

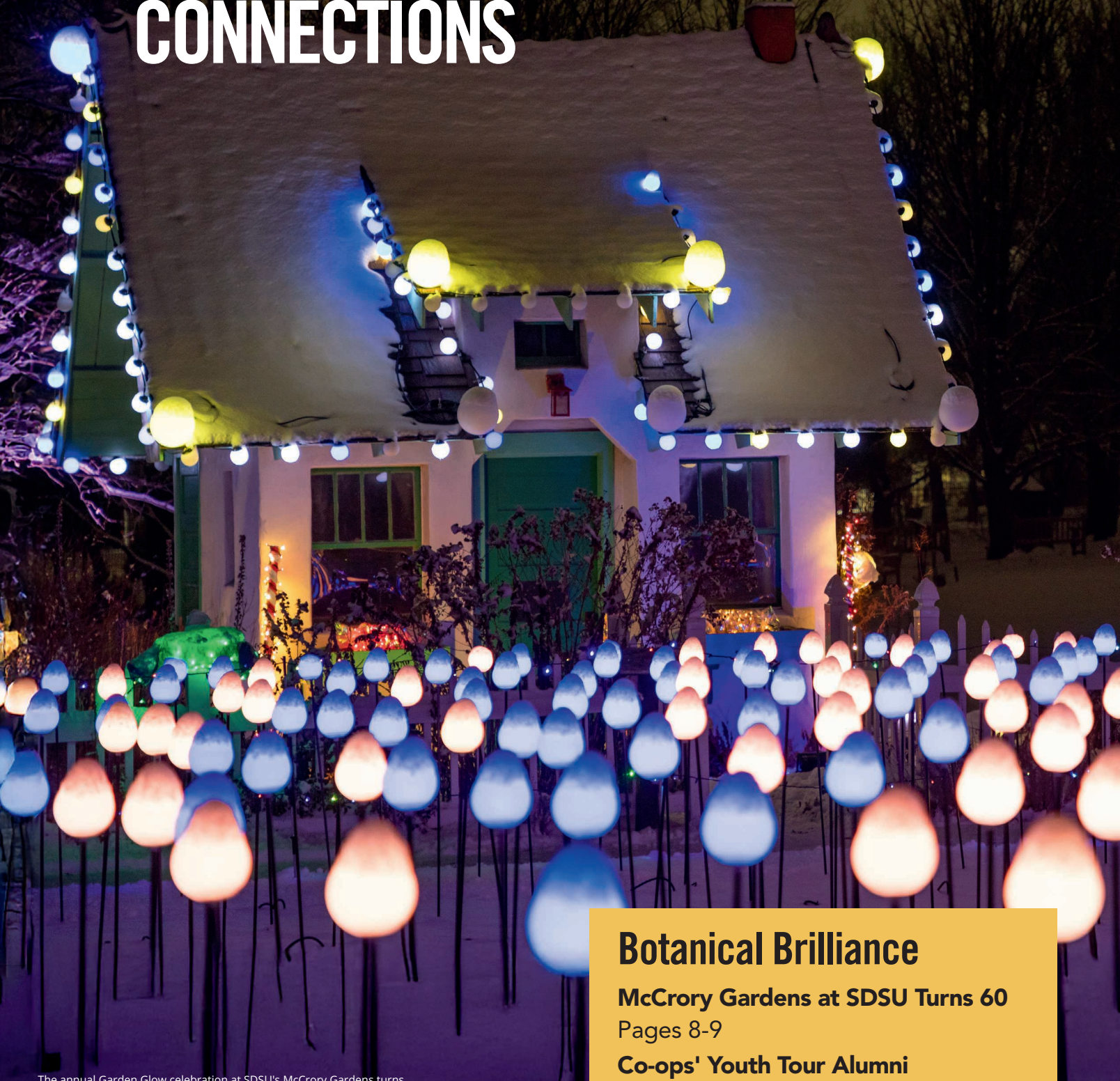


A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



DAKOTA ENERGY
DECEMBER 2025 VOL. 26 NO. 8

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Botanical Brilliance

McCrary Gardens at SDSU Turns 60

Pages 8-9

Co-ops' Youth Tour Alumni

Pages 12-13

The annual Garden Glow celebration at SDSU's McCrary Gardens turns the space into a winter wonderland with festive lights and decorations.

Photo by McCrary Gardens

Understanding Your Facilities Charge

Keeping Power Reliable and Fairly Priced for All Members

RELIABLE POWER ACROSS 2,533 MILES OF LINE

Dakota Energy Cooperative's electric system covers 2,533 miles of power lines, a large network that connects farms, homes, and businesses across our service area. On average, we serve just 1.4 members per mile of line.

By comparison, city and investor-owned utilities often serve 30 or more members per mile, meaning they collect 5 to 10 times more revenue per mile than we do. That gives them more money to spread over their fixed costs while Dakota Energy must share those same costs among far fewer members.

Even though we serve fewer members per mile, every pole, wire, and transformer must still be built and maintained to keep your power reliable. Building and maintaining our system is a significant investment. It costs more than \$60,000 to build one mile of single-phase line and more than \$100,000 per mile for three-phase line. These expenses must be recovered, in part, through the monthly facilities charge.

WHAT IS THE FACILITIES CHARGE?

Every utility, whether it's electricity, gas, internet, or phone includes a basic monthly fee. For Dakota Energy, this is called the facilities charge, and it helps ensure electricity is always available when you need it.

This charge isn't based on how much power you use. Instead, it covers the fixed costs of providing service, the infrastructure that stands ready 24/7, whether your usage is high or low.

