



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

**RENVILLE-SIBLEY**  
**FEBRUARY 2026 VOL. 26 NO. 10**

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

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Sponsors Co-op Lineman**

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Dirty Jobs star Mike Rowe with Work Ethic Scholarship  
recipient Tayden Wells at Mitchell Technical College  
*Submitted Photo*

# Get Involved! Join Us for Member Informational Meetings and the Annual Meeting



**Amy Ervin**  
Executive Admin  
and HR

This March, we invite you to connect with Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association by attending our Member Informational Meetings and Annual Meeting.

These events are a great opportunity for you—the members we proudly serve—to visit with our board of directors, employees, and leadership team and share what's on your mind.

We truly value your input. Your questions, ideas, and feedback help guide the decisions we make for our cooperative and our communities.

### Member Informational Meetings

Our Member Informational Meetings are designed to encourage open conversation in a smaller group setting. While we'll provide a short presentation, these meetings are meant to be interactive. Members are welcome to ask questions, raise concerns, or discuss any topic they'd like.

To make it easy to attend, we're hosting four meetings at different times and locations throughout our service territory. Please feel free to join us at whichever meeting works best for you:

- Monday, March 9, 2026 @ 9:30 a.m. – Fairfax Community Center
- Tuesday, March 10, 2026 @ 6:30 p.m. – Redwood Area Community Center
- Thursday, March 12, 2026 @ 1:30 p.m. – Sacred Heart Community Center
- Saturday, March 14, 2026 @ 9:30 a.m. – RSCPA Boardroom, Danube

### Annual Meeting

We also hope you'll plan to attend our Annual Meeting on Thursday, March 26, 2026, at the Redwood Area Community Center.

During the meeting, we'll share a few brief business updates, including a financial summary from 2025, announce the results of the Board of Directors election, and welcome our guest speaker.

We'll be sure to have some fun, too. The evening will conclude with door prizes for adults, and prizes for kids, and a delicious meal for everyone to enjoy.

### You have a say.

Spending time with our members and hearing your perspectives is important to us. The electric industry continues to change, and new technology and evolving needs affect how electricity is delivered to homes, farms, schools, and businesses.

As we plan for the future, your feedback helps us understand what matters most to you and your neighbors. Your input plays an important role in shaping the direction of the cooperative.

The Annual Meeting is also when members vote on board directors and, at times, on issues brought forward for membership consideration. This is one of the most direct ways you can have a say in how your cooperative is governed.

Our board of directors is comprised of nine (9) members who live and work right here in our local service area, so they are in the best position to know where community investments are most needed. And by the way, we hope you'll consider running for the board in the future – we're always looking for folks who care about our community who would be willing to serve.

### Your Electric Bill Is an Investment in Your Community

Renville-Sibley is not an ordinary utility—we're a cooperative. That means our members are also our owners. Every time you pay your electric bill, you're investing in your cooperatives, Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association and our wholesale power providers, East River Electric and Basin Electric Cooperatives.

After covering the cost of wholesale power, remaining funds stay right here in the local community. These dollars are reinvested in our system to maintain reliability, strengthen the electric grid, and ensure safe, dependable service for everyday life. Local input matters—those closest to the community understand its needs and priorities, helping guide how co-op dollars are spent.

While our core mission is to provide safe, reliable, and affordable electricity, we're also guided by a commitment to serve our members and communities—not to generate profits.

We hope you'll take advantage of the benefits of your cooperative membership and join us for the Annual Meeting on March 26. We look forward to seeing you and visiting with you.





# SAVE THE DATE

## 88<sup>th</sup> RENVILLE-SIBLEY ANNUAL MEETING

THURSDAY 26TH OF MARCH 2026

Redwood Area Community  
Center in Redwood Falls

Renville-Sibley's 88th Annual Meeting will be held on March 26, 2026, at the Redwood Area Community Center in Redwood Falls. More annual meeting information will be provided in upcoming newsletters.

## Member Informational Meetings

Each year, Renville-Sibley holds Member Informational Meetings throughout the service area. These meetings are held at various days and times with the hope that if one day or time doesn't work for a member, another day or time might. All members are encouraged to attend these meetings to learn more about Renville-Sibley and the electric industry. This year, the schedule is as follows:

**March 9, 2026 @ 9:30 a.m. – Monday –  
Fairfax Community Center**

**March 10, 2026 @ 6:30 p.m. – Tuesday –  
Redwood Area Community Center**

**March 12, 2026 @ 1:30 p.m. – Thursday –  
Sacred Heart Community Center**

**March 14, 2026 @ 9:30 a.m. – Saturday –  
Danube, RSCPA Boardroom**

A light snack will be provided at each of the meetings. We look forward to seeing you at the Member Informational Meetings in March. 811600

## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### RENVILLE-SIBLEY CO-OP POWER

(USPS 019-074)

#### Board of Directors

Whitey Hinderman – Chair  
Roger Manthei – Vice Chair  
Vicky Firl – Secretary/Treasurer  
Jeff Boersma  
Gary Eekhoff  
Alan Neyers  
Gary Peterson  
Helen Ruebel  
Wayland Zaske

#### Renville-Sibley Employees

Gene Alex – Line Superintendent  
Brian Athmann – Journeyman Lineman  
Shawn Beckler – Crew Chief  
Mike Benson – Journeyman Lineman  
Brad Braulick – Crew Chief  
Nick Bruns – Technology Manager  
Anthony Carruth – Journeyman  
Lineman  
Amy Ervin – Executive Admin and HR  
Brayden Fischer – Journeyman Lineman  
Carren Frank – Cooperative Support  
Specialist  
DeeAnne Norris – CEO  
Clint Olson – Journeyman Lineman  
Marc Snyder – Cooperative Analyst  
Jill Woods – Member Services  
Professional

