



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



**RENVILLE-SIBLEY**  
FEBRUARY 2023 VOL. 23 NO. 10

# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Mitchell Technical College launches careers in a wide range of fields including training for linemen like Lacreek Electric's Matt Kruid.  
*Photo by Billy Gibson*

## Tech Training

**Mitchell Technical College**  
Pages 8-9

**Promoting tribal tourism**  
Pages 12-13

# Get involved! Join us at the Member Informational Meetings and Annual Meeting

Two exciting events are coming up in February and March, when Renville-Sibley will host member informational meetings and our annual meeting for you, the members we proudly serve. These events provide a great opportunity for me, the board of directors, and our employees to talk with you and hear what's on your mind. Although our main topic of discussion will be our new facility, we welcome your feedback and questions on any topic.



**DeeAnne Norris**  
CEO  
320-826-2593 or  
800-826-2593

At the member informational meetings, we gather with smaller groups of members to encourage dialog. Although we provide a presentation, we are also open to fielding questions or having a discussion on any topic the members choose to raise. We will host three (3) member informational meetings on different days and locations within our service territory. You are welcome to attend whichever meeting is the most convenient for you.

- Saturday, Feb. 11 at 9 a.m. – Danube Community Center
- Tuesday, Feb. 14 at 1:30 p.m. – Sacred Heart Community Center
- Thursday, Feb. 16 at 9 a.m. – Fairfax Community Center

We also hope you'll join us for the annual meeting, which will take place at The Redwood Area Community Center on Thursday evening, March 30th. During the annual meeting, we'll share a few brief business updates including a financial summary from 2022, announce the election results for the Board of Directors, and then welcome our very own member, Barbara Marks, to the podium to give a presentation on the new facility. Barbara did an excellent job of representing our members as the project manager and senior designer for Engan Associates led by Richard Engan.

We're going to have a lot of fun too! Lenae Wordes has created some of her "fabulous prizes" to be handed out to a few randomly selected members. Lenae retired in December but will be attending the meeting as a cooperative member this year and has volunteered to hand out the prizes she created. When you see her, please thank her for the 25 years she dedicated to you and your cooperative! We'll also have several "normal" door prizes for adults, activities and prizes for the kids, followed by a tasty meal.

Spending time with you and hearing your take on our community's energy future is so important to us. In fact, it's essential because everything we do is shaped by the members of our community. As I'm sure you know,

the energy industry is in the midst of massive change. Consumer needs and changing technology impact nearly every aspect of how we manage and deliver energy to local homes, schools and businesses.

As we navigate major changes in the coming years, we need to hear from you and your neighbors to inform our planning as we strive to meet the long-term needs of all Renville-Sibley members.

You may be wondering if your opinion really makes a difference, and yes, it does! Gaining guidance and perspective from our members and board helps set priorities for the co-op and guide future decisions. At our annual meeting, at times, we raise issues for voting consideration by the general membership (that's everyone who pays for electric service from Renville-Sibley). The annual meeting is also a time for members to vote on the co-op's board of directors.

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, like our current directors, who care about our community and are willing to serve.

Most consumers likely don't equate active involvement with their electric utility with helping their community. But Renville-Sibley is not an ordinary utility. We're a co-op, and our business model is meant to serve the members and the community in which it operates. Think of it this way: every time you pay your electric bill, you're actually investing in your cooperatives because our members are owners of our wholesale power providers, East River Electric and Basin Electric Cooperatives, as well as Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association.

The money that remains after paying for wholesale power stays here in the local community. By making investments in our local system, we can ensure you have reliable power for everyday life. This local input means those closest to the community know its needs and priorities and help direct where co-ops dollars are spent. Every year, we invest funds to make updates to our local system, which helps maintain reliability and grid resilience.

Our core purpose and mission are to provide safe, reliable and affordable power. But as a co-op, we're also motivated by service to our community, rather than profits. We hope you'll exercise the benefits of your co-op membership and join us for the annual meeting on March 30th. We look forward to seeing you!



## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### RENVILLE-SIBLEY CO-OP POWER

(USPS 019-074)

#### Board of Directors

Roger Manthei – Chair  
Wayland Zaske – Vice Chair  
Alan Neyers – Secretary/Treasurer  
Gary Eekhoff  
Matt Haubrich  
Whitey Hinderman  
Gary Peterson  
Kylie Rieke  
Helen Ruebel

#### Renville-Sibley Employees

Gene Allex – 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 – Member and Board Services Representative  
Brayden Fischer – Journeyman Lineman  
Cindy Mertens – Administrative Services Manager  
DeeAnne Norris – CEO  
Clint Olson – Journeyman Lineman  
Kathy Ridl – Office Assistant  
Shane Suess – PT Janitor

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

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# ANNUAL MEETING



Renville-Sibley's 85th Annual Meeting will be held on March 30 at the Redwood Area Community Center in Redwood Falls. More annual meeting information will be provided in upcoming newsletters. 801401

## Member informational meetings to be held in February

Renville-Sibley will be hosting our annual member informational meetings throughout the service area in February. All members are invited to attend and learn more about our electric cooperative and what is happening in the electric industry.

The meeting schedule is as follows:

- **February 11** at 9 a.m. – Danube Community Center
- **February 14** at 1:30 p.m. – Sacred Heart Community Center
- **February 16** at 9 a.m. – Fairfax Community Center

A light snack will be served at each of the meetings. We look forward to seeing you at the member informational meetings in February.

## Congratulations

Congratulations to Marvin & Patsy Breikreutz on being selected as winners of the \$50 prize energy credit at our Christmas Open House! Thank you all who came to our Open House, we look forward to celebrating next year with our membership at our new facility!

### Check out this handy electrical fire check list

Electrical Fires do not have to happen. Use this checklist to help you find and fix electrical fire hazards in your home before they can start a fire.

Smoke Alarms – Smoke alarms save lives!

- ✓ Do you have enough smoke alarms?
- ✓ Are they working?
- ✓ Do you test them?

Switches and Outlets – Be on the look-out for signs of trouble.

- ✓ Are they working?
- ✓ Do they make crackling, buzzing, or sizzling sounds?
- ✓ Are they warm to the touch?
- ✓ Do plugs fit snugly?

Cords – Never use damaged cords.

- ✓ Is there fraying or cracking?
- ✓ Are they pinched or pierced?
- ✓ Do you use extension cords all the time?
- ✓ Are cords getting enough air?

Lamps and Appliances – Use them safely.

- ✓ Are you using the right bulbs?
- ✓ Do you use space heaters safely?
- ✓ Are appliance cords protected from damage?

Electrical Panel – Know the basics.

- ✓ Do you have AFCIs?
- ✓ Have you tested your AFCIs?
- ✓ Are all circuit breakers and fuses the proper size?



### KEEPING UP WITH ELECTRIC METERING TECHNOLOGY



South Dakota's electric cooperatives recently held an electric meter school in Pierre where more than 45 co-op employees learned about the latest technology in residential and industrial kilowatt hour metering processes. Metering is a key component of providing reliable, safe and affordable power to cooperative members all across the state.

To view scenes from this important training program and learn more about how electric cooperatives work to improve our communities, visit Cooperative Connections Plus by scanning the QR code at right.



### Take care when flying kites

#### Jaclyn Koistinen

Jaclyn Koistinen, 11, is already thinking ahead to spring when kite-flying is a popular activity. She warns kids and adults both to take care when putting that kite in the air. Jaclyn is the daughter of Patrick and Jenilee Koistinen, members of H-D Electric based in Clear Lake.

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.





# BRUNCH SWEET BRUNCH

**CRAB QUICHE****Ingredients:**

- 1 (6 oz.) can crab meat (rinsed and drained)
- 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/4 c. chopped green onion (or fresh chives)
- 4 eggs.
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. dry mustard
- 1 c. milk (or half-n-half)

**METHOD**

Grease or spray pie pan. Combine crab, cheese and onion. Press into pie pan and up the sides. Whisk together the milk, eggs, salt and mustard. Pour mixture into pan. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake in 400 degree oven about 30 minutes or until set. Let set 5 minutes before cutting and serving.

