



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

DAKOTA ENERGY

JUNE 2026 VOL. 27 NO. 2

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



River Power Renewed

Fort Randall Renovations

Pages 8-9

Pick, Sloan & the Missouri

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The Fort Randall Dam is retrofitted
with new generating units.
Photo by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

DIRECTORS EARN BOARD LEADERSHIP CERTIFICATE



We are proud to announce that five of our board directors have earned the Credential Cooperative Director (CCD) certificate through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).



From left to right : Darrell Raschke, President; Doug Schaefers, Director; JoAnn Morford, Director; Daniel Langbehn, Secretary; and Brian Bonebright, Treasurer.



The electric industry is continually evolving, bringing new challenges and expectations for cooperative directors. Meeting those expectations requires a strong understanding of the electric utility business, effective governance skills, and a solid knowledge of cooperative principles and the cooperative business model.

Dakota Energy is committed to continuing education through statewide and national programs to ensure our board members are well prepared to lead for the benefit of our members.

The NRECA Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) program requires course attendance and demonstrated understanding of five core competency areas:

- **Director Duties and Liabilities**
- **Understanding the Electric Business**
- **Board Operations and Process**
- **Strategic Planning**
- **Financial Decision Making**

Completing the CCD program reflects our directors' dedication to responsible governance and informed decision making on behalf of the members we serve.

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 Shaefer, Orient
Shaun Schnathorst, Huron
James Wangness, Miller

CEO/General Manager: Chad Felderman

Manager of Operations: Matt Zomer

Manager of Finance & Administration:
Eric Hasart

Marketing & Communications Specialist:
Samantha Brodeen

Manager of Member Services: Jeff Gilbert

IT Administrator: Jared Rakness

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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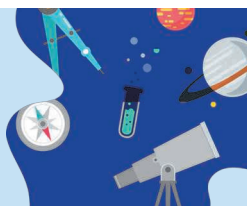
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**DAKOTA ENERGY
COOPERATIVE, INC.**

POWERING CURIOSITY IN OUR SCHOOLS

Bringing electrical safety education into local classrooms



Dakota Energy Cooperative has been busy visiting schools and events across our service territory this spring, teaching students about electrical safety and giving them a behind-the-scenes look at the important work line crews do every day.

In April, we presented at Sunshine Bible Academy, followed by visits with 4th and 5th graders in the Miller School District and 4th–6th graders at Highmore-Harrold School District. Students experienced our interactive Power Town demonstration, highlighting the real dangers of electricity, and got hands-on with a Van de Graaff generator to explore static electricity. They also had the chance to try on lineman gear and build their own mini paper bucket truck.

We also spent time with students at the Huron High School Business and Career Fair and Huron Middle School Career Day, where students toured a bucket truck, watched a pole climb, and took part in engaging group activities.

We're proud to offer these programs each year to promote electrical safety and build strong connections with the communities we serve. If your school is interested in a presentation, let us know!

Below is a look at how Dakota Energy supports local schools across our service territory through 2025 tax contributions distributed in 2026.

School	Total Tax Amount
Huron Independent	\$137,556.84
Iroquois Independent	\$17,343.92
Wolsey-Wessington	\$18,973.16
Willow Lake Independent	\$125,901.97
Wessington Springs Ind.	\$773.89
Doland Independent	\$511.29
Hitchcock-Tulare	\$7,014.95
Faulkton Area	\$4,324.36
Miller Area	\$52,047.39
Redfield Independent	\$3,047.09
Howard	\$59.37
Woonsocket	\$28.86
Highmore-Harrold	\$19,604.96
Chamberlain Independent	\$155.45
Agar-Blunt-Onida	\$106.17
TOTAL	\$387,449.67

NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH: PLUG INTO WHAT MATTERS

Safety is a word that shows up in mission statements, meetings and job sites across every industry. At its best, it reflects preparation, awareness and responsibility.

That's where the difference shows.

Electricity doesn't leave room for shortcuts. It demands attention, consistency and respect every day. For your local cooperative, that responsibility is built into the work.

The job goes beyond delivering power. It protects the people who build and maintain the system and the communities who rely on it. Reliable and affordable electricity matters, and so does making sure every crew member goes home at the end of the day.

That outcome takes focus, repetition and a culture where doing things right matters more than doing them fast.

Built on the Right Habits

Linework is demanding and, at times, dangerous. It's also highly structured. Crews follow national standards designed for utility work. Protective equipment isn't optional. Procedures aren't suggestions.

Before a job begins, it's planned. Crews walk through the work, identify risks and make sure everyone is aligned. Communication stays constant.

What happens after the job matters just as much. Near-misses are tracked, reviewed and discussed to understand what happened and prevent it from happening again. Over time, those lessons build a stronger, more prepared workforce.

Everyone is expected to look out for each other. If something doesn't look right, it gets said. That accountability turns policies into habits.

Contractors working alongside cooperative crews are held to those same expectations.

Extending Beyond the Jobsite

The work doesn't stop at the edge of a right-of-way. Because crews live in the communities they serve, that responsibility carries beyond the job.

Your local cooperative shares electrical safety information through schools, events and outreach. It's simple advice that helps prevent accidents.

June is National Safety Month. Most electrical injuries are preventable, and small decisions matter.

Leave electrical work to qualified professionals. Don't overload outlets. Stay clear of downed power lines and report them. If something looks off, whether it's a damaged transformer or an open substation, say something.

Take the Extra Moment

Electricity is easy to take for granted. But the systems behind it, and the people maintaining them, depend on careful decisions.

