



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



RENVILLE-SIBLEY
NOVEMBER 2026 VOL. 27 NO. 7

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

Honoring Our Heroes

**Veterans Memorial
Renovated**

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Youth Tour Alum

Pages 12-13



UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)

1. Publication Title Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association	2. Publication Number 0 1 0 7 4	3. Filing Date 09/30/2026
4. Issue Frequency Monthly	5. Number of Issues Published Annually 12	6. Annual Subscription Price \$9.00
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®) PO Box 68515 Hwy 212 W, Danube, MN 56230		Contact Person Amy Ervin Telephone (include area code) (320) 658-2553

8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer) PO Box 68515 Hwy 212 W, Danube, MN 56230

9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)

Publisher (Name and complete mailing address) Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association PO Box 68515 Hwy 212 W, Danube, MN 56230
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Editor (Name and complete mailing address) Amy Ervin PO Box 68515 Hwy 212 W, Danube, MN 56230

Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address) Amy Ervin PO Box 68515 Hwy 212 W, Danube, MN 56230
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10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)

Full Name Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association PO Box 68515 Hwy 212 W, Danube, MN 56230
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11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box ☐ None
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Full Name Rural Utilities Services 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C., 20260

National Rural Cooperative Finance Corporation 2201 Cooperative Way, Herndon, VA 20171

CoBank 5500 S Quebec Street, Greenwood Village, CO 80111

12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one) The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: ☒ Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months ☐ Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)
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13. Publication Title Renville-Sibley Cooperative Connections	14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below 10/20/2026
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15. Extent and Nature of Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issues Published Nearest to Filing Date
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a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)	1654	1647
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b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	1557	1550
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(1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	1557	1550
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(2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (Include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	0	0
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(3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mail, Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®	0	0
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(4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	0	0
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c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))	1557	1550
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d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)	91	92
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(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	91	92
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(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	0	0
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(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)	0	0
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(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	0	0
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e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3), and (4))	91	92
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f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)	1649	1642
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g. Copies not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))	5	5
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h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)	1654	1647
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i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)	94	94
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16. Electronic Copy Circulation	Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issues Published Nearest to Filing Date
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a. Paid Electronic Copies	0	0
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b. Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	1557	1550
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c. Total Print Distribution (Line 15f) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	1649	1642
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d. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16c times 100)	94	94
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I certify that 60% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are paid above a nominal price.		
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17. Publication of Statement of Ownership	☒ Publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the 11/17/2026 issue of this publication.	☐ Publication not required.
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18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner	Date
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Amy Ervin Executive Admin and HR	09/28/2026
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Local Voices Shape Local Solutions October is National Co-op Month



Amy Ervin
Executive Admin
and HR

When you hear the word cooperative, what comes to mind? As your local electric co-op, we hope you think of Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association (RSCPA).

Regardless of the services offered, all cooperatives have one thing in common: they're led by the people they serve – and that simple idea makes a meaningful difference.

Cooperatives come in all shapes and sizes, each created to meet a specific need. Credit unions help members save and borrow money. Producer cooperatives, like Ocean Spray and Land O'Lakes, help farmers bring their products to market. Retail cooperatives, like REI and ACE Hardware, are owned by their shoppers or a membership of store owners, while housing cooperatives give residents a voice in managing their communities. And utility cooperatives – like RSCPA – provide reliable electricity to the communities they serve.

Unlike many businesses that answer to outside investors or shareholders, cooperatives are built for their members. Their goal isn't simply to earn a profit – it's to provide value, meet unique local needs and strengthen the communities they call home. That's exactly what makes RSCPA different.

Our story began in 1938 when neighbors came together to bring electricity to an area when other utilities wouldn't. While a lot has changed since then, our purpose has remained steady. We're still here to provide power and make decisions with our community's best interests in mind.

Being locally owned means we have the flexibility to focus on what matters most to the communities we serve. That's why no two electric cooperatives are exactly alike. Every community has different needs, and every cooperative reflects those priorities.

For some co-ops, that means expanding programs that help members save energy and money. Others may focus on supporting economic development, investing in new technology or creating new opportunities for local students. Operation Round Up was created to help the communities we serve through donations given by you, our members.

You'll also find the co-op difference in the little things. It's the lineworkers restoring power after a storm. The employees answering your questions when you call. The team members volunteering at community events. The board members, your neighbors, who help guide decisions for the future.

We're your neighbor and local energy partner, and we're committed to serving this community for generations to come.

