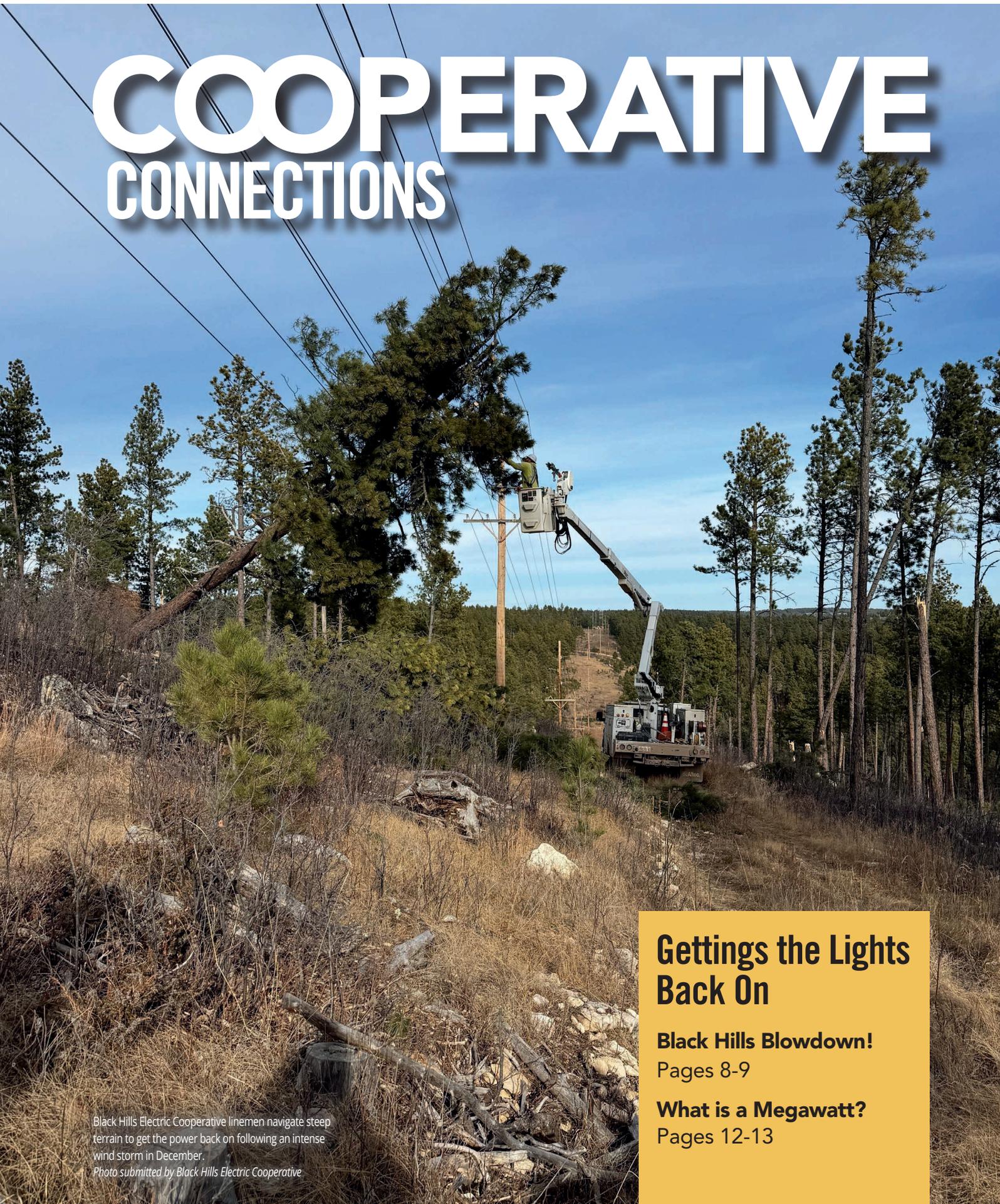




A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

RENVILLE-SIBLEY
MARCH 2026 VOL. 26 NO. 11

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Gettings the Lights Back On

Black Hills Blowdown!
Pages 8-9

What is a Megawatt?
Pages 12-13

Black Hills Electric Cooperative linemen navigate steep terrain to get the power back on following an intense wind storm in December.

Photo submitted by Black Hills Electric Cooperative

Minnesota Electric Cooperatives: 2026 Legislative Priorities

Jenny Glumack
MREA

The 2026 Minnesota legislative session will convene February 17 and constitutionally must adjourn by May 18. After passing the biennial state budget in 2025, lawmakers are expected to focus largely on policy issues and the state's capital investment bill, which funds public infrastructure projects. This session unfolds with legislators keenly aware that all 201 legislative seats and the state's constitutional offices will be on the ballot in November.

This political backdrop is headlined by the recent announcement by incumbent Democratic Gov. Tim Walz that he will not seek reelection. At this point, who will run on the Democratic side is still in limbo. However, there are 11 GOP candidates, including Speaker Lisa Demuth and Rep. Kristin Robbins, who are looking to fill the role. Little legislative progress is expected given the divided dynamics, but as history shows, the Minnesota Legislature often finds ways to surprise.

