential to interact with both internal systems and external networks, cybersecurity is a top priority. As South Dakota rural electric cooperatives look to adopt tools powered by AI and other tech, they will ensure their systems are safe from potential cyber threats. Strong digital defenses are essential for the safe use of any new technology.

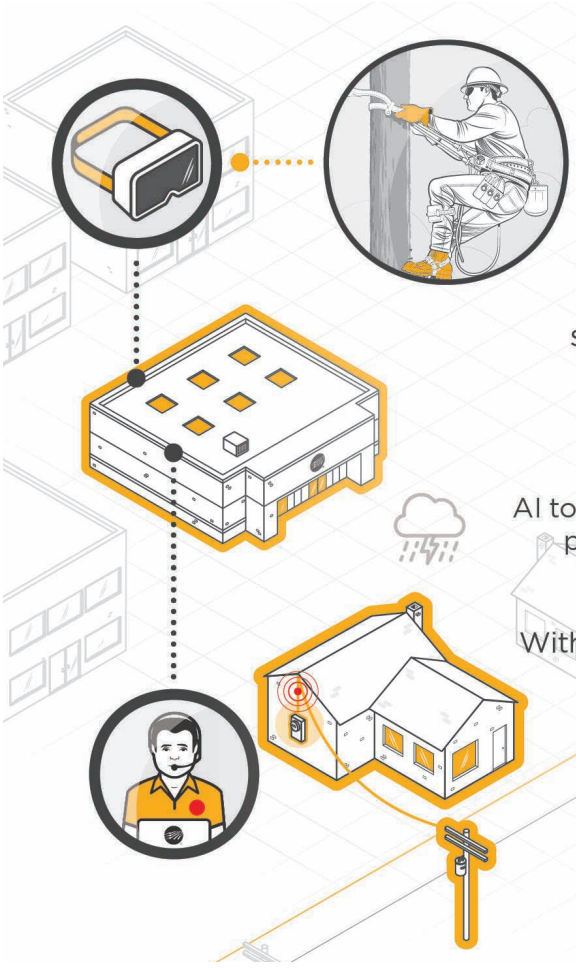
With safety in mind, May said East River Electric is actively partnering with Dakota State University graduate students to see how AI can be safely utilized by electric cooperatives. Together, East River Electric is working with the school to build an AI model that can predict electricity usage based on weather conditions and other factors to support the cooperative's load forecasting and rate forecasting capabilities. Although the technology is still in its infancy, May said he expects that someday AI will play a significant role in an electric cooperative's daily operations, including load forecasting, outage response and maintenance planning.

"It's difficult to predict how AI can be used for different types of jobs, but it will certainly become common throughout the organization as we learn all of the things AI can do," he said. "If it can be used to make our employees more productive and have a positive impact on the organization and our members, we will consider it. In some areas it could become commonplace within the next year, but throughout the cooperative it could take 3 to 5 years or more to be fully integrated in a safe and secure way."

Beyond grid operations, East River Electric is also trying out Microsoft CoPilot, an AI-powered assistant built into programs like Word, Excel, Outlook and Teams. A few employees are currently testing it to see how it might improve productivity and workflow, especially in communications and marketing departments.

Ultimately, if AI can streamline a process, predict an issue or improve service for electric cooperative members, May said it's worth considering. AI can be another tool in the cooperative tool belt that can make energy more reliable, services faster and operations more efficient.

"Over the next 5 to 10 years, AI's role in electric cooperatives is poised to grow significantly, driven by the need for efficiency, grid reliability and sustainability amid rising energy demands and technological advancements," said May. "Just the advancements that have been made in the last three years have been astounding to watch, and as more and more data centers and large language models are built in the coming years, it will become something that cooperatives likely use on a daily basis."



AI PUT INTO ACTION

Electric cooperatives are already using artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR) for key tasks and activities. Looking ahead, co-ops see great potential for AI and AR as helpful tools for improving grid reliability and the services they provide to consumer-members.

SERVICES FOR MEMBERS

AI tools like chatbots can enhance member interactions and provide a tailored experience based on energy use data.

WEATHER FORECASTING

With the help of AI, weather forecasts will become more accurate, pinpointing areas to station utility crews.

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Through augmented reality, or AR, lineworkers can experience interactive, lifelike trainings, rather than watching a video or webinar.

Photo by Jessie Tucker

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Is an EV Right for Your Needs?

Jacob Boyko
jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

As electric vehicle infrastructure improves in South Dakota, you may be wondering: is it finally time to jump on board the EV bandwagon?

EVs offer many lucrative benefits to their owners. They mark an end to the tedious oil changes, and you're likely to take on fewer expenses to maintain the vehicle — and that's all while you're getting the combustion engine-equivalent of 100 miles to the gallon.

It's a deal lucrative enough that EV registration has surged in the U.S. to more than four million vehicles on the road in 2024, with that number expected to grow exponentially over the next decade. Florida, Texas and Washington each already have more than 100,000 EVs registered, and California reports more than one million.

