

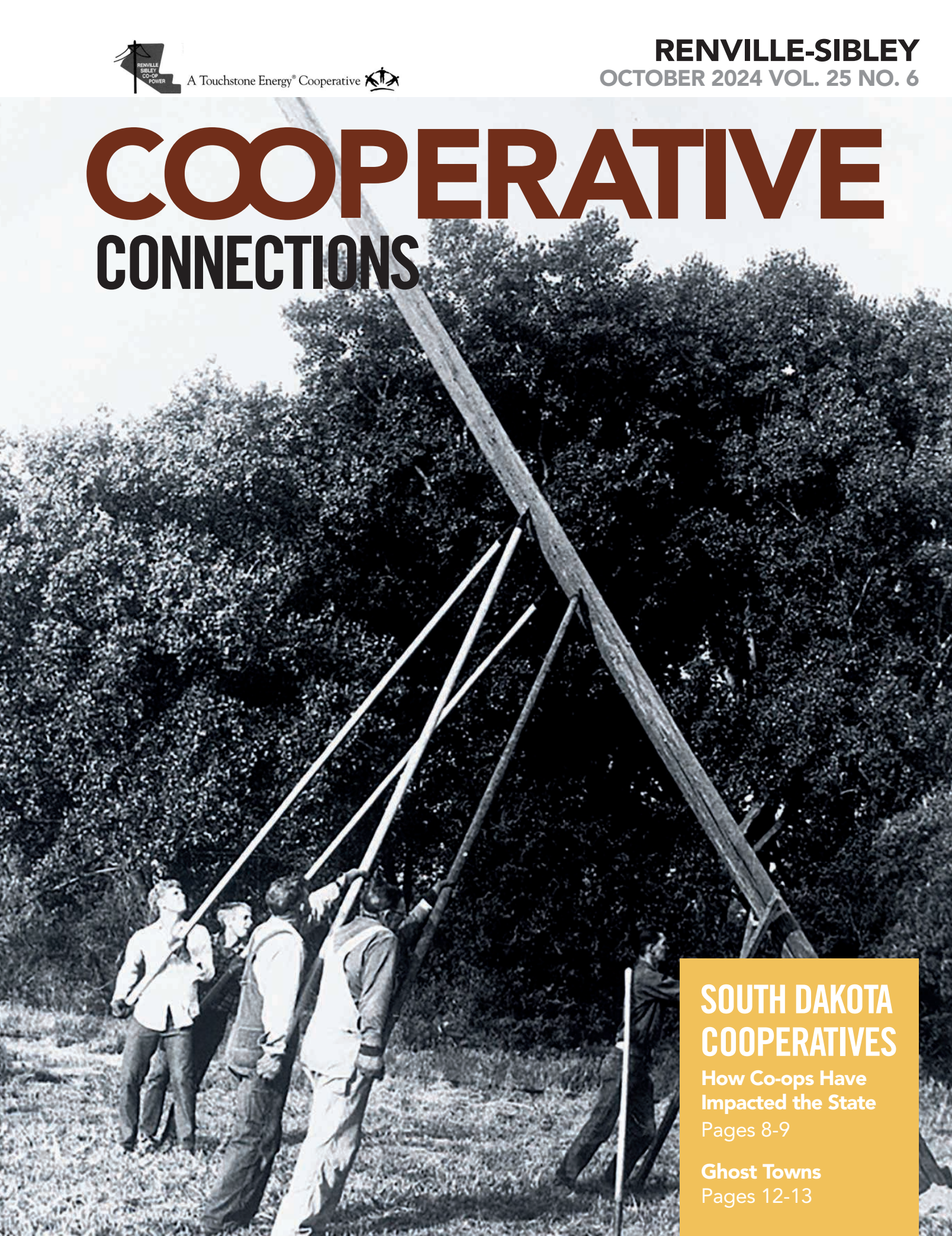


A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



RENVILLE-SIBLEY
OCTOBER 2024 VOL. 25 NO. 6

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



SOUTH DAKOTA COOPERATIVES

**How Co-ops Have
Impacted the State**
Pages 8-9

Ghost Towns
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Family-a-Fair



Amy Ervin
Member and
Board Services
Representative

The annual Family-a-Fair Night was held on Thursday, August 8th at the Renville County Fair. With unseasonably cooler temps for August, it was a great evening to be at the fair! A total of 367 people attended compliments of Renville-Sibley. The fair is always a great opportunity for us to visit with our members and enjoy all the fun that the fair brings. All members who attended were automatically registered for a \$50 energy credit drawing and kids 12 and under were able to register for a kid's prize. Congratulations to Michael Johnson for being selected as our winner of the \$50 energy credit and to Emmett Erickson for winning the kid's prize. We would also like to extend a big thank you to the Dairy Association and Pork

Producers for allowing Renville-Sibley the opportunity to give our members a \$1 off coupon to enjoy at either of their booths. We also want to thank the Renville County Fair Board for all their hard work to put this event on each year and allowing us to offer this evening of fun to our members. We can't wait to see you next year at the fair!



Farmfest

Renville-Sibley once again joined together with other electric cooperatives in southern Minnesota at Farmfest to share information on electricity. With beautiful, cooler weather, Farmfest had great attendance. Upon visiting the Touchstone Energy booth, members of the cooperatives were able to register for one of five electric prizes to be given away: an ice auger, backpack blower, shop vac, pole saw, or a chain saw. Unfortunately, Renville-Sibley did not have a member's name drawn this year. Thank you to everyone who came to Farmfest and visited our booth. We look forward to seeing you next year at this event!



Above: RSCPA Director Vicky Firle, District 1.



Update Your Contact Information

In the utility business, we know rough weather will occur and sometimes power outages simply can't be avoided. There are steps you can take to ensure your electricity is restored as quickly and safely as possible. One step is to keep your contact information up to date. Not only does this help us when notifying you of planned outages for repairs and maintenance, it also assists in a quicker response when calling in a power outage after hours. After hour calls go to Cooperative Response Center (CRC). Your account information automatically shows if the phone number you are calling from is tied to your account in our software system. If we don't have the correct phone number linked to your home address, it can make your call to CRC a little more time consuming as they search for your account. Another step to a speedy response when calling in your power outage is to have your account number available.