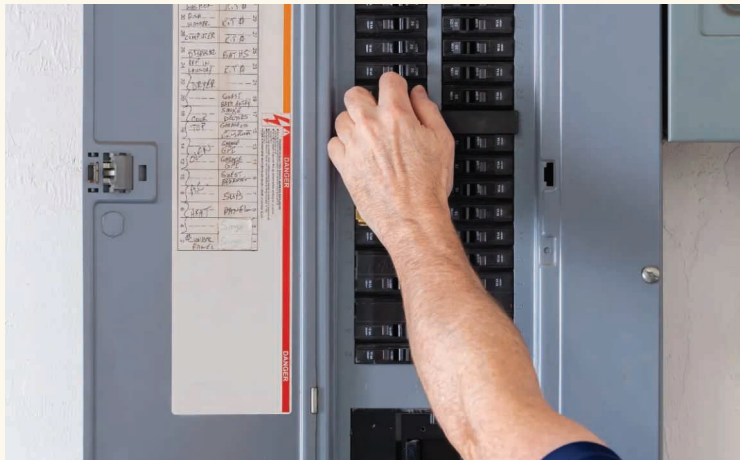
This National Co-op Month, we invite you to join us in celebrating the cooperative difference, because this co-op belongs to you.

Whether it's RSCPA, your local credit union, or ACE Hardware, cooperatives prove that when people work together, everyone benefits.

Your membership is what makes our mission possible – and it's what keeps us focused on serving the people and communities that matter most.

Heat Credit Begins

Members who have electric heat (metered with a separate submeter) pay only \$0.075/kWh for energy used to heat their home/shop during the months of October through April. This lower rate will be reflected starting with the November statement. **If you have a separate breaker for your heat meter, please remember to turn it on or you will be billed at the regular energy rate.** If the majority of your home is heated with electric heat and you are not on our metered electric heat rate, please contact the office for more information.



COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

RENVILLE-SIBLEY CO-OP POWER

(USPS 019-074)

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Roger Manthei – Vice Chair
Vicky Firlie – Secretary/Treasurer
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Gary Eekhoff
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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.

≡ *Mark your calendar!* ≡

Renville-Sibley will be hosting our annual
Holiday Open House

on Thursday, December 3rd
from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Register to win a
\$50
energy credit
to go towards your
electric bill!

While you are in town, be sure to stop over and visit
Danube Upholstery and Minnwest Bank
who will be having their open house that day as well!

KEEP SAFETY AT THE HEART OF YOUR HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

The holiday season, stretching from late November through mid-January, is widely considered the most joyous time of the year. Families gather, festive parties fill our calendars, and a spirit of generosity warms our homes. However, alongside the cheer comes a significant spike in travel, home decorating, and large-scale cooking. Consequently, preventable accidents and injuries dramatically increase during these months. To ensure your family and friends remain safe and injury-free throughout the festivities, keeping safety top of mind is crucial. Below is a comprehensive guide of tried-and-true advice to help you navigate the season securely.

Traveling for the Holidays? Be Prepared and Alert

For millions of people, the holidays mean hitting the road to visit loved ones. Unfortunately, car travel during this busy period carries the highest fatality rate of any major transportation form. Hundreds tragically lose their lives in crashes on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day alone. Alarming, alcohol impairment contributes to approximately one-third of these fatal incidents.

To stay safe on the roads, follow these essential guidelines:

- Winterize your vehicle: Prepare for harsh weather and keep a well-stocked emergency kit in your trunk.
- Rest up: Get plenty of sleep before departing to avoid the severe dangers of drowsy driving.
- Plan ahead: Leave early and anticipate heavy traffic to eliminate the dangerous temptation to speed.
- Buckle up: Ensure every passenger is properly restrained, regardless of the trip's length.
- Eliminate distractions: Put your cell phone away; it remains the primary driving distraction today.
- Designate a driver: Always use a completely sober driver. Alcohol and medications cause severe impairment.

Decorate with Caution and Care

Decking the halls instantly puts families in a holiday mood, but hospital emergency departments treat thousands of decorating-related injuries annually. Remember these safety tips:

- Keep poisonous seasonal plants, like mistletoe and holly berries, strictly out of the reach of children.
- If utilizing an artificial tree, verify it is clearly labeled as "fire resistant."
- For live trees, cut two inches off the trunk for better water absorption. Water daily and remove it when dry.
- Place your tree at least three feet away from fireplaces, radiators, and space heaters.

- Discard and replace light sets featuring broken sockets, frayed wires, or loose electrical connections.
- Turn off all holiday lights before going to bed or leaving the house.