During this session, the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) is advocating for policies that ensure reliable, affordable and sustainable energy for all Minnesotans. While the legislative climate may present challenges, we see opportunities to make progress on key issues that benefit rural communities, strengthen the grid and advance innovative energy solutions.

This year, two priorities lead our efforts: lifting Minnesota's moratorium on nuclear energy and reforming outdated net metering policies.

Lifting Minnesota's Nuclear Energy Moratorium

For decades, Minnesota has maintained a moratorium on new nuclear

energy projects, limiting the state's ability to explore carbon-free and reliable power generation. As electric cooperatives work to meet growing demand and integrate more renewable energy, baseload power from advanced nuclear technologies offers immense potential.

Nuclear energy plays a key role in the clean energy transition. Unlike wind or solar, it provides constant, reliable power regardless of weather conditions or time of day. With advancing technologies like small modular reactors (SMRs), nuclear energy can complement renewables while reducing carbon emissions.

Removing the moratorium doesn't commit Minnesota to nuclear projects today, but it opens the door to important conversations about ensuring a balanced energy mix for the future. MREA is co-leading efforts to lift the moratorium alongside more than 40 partners, including utilities, labor unions, environmental groups and county governments, through the Minnesota Nuclear Energy Alliance. This coalition is bringing together members from across the political spectrum, and we're optimistic 2026 can be the year Minnesota reopens the nuclear discussion. Learn more at mnnuclearenergyalliance.org.

Reforming Net Metering

Reforming Minnesota's outdated net metering policies is another top priority. While net metering has encouraged the growth of distributed generation like rooftop solar, the current framework unfairly shifts costs to non-solar members.

Electric cooperatives fully support renewable energy, but policies must ensure fair and equitable treatment for all cooperative members, whether or not they generate their own power. MREA is working toward reforms that balance affordability with encouraging renewable

energy growth. By aligning incentives with the true costs and benefits of distributed energy resources, we can foster continued innovation without overburdening those who can least afford it.

Additional Areas of Focus

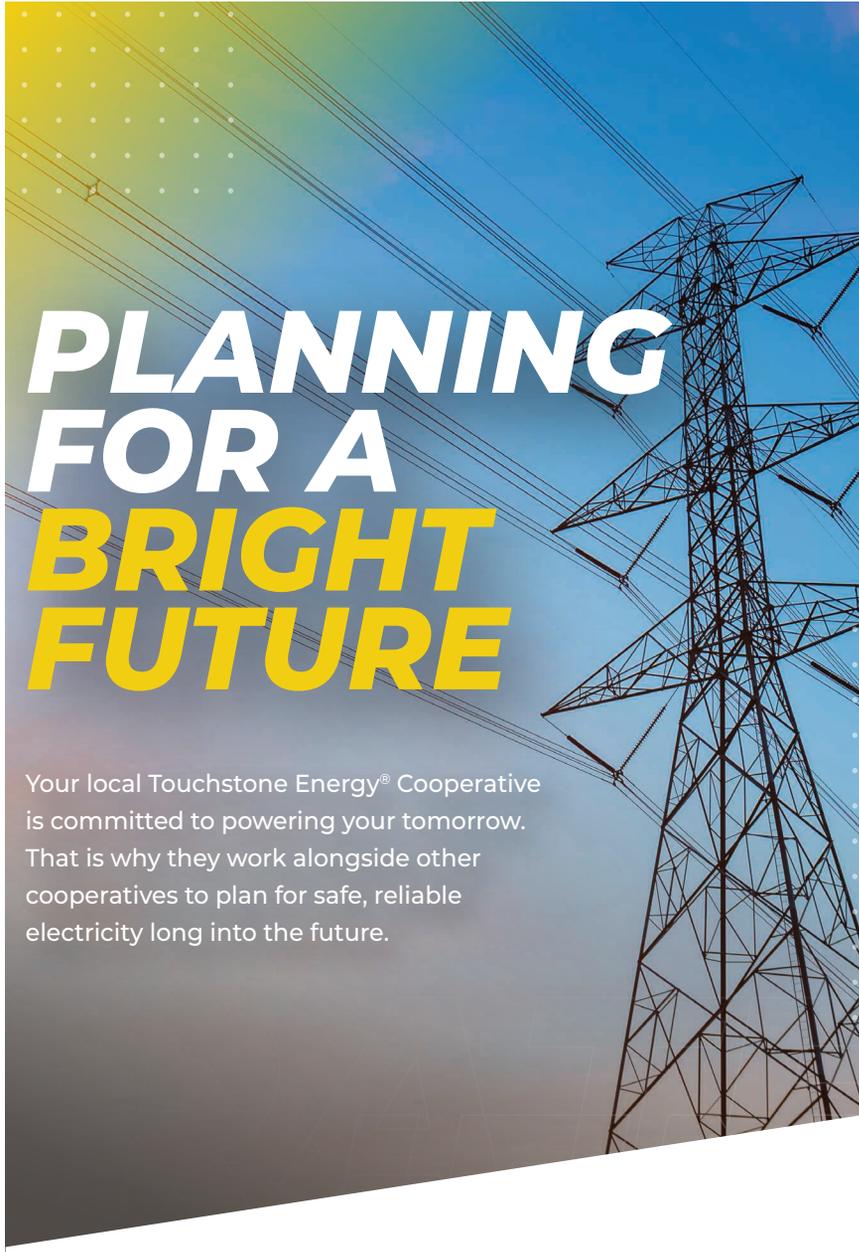
While lifting the nuclear moratorium and reforming net metering are MREA's top priorities, several other issues remain important:

- **Wildfire Mitigation:** Rural utilities and cooperatives are key players in reducing wildfire risks. MREA is working with stakeholders to coordinate strategies that protect communities and critical infrastructure.
- **Utility Worker Protection:** Existing laws mostly protect utility workers, but increasing public awareness remains a priority. We want to extend the cooperative culture of safety across our state.
- **Energy Affordability:** Co-ops prioritize keeping electricity affordable and will continue defending against mandates that raise costs and undermine reliable, balanced energy solutions.