WHAT THE FACILITIES CHARGE COVERS

- Power line maintenance and system upgrades
- Transformer and meter service
- Outage response and right-of-way clearing
- Meter reading and billing
- Insurance, taxes, and administrative costs

Without a facilities charge, these essential costs would have to be recovered through energy rates alone which would unfairly shift expenses to higher-use members.

RESULTS OF THE COST-OF-SERVICE STUDY

In October, Dakota Energy worked with Power System Engineering, Inc. to conduct a cost-of-service study. This study was a detailed analysis of what it truly costs to provide electric service to each member class.

The study revealed that our current facilities charge is below the actual cost of service:

Service Type	Current Charge	Actual Cost
Farm/ Residential	\$60	\$121.23
Three-Phase	\$120	\$198.18

Our board of directors and management team are now developing a plan to gradually adjust the facilities charge to more accurately reflect these real costs.

Dakota Energy's goal is fairness, making sure each member pays their share of the true cost of providing electric service.

A COMMITMENT TO VALUE AND RELIABILITY

As a member-owned, not-for-profit cooperative, Dakota Energy doesn't raise rates to earn profits. All

changes are made solely to cover the real costs of providing power safely and reliably. Despite rising prices for nearly everything else, electricity remains one of the best values for your household dollar powering your comfort, safety, and quality of life every single day.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A STRONG FUTURE

Dakota Energy remains dedicated to keeping your lights on, maintaining fair rates, and investing in the system that connects us all. Rate changes are never easy, but they are essential to:

- Maintain safety and reliability
- Keep infrastructure strong
- Ensure fairness for all members

The past five years have been a period of exploding costs for the electric utility industry pushed by soaring demand, supply chain challenges, raw materials shortages, increased labor costs, and tariffs. The impact has been rapid increases in the cost of producing power, longer and more unpredictable project timelines and the need for more financing, all of which have driven electric rates up for residences, businesses and other end-users. Here's a look at what's contributing to the trend.

Percent increase since 2020:

Infrastructure

Utility poles (wood, steel, composite)	+25-40%
Crossarms & braces (steel/wood).....	+20-35%
Conductor wire (aluminum/copper).....	+30-50%
Transformers.....	+70-100%
Grain-oriented electrical steel.....	+80-100%
Copper wiring.....	+50%
Smart meters.....	+20-35%
Pad-mounted switchgear.....	+25-40%
Circuit breakers/reclosers.....	+20-35%

Fleets

Light trucks.....	+25-40%
Bucket trucks, digger derricks	+20-50%
Fuel costs (especially diesel).....	+20-30%
Maintenance.....	+15-25%
Insurance premiums.....	+20%

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

DAKOTA ENERGY

(USPS No. 018-949)

Board President: Darrell Raschke, Huron

Board of Directors

Nick Nemec, Holabird - Vice President
Daniel Langbehn, Huron - Secretary
Brian Bonebright, Wessington - Treasurer
Brian Baum, Alpena
JoAnn Morford, Miller
Doug Schaefer, Orient
Schaun Schnathorst, Huron
James Wangness, Miller

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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SCHOLAR OF THE WEEK



Manager of Member Services Jeff Gilbert presented Kendal Uttecht a check for \$250 from Dakota Energy Cooperative.

TOUCHSTONE ENERGY SCHOLAR OF THE WEEK

Wolsey-Wessington High School Senior Kendal Uttecht honored for her scholastic accomplishments.

Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week of the 2025-2026 school year is Kendal Uttecht, a Wolsey-Wessington High School senior. She was selected for the week of October 19–25, 2025.

Kendal Uttecht has a 4.07 GPA and attributes much of her success to her siblings who support each other in everything they do.

She has qualified for the state meet four times in both cross-country and track, has over 1,000 assists in volleyball, and also plays basketball.

But athletics are only part of her extracurricular activities. Kendal is the student council president, an officer of Health Occupations Students of America, the one-act play, oral interpretation, band, chorus, and the science quiz bowl team for two years.

After high school, she plans to attend Northern State to compete in cross-country and track, and to study nursing.

“As a junior, I shadowed a nurse at the hospital in Huron and watched a C-section in the operating room. The experience was incredible. I took the first photo of the baby with the dad, which was truly heartwarming. That’s when I knew this is what I want to do,” said Kendal.

Her counselor, Kathy Stevens, noted how Kendal is fiercely competitive. Whether on the court, in the classroom, or at quiz bowl, she gives 100%. Her presence will be missed, but she leaves behind a legacy for the other students to follow.

Her parents are Russ and Lindy Uttecht of Wolsey, SD.
Congratulations, Kendal!

So, a Power Line Fell On Your Car...

Driving accidents can happen quickly and easily in the winter months with slick, inconspicuous coatings of black ice, reduced visibility and other weather-related safety hazards.

The important thing is that you know what to do if you find yourself in a collision with a utility pole – because what you don't know can seriously injure or kill you.

If a power line falls on or near your vehicle and there is no fire...

Call 911 and remain in your vehicle until help arrives — this is where you are safest. Your vehicle may be insulating you from the electrical current. Once you leave the vehicle and place your foot on the ground, the electricity may take a path through your body and shock you.

Never go off looks; a downed power line may not be sparking or showing obvious signs of being live, but it may still be energized.

If someone attempts to assist you, warn them to stay back until the utility can de-energize the line.

If a power line falls on or near your vehicle and there is a fire...

If your vehicle has caught fire, you must proceed with extreme caution. Again, even if a line isn't sparking, it may still be energized.