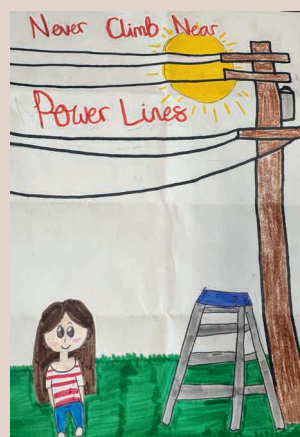
Watch Out for Holiday Fire-Starters

The glow of candles and fireplaces is a holiday staple, but combined with combustible decorations, house fire risks skyrocket. The National Fire Protection Association notes candles cause 46% of December home fires.

- Place candles in sturdy holders away from curtains and curious children.
- Store matches and lighters in a locked, high cabinet.
- Consider battery-operated flameless candles as a very safe alternative.
- Never burn pine branches or wrapping paper in fireplaces; they can cause flash fires.
- Use a protective screen for burning fires and never leave lit candles unattended.

Be highly alert to the extreme dangers of turkey fryers. Hundreds of fires and severe burns are linked to these devices. Consider using oil-less fryers or purchasing fried turkeys from professionals. If you must fry your own, strictly follow all U.S. Fire Administration guidelines.

By taking these simple, proactive steps, you can protect loved ones and ensure your holidays remain merry, bright, and safe.



"Never climb near power lines."

Penelope Poppen

Penelope warns readers to never climb near power lines. Thank you for sharing, Penelope! Penelope's parents are Brett and Megan Poppen, members of Black Hills Electric Cooperative.

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.

THE FAMILY TABLE

ENCHILADA CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

1 lb. hamburger
1 medium onion, chopped
1 green pepper, chopped
1 can (10 oz.) enchilada sauce
6 tortilla shells
1 cup shredded cheese
1 can pinto beans

Method

In a glass baking dish, put the browned hamburger, onion, pepper, beans and sauce in shells and roll up. Layer with shredded cheese on top. Bake 20 minutes in oven.

Optional: Use 1 cup of sliced black olives on top of cheese

Marla Gilbert
Southeastern Electric

PARTY IN A PAN

Ingredients:

1 1/2 lbs. hamburger, browned
1 can cream of celery soup
1 can cream of chicken soup
1 box Stove Top Stuffing Mix
1 can corn, drained
3 cups mozzarella cheese, shredded

Method

Combine the hamburger, celery soup and chicken soup in a bowl and set aside. Prepare the Stove Top Stuffing as directed on the box. Layer half the hamburger mixture, half the corn, half the stuffing, and half the cheese; repeat layers again. Bake 30-40 minutes at 350°F or until cheese is melted. Makes a 9x13-inch pan.

Kathy Zomer
Douglas Electric

BEEF TERIYAKI

Ingredients:

1lb. boneless beef sirloin steak
2 tbsp. cornstarch
14 oz. beef broth
2 tbsp soy sauce
1 tbsp. brown sugar
1/4 tsp. garlic powder
3 cups broccoli florets
1 1/2 cups rice
1 2/3 cups water

Method

Cook the rice in water according to the directions on the bag. Slice beef in very thin strips. In a large skillet, saute the beef strips until browned and the juices evaporate.

In a mixing bowl, combine cornstarch, beef broth, soy sauce, brown sugar and garlic powder. Mix thoroughly.

Add the liquid mixture and broccoli florets to the beef. Cook until mixture boils & thickens to a desired consistency, stirring frequently.

Serve over the cooked rice.

Karen Soulek
Charles-Mix Electric

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2026. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.

Is Your HVAC System Ready for Winter?

Here's what to check this fall

As cold weather approaches, fall is a good time to ensure your heating and cooling system is ready for winter. A few simple maintenance steps can improve comfort, reduce energy use and help prevent a breakdown when you need heat the most.

Schedule a professional inspection

- Have your heating system inspected by a qualified HVAC professional each year, preferably before winter weather arrives. A professional can check for worn parts, airflow issues, safe operation and other problems that may not be obvious to a homeowner.
- Ensure the inspection includes checking for proper ventilation and signs of carbon monoxide risks if your home has a gas, propane or oil furnace.

Change or clean air filters

- Check your air filter regularly and replace or clean it as needed — usually every one to three months. A dirty filter can block airflow, make your system work harder and affect indoor air quality.
- Consider filter changes more often for homes with pets, allergies, heavy system use or significant dust.

Check airflow throughout the home

- Ensure all registers and vents are clean and not blocked by furniture, rugs, curtains or other items.
- Vacuum vents to remove dust and keep air moving freely. If you notice excessive dust around vents, uneven heating or weak airflow, it may be time to have your system and ductwork checked by a professional.