A Trusted Voice for Rural Energy

MREA is dedicated to standing up for electric cooperatives and promoting policies that safeguard affordability, reliability and local control. Whether through testimony, outreach or collaboration, we will work to ensure the cooperative difference is front and center in Minnesota's energy discussions.

From lifting the nuclear moratorium to reforming net metering, 2026 offers a chance to shape a stronger, more sustainable energy future. Together, we can ensure that energy policies serve all communities fairly and equitably.



Your local Touchstone Energy® Cooperative is committed to powering your tomorrow. That is why they work alongside other cooperatives to plan for safe, reliable electricity long into the future.

RE-ENERGIZING RELIABILITY

Learn more about how your co-op plans for a future with safe, reliable electricity at YourCoopPower.com.



COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

RENVILLE-SIBLEY CO-OP POWER

(USPS 019-074)

Board of Directors

- Whitey Hinderman – Chair
- Roger Manthei – Vice Chair
- Vicky Firlé – 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

RENVILLE-SIBLEY COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is published monthly by Renville-Sibley Co-op Power Association, 515 Highway 212 W, Danube, MN, 56230 for its members. Electric cooperative members devote 75 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Periodicals Postage Paid at Danube Post Office, Danube, MN 56230 and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Renville-Sibley Cooperative Connections, PO Box 68, Danube, MN 56230; Telephone (320) 826-2593; Toll Free 1-800-826-2593; Fax (320) 826-2679.

Web site: www.rscpa.coop

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Ensuring Drone Safety Near Power Lines

As drones continue to gain popularity for recreational and commercial use, their integration into our daily lives should not lessen the consideration of safety – particularly when it comes to flying near power lines. The intersection of drone technology and electrical infrastructure necessitates adherence to safety protocols, regulations, and best practices to protect both pilots and the integrity of electrical systems.

Power lines are essential components of our electrical grid, delivering energy to homes and businesses. However, they can pose serious hazards for drone operators. Collisions with power lines can cause significant equipment damage, leading to costly repairs or replacements. More critically, such incidents can disrupt service for hundreds of members, creating outages that could last for hours or even days.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has established regulations governing drone use, including restrictions on flying in proximity to power lines. According to FAA guidelines, drone pilots must always maintain a visual line of sight with their aircraft and avoid flying over people. When operating near electrical infrastructure, it is crucial to adhere to the regulations pertaining to altitude and no-fly zones.

Drone operators should also be familiar with state and local laws, as some municipalities have designated specific areas as no-fly zones, particularly near critical infrastructure like power facilities. Understanding these regulations is not only a legal requirement but also an essential step in ensuring the safety of all involved.

Best Practices for Safe Operations

To minimize risks when flying drones near power lines, operators should adopt several best practices:

1. **Pre-Flight Planning:** Before taking off, thoroughly assess the flight area. Identify the location of power lines, potential obstacles, and any relevant no-fly zones. Consulting local maps and aerial photography can aid in understanding the landscape.
2. **Maintain Safe Distances:** When operating near power lines, always keep a safe distance. The FAA recommends a separation of at least 500 feet from energized power lines to avoid potential collisions. Keeping a safe buffer not only protects the drone but also mitigates risks to nearby electrical infrastructure.

3. **Use Technology Wisely:** Many modern drones come equipped with GPS and obstacle avoidance systems that can aid in safe navigation. Utilize these features and ensure that your drone's software is updated to reduce the likelihood of malfunction.
4. **Operating in Controlled Conditions:** Avoid flying drones in poor weather conditions such as high winds, rain, or reduced visibility. Harsh weather not only affects flight stability but can also lead to loss of control over the drone, increasing the risk of accidents.
5. **Emergency Procedures:** In case of a malfunction or loss of control, having an emergency plan in place is vital. Be prepared to communicate with local authorities if a drone becomes entangled in power lines or presents a safety concern.

As the popularity of drones continues to soar, awareness around safety protocols, especially near power lines, has become increasingly critical. By understanding the risks involved, adhering to regulations, and implementing best practices for safe drone operations, pilots can ensure the protection of themselves, others, and vital electrical infrastructure. Responsible drone use fosters innovation while ensuring safety remains paramount in our evolving technological landscape.

"Never ever try to grab birds off of power lines!"



**Naomi Krcil,
Age 8**

Naomi warns readers to never EVER grab birds off of a power line. Great picture, 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.