When a task involves electricity, take a moment. Look twice. Think it through.

That pause can make all the difference.



"Be safe, lineman!"

Renn Ronning, age 8

Renn urges the line crew to stay safe on the job. Thank you for sharing your picture, Renn! Renn's parents are Justin and Katrina Ronning from Elk Point, 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.

Easy & Delicious FAMILY MEALS

TACO SOUP

Ingredients:

1 lb. hamburger, cooked and drained
1 28 oz. can red or Kidney beans
1 28 oz. can petite diced tomatoes
1 14 oz. can corn
1 pkg. taco seasoning

Method

Put all ingredients into bean pot. Microwave for 20 minutes. Serve with shredded cheese and corn chips. Do not drain liquids.

Marla Gilbert
Southeastern Electric

QUICK PORK CHOP DINNER

Ingredients:

4 pork chops
2 tps. prepared mustard
2 tps. flour
1/2 tsp. salt or Mrs. Dash
Dash of pepper
2 tps. fat or oil
1 10 oz. can of chicken rice soup or chicken broth
1/2 cup water
Add onion, potatoes, carrots, garlic powder to taste

Method

Spread mustard over pork chops and sprinkle with flour, salt and pepper. Brown thoroughly in fat or oil in pressure cooker. Add chicken soup and water. Add vegetables and cover. Set control at 10 and cook 12 minutes or 35 minutes if you add vegetables. Cool pan for 5 minutes, then reduce pressure.

Ruth Konechne
Central Electric

CARAMELIZED HAM & SWISS SLIDERS

Ingredients:

12 Hawaiian dinner rolls, split
1/4 cup horseradish sauce, optional
12 slices deli ham (or 24 if it's thinly sliced)
6 slices Swiss cheese, cut in fourths (so you have 24 squares of cheese)

Sauce

1/2 cup butter
1/4 tsp. onion powder
2 tps. brown sugar
1 tps. Dijon mustard
2 tps. poppy seeds
1-1/2 tps. Worcestershire sauce
1/4 tsp. garlic powder

Method

Spray a 9x9 or 9x13 glass dish with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside. Preheat oven to 325°. Spread roll bottoms with horseradish sauce (if using). Fold up pieces of ham to fit the rolls and place them on the bottom halves of the roll. Next, place 2 squares of cheese, replace roll tops and place in a single layer in the prepared pan.

In a small skillet, heat butter over medium-high heat. Stir in remaining ingredients. Pour over rolls. Cover with foil and bake covered for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake 5 more minutes. *These can also be made ahead of time. Just cover with foil and refrigerate for several hours or overnight. Bake as instructed.

Jerald and Virginia Jensen
Sioux Valley Energy

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 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

LOAD LIMITER

Managing Electric Demand *With a Load Limiter.*

Many members are billed not only for how much electricity they use, but also for how much electricity is used at one time. This is known as electric demand. Even a short spike in usage during a 15-minute period can increase costs for the entire month.

To help members better manage demand, Dakota Energy now offers a Load Limiter option.

What Is a Load Limiter?

A load limiter monitors electric usage in real time and manages selected electric loads when usage approaches a preset limit. Instead of allowing demand to spike, the device temporarily cycles certain non-essential equipment to keep overall demand below the set level.

The goal is simple: reduce peak demand with minimal change in comfort or daily routines.

How It Works

- The member selects a maximum demand level
- Specific electric loads are chosen for management
- When demand approaches the limit, the device automatically manages those selected loads
- Once demand drops, normal operation resumes

This process runs automatically and quietly in the background at all times.

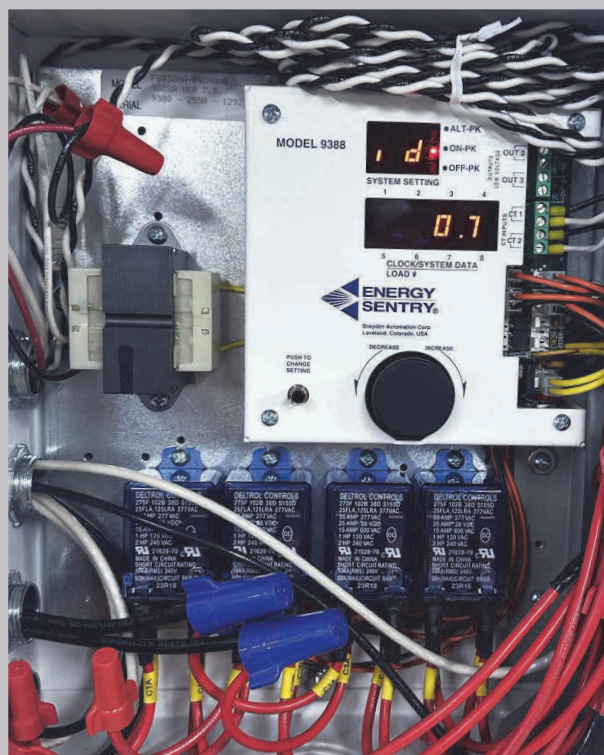
What Type of Loads Can Be Managed?

Load limiters are most effective with larger electric loads that can be cycled briefly, including:

- Water heaters
- Space heating equipment
- Pumps or fans
- Hot tubs
- Washers and dryers
- Stoves
- Dishwashers
- Other non-essential electric equipment

Installation and Use

Installation is quick and performed by trained electrical professionals. Once installed, the device operates automatically based on the selected demand limit. No daily adjustments are required.