**Elaine Rowett, Sturgis**

**PRALINE PECAN CRUNCH****Ingredients:**

- 1 (21 oz.) box Quaker Oat Squares cereal (about 8 c.)
- 2 c. pecans
- 1/2 cup packed brown sugar
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1/2 c. light corn syrup
- 1/4 c. margarine
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda

**METHOD**

Heat oven to 250 degrees. Mix cereal and pecans in 9x13 inch pan. Set aside. Mix corn syrup, brown sugar and margarine in glass bowl. Microwave on high 1-1/2 minutes. Stir. Microwave 1 to 1-1/2 minutes more or until boiling. Stir in vanilla and baking soda and pour over cereal mixture. Stir to coat evenly. Bake 1 hour, stirring every 20 minutes. Spread on baking sheet to cool. Break into pieces and store in airtight container.

**Nancy Stenson, Fort Pierre**

**CINNAMON APPLE BRUNCH BAKE****Ingredients:**

- 1 can (21 oz.) apple pie filling
- 1/2 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 3 tbsp. butter, melted
- 2 tsp. McCormick® Ground Cinnamon
- 1 1/2 tbsp. McCormick® All Natural Pure Vanilla Extract
- 1 can (12 oz.) refrigerated biscuits
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts

**METHOD**

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix apple pie filling, brown sugar, butter, cinnamon and vanilla in medium bowl. Spread 1/2 of the apple mixture in 2-quart shallow baking dish. Cut each biscuit into quarters. Arrange biscuit pieces, points up, over apple mixture. Spread remaining apple mixture over biscuits. Sprinkle with nuts. Bake 35 to 40 minutes or until golden brown. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

**mccormick.com**

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 2023. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

# Are you interested in a new adventure?

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association is beginning to plan for the 85th Annual meeting of the membership that will be held on March 30, 2023 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 Kylie Rieke. Kylie Rieke's term will expire in 2023.

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 Matt Haubrich. Matt Haubrich's term will expire in 2023.

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 2023.

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 fourth Tuesday 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 800-826-2593 before February 6, 2023, for further information.



## \$5,000 in academic scholarships to be awarded



Renville-Sibley Cooperative will offer \$5,000 in scholarship money to students in this region. The scholarships are for the 2023-24 school year.

Renville-Sibley is allocated a \$1,000 scholarship from Basin Electric to be awarded at the discretion of the cooperative. Another \$1,000 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 \$1,000 Basin Scholarship and the \$1,000 Renville-Sibley Scholarship. These scholarships will be awarded based on a combination of SAT/ACT scores and overall GPA, work experiences, 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 four \$1,000 scholarships are distributed from uncashed capital credit checks and 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 vo/tech school. Applications will be accepted until Feb. 23, 2023. Winners will be announced to the public at the Cooperative's Annual Meeting on March 30, 2023.

Renville-Sibley participates with

other Minnesota electric co-ops in sponsoring the continuation of the Jay York Scholarship. He was a Lake Wilson farmer who dedicated his life to the rural electric program and education. He was the first Minnesotan to serve as president of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Scholarships are available each year from this program and are selected by random drawing. Each participating cooperative may submit one candidate's name. The amount is determined based on the number of cooperatives that participate.

Only one completed application is required for an applicant to be considered for any of these scholarships. Incomplete applications will be excluded. For more information and an application form, contact Renville-Sibley at 800-826-2593 or 826-2593. For applications, visit [www.rscpa.coop](http://www.rscpa.coop).

## New facility update: Work progressing at a fast pace

Through the end of December, all in-ground plumbing and electrical work has been completed at the site.

The office side had the in-floor tubing for heat installed, concrete poured, and most of the initial framing work completed. Our shop and warehouse have all foam and in-floor tubing for heat installed. Concrete for the west side of the shop floor was poured at the

end of December and the east side is scheduled for the end of January.

To watch the outside activity at the new facility, check out the video on our website: <https://rscpa.coop/renville-sibley-new-facility>.