Your contact information and account number is located on your electric statement. Please review your contact information and let us know if this information needs to be updated. You can update the information on your return stub or by calling our office at 800-826-2593.

Operation Round Up

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 application deadline is October 1, 2024. The next meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held on October 15, 2024.

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

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

RENVILLE-SIBLEY CO-OP POWER

(USPS 019-074)

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Web site: www.rscpa.coop

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FIRE SAFETY

Cooking and heating are the leading causes of home fires and fire injuries, and winter months are the peak time for fire-related deaths. **Fire Prevention Week (Oct. 6-12, 2024)** is the perfect time to review and practice fire safety.

Minimize Your Risks

The good news: Deaths from home fires in the U.S. have trended downward since the 1970s, according to Injury Facts, but even one death from a preventable fire is too many. While fire doesn't discriminate by age, it is the third leading cause of death for children 1 to 14.

When cooking, make fire safety a priority by keeping these tips in mind:

- Be alert; if you are sleepy or have consumed alcohol, don't use the oven or stovetop.
- Stay in the kitchen while you are frying, grilling, boiling or broiling food.
- Keep anything that can catch fire away from your stovetop.

Heating is the second leading cause of home fires. Follow these tips:

- Keep all flammables, like paper, clothing, bedding, drapes or rugs, at least three feet from a space heater, stove or fireplace.
- Never leave portable heaters and fireplaces unattended; turn off heaters and make sure fireplace embers are extinguished before leaving the room.
- If you must use a space heater, place it on a level, nonflammable surface, like ceramic tile, not on a rug or carpet.
- Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
- When buying a space heater, look for models that shut off automatically if the heater falls over.

Working Smoke Alarms Are a Must

About three out of five fire deaths happen in homes without working smoke alarms. Smoke alarms are a key part of a home fire escape plan providing early warning to reduce your risk of dying in a fire. The National Fire Protection Association recommends you:

- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, inside bedrooms and outside sleeping areas on the ceiling or high on the wall.
- Keep smoke alarms away from the kitchen, at least 10 feet from the stove, to reduce false alarms.
- Use special alarms with strobe lights and bed shakers for

people who are hard of hearing or deaf.

- Test smoke alarms monthly.
- Replace batteries in your smoke alarm and carbon monoxide detector annually.
- Replace smoke alarms that are 10 or more years old.

When and How to Use a Fire Extinguisher

Always put your safety first; if you are not confident in your ability to use a fire extinguisher, get out and call 9-1-1. The American Red Cross cautions you to evaluate the situation and ensure:

- Everyone has left or is leaving the home
- The fire department has been called
- The fire is small, not spreading, and there is not much smoke
- Your back is to an exit you can use quickly

Remember the acronym PASS:

Pull the pin.

Aim low at the base of the fire.

Squeeze the handle slowly.

Sweep the nozzle side to side.

Source: National Safety Council



Power Line Safety "Watch Out for Power Lines!"

Archer Rindels, Age 7

Archer Rindels warns readers to be careful around power lines. Thank you for your picture, Archer! Archer's parents are Kyle and Rochelle Rindels, members of Sioux Valley Energy.

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.

Delicious CHICKEN

CHEESY CHICKEN BUNDLES

Ingredients:

1 (11 oz.) can condensed cream of chicken soup
1/2 cup milk
3/4 cup Velveeta, shredded or cubed
1 (10 oz.) can chunk chicken, drained and flaked
1 (8 oz.) can crescent rolls

Method

Combine soup, milk and cheese. Heat until melted and smooth. Pour into a 7x11 inch pan that has been sprayed with vegetable oil.

Separate crescents into 8 triangles. Place 2 tbsps. of chicken on wide end of crescent roll. Pinch to seal. Place on top of sauce.

Bake uncovered at 375 degrees for 25 minutes and until golden brown. Serve with sauce on top.

Yields eight chicken bundles or four servings.

Janet Ochsner
Box Elder, S.D.

CROCKPOT CHICKEN PARMESAN SOUP

Ingredients:

3 boneless chicken breasts
1 tbsp. minced garlic
1 can crushed tomatoes (28 oz. can)
1 can tomato sauce (15 oz. can)
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. ground black pepper
2 tsp. Italian seasoning
4 cups chicken broth
1 cup parmesan cheese (freshly shaved)
1 cup heavy whipping cream
8 oz. rotini pasta (uncooked)
1 1/2 cup shredded Mozzarella

Method

Add the chicken breast, minced garlic, crushed tomatoes, tomato sauce, salt, pepper, Italian seasoning and chicken broth to the Crock-Pot.

Cover Crock-Pot with lid and cook on low for 6-8 hours.

Shred the chicken. Stir in the shredded parmesan cheese, heavy whipping cream and rotini pasta. Cover and cook on low for 30 minutes.

Top the individual soup servings with mozzarella cheese.

Kayla Beaner
Centerville, S.D.

BUTTER CHICKEN

Ingredients:

4 tps. Garam Masala blend
1/2 tsp. garlic powder
1/2 tsp. ground ginger
1/2 tsp. ground turmeric
1/8 tsp. crushed red pepper
4 tbsps. butter, divided
1 can (14.5 oz.) petite diced tomatoes
1 med. red onion, chopped
1 1/4 lbs. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch cubes
1/4 cup heavy cream
1/2 tsp. sea salt

Method

Mix Garam Masala, garlic, ginger, turmeric and crushed red pepper in small bowl. Heat large non-stick skillet on medium heat. Toast seasoning mixture 1 min. or just until fragrant, stirring constantly. Add 2 tbsps. of the butter to skillet, swirling to melt. Add onion; cook and stir 2 to 3 mins. until softened. Stir in tomatoes; cook 5 mins. Carefully transfer mixture to blender container; cover. Blend until smooth, scraping sides as needed. Return pureed sauce to skillet. Bring to simmer on med.-low heat. Add chicken; cook 8 to 10 minutes or until chicken is cooked though, stirring occasionally. Stir in remaining butter, cream and salt until well blended. Simmer on med.-low heat 2 to 3 minutes until sauce is slightly thickened. Stir in additional crushed red pepper to taste and serve with hot cooked basmati rice or warm naan bread, if desired. Garnish with fresh cilantro leaves, if desired.

