



# Cooperative Connections

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Help Fund  
Education  
Aspirations**

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**Tech School  
and Go!**

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# How Local Governance Works for You!



**DeeAnne Newville, CEO**

dnewville@renville-sibley.coop  
Phone: 320-826-2593 or  
Toll Free 800-826-2593

Since Minnesota's first electric cooperative was established in 1935, co-ops have been leading the way in serving member-owners with safe, reliable, affordable and increasingly clean electricity. From our earliest beginnings, strong governance has been – and continues to be – at the heart of a successful electric cooperative.

Minnesota is home to 44 distribution cooperatives, including Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association, which are served by six generation and transmission cooperatives. Collectively, Minnesota's electric cooperatives employ more than 3,000 people and serve 1.7 million – or one-third of Minnesota's residents. It's a big responsibility and one we take seriously.

Under the successful and proven cooperative business model, we're locally owned by the members we serve and governed by an elected board of directors who are also member-owners of the cooperative. Committed to powering lives and empowering our communities, Renville-Sibley has been guided by seven core principles since our founding. You'll see these principles demonstrated in everything we do.

## Cooperative Principles

- Voluntary and Open Membership
- Democratic Member Control
- Members' Economic Participation
- Autonomy and Independence
- Education, Training and Information
- Cooperation Among Cooperatives
- Concern for Community

While all the principles are important, one principle really differentiates co-ops from other for-profit utilities – Democratic Member Control. This principle says, cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote). In short – as a member-owner of Renville-Sibley, you always have a vital and valued say in the way we operate.

To effectively and efficiently represent Renville-Sibley's 1,586 members' interests, board directors are elected for three-year terms. These directors play a crucial role in determining the strategic direction and priorities of Renville-Sibley. Their input and guidance are key as the co-op keeps the lights on today and works to anticipate and meet our member-consumers' future energy needs.

Through education and training opportunities, industry conferences and independent learning, our nine directors invest a significant amount of time staying informed on the latest challenges, trends, regulations and technologies impacting electric cooperatives. From environmental laws to financial matters to cybersecurity and technology advancements, the electric industry is incredibly complex. In order to effectively govern, co-op directors need to have a thorough understanding of these issues and how they could affect member-owners. The time directors spend on education and training is a mandatory requirement in strategically guiding the cooperative. 542200

Within our board of directors, officers are elected to fulfill specific responsibilities for the cooperative. Not only are board members trained on energy-related issues, they are also trained to be transparent, accountable to one another and the member-owners we serve; and adhere to the cooperative's bylaws and other applicable rules, regulations and laws. We are actively seeking members interested in running for our board of directors. You can find more information about our board of directors on our website at [www.renville-sibley.coop](http://www.renville-sibley.coop).

Serving in a governance role for Renville-Sibley is a privilege and one your directors embrace. If you have questions about our local governance structure or how to run to serve as a director, please contact us at 800-826-2593.

**Collectively,  
Minnesota's  
electric  
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– or one-third  
of Minnesota's  
residents**

# Renville-Sibley

## Cooperative Connections

(USPS 019-074)

### Board of Directors

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

### Renville-Sibley Employees

Gene Alex – Line Superintendent  
Brian Athmann – Journeyman Lineman  
Shawn Beckler – Crew Chief  
Mike Benson – Journeyman Lineman  
Brad Braulick – Crew Chief  
Nick Bruns – Systems Coordinator  
Anthony Carruth – Journeyman Lineman  
Amy Ervin – Consumer Accounts Representative  
Brayden Fischer – Journeyman Lineman  
Cindy Mertens – Administrative Services Manager  
DeeAnne Newville – CEO  
Brandon Ochs – Journeyman Lineman  
Clint Olson – Journeyman Lineman  
Kathy Ridl – Office Assistant  
Lenaë Wordes – Communications Manager

RENVILLE-SIBLEY COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is published monthly by Renville-Sibley Co-op Power Association, 103 Oak Street, Danube, MN, 56230 for its members. Electric cooperative members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Non-member subscriptions are available for \$6 annually. 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.renville-sibley.coop](http://www.renville-sibley.coop)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Youth Tour Applicants

Each year, rural electric cooperatives across the nation sponsor roughly 1,900 students on the Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. The youth tour program continues to foster the grassroots spirit of the rural electric cooperatives by demonstrating to high school juniors and seniors how our government works and what the electric cooperative business model is all about.

In 2020, Renville-Sibley will be sending one high school junior or senior on an all-expense-paid trip to the Washington, D.C., Youth Tour. The selected student will spend six days in our nation's capitol visiting museums, chatting with politicians and making memories and friends that will last a lifetime. What is the best part of this trip? The best part is the fact that Renville-Sibley will pay all of the expenses.

More information and how to apply can be found below.

### Contest purpose:

Select one youth to represent Renville-Sibley Co-op Power at the Washington, D.C., Youth Tour.

### Eligibility:

The contest is open to any current high school junior or senior whose family is a member of our cooperative.