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**Web site: [www.rscpa.coop](http://www.rscpa.coop)**

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# FIVE WAYS TO SAFEGUARD YOUR HOME THIS WINTER

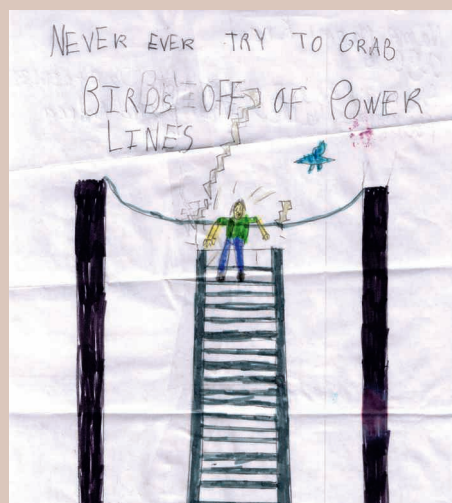
As the temperatures drop and the days grow shorter, there's a natural inclination to create a warm and cozy haven at home. Unfortunately, as we see increased use of heating equipment, candles and electrical items, the number of home fires tends to increase during winter months.

### Here are five ways you can safeguard your home for the winter season.

1. Ensure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly. If your detectors are battery-operated, replace the batteries annually. Test the detectors once a month and give them a good dusting to ensure the sensors are clear of dirt and debris.
2. Inspect electrical cords. We depend on more cords during winter, whether for holiday lighting, extension cords or portable heaters. Before using any corded items, double check to make sure cords aren't frayed or cracked. If you use portable space heaters, remember to keep them at least three feet away from flammable items. Use models that include an auto shut-off feature and overheat protection. Space heaters can take a toll on your energy bills. Use them efficiently (to heat smaller spaces) and safely. Never plug a space heater into a power strip. Speaking of power strips...
3. Avoid overloading electrical outlets and power strips. When overloaded with electrical items, outlets and power strips can overheat and catch fire. If you use power strips for multiple devices, make sure the strip can handle the electrical load. For a safer bet, look for power strips that include surge protection.
4. Clean the fireplace to improve safety and efficiency. There's nothing better than a warm fire on a chilly night, but it's important to maintain your fireplace for safety. As wood burns, a sticky substance known as creosote builds up in the chimney. When creosote buildup becomes too thick, a chimney fire can ignite. The chimney should be cleaned at least once a year to reduce fire risks. Regular cleaning

also improves air flow and limits the amount of carbon monoxide that seeps indoors.

5. Practice safety in the kitchen. As we spend more time in the kitchen during the holiday season, be mindful of potential fire hazards. Never leave food that's cooking on the stovetop unattended. Clean and remove spilled foods from cooking surfaces and be mindful of where you place flammable items like dish towels.



**Naomi Krcil, Age 8**

Naomi warns readers to never, ever grab birds off power lines. Great job, Naomi! Naomi'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.



# Family Night FAVORITES

## SAUERKRAUT BEEF BAKE

### Ingredients:

1 lb ground beef  
1 can sauerkraut, rinsed and drained  
1/2 cup instant rice  
1 can cream of mushroom soup  
1 soup can water  
2 tbsps. onion soup mix  
1 small can sliced mushrooms (optional)

### Method

Brown ground beef, drain excess fat. In large bowl, mix all remaining ingredients. Transfer to a greased 2-quart casserole or baking dish.

Cover and bake at 350°F for one hour or until heated through.

**Sally Florey**  
**Charles Mix Electric**

## MINI BBQ BACON CHEDDAR MEATLOAF

### Ingredients:

2 lbs. ground beef  
6 oz. chili sauce  
4 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled  
1 1/2 cups sharp cheddar cheese, shredded  
1/2 cup panko breadcrumbs  
2 large eggs  
1 tsp. onion powder  
1 tsp. seasoned salt  
1 tsp. garlic powder  
2 tbsps. Worcestershire sauce  
1 tsp. yellow mustard  
1/2 cup BBQ sauce

### Method

Preheat oven to 425°F.

Cook and crumble bacon.

In a mixing bowl, mix together all meatloaf ingredients except the BBQ sauce.

Divide the mixture into 8 round loaves. Press a small depression into the middle of the meatloaves.

Brush BBQ sauce on top of the meatloaves.

Bake for 25 minutes. Turn on broiler and brown the BBQ sauce for 2 to 5 minutes.

**Kayla Beaner**  
**Southeastern Electric**

## SMOKED MEATLOAF

### Ingredients:

1 cup panko breadcrumbs  
1 cup whipping cream  
1.5 lbs. 93% lean ground beef  
1 lb. ground pork  
1/2 pkg. bacon  
2 eggs, beaten  
2 tps. Worcestershire sauce  
1-2 tps. minced garlic  
1/8 cup ketchup  
2 tps. Heifer Dust (spice)  
1/2 tsp. ground pepper  
1/2 sweet onion, chopped  
1/2 green pepper, chopped  
1-2 carrots, chopped  
1-2 celery stalks, chopped  
1/2 carton mushrooms, chopped

### Basting Sauce

Cookies BBQ                      Ketchup  
Brown sugar                      Dry mustard  
Apple cider vinegar

### Method

Turn Traeger to Smoke then set to 225°F and preheat for 15 minutes.