Scrumptious SALADS

MACARONI SALAD

Ingredients:

2 cups macaroni (cooked, drained, rinsed and cooled)
 2 or more cups of carrots (chopped or shredded)
 1 small chopped onion (optional)
 1 cup chopped green pepper (optional)

Dressing

1 cup mayonnaise (Hellmans)
 1/4 cup vinegar
 1/2 cup sugar
 7 oz. sweetened condensed milk
 1/4 tsp. salt
 1/4 tsp. pepper

R. Gregg Fritz
 H-D Electric

KARI REDER'S POTATO SALAD

Ingredients:

7-8 lbs. potatoes, Yukon gold or red
 1 dozen eggs
 1 med. sweet onion
 2 cups Mayo
 1 tbsp. cream
 1/4 cup of apple cider vinegar
 1/2 cup of sugar or splenda
 1 1/2 tbsps. mustard
 2 tbsps. celery seed
 Celery salt, salt and pepper to taste

Method

Boil potatoes and eggs, peel and dice. Add the chopped onion. Mix together mayo, cream, apple cider vinegar, sugar, mustard, celery seed, celery salt, salt and pepper. Mix all together well and refrigerate.

Kari Reder
 Northern Electric

SUMMER GARDEN PASTA SALAD

Ingredients:

1 lb. thin spaghetti, broken into 1" pieces
 1 pt. cherry tomatoes, halved
 2 med. zucchini, peeled & diced
 2 med. cucumbers, diced
 1 green pepper, diced
 1 red pepper, diced
 1 - 16 oz. can sliced black olives, drained

Dressing:

1 - 16 oz. bottle Italian dressing
 1/4 cup parmesan cheese
 1 tbsp. sesame seeds
 1 tsp. paprika
 1/2 tsp. celery seed
 1/2 tsp. garlic salt

Method

Cook pasta; drain. Drizzle with 1-2 tsps. olive oil. In large bowl, combine pasta, tomatoes, zucchini, cucumber, peppers and olives.

Whisk dressing ingredients together. Pour over salad ingredients and toss to coat.

Cover and refrigerate for three hours.

Jane Ham
 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 2025. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Annual Meeting Notice

The 88th Annual Meeting of Renville-Sibley Co-op Power Association will be held on Thursday, March 26, 2026, at the Redwood Area Community Center in Redwood Falls. The meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. The meeting is being called in accordance with the Bylaws of the Association to transact the following business:

1. Report of officers, directors and committees
2. Election of three (3) directors, one (1) from District 1, one (1) from District 2 and one (1) from District 3
3. Any other business which may properly come before the meeting

Voting ballots for director election, including candidate information, will be mailed to all members the week of March 2nd.

If you cannot attend and you wish to mail your ballot, you may do so. However, if mailed, it must be received through the mail by March 26th, 2026.

Drawings for the early bird prizes will begin at 5:45 p.m. Drawings will also be held at the close of the annual meeting. Children in attendance will be eligible for prize drawings.

A \$15 energy credit attendance prize will be given to members (one credit per member) who attend the annual meeting. All members are encouraged to attend the 88th annual meeting of Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association.

Vicky Firle, Secretary

Member Informational Meetings

Each year, Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association (RSCPA) 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.

Director Candidate Information

The following individuals are running for the Renville-Sibley Co-op Power Association board of directors. More information from the candidates will be included with the ballot mailing. Candidates are listed by district.

District 1:

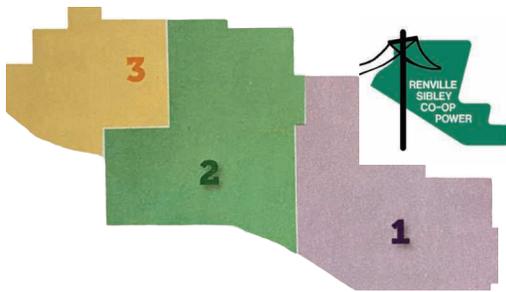
- Vicky Firlé (incumbent)
Townships of Cornish, Severance and Moltke in Sibley County; the Townships of Ridgely and West Newton in Nicollet County and the Townships of Cairo, Wellington, Martinsburg, Camp, Bandon and Palmyra in Renville County.

District 2:

- Jeff Boersma (incumbent)
- Nicholas Plaetz
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.

District 3:

- Roger Manthei (incumbent)
Townships of Roseland and Holland in Kandiyohi County, the Township of Rheiderland in Chippewa County and the Townships of Troy, Winfield, Emmet, Crooks, Sacred Heart, Hawk Creek, Ericson and Wang in Renville County.



District 1 - Vicky Firlé

District 2 - Jeff Boersma

District 2 - Nicholas Plaetz

District 3 - Roger Manthei

January Scholars of the Month

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association (RSCPA), your Touchstone Energy Cooperative, proudly recognizes two exceptional seniors as our January Scholars of the Month! Elizabeth Wassenaar of CMCS and Seth Lippert of BOLD truly represent the values we hold dear—integrity, accountability, innovation, and a strong commitment to community.

Elizabeth Wassenaar is a respected leader at CMCS known for her warm personality, kindness, and creative, sincere approach to school life. Her strong work ethic and industrious mindset drive her to excel in both academics and activities, where she approaches every task with enthusiasm and thoughtfulness. With plans to pursue nursing, Elizabeth's compassion and dedication position her well for a meaningful and impactful career in healthcare.