### Requirements:

Contestant shall write a 300-word essay, answering the question “What makes you a good candidate to represent Renville-Sibley Co-op on the 2020 Youth Tour and what do you expect to gain from your Washington, D.C., experience?”

Complete a Youth Tour application form which can be found on Renville-Sibley's website.

### Additional Information:

Deadline for application is Feb. 21, 2020. The winner will be announced by Feb. 28, 2020

### Tour Dates: June 20-25, 2020

## Sample itinerary (subject to change):

### Saturday, June 20

- Travel day
- Electric Cooperatives 101 class

### Sunday, June 21

- Tour of Monuments, Arlington Cemetery, Smithsonian's, night monument tour

### Monday, June 22

- Mount Vernon, National Museum of the Marine Corp, Old Town Alexandria and NRECA general session with other state youth tours

### Tuesday, June 23

- Group picture in front of White

House, Newseum, National Cathedral, Holocaust Museum, John F Kennedy Center Performing Arts Center show

### Wednesday, June 24

- Library of Congress, U.S. Capitol tour, visit the Galleries, Capitol visits with Senators and Representatives, US Botanical Gardens, Souvenir City

- NRECA dinner and dance

### Thursday, June 25

- Travel day

More information can be found at the National Youth Tour website <http://youthtour.coop>





## Winter Electrical Safety Tips

In South Dakota and western Minnesota, December through March is a particularly hazardous time of year for storms and electrical power outages. Heavy snow, ice and wind can ravage power lines, both on the main power grid and at home. Add to that the increased use of home heating equipment such as space heaters and electric blankets and the potential for dangerous electrical hazards and home fires only intensifies.

Keep your home and loved ones safe this season by following these important winter electrical safety tips:

- **Use space heaters safely.** Keep them a minimum of three feet from furniture, bedsprings, drapes or clothes and never leave them unattended when they're on. Don't use extension cords with your space heaters and always unplug the heaters when they're not in use. Keep space heaters away from wet or damp areas and never touch a heater when your body is wet.
- **Use caution with electric blankets.** Never use an electric blanket while you're sleeping. Make sure the plug and cord are in good shape; otherwise it can pose a fire hazard. Be sure to dispose of electric blankets that have worn or damaged areas.
- **Be careful with your kitchen appliances.** While crockpots and other slow-cooking devices get a lot of use in the winter, you should never leave them turned on when no one is home. Leaving them unattended is a major fire risk. And be sure to check electrical kitchen appliances for frayed or damaged cords and plugs before use.
- **Make sure your home is equipped with functioning carbon monoxide detectors.** Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless gas that kills at high concentrations and causes serious and irreversible injuries at lower levels. Deaths from carbon monoxide poisoning increase during the winter months due to the use of common fuels like natural gas, wood and coal. Installing an inexpensive carbon monoxide detector can save your family's life.
- **Are your smoke alarms in working order?** It's important to make sure that you have an adequate number of smoke alarms throughout your home and that they are functioning properly. Simply push the test button to make sure it beeps and replace the batteries if needed.
- **Don't overload circuits or wattage.** Despite the shorter, darker days of winter, don't go above the recommended wattage for your light fixtures. Don't overload wall outlets either and only plug three-prong cords into three-prong outlets. Use extension cords sparingly and only for temporary purposes.
- **Have your home's electrical panel inspected by a licensed electrician.** Because electric usage goes up significantly in winter, you may need an upgrade in order to meet this increased demand.
- **Keep outdoor outlets closed.** Check your outdoor outlets regularly to ensure that they don't have an accumulation of ice and snow on them. Keep them cleared off and closed to avoid moisture from invading the receptacle box and causing an outage.

Source: [www.mrelectricians.us/best-winter-electrical-safety-tips](http://www.mrelectricians.us/best-winter-electrical-safety-tips)

✓ STOP AT THE BANK

✓ GRAB THE GROCERIES

✓ FIND MY POLLING PLACE

✓ REMEMBER TO VOTE

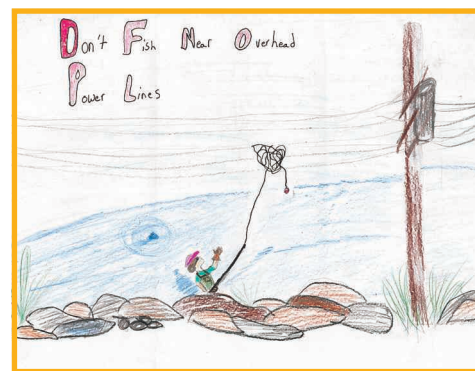


**CO-OPS VOTE**

A PROGRAM OF AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES  
WWW.VOTE.COOP

**ELECTION DAY  
NOVEMBER 3, 2020**

### KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"Don't fish near overhead power lines"**

**Lily Gums, 14 years old**

Lily is the daughter of Dave and Kathy Gums, Clear Lake, S.D. They are members of H-D Electric Cooperative, Clear Lake.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents. Colored drawings are encouraged.