Combine the vegetables, drizzle with olive oil and microwave for about 2 minutes to soften. Cool for 10 minutes. Mix everything in a large bowl with hands. Form into a large loaf on parchment paper. Place bacon strips on grate pan. Gently flip loaf onto the bacon lined grate pan.

Place on grill and smoke for 45 minutes. Increase temperature to 325°F. Preheat for 10 minutes. Return to grill and insert probe. Cook until internal temperature reaches 160°F – about 1-2 more hours depending on size of loaf.

During the last 15-20 minutes, baste heavily with barbeque sauce mixed with brown sugar, ketchup, mustard and a little apple cider vinegar or apple juice.

**Deb Prins**  
**Cam Wal 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 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.



# Scholarships to be Awarded

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association will be offering \$7,000 in scholarship money to students in this region. The scholarships are for the 2026 – 2027 school year.

Renville-Sibley is allocated a \$2,500 scholarship from Basin Electric to be awarded at the discretion of the cooperative. Another \$1,500 scholarship is from Renville-Sibley.

A committee of Renville-Sibley Board members, as well as an employee of the cooperative, will select the recipients of the \$2,500 Basin Scholarship and the \$1,500 Renville-Sibley Scholarship. These scholarships will be awarded based on a combination of SAT/ACT scores and overall grade point average, work experience, participation in school and community activities, the personal statement of career goals and the written recommendation by a third party. Additional consideration will be given to applicants interested in a position related to the electric industry for the Renville-Sibley scholarship.

The remaining three \$1,000 scholarships are distributed from uncashed capital credit checks and are awarded by a random drawing at the annual meeting from the remaining completed applications.

All scholarship applicants must be U.S. citizens and a dependent of a member of Renville-Sibley Cooperative. They must be a high school senior who plans to enroll as a full-time student in an undergraduate course of study at an

accredited two-year or four-year college, university, or vocational/technical school. Applications will be accepted until February 12, 2026. Winners will be announced to the public at the Cooperative's Annual Meeting on March 26, 2026.

Renville-Sibley participates with other Minnesota electric cooperatives in sponsoring the continuation of the Jay York Scholarship. Mr. York was a Lake Wilson farmer who dedicated his life to the rural electric program and to education in rural Minnesota. He was the first Minnesotan to serve as president of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Scholarships are available each year from this program and are selected by random drawing. Each participating cooperative may submit one candidate's name for the drawing. The amount of this scholarship is determined based on the number of cooperatives that participate in the program. Over the past 20 years, Renville-Sibley has been awarded 14 Jay York scholarships.

Only one completed application is required for an applicant to be considered a candidate for any of the available scholarships. Incomplete applications will be excluded. For more information and a scholarship application form, contact Renville-Sibley at 1-800-826-2593 or 320-826-2593. Application forms are also available at our website [www.rscpa.coop](http://www.rscpa.coop).



## Renville-Sibley Co-op Power 2026 Rebates and Incentives

### Non Commercial Electric Heat Rebates:

*(replacement incentive offered after 10 years)*

- \$800 Geothermal Heat Pump
- \$800 Air-to-Air Heat Pump
- \$300 Ductless Air Source Heat Pump

Electric heating systems must meet the DOE manufacturing standard for HSPF efficiency. DOE standard in 2026 for HSPF is 8.8 and HSPF2 is 7.5. Ductless system must be new, under 2 tons, electrical ductless equipment and meet the DOE manufacturing standard for HSPF efficiency. Contact the office for commercial, industrial or agricultural rebate information.

### Special Discount Rates:

Separately metered electric heat is only 6.5 cents/kWh!

Contact the office for details. – There is a \$4.00 per month charge for all discount meters.

### Electric Water Heater Rebates:

*(replacement incentive offered after 10 years)*

- \$6/gallon – Marathon® Lifetime Warranty Units
- \$100 bonus rebate for new home or fossil fuel conversion

- \$6.50 monthly credit for controlled electric water heater

Renville-Sibley has 100-gallon grid enabled water heaters available. Please call the office for more details on this program.

### Nonresidential Efficient Lighting Replacement Program:

Renville-Sibley offers a rebate of \$.20/watt saved for the replacement of inefficient lighting systems in nonresidential installation. The maximum rebate amount is \$1,000 per member per calendar year and a maximum of up to 50 percent of the total project cost. The minimum rebate is \$50.

### Energy Star® Rebates:

- \$100 – Refrigerator *(requires proof of disposal of existing unit)*
- \$200 – Central Air-Conditioner
- \$50 – Dishwasher
- \$50 – Clothes Washer
- \$50 – Clothes Dryer
- \$100 – Freezer
- \$25 – Dehumidifier
- \$25 – Room Air-Conditioner
- \$5 – LED Light Bulb *(bulb must be a minimum of 8 watts, maximum of 20 bulbs per location)*
- \$35 – Disposal rebate for refrigerator or freezer currently in service *(requires proof of disposal)*

*(ENERGY STAR® Rebates are capped annually; contact the office to verify status of program.)*



**All rebate forms can be found at [www.rscpa.coop](http://www.rscpa.coop)**  
**For more information, please contact us at 800-826-2593 or 320-826-2593.**



# FOSTERING FUTURES

## 'Mike Rowe Scholarship' Winner Kicks Off Career at Electric Co-op

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

For many high schoolers, figuring out the next steps after graduating is a time for making big decisions and answering tough questions. What do I want to do for a career? Should I go to a university or technical college? Will I be able to pay off all of this college debt?