Seth Lippert is a standout BOLD student recognized for his responsibility, integrity, and commitment, earning deep respect from teachers and classmates. He has achieved academic honors, served on Student Council, and challenged himself with advanced college courses. A talented performer involved in choir and Pop Singers, Seth also gives back to the community through volunteering at the Renville County Food Shelf and his church. His dedication extends to athletics as a member of the basketball and track and field teams. Seth plans to study Business Finance, aspiring to become a



Seth Lippert



Elizabeth Wassenaar

financial broker or analyst—goals well matched to his drive, character, and diverse talents.

Both Elizabeth and Seth exemplify what it means to be RSCPA Scholars—students who lead with character, work hard, care deeply, and influence their communities for the better. We applaud their accomplishments and look forward to seeing the positive impact they will continue to make in the years ahead.

Congratulations to our January Touchstone Energy Scholars of the Month, Elizabeth and Seth! Your schools, families, and communities are proud of you.



Intense wind left the crossarm of a broken three-phase pole hanging after a holiday storm.
Photos submitted by Black Hills Electric Cooperative

GETTING THE LIGHTS BACK ON

Black Hills Electric Cooperative Works Tirelessly Following Holiday Storm

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

In the early morning hours of Dec. 18, powerful winds swept across western South Dakota, leaving much of the Black Hills without electricity. The outage included the home of Bill Brisk, manager of operations at Black Hills Electric Cooperative.

Through wild winds, Brisk set out for his office at the cooperative at 3 a.m., where he discovered that the windstorm was unlike anything he had seen in his 36 years with the cooperative.

“We get wind in the Hills,” Brisk said. “But nothing like that. In all of the time that I’ve been at the cooperative, I’ve never seen wind that strong.”

Wind gusts were later estimated at more than 100 mph, tearing through the Black

Hills with unprecedented force.

When Brisk arrived, the scope of the damage became clear. Nearly the entire system was down, and more than 11,000 of the co-op’s approximately 11,500 meters were without power. By daybreak, more than 96% of Black Hills Electric Cooperative’s system was dark, the largest outage event in the cooperative’s history.

Although an influx of outage calls from members came in around midnight, Brisk made an early and critical decision; crews would not be sent out while the storm was still raging.

“We began receiving calls around midnight, but I did not have our crews go out, just for the fact that it was just too dangerous,” Brisk said. “Trees were breaking off, conditions were hazardous, and I didn’t want to put our crews in any

dangerous situations.”

Instead, crews waited for daylight, when conditions allowed for safe assessment – the first step of getting the lights back on.

Assessment almost always begins with reporting from the community. Due to an overwhelming call volume during storm events, local reports of outages are forwarded to Basin Electric Power Cooperative’s Security and Response Services. These services relay important updates to electric cooperatives. Dispatchers communicate with linemen via push-to-talk radios and cell phones, tracking linemen from the time they leave the shop until the outage has been restored.

In addition to local reports, linemen also conduct their own assessments. That morning, linemen reported countless uprooted and snapped trees, downed poles and even wires lay broken across forest floors and roadways. In some areas, trees fell into other trees, creating dangerous conditions for anyone working below.

“I believe this was one of the worst storms in our cooperative’s history, including winter storm Atlas,” said Brisk.

As the assessment was underway, line

crews worked to bring downed substations back online first, then main three-phase feeders, followed by smaller distribution lines that bring power directly to homes and businesses. That order helps restore electricity to the greatest number of members as quickly as possible.

In the Black Hills, terrain adds another layer of complexity. Many lines run through dense forest, steep canyons and areas far from maintained roads.

“This isn’t square-mile territory,” Brisk said. “You might have to drive five or six miles just to get around a canyon.”

By midday Dec. 18, it was decided the damage was too widespread for Black Hills Electric to tackle alone. Brisk reached out to Mark Patterson, South Dakota Rural Electric Association’s manager of loss control, to request mutual aid from neighboring cooperatives – reinforcing a long-standing cooperative tradition built on neighbors helping neighbors.

Within hours, assistance began mobilizing. Crews, trucks and equipment arrived from across western South Dakota. Six electric cooperatives and a contractor ultimately sent help, bringing 55 additional linemen to the Black Hills. Those crews came from Butte Electric Cooperative, Cherry-Todd Electric Cooperative, Lacreek Electric Association, West Central Electric Cooperative, West River Electric Association, Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative and Kainz Power Lines, a local contractor based out of Custer.

“I had each operations manager of the responding cooperatives call me and ask what we needed,” Brisk said. “We asked for bucket trucks, digger trucks, chainsaws, attachments for skid steers, and extra line crews, and they sent everything we asked for.”

Days began early and ended late with crews often working 12 to 16-hour shifts. Brisk emphasized safety repeatedly to the crews as they worked among unstable trees, high winds and rugged terrain.

Behind the scenes, the restoration effort extended beyond the field. Office staff coordinated logistics and prepared meals. Lunches were packed daily for crews heading out before dawn. Supplies

were tracked, equipment was staged and communication updates were shared with members.

“It wasn’t just the line crews,” Brisk said. “Everybody stepped up.”

As crews continued working and Christmas approached, it appeared unlikely that power would be fully restored in time for the holiday. The visiting crews made it clear they were willing to stay through the holiday.