# Super Soups

## Leftover Turkey Chowder

4 slices bacon, chopped	1/4 cup flour
1/2 cup chopped onion	2 cups half-and-half
2 cups water	2 cups cubed cooked turkey
4 medium red potatoes, cut in 1/2-inch cubes (about 2 cups)	1 (8 3/4 oz.) can whole kernel corn, undrained
1 pkg. McCormick® Turkey Gravy Mix	1 tsp. McCormick® Sage, Rubbed

Cook bacon in large saucepan on medium heat until crisp. Add onion; cook and stir 3 minutes. Add water and potatoes. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 5 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Stir gravy mix and flour in medium bowl. Stir in half-and-half with wire whisk until smooth. Stir mixture into saucepan. Add turkey, corn and sage. Bring to boil on medium heat. Reduce heat to low; cover and simmer 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Makes 8 (1 cup) servings.

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 258, Fiber 1g, Protein 16g, Cholesterol 68mg, Total Fat 14g, Sodium 427mg, Carbohydrates 17g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Crockpot Potato Soup

1 (30 oz.) bag hash browns	1/2 cup chopped onion
3 (14 oz.) cans chicken broth	1/4 tsp. pepper
1 can cream of chicken soup	1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese

Combine first 5 ingredients in crockpot. Cook on LOW 6 to 8 hours. Add cream cheese 1 hour before serving.

**Bonnie Weber, Aberdeen, SD**

## Taco Soup

1 lb. ground beef, browned and drained	1 (10.75 oz.) can tomato soup
1 can chili beans, undrained	1 soup can water
1 pkg. taco seasoning	Tomato juice

Combine all ingredients; heat through. Serve with shredded cheese, corn chips or crackers if desired.

**Velma Schmitz, Bonesteel, SD**

## Curried Pumpkin Soup

8 oz. sliced fresh or canned mushrooms	1 (15 oz.) can pumpkin
1/2 cup chopped onion	1 (12 oz.) can evaporated milk
2 T. butter	2 T. honey
2 T. flour	1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
1 tsp. curry powder	Salt and pepper
3 cups vegetable broth	

In a large saucepan, saute mushrooms and onions in butter until tender. Stir in flour and curry powder until blended. Gradually add broth. Bring to a boil; cook and stir 2 minutes or until thickened. Add pumpkin, milk, honey, nutmeg, salt and pepper. Heat through.

**White Tail Ridge Bed & Breakfast, Hermosa, SD**

## Cheddar-Ham Chowder

2 cups water	1/4 cup butter
2 cups cubed potatoes	1/4 cup flour
1/2 cup sliced carrots	2 cups milk
1/2 cup sliced celery	2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese
1/4 cup chopped onion	1 (16 oz.) can corn, drained
1 tsp. salt	1-1/2 cups cubed, cooked ham
1/4 tsp. pepper	

In a large saucepan, bring first 7 ingredients to a boil; reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 8 to 10 minutes or until vegetables are just tender; remove from heat but do not drain. Meanwhile, in a medium saucepan, melt butter and blend in flour. Add milk all at once, cooking and stirring until thickened and bubbly. Add cheese, stirring until melted. Stir into undrained vegetable mixture. Return large saucepan to heat; add corn and ham. Heat through, stirring occasionally.

**Diane Fode, Rapid City, SD**

Please send your favorite brunch, seafood or appetizer/ beverage recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3).

Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in June 2020. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.

# Are You Interested in a New Adventure?

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association is beginning to plan for the 82nd annual meeting of the membership that will be held March 26, 2020, at the Island Ballroom in Bird Island, Minn. Three (3) directors will be elected during that time, each for a three-year term.

The First District, consisting of the townships of Cornish, Severance and Moltke in Sibley County; the townships of Ridgely and West Newton in Nicollet County; and the townships of Cairo, Wellington, Martinsburg, Camp, Bandon and Palmyra in Renville County is represented by Alan Neyers, Whitey Hinderman and Philip Nestande. Philip Nestande's term will expire in 2020.

The Second District, consisting of the townships of Honner and Delhi in Redwood County; and the townships of Beaver Falls, Flora, Henryville, Birch Cooley, Norfolk, Melville, Bird Island and Kingman in Renville County is represented by Helen Ruebel, Wayland Zaske and Matt Haubrich. Matt Haubrich's term will expire in 2020.

The Third District, consisting of the townships of Roseland and Holland in Kandiyohi County; Rheiderland Township in Chippewa County; and the townships of Troy, Winfield, Emmet, Crooks, Sacred Heart, Hawk Creek, Ericson and Wang in Renville County is represented by Gary Eekhoff, Gary Peterson and Roger Manthei. Roger Manthei's term will expire in 2020.

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association Director Districts



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

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

## Director qualifications required for service to the cooperative shall include:

- A. Must be an individual and must be at least 18 years of age.
- B. Must be competent and able to execute a contract.
- C. Must not have been convicted of a felony or gross misdemeanor during the preceding 5 years prior to becoming a director for the Cooperative or during the period while serving as a director.
- D. Must have a high school diploma or equivalent.
- E. Must make a reasonable effort to become and remain knowledgeable about special issues regarding electric cooperatives by attending training, workshops and seminars.
- F. Must attend at least three-fourths (3/4) of all monthly scheduled board meetings during any twelve (12) month period.