To make your escape, jump from your vehicle to the ground, making sure your body is not touching the ground and vehicle simultaneously. Making contact with both would make your body a direct conduit, and you would be electrocuted.

For that same reason, do not assist anyone else exiting the vehicle or accept help exiting the vehicle.

Once you're on the ground, keep your feet together and hop or shuffle away from the scene, at least 40 feet away. As you move, your goal is for there to not be a voltage difference between your feet. You do not want one foot off of the ground while the other foot is making contact with the ground.

Call 911 and warn others to stay away from the scene.

If you come across downed power lines...

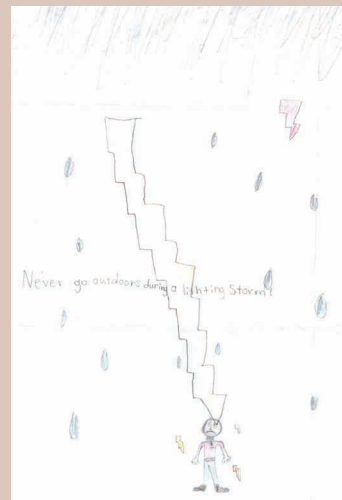
Stay no less than 40 feet away, as the ground can become energized. Never drive over downed power lines – not only do you risk electrocution and damage to your vehicle, but the added tension could pull down surrounding utility poles and create additional hazards.

If you're a first responder at the scene...

Always assume lines are energized. Contact the utility and wait for them to de-energize the lines and give you the all-clear.



"Never go outside during a lightning storm!"



Josiah Krcil, Age 9

Josiah cautions readers on the dangers of going outside during a lightning storm. Great picture, Josiah! Josiah's parents are Andrew and Andrea Krcil from Dante, 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.

Specialty SOUPS

CHEESEBURGER VEGETABLE SOUP

Ingredients:

1 lb. ground beef
2 lbs. block Velveeta cheese
(2) 12 oz. cans evaporated milk
(3) 10.5 oz. cans cream of mushroom soup
10.5 oz. can cream of celery soup
1 can French style green beans
1 can mixed vegetables
1 can diced potatoes

Method

Brown ground beef. Cut Velveeta into cubes. Put all ingredients into slow cooker. Cook on low six to eight hours, stirring halfway through or cook on high two hours, and then on low another two hours, stirring halfway through.

Wendy Thorson
Northern Electric

DUMPLING SOUP

Ingredients:

1 tbsp. vegetable oil
2 tsps. sesame oil
1 cup carrots, shredded
5 green onions, thinly sliced (whites and greens separated)
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
1/4 tsp. ground ginger
1/4 cup white miso paste
6 cups chicken vegetable broth, divided
1 lb. frozen mini dumplings
3 cups baby spinach
3 tsps. soy sauce (plus more to serve)
Hot sauce or chili oil to serve

Method

In a large pot, heat the vegetable oil and sesame oil over medium heat. Add the carrots, green onion whites, garlic, and ginger. Cook, stirring frequently, until the vegetables begin to soften, two to three minutes. In a small bowl, combine the miso paste with 1/2 cup broth, whisking until the miso is dissolved. Add the miso mixture and remaining broth to the pot and bring to a boil.

Add the dumplings and bring to a simmer. Heat until the dumplings are heated through, three to five minutes. Stir in the spinach, cooking until the greens are wilted, one to two minutes. Add the soy sauce and green onion greens.

Serve hot with hot sauce or chili oil, and extra soy sauce.

Susan Forma
Union County Electric

PHEASANT CHOWDER

Ingredients:

2 pheasants (thighs and breasts: or only breasts if preferred)
4 celery stalks, sliced
1/2 lb. bacon strips, sliced
1 large yellow onion, diced
4 cups chicken broth
4 medium size Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cubed
3 cloves garlic, diced
5 tsps. flour
2 cups half-and-half
1 cup parmesan cheese
Salt and Pepper

Method

Put cubed potatoes in a separate pot, cover with the chicken broth, and bring to a boil. Cook the potatoes until they are soft.

Slice the pheasant meat, across grain into 1/4 to 1/2 inch strips.

Cut bacon slices into small pieces and put in a Dutch oven on medium heat. Add diced celery and onion and cook until the bacon and celery are cooked through and onions are transparent. Add the garlic and pheasant. The meat should cook quickly because of the small sized pieces. Once meat is cooked, add the flour one tablespoon at a time while stirring the mixture, thoroughly coating the vegetables and meat.

Add the potatoes and broth from the separate pot. Once incorporated, stir in the half-and-half, then stir in the parmesan cheese. Salt and pepper to taste. This chowder is ready to eat once heated through, or you can let it simmer on low heat. Flavors should continue to meld.

Nick Kvernevig
Lake Region 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.

Merry Christmas

From Dakota Energy Cooperative

*Our offices will
be closed
Thursday,
December 25*



Bright Lights Safe Nights,

Outdoor holiday lighting safety

- Use outdoor-rated lights with UL safety labels.
- Plug into GFCI outlets for shock protection.
- Stay at least 10 feet from power lines when hanging lights.
- Don't hang lights with tacks, nails or screws; use clips instead.
- Keep cords away from water and snow.
- Inspect for damage like broken sockets or frayed cords.
- Don't overload extension cords or outlets.
- Turn off lights before bed or when away; a timer makes it easy.



SEPTEMBER 2025

The Board of Directors met on Tuesday, September 17, 2025, with Directors Baum, Bonebright, Langbehn, Morford, Nemec, Raschke, Schaefer, Schnathorst, and Wangsness present. Manager Felderman and Employees Decker, Gilbert, Hasart, Palmer, Picek, Rakness, and Zomer were present.