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 2024. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.



Choose Renewable Energy for Your Home or Business

You can easily purchase renewable energy from your local electric cooperative, Renville-Sibley Co-op Power. Renville-Sibley has Renewable Energy Credits (RECs) available for purchase to offset your current usage with 25%, 50%, 75% and 100% renewable energy options. The price of the RECs will be added to your current electric bill.

The electricity you receive will still be the same reliable, affordable energy you have always received from Renville-Sibley Co-op Power but, by participating in this program, you will be supporting current and future renewable projects in our area.

Your home or business will be joining hundreds of other people from across the nation who are supporting renewable energy. By purchasing RECs, your business could add value to your products or services, promote future regional renewable projects and showcase your support for renewable energy sources.

FAQ's

What is a Renewable Energy Credit (REC)?

- 1 MWh (megawatt hour) produced by a renewable energy source equals 1 REC
- RECs are also called Green Tags
- RECs represent the valuable renewable attributes of wind energy

How much does it cost?

\$1 per MWh. The average Renville-Sibley member uses 1,200 kWh a month. Participating in the REC program would add the following amount to your monthly bill:

100%	=	\$1.20
75%	=	\$0.90
50%	=	\$0.60
25%	=	\$0.30

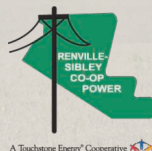
Do I need to purchase any special equipment?

No. Renville-Sibley will continue to fulfill all your electric needs and you can enjoy the benefits of renewable energy.

Where do the RECs come from?

The RECs come from several wind farms in the region that supply renewable energy to Renville-Sibley Co-op Power. These include, but are not limited to:

- North Dakota: PrairieWinds 1, Wilton 1 & 2, Baldwin Wind Project and Minot Wind Project
- South Dakota: Crow Lake Wind, the Chamberlain turbines, Day County Wind Farm and South Dakota Wind Project



1.800.826.2593
renville-sibley@rscpa.coop

Renville-Sibley Co-op Power is an equal opportunity provider & employer.

Teen Driver Safety

As a parent, you're in the driver's seat

Parenting teens can be challenging. While some battles aren't worth fighting, protecting your teen behind the wheel is.

And although no one wants to think about teens being in car accidents, it does happen. Protecting your teen behind the wheel is crucial due to their inexperience, which makes them more susceptible to crashes. Car accidents are a leading cause of death for teens in the U.S., with the highest risk in the first year of driving. Common hazards include additional passengers, speeding, drowsy driving and using phones.

Distracted driving is a major issue, with 3,308 people killed in distracted-affected crashes in 2022, including 2,613 teens, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation. That's approximately seven teens per day.

Teen drivers often lack the skills and experience needed to avoid fatal crashes, and distractions such as texting can be particularly dangerous. For example, reading a text at 55 mph is like driving the length of a football field with your eyes closed. For this reason, many states have laws against texting, talking on the phone and engaging in other distractions while driving.

There are three types of driving distractions to discuss with your teen:

- Visual, when you take your eyes off the road.
- Manual, when you take your hands off the wheel.
- Cognitive, when you take your mind off driving.

To prevent distracted driving, teach your teens (and emulate) these tips:

1. Do not text while driving.
2. Block texts and keep your phone out of sight.
3. Avoid eating while driving.
4. Use playlists instead of searching for music.
5. Set up navigation before driving or have a passenger navigate.

Teen drivers report pressure from families and friends to use phones while driving. Many drivers continue to use phones even when they are aware of the crash risk. Technology can help avoid cell phone use while driving. Use built-in features on your smartphone or cell phone blocking apps to prevent distractions. For the greatest safety benefit, change your phone settings to block hands-free and calls and text messages. 656800

U DRIVE. U TEXT. U PAY. DON'T DRIVE DISTRACTED

For your safety and the safety of roadside crews, other drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists and motorcyclists, do not drive distracted. Put all your attention on driving, and the rest can wait. As the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) promotes in its safety campaign, "U Drive. U Text. U Pay."

DISTRACTED DRIVING CRASH STATISTICS ON U.S. ROADS:

- Nine people die each day in crashes that are reported to involve a distracted driver.
- Distracted driving claimed 3,522 lives in 2021.
- Texting diverts attention from driving for approximately 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that's enough time to travel the length of a football field.
- Many states have laws against texting, talking on the phone and other distractions while driving.

THERE ARE THREE TYPES OF DRIVING DISTRACTIONS:

1. Visual, when you take your eyes off the road.
2. Manual, when you take your hands off the wheel.
3. Cognitive, when you take your mind off driving.

Distracted driving is preventable. Use apps to help you avoid using your cell phone and do not multitask while driving.