Upon becoming a candidate for and/or to remain a Director, an individual must

complete an annual conflict of interest disclosure form, approved by the Board of Directors. All Directors and/or Director candidates must comply with or meet the following conflict of interest qualifications:

- A. Shall not be a close relative of an existing Director, employee, agent or representative of the Cooperative other than an existing Director who will cease being a Director upon the candidate assuming office;
- B. Within 5 years immediately prior to becoming a Director, shall not have been a Cooperative Officer, employee, agent or representative of the Cooperative or any subsidiary or affiliated company;
- C. Shall not be employed by, materially affiliated with, nor share a material financial interest with any current Director;
- D. Shall not be engaged in any business, nor employed by, nor materially affiliated with, nor have a material financial interest in any individual or entity that:
  1. Is regularly, directly, and substantially competing with the Cooperative or any other entity that the Cooperative controls or in which the Cooperative owns a majority interest (Cooperative Subsidiary).
  2. Is regularly selling goods and services to the Cooperative or the Cooperative Subsidiary.
  3. Possesses a substantial conflict of interest with the Cooperative or the Cooperative subsidiary.
- E. A former Director is ineligible for employment by the Cooperative for five years following the end of the tenure as a Director.

## As a Director, the member agrees to:

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

If anyone should decide to seek candidacy for the board of directors, there are many rewards to be enjoyed when elected. A director has the opportunity to demonstrate their leadership quality and increase



their knowledge within the cooperative business environment and the electric industry. As a director, this person could play a significant role in the future development of Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association.

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

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

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

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

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

If you are interested in becoming a candidate for the Renville-Sibley Board of Directors, contact the Renville-Sibley office at 1-800-826-2593 before Jan. 10 for further information.

## Scholar of the Month

Congratulations to Tyler Rice from Renville County West High School for being selected as the November Scholar of the Month. He was nominated because of his work ethic both in the classroom and in athletics and his positive attitude. He is friendly to others and always striving to be the best that he can be. Renville-Sibley Co-op Power salutes Tyler as the November Touchstone Energy® Scholar of the month.



Tyler Rice

More information on the Scholar of the Month program can be found on our website [www.renville-sibley.coop](http://www.renville-sibley.coop) under the Customer Service tab.

## Energy Audits Available

Renville-Sibley offers energy audits to all members. The audit includes a walk-through of your home, taking pictures with an infrared camera of any areas where cold air might be entering your home, along with a review of the energy consumption in your home. The cost of this audit is \$150. If the member makes improvements recommended in the follow-up report and submits invoices showing that \$150 or more was spent on these improvements, the charge will be refunded. Please contact the office at 800-826-2593 for more information or if you are interested in having an energy audit of your home.

## Member Informational Meetings Scheduled

Renville-Sibley will be hosting our annual member informational meetings throughout the service area Feb. 15 through Feb. 20, 2020. More information about the meeting dates will be in the February issue of *Cooperative Connections*.

**Notice:**  
**The office will also be closed the afternoon of Dec. 24 and all day on Dec. 25 in observance of Christmas and on Jan. 1 in observance of New Year's Day.**

Comparative Report			
	Current Oct. 31, 2019	One Year Ago Oct. 31, 2018	10 Years Ago Oct. 31, 2009
Average Number of Consumers	1,882	1,882	1,940
kWhs purchased	124,142,922	152,361,758	130,802,103
Cost of purchased power	\$7,342,254.67	\$9,077,535.27	\$5,022,004.40



Electric cooperatives are offering more than \$100,000 in scholarships for area students.

## COLLEGE AHEAD?

### Electric Cooperatives Offer Scholarships to Fuel College, Technical School Aspirations

**Brenda Kleinjan**

[editor@sdrea.coop](mailto:editor@sdrea.coop)

For more than 30 years, South Dakota's electric cooperatives have been helping fund the continuing education dreams of students planning to attend four-year colleges or technical schools.

Over the decades, the scholarships have funded students on their way to careers in education, medicine, government, energy and everything in between.

Through the Basin Electric Power Cooperative Scholarship Program, each cooperative that is a Basin Electric member cooperative awards a \$1,000 scholarship to the dependent of a co-op member. Additional scholarships through the program are available to the dependents of co-op employees

Several cooperatives offer scholarships to individuals to become electric line workers or electricians. These scholarships, in addition to those awarded by the South Dakota Rural Electric Line Superintendents Association, amount to more than \$10,000.





# Future Engineer?

## Nationwide Scholarship Available

Since its inception three years ago, the Glenn English National Cooperative Leadership Foundation Scholarship Committee has awarded almost \$10,000 in scholarships to individuals pursuing a career in engineering.

This annual opportunity would not be possible without the foresight and generous contributions of the IEEE: Rural Electric Power Committee (REPC). Together, we hope to support future engineers with an interest and passion for defining and solving the electric utility challenges of the future, specifically in the rural parts of America.