MANAGER’S REPORT

Manager Felderman reported on the following items:

- Monthly energy sales and revenue
- Basin Electric
- South Dakota Rural Electric Association State Fair booth
- Greater Huron Development Corporation
- East River new line construction
- Basin Electric resolution
- Public Utility Commission wildlife safety talk report
- Annual meeting survey results

OFFICE SERVICES REPORT

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

- Financial reports
- Cooperative Finance Corporation capital credit retirement
- Residential energy consumption survey
- Capital credit retirement update

OPERATIONS REPORT

Manager of Operations Zomer reported on the following items:

- Construction, maintenance and retirement activities
- Pole changes
- Construction work plan completion
- Service rebuilds

- Pole testers tested 1,850 poles, 14 were rejected and 9 of them have been changed

MEMBER SERVICES REPORT

Manager of Member Services Gilbert reported on the following items:

- Wiring department workload
- Potential hazards
- Load control savings
- Tulare football field lighting project

HUMAN RESOURCES/ COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

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

- Survey and Ballots update
- Job interviews
- First responders training
- Community events
- 2026 benefit premiums

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT

Information Technology Administrator Rakness reported on the following items:

- Security news
- Website/Cybersecurity

BOARD ACTION

- The following items were acted upon:
- Accepted the reports presented

- Appointed Director Nemec as the voting delegate and Director Bonebright as the alternate for the 2025 Mid-West Electric Association annual meeting in Denver, CO
- Approved the salary package for the employees and the Chief Executive Officer/General Manager
- Appointed Director Langbehn as the voting delegate for the 2025 Rural Electric Supply Cooperative annual meeting in Madison, WI
- Approved revisions to Policy No. 030 Working Capital and Reserves, Policy No. 031 Depositories and Signatures, Policy No. 094 Security - PCI Procedures and Policy No. 203 Supplemental Compensation for Salaried Employees (Disaster Situations)

BOARD REPORTS

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

Year-to-Date Financial Report		
	Sept-25	Year-to-Date
Total Revenue	\$1,929,053.....	\$18,981,410
Cost of Power	\$1,341,391.....	\$13,133,461
Operating Expenses	\$634,162.....	\$5,728,038
Total Margins	\$115,495.....	\$1,288,272
KwH's Purchased.....	18,125,100.....	177,423,864
Services in Place		3,642
Miles of Line		2,532
Members per Mile		1.44
Wholesale power costs, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for 79.91% of DEC's total cost of service.		

NOTICE:
MONTHLY BOARD
MEETING DATES

10:00 AM - HURON

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18

TUESDAY, JANUARY 27

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24

TUESDAY, MARCH 24

TUESDAY, APRIL 28



During the annual Garden Glow event, McCrory Gardens in Brookings is transformed into a winter wonderland.
Photo submitted by McCrory Gardens

NATURE GROWS & GLOWS AT MCCRORY GARDENS

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Tucked among the towering pines at the busy corner of 6th Street and 22nd Avenue in Brookings, S.D., you'll find a little plot of botanical paradise.

For 60 years, South Dakota State University's McCrory Gardens has not only served as a mecca for horticulture enthusiasts, but also a versatile, community-focused space for weddings, workshops and other seasonal festivities.

"Here, our mission is connecting people and plants through education, research, discovery and enjoyment of the natural and built landscape," said Lisa Marotz, director of McCrory Gardens.

Working toward that mission, Marotz and staff keep a schedule full of activities for SDSU students and community members with a variety of seasonal events: a spring-time syrup-making workshop where participants are taught to tap trees; the summer-time TuliPalooza where more than 15,000 tulip bulbs are planted in a colorful display; and the family-focused fall festival during Hobo Day weekend featuring horse-drawn hay rides and food trucks.

"There really is always something to see — just maybe not always what you expect," said Kathryn Bowar, an SDSU ag science

student and McCrory Gardens intern from Hoven, S.D.

Bowar says the space is increasingly popular for students looking to take a break from busy campus life to study, hang out with friends, or just enjoy time alone in a tranquil, outdoor environment surrounded by nature.

"I grew up as a ranch kid and adjusting to city life was overwhelming at times," Bowar added. "Coming to McCrory Gardens was a breath of fresh air and helped me recenter in the beauty of nature."

The garden's hallmark event is the regionally renowned Garden Glow, which transforms the dormant grounds into a winter wonderland with bright and festive Christmas lights and decorations.

"Garden Glow is a way that we are able to bring thousands of people to a botanical garden in South Dakota in December," Marotz said with a laugh. "We started out in 2015 when about 51 people came. Last year we were up to about 13,000, so it's grown a lot in popularity."

At the upcoming Garden Glow, visitors will meander through the reindeer meadow, travel across the life-size "Candy Land" board, warm up with a stop at the hot cocoa hut and peek inside Santa's summer-time home while exploring all the garden has to offer.

And there's been a lot of change over the garden's 60-year history, from new flowerbeds and gardens to patios and memorials.

But despite that, Marotz says she and her staff work to ensure the original vision of the garden and the contributions of those who worked before her are preserved.

Rather than tearing out and replacing sections of the gardens, the staff update and add to the space, with each parcel of the 25-acre garden bearing the fingerprints of past enthusiasts who cultivated, researched and appreciated the flora that make the Midwest beautiful.

"We have visitors comment that they now know what heaven looks like," Marotz said. "That's what people feel here: sanctuary and peace."