Tayden Wells' mind was already made up following a great high school internship and a little bit of faith and support from others. Wells was awarded numerous scholarships, but none as prestigious – nor time-consuming – as the Work Ethic Scholarship from 'Dirty Jobs' star Mike Rowe.

### Discovering the Passion

Growing up around linemen, Tayden had an early appreciation for their work, unpredictable schedules and the expansive grid of wires and poles that keeps everyone's lights on.

"As a child I'd be sitting in the house and all of a sudden, Dad would up and vanish," Tayden explained. "And I always wondered, what's he doing? Where's he going? Why is he going to work on a Saturday or in the middle of the night? And then finally it occurred to me that we rely on the power grid, and when the power goes out, linemen go to work."

Tayden's dad, Travis, is a lineman at Clay-Union Electric in Vermillion, S.D. Tayden recalls the long car rides on hunting trips with his dad and uncle – also a lineman – where the conversations would drift to the power lines outside the truck windows.

"I'd hear them talking, using linemen slang like 'distro' (distribution lines) and 'T-lines' (transmission lines)," Tayden said. "They really sparked my interest."

When Tayden's high school business teacher told students to think about internships, he knew exactly where he wanted to go.

### It All Started With an Internship

Tayden's teacher made the call to Union County Electric Cooperative in Elk Point, S.D. After getting the green light from the board of directors, Tayden was cleared to shadow the crew for about 10 hours a week as he learned the ins and outs of the job.

"He was always looking for something to do, and he also asked a lot of questions and had an eagerness to learn," General Manager Matt Klein said about Tayden's work ethic. "When I saw that, I knew he would fit in well with the rest of our team."

Klein offered the high school senior a full-time summer



internship where he continued to expand his skills before heading to Mitchell, S.D., in the fall.

### Mike Rowe's Work Ethic Scholarship and the S.W.E.A.T. Pledge

With his mind made up after the internship, Tayden's next step was to enroll in the power line program at Mitchell Technical College for a formal education – and find scholarships to help pay for it.

A straight-A student involved in athletics and extracurricular activities, Tayden applied for numerous scholarships, including the highly competitive Work Ethic Scholarship.

The scholarship, founded and administered by Mike Rowe and his foundation, offers millions of dollars to kids around the nation interested in pursuing trade careers.

Electricians, linemen, HVAC, nursing, culinary, automotive, even cosmetology – just no four-year bachelor's degrees.

"We promote skilled trades and want to get people into good-paying jobs without them drowning in debt," explained mikeroweWORKS President Mary Sullivan, who oversees the scholarship. "It's just heartbreaking seeing the amount of kids taking on college debt and graduating and aren't able to find jobs in their chosen field. Even more heartbreaking – but less reported – is the number of kids that drop out partway through the program with the debt and no piece of paper."

The scholarship's application process is different too – it's intensive, spanning several months and requires applicants to submit a video, answer questionnaires, gather references and think critically about the scholarship's curriculum.

The scholarship attracts thousands of applicants, but by the end, only the most committed, hardest working remain.

"We want to give scholarships to the kids who are passionate – they show up early, stay late and help others," Sullivan explained. "One of the recipients said he applied for 20 scholarships, and if you put all the other 19 into a bucket, ours still took more



time – but he said there was a level of pride in receiving it. High school kids today need to see 18-20 year olds who are successful, and the scholarship program allows us to meet students we believe are good representatives for the industry.”

Part of the curriculum includes the S.W.E.A.T. Pledge (Skill & Work Ethic Aren't Taboo) video series that walks students through 12 pledges Rowe designed to promote strong work ethic and foster successful careers, which include:

*“I do not follow my passion. I bring it with me. I believe that any job can be done with passion and enthusiasm.”*

*“I deplore debt and do all I can to avoid it. I would rather live in a tent and eat beans than borrow money for a lifestyle I can't afford.”*

After completing all of the curriculum and proposing a 13th S.W.E.A.T. pledge for a final project, Tayden was awarded \$16,000 to cover his education.

And when Rowe traveled to MTC in 2024, Tayden got the chance to thank Rowe face-to-face.

“Mike told me, from his mouth, that my scholarship was one of the highest amounts they gave out that year,” Tayden said. “That was very cool to hear.”

Rowe said Tayden stood out among thousands of applicants and embodies the qualities the scholarship promotes.

“Tayden checked all the boxes, and then some,” Rowe said. “His references were great, his attitude was great, his essay was great, and his comments about The SWEAT Pledge were spot on. His willingness to pursue a skill that's in demand, along with his attitude and work ethic, make him a perfect example of the qualities we're trying to encourage with our scholarship program. The country needs thousands more like him.”

### Reflecting On the Journey

Tayden graduated from the power line program in 2025. He credits his success in part to his internship, saying the out-of-classroom experience set him up for a good year of training at MTC and a rewarding career with electric cooperatives.

“I kind of had the upper hand going into the program with my internship,” Tayden said. “I was able to see stuff before I went to school, so I kind of had a good understanding of the basics. But for kids coming in, some of them obviously struggle. I'm a very hands-on, visual learner, so because I was able to see it beforehand, the bookwork and the schooling really clicked a lot better with me.”

Today, Tayden is a full-time apprentice lineman at Union County Electric, where he continues to accumulate hours and complete coursework to earn his journeyman lineman certification. He encourages other young people not to overlook a career in the trades – or the Work Ethic Scholarship.