### Dates & Deadlines:

- Applications will be accepted starting on Dec. 14, 2019.
- The deadline for application submission is 11:59 p.m. EST on May 15, 2020.
- Winners are selected by a scholarship committee and announced after the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association summer board meeting in Mid-July, 2020.
- Awards are distributed in August/September, 2020.

### Eligibility Requirements

- Must be a US Citizen
- Applicant must be enrolled in an ABET, four-year program of electrical engineering or electrical engineering technology, and have at least a 'B' average in major subjects.
- Applicant must be enrolled as a full-time student.
- Applicant must have already received academic credits equal to at least one year of college.

### Essay Requirement Information

- To be considered for the Engineers of the Future Scholarship, you must submit an essay using the following requirements as your guide:
  - Essays need to be between 1,000 and 1,500 words.
  - Essays must describe, in detail, plans to pursue a career as an electrical engineer, with an emphasis in electric power, in an electrical utility serving a rural area.
  - Essays must demonstrate knowledge of the unique challenges facing the electric industry in Rural America and describe how you might address these issues as an engineer.

But, the majority of scholarship money available from the region's electric cooperatives are not tied to a specific program of study.

A study released this summer by WalletHub.com found that South Dakota has the highest rate of student loan debt of any state in the country while Minnesota finished sixth on the list.

The study, performed by consumer finance website WalletHub.com, had researchers analyze 12 different measures of indebtedness, including average student debt, number of students with debt, and unemployment rate.

South Dakota had the highest proportion of students with debt, and was fourth highest when it

came to percentage of student loan borrowers over age 50.

Some of the scholarships offered by electric cooperatives require that students be in high school, while other scholarships are designed for students that may be returning to school.

Additionally,

students selected to represent their local electric cooperative on the Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., are eligible for a \$10,000 Glenn English Foundation Scholarship. Students can apply for the undergraduate scholarship once they have completed one semester of college or technical school.

Deadlines for local scholarships vary, so check with your local electric cooperative for details.

**South Dakota led the nation in student loan debt, according to a national study.**

Of the scholarships being offered by electric cooperatives, more than \$10,000 is dedicated to students seeking energy-related careers.



# November Board Meeting Highlights

The November board meeting was held on Monday, Nov. 25, at 8 a.m. All board members were present except Alan Neyers. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Newville, Gene Alex and Lenae Wordes.

## The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the October board meeting
- Operating and disbursement reports for the month of October
- Capital credits to estates
- Safety report for November
- Basin Electric Load Forecast Resolution
- 2020 Market Rate

Operations review – YTD through October (unaudited)

- Organization activities
- East River update
- Basin Electric update
- NRECA Update
- MREA Update
- Line crew work in progress, equipment update and outage update
- Accounts receivable
- Christmas Open House
- Co-ops in the Classroom

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

## The board reviewed:

- Total new members for the month of October
- Reports from staff members as to the activities in their department. Items in the reports include:
  - High level Statement of

**Notice:**  
**The December board meeting will be held on Thursday, Dec. 19, at 9 a.m.**  
**The January board meeting will be held on Monday, Jan. 27, at 9 a.m.**

## 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 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

## Where's the Number?



Last month, Bruce Lueck found his member number in the newsletter. Congratulations, Bruce! With this being the first newsletter of the new year, a change is in order. The credit will start at \$15 and increase by \$15 each month. Another number has been hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number and call the office by the Jan. 3, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck in your search!

## Outage Report

affecting 10 members or more

Date: 11-1-19  
 Time off: 9:06 a.m.  
 Time on: 10:45 a.m.  
 Substation: Troy  
 Cause: Farm equipment

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

## Mission Statement

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

## Wanted/For Sale

**Wanted:** Massey Ferguson MF62 corn head, 6 row, 20" offered back in the late '60s.

Robert Johnson, Sacred Heart, MN  
320-765-8805

**Wanted:** Ceramic Christmas tree, electric

Dennis Hanlon, Franklin, MN  
320-212-3803

**For Sale:** Work bench 103" long, 43" wide, 34" high, made from bowling ally wood, four wheels, very nice.

Larry Breitkreutz, Renville, MN  
320-826-2248





If you look closely, you can see the shock between GFW students Ahnika Prafke and Terrell Stearns.

# Co-ops in the Classroom Visits Area Schools

## Lenae Wordes

[lwordes@renville-sibley.coop](mailto:lwordes@renville-sibley.coop)

Each year Renville-Sibley Co-op partners with East River Electric out of Madison, S.D., to bring the Co-ops in the Classroom program to area schools. This year, Jenny Gross from East River and I had the chance to visit six area schools with this program. The schools we visited were St. Mary's and BOLD in Bird Island, RCW in Renville, Redwood Valley in Redwood Falls, Cedar Mountain in Franklin and GFW in Fairfax.

The program teaches fourth-grade students about electricity, generating electricity and being safe around electricity. While at RCW, we also visited the second-grade students where we discussed safety around overhead and underground power lines.