Benefits of a Load Limiter

- Reduces peak electric demand
- Helps protect against higher demand charges
- Improves overall energy efficiency
- Automatically manages loads with no manual action

Users will see immediate savings potential by preventing a single high-demand event.

Who Is This For?

- Homes on a residential demand rate
- Buildings with noticeable demand spikes
- Members who want more control over electric costs
- Agricultural or commercial operations with large electric equipment

Cost and Installation

Load limiters cost approximately \$1,000, with additional labor and mileage fees. Installation time and total cost vary depending on the type and number of electric loads being managed.

Learn More

Interested in managing electric demand? Dakota Energy can help determine whether a load limiter is a good fit for your home or business. Contact us to learn more.

(605) 352-8591 | info@dakotaenergy.coop | [Dakota Energy Cooperative](#) | www.dakotaenergy.coop



MARCH 2026

The Board of Directors met on Tuesday, March 24, 2026, with Directors Baum, Bonebright, Langbehn, Morford, Nemec, Raschke, Schaefer, Schnathorst, and Wangness present. Manager Felderman and Employees Brodeen, Gilbert, Hasart, Kempf, Picek, Rakness, and Zomer were present.

MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Felderman reported on the following items:

- Monthly energy sales and revenue
- Basin Electric
- SDREA updates on Wildfire Mitigation Plan and new DOT requirements
- Border States inventory
- GHDC
- CRC
- New substation request
- Potential new service update
- City of Miller

OFFICE SERVICES REPORT

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

- February financial reports
- SAMS registration
- EIA - 861 survey
- Federated insurance renewal
- 2025 year-end report
- 2025 outside consultants

OPERATIONS REPORT

Manager of Operations Zomer reported on the following items:

- Construction, maintenance, and retirement activities
- Tree trimming
- Heat testing underground circuits
- Rebuilding irrigation services
- Huron substation outage scheduled April 6-May 7 for East River upgrades

- Pole changes
- March 23 outage
- 2026 construction projects
- CRC
- February outages

MEMBER SERVICES REPORT

Manager of Member Services Gilbert reported on the following items:

- Wiring department workload
- Potential hazards
- Load control savings
- Demand limiter update
- A/C load control removals
- Electric motor promotional materials

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Marketing & Communications Specialist Brodeen reported on the following items:

- Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Week
- Upcoming community events
- Staffing update
- Motor shop promotion

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REPORT

Information Technology Administrator Rakness reported on the following items:

- Security news
- Website/cybersecurity
- Demand material
- Outage Management System

BOARD ACTION

The following items were acted upon:

- Accepted the reports as presented
- Accepted the 2025 audit report
- Approved the budget amendment for replacement of the HVAC system in the Huron office
- Approved \$500 donation to Ree Heights Roundup
- Approved policies include: Policy No. 045 – Billing Deposits, Policy No. 047 – Non-Sufficient Funds or No-Account Checks, Policy No. 048 – Service Charges on Past Due Accounts (Non-Electric), Policy No. 069 – Billing, Meter Reading and Collections

BOARD REPORTS

Director Raschke reported on the East River Board meeting.

Next monthly board meeting is May 26, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. in the Huron office.

Year-to-Date Financial Report

	Mar-26	Year-to-Date
Total Revenue	\$2,536,829	\$7,834,199
Cost of Power	\$1,743,184	\$5,220,543
Operating Expenses	\$684,803	\$2,205,610
Total Margins	\$195,570	\$641,334
KwH's Purchased	20,495,617	64,135,363
Services in Place		3,654
Miles of Line		2,530
Members per Mile		1.44

Wholesale power costs, taxes, interest, and depreciation account for 84.13% of DEC's total cost of service.



SAVE THE DATE

DAKOTA ENERGY COOPERATIVE, INC.

Annual Meeting

THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 2026



The rotor is lifted out of the generator unit using two cranes. This component of the generator will be reused once other parts are replaced.
Photo Submitted by USACE

RENEWING RIVER POWER

Fort Randall Dam Undergoes Multiyear Renovation

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

A 72-year old hydropower dam in southeast South Dakota is the first of the state's four mainstream Missouri River dams to undergo a substantial retrofit to improve the facility's efficiency and reliability.

Fort Randall Dam, which began operating in 1954, was built near Pickstown, South Dakota, through the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program. The program was included in the Flood Control Act of 1944 by Congress to dam the Missouri River at multiple points to improve the region's water management, irrigation, flood control and navigation while also generating much-needed hydropower. *(See Pages 12-13 for more on how the program came to be.)* A marvel at the time of its construction, the two-mile-long rolled-earth dam holds back 5.4 million acre-feet of water in Lake Francis Case. The dam's eight turbine generators have a maximum generating capacity of 320 megawatts – enough electricity to power about 245,000 homes.

Now, more than seven decades later, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is looking to boost those numbers and revitalize the aging dam with state-of-the-art, 21st-century technology to ensure the facility keeps up with the region's modern energy demands.

Overseeing the multi-year project is Maintenance and Operations Manager Michael Schenkel, who's spent the last 14 years at the Fort Randall Project overseeing the facility's maintenance, operation and planning. Schenkel says while the dam's eight original 72-year-old generators and turbines have served reliably, a renewal will improve the project's operation.

"Like many aging public assets, it's time for reinvestment," Schenkel said. "The turbine-generator units were installed in the

1950s and are beyond their expected service life. We're replacing them to ensure long-term energy and infrastructure resilience."