“All the outside crews said they weren’t leaving,” Brisk said. “They stayed to help us finish.”

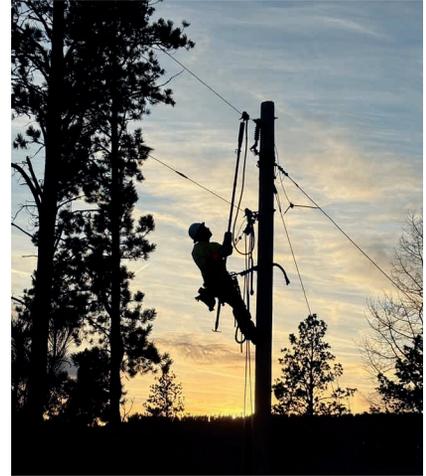
By Christmas Eve, most members had power for the holiday and visiting crews were able to return home. Even still, Black Hills Electric crews continued limited work through the holiday, work that continues today.

“To be truthful, we are still cutting trees, setting poles and repairing lines from this storm,” said Brisk.

The storm was later designated a FEMA-eligible event, requiring detailed tracking of labor, equipment and materials.

Looking back, Brisk said the restoration efforts relied heavily on cooperation and dedication among crews from the assisting cooperatives.

“It’s good to know you’ve got great neighbors,” he said. “When you need help, they come.”



An assisting lineman from West River Electric Cooperative installs a ground on the line to be further worked on.



Damage from the storm not only affected poles, but also uprooted trees.



Bill Brisk, manager of operations at Black Hills Electric Cooperative, gives a morning briefing, updating the cooperative and assisting crews with storm recovery assignments.

Winter Safety for Outdoor Workers

Working Outdoors in the Cold? Here's How to Protect Yourself From Frostbite and Hypothermia This Winter

When the temperature drops, so does your body's ability to stay safe. Outdoor workers — and those who enjoy outdoor sports like hunting, fishing or hiking — face added risks and must take extra steps to guard against frostbite and hypothermia.

Follow these tips and have a plan to stay safe when working outdoors:

- **Watch the weather.** Monitor the temperature and wind chill. Take frequent breaks indoors to help prevent cold stress.
- **Stay warm and dry.** Dress in loose, warm layers. Wear a moisture-wicking base, an insulating mid-layer, and a protective outer layer (flame-resistant/arc-rated if required for your work). Use warm socks and waterproof boots. Remove any wet clothing as quickly as possible.
- **Protect your head and face.** Use a hat, hood, or hard-hat liner. When required for your job, choose FR/AR-rated liners or balaclavas. Avoid bulky hats or loose scarves.
- **Keep your hands safe.** Wear insulated gloves or mittens to guard against frostbite. If working with electricity, always use voltage-rated protective gloves with approved liners — never substitute regular winter gloves in place of necessary personal protective equipment (PPE).
- **Fuel your body.** Drink warm fluids, stay hydrated and eat high-energy foods.

- **Know the warning signs.** Watch for frostbite (numbness, skin color changes) and hypothermia (shivering, confusion, slurred speech).
- **Be prepared on the road.** Keep a winter emergency kit in your vehicle with blankets, traction aids, and extra PPE.

Recognizing frostbite

Frostbite happens when skin and tissue lose circulation and freeze, commonly affecting fingers, toes, ears and nose.

Symptoms of frostbite

- Numbness or tingling in the affected area
- Skin that turns red, white or bluish gray
- Cold, hard or waxy-looking skin
- Stiff muscles and joints

Treating frostbite

1. If possible, move indoors to a warm place.
2. Warm the affected area with warm (not hot) water, or place hands under armpits.
3. Avoid rubbing or massaging frostbitten skin, as this may cause further damage.
4. Seek medical attention for severe frostbite or skin with blisters.

Recognizing hypothermia

Hypothermia occurs when body temperature drops dangerously low.

Symptoms of hypothermia

- Shivering
- Confusion or slurred speech
- Drowsiness or exhaustion
- Slow, shallow breathing

Treating hypothermia

1. If possible, move indoors to a warm place.
2. Call 9-1-1 immediately, especially if the person is unconscious.
3. Provide warm fluids, avoiding caffeine and alcohol.
4. Remove any wet clothing and warm the torso with layers of blankets or clothing.
5. Wrap the body and head, leaving the face uncovered.
6. If layers are not available, add body heat.

Cold weather brings unique challenges, from icy roads to freezing winds that make outdoor work even more hazardous. Lineworkers and other outdoor professionals face these risks daily to keep essential services running.

When temperatures drop, look out for one another and take steps to stay safe. Prevention matters — limit your time in the elements, wear proper protective clothing, and stay alert. Working smart in the cold helps ensure everyone makes it home safely.

Safety Note

If your machinery or vehicle comes in contact with a power line, do not get out of the cab. Call 9-1-1 and the dispatched utility will de-energize the power so that you can safely exit your tractor or vehicle.



WINTER SAFETY WHEN WORKING OUTDOORS

Cold weather can be dangerous if you're not prepared.