Most students learn best with hands-on activities. One of the demonstrations the fourth-grade students enjoyed was the Van de Graaff generator. This hair-raising demonstration clearly showed the movement of electrons by causing the students' hair to stand on end while standing on a plastic stool. It is always fun to hear the laughs as they watch their classmate's hair stand up. The discussion turns to what materials are insulators of electricity and what materials are conductors of electricity. To demonstrate how electricity can jump, another student is invited to the front to try to touch the "energized" student with their fist or elbow. If conditions are right, we will see the shock between the two students. The students are always reminded that this is static electricity and they should never try this experiment at home as electricity is very dangerous and should be respected.

Another device that invokes a lot of excitement with the fourth-graders is the Pedal Power bicycle generator. Students are asked to become power plants as they provide the energy for lights

and small household devices. Students quickly learn that the more devices that are plugged into the bicycle's generator, the harder it is to peddle.

Some students commented that it feels like riding a bike up hill. In one of the activities, the student riding the bicycle is tasked with generating enough power to turn on different types of light bulbs. The student quickly learns that it takes more peddle power to light an incandescent light bulb than it does to power a CFL. LED light bulbs are the easiest to power. Gross encourages students to share this information with their parents and encouraged everyone to conserve energy by using LED light bulbs.

By the end of the presentation, students had developed a new understanding and appreciation for electricity. I thank the schools for allowing us the opportunity to come into their classroom to talk about electricity.

Cedar Mountain student Marley Hewitt generates enough power to light four CFL light bulbs.



St. Mary's student Brecken Erickson demonstrates the movement of electrons. One hand is on the Van De Graaff generator while small pieces of paper fly off of his other hand.



# Technical Schools, Colleges Ready the Workforce

Variety of programs offered for in-demand careers

**Brenda Kleinjan**

editor@sdrea.coop

Each year, more than 10,000 people head to area technical schools and technical colleges to develop the skills employers in the region are seeking.

South Dakota's four technical schools – Lake Area Technical Institute in Watertown, Mitchell Technical Institute in Mitchell, Southeast Technical Institute in Sioux Falls and Western Dakota Technical Institute in Rapid City – have been serving students in the region for the last century, with three of the schools starting in 1968 and the fourth starting in 1969. Neighboring states have similar offerings at schools within easy driving distance of South Dakota.

This fall, Lake Area's campus at Watertown, S.D., was at capacity with 2,228 students. The school notes that students have a 99 percent placement rate after graduation.

Nearly 1,200 students attend Mitchell Tech which notes that 99 percent of its graduates find employment or continue their education. The school also notes that 82 percent of its grads stay in the Rushmore State.

For Southeast Tech's 2017-2018 graduates, the school said that 95 percent are employed or continuing their education, with 95 percent of those employed were employed in a field related to their Southeast Tech program.

Western Dakota Tech is the only technical college serving the western half of the state. It notes that 96 percent of its most recent graduates are working, continuing their education or enlisting in the military.



Among the programs offered at Mitchell Technical Institute in Mitchell, S.D., is South Dakota's only power line program for training future line workers.

## National Leaders

Technical colleges across the region have been recognized for excellence in their field.

The \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, awarded every two years, is the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges. With a singular focus on student success, the Prize highlights institutions with outstanding achievements in four areas: student learning, certificate and degree completion, employment and earnings, and high-levels of access and success for students of color and low-income students.

In November, the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program named the nation's top 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges.

Eleven schools based in Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota made the list:



# Minnesota West Community & Technical College

Technical education needs in southwestern Minnesota have been served by the campuses of Minnesota West Community and Technical College for more than 75 years.

The college has five campuses: Canby, Granite Falls, Jackson, Pipestone and Worthington in addition to centers in Luverne and Marshall.

The college offers a wide array of ever-changing programs and services, including career and transfer preparation, industry and customized training, community education, athletics, performing arts, student organizations, clubs, and personal enrichment. The school provides students opportunities to earn an associate degree, diploma or certificate in more than 60 disciplines, plus convenient campus locations throughout southwest Minnesota as well as online learning opportunities.

The school boasts of its small class sizes, personalized attention and focused, hands-on learning. Its technical programs provide students with the practical skills to begin successful careers in a variety of industries immediately upon graduation. Liberal arts programs at Minnesota West are a great starting point for careers or further study in numerous fields. Credits earned in our associate of arts and associate of science programs are designed for seamless transfer to other Minnesota State institutions.



Lake Area Tech in Watertown was nationally recognized as a top community college.

## ■ MINNESOTA

- Alexandria Technical and Community College
- Minnesota State Community and Technical College
- Northland Community and Technical College
- Ridgewater College
- Saint Paul College

## ■ NEBRASKA

- Central Community College
- Northeast Community College

## ■ NORTH DAKOTA

- Bismarck State College
- North Dakota State College of Science

## ■ SOUTH DAKOTA

- Mitchell Technical Institute
- Southeast Technical Institute

Based on strong and improving student outcomes – including in learning, completion rates, employment rates and earnings, and equity – 15 percent of community colleges nationwide have been invited to apply for the Aspen Prize. Data show that over the last two years, student retention, graduation rates, and degree completion have improved at the top tier of 150 Aspen Prize-eligible colleges.