Sources: NHTSA, CDC

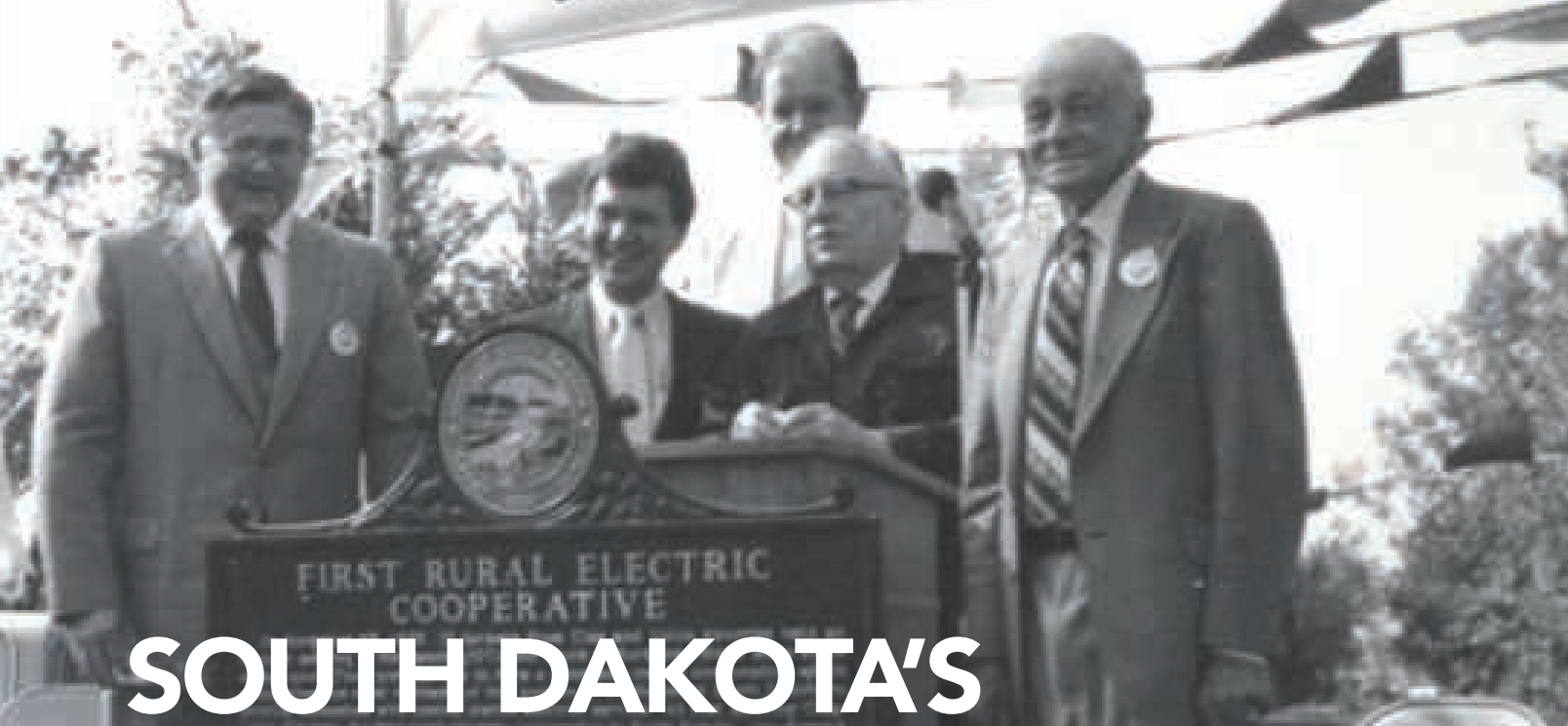
Safe Electricity.org®
Learn more at

Stay Safe Around Power Lines

Ensure your teen knows what to do if they encounter downed power lines: stay in the vehicle, call 9-1-1 and stay at least 50 feet away from the scene if they witness an accident.

Make sure they realize that downed lines or other damaged utility equipment can look lifeless and harmless yet still be energized. They do not have to be sparking, moving or sizzling (like you often see in movies) to be energized. For more safety tips, visit SafeElectricity.org and consider downloading a Parent-Teen Driving Agreement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Your teen looks up to you more than you think. Set a good example for them when you're behind the wheel — don't drive distracted, don't speed and always wear a seat belt.



SOUTH DAKOTA'S COOPERATIVES

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Picture life in rural South Dakota 100 years ago. Each morning, families woke before dawn to work by the flicker of kerosene lamps, hand-pumped water to fill a gas-powered wringer-washer, and retrieved breakfast ingredients from a dripping ice box. Looming in the backs of producers' minds were fears that the market would trend downward and they may not be able to cover their debts, or even harvest their fields.

Today, South Dakota's rural farmers and ranchers enjoy virtually all of the accommodations of modern living their suburban counterparts enjoy. Past luxuries like running water, full-time electricity, internet and telephone are now standard, and many farmers enjoy stronger economic security compared to the past's tumultuous markets.

That's because for over 100 years, rural South Dakotans have pooled their resources by forming cooperatives that level out some of the disparities between rural and urban life. Thanks to members' ingenuity, rural America is not just a viable, but a thriving place to live and work.

The First Cooperatives

The first cooperatives in South Dakota were agriculture-focused. Far too often, an

oversupply of goods led to price crashes, resulting in farmers unable to economically harvest crops or market livestock. This led to tremendous waste and crushed livelihoods.

As producers grew weary of the uncertain market, they organized to collectively market and distribute their products: they coordinated, shared risk and pooled resources.

South Dakota's earliest farm supply and marketing cooperatives started popping up a little after the turn of the 20th century. The South Dakota Secretary of State's office lists Lake Andes Farmers Cooperative, formed in 1909, as the oldest ongoing cooperative in the state.

During this early period, cooperatives operated in a legal gray area. Since producers working collectively in a cooperative setting could be viewed as monopolistic or collusive, they were under careful watch by the Federal Trade Commission as well as their larger competitors.

That changed in 1922 with the passage of the Capper-Volstead Act.

"Capper-Volstead allowed producers to come together and market their products and not be in violation of the Sherman Antitrust Act," explained Brenda Forman, South Dakota Association of Cooperatives executive director. "[Cooperatives] were not considered to be a monopoly as long as they were a cooperative association formed

Clay-Union Electric Corporation was the first electric cooperative in South Dakota.

by producers, owned by the members, one member gets one vote in cooperative elections, etc."

The presence of ag cooperatives surged in the 1930s as producers looked for stability during the Great Depression, the South Dakota Farmers Union says. With effectiveness proven, the cooperative strategy has stuck around since.

Today, there are 63 farm supply and marketing cooperatives serving over 130 South Dakota communities, Forman said.

Those same visionaries who established the first ag cooperatives identified another need that was not being met. Using the same cooperative model that changed their lives once already, farmers would bring power to the prairie.

Electricity

Before energy infrastructure was widespread, many small towns in South Dakota relied on local power plants. However, with distribution lines only serving the city, living even a mile or two out of town was the difference between flipping a light switch and carrying a lantern.

Despite requests from farmers to run lines to their homes – some of whom even offered to pay installation costs – most municipalities and investor-owned utilities (IOUs) refused because undertaking the effort didn't lead to any meaningful profit.

Even many of the state's elected representatives seemed resigned to the idea

that the future of energy for their farming constituents was tied to on-site generation, like the modest Delco-Light plants that could power a few small appliances and light bulbs. To them, it seemed laughable that there was any feasible way to run lines in a state where the service would average out to a sparse 2.2 customers per mile of line, and for many, that was the end of the conversation.