Meanwhile in South Dakota, it's still fairly irregular that you'll see an electric vehicle (with in-state plates) driving around your community. In fact, the South Dakota Department of Transportation records only about 1,400 fully-electric vehicles on the road, even as charging infrastructure increases.

"You do have range anxiety — that is something that happens," said Matt Hotzler, manager of H-D Electric Cooperative in Clear Lake, who regularly takes the co-op's Tesla Model 3 on business trips across the state.

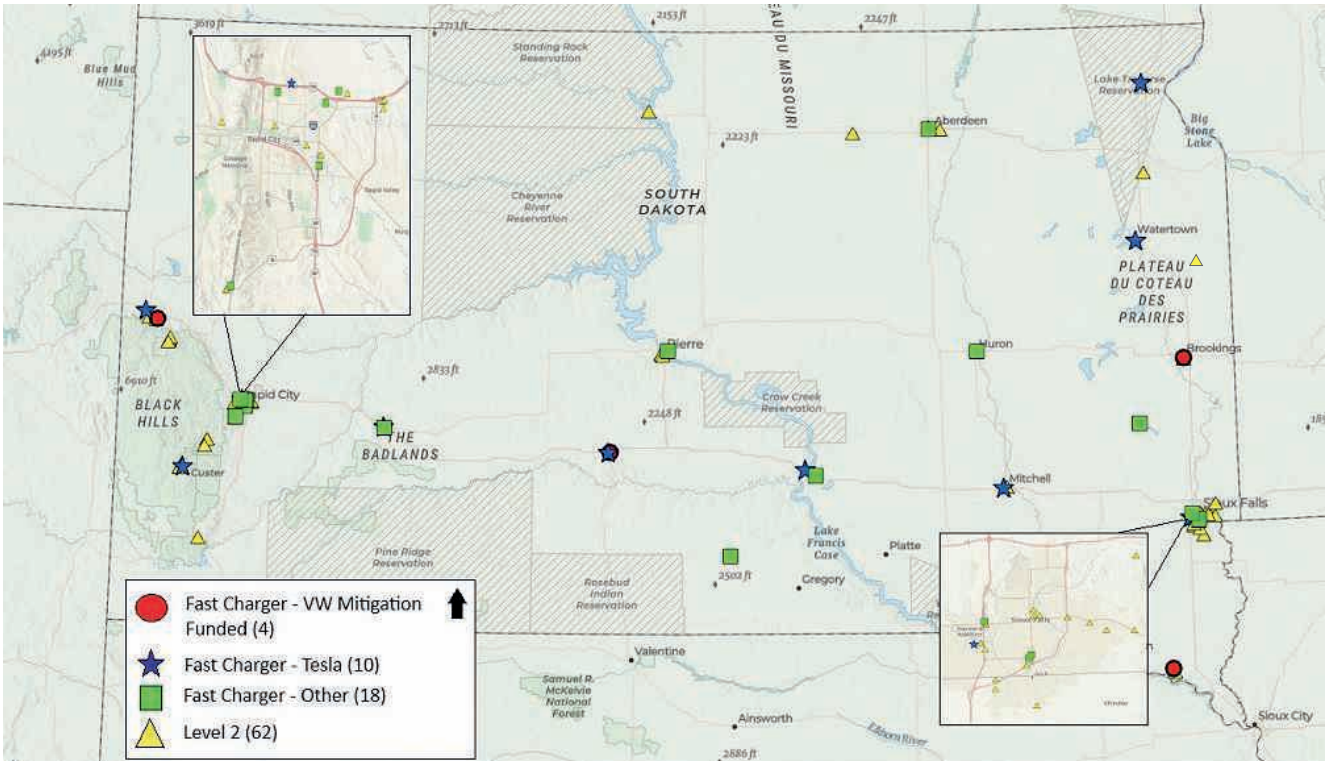
South Dakota's weather makes planning a trip in an electric vehicle a little more hands-on. Temperature, wind speeds, climate control and headlights all affect how frequently you have to stop to add some joules.

Luckily, the stops aren't usually long, Hotzler said, with his Tesla planning several stops along a route to do partial charges – about ten minutes at a time – before hitting the road again.

While the public charging stations are convenient for out-of-town travels, it's where one giant plus to owning an EV – low operating costs – begins to erode.

Jessie Tucker, manager of member services at West Central Electric Cooperative in Murdo, recalls his surprise on a trip last winter to Rapid City when he stopped to charge the co-op's Ford F-150 Lightning and discovered his charging rate was nearly 68¢ per kWh – more than five times what it would cost to charge at home. Driving 80 mph in the winter weather and averaging about 1.3 miles per KWh, Tucker calculated the combustion engine-equivalent would be about $9.41 per gallon.