Lisa Marotz – McCrory Gardens Director since 2016 – with intern Kathryn Bowar, who is beginning her third fall working at the garden.
Photo by Jacob Boyko

With bright, blooming flowers, McCrory Gardens is the perfect stop for migrating butterflies and other helpful pollinators.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Many area visitors recognize this cottage as the 1928 Lawson Gas Station in Lake Preston, which was moved to McCrory Gardens in 1996 and renovated in 2024.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



Each cactus in the cacti garden is dug up each fall and moved into a greenhouse on campus before being replanted in the spring.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



The 1991 Sioux Quartzite rock garden and 2013 waterfall are a favorite fixture in the garden — and the site of numerous summertime marriage proposals.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



A labyrinth of pathways and trails lined with mature trees and vines give garden visitors a sense of exploration — even though they're right in the middle of Brookings.
Photo by Jacob Boyko



During the Garden Glow event, the East Terrace Lawn and Gazebo becomes The Enchanted Forest. Marotz notes this was the site of the first Garden Glow in 2015 — miniscule compared to today's expansive decorating.

This winter, Garden Glow is open 5-9 p.m. from Dec. 6, 2025 through Jan. 6, 2026.

Photo submitted by McCrory Gardens

60TH ANNIVERSARY THE MCCRORY STORY

*Photos submitted by
McCrory Gardens*

1964

The S.D. Legislature approves funds to construct Bailey Rotunda and Wagner Hall on the site of SDSU's Horticulture-Forestry Gardens. Samuel A. McCrory, head of the horticulture department at SDSU, advocated for a research garden filled with S.D. flora that would also serve as a learning center for students. McCrory passed away March 10, 1964.



1966

The new horticulture garden is formally dedicated "McCrory Gardens" to honor the late department head.



1977

McCrory Gardens receives the prestigious All-American Display Garden Award. The Garden is now designated to receive and showcase winning plant selections each year.



1979

McCrory Gardens is named on a list of the top 10 small gardens in the U.S. by ARCO Travel Club Magazine.



1988

The first annual Garden Party is held to fund the maintenance and operating costs of the garden.



1994

The late Gov. George Mickelson is honored in the newly-constructed Mickelson Grove.



2012

The new Education & Visitor Center is dedicated.



2025

McCrory Gardens celebrates its 60th anniversary!

UNCLAIMED CAPITAL CREDITS

Dakota Energy mailed a capital credit check to the last known address of the people or businesses listed below that has not been cashed or were returned due to incorrect or outdated addresses. If you recognize a name, please let the individual know that they can contact Dakota Energy at 605-352-8591 or info@dakotaenergy.coop to claim their capital credit check.

Any persons or businesses listed in the notice must claim them within six (6) months of this notice, or the amounts will be forfeited to the Cooperative.

Aalbers, James	Deeg, Larry C	Hamlin, Donald	Luke, Helen
Aasby, Leonard	Dejong, D Scott	Hammer, K L	Lumby, Vince
Abernathy, Lorraine	Delvaux, Thaddeus J	Haneke, Robert	Madsen, Larry
Aesoph, David	Devos, Dave	Hanson, Jeff	Mahrt, Justen
Alarie, A D	Deuter, James A	Hanson, Susan	Marone, Dave
Almond, Marva	Doering, Gary	Hardes, Mike	Marquette Bank N A
Anderson, Art	Doolittle, Willis	Hargens, Marie	Marshall, Glen
Anderson, Jim L	Dorn, Carey	Harrington, Adam	Mauger, Debra
Anderson, Marilyn	Dosch, Donna	Harrington, John	Melvin, Warren
Appleman, James H	Dudley, Shirley A	Hastings, Brady	McCartney, Donald
Belkham, Carrie L	Duncan, John M	Haugen, Dean M	McClanahan, Betty L
Bergeson, Marlyn J	Durr, Gary	Hensley, Carmen R	McCollin, Judy
Bergman, Kathy	Eden, Vivian M	Herding, Jamie L	Melbourn, Barbara
Better, Luverne	Eichstadt, Gary R	Herr, Glen R	Menke, Helen
Bevers, Tony	Eichstadt, Paul A	Heezen, Jack	Menke, Paul
Binger, John	Eifealtd Brothers	Hiland TWP Hall	Meursing, Jeanette
Black, Lee	Endahl, Gerald L	Hillmer, James	Miles, Jeff
Blow, Frank	Erdmann, Daniel	Holm, Edward (Bud)	Miller, Effie
Bowar, Roman	Erickson, Earl	Holman, James C	Miller, Gene
Bremer, Rudy	Eschenbaum, Phyllis	Hurd, James	Miller, Jeff
Brown, Berta	Evans, Russell B	Jasco Construction Services	Miller, Paul
Brown, Gina R	Fawcett, Donald	Jewett, Lyonne	Miller, Randy
Browne, Tim	Fenner, Emma	Johnson, Clinton	Miner, Tom
Brothers, Chester T	Feterl, Pat	Johnson, Greg J	Mittleider, Clyde
Brueggeman, Dorothy	Fischer, Darlis	Johnson, Joan	Mosier, Earl L
Bucklin, Shirlee J	Fox, Dean	Johnson, Jenny	MTB Company
Burrows, James	Friedeman, Nancy	Johnson, Lance C	Muellenberg, C W
Carlson Construction	Freking, Bruce	Johnson, Mike G	Nedved, Terry
C & R Farms	French, Marvin D	Johnson, Patricia	Neu, Ruth
Champ, Dennis	Ganske, David A	Johnson, Vivian	Nielsen, Eudale
Christensen, Sharon	Gascoigne, Jerald	Jones, Albert	Nissen, Alvie
Commnet Cellular, Inc	Geiger, Donald	Kaitfors, Pamela	Nuhring, William J
Cooley, Linda	Geiger, Robert L	Kasa, Roger	Oligmueller, William
Corcoran, Charles	Gitchell, M T	Keller, Mark	Osterbur, Kenneth
Cordell, Jack	Gilbert, Inez E	Jellerson Dietz, Heather	Palmer, Bartt A
Coss, Kevin	Gortmaker, Nick	Knight, Merle	Park, Alison
Coyle, Allen	Gowen, Michael	Kopfmann, Floyd K	Paul, Rodney
Crane, Delores	Grand Township Hall	Lahman, Galen	Paz, Alvaro N
Crist, Laverne	Griffith, Judy	Lakner, Stanlee	Pekarek, Grace
Dakota Rental Inc	Gross, Edwin	Langland, Debra A	Peltier, Agnes V
Daly, Paul	Gross, Reva P	Lemaster, Mike	Pepsi-Cola Bottling
Davis Brothers	Gruenstein, John	Lentsch, Robert R	Pfeiffer, Jim W
Davis, Dennis A	Gubbins, Keith O	Lenz, Jason	Pier, Gilbert
Decker, Anna	Haan, Cindy	Little, Robert	Pietz, Justin