He pointed out that the USACE got its money's worth with the original generators, saying how rare it is for a generator to last over 70 years without needing a rewind – referring to the process of replacing the stators, or the copper windings and insulation that help convert the turbine's rotation into electricity. Over time, heat, vibration and age can weaken that insulation and increase the risk of failure. Schenkel noted that Fort Randall is the only Missouri River dam in South Dakota that has retained its original stators up to this point.

The scale of the units pose a significant challenge – each unit is 40 feet tall and weighs more than 400 tons, necessitating piece-by-piece transport, assembly and installation. Voith Hydro North America, the company awarded the contract to manufacture and install the new turbine runners and generator stators, began the decommissioning and replacement of the first generator in July of 2025. USACE expects that generator to be offline until November 2026 after installation is complete and engineers can inspect it for any issues. Once the first unit is back online and clears inspection, engineers will give the contractor the green light to proceed. To keep up with hydropower demand and allow adequate flow downstream, USACE's goal is to keep six units operating and two units offline for renovation at a time until the project is wrapped up in 2031.

Schenkel explained how the upgrade solves two problems at once: it replaces aging components in the dam and provides the opportunity to install new, highly efficient generators and turbines to produce more power with the same amount of water.

Fort Randall's original turbines generate hydropower most efficiently with 103 feet of head – the vertical distance between the water levels above and below the dam, determining the pressure at which water moves through the turbine. At 103 feet of head, each generator will produce about 31 megawatts of electricity.

However, due to the region's fluctuating power demands, water

management and other factors, operating in the efficient middle ground isn't always ideal. Schenkel says USACE often operates Fort Randall at 40 megawatts and 119 feet of head – about 4% below peak efficiency.

To solve this problem of lost efficiency, the new turbines being installed are highly-efficient, rated for 52 megawatts at 119 feet of head. This change raises the facility's total generating capacity from 320 megawatts to about 400 megawatts – enough electricity to power more than 300,000 homes.

"We expect to recover roughly 10% more energy output from the same water volume," Schenkel said. "Essentially free power beyond the capital investment once the upgrade is complete."

As part of the renovation, USACE also completed as-needed updates to the switch yard, which is the infrastructure that routes power to transmission lines for transport across the region.

Electricity generated at the Fort Randall Dam is managed, transported and sold by the Western Area Power Administration under the U.S. Department of Energy.

As a co-op member, part of your utility's energy mix is hydropower from the Missouri River dams, including Fort Randall, "so this work directly affects co-op members," Schenkel added.

Looking at the dam's age and efficiency profile – and also being the only dam in South Dakota possessing its original stator windings – Schenkel said Fort Randall was the clear priority. The USACE has begun planning a similar renovation project for the Oahe Dam.

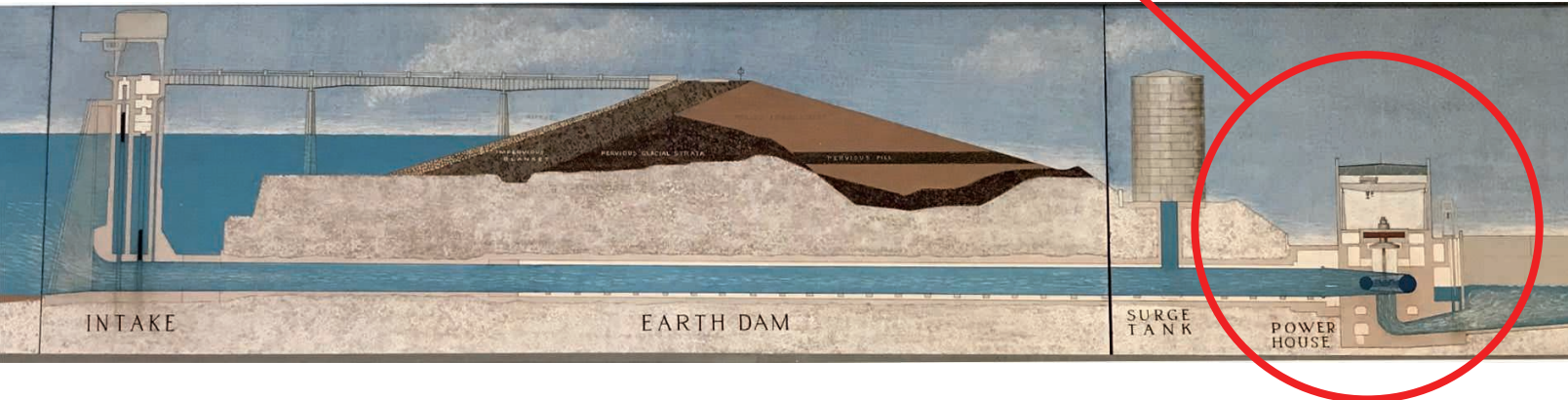
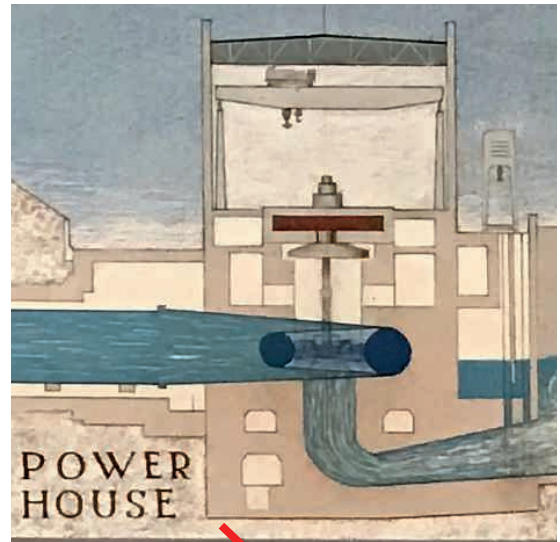
Work at the Fort Randall Project is scheduled to wrap up in 2031 once all eight generating units are replaced.