- Keep most of the registers open throughout your home. Closing vents in unused rooms may seem like a way to save energy, but it can disrupt airflow and make your system work harder.

Reduce heat loss

- Look for drafts around windows and doors and seal gaps with weatherstripping or caulk.
- Check insulation in attics, basements and crawl spaces. Proper insulation can help keep warm air inside and reduce strain on your heating system.

Prepare outdoor HVAC equipment

- Remove leaves, branches, grass clippings and other debris around outdoor HVAC equipment. Trim shrubs and vegetation to maintain at least two feet of clearance around the unit.
- Check gutters and downspouts to ensure water drains away from HVAC equipment.
- Check your furnace's outdoor air intake and exhaust pipes. Snow, ice or debris can block airflow, keep your furnace from operating properly and increase the risk of carbon monoxide buildup.
- Keep outdoor heat pumps clear of snow, ice and debris during the winter. Do not cover a heat pump while it is operating, because it needs airflow to work properly.

Adjust your thermostat for energy savings

- Install or program a smart thermostat to match your household schedule. Lowering the temperature when you are asleep or away from home can help save energy without compromising comfort.

- Review the settings on your smart or programmable thermostat before winter begins. You could set the fan to "auto" during mild fall weather to circulate air efficiently without unnecessary energy use.

Know when it may be time for a replacement

Heating systems more than 10 years old may operate less efficiently than newer models. Planning ahead can help you avoid an emergency replacement during extreme cold.

Check with your utility for rebates on energy-efficient replacements.

- Watch for signs such as increasing energy bills, uneven heating, frequent repairs, unusual noises or a system that takes too long to heat your home.
- When it is time to replace your system, consider ENERGY STAR-labeled equipment for long-term energy savings and efficiency. These include high-efficiency furnaces, air-source heat pumps or geothermal heat pumps, depending on your home, climate and budget.

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.

Mackton Bratsch selected as Jay York Scholarship Winner

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association (RSCPA) is excited to announce that Mackton Bratsch has been awarded the Jay York Scholarship!

RSCPA is one of the many cooperatives that participated in the scholarship in honor of Jay A. York. This scholarship is available to dependents of RSCPA members.

Mackton is the son of Jason and Christie Bratsch and graduated this past Spring from RCW High School. He is continuing his education at Ridgewater College and is pursuing a career as an Electrician with hopes to graduate as a Journeyman. He was involved in 4-H serving as an Officer and in FFA. He also raises rabbits and goats for show. He leases out these animals to other 4-H members. He participated in band all throughout high school as well.

The Jay A. York Scholarship was created in 1994 by Minnesota's electric cooperatives to honor Jay A. York. Mr. York was the first Minnesotan to serve as president of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and was a respected leader in rural electric cooperative matters for nearly three decades. He was admired not only for his leadership and vision but also for his integrity, deep knowledge of the industry, and steadfast commitment to rural communities. In addition, Mr. York served as Chairman and Director of Nobles Electric in Worthington, Minnesota.

Congratulations to Mackton on receiving this well-deserved scholarship! RSCPA wishes you the best as you continue your education and look ahead to future opportunities.



RCW High School graduate Mackton Bratsch has been awarded the Jay York Scholarship.

Changes to Payment Due Date Practices

Due to increasing uncertainty regarding the United States Postal Service mail delivery times, Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association (RSCPA) has adjusted our payment due date practices.

Effective October 3rd, payments were required to be physically received in our office to be considered "on time". We will no longer accept "post-marked" dates. If the 3rd falls on a weekend or recognized holiday, payments will be due the following business day. Accounts with balances not received by this deadline will be subjective to a 1.5% late fee.

To help you avoid penalties due to potential mail delays, RSCPA has several convenient, secure, and instant payment options available.

- **Smarthub Pay Portal:** Visit our website at www.rscpa.coop to log into the Smarthub Pay Portal (Email and password required).
- **PayNow:** Click the "PayNow" link on our homepage. No login is required; you will only need your account number and last name.
- **Pay-by-Phone:** Call us toll free at 855-939-3674 to pay using a debit/credit card or your checking/savings account.
- **Auto-Pay:** Set up an automatic monthly payment to be safely deducted from your bank account or card on the 3rd of each month.

Please call our office if you have any questions or need assistance setting up any of these payment methods.



HONORING OUR HEROES

Veterans Memorial Undergoing Revamp

Jacob Boyko

jacob.boyko@sdrea.coop

Lee Leuning's father was about 80 when he sat in his son's sculpting studio to become the sailor at South Dakota's World War II memorial.

For three days, Leuning studied his face and shaped his features. His father slowly began talking about the war. After 50 years, the experience still weighed heavy.