Follow these tips to stay safe when working outdoors:

- ❄️ Keep an eye on the temperature.
- ❄️ Take frequent, short breaks indoors.
- ❄️ Dress in loose, warm layers.
- ❄️ Wear warm socks and waterproof boots.
- ❄️ Protect your head, ears, face and hands with warm gear to prevent frostbite and heat loss.
- ❄️ Keep dry and remove wet clothing as quickly as possible.
- ❄️ Drink a warm beverage, stay hydrated and eat high-energy foods.
- ❄️ Watch for signs of hypothermia.
- ❄️ Have a winter emergency kit in your vehicle.

Learn more:



OUTAGE REPORT:

Affecting 10 members or more

Date: 12-2-2025

Time off: 4:11 AM

Time on: 4:26 AM

Substation: Henryville, Kingman, Troy

Cause: Transmission Line Down

Date: 12-2-2025

Time off: 4:11 AM

Time on: 9:15 AM

Substation: Emmet

Cause: Transmission Line Down

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

GIVE AWAY:

- Bernese Mountain dog
Male, Neutered, 6 years old
Will text photo if interested
Mary Peters
Morton, MN 56270
507-782-3070

FOR SALE:

- Farm fresh eggs!
Hand Picked - Free Range
\$4.00 per dozen
Pete & Jojo Schmoll
Olivia, MN 56277
320-579-0098
- 5th wheel hitch \$300
- Stainless hog/livestock feeders
\$65/offer
- R/C plane 60" \$120
Randall W. Mertz
Olivia, MN 56277
320-522-0776

WANTED:

- 3 pt. tractor mower
Denny Hanlon
Franklin, MN 55333
320-212-3803

What Can You Do With 1 Megawatt?

Factory

Facilities with heavy machinery can draw 1 MW of power.

Big Box Stores

1 MW will power a typical large retail store.

Office Building

1 MW can power several medium-sized office buildings.

Hospital

1 MW will power a small hospital.

Power Plant

Typical outputs:

Coal: 500 MW to 1 GW

Gas: 50 MW to 1 GW

Nuclear: 500 MW to 1.5 GW

1 MW is 1 million watts of power.

School

0.5 MW will power a medium-size public school.

EV Charging

1 MW can power four Tesla Supercharger V3s simultaneously.

Data Center

1 MW will power one small data center.

Other facilities that can draw up to 1 MW of power:

- High-speed rail
- Large farms
- Wastewater treatment
- Stadiums

Residential

1 MW can power 750 to 1,000 homes.

WHAT IS A MEGAWATT?

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

If you're a regular Cooperative Connections reader, you've probably seen the term "megawatt" countless times. From articles about new power generation facilities, energy-saving tips, major infrastructure projects or energy policy, megawatts come up again and again. But what does a megawatt actually mean?

Watts, Kilowatts, Megawatts & More

A megawatt is a unit of power that measures the speed at which energy is generated or used at a given time. A megawatt is 1,000 kilowatts (KW), or 1 million watts.

You may recognize watts from the labels on everyday household items like light bulbs and phone chargers. These numbers indicate the amount of power the device draws while operating.

Here are the wattages for some common household items:

- LED Light bulb – 5-20 Watts
- Refrigerator – 350-800 Watts
- Desktop PC – 100-800 Watts
- LED Television: 30-300 Watts
- Microwave – 700-1,200 Watts
- Hair Dryer – 1,500-2,000 Watts
- Clothes Dryer – 1,800-5,000 Watts

At East River Electric Power Cooperative, the generation and transmission cooperative that sells power to member co-ops in Eastern South Dakota and Western Minnesota, Jennifer Gross uses a modified bicycle to help put power into perspective.

The bike is stationary – the pedals power a small generator wired to several different kinds of light bulbs. Gross, who is East River's education and outreach coordinator, says the "pedal power bike" demonstrates energy use in a tangible way and highlights the difference of energy-efficient products.

"It's actually quite difficult for the person pedaling to generate electricity consistently for more than a few minutes," Gross said.



"When they're pedaling to power the inefficient, old-school incandescent light bulbs, they can pedal for about one minute and not even keep it at 200 watts the whole time."

The electric grid experiences the most strain during peak demand times – the hours before and after work and school when most people are home doing laundry, watching TV etc.

In communities with hundreds to thousands of homes and businesses, electricity demand grows large enough to be measured in megawatts – the unit equal to 1,000 KW.

Your electric co-op's electricity is generated by Basin Electric Power Cooperative, which was formed in the 1960s by electric co-ops in the upper Midwest to generate electricity for co-ops. Serving over 3 million consumers across nine states, Basin generates power from its owned and leased assets, which include coal, natural gas, solar and wind. Basin's generation capability is so massive that it's measured in gigawatts – the unit equal to 1,000 MW.

Basin reports a maximum generating capacity of about 8,427 MW – or 8.427 GW. That figure reflects every available generation resource running at full output, including the oil-fueled peaking units used during times of high demand, along with purchases from the Western Area Power Administration and the Southwest Power Pool energy market.

On an even larger scale, the total installed generation capacity in the U.S. reaches the terawatt level, totalling about 1.3 TW, which is equal to 1,300 GW, 1.3 million MW or 1.3 billion KW – enough to simultaneously run about 1 billion hair dryers!

$$\begin{aligned}
 &1 \text{ Million Watts} \\
 &= \\
 &1,000 \text{ Kilowatts} \\
 &= \\
 &1 \text{ Megawatt} \\
 &= \\
 &1/1,000 \text{ Gigawatt}
 \end{aligned}$$

Your Co-op's Megawatts

As a co-op member, you're a part-owner of Basin Electric's generation resources. Here's a look at several of those facilities.