UNCLAIMED CAPITAL CREDITS

Pioneer Hi-Bred Corn	Schiltz, Norm	Sparks, James J	Von Sternberg, Carl A
Poole, Rodger	Schmidt, James	Stanley, James R	Wagner, Jane
Pratt, Terry L	Schmidt, Mary L	Stirling, Nancy	Waldner, Phillip J
Pulfrey, Bruce	Schmidtgall, James W	Supler, Vicki	Waldner, Sammy
Pushee', De' D	Schnabel, Elmer B	Szilvasi, Andrew T	Waters, Dale
Ray, C A	Schofield, Daryl	Taylor, Vanessa	Walter, Garms
Reisdorff, John	Schweigert, Shawn	TCF Mortgage Corporation	Wellner, George
Richardson, G A	Schultz, C H	Thingelstad, Lucy	Wells, Bill
Rinehart, Marilyn	Shallbetter, Jeffrey	Thompson, Kent	Wells, Richard
Rink, Richard	Shingledecker, James O	Thue, Robert	Werner, Joseph
Roach, Robert	Shoultz, Carol	Timmerman, Mari	West Hand Baby Beef
Roduner, Melvin	Showalter, Nancy	Tiyona, Lexie	Western Wireless Corp
Rogalla, Bev M	Siegling, Ronald	Toupal, Lenard	Wilant, Mark L
Rough Riders Club	Sievers, Brandi	Tschetter, Lanna J	Williams, Don R
Runestad, John	Smith, Bradford B	Ulvestad, Lonna	Wynia, Michael R
Salveson, Ted	Smith, Christine L	Vanderwerff, Kent	Yada, Lauren
Sargeant, James	Smith, Margaret	VanMarel, Doug	Zartman, Josephine
Schade, Donavon	Snyder, Charles F	Venjohn, Mike	Zieger, Gladys
Schaeffer, Steven	Songer, Ruth	Voneye, Charles	Zoss, George A

DEMAND ENERGY QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

Your electric bill has two parts: demand and energy use. Demand, or electric load, is measured in kilowatts (kW). Energy use, or consumption, is measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh). Your bill depends on both kW and kWh. The energy consumption part is based on the total kWh used during a specific period, no matter how or when the electricity was used. The demand part of the bill depends on the highest 15-minute demand recorded by the electric meter during that period.

WHAT IS DEMAND?

Demand is the average rate of energy consumption over a 15-minute period. Demand measures how fast energy is being consumed (on average) in a 15-minute interval.

WHY AM I BEING CHARGED FOR DEMAND?

Dakota Energy is billed for demand from East River Electric every month. Power costs are increasing, and a recent cost-of-service study indicates that we need to better capture the costs incurred by each member. Without a demand rate, some members with little demand pay the same amount as members with a lot of demand. The new demand rate allows us to fairly and adequately capture the actual amount of power consumed and its impact on the system.

Additional information can be found on Dakota Energy's website: <https://www.dakotaenergy.coop>. Under "Your Account", there is a page called "Understand Demand Billing" or scanning the QR code at the right.

HOW IS THE DEMAND BILLED/CALCULATED?

Your billed demand is the highest demand recorded in a 15-minute interval on your meter within the billing period. No certain time of day affects your demand; it is based solely on when you use the most major appliances at the same time.

HOW IS DEMAND DIFFERENT FROM KWH?

Energy (kWh) is similar to a car's odometer, the total amount of miles traveled in the billing period. Demand is the speedometer, measuring the speed at which the energy flows. The demand is your highest recorded "miles per hour" speed that month.

HOW CAN I REDUCE MY DEMAND?

Spread out the use of major appliances such as a clothes dryer, an electric range, an oven, and a dishwasher. For example, running the dishwasher while cooking food will have a higher demand than running the dishwasher after cooking food.

HOW CAN I TRACK MY DEMAND?

On your billing statement, it is listed under meter reading information as kW (kilowatts).





The 2006 Youth Tour group takes a photo on the Albert Einstein Memorial in Washington, D.C.
Photo by Brenda Kleinjan

YOUTH TODAY. LEADERS TOMORROW.