Above: The Fort Randall Dam is equipped with eight turbines. Unit 6 turbine is shown being removed for the first time since it went online in 1955.

Below & Right: A visual of Fort Randall Dam. Water flows into the powerhouse via the intake tunnel. As the water passes through, it spins the turbine. The rotor, connected to the turbine, spins inside the stator. As the rotor spins inside the stator, its magnetic field passes through copper windings and produces electricity.

Photos Submitted by USACE



DAKOTA ENERGY AWARDS 2026 SCHOLARSHIPS

Dakota Energy Cooperative, Inc. is proud to invest in the future of our local communities by awarding \$4,000 in scholarships to six outstanding students through its 2026 Scholarship Program. These students exemplify academic excellence, leadership, and a strong commitment to service.

Scholarship applicants must be a child or dependent of a Dakota Energy member or employee. Recipients are chosen based on academic performance, leadership qualities, school and community involvement, honors and awards, work experience, and personal recommendations.

\$1,000 Basin Electric Scholarships

Jonah Beck

Jonah Beck, a senior at Huron High School, has been awarded a \$1,000 Basin Electric Member Cooperative Consumer Scholarship. He plans to attend South Dakota State University, where he will pursue a degree in K-12 Music Education. Jonah is the son of Laura and Jared Beck of Huron.



Belle Niederbaumer

Belle Niederbaumer, a senior at James Valley Christian School, also received a \$1,000 Basin Electric Member Cooperative Consumer Scholarship. She will attend South Dakota State University to study Nutrition & Health Sciences. Belle is the daughter of Cindy and Matt Niederbaumer of Huron.



\$500 Dakota Energy Scholarships

Addyson Baruth

Addyson Baruth, a senior at Woonsocket High School, received a \$500 Dakota Energy Scholarship. She will attend Northern State University, majoring in Psychology with a minor in Elementary Education. Addyson is the daughter of Melissa and Rob Baruth of Alpena.



Cole Cavenee

Cole Cavenee, a senior at Miller High School, was awarded a \$500 Dakota Energy Scholarship. He plans to attend Mitchell Technical College to study Power Sports & Marine Technology. Cole is the son of Stephanie and Matt Cavenee of Miller.



Hylton Heinz

Hylton Heinz, a senior at Huron High School, received a \$500 Dakota Energy Scholarship. She will attend Dakota State University, where she will pursue Elementary Education while competing on the university's basketball team. Hylton is the daughter of Dennis Heinz of Huron.



Jayce Pugh

Jayce Pugh, a senior at Miller High School, was also selected to receive a \$500 Dakota Energy Scholarship. She plans to attend South Dakota State University to pursue a degree in Nursing. Jayce is the daughter of Chelsea and Riley Pugh of Miller.



Dakota Energy Cooperative congratulates each of these students on their achievements and is honored to support them as they take the next step in their educational journeys. We look forward to seeing the positive impact they will make in their communities and beyond.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS SPOTLIGHT

DANIEL LANGBEHN | DEC Board Secretary

Huron, SD | Beadle District
Serving on the board for two years, Dan has been a Dakota Energy member for more than 50 years. Now retired, he previously worked as a Technology Coordinator and Network Administrator for the local school district, bringing valuable experience in technology and problem-solving to the board.



Serving Members with a Cooperative Mindset

A member of Dakota Energy Cooperative since 1974 and a lifelong resident of Beadle County, Dan says serving on the board is a way to give back to the cooperative that has served his family very well throughout his married life.

"I wanted to be a voice for our members, to be that direct link between the cooperative and the members," he said. "Serving as a director is a way for me to ensure our members continue to have safe, reliable, and affordable power, while keeping future generations of members in mind. I want to be someone our members feel comfortable approaching and asking questions."

The cooperative principle that resonates most strongly with him is "Concern for Community," pointing to Dakota Energy's scholarships, student trips to Washington, D.C., school safety demonstrations, and support of senior centers and community events throughout the service territory.

One board accomplishment he is most proud of is the decision to start Electric Motor Services. "We felt there

was a need for an electrical motor repair shop and have gone forward with this endeavor," he said. "I feel good about being a part of this board, who are trying to figure out what we can best do to help our members."

He says rising costs continue to be one of the biggest challenges facing the cooperative. Power costs take up just under 75% of our expenses. Equipment costs for wire, transformers, and trucks also continue to increase, which impacts the cooperative's overall budget. Even through those challenges, the board continues working to control costs while making sure the system remains safe and reliable so members can "turn on the lights and have the power you need."

Dan also stays active in the community outside of board service. He serves as a substitute teacher in Huron Middle School and High School and enjoys spending time working in his garden during the summer months.

"If you have a question, please call the Dakota Energy office, get signed up, and come to our board meetings and talk to us," he said. "We are all member-owners of this cooperative, and we will continue working together to do what is best for our members."

NEW PLAN FOCUSES ON WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION

Proactive steps to strengthen system safety, reliability, and community protection.



Reduction of
Ignition
Potential



System and
Environmental
Monitoring



Enhanced
Vegetation
Management



Expanded Public
Communications and
Outreach

Dakota Energy is preparing to implement a wildfire mitigation plan in the coming months to help reduce risk and protect the communities we serve.