The narrative changed when President Franklin D. Roosevelt expanded his New Deal programs to modernize rural America, creating the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) to finance ambitious projects.

The profit-minded IOUs were largely uninterested in expanding into sparse territory for measly returns, and little progress was made toward Roosevelt's vision.

In 1936, once it was apparent IOUs wouldn't be making the foray into rural territories as farmers had hoped they would, Roosevelt signed the Rural Electrification Act. Now, cooperatives could organize and receive REA loans while the IOUs idled.

A group of 17 farmers from Clay and Union counties jumped at the opportunity to finally bring their homes into the modern age. Just months after the REA was established, and at a time when just 5% of South Dakota farms had power, the group hatched out a plan to secure an REA loan for their newly-formed Fairview Rural Electric System, today Clay-Union Electric Corporation.

Going door to door and collecting \$5 sign-ons from neighbors ranging from ecstatic to skeptical, the cooperative finally got the REA's green light and received a \$70,000 loan to build 67 miles of line that would serve about 300 members, according to a 1936 Argus Leader report.

The success of South Dakota's first electric cooperative brought hope to still more than 90% of South Dakota farmers without power. It wasn't long before dozens more newly-formed cooperatives were each going door to door collecting sign-on fees to secure their own REA loans.

Serving Everyone

In 1946, roughly 10 years after the state's first electric cooperative debuted, rural farmers and ranchers from the state's

remote northwest corner met in Lemmon to form their own cooperative. The board understood securing a loan from REA to serve such a vast and sparse territory would be a big ask, so they opted to charge members a \$10 monthly minimum, which was twice the minimum rate of most South Dakota cooperatives, and equal to about \$170 today.

Even so, would-be members agreed to the terms of the longshot project and paid their \$5 membership fee. Despite federal hesitation about the feasibility of such a project, the REA loan was approved.

Grand Electric Cooperative received more than \$1.8 million over two loans that would build 1,127 miles of line and serve 948 members. The investment amounted to one of the REA's largest and riskiest yet in the state, but proved to be a success.

Cooperative members did the impossible; the wires in northwest South Dakota had finally been energized. Board members then eyed another ambitious goal – bringing telephone to Northwest South Dakota.

West River Cooperative Telephone Company was formed as a separate entity, but in the spirit of cooperation, the telephone and electric cooperative would be jointly operated. The two would, and still to this day, share a building, staff and infrastructure.

"Up here, we cover almost 8,000 square miles and have 4,000 miles of wire, but we only have 1,800 members," explained Eric Kahler, the cooperatives' joint general manager. "When you look at the economics of this type of service territory, if you're in the business to make money, you're not going to be too successful here. The cooperative model is really the only model that could work here."

And the community knows that fact and is grateful for their cooperative, says Patricia Palmer, who has spent much of her last 63 years working in Grand Electric and West River Telephone's member services.

"They're thankful," she said. "Very thankful. We have a terrific telephone work crew and line department. At times, they work tirelessly in horrible weather conditions... You can't believe the thank you notes that we get."

Growing up on a farm near McIntosh, Palmer has a firsthand account of the impact

of cooperatives. And she says it's one she will never forget.

The night she watched her family's farmhouse light up for the first time was also the beginning of a new chapter, she recalled. A chapter with an automatic washer, a refrigerator and a toaster.

As times change, cooperatives continue to be at the forefront of bringing service that might otherwise be out of reach.

"When I came to the cooperative, it was just telephone and electricity, and now we have high-speed internet and TV," Palmer said. "Over the years, the cooperative has really grown!"

Other Applications

The cooperative model is also used in many other sectors; there are 34 South Dakota credit unions that offer member-owners better interest rates and reduced fees compared to for-profit banks.

Even some rural water systems, while not wholly cooperatives themselves, borrow some of the cooperative fundamentals to make serving large areas more practical.

"Cooperatives are pretty significant in the impact they've had," Forman said. "And the other cooperatives we have – there are daycare co-ops, food co-ops, education co-ops – there's a number of different structures that the cooperative model has been used for, because of that ownership and one member, one vote."

Today, there are 141 cooperatives in the state, providing more than 78,500 jobs, \$2.8 billion in worker salaries and \$3.9 billion in gross domestic product (GDP), according to a South Dakota State University study titled *The Economic Impact of Cooperatives in South Dakota*.

That means cooperatives contribute almost 13% of South Dakota jobs, more than 11% of salaries, and 6.2% of the state's entire GDP.

"In a cooperative, your board is local," Forman said. "[The co-op board and employees] support and participate in sports functions, 4-H barbecues, you may go to church with them, or they may be at family dinner. Which means when something is a concern or challenge, you have somebody to go to and you have contacts close that know you and understand the system."

Cold Weather Rule and Energy Assistance Program

In accordance with Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule, electric service cannot be disconnected for nonpayment between Oct. 1 and April 30 if electricity is the primary heat source and ALL of the following statements apply:

216B.097 COLD WEATHER RULE; COOPERATIVE

Subdivision 1. Application; notice to residential customer. (a) A municipal utility or a cooperative electric association must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a residential customer during the period between October 1 and April 30 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit and all of the following conditions are met:

(1) The household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. A municipal utility or cooperative electric association utility may (i) verify income on forms it provides or (ii) obtain verification of income from the local energy assistance provider. A customer is deemed to meet the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any form of public assistance, including energy assistance, that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50 percent of the state median household income.

(2) A customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.

(3) A customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills.

(b) A municipal utility or a cooperative electric association must, between August 15 and October 1 each year, notify all residential customers of the provisions of this section.

Subd. 2. Notice to residential customer facing disconnection. (a) Before disconnecting service to a residential customer during the period between October 1 and April 30, a municipal utility or cooperative electric association must provide the following information to a customer:

(1) a notice of proposed disconnection;

(2) a statement explaining the customer's rights and responsibilities;

(3) a list of local energy assistance providers;

(4) forms on which to declare inability to pay; and

(5) a statement explaining available time payment plans and other opportunities to secure continued utility service.