Today, more than 25 years later, Leuning's father stands immortalized in bronze on the shore of Capitol Lake in Pierre, representing sailors like himself who served in World War II.

He stands among five other slightly larger-than-life statues representing members of the U.S. armed forces. The display, called "Why We Fought," depicts the service members in tattered uniforms saluting toward the American flag.

"It's soldiers in each individual moment stepping out of battle and recognizing the flag and what they fought for," Leuning said.

A member of Northern Electric Cooperative, Leuning created the figures

with fellow sculptor Sherri Treeby. Visitors to Pierre will find their work throughout the city, including statues along the Trail of Governors and a relief plaque commemorating the Lt. Cmdr. John C. Waldron Memorial Bridge. At Capitol Lake, their sculptures honor veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

Several of the World War II figures have family connections. Leuning used his mother's likeness for the army corps mechanic – she served as a plane mechanic in WWII – and his sons as models for the pilot and Marine. Treeby's father, an Army veteran, provided the face of the Coast Guardsman.

The WWII memorial was the first memorial unveiled, dedicated by Gov. Bill Janklow just four days after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Leuning recalls being amazed by the turnout – thousands of visitors were at the Capitol for the dedication.

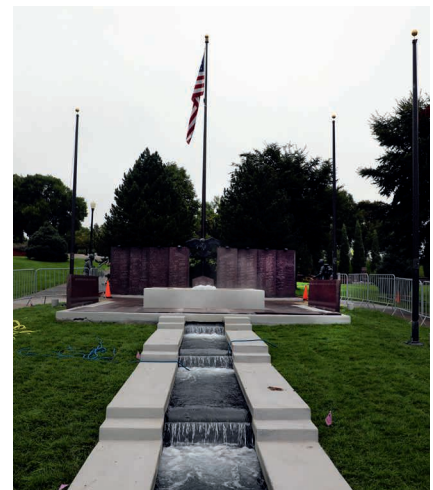
He remembers one Navy veteran watching the dedication parade from a hospital bed with an attendant.

The WWII memorial on Capitol Lake shows soldiers saluting the American flag after battle.

Later, after the Korean and Vietnam soldier statues and walls were added beneath the flag, the WWII veterans appear to salute them too.

Photo by Jacob Boyko

"Every time a flag came by with an honor guard ... that guy would have his aide get him out of the bed, and he'd snap to attention," Leuning said. "That, to me, showed this really means something to them."



Recent renovation improved water drainage. Previously, water under the granite tiles caused loosening. The tiles have since been replaced with sod grass. The stream bed was also replaced.

Photo by Jacob Boyko

Subsequent dedications for the Korean and Vietnam memorials during Gov. Mike Rounds' administration attracted even more visitors. The state estimated 32,000 people attended the two-day Vietnam dedication in 2006. Some veterans watched the ceremony from pontoon bridges on Capitol Lake.

Unfortunately, years of exposure have taken a toll on the site. Trapped water beneath the granite tiles caused some to loosen and crumble, explained Leah Haugan, Special Projects Coordinator for the South Dakota Bureau of Human Resources and Administration.

"Try as we might to keep it in great shape, you can't keep up with deteriorating stone," Haugan said.

Over the summer, the state began work on a renovation project for the memorials, which will bring some changes to the site.

Sections of granite have been replaced with grass. The military seals embedded in the walkway were lifted out and placed on pedestals. The stream from the Artesian well remains, but it's now bordered by a concrete curb. The granite tiles around the fountain were upgraded from ¾ inch thick tiles to 2 inch thick tiles, and the fountain enclosure was remade with concrete and granite tiles around the top.

Restoring the site is part of the state's commitment to honoring veterans and their service, Haugan said.

"Words are words, but when you build something like that that memorializes their efforts and their sacrifice, I think that shows them there's proof positive that we recognize and honor them," Haugan said.

The renovation does not bring back the Flaming Fountain's flame. Methane rising from the artesian well that feeds Capitol Lake kept the flame burning for decades, but it went out around 2015 when the flow could no longer sustain it. Haugan said a more ambitious fountain project is among the ideas for the site, depending on funding.

A separate proposal would honor Native American code talkers who served in World Wars I and II using their native languages to transmit messages that enemy forces were not able to translate. Funding for that memorial also remains unresolved.

Visiting the memorials, Leuning has seen what that recognition can mean to a family. The day after the Vietnam memorial dedication, he returned to take photos and was approached by a woman asking him to take her picture. He obliged,

and the lady went up to the bronze statue and hugged it.

"She said, 'That's my Davy. It looks just like my Davy.'"