When you watch this video, it will seem like everything happened so fast right away then nothing happened for a bit. Then, when the walls and roof

went up, there was a lot of activity on site. Now that the walls and roof are installed, the contractors are working inside the building so it will again appear as if nothing is happening at the site. However, there is a lot of activity going on this winter to prepare for our move into the building in 2023.



Mitchell Tech facilities were used for the annual electric cooperative rubber gloving school last summer. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

## Mitchell Tech prepares linemen to deliver the 'right stuff' for members

**Billy Gibson**

editor@sdrea.coop

It's rare that you find a cooperative lineman in the state of South Dakota who hasn't been through the training program at Mitchell Technical College.

Mike Puetz doesn't remember all the names and faces, but his mentorship has played a key role in turning loads of wannabe linemen into highly skilled craftsmen over the past 25 years.

Puetz serves as head of the lineman training department at MTC and is giving some thought to hanging up his hooks in the next year or so. When he reflects on his teaching career, he swells with pride at how the program has improved exponentially over time.

There have been many milestones in the emergence of the lineman education program rising to become one of the best of its kind in the country.

Back in 2018, for instance, the power line construction and maintenance school was named winner of the inaugural Siemens-Aspen Community College

STEM award. The honor is given by the Aspen Institute to eight colleges nationwide that provide "outstanding preparation" for students in high-demand jobs and provides selected schools with \$50,000 to apply toward scholarships and other forms of financial assistance.

"That was definitely a shock," Puetz said. "There's a lot of good programs out there, and for us to be chosen for that prestigious award was unbelievable. We work hard to be able to say we have a very strong program, and that just gave us some validation that we're moving in the right direction. It's icing on the cake."

Mark Patterson, manager of loss control services at the South Dakota Rural Electric Association based in Pierre, has worked with Puetz for 15 years. He's hard-pressed to find many co-op linemen who haven't trained under Puetz.

"Mike has been around so long, and I'd estimate about 80 percent of the electric co-op linemen out there today have been trained by him," Patterson said. "They do a fantastic job of teaching the fundamentals, whether a student ends

up at a municipal, an investor-owned or a co-op. And our superintendents do an exceptional job of working with the graduates to help them gain the field experience they need to serve our members with a mindset of safety and efficiency."

Over the years, Puetz said, MTC has not only distinguished itself among similar programs but has also greatly expanded its array of academic and technical career tracks. There are tracks for construction and manufacturing, business and service industries, health sciences, engineering technologies and agriculture and transportation.



Sioux Valley Energy's Cole Anderson learned his trade at MTC.





At left, Mike Puetz has trained hundreds of future linemen. Above, Mitchell Technical College is well equipped to give electric linemen the real-world skills they need to succeed. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Cole Anderson is a lineman at Sioux Valley Energy based in Madison. He graduated from the training program four years ago and recalls why he selected MTC to learn the ropes of line work.

"I had an uncle who was a lineman in another state and I knew that's what I always wanted to do," said Anderson, a graduate of Chester Area High School. "I started looking at schools and noticed they had limited positions open and they were always taken very quickly. That told me how good their reputation was."

Anderson received his certification in May of 2018, joined the cooperative as a 1,000 hour lineman, and eventually worked his way into a journeyman position.

Oddly enough, he met Puetz a year before he enrolled at MTC. While still in high school, Anderson was on a tour of the facility when he happened to encounter Puetz in the hallway. The two shook hands and after a brief conversation, Puetz said: "If I don't see you here next year, I'm coming to track you down."

Anderson said he finds himself frequently relying on his lineman education and remembering the things Puetz taught him, including those lessons that don't necessarily have to do with line work.

"I think he's awesome. He's big on work ethic and he always told us that no matter what we did in life, a good work ethic will allow you to accomplish your goals and stand out from the rest," Anderson said. "He also had a thing about belts. You had to wear a belt. If he saw you and you didn't have one on, he'd take his off and give it to you."