"It would be tough for me to own one (personally) at this point," Tucker said. "If you're a daily commuter and you're getting home every night, then owning an EV does make sense. If you can charge overnight at your own house, it is still approximately half the cost of $2.85 fuel."



Electric Vehicle charging stations in South Dakota.
Graphic courtesy of South Dakota Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

In western South Dakota, West River Electric Association offers members an EV charging incentive — with some stipulations.

"It's like the old cell phone plans where they would have unlimited nights and weekends," joked Adam Daigle, manager of communications and public relations at West River Electric in Wall.

"Members with an electric vehicle can pay $33 per month for unlimited charging on nights (9 p.m.- 7 a.m.) and on weekends. So in a sense, you can drive all month for $33."

The incentive is designed to encourage charging during off-peak times when there is less strain on the electric grid while also helping members interested in electric vehicles make the switch.

"I think EVs are great cars for commuting," Daigle said. "If you stay within range of that battery, where you don't have to hit a level three charger, they're fantastic."

Another factor to consider if you're thinking about an electric vehicle: you'll need somewhere indoors to charge it.

The lithium-ion batteries found in EVs will not charge as quickly in cold weather. Though many EVs have systems to warm the battery before charging, a heated garage is still the most convenient and efficient way to charge, and can prevent cold-weather charging degradation on your battery.

"When I drive my Tesla to work and it sits out in the really cold weather for a big part of the day – 8 to 10 hours – I do see some battery used during that time to keep things warm," H-D Electric's Hotzler added. "You have to be careful of the batteries getting so cold."

Another necessity: a 240-volt plug for level 2 charging. While you can charge an electric vehicle with a standard 120-volt outlet, it could take more than a day to reach a full charge.

After five years of driving the Tesla Model 3, Hotzler is a fan of the technology, and recommends it as a daily driver.

"I'd recommend an EV for a household using it for a back and forth commute – just not any extremely long trips," Hotzler said. "For an everyday driver, it works really well. They drive fast, they're zippy, there's hardly any maintenance. I've just had a really positive experience."

EV Charging Explained

Level 1 charging uses a standard 120-volt outlet. Level 1 charging is the slowest charging speed, adding about 3-5 miles of range per hour. This is not recommended, and is typically used in residential settings.

Level 2 charging uses a 240-volt outlet – the same as your stove or dryer. This is the more practical solution, adding about 12-30 miles of range per hour and is enough to charge many EVs overnight. This is recommended for residential settings. Many public charging stations also feature level 2 chargers.

Level 3 charging, or DC fast chargers, are the quickest way to charge, taking just a half hour to charge the battery to 80%. Using these chargers can cost as much or more than a tank of gas. Speeds range from 50 KW to 350 KW. These stations are placed along major highways, including I-29 and I-90.

Source: driveelectricsd.com, How-To Geek

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UNTIL OCT. 31
Wallace Dow, Prairie Architect Traveling Exhibit
Lake County Museum
Madison, SD
605-256-5308

SEPT. 2, OCT. 4
Davis Indoor/Outdoor Flea Market & Vendor Fair
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Davis American Legion
Davis, SD
605-351-3074

SEPT. 5-7
James Valley Threshing Show & Tractor Club
Threshermen's Park
Andover, SD
www.jamesvalleythreshers.com

SEPT. 7
Farmer Tractor Parade
1 p.m.
Tractors, Cars & Food
Farmer, SD

SEPT. 7
Homesteader Day Celebration
Pioneer Demonstrations
1-4 p.m.
Beaver Creek Nature Area
Valley Springs, SD

SEPT. 13-14
Harvest & Kuchen Festival
Delmont, SD
www.twinriversoldiron.org

SEPT. 13-14
South Dakota Senior Softball Tournament
Huron, SD
605-295-2039
www.southdakotaseniorgames.org

SEPT. 19
Veterans Stand Down
SD Military Alliance
8:30-11:30 a.m.
1600 W. Russell St.
Sioux Falls, SD

SEPT. 19-20
Holiday Arts Fall Craft Show
Davison Cty Fairgrounds
Mitchell, SD
605-770-8136

SEPT. 19-20
SiouxperCon Annual Convention
Benefits Make-A-Wish, REACH Literacy, JY6 Foundation
Sioux Falls Convention Center
Sioux Falls, SD

SEPT. 26-28
Coal Springs Threshing Bee Featuring Horse-Drawn Equipment
Meadow, SD
605-788-2229

SEPT. 27
Your Race, Your Pace
9:30 a.m.
Wylie Park
Aberdeen, SD

SEPT. 27
Wheelin' To Wall Cycling Event
Wall, SD
www.wheelintowall.com

SEPT. 27
Ag Day
Roundup Arena
Belle Fourche, SD

OCT. 3
DSU Architecture Walking Tour
3-4 p.m.
Lake County Museum
Madison, SD

OCT. 4
Pumpkin Train, Vendor Showcase
Prairie Village
Madison, 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.