Then she pointed to her husband's name on the wall.



Leuning's Vietnam War memorial.
Photo submitted by Lee Leuning



Sculptor Lee Leuning with his dad, Donald Leuning, at the World War II Veterans Memorial dedication Sept. 15, 2001, in Pierre.
Photo submitted by Lee Leuning



An estimated 32,000 people attended the Vietnam War Memorial dedication in 2006.
U.S. Airforce Photo by 1st Lt. Carrie L. Kessler

Are You Interested in a New Adventure?

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association (RSCPA) is beginning to plan for the 89th Annual meeting of the membership that will be held on March 23, 2027, at the Redwood Area Community Center in Redwood Falls, Minnesota. Three (3) directors will be elected during that time, each for a 3-year term.

The First District, consisting of the townships of Cornish, Moltke, and Severance in Sibley County; the townships of Ridgely and West Newton in Nicollet County; and the townships of Bandon, Cairo, Camp, Martinsburg, Palmyra, and Wellington in Renville County is represented by Alan Neyers, Whitey Hinderman, and Vicky Firle. Alan Neyer's term will expire in 2027.

The Second District, consisting of the townships of Delhi and Honner in Redwood County; and the townships of Beaver Falls, Birch Cooley, Bird Island, Flora, Henryville, Kingman, Melville, and Norfolk in Renville County is represented by Helen Ruebel, Wayland Zaske, and Jeff Boersma. Helen Ruebel's term will expire in 2027.

The Third District, consisting of the townships of Holland and Roseland in Kandiyohi County; Rheiderland in Chippewa County the townships of Crooks, Emmet, Ericson, Hawk Creek, Sacred Heart, Troy, Wang, and Winfield in Renville County is represented by Gary Eekhoff, Gary Peterson, and Roger Manthei. Gary Peterson's term will expire in 2027.

As stated in the RSCPA by-laws, the following are the Qualifications and Tenure for the position of Director:

- A. Must be an individual and must be at least 18 years of age.

- B. Must be competent and able to execute a contract.
- C. Must not have been convicted of a felony or gross misdemeanor during the preceding 5 years prior to becoming a director for the Cooperative or during the period while serving as a director.
- D. Must have a high school diploma or equivalent.
- E. Must make a reasonable effort to become and remain knowledgeable about special issues regarding electric cooperatives by attending training, workshops and seminars.
- F. Must attend at least three-fourths (3/4) of all monthly scheduled board meetings during any twelve (12) month period.

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

- A. Shall not be a close relative of an existing Director, employee, agent or representative of the Cooperative other than an existing Director who will cease being a Director upon the candidate assuming office;
- B. Within 5 years immediately prior to becoming a Director, shall not have been a Cooperative Officer, employee, agent or representative of the

Cooperative or any subsidiary or affiliated company;

- C. Shall not be employed by, materially affiliated with, nor share a material financial interest with any current Director;
- D. Shall not be engaged in any business, nor employed by, nor materially affiliated with, nor have a material financial interest in any individual or entity that:
 1. Is regularly, directly, and substantially competing with the Cooperative or any other entity that the Cooperative controls or in which the Cooperative owns a majority interest (Cooperative Subsidiary).
 2. Is regularly selling goods and services to the Cooperative or the Cooperative Subsidiary.
 3. Possesses a substantial conflict of interest with the Cooperative or the Cooperative subsidiary.
- E. A former Director is ineligible for employment by the Cooperative for 5 years following the end of the tenure as a Director.

As a Director, the member agrees to:

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

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

A director also has a very important responsibility which is to uphold and abide by the bylaws of the cooperative. Directors are to act as the trustees for the assets of the cooperative and are assigned the duties of formulating, approving and reviewing the policies that provide guidelines for the cooperative. 956300

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

Directors attend seminars and

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

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

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

If you are interested in becoming a candidate for the RSCPA Board of Directors, contact the RSCPA office at 1-800-826-2593 by December 1st for further information.

OUTAGE REPORT:

Affecting 10 members or more

None this month

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

FOR SALE:

Stainless feeders \$50
Randy Mertz
Olivia, MN 56277
320-522-0776

12 ft digger, 3-point hitch mount.
Bruce Feldman
Renville, MN
320-522-0466

WANTED:

Used disk blades-cracked
broken-no halves
Randy Mertz
Olivia, MN 56277
320-522-0776

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



The Renville-Sibley office will be closed in observance of:

Veterans Day
Wednesday and Thursday,
Nov. 11 and 12

Thanksgiving
Thursday, Nov. 26



YOUTH TOUR 1969

How a Youth Tour Friendship Changed Marty Larsen's Life

Frank Turner

frank.turner@sdrea.coop

When Marty Larsen earned a spot on the 1969 Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., through Turner-Hutchinson Electric Cooperative, he had every reason to believe dairy farming would remain at the center of his life. Turner-

Hutchinson, a predecessor of today's Southeastern Electric Cooperative, served the area around his family's dairy farm seven miles west of Hurley.