“With all of the talk about AI now, the trade jobs are always going to be there,” Tayden said. “Without oil fields we wouldn't have gas, and without electricity we wouldn't have lights. Mike realizes that the world revolves around the trades, and he wants to see kids strive and succeed because in the trades there are endless opportunities, just like any other job.”

### Why is it so important that more young Americans enter the trades, and what does a shortage of skilled workers mean for the country?

For decades, the skills gap has been a tragedy of missed opportunity, both for students who weren't encouraged to consider a lucrative and viable path and the industries that rely on skilled labor. It still is. Today though, it's also a matter of national security. Not a week goes by that MRW doesn't get a call from an industry leader, desperate to hire skilled workers. The US Maritime Industrial Base told me they need 250,000 tradespeople to build nuclear subs. The automotive industry has over 100,000 openings for mechanics and collision repair techs. The energy industry needs half a million electricians, and the construction industry has so many openings they've stopped counting. The skills gap is real, and I can tell you that every CEO and every elected official I know are paying attention like never before.

### What's one piece of advice you have for young people who are deciding their career path?

With regard to choosing a career, there's nothing more dangerous than dispensing advice to people you've never met. Same thing with choosing an education. We told an entire generation of kids that a four-year degree was the best path for the most people and then pressured them to borrow whatever it took to buy a degree, regardless of the cost. That kind of cookie-cutter advice was a colossal mistake and a big reason why we have millions of open jobs today that don't require a college diploma and lots of college graduates with a trillion dollars in student debt and no work in their chosen field. The only advice I generically offer to young people is to be very careful about “following your passion.” Just because you're passionate about something doesn't mean you can't suck at it. Obviously, it's important to be passionate about whatever you do, but passion – like work ethic – is a choice, and life is a lot easier when you figure out a way to be passionate about whatever it is you're good at. (People hate hearing that, by the way, but it's the truth.)

### What do you see as the single biggest misunderstanding young people have about working in the trades today?

The trades are surrounded by dozens of stigmas, stereotypes, myths and misperceptions that dissuade people from giving them an honest look. I guess if I had to pick one, I'd point to the stubborn belief held by many parents that their kids can't make six figures working with their hands. It's laughably and demonstrably false. And fun to disprove. Also – the simple fact that the road to so many successful small businesses often starts with the mastery of a skill that's in demand. The number of successful entrepreneurs in the skilled trades is enormous, and more people need to understand that.

### What can teachers, community leaders and co-ops do to better identify and support young people interested in a trade career?

Start a “Career Reality Day” where local linemen, meter technicians and substation operators come in and talk real numbers. Not feel-good fluff, but actual wages, benefits, and career paths. When kids hear that a journeyman lineman can make \$80,000 a year without student loan debt, that gets their attention.



# Are You Interested in a New Adventure?

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association is beginning to plan for the 88th Annual meeting of the membership that will be held on March 26, 2026, at the Redwood Area Community Center in Redwood Falls, Minnesota. Three (3) directors will be elected during that time, each for a 3-year term.

The First District, consisting of the townships of Cornish, Severance and Moltke in Sibley County; the townships of Ridgely and West Newton in Nicollet County; and the townships of Cairo, Wellington, Martinsburg, Camp, Bandon and Palmyra in Renville County is represented by Alan Neyers, Whitey Hinderman, and Vicky Firlle. Vicky Firlle's term will expire in 2026.

The Second District, consisting of the townships of Honner and Delhi in Redwood County; and the townships of Beaver Falls, Flora, Henryville, Birch Cooley, Norfolk, Melville, Bird Island and Kingman in Renville County is represented by Helen Ruebel, Wayland Zaske, and Jeff Boersma. Jeff Boersma's term will expire in 2026.

The Third District, consisting of the townships of Roseland and Holland in Kandiyohi County; Rheiderland in Chippewa County the townships of Troy, Winfield, Emmet, Crooks, Sacred Heart, Hawk Creek, Ericson and Wang in Renville County is represented by Gary Eekhoff, Gary Peterson, and Roger Manthei. Roger Manthei's term will expire in 2026.

As stated in the Renville-Sibley by-laws, the following is the Qualifications and Tenure for the position of Director:

Each director shall be a member of the Cooperative and shall be elected by the members within their respective district at the annual meeting of the members for a term of three years. No member shall be eligible to become or remain a director or to hold any position of trust in the Cooperative who is not a bona fide resident in the area served by the Cooperative, or who is in any way employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise or a business selling electric energy or supplies to the Cooperative, or a business primarily engaged in selling electrical or space heating/cooling appliances, fixtures, or supplies to the members. When a membership is held jointly by two or more persons, including husband and wife, only one of such joint tenants may be elected a director, provided, however, that neither one shall be eligible to become a director, unless all shall meet the qualifications herein set forth.

Director qualifications required for service to the cooperative shall include:

- A. Must be an individual and must be at least 18 years of age.
- B. Must be competent and able to execute a contract.
- C. Must not have been convicted of a felony or gross misdemeanor during the preceding 5 years prior to becoming a director for the Cooperative or during the period while serving as a director.
- D. Must have a high school diploma or equivalent.

- E. Must make a reasonable effort to become and remain knowledgeable about special issues regarding electric cooperatives by attending training, workshops and seminars.
- F. Must attend at least three-fourths (3/4) of all monthly scheduled board meetings during any twelve (12) month period.