The 150 community colleges named in November 2019 as eligible to compete for the 2021 Prize were selected from a pool of nearly 1,000 public two-year colleges nationwide using publicly available data on student outcomes. Located in 39 states in urban, rural, and suburban areas,

serving as few as 500 students and as many as 75,000 students, these colleges represent the diversity and depth of the community college sector.

The top 10 finalists for the 2021 Aspen Prize will be named in May 2020. The Aspen Institute will then conduct site visits to each of the finalists and collect additional quantitative data, including employment and earnings data. A distinguished jury will make award decisions in

**Lake Area Technical School in Watertown, S.D., was the 2017 Aspen Prize winner, the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance among America's community colleges.**

spring 2021.

Lake Area Technical School in Watertown, South Dakota, was the 2017 Aspen Prize winner. In the 2017-2018 school year, Minnesota West was one of 150 top community colleges nationwide competing for the Aspen Prize while MTI was a 2019 Top 10 finalist.

# CAPITAL CREDITS

## Renville-Sibley Board of Directors Approve Capital Credit Retirement

### Lenae Wordes

lwordes@renville-sibley.coop

At the October board meeting, the board of directors of Renville-Sibley Cooperative approved the disbursement of just under \$370,000 in capital credits to current and past members. This year, members from 2000 and 2018 will receive a capital credit retirement. The credit will be applied on the December statement. Checks will still be issued to inactive members who have a capital credit balance in the years being retired.

This retirement reflects 100 percent of unretired 2000 capital from Basin Electric and 10.3 percent of 2018 Renville-Sibley capital. Below are some common capital credit questions. If you have any further questions regarding capital credits, please contact the office.

### Common Capital Credits Questions:

#### What are capital credits?

An electric cooperative operates on an at-cost basis by annually “allocating” to each member, based upon the member’s purchase of electricity, operating revenue remaining at the end of the year. Later, as financial condition permits, these allocated amounts – capital credits – are retired. Capital credits represent the most significant source of equity for Renville-Sibley. Since a cooperative’s members are also the people the co-op serves, capital credits reflect each member’s ownership in, and contribution of capital to, the cooperative. This differs from dividends investor-owned utilities pay shareholders, who may or may not be customers of the utility.

#### Where does the money come from?

Member-owned, not-for-profit electric co-ops set rates to generate enough money to pay operating costs, make payments on any loans and provide an emergency reserve. At the end of each year, we subtract operating expenses from the operating revenue collected during the year. The balance is called an operating “margin.”

#### How are margins allocated?

Margins are allocated to members as capital credits based on their

purchases from the cooperative – how much power the member used. Member purchases may also be called patronage.

#### Do investor-owned or municipal utilities retire capital credits?

No. Within the electric industry, capital credits only exist at not-for-profit electric cooperatives owned by their members.

#### Are capital credits retired every year?

Each year, the board of directors makes a decision on whether to retire capital credits based on the financial health of the cooperative. During some years, the co-op may experience high growth in the number of new accounts or severe storms may result in the need to spend additional funds to repair lines. These and other events might increase costs and decrease member equity, causing the board not to retire capital credits. For this reason, Renville-Sibley’s ability to retire capital credits reflects the cooperative’s strength and financial stability.

#### Do I lose my capital credits in the years the co-op decides not to make retirements?

No. All capital credits allocated for every year members have been served are maintained until such time as the board retires them. Prior to this year, Renville-Sibley has retired all capital credits through 1996.

#### What years will be retired this December?

Renville-Sibley will be retiring 100 percent of unretired 2000 Basin Electric patronage and 10.3 percent of the 2018 Renville-Sibley capital credits.

#### How much will be retired in total in 2019?

Just under \$370,000.

#### I did not get electric service from Renville-Sibley in 2000, will I get any retirement?

Maybe. Although you will not receive a retirement from 2000, you will receive a retirement if you purchased electric service in 2018. This credit was applied to your December 2019 electric bill.



## How much has Renville-Sibley paid in total capital credits retirements since it began in 1938?

Renville-Sibley will have paid just more than \$12.6 million in capital credits retirements to current and former members by the end of this year.

## How often do members receive capital credit retirements?

The board of directors makes a decision each year by November whether or not to retire capital credits. When the cooperative is strong enough financially and member equity levels high enough, the board directs staff to retire some portion of past years' capital credits.

## How will the retirement work?

Active members will receive a credit on their December electric statement. Inactive members will be mailed a check provided the amount is more than \$5. Due to the expense involved in printing checks, the minimum retirement check that will be written will be \$5.

## What if I have moved?

If you move or no longer have electric service with Renville-Sibley, it is important that you inform the cooperative of your current address, so that future retirements can be properly mailed to you. If you purchased electricity during the years being retired, then you will receive a capital credit retirement, even if you move out of our service area. If we have your current address, we will send your retirement check by mail.

## How many people will get retirements?

Roughly 1,500 currently active members will have a credit applied to their account and about 500 inactive members will receive a check.