South Dakota's Youth Tour Continues to Inspire Leadership Years Later

Frank Turner

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Each summer, a new group of South Dakota teens will board a plane for Washington, D.C., full of excitement for the trip of a lifetime. They're part of the South Dakota Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, a weeklong experience that connects rural students to the people, places and ideas that shape our country.

The Youth Tour began after a 1957 speech by former Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson, who encouraged electric cooperatives to send young people to the Capitol so they could "see what the flag stands for." Since South Dakota sent

its first group in 1963, more than 1,300 students have made the trip.

During the trip, students visit landmarks like Ford's Theater, the National Archives and the U.S. Capitol. They meet members of Congress, make friends from across the country and see firsthand how decisions made in Washington affect people back home.

For many, the most meaningful part of the trip happens long after they return. The experience lights a spark that shapes how they view their communities and their roles within them.

Two of those alumni, Kevin Larsen and Andi Fouberg, still carry lessons from their Youth Tour experiences today.

Kevin Larsen

Kevin Larsen remembers applying for Youth Tour in 2006 as a junior from Howard High School to represent Central Electric Cooperative.

"I've always been a history nut," he said. "My parents, like a lot of farmers, weren't made of money. This was a chance to go see the nation's capital, and I figured, why not apply?"

Once he decided to apply, he approached his high school English teacher, who helped him polish his essay, which landed on the desk of longtime Central Electric Cooperative General Manager Ken Schlimgen. "Lo and behold, the legendary Ken Schlimgen gives me a call," Larsen said. "And the rest is history."

Larsen now serves as the public information officer for the South Dakota State Historical Society in Pierre. He is also active in local organizations and community leadership roles, serving as president of the Pierre Kiwanis Club, incoming exalted ruler for the Pierre Elks Lodge, and in 2025

he ran for a position on the Pierre City Commission, only to come short by a handful of votes.

“These types of trips instill a passion for civics, and I think they mean a lot more for rural South Dakota kids,” Larsen said. “I’m from the middle of nowhere, Canova, South Dakota – a lot of people don’t even know where that is. The nearest town from our farm was six miles away, and that town is 100 people if everybody’s home. I think the opportunity to travel means more coming from somebody that was raised on a farm.”

He laughs when he thinks back to the trip. He keeps in touch with one of his roommates from that week. “You build connections you don’t expect,” he said. “One of the guys I roomed with ended up being a friend of my wife’s, and years later he attended our wedding.”

Larsen also credits his former Youth Tour Director, Brenda Kleinjan, for making the trip a success. “She was so passionate about the places we visited,” he said. “We weren’t just seeing historic monuments; we were learning what they meant.”

For Larsen, that week in D.C. helped set him on a lifelong path of leadership. “That trip really instilled that leadership ability and finding that inner voice to apply for something you might not think would ever happen,” he said. “When I sent off the essay in high school, I would have never imagined in my wildest dreams that I’d get an all-expenses-paid trip to D.C. We even ate well, too.”

Andi Fouberg

When Andi Fouberg applied for the Youth Tour, she was a high school student from Letcher. “I’m pretty sure my best



Kevin Larsen
2006 Youth Tour Alum
Submitted Photo



Andi Fouberg
1994 Youth Tour Alum
Submitted Photo

friend went the year before, and I thought that seemed pretty cool,” she said.

Also representing Central Electric Cooperative, she joined the 1994 Youth Tour, a year she remembers vividly for an unusual reason.

“The night before we left was when O.J. Simpson went on the white Ford Bronco run through Los Angeles,” she said with a laugh. “We watched it on TV in the hotel in Sioux Falls because we met there and stayed the night before we all flew out together.”

The trip instilled an early passion for civic life in Fouberg. After college, she moved to Washington, D.C., and spent 10 years as Sen. John Thune’s communications director.

“Youth Tour was what prompted me to want to be in D.C. at some point,” Fouberg said.

While working for Sen. Thune, Fouberg would regularly meet new Youth Tour students visiting the Capitol every year in June.

“I’d see these students walking the same halls I once toured, wide-eyed and curious, and I’d think, that was me,” she said.

Now, Fouberg leads the South Dakota State University Alumni Association as its president and CEO. She credits that early trip with showing her what public service and connection can look like.

“The trip had an impact on me wanting to be out there and be part of that environment,” she said. “It made me want to be part of the process and feel like you are part of the government machine, but in a way that helps people.”

Reflecting on it now, she believes the experience gives students from small towns something they might not otherwise see.

“Growing up in Letcher or any small community in South Dakota, I don’t know that civic engagement is something you naturally imagine yourself doing without exposure from something like Youth Tour,” she said. “Without exposure to Washington D.C. through something like that, I probably would not have pursued that path. It all had its roots in Youth Tour.”



Kevin Larsen (left) takes a photo with Youth Tour friends at the FDR Memorial in 2006.
Photo by Brenda Kleinjan



401 CREATE

LifeQuest Program Brings Mitchell Community Together

Frank Turner

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As creative director for 401 Create, Jessica Callies spends her days helping others find joy through art, music and connection. The program, part of LifeQuest in Mitchell, has become a place where creativity, inclusion and community come together.

LifeQuest is a nonprofit that has served adults with disabilities for more than 60 years. Its mission is to create opportunities that enrich lives, and 401 Create is one way to achieve that goal. The program began after LifeQuest purchased and renovated its downtown building in 2021, creating a public space where members and community volunteers can gather, collaborate and celebrate creativity.

“The idea of 401 Create came about to build partnerships between the

people we serve and the community of Mitchell,” Callies said.