Anderson and his wife, Sarah, recently built a new home outside of Madison and are expecting a baby boy in March. He said he's grateful for the outstanding

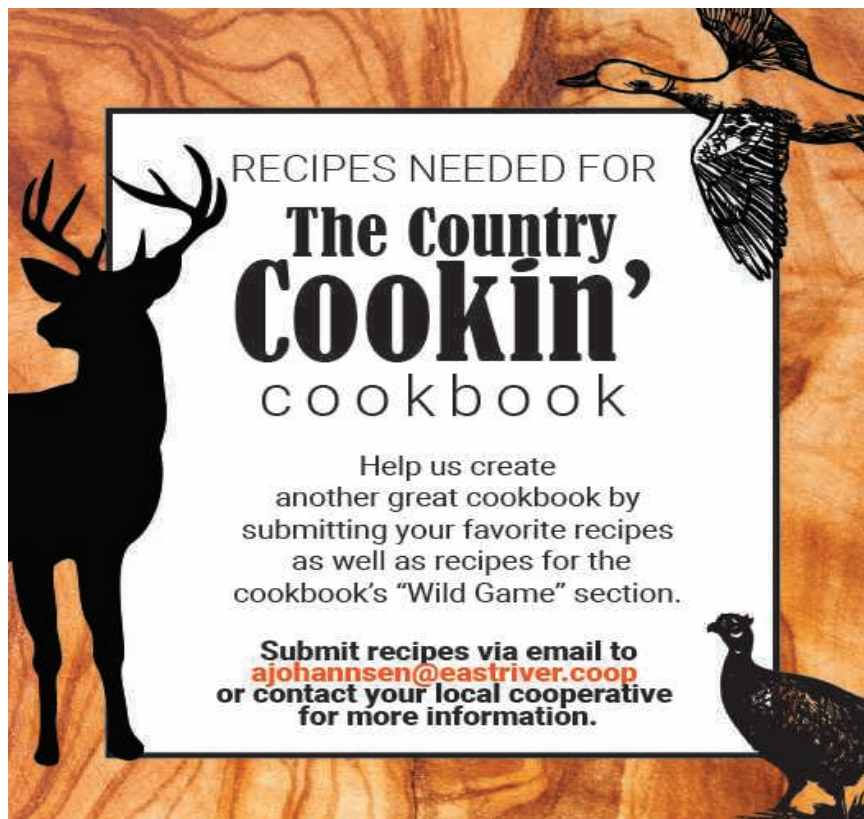
instruction he received during his education phase and is also thankful to have a position at an outstanding organization within the electric cooperative system.

"I just feel fortunate. It's been a great experience all the way through," he said. "I think it's a privilege to be able to do a job I enjoy and to work with professionals who know their craft, and an organization that is focused on delivering the highest quality service to its members."

For more information about MTC, visit [www.mitchelltech.edu](http://www.mitchelltech.edu).



MTC is a prime training ground for future co-op linemen. *Photo by Billy Gibson*



## Comparative Report

	Current YTD through November 30, 2022	One Year Ago YTD through November 30, 2021	10 Years Ago YTD through November 30, 2012
average # of Consumers	1,889	1,882	1,921
kWhs purchased	158,955,906	167,139,763	140,730,497
Cost of purchased power	\$8,763,374.89	\$10,830,753.37	\$7,076,926.08

## 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

## MISSION STATEMENT

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

## OUTAGE REPORT

*Affecting 10 members or more*

**Date: 11/7/22**

Time off: 9:55 a.m.

Time on: 12:38 p.m.

Substation: Cairo

Cause: Scheduled

**Date: 11/8/22**

Time off: 9:00 a.m.

Time on: 11:38 a.m.

Substation: Troy

Cause: Scheduled

**Date: 11/15/22**

Time off: 1:00 p.m.

Time on: 1:43 a.m.

Substation: Cairo

Cause: Scheduled

**Date: 11/22/22**

Time off: 10:15 a.m.

Time on: 11:32 a.m.

Substation: Crooks, Troy

Cause: Overload

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



## December board meeting highlights

The December board meeting was held on Tuesday, Dec. 20, at 9 a.m. All board members were present except Helen Ruebel. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Norris, Gene Alex, Lenae Wordes, Cindy Mertens, and Amy Ervin.