This effort follows the passage of South Dakota Senate Bill 36, signed into law in March 2026. The law requires utilities to develop formal plans focused on reducing wildfire risk while maintaining safe and reliable electric service.

Dakota Energy's plan will outline steps to identify higher-risk areas, strengthen inspection and maintenance practices, and manage vegetation near power lines. It will also include procedures for operating during high-risk conditions, coordination with local and state agencies, and strategies for restoring power if a wildfire occurs.

Dakota Energy has long taken steps to reduce wildfire risk through routine line inspections, vegetation maintenance, and system monitoring. This new plan formalizes those efforts into a comprehensive strategy designed to strengthen preparedness and response across the cooperative's 3,500-square-mile service territory. With such a large rural area to serve, proactive planning is essential to help crews respond quickly and safely if a wildfire occurs.

As a cooperative, Dakota Energy will submit its plan to the Board of Directors for approval and will provide annual updates as required.

This plan is part of Dakota Energy's continued commitment to safety, reliability, and responsible service to our members.

THE PICK-SLOAN PLAN

Taming North America's Longest Waterway

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyok@sdrea.coop

In the 1930s, both the upper Missouri River and its home in rural America looked notably different than they do today.

That was a period in which electricity was still a luxury enjoyed by townsfolk lucky enough to have a municipal or investor-owned utility serving the community. As rural neighbors founded electric cooperatives to serve their homes, the once-primitive prairie quickly began to light up. And with that step into the modern age came the growing need for more electricity.

At this same time, the 2,300-mile-long Missouri River passing through seven states in the region was proving to be an untamable, destructive force for the communities and agriculture producers on its banks.

The floods would wreak havoc on riverside cities like Omaha, Kansas City, St. Louis, and Mississippi River communities like Memphis and New Orleans during swells, disrupting economic activity and trade. During low-flow years and toward the end of summer, the low water levels made navigation extremely difficult for barge traffic.

These problems had been ongoing. All the way back in 1933, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal constructed the Fort Peck Dam near Glasgow, Mont. There, the nearly 4-mile-



The Missouri River floods downtown Pierre in 1952 before the Oahe Dam is complete.

Photo Courtesy of S.D. State Historical Society

long and 250-foot high rolled-earth dam created Fort Peck Lake, stretching 134 miles across eastern Montana and generating up to 185 MW of electricity. Even so, the federal government understood more work was needed to fully rein in the power of the Missouri.

Competing Visions: Pick vs. Sloan

Lewis A. Pick, an officer with the US Army Corps of Engineers, and William G. Sloan, an official with the Bureau of Reclamation, each had a vision for the future of the Missouri River Basin.

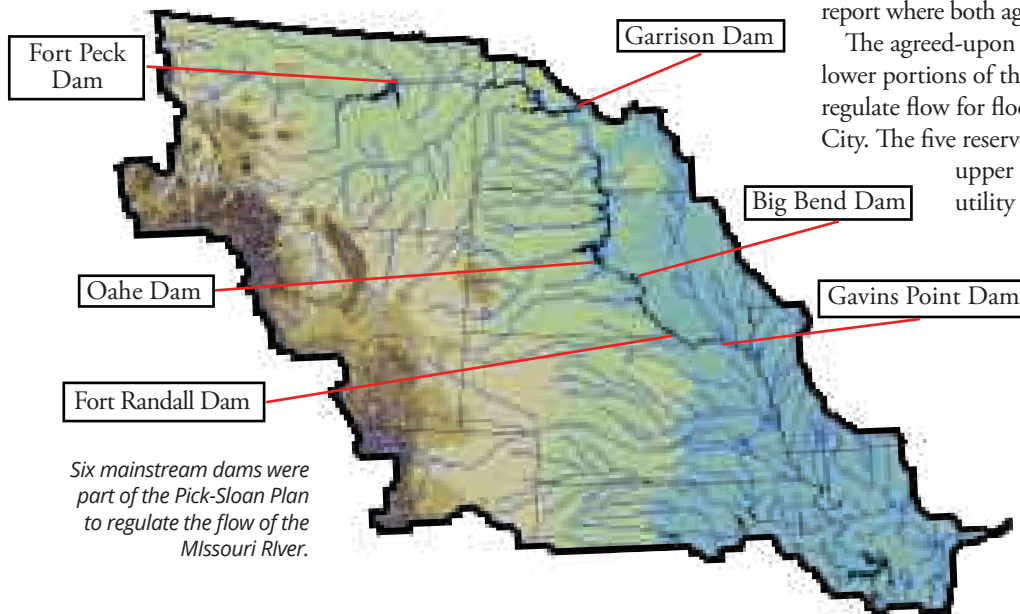
Pick envisioned large dams on the main channel of the Missouri River with a focus on flood control and navigation downstream in the lower Missouri River basin. His plan included five main-channel dams with levees from Sioux City, Iowa, to the river's confluence with the Mississippi River in St. Louis, Missouri.

Sloan, on the other hand, wanted the projects to benefit the upper Missouri River basin, with a focus on water storage for irrigation and agricultural development. Sloan recommended dozens of smaller dams with hydro-electric power plants.

The battle between the USACE and DOR was contentious, but it became clear that no side could garner enough support on its own to pass a project with price tags of about \$1 billion each.

Finally, in 1944, USACE and DOR released a joint engineering report where both agencies' goals for the basin were represented.