401 Create serves as both a day program and a public gathering space that Callies describes as a community center, the first of its kind for LifeQuest. The front of the space features a small stage for live music, while the rest of the room often fills with laughter, paintbrushes or the smell of something good baking in the kitchen.

“401 Create is a day program,” Callies said. “A group of LifeQuest members comes most days to take part in the activities we host. It also serves as a public space for the community, so in many ways, it’s like a community center.”

The lineup of activities is as varied as the people who walk through the door. On any given week, you might find a group singing karaoke, a volunteer

LifeQuest and community members are gathered during a cafe night, chatting and laughing, waiting for the live musicians to start their show.

Photo submitted by 401 Create

leading a cooking class or a visiting artist guiding a painting workshop.

“Last summer, we did a 12-week program with Healing Hearts Haven, who used to have a presence in Mitchell but has since moved to Sioux Falls,” Callies said. “She came over from Sioux Falls two days a week and did some creative therapeutic activities, and that was open to the public.”

Each event offers something different, but they all share a common goal: making sure everyone feels welcome. “The goal is always to create opportunities for persons with support to have the same opportunities that people without support have,” Callies said. “We actually have thrown two pep rallies for the basketball team. We can’t always get into every space, but we can invite people into ours.”

That welcoming spirit has turned 401 Create into a lively downtown community hub. Larger events like karaoke or live music nights often draw between 35 and 50 participants.

Smaller art or therapy sessions are kept more intimate, giving each person a chance to explore something new. “Because many of these adults haven’t always had the chance to try activities like this, some are just now discovering what they’re truly interested in,” she said.

It wouldn’t be possible without the volunteers from the Mitchell community who help make it all happen. About a dozen people lend their time regularly, from musicians to business employees who stop in to help with events.

“John Cersosimo is a retired teacher who comes in once or twice a month and plays guitar while we do what I call calm creating,” Callies said. “Chris Foster volunteers once a month to come sing for us, and Northwestern Mutual has sent people down to play bingo once a month.”

That growth has spread beyond LifeQuest. “I’ve seen a lot of people from the general public come in and be kind of surprised at what LifeQuest members are capable of doing,” she said. “Maybe breaking through stereotypes is important.

If I put an activity out, they fill right away. There’s no lack of participation.”

From art exhibits and choir performances to cafe nights and fundraisers, 401 Create has become a place where new connections are made every week.

“The impact isn’t just within the LifeQuest community but within the greater Mitchell community,” she said. “What’s happening at 401 is providing opportunities for things outside of there, which is ultimately the goal.”

Partnerships have played a big role in that success. LifeQuest often works with the Mitchell Area Arts Council and other local groups to bring in instructors, musicians and volunteers.

For Callies, the most rewarding moments are the ones when LifeQuest members take ownership of the space.

“Being able to run an event at 401 Create with LifeQuest members basically doing the legwork and raising money for other nonprofits is really an avenue of success,” she said.



(Above) LifeQuest members (from left to right) Jackson, Payton, Marlena and Taylor groove to Just Dance! on the Nintendo Wii.

(Top left) A group of LifeQuest members work together to paint a spot in Creative Way, an art alley in downtown Mitchell started by the arts council.

(Bottom left) Mindy, Jess, Jenny & Michael pose in front of donations for SafePlace of Eastern South Dakota during a cafe night fundraiser.

Photos submitted by 401 Create

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

Your Phone Number: _____

Your E-mail Address: _____



NOV. 25-DEC. 26
Christmas at the Capitol
8 a.m.-10 p.m. (holidays included)
Pierre, SD
605-773-3178
christmasatthecapitol.sd.gov

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.

NOV. 29
Gregory Mid-Winter Fair
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Gregory Memorial Auditorium
Gregory, SD
605-830-9778

DEC. 1-30
Trees & Trains Exhibit
SD State Railroad Museum
Hill City, SD

DEC. 2
SunCatcher TRA Chilli Cook-off & Dessert Silent Auction
841 E. St. Patrick St.
Rapid City, SD
info@suncatchertra.org

DEC. 4
Parade of Lights
6-7 p.m.
Vermillion, SD
605-624-5571

DEC. 5
Kimball's Hometown Holiday
Main Street
Kimball, SD

DEC. 5-6
Christmas in the Hills
Mueller Center
Hot Springs, SD
605-890-2974

DEC. 5-7, 12-14
Mighty Corson Players Humbug
Dec. 5-6, 12-13: 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 7, 14: 2:30 p.m.
Corson, SD
www.mightycorson.com

DEC. 6
Hometown Christmas
All Day
Milbank, SD
605-432-6656
milbanksd.com/chamber

DEC. 6
KJAM Parade of Lights
5:30 p.m.
Madison, SD
605-256-4514

DEC. 6
Holly Jolly HoeDown on Ice
Fort Pierre Expo Center
Pierre, SD
605-289-1334

DEC. 7
KCBA Hometown Christmas
10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Kadoka City Auditorium
Kadoka, SD
605-488-0151

DEC. 13
Parade of Lights
5:30 p.m.
Aberdeen, SD

DEC. 14
A Poker Alice Christmas
2 p.m.
Gayville Music Hall
Gayville, SD
605-760-5799

DEC. 14
Shaun Johnson Big Band Experience Holiday Show
4 p.m.
Johnson Fine Arts Center
Aberdeen, SD

DEC. 15
Holiday Jam with the Hegg Brothers
7-9 p.m.
H.S. Performing Arts Center
Mitchell, SD

DEC. 21
Bethlehem in Brule County
5 p.m.
Ag Building
Pukwana, SD
605-730-0553

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.