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the November 22 board meeting
- Operating and disbursement reports for the month of November
- 2023 Market Rate
- Safety Report for December
- Bad Debt
- Schedule "A" Standard Pricing Guide Revisions
- Minnwest Bank Authorized Signer Change
- FM Bank Authorized Signer Change
- Hometown Bank Authorized Signer Change
- NRECA Annual Meeting Voting Delegate

- NRTC Annual Meeting Voting Delegate
- The board reviewed:
- Total new members
  - Reports from staff members as to the activities in their department. Items in the reports include:
    - High-level Statement of Operations review – YTD through November (unaudited)
    - Organization activities
    - East River update
    - Basin Electric update
    - NRECA update
    - MREA update
    - Linecrew work in progress, equipment update, and outage update
    - Accounts receivable
    - New facility update

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

## NOTICE:

The January board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 24, at 9 a.m.  
The February board meeting will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 28, at 9 a.m.

## Scholar of the Month

Renville-Sibley Co-op Power, your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative, congratulates Elsa Gustafson on being selected as the December Scholar of the Month.

Elsa is a senior at CMCS and was nominated because of her deep desire to go above and beyond in learning to develop a deeper understanding of her schoolwork. She participates in a variety of activities at school such as track and field, the drama department – taking lead roles, choir, band and student council. She also holds a part-time job outside of school and is active in her church.

Renville-Sibley Co-op Power salutes Elsa Gustafson as the December Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Month.



## WHERE'S THE NUMBER?

Last month Steven Herschman found his member number in the newsletter. Congratulations! The credit will start over with a value of \$15. Another number has been hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number and call the office by the 1st of February, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck in your search!

## 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 \$33,061.06 in contributions. To date, with your generosity, we've given \$31,850 back to 27 different local organizations.

This shows that small donations from electric co-ops like ours, over time, can collectively make a big impact. Thank you to all who participate in this program!

# NATIVE TOURISM

## Native Tourism Alliance shines spotlight on tribal nation culture

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Sure, many of the 15 million travelers who visit South Dakota each year may have marveled at the Mount Rushmore Memorial, snapped a selfie at Wall Drug or beheld the fast-moving waters in Falls Park.

But how many of them have witnessed the whirling splendor of a wacipi, the traditional Native American celebration of life? How many have paused to watch a Native artist crafting a colorful piece of beaded jewelry?

Several years ago, a blind spot was noticed in the Department of Tourism's efforts to attract visitors – not much attention was being focused on the state's nine federally-recognized tribal nations.

In an effort to address that oversight, the department teamed up with the George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies

and the tribes to develop a sustainable indigenous tourism industry by letting visitors know there are many points of interest available for exploration far beyond the beaten paths.

The five-year plan has been described as a “groundbreaking endeavor” and is one of the first initiatives of its kind under the Native American Tourism and Improving Visitor Experience (NATIVE) Act and was unveiled in August of 2021. More than 60 state, local and federal organizations collaborated to formulate the strategy as a catalyst for economic growth.

“I think the Alliance is a potential revenue source for our tribes, and it's a way for us to generate income, alleviate poverty and help conserve our natural resources and culture,” said Dew Bad Warrior-Ganje, a member of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

The plan identified five guiding principles:

### Native Tourism Alliance

**CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX TRIBE**

PO Box 590, Eagle Butte, SD 57625  
605-964-4155

**CROW CREEK SIOUX TRIBE**

PO Box 50, Fort Thompson, SD 57339  
605-245-2221

**FLANDREAU SANTEE SIOUX TRIBE**

PO Box 283, Flandreau, SD 57028-0283  
605-997-3891

**LOWER BRULE SIOUX TRIBE**

PO Box 187, Lower Brule, SD 57548  
605-473-5561

**ONGLALA SIOUX TRIBE**

PO Box 2070, Pine Ridge, SD 57770  
605-867-5821

**ROSEBUD SIOUX TRIBE**

PO Box 430, Rosebud, SD 57570  
605-747-2381

**SISSETON WAHPETON OYATE**

PO Box 509, Agency Village, SD 57262  
605-698-3911

**STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE**

PO Box D, Fort Yates, ND 58538  
701-854-8500

**YANKTON SIOUX TRIBE**

PO Box 1153, Wagner, SD 57380  
605-384-3641



- Unity - Reunification of the Očhéthi Šakówi Oyate through shared history, commonalities, and collaboration on developing regional tourism.
- Preservation - Promotion of art and culture in order to enhance self-identity and pride as well as preserve the culture, including language and traditional knowledge.
- Woksape - Recognition of Elders as the driving force of traditional knowledge and wisdom in the development of regional tourism and educating the youth to be stewards of the language and culture.
- Education - Creation of cross-cultural bridges and educating the World about Native American communities.
- Self-sufficiency - Development of opportunities for Tribal Nations to become self-sufficient and create pathways to enhance livelihood.

Organizers gathered together and developed detailed goals and methods to achieve those goals. Planners were forced to start from the ground floor as not much data existed to determine the present status of Indigenous tourism.

They initially identified a “rich mix” of 145 existing natural, cultural and heritage attractions and special events to promote, in addition to potential agritourism initiatives.

Nearing the halfway point in the plan’s prescribed timetable, stakeholders report substantial progress and greater interest from visitors seeking an authentic cultural experience.

Calvin Bloemendaal, who has represented the South Dakota Department of Tourism in the Alliance from its inception, pointed out several specific measures of success.

Chief among them is the creation of a nine-day motorcoach tour of tribal territory that starts in Rapid City and terminates in Bismarck. The tour, coordinated with assistance by the tourism department, will begin this summer and will be operated through Destination America and Trafalgar Tours.

“It’s one of the first tours of its kind,” Bloemendaal said. “Destination America caters to an upscale clientele of individuals who like to travel a lot and have been to a lot of places. They’re looking for something unique and interesting they haven’t seen before.”

He also mentioned the progress that has been made in building a network of support for tribal tourism and the development of themed destination experiences.

There’s also a marketing guide that is part of the department’s general ongoing promotional efforts. More than 30,000 of the helpful guides were printed and are being distributed at visitor centers, trade shows and other industry events.

“I was at a trade show in Denver and people were extremely interested in this idea and gravitating toward it. The guide is an effective tool that inspires people to visit,” he said. “We’re making a lot of headway as far as putting together pitches and itineraries to attract more tour operators to the state.”





# Be proactive in preventing electrical fires

Take steps to help prevent electrical fires by identifying possible issues before they occur.

When assessing your home, the first step is to hire a qualified electrician to check all wiring to ensure it is up to code and that the electrical system can handle the demands of your electronics, appliances, lights and other electrical needs. Beyond that, watch for possible issues as they arise.

Symptoms of issues include flickering lights, discolored outlets and switch plates, damaged cords, and frequently tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses.

Check these electrically related items in your home:

**1. Electrical outlets:** Check for loose-fitting plugs and loose wall receptacles. Replace missing or broken wall plates. If you have young children, install tamper-resistant outlets if your home does not have them. Avoid overloading outlets with adapters and too many appliance plugs.

**2. Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs):** Make sure GFCIs are installed in your kitchen, bathrooms, laundry room, workshop, basement, garage, and outdoor outlets. GFCIs help protect against electrical shock. Use the Test and Reset buttons monthly to ensure that they are working properly.

**3. Cords:** Check cords to ensure they are not frayed or cracked, placed under rugs, tightly wrapped around an object or located in high-traffic areas. Do not nail or staple them to walls, floors, or other objects.

**4. Extension cords:** These are not intended to be permanent solutions, so



- Incorrectly installed wiring
- Overloaded circuits and extension cords
- Defective or improper plugs, switches and outlets
- Misuse or poor maintenance of lighting

use them temporarily. If you find that you need more electrical outlets, consult your electrician.