## Can I donate my retirement back to the cooperative?

Yes. If you would like to donate your retirement back to the cooperative, please call our office at 800-826-2593 or email our communications manager, Lenae Wordes, at [lwordes@renville-sibley.coop](mailto:lwordes@renville-sibley.coop) for instructions. All donated capital credit retirements will be designated to our scholarship fund and will be awarded at the following annual meeting to students in our local communities.

# 'Twas The Week Before Christmas...

'Twas the week before Christmas, when all through the halls,  
Not one co-op employee was resting, they were answering your calls.  
The electric system was working, providing power for Christmas light,  
In hopes that St. Nicholas would find his way on a dark, freezing night.

The children were nestled all snug in their beds,  
While visions of new electronics danced in their heads.  
With mom changing laundry and the TV remote in dads lap,  
The cell phones were charging, giving texting a long needed nap.

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,  
Dad sprang from the couch to see what was the matter.  
Away to the security cameras he flew like a flash,  
Took a look, opened the doors and realized he forgot to take out the trash.

Mom was out blowing the new fallen snow,  
Not realizing there were extension cords lying below.  
When suddenly all the lights in the house began to disappear,  
There was an open fuse or worse, dad began to fear.

He went to the basement to fix the fuse quick,  
But nothing happened, not even the water heater went click.  
He recognized a problem when down the kids came,  
And began complaining about no power for their video game.

Dad unplugged his iPhone to make that important call,  
But unfortunately, it was dead, despite being plugged into the wall.  
A predicament, certainly, he thought to himself "wow",  
He was missing the power he always expected now.

With the rev of an engine, he heard with great cheer,  
He looked out the window and saw Renville-Sibley Co-op was here.  
Out stepped the linemen all dressed in safety protection,  
They told dad it wasn't just his house, it was the entire section.

They worked fast and worked safe to bring back the light,  
They spliced and they fixed with all of their might.  
Then in a twinkling, the lights came back on,  
And before we all knew it, the linemen had gone.

Thank goodness for dedication, customer service and care,  
Mom again would be able to blow dry her hair.  
As the Renville-Sibley truck disappeared out of sight,  
We heard them exclaim, Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night!

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Let the sunshine in! For additional warmth, open drapes over windows that receive sunlight during the day. Close them at night, which can reduce heat loss from a warm room up to 10 percent.

Source [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



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**October 19-January 5**

Pheasant Hunting Season, Statewide, Pierre, SD, 605-223-7660

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**November 22-January 5**

Winter Wonderland, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-275-6060

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**November 26-December 26**

Christmas at the Capitol, Pierre, SD, 605-773-3178

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**December 15-March 31**

South Dakota snowmobile trails season, Lead, SD, 605-584-3896

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**December 19-21**

Strawbale Winery Twilight Flights, Renner, SD, 605-543-5071

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**December 21-24, 27-28**

1880 Train Holiday Express, Hill City, SD, 605-574-2222

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**December 31**

Make-A-Wish New Year's Eve Benefit and Dance, Ramkota Hotel & Convention Center, Doors Open at 7 p.m., Aberdeen, SD, 605-370-4588

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**January 10**

Taste of Sturgis, Sturgis City Auditorium, Sturgis, SD, 605-347-3233

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**January 12**

Yoga on the Ice, Main Street Square, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

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**January 14-15**

Paw Patrol Live! Race to the Rescue, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

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**January 16-17**

Media One Funski, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-339-0000

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**January 24-25: Pro Snocross Races, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876**

Photo courtesy: travelsouthdakota.com

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**January 17**

Justin Moore & Tracy Lawrence, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

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**January 18**

Lakota Games on Ice, Prehistoric Indian Village, Mitchell SD, 605-996-5473

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**January 18**

Heroes Skate Day, Main Street Square, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

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**January 31-February 2**

12th Annual Winterfest of Wheels, Convention Center, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-231-3100

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**January 31-February 2**

Winterfest, Lead, SD, 605-584-1100

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**January 31-February 9**

Annual Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo, Rapid City, SD, 605-355-3861

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**February 1**

Lake Hendricks Fishing Derby, Hendricks, MN, 507-828-2113

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**February 1**

Living History Fair, Brookings Renegades, Lake Area Technical Institute, Watertown, SD, 605-693-4589, dhuebner@itctel.com

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**February 10-16**

Frost Fest, Brookings, SD, 605-692-6125

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**February 14**

Snow Ball, Brookings, SD, 605-692-6700

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**February 21**

KORN and Breaking Benjamin, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

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**February 21-22**

Mardi Gras Weekend, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

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**February 26**

The Harlem Globetrotters, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

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**February 27-March 1**

SD State Dart Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

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**March 3**

RCCA presents Young Irelanders, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4111

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**March 14**

28 Below Fatbike Race, Ride and Tour, Lead, SD, 605-641-4963

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**March 20-21, 27-28**

Annual Schmeckfest, Freeman, SD, 605-925-4237

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**March 28**

Annual Ag Day at the Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

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.