Upon becoming a candidate for and/or to remain a Director, an individual must complete an annual conflict of interest disclosure form, approved by the Board of Directors. All Directors and/or Director candidates must comply with or meet the following conflict of interest qualifications:

- A. Shall not be a close relative of an existing Director, employee, agent or representative of the Cooperative other than an existing Director who will cease being a Director upon the candidate assuming office;
- B. Within 5 years immediately prior to becoming a Director, shall not have been a Cooperative Officer, employee, agent or representative of the Cooperative or any subsidiary or affiliated company;
- C. Shall not be employed by, materially affiliated with, nor share a material financial interest with any current Director;
- D. Shall not be engaged in any business, nor employed by, nor materially affiliated with, nor have a material financial interest in any individual or entity that:



1. Is regularly, directly, and substantially competing with the Cooperative or any other entity that the Cooperative controls or in which the Cooperative owns a majority interest (Cooperative Subsidiary).
2. Is regularly selling goods and services to the Cooperative or the Cooperative Subsidiary.
3. Possesses a substantial conflict of interest with the Cooperative or the Cooperative subsidiary.

E. A former Director is ineligible for employment by the Cooperative for 5 years following the end of the tenure as a Director.

As a Director, the member agrees to:

- Abide by, promote and uphold the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws, both of which can be found on our website, and Policies of Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association.
- Attend regular and special Board meetings of the Cooperative.
- Attend, when appointed, committee meetings of the Cooperative.

If anyone should decide to seek candidacy for the board of directors, there are many rewards to be enjoyed when elected. A director has the opportunity to demonstrate their leadership quality and increase their knowledge within the cooperative business environment and the electric industry. As a director, this person could play a significant role in the future development of Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association.

A director also has a very important responsibility which is to uphold and abide by the bylaws of the cooperative.

Directors are to act as the trustees for the assets of the cooperative and are assigned the duties of formulating, approving and reviewing the policies that provide guidelines for the cooperative.

The board is responsible for sending representatives to the affiliated association meetings that often include voting requirements. They include East River Electric Power Cooperative, Minnesota Rural Electric Association, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, National Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation, CoBank, Cooperative Network and the National Rural Electric Association.

Directors attend seminars and meetings of several organizations to learn about the industry. Directors are asked to lobby and remain informed on legislative issues that could impact this industry and/or the cooperative way of doing business. The Board meets monthly and reviews financial reports, work plans, annual audits, planning documents and evaluates the cooperative operations while approving budgets and purchases.

Most of all, a director should be available to visit with their constituents and have a genuine spirit of helping others at all times.

Board meetings are typically held on the last Wednesday of every month, beginning at 9:00 a.m. in December, January and February and beginning at 8:00 a.m. the rest of the year. Board meetings will be held in person or via Zoom. The estimated time needed to be committed annually is approximately 30 days, which includes monthly meetings and committee assignments. Directors are compensated per diem for their time as well as all personal expenses.

If you are interested in becoming a candidate for the Renville-Sibley Board of Directors, contact the Renville-Sibley office at 1-800-826-2593.

## OUTAGE REPORT:

*Affecting 10 members or more*

**Date: 11-13-2025**

Time off: 4:50 PM

Time on: 5:05 PM

Substation: Birch Cooley

Cause: Broken Pole

**Date: 11-19-2025**

Time off: 9:00 AM

Time on: 10:58 AM

Substation: Henryvill

Cause: Prearranged

Please contact Renville-Sibley's office for more details about these power outages.

## FOR SALE:

- Farm fresh eggs, hand-picked, free range (weather permitting) – \$5.00 per dozen  
Pete Schmoll & JoJo Schmoll  
Olivia, MN 56277  
320-579-1298
- Like-New PetSmart  
Pet Taxi 16 ½ x 25 – \$20
- Box Western Books (30+) – \$10
- Puzzles- 500 or 1000 Piece – \$2.75-\$4  
Darlene Konz  
Olivia, MN 56277  
320-863-8246

## CONGRATS

Congratulations to Ramona Warner on being selected as the winner of the \$50 prize energy credit at our Holiday Open House! Thank you to all who came to our Open House. We look forward to celebrating with you again next year!

## CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

Call 811 or go online to [www.gopherstateonecall.org](http://www.gopherstateonecall.org) and file a locate request before you dig!  
Toll Free: 1-800-252-1166



# UNDERSTANDING THE SOUTHWEST POWER POOL

Basin Electric's trading floor connects the cooperative to the broader wholesale electricity market.

*Submitted Photo*

**Frank Turner**

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

When looking at the entire electric grid, electric cooperatives are just one component in a much larger system. Understanding how that system works, and how power is planned and shared across the region, provides important context for decisions that affect reliability, long-term infrastructure investments and, ultimately, the cost of electricity.

## **Southwest Power Pool**

Every electric cooperative in South Dakota operates within the Southwest Power Pool (SPP), a regional transmission organization that oversees the grid. Really, electric cooperatives are all essential pieces of a larger,

regional puzzle that keeps the lights on.

SPP manages a wholesale electricity market and operates transmission lines across all or parts of 14 Midwest states, including South Dakota.

In 2015, East River Electric Power Cooperative joined the Southwest Power Pool along with Basin Electric Power Cooperative and the Western Area Power Administration Upper Great Plains Region. This move allowed electricity generators in the state to participate in a larger regional market, making it easier and more efficient to buy and sell energy across the grid.

Electric cooperatives aren't the only utilities operating within this regional system. Investor-owned utilities and

municipal utilities also participate in the SPP, all feeding into the same wholesale electricity market. By sharing transmission lines and following the same market rules, these utilities help create a broader, more flexible grid, allowing power to move long distances to where it's needed most.