**5. Light bulbs:** Verify that your light bulbs are the intended wattage for the lamp or fixture they are in.

**6. Appliances/electronics:** If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker, or gives you an electrical shock, it is time to discard it and replace it with a new version. Use surge protectors to protect expensive electronics. Make sure your appliances and electronics are placed in dry locations.

**7. Circuit breakers/fuses:** Check that circuit breakers are working properly. Fuses should be properly rated for the circuits they protect.

**8. Electrical wiring:** If an outlet is not working, it may be an indicator of unsafe wiring. Also, check for loose wires

and lighting fixtures. Listen for popping or sizzling sounds behind walls. If light switches feel hot or lights spark and flicker, immediately shut them off at the circuit breaker and contact a qualified electrician to make repairs.

**9. Arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs):** AFCIs, which monitor the flow of electricity throughout your home, should be properly installed. If an AFCI detects any abnormality, it shuts the system off to prevent a fire. Upon inspection, an electrician can assess whether your home is properly protected.

**10. Service capacity:** If fuses blow or trip frequently, you may need to increase the capacity of your electrical service or add new branch circuits. Contact a qualified electrician.

For more information on electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).





## Renville-Sibley Co-op Power

# 2023 Rebates and Incentives

### Incentives:

- 5 percent interest loans available for equipment, service upgrade and installation of qualified heat systems (up to \$15,000 for up to five years with approval)
- Minimum qualifications must be met for all marketing programs

### 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. Ductless system must be new, under two 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 and controlled A/C is only 6 cents/kWh!

Contact the office for details. – There is a \$2.50 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 \$.30/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.



**Feb 16, 2023**  
**Photo Showcasing:**  
**A Path Les Traveled**  
 Homestake Adams Research  
 and Cultural Center  
 Deadwood, SD  
 605-722-4800

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.

**FEB. 3-4**  
**TOOTSIE**

Show Dates:  
 Feb. 3, 7:30 p.m.  
 Feb. 4, 2 p.m.  
 Feb. 4, 7:30 p.m.  
 Washington Pavilion  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-367-6000

**FEB. 4**  
**Lake Hendricks Fishing Derby**  
 9 a.m. registration  
 Hendricks City Public  
 Lake Access  
 Hendricks, MN  
 507-828-2113

**FEB. 4**  
**James River Gobblers**  
**Hunting Heritage Banquet**  
 Highland Conference Center  
 Mitchell, SD  
 605-999-3208

**FEB. 10-11**  
**Mardi Gras Weekend**  
 Mardi Gras Events & Parade  
 Sponsored by Deadwood  
 Chamber of Commerce  
 Main Street  
 Deadwood, SD

**FEB. 11**  
**Songs of Romance**  
 7:30 p.m.  
 Washington Pavilion  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-367-6000

**FEB. 16**  
**Photo Showcasing:**  
**A Path Les Traveled**  
 12 p.m.-1 p.m.  
 Homestake Adams Research  
 and Cultural Center  
 Deadwood, SD  
 605-722-4800

**FEB. 24**  
**Calamity's Shindig**  
 6 p.m.-9 p.m.  
 Homestake Adams Research  
 and Cultural Center  
 Deadwood, SD  
 605-722-4800

**FEB. 28**  
**BIG Career & Internship Fair**  
 10 a.m.-2 p.m.  
 Ramkota Hotel  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**MARCH 4**  
**Annual Ag Day**  
 9 a.m.-1 p.m.  
 Washington Pavilion  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-367-6000

**MARCH 18**  
**Shamrock Shuffle Fun Run**  
 12 p.m.  
 Main Street  
 Presho, SD

**MARCH 25-26**  
**Greater Sioux Falls Model**  
**Train Show**  
 Multi-Cultural Center  
 Sioux Falls, SD

**MARCH 30**  
**"The Wildest Banquet**  
**Auction in the Midwest"**  
 5:30 p.m.  
 South Dakota Military  
 Heritage Alliance  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-339-1203

**APRIL 1**  
**Mozart Requiem**  
 7:30 p.m.  
 Washington Pavilion  
 Sioux Falls, SD  
 605-367-6000

**Note: Please make sure  
 to call ahead to verify the  
 event is still being held.**