The agreed-upon plan would benefit both the upper and lower portions of the basin, with five hydro-power dams to regulate flow for flood control and navigation past Sioux City. The five reservoirs would store water for uses in the upper basin, including irrigation, recreation, utility systems and hydropower generation.



Six mainstream dams were part of the Pick-Sloan Plan to regulate the flow of the Missouri River.



Oahe Dam during construction in 1958.
Photo Courtesy of S.D. State Historical Society

Fort Randall Dam (1946-1954)

Location: Pickstown, S.D.

Length: 10,700 feet long – over 2 miles!

Height: 165 feet at highest point

Generating Capacity: 8 hydroelectric generating units producing up to 320 MW. (See pp. 8-9)

Completed in the 1950s, Fort Randall was the first of South Dakota's mainstream Missouri River dams to come online, generating hydropower for the region and changing the river from a threat into a resource. The Fort Randall Dam creates Lake Francis Case, named for South Dakota's US Senator and Pick-Sloan advocate Francis Higbee Case. The reservoir can store about 5.3 million acre-feet of water (enough water to flood 5.3 million acres at a depth of 1 foot).

Garrison Dam (1947-1955)

Location: Riverdale, N.D.

Length: 11,300 feet long – over 2 miles!

Height: 210 feet at highest point

Generating Capacity: 5 hydroelectric generating units producing up to 583 MW.

Garrison Dam creates lake Sakakawea, which stretches across western and central North Dakota. The reservoir is the largest on the Missouri River, holding more than 23.5 million acre-feet of water. The dam is named after the nearby town, Garrison. Controversially, the lake flooded the homes of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara tribal nations.

Oahe Dam (1948-1963)

Location: Pierre/Fort Pierre, S.D.

Length: 9,360 feet long – about 1.8 miles!

Height: 245 feet at highest point

Generating Capacity: 7 hydroelectric generating units producing up to 786 MW.

Oahe Dam sits north of Pierre and Fort Pierre, forming Lake Oahe. The reservoir can hold about 23 million acre-feet of water. Oahe Dam has the highest generation capacity, producing enough electricity to power about 600,000 homes.

The dam and lake's name came from the Oahe Indian Mission established more than 70 years before. The mission's site, as well as other communities and tribal lands, were submerged beneath the reservoir.

Gavin's Point Dam (1952-1957)

Location: Yankton, S.D.

Length: 8,700 feet long – about 1.6 miles.

Height: 74 feet at highest point

Generating Capacity: 3 hydroelectric generating units producing up to 132 MW.

The farthest downriver dam on the Missouri, Gavin's Point is a dam essential for controlling the water levels for downstream barge traffic starting at Sioux City on the Missouri River and all the way down to New Orleans on the Mississippi River. The dam creates Lewis and Clark Lake on the South Dakota-Nebraska border, with a storage capacity of 492,000 acre-feet of water.

Big Bend Dam (1959-1966)

Location: Fort Thompson, S.D.

Length: 10,570 feet long – about 2 miles.

Height: 95 feet at highest point

Generating Capacity: 8 hydroelectric generating units producing up to 439 MW.

The final mainstream Pick-Sloan dam to be completed on the Missouri River, Big Bend Dam creates Lake Sharpe, holding about 1.7 million acre-feet of water.

The Good and the Bad

A lot of good came from the Pick-Sloan Plan: affordable hydropower for communities throughout the region and water storage to mitigate drought and reduce flooding.

However, a project of such magnitude will also naturally have downsides. University of South Dakota Professor David Swanson says the disruption of

natural patterns has affected ecology for riverside habitats.

Cottonwood seedlings need wet, sandy soil to germinate – without spring floods, it's hard for new trees to establish. Today, there are fewer young cottonwoods growing.

In addition, birds like the least tern that nest on sand bars struggle to find suitable ground, affecting populations.

The reservoirs also flooded more than 1 million acres of land along the Missouri River, some held by private landowners and tribes, and displaced about 6,000 people from land where their families had lived for generations.

In South Dakota, several former communities lay beneath Lake Oahe, including parts of Polluck and Forest City.

Between Chamberlain and Oacoma, American Island was once a statewide destination for boy scouts, with its miles of forest, camp with cabins and bathhouse, racetrack. Today, it sits below dozens of feet of water in Lake Francis Case.



American Island's locally-famous animal statues were moved before Lake Francis Case flooded the island.
Photo Courtesy of the Cozard Memorial Library



Tribal leader George Gillette wipes tears as land is seized for the Garrison Dam.
Photo Courtesy of National Archives



BUILT ON SAFETY

Members of SDREA's Loss Control team, from left: Joe Denison, Josh Risty and Travis Schroeder. Photo by Frank Turner

SDREA's Loss Control Program Prioritizes Safety in the Field

Frank Turner

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June marks National Safety Month, a time to recognize the systems and decisions that keep people safe on the job. For electric cooperatives, that responsibility extends far beyond a single month. It is built into the daily operations and of an electric cooperative. In South Dakota, SDREA's loss control program promotes up-to-date safety standards through trainings, jobsite guidance and resources aimed at preventing accidents before they happen.

Leading that effort is SDREA Loss Control Manager Josh Risty, who stepped into the role earlier this year working alongside fellow loss control professionals Joe Denison and Travis Schroeder as part of SDREA's loss

control team.

Although new to SDREA, Risty brings years of experience as a lineman and lessons about safety from his time working in the field.

While attending line school at Mitchell Technical College in 2010, Risty was selected as one of a small group of students sent to assist with restoration efforts at Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative after a major winter storm. The storm was severe enough that cooperatives called on line school students to help, bringing in crews from across the region to restore widespread outages.