(b) At the same time that notice is given under paragraph (a), the utility must also give written or electronic notice of the proposed disconnection to the local energy assistance provider and the department.

Subd. 3. Restrictions if disconnection necessary. (a) If a residential customer must be involuntarily disconnected remotely using advanced metering infrastructure or physically at the property being disconnected between October 1 and April 30 for failure to comply with subdivision 1, the disconnection must not occur:

(1) on a Friday, unless the customer declines to enter into a payment agreement offered that day in person or via personal contact by telephone by a municipal utility or cooperative electric association;

(2) on a weekend, holiday, or the day before a holiday;

(3) when utility offices are closed; or

(4) after the close of business on a day when disconnection is permitted, unless a field representative of a municipal utility or cooperative electric association who is authorized to enter into a payment agreement, accept payment, and continue service, offers a payment agreement to the customer.

Further, the disconnection must not occur until at least 30 days after the notice required in subdivision 2 has been mailed to the customer or 15 days after the notice has been personally delivered to the customer.

(b) The customer must not be disconnected until the utility attempts to confirm whether the residential unit is actually occupied, which the utility may accomplish by:

(1) visiting the residential unit; or

(2) examining energy usage data obtained through advanced metering infrastructure to determine whether there is energy usage over at least a 24-hour period that indicates

occupancy.

(c) A utility may not disconnect a residential customer who is in compliance with section 216B.098, subdivision 5.

(d) If, prior to disconnection, a customer appeals a notice of involuntary disconnection, as provided by the utility's established appeal procedure, the utility must not disconnect until the appeal is resolved.

(e) For the purposes of this section, "advanced metering infrastructure" means an integrated system of smart meters, communication networks, and data management systems that enables two-way communication between a utility and its customers.

Subd. 4. Application to service limiters. For the purposes of this section, "disconnection" includes a service or load limiter or any device that limits or interrupts electric service in any way.

Subd. 5. Cost recovery. A municipal utility or cooperative electric association may recover the reasonable costs of disconnecting and reconnecting a residential customer, based on the costs of providing notice to the customer and other entities and whether the process was accomplished physically at the property being disconnected or reconnected or remotely using advanced metering infrastructure.

History: 1991 c 235 art 2 s 1; 2001 c 212 art 4 s 2; 1Sp2003 c 11 art 3 s 2; 2007 c 57 art 2 s 14,15; 1Sp2021 c 4 art 8 s 11-14

To learn more about the EAP program or to apply for assistance:

- Visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Assistance website, Energy Assistance Program / Minnesota Department of Commerce - Energy (mn.gov) for more details and to access the application portal.

- Contact your county EAP service provider for additional information and assistance (list providers & phone numbers).

Here is a list of local energy assistance providers:

Minnesota Valley Action Council
706 N Victory Drive
Mankato, MN 56001
800-767-7139 (Toll-Free)
507-345-6822 (Mankato)

United Community Action Partnership
Marshall Office:
1400 S Saratoga St
Marshall, MN 56258
Marshall (Corporate) 507-537-1416

Willmar Office:
200 SW 4th St
Willmar, MN 56201
Willmar 320-235-0850

Prairie Five Community Action Council
719 North 7th Street, Suite 302
P.O. Box 159
Montevideo, MN 56265-0159
320-269-6578 (Montevideo) or 800-292-5437

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association exists because of you, and we are dedicated to the people and communities we serve. If you are having difficulty paying your electric bill and do not qualify for either of these programs, please contact Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association to set up a payment plan.

Utility Payment Arrangements for Military Service Personnel

325E.028 UTILITY PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR MILITARY SERVICE PERSONNEL.

Subdivision 1. Restriction on disconnection; payment schedules. (a) A municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility must not disconnect the utility service of a residential customer if a member of the household has been issued orders into active duty, for deployment, or for a permanent change in duty station during the period of active duty, deployment, or change in duty station if such a residential customer:

(1) has a household income below the state median household income or is receiving energy assistance and enters into an agreement with the municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility under which the residential customer pays ten percent of the customer's gross monthly income toward the customer's bill and the residential customer remains reasonably current with those payments; or

(2) has a household income above the state median household income and enters into an agreement with the municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility establishing a reasonable payment schedule that considers the financial resources of the household and the residential customer remains reasonably current with payments under the payment schedule.

(b) For purposes of this subdivision, "household income" means household

income measured after the date of the orders specified in paragraph (a).

Subd. 2. Annual notice to all customers; inability to pay forms. (a) A municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility must notify all residential customers annually of the provisions of this section.

(b) A municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility must provide a form to a residential customer to request the protections of this section upon the residential customer's request.

Subd. 3. Application to service limiters. For the purposes of this section, "disconnection" includes a service or load limiter or any device that limits or interrupts electric service in any way.

Subd. 4. Income verification. Verification of income may be conducted by the local energy assistance provider or the municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility unless the customer is automatically eligible for protection against disconnection as a recipient of any form of public assistance, including energy assistance that uses income eligibility in an amount at or below the income eligibility in subdivision 1, paragraph (a), clause (1).

Subd. 5. Appeal process. (a) The municipal utility, cooperative electric association, or public utility shall provide the residential customer with a commission-approved written notice of the right to appeal to the commission or other appropriate governing body when the utility and residential customer are unable to agree on the establishment, reasonableness, or modification of a payment schedule, or on the reasonable timeliness of the payments under a payment schedule, provided for by this section. Any appeal must be made within seven working days after the residential customer's receipt of personally served notice, or within ten working days after the utility has deposited first class mail notice in the United States mail.

(b) The utility shall not disconnect service while a payment schedule is pending appeal, or until any appeal involving payment schedules has been determined by the commission.

Subd. 6. Enforcement. This section may be enforced pursuant to chapter 216B.

History: 2007 c 111 s 1; 2015 c 21 art 1 s 72

MEMBER SAFETY

FOR SALE:

Grass fed, grass finished beef.
Burger-Individual Cuts-Quarters-Halves when available. Call for pricing.

Dave Pastoors
Olivia, MN 56277
320-522-4851

14 ft Fishing Boat & Trailer, 15 hp Electric Start Motor.