"SPP is like a traffic director of electricity, because it doesn't own any assets," said Kristi Fiegen, South Dakota Public Utilities Commissioner and chair of the Southwest Power Pool's Regional State Committee. "They direct traffic and work to make sure the transmission lines and generation are bringing electricity to about 18 million customers on a second-by-second basis. That supply has to equal the demand every single second."



## Winter Storm Uri

Another important benefit of participating in SPP is its ability to support the grid during extreme weather or unexpected outages, when regional coordination becomes especially important. Because SPP manages electricity across such a large footprint, the system can draw on resources from far beyond state borders. For example, when a power plant in North Dakota goes offline for routine maintenance, electricity from another state can cover the gap. Likewise, during severe winter weather in the South, generation from the Dakotas can help support the southern part of the grid.

That system maintained regional reliability until Feb. 2021, when it was pushed to its limits by Winter Storm Uri, which caused widespread power outages across Texas. According to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 4.5 million people in Texas lost power during the storm.

“Winter Storm Uri woke up the entire nation, because we didn’t know how vulnerable we were,” said Fiegen.

The storm prompted SPP to reexamine how the grid maintains regional reliability during the winter. Part of that change involved increasing the reserve margin — the extra electric generation capacity kept on hand beyond what is normally needed — to help the system withstand extreme cold and unexpected outages. The goal, according to Fiegen, is to ensure enough power is available across the region, especially on the coldest days of the year.

“Since Winter Storm Uri, we have spent much of our time focused on resource adequacy policies,” Fiegen said, referring to SPP leadership and regulatory committees.

## Reserve Margin

One significant change set to take effect in the 2026/2027 winter season is SPP’s adoption of a winter planning reserve margin, which increases the amount of generation required to be available during the winter season. The change will apply across the SPP footprint, including impacts to Basin Electric, which supplies power to cooperatives across South Dakota, North Dakota, Montana, Minnesota and much of the Midwest.

Through an increased winter reserve margin, the SPP aims to better prepare the entire SPP footprint for extreme weather and periods of unusually high electricity demand, helping ensure reliable power for homes, businesses and industries across the SPP footprint.

So, what does this mean for cooperative members in South Dakota? Valerie Weigel, senior vice president of Energy Markets and Dakota Coal Operations at Basin Electric, said higher reserve margins means Basin Electric needs to supply more generation capacity to the SPP market to meet expected peak winter demands, which affects Basin Electric’s wholesale rates for the cooperatives it serves.

“The increase in reserve margins means we need to build additional generation to ensure we have enough accredited resources to meet new planning requirements,” Weigel said. “As we look toward the rate increase in 2026, part of that increase reflects the cost of adding these resources to meet updated market requirements.”

# Learning The Lingo

## Transmission

High-voltage power lines and related infrastructure that move electricity long distances from power plants to local utilities. Transmission allows electricity to be shared across regions, especially during emergencies or peak demand.

## Generation Capacity

The maximum amount of electricity that a utility’s power plant or portfolio of power plants can produce at one time. Capacity matters most during peak demand, when the grid is under the most strain. This may happen during extreme heat or cold, when people are using more electricity to heat or cool their homes.

## Southwest Power Pool (SPP)

A regional transmission organization that coordinates electricity transmission and wholesale power markets across 14 Midwestern states, including South Dakota and Minnesota. SPP does not own power plants or transmission lines; instead, it manages how electricity flows across the regional grid.

## Regional Transmission Organization (RTO)

A federally approved organization, like SPP, that operates the electric grid across multiple states. RTOs balance supply and demand, manage wholesale electricity markets and plan for long-term grid reliability.

## Reserve Margin

The extra amount of generation capacity kept available above expected peak demand. This extra capacity helps the grid handle extreme weather, unexpected outages or sudden increases in electricity use.

# December Board Meeting Highlights

The December board meeting was held on Thursday, December 18th, 2025, at 9 a.m. All board members were present. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Norris, Gene Allex, Amy Ervin, and Carren Frank.

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the November 20th, 2025 board meeting
- Operating and disbursement reports for the month of November
- Safety Report for December
- Nominating Committee Appointment
- Schedule A – Standard Pricing Guide
- MN Paid Leave Policy
- Basin Load Forecast Resolution
- Hometown Bank Treasury Management Application Resolution
- Cooperative Family Fund
- Director Expenses

The board reviewed the following items:

- Total new members
- Reports from staff members as to the activities in their department. Items in the reports include:
  - o High-level Statement of Operations review – YTD through November (unaudited)
  - o Organization activities
  - o Basin Electric update
  - o East River update
  - o Director meeting reports
  - o Linecrew work in progress, equipment update, and outage update
  - o Accounts Receivable
- Member Informational Meeting Schedule

Please contact the Renville-Sibley office if you would like more information regarding the board meeting.

# WHERE'S THE NUMBER?

Last month's RSCPA member found their member number in the newsletter. Congratulations! The value of the energy credit will start over at \$15. Another number has been hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number and call the office by the 2nd of February, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck in your search!

# REMINDER

Renville-Sibley encourages any member planning on making changes to their service in 2026 to please contact the office as soon as possible. In order to complete these projects on time, material may need to be ordered well in advance as often there is extended lead time to get the appropriate material. In addition, crew time will be scheduled in the order projects and materials are received.

# Notice

The board will not meet in January 2026.  
The February board meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at 9 a.m.

# OPERATION ROUND UP

Since the inception of the Operation Round Up program in June 2019, Renville-Sibley's membership and employees have made an impact on our local communities through their participation. Renville-Sibley has collected a total of \$66,110.18 in contributions. To date, with your generosity, we've given \$57,300.00 back to 51 organizations.