"It was eye-opening in every way," Risty said. "It was a great experience, and it really helped me build some knowledge for the job. It actually fueled my drive to become a lineman even more."

Just as memorable was the response from the community. Crews were fed, supported and taken care of by people who understood what was at stake. The experience also underscored a broader responsibility – restoring power not just as a service, but as something essential to the people who rely on it.

That lesson carried forward as Risty continued his career. After line school, he gained experience at Sioux Valley Energy before moving into roles with FEM Electric Association and later H-D Electric Cooperative, where his understanding of safety continued to develop in the field.

"The job has its dangers and its risks, but how you manage that risk to get the job done is a big part of safety. There's a safe way of going about it," Risty said.

Working alongside experienced linemen, he learned to focus on the details – how conditions, equipment and environment could change the outcome of a job. One moment from

that time continues to stand out.

Risty and a fellow lineman were preparing to transfer a residential service from overhead to underground. Normally, the job would require shutting off power. In this case, the resident depended on medical equipment and could not lose electricity.

Instead of postponing the work, the crew worked through another option. By testing and identifying matching electrical conditions, they completed the transfer without interrupting service.

“We were able to make the change without shutting them off,” Risty said.

Experiences like that reinforced the level of responsibility that comes with the job – not just for the crew, but for the people relying on that service.

As his career progressed, Risty was exposed to different crews and approaches, but the same core principles continued to surface: communication, attention to detail and taking the time to do the job right. Over time, those lessons shifted into leadership, shaping how he now approaches training and safety across the state.

That philosophy now shapes the work of SDREA’s loss control team.

“You can’t just check a box and say you covered safety,” he said. “It has to connect. It has to be something that guys can take with them and use every day.”

It’s a lesson that the cooperative network knows well. Risty said that safety across the system has continued to move in the right direction. From improved equipment to more consistent training and stronger communication in the field, he has seen a clear shift over the course of his career.

“I think the culture of safety has really improved over the last 20 years,” Risty said. “There’s more training, more opportunities to learn and a stronger focus on why it matters.”

That progress, he said, is built on accountability and looking out for the people working alongside you.

“It’s not just about yourself,” Risty said. “It’s about the guy next to you and making sure everyone goes home safe.”

That focus now drives how SDREA’s loss control team approaches training, emphasizing real-world application and situations crews may encounter

in the field. Risty said the work is collaborative, with Denison and Schroeder helping shape how the program continues to evolve.

Looking ahead, the goal for SDREA’s loss control team and the broader cooperative network remains the same:

“You want everyone to go home at the end of the day, the same way they showed up,” Risty said.



SDREA Loss Control Manager Josh Risty is pictured with his family.
Photo submitted by Josh Risty



JUNE 19-20
77th Annual Tabor
Czech Days
 Food, Dancing, Parade
 Tabor, SD
taborczechdays.com

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 4-6
Black Hills Quilt Show
 Thurs. 5-8 p.m.
 Fri. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Sat. 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Rushmore Hall
 at the Monument
 Rapid City, SD

JUNE 5
Northern Bull Riding Tour
 Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

JUNE 6
Bulls 'n' Pulls
Antique Tractor Pull
 Prairie Village
 Madison, SD

JUNE 12-14
South Shore 125th
Anniversary Celebration
 South Shore, SD
 605-756-4130
www.southshore-sd.com

JUNE 13
Journey Into Historic Pickstown
 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Ft. Randall Town & Museum
 Pickstown, SD
 605-487-7299

JUNE 13
Luce Pioneer Day
 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Rope & Candle Making, Butter
 Churning, Dutch Oven Cooking
 Lake Herman State Park
 Madison, SD
 605-880-5077

JUNE 19
Dalesburg Midsummer
Festival
 A Celebration of Scandinavian
 & Rural Heritage
 Dalesburg Lutheran Church
 Vermillion, SD
www.dalesburg.org

JUNE 20
Alexandria Car Show
 Registration:
 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m.
 Car Show: 12-4 p.m.
 Alexandria, SD
 605-770-4717

JUNE 24-26
Bruce Honey Days
 Bruce, SD
 605-627-5671

JUNE 24-27
Crystal Springs Rodeo
 Clear Lake, SD
 605-874-2996

JUNE 25-27
37th Annual Red Power
Round Up
 South Dakota State Fairgrounds
 Huron, SD
 Contact: Dale Steffen
 605-680-0011

JUNE 26-27
Buckhorn Rodeo
 Britton, SD
 605-880-5077

JUNE 27-JULY 5
Woonsocket Water Festival
 Red, White & Splash!
 Woonsocket, SD
woonsocketsd.com/Water-Festival

JULY 2-4
USA 250th Celebration
at Mount Rushmore
 Rapid City, SD
www.nps.gov

JULY 10-12
Rooted: A Prairie Arts
Weekend
 Geddes, SD
AuthenticArts605.com/gallery

JULY 11
40th Annual Spearfish Canyon
Half Marathon & 5K
 Start: 7 a.m., Savoy, SD
 End: City Park, Spearfish, SD
 Register: www.nhcaso.org

JULY 18
SD MCC Relief Sale
 Helping Others 'Round the World
 Museum: 10 a.m.
 Food Court, Bake Sale: 11 a.m.
 Pioneer Hall
 Freeman, SD
 605-925-7009
sdmccreliefsale.weebly.com

JULY 18-19
10th Annual Charles Mix
Saddle Club SDRA Rodeo
 Geddes, SD
 605-680-2763

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.