Youth Tour gives high school students sponsored by their local electric cooperatives the chance to spend a week in Washington, D.C., visiting historic sites, learning about

government and electric cooperatives and meeting students from across the country. South Dakota began sending students on the trip in 1963. Larsen went just six years later.

Back then, Turner-Hutchinson Electric selected its Youth Tour delegates through 4-H, rewarding young people for their accomplishments. In 1969,

The 1969 South Dakota Youth Tour group. Marty Larsen is pictured in the top row, seventh from the right. John Nordlie is pictured in the top row, fifth from the left.

Photo courtesy from the SDREA Archives

Larsen placed eighth at the national 4-H dairy judging competition in Ohio. The accomplishment earned him the cooperative's Youth Tour trip to Washington, D.C.

But before Larsen could make the trip, an Army recruiter threw a wrench in his plans, warning him that he was likely to be called for service soon. Rather than wait to be drafted, Larsen chose to enlist, expecting to head to basic training and then Vietnam.

Not long after, Larsen received an induction notice, but first he had to complete a military physical. Larsen, who is hard of hearing, failed the hearing test and was disqualified from service. Had he passed, he said he would have left for basic training about a week before the 1969 Youth Tour departed.

"Somebody upstairs was looking out for me," he said.

With the Army no longer standing in the way, Larsen was going on the trip. To prepare, his mother bought him new clothes and a new pair of shoes. Even still, he returned home with the soles nearly worn through. At the Washington Monument, he and a small group of students climbed 897 steps rather than wait in the long elevator line, then rode the elevator back down.

Near the end of the trip, the group ate at a seafood restaurant along the Potomac River. Larsen persuaded the chaperones that the students ought to try lobster, something many of them had never eaten before. When the waitress brought lobster bibs to the table, Larsen passed his around and asked everyone to sign it.

His mother later saved the bib in the scrapbook she kept of his childhood, alongside years of 4-H ribbons, judging cards and other keepsakes. Larsen still has the scrapbook today.

The students took an evening cruise on a multilevel paddlewheel-style boat on the Potomac, complete with live music. South Dakota Youth Tour students continue the tradition of a river cruise today aboard the Cherry Blossom.

For Larsen, though, the most important part of Youth Tour was the people he met. One of them was John Nordlie of Sioux Falls, a young photographer who worked with the Argus Leader and later attended Augustana College.

The two became friends during the trip and stayed in contact after returning home.

"We stayed friends after we got back," he said. "I was in his wedding party when he got married. He was in my wedding party when I got married."

For the next several years, Larsen stayed close to the life he knew, working in dairy and welding. Nordlie, meanwhile, developed an interest in pipe organs. In 1983, he called Larsen and asked if he wanted to come work for him building organs for cathedrals and music halls.

Larsen agreed, bringing his experience as a welder, machinist and mechanical problem-solver into a trade he had never expected to enter. He spent the next 20 years working with Nordlie and became deeply involved in the mechanics of organ construction.

His work eventually went far beyond basic fabrication. Larsen built components, developed specialty tools and designed machinery for organ builders. One machine he created transformed a wire-bending process that had taken workers several minutes per piece, allowing them to produce several pieces per minute. Other tools he built ended up with organ companies elsewhere in the United States and overseas.

The work also took Larsen far beyond southeastern South Dakota. Over the years, he traveled throughout the country and to Japan, worked

on historic instruments and helped construct and restore pipe organs in churches, museums and other settings. More than four decades after entering the trade, he is still involved in restoration work.

Looking back, Larsen can draw a direct line from the Youth Tour trip to the career that followed. Without the trip, he may never have met Nordlie. Without that friendship, the call inviting him into organ building may never have come.

"It meant a lot to me to be able to go on that trip," Larsen said. "It changed me from a dairy farmer to a pipe organ builder."

More than 50 years later, Larsen still has the scrapbook his mother kept from the trip, along with the signed lobster bib and other reminders of that week in Washington. But the most lasting thing he brought home was the friendship that, years later, opened the door to a life he never could have planned.



Marty Larsen and his wife, Barbara.
Photo by Frank Turner

Interested in attending Youth Tour?
Contact your local electric cooperative to
learn more about the application process.