Applications for donations can be found at [rscpa.coop/operation-round](https://rscpa.coop/operation-round). Contact the office at 320-826-2593 for more information.

# FREE Want Ad Service

Members can submit ads for the following categories: Giveaway, For Sale, For Rent, and Wanted. Ads should be or are limited to no more than 15 words and must be received by the first of the month to be included in the following month's newsletter. Renville-Sibley reserves the right to edit content or exclude ads due to space restrictions. Ads will be run one time only unless resubmitted. Please complete the following information and mail it to the Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power, PO Box 68, Danube, MN 56230.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Ad to be placed (limit of 15 words per ad)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Type of ad: ☐ Giveaway ☐ For Sale ☐ For Rent ☐ Wanted



## December Scholars of the Month

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association (RSCPA), your Touchstone Energy Cooperative, is proud to recognize two exceptional seniors as our December Scholars of the Month! Elizabeth Johnson from MACCRAY and Maggie Setrum from CMCS truly represent the values we hold dear—integrity, accountability, innovation, and a strong commitment to community.

Elizabeth is a remarkable student who demonstrates leadership, integrity, and a passion for learning. She approaches every task with honesty and seeks opportunities for growth. Alongside maintaining top academic performance and taking online college classes, Elizabeth is actively involved in FFA, FCA, and NHS. She has represented her school on the FFA Floriculture contest team and served as a team leader for three years, inspiring others with her organizational skills and dedication. Her creativity, strong work ethic, and commitment to volunteering make her an outstanding role model in her school.

Maggie is an outstanding student and leader who exemplifies hard work, integrity, and compassion. A top achiever academically, she takes PSEO classes while actively participating in fine arts through



Elizabeth Johnson



Maggie Setrum

band, choir, drama, and art classes. Maggie plays the flute and performs as a violinist. She also leads as team captain for cross country, demonstrating responsibility and teamwork. Beyond school, Maggie volunteers with the community VBS program, assists with EMT training, and helps maintain town flower beds. Known for her kindness and cooperative spirit, Maggie truly makes a positive impact in her community.

Please join us in celebrating Elizabeth and Maggie for their dedication, leadership, and the positive impact they make every day. Congratulations to our December Touchstone Energy Scholars of the Month!

★ ★ **HAPPY** ★ ★  
**PRESIDENTS' DAY**

The Renville-Sibley office will be closed on the following holiday:  
February 16th in observance of Presidents' Day.

## Mission Statement

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association will provide safe, efficient, reliable electric energy and services to enhance the quality of rural living.

## Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov). This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

## REGISTER TO WIN!

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: \_\_\_\_\_



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.

**JAN. 30-FEB. 7**  
**Annual Black Hills Stock Show**  
Central States Fairgrounds  
Rapid City, SD  
[www.centralstatesfairinc.com](http://www.centralstatesfairinc.com)  
605-355-3861

**FEB. 1**  
**The Great Lake County Hotdish Competition**  
11:30-1:30 p.m.  
St. Thomas School Gym  
Madison, SD  
605-256-5308

**FEB. 6-7**  
**31<sup>st</sup> Annual Dinner Theater**  
Reliance Legion Hall  
Reliance, SD  
Tickets: 605-730-0553

**FEB. 7-8**  
**The Black Market/Formerly Benson's Flea Market**  
Sioux Falls, SD  
605-332-6004

**FEB. 13-16**  
**12th Annual Frost Fest**  
Brookings, SD

**FEB. 14**  
**Polar Bear Chili Cook-Off**  
11 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Hill City, SD

**FEB. 20-22**  
**Winterfest**  
Fireworks, Parade of Lights, Bonfire, Snowshoeing  
Lead, SD  
[www.leadmethere.com/winterfest](http://www.leadmethere.com/winterfest)

**FEB. 21**  
**Knights of Columbus Fishing Derby & Raffle**  
10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Enemy Swim Lake, Waubay, SD  
605-881-5075

**FEB. 21**  
**All Ability Skate**  
12-3 p.m.  
Main Street Square  
Rapid City, SD  
[disabilityaac@rcgov.org](mailto:disabilityaac@rcgov.org)

**FEB. 21**  
**Bellator Titans Casino Night Fundraiser**  
6-11 p.m.  
City Lights Bar & Event Center  
Aberdeen, SD

**FEB. 22**  
**C Street Brass**  
4 p.m.  
Johnson Fine Arts Center  
Aberdeen, SD

**FEB. 24**  
**Life as an Astronaut**  
Free Presentation by NASA  
Astronaut Charles Gemar  
7-8 p.m.  
DSU Science Center  
Madison, SD  
605-256-5308

**MARCH 5**  
**SD Jazz Festival**  
7:30 p.m.  
Johnson Fine Arts Center  
Aberdeen, SD

**MARCH 7**  
**Free Christian Men's Event**  
The Barn at Aspen Acres  
8:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.  
Spearfish, SD  
Register: [RiseUpMen.com](http://RiseUpMen.com)

**MARCH 14**  
**St. Uhro Finnish Festival**  
11 a.m. Main Street Parade  
12 p.m. Community Ctr. Lunch  
Lake Norden, SD  
605-881-1758

**MARCH 20-21**  
**Badlands Quilters Getaway**  
Fri. 5:30 p.m. Start  
Sat. 8 a.m. Start  
Wall Community Center  
Wall, SD  
605-279-2807

**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.**