Antelope Valley Station
Beulah, N.D. • 1984
900 MW • Coal



Bison Gen. Station
Epping, N.D. • 2030
1,490 MW • Nat. Gas



Pioneer Gen. Station
Williston, N.D. • 2013
822 MW • Nat. Gas



Crow Lake Wind
White Lake, S.D. • 2011
172 MW • Wind



Wild Springs Solar
New Underwood, S.D.
2024 • 114 MW • Solar

Operation Round Up

At the January Operation Round Up board meeting, the Board of Trustees awarded five (5) donations to local non-profit organizations. A \$500 donation was given to each organization. BOLD After Prom, GFW After Prom Committee, and MACCRAY After Prom will use the funds to support their after-prom activities. GFW Topspin JO Volleyball will use the funds to provide new jerseys for their youth teams in third to eighth grades. Pages of Our Communities Foundation will use the money to provide magnetiles, a library corner, a farmers market, fire house and an indoor play

opportunity at the new CORNLAND USA STEM and Sensory Center for children ages 0 – 8.

If your non-profit organization has a project or event that would benefit the community, Operation Round Up funds may be available to help your group reach its goal. The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on April 14, 2026. The deadline for applications is April 1, 2026. 1000900

Applications for donations can be found at rscpa.coop/operation-round. Contact the office at 320-826-2593 for more information.

WHERE'S THE NUMBER?

Last month RSCPA member did not find their member number in the newsletter. The value of the energy credit will be increased to \$30. Another number has been hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number and call the office by the 2nd of March, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck with 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.

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!

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

Notice

The January board meeting was not held this year. The board meeting highlights will return to the newsletter after the February meeting.

The February board meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 25, 2026 at 9 a.m.

The March board meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 25, 2026 at 8:00 a.m.

Renville-Sibley's 88th Annual Meeting will be held on March 26, 2026, at the Redwood Area Community Center in Redwood Falls. See page 6 for the Annual Meeting notice.

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

Preparing for Storm Season?

DON'T FORGET TO READY YOUR CAR

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), every vehicle should have an emergency supply kit onboard. Kits should be checked twice a year and expired items should be replaced regularly. Emergency supply kits should include:



Snowbrush
Shovel
Windshield washer fluid
Cat litter for traction



Warm clothing
Blankets
Drinking water
Nonperishable foods



Properly inflated spare tire
Wheel wrench & tripod jack
Jumper cables
Fire extinguisher



Reflective triangles
Reflective vest
Brightly colored cloth
(to tie on side mirror)



First-aid kit
Flashlight and batteries
Compass
Car charger for cell phone

Safe
Electricity.org®

Source: NSC

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 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. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



MARCH 7
Ag Day
 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Washington Pavilion
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-367-6000

Washington Pavilion Photo

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.

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

MARCH 7
Southern Hills Holistic Fair
 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Mueller Civic Center
 Hot Springs, SD

MARCH 7-8
The Black Market
 Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
 W.H. Lyon Expo Building
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-332-6004

MARCH 14-15
Philip Area Annual Rod & Gun Show
 Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Sun. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
 American Legion Hall
 Philip, SD
 605-859-2135

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 14
SNOLF (Snow Golf) Tournament
 Webster, SD
 Contact: Buster's Resort
 605-345-2787

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

MARCH 20-22, 27-29
Mighty Corson Art Players
 March 20-21, 27-28: 7:30 p.m.
 March 22, 29: 2:30 p.m.
 Corson Playhouse
 Corson, SD
 www.mightycorson.com

MARCH 27
East Dakota Chapter NWF 33rd Annual Banquet
 Ramkota Expo Hall
 Sioux Falls, SD
 605-940-0702

MARCH 28
Coteau Prairie Masters Gardeners Ready, Set, Grow
 9 a.m.-12 p.m.
 Codington Cty. Extension Cplx.
 Watertown, SD

MARCH 28
VFW Teener Baseball Benefit Vegas Night
 Social: 4:30 p.m., Meal: 6 p.m.
 Tyndall, SD

APRIL 3
Bachelors of Broadway: Gentlemen of the Theatre
 7 p.m.
 Johnson Fine Arts Center
 Aberdeen, SD

APRIL 5
Easter Sunrise Service
 7 a.m.
 Mount Rushmore
 605-391-9156

APRIL 9
McCrossan Wildest Banquet Auction in the Midwest
 Jimmy Buffett Tribute
 Polynesian Paradise Dancers
 Sioux Falls, SD
 www.mccrossan.org

APRIL 9-11
Annual Schmeckfest
 German Heritage Celebration
 Freeman, SD
 605-925-4237
 www.schmeckfest.com

APRIL 18
Brookings Quilt Show XII
 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Admission: \$10
 Dakota Bank Center
 Brookings, SD
 605-690-3246

APRIL 18
Tri-Valley Chorus 75th Annual Show
 4 p.m.
 Centerville, SD
 605-201-9398

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.