September Board Meeting Highlights

The September board meeting was held on Wednesday, September 30th, 2026, at 8 a.m. Directors Boersma, Eekhoff, Firle, Hinderman, Manthei, Neyers, Peterson, Ruebel, and Zaske, were present. Others present were DeeAnne Norris, Nick Bruns, and Amy Ervin.

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the August 26th, 2026, board meeting
- Director Expenses
- Operating and disbursement reports for the months of August
- Capital Credits to Estates per Policy 203
- Safety Report for July/August
- Brady Martz Engagement Letter
- Mid-West Electric Consumer Association Annual Meeting Voting Delegates

The board reviewed the following items:

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

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

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 1st of November, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck in your search!

REMINDER

Renville-Sibley encourages any member planning on making changes to their service in 2026 or 2027 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

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 meeting of the Board of Trustees will be held in January. The deadline for applications is December 31st.

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

Board Meeting Notices

The October board meeting will be held on
Wednesday, October 28, 2026, at 8:00 a.m.

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



Digging? Click or Call 811 First.

Whether you're excavating at a job site or installing a new fence post, underground utilities could be at any depth below the ground's surface. Keep yourself – and those around you – safe by having the dig site located through your local contact center before you dig.

RED	Electric power lines, cables, conduit and lighting cables
YELLOW	Gas, oil, steam, petroleum or gaseous materials
ORANGE	Communication, alarm or signal lines, cables or conduit
BLUE	Potable water
GREEN	Sanitary sewers and drain lines
PURPLE	Reclaimed water, irrigation and slurry lines
PINK	Temporary survey markings
WHITE	Proposed excavation



Find us online
www.gopherstateonecall.org

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.



NOV. 7
Wine, Cheese & Chocolate Stroll
 Deadwood, SD
www.deadwood.com/events/

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.

NOV. 1
Kadoka Holiday Festival
 10 a.m.-4 p.m. (MST)
 Lunch 11 a.m.-1 p.m.
 Kadoka City Auditorium
 Kadoka, SD
 605-488-0151

NOV. 6-8
Hill City Girlfriends' Weekend
 Hill City, SD

NOV. 7
Fall Fling Craft/Vendor Show
 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Dakota Christian School
 Corsica, SD

NOV. 7
Black Hills Meat Fest
 Free Admission
 Central States Fairgrounds
 Nerdy Nuts Expo Hall
 Rapid City, SD
[Facebook.com/BlackHillsMeatFest](https://www.facebook.com/BlackHillsMeatFest)

NOV. 7-15
Rustic Designs & More Christmas Country Show
 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 41450 264th St.
 Ethan, SD
 605-770-2411

NOV. 8
32nd Annual Lutefisk, Meatball & Lefse Supper
 4-7 p.m.
 Trinity Lutheran Church
 Chamberlain, SD
 605-730-0553

NOV. 12
The Satin Dollz
 Patriotic Female Vocal & Dance Quintet
 7 p.m.
 Johnson Fine Arts Center
 Aberdeen, SD
aberneencommunityconcerts.org

NOV. 14
Kick-Off to Christmas & Santa Shop
 10 a.m.-2:45 p.m.
 7 p.m. Parade
 Eureka, SD
 605-230-1777

NOV. 14
Lake Campbell Lutheran Church Lutefisk Supper
 Seatings: 4:30, 5:45, 7 p.m.
 Volga, SD
 Reservations: 605-690-4868

NOV. 14
Club 14 Craft & Vendor Fair
 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Hendricks Public School
 Hendricks, MN
 605-690-5586

NOV. 14-15
Zonta Holiday Craft & Vendor Show
 Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Sun. 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
 Ramkota Hotel
 Pierre, SD

NOV. 16-21
Yelduz Shrine Festival of Trees
 Mon.-Fri. 4-7 p.m.
 Sat. 11 a.m.-6 p.m.
 802 S. Main St.
 Aberdeen, SD
 605-225-4841
Yelduz.com

NOV. 20
Aberdeen University Civic Symphony Concert
 7:30 p.m.
 Johnson Fine Arts Center
 Aberdeen, SD
aberneencommunityconcerts.org

NOV. 21
Lille Norge Fest
 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
 Canyon Lake Activity Center
 2900 Canyon Lake Dr.
 Rapid City, SD
borgundlodge.org

NOV. 27-28
Sip, Shop & Stroll
 Viborg, SD

NOV. 28
Gregory Mid-Winter Fair
 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
 Gregory Memorial Auditorium
 Gregory, SD
 605-830-9778

DEC. 4-5
Christmas in the Hills
 Mueller Civic Center
 Hot Springs, SD
 951-591-2335

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.