Jerry Steinkamp
Renville, MN 56284
320-894-0363

Winpower PTO Generator on Wheels, 240 + 110 Power Works Great.

Dean Bock
Franklin, MN 55333
507-430-2609

Bull Bar for a 2012 Full Size Ford Pickup. Asking \$200.00

Verna Steinborn
Fairfax, MN 55332
507-217-4373

OUTAGE REPORT:

Affecting 10 members or more

Date: 7-15-24
Time off: 8:04 AM
Time on: 8:35 AM
Substation: Troy
Cause: Tree Failure from Overhang or Dead Tree without ice/snow

Date: 7-15-24
Time off: 12:27 PM
Time on: 1:00 PM
Substation: Wellington-Cairo
Cause: Substation

Date: 7-15-24
Time off: 12:27 PM
Time on: 1:00 PM
Substation: Crooks
Cause: Substation

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

GHOST TOWNS

South Dakota's History Remembered

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Scattered across open fields and through narrow mountain gulches, a careful eye can spot many of South Dakota's nearly 250 long-lost prairie villages and prospecting towns.

Many of these communities were once thriving outposts, railroad hubs, farming villages and mining towns, but were dealt their final blows by the hardships of the dust bowl, changes to railroad systems and the depletion of natural resources.

Most of the towns are long forgotten, their existence marked only by the rotted shell of an old wood barn or a crumbling foundation poking up from the ground.

Thanks to the work of local historical societies who have pieced together the history of the communities' "booms and busts" through old newspaper clippings, plat maps and land records, we can get a glimpse into the lives of the first rural South Dakotans and learn about the communities that once bustled with life.

Galena

Unique among a cavalcade of abandoned Black Hills gold-rush towns, Galena's roots are in its silver. The town was settled in the late 1870s after prospectors Patrick Donegan and John F. Cochran discovered layers of lead and silver ore near Bear Butte Creek while searching for gold deposits.

The U.S. government removed the two men from the area in accordance with Native American treaties. However,

their exile turned out to be short-lived. Donegan and Cochran returned shortly after to mine their claim as more and more gold-hungry settlers tested the increasingly unenforceable treaties.

The claim, which would later become the Sitting Bull mine, turned out to be a mother lode, according to Galena Historical Society member Jeff Jacobsen.

Over the next several years, other mining operations popped up in the gulch as the miners' families made Galena their new home. The town soon had multiple houses, a hotel, restaurant, stores, a catholic church, cemetery and school, attracting new settlers through its peak between 1881 and 1883.

Arriving from Chicago in hopes of expanding his fortune, Col. John Davey soon became a Galena mining heavyweight, buying up claims along the Bear Butte Creek, including the Sitting Bull claim.

Davey's more than 125-man operation was running smoothly until trouble arose from a claim dispute. The owners of the nearby Richmond claim suspected Davey was digging too far into the hill and mining their silver. Davey claimed he was following the path of the ore, which according to mining law, he was allowed to follow onto another claim. The Richmond claim owners said the law didn't apply to a horizontal blanket formation of ore, like the one in Galena.

A lengthy court battle ensued, and the judge shut down the Sitting Bull mine

until the ruling. Galena was suspended in controversy as many of the townsfolk found themselves out of work.

Thus began Galena's rocky "boom and bust" cycle, Jacobsen explained.

"The boom time was when Col. Davey and other mines were producing, and then the lawsuit shut that down and you have a bust," he said.

The judge ruled against Davey, and the operation never recovered. Galena would never again be the bustling town it was in the early 1880s.

"In 1892, some more people came into town and tried to start up again, so that was a boom, and then they went bankrupt, so there's a bust," Jacobsen continued. "There's like three or four cycles like that in Galena."

By the mid 1930s, the town had seen its final bust. The mining wasn't comparable to the riches of the past, and interest in the gulch slowly started to fade. The tracks were removed and the school house closed in 1943.

Today, Galena is the best-preserved Ghost Town in South Dakota. On the second Saturday of each June, visitors can tour the town, visit the maintained graveyard and go inside the newly-restored schoolhouse, courtesy of the Galena Historical Society.

"It just kind of stands out," Jacobsen said. "Galena is just one of the very few silver mining areas in the Black Hills when almost everyone else was trying for gold."



Galena School
Photo Credit: Galena Historical Society

Did You Know

In 1947, Deadwood resident Ollie Wiswell came across an orphaned coyote pup while he was out on a hike. He gave the pup, named Tootsie, to Fred and Esther Borsch of Galena. Tootsie gained fame as the mascot for the Borschs' Deadwood liquor store, famously appearing on the store's sign. Fred taught Tootsie to howl along to his singing, and the two recorded the album "South Dakota Tootsie."

Tootsie, at this point a South Dakota mascot, rode through parades, was featured in an airline advertising campaign, and even embarked on a nationwide tour where she visited the White House and performed for President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Vice President Richard Nixon.

Gov. George Mickelson, a fan of Tootsie himself, signed legislation in 1949 making the coyote the state's official animal. Tootsie died in 1959 and is buried near her home in Galena.

Argonne

About nine miles northwest of Howard, just off state Highway 25, lay the remains of the ill-fated farming community, Argonne.

Marked by a blue historical sign, travelers-by can catch a glimpse of the town's massive cement bank vault with its swinging iron door, an old silo bearing the town's name, several concrete foundations, and a house falling into its own footprint.

The town's founder, Dr. Louis Gotthelf, was a Prussian-born physician who emigrated to the United States in the aftermath of the Prussian revolution. Gotthelf staked his claim in 1881 and established the townsite in 1886.

The town was originally called St. Mary's, named after Gotthelf's daughter, and was strategically positioned along the Chicago and North Western railroad, with the streets running parallel to the railroad rather than the traditional east-west layout. Confusion with another St. Mary's led to the residents voting to change the name to Argonne in 1920, which was chosen to honor local soldiers who had served in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive during World War I.

Despite having what should have been a prime location, Argonne failed to grow to Gotthelf's satisfaction, and he left with his family for Parker in 1889.

A 1919 land boom in South Dakota finally turned things around for Argonne, Miner County Historical Society member George Justice Forster said.

"Most of the growth that happened initially was when it kind of took off as a

trade center," he explained. "Suddenly the town had a railway depot, lumberyard, farmer's cooperative and general store."

In the early 20s, Argonne's population boomed to about 100 residents, and the town offered new amenities including a school, blacksmith and post office.

Argonne's peak was short-lived, and by 1930 the population had fallen to about 65 residents.

When Doug Jerlow moved to town in 1953, much of what was built in the town's prime was left abandoned, and most of the businesses that did remain were struggling.

"It was past the peak," Jerlow recounted. "One general store closed when the post office inside it closed, and that was an elderly lady who ran that and lived in a house by herself. The Haxby family's store was open for maybe a year or two after that."

Though the town was facing a bleak outlook, there remained one huge point of pride for Argonne: high school basketball.

Delbert Gillam, also known as the

Argonne Ace, led the Argonne Arrows to a 10-1 start in his junior year in 1953. Gillam also broke the state record for the most points scored by a player in a single game, making 31 field goals and 10 free throws, scoring 72. Argonne still holds this record.

The high school closed in 1956, but the community limped on for a few more years before the grade school closed in 1970 when the railroad picked up and left.

Doug Jerlow's family, the last residents of Argonne, left town that same year.

Jerlow pointed out that while many other communities along the rail line like Unityville, Canova, Carthage, and Esmond struggled to recover from the abandonment of the line, for Argonne, it was the death blow.

Now, Forster and other members of the Miner County Historical Society are working to preserve the history of Argonne.

A historical marker will soon be placed east of Argonne on state Highway 25 that will tell the story of Argonne from its founding to its final household.

Though Jerlow now lives near Madison, he still farms near Argonne and owns most of the former townsite. As the unofficial mayor of Argonne, as Jerlow sometimes calls himself, he wants to keep the memory of his childhood hometown alive.

"It was just a nice community to grow up in," he said. "Those small communities, I think it's becoming harder to find them anymore."





WHERE'S THE NUMBER?

Last month 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 1st of October, 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 2024 or 2025 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.

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

THANK YOU

On behalf of the entire Corn Capital Days Planning Committee, we want to thank you and your organization for your generous donation towards our week-long celebration. Our goal is to make each year better than the last and that wouldn't be possible without your donation. Your gift goes a long way to making Corn Capital Days successful!

August Board Meeting Highlights

The August board meeting was held on Tuesday, August 27 at 8 a.m. All board members were present. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Norris, Gene Alex, Attorney Jeff Whitmore, and Amy Ervin.

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the July 23 board meeting
- Operating and disbursement reports for the month of July
- Capital Credits to Estates
- Safety Report for August
- Mid-West Electric Consumers Association Annual Meeting Voting Delegate and Alternate Voting Delegate

The board reviewed:

- Total new members
- Capital Credits Transferred
- Reports from staff members as to the

activities in their department. Items in the reports include:

- High-level Statement of Operations review – YTD through July (unaudited)
- Organization activities
- East River update
- Basin Electric update
- NRECA update
- MREA update
- Linecrew work in progress, equipment update, and outage update
- Accounts Receivable
- CFC At-Large Director Position

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

Mission Statement

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association will provide 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.

Notice:

The September board meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 24 at 8 a.m.

The October board meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 22 at 8 a.m.

Comparative Report

	Current YTD	One Year Ago YTD	10 Years Ago YTD
Average # of Consumers	1,880	1,879	1,914
kWhs purchased	7,814,679	9,159,772	8,225,330
Cost of purchased power	\$480,784.93	\$541,621.16	\$449,658.20

SEPT. 14-OCT. 27
Mazing Acres Fall Festival

10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
30851 433rd Ave.
Yankton, SD
605-760-2759



SEPT. 27-29
Coal Springs Threshing Bee and Antique Show
Meadow, SD
605-788-2299

OCT. 4-5
Holman Acres Pumpkin Fest and Vendor Show
Philip, SD
605-441-1060

OCT. 4-5
25th Annual Pumpkin Fest
Webster, SD
<https://webstersd.com/home>

OCT. 5-6
Run Crazy Horse Marathons
Crazy Horse
605-390-6137
www.runcrazyhorse.com

OCT. 5-6
Magic Needlers Quilt Show
Codington County Extension Complex
Watertown, SD
605-881-3273

OCT. 5-6
The Black Market
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds
Sioux Falls, SD
605-332-6004

OCT. 6
Giant Pumpkin Festival
Bentley Memorial Building
Bison, SD
Enter Pumpkins by 11:30 a.m.
605-244-5475

OCT. 10-11
Rural Women in Agriculture Conference
Oct. 10 from 1-9 p.m.
Oct. 11 from 7 a.m.-3 p.m.
The Lodge of Deadwood
Deadwood, SD
SouthDakotaWomeninAg.com

OCT. 11-12
Junkin' Market Days
Ramkota Exhibit Hall
Sioux Falls, SD
605-941-4958

OCT. 19
Buffalo County Fall Ball
Live Music and Food
8 p.m.
Fire Hall
Gann Valley, SD

OCT. 25-27
Forest of Fears Haunted Trail
7 p.m.-10 p.m.
Reclamation-Ranch
40787 259th St.
Mitchell, SD

OCT. 26
Hill City Children's Boo Bash and Pumpkin Festival
Hill City, SD
605-574-2368

OCT. 26
Hartford Women of Today Fall Craft Fair
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
West Central Becker Center
Hartford, SD
605-359-2049

OCT. 26
Owl-O-Ween
Noon-5 p.m.
Black Hills Raptor Center
Caputa, SD
605-391-2511

OCT. 31
Treat Street
5:30 p.m.-7 p.m.
Main St.
Milbank, SD
605-432-6656
MilbankSD.com/Chamber

NOV. 2
Fall Fling Craft Show
10 a.m.-2 p.m.
Dakota Christian School
Corsica, SD
605-366-7940

NOV. 2
Reliance Christmas Carousel
9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Legion Hall
Reliance, SD
605-730-0553

NOV. 22-23
Holiday Arts Christmas Craft Show
Davison County Fairgrounds
Mitchell, SD
605-359-2049

NOV. 30
A Hometown Christmas Market
2 p.m.-6 p.m.
Main St.
Elk Point, SD

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.

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