



# Renville-Sibley

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

April 2020 Vol. 20 No. 12

# Cooperative Connections



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# Electric Cooperatives to Purchase Power from S.D.'s Largest Solar Project



**DeeAnne Newville, CEO**

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Toll Free 800-826-2593

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association is adding solar power to its generation mix thanks to a 128 megawatt (MW) solar energy project that will be constructed near New Underwood, S.D., and is projected to be operational by 2022.

On Feb. 18, Geronimo Energy, a National Grid company, and Basin Electric Power Cooperative announced the execution of a Power Purchase Agreement for the Wild Springs Solar Project. Renville-Sibley is a member of Basin Electric, a wholesale generation cooperative that provides a large portion of its power supply. Once operational, Wild Springs will be the largest solar project in South Dakota. It will be located about 20 miles east of Rapid City in the service area of West River Electric Association, Inc., which is a distribution electric cooperative member of Basin Electric.

"We're excited that West River's service area will be home to the Wild Springs Solar Project," said West River Electric Association CEO/General Manager Dick Johnson. "This solar energy project will benefit our cooperative family, as well as our local communities. As not-for-profit co-ops that are owned by our members, everything we do goes back to the people we serve."

In total, Basin Electric is a not-for-profit wholesale power provider to 141 member cooperative systems in nine states. In South Dakota, Basin Electric transmits its power supply to two generation and transmission (G&T) cooperatives, Rushmore Electric Power Cooperative and East River Electric Power Cooperative. Those two G&T cooperatives then transmit the power supply to their respective distribution cooperatives, with Rushmore Electric being the G&T provider to West River Electric. The state's 28 distribution co-ops power the homes, farms and businesses within their service areas.

"For the first time in its history, Basin Electric will buy solar generation on a large scale to serve our members. The board's decision to add solar generation to our resource portfolio is to continue with our all-of-the-above strategy, as well as solar generation becoming a more economic energy source. We are excited about adding solar to our already diverse generation mix," said Paul Sukut, CEO and General Manager of Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

Renville-Sibley is a member of East River Electric, the G&T that serves the eastern half of South Dakota and parts of western Minnesota. In 2019, nearly 38 percent of East River's power supply mix came from wind and hydropower generation. That percent is projected to increase as new renewable sources, including the Wild Springs project, are added to the mix. Renville-Sibley also offers a Renewable Energy Credit (REC) program through which its member-owners can purchase RECs to offset their current energy usage with 100 percent renewable energy and showcase their support for current and future renewable projects.

"Our cooperative network is always looking to ensure we have a mix of power resources to meet the needs of our membership and renewable energy is an important part of that strategy," said East River Electric General Manager Tom Boyko. "This project with Geronimo Energy is an important strategic step as we look to the future in continuing our strong history of providing safe, affordable and reliable power."

The Wild Springs project has been supported by local and state community members and will bring significant economic benefits to the local area. Current estimations for the project's economic benefits total over \$17 million throughout the first 20 years of operation, including positive impacts in new tax revenue, construction jobs, new full-time jobs, and charitable funds through the project's Education Fund. The Wild Springs Education Fund alone will offer approximately \$500,000 in donations to the local school districts connected to the project above and beyond all tax revenue and local spending benefits.

"Historically, there has been a misconception that solar in the northern regions of the United States wasn't feasible," stated David Reamer, President for Geronimo Energy. "Both Geronimo and Basin Electric recognized that the addition of solar to its overall generation fleet not only offers customers a clean, economic option for their electricity, but it also diversifies a utility's portfolio."

Geronimo's South Dakota operating project portfolio includes the recently completed Crocker Wind Farm, a 200 MW wind project located in Clark County, South Dakota. Geronimo also successfully developed the operational Pierre Solar Project, a joint effort with the City of Pierre and Missouri River Energy Services, located on City property in Hughes County, South Dakota.

## Editor's Note:

Portions of this article came from a press release announcing the project.

# 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  
Lenae Wordes – Communications Manager

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Web site: [www.renville-sibley.coop](http://www.renville-sibley.coop)

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# Renville-Sibley Co-op to Hold Annual Meeting

The 82nd annual meeting of Renville-Sibley Co-op Power Association will be held on Thursday, March 26, 2020, at the Island Ballroom in Bird Island. The meeting will begin at 6 p.m. with the dinner immediately following the meeting. The meeting is being called in accordance with the bylaws of the association to transact the following business:

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

The annual meeting report was mailed to all members the second week of March. Members will receive their voting ballots for director election including candidate information, at that time. If you cannot attend and you wish to mail your ballot, you may do so. However, if mailed, it must be received through the mail by March 26, 2020.

Drawings for the early bird prizes will begin at 5:45 p.m. Drawings will also be held at the close of the annual meeting. Children in attendance will be eligible for prize drawings. A \$10 energy credit attendance prize will be given to members (one credit per member) who attend the annual meeting. All members are encouraged to attend the 82nd annual meeting of Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association.

Alan Neyers, Secretary

### NOTICE:

Candidates for the director positions are listed on Page 7 and candidate information for each district was included with the ballot mailing.

### Comparative Report

	Current Jan. 31, 2020	One Year Ago Jan. 31, 2019	10 Years Ago Jan. 31, 2010
Average Number of Consumers	1,882	1,882	1,928
kWhs purchased	19,979,553	20,580,455	20,009,870
Cost of purchased power	\$1,221,626.47	\$1,162,937.80	\$853,375.97

## Scholar of the Month

Congratulations to Katelyn Hultgren from MACCRAY High School for being selected as the February Scholar of the Month. She was nominated because she is a great student both artistically and academically. Katelyn is a very talented artist, creating amazing works of art and winning several art awards. In addition, Katelyn is at the top of her class academically and is a three-sport athlete. She is always determined to do her best in everything she pursues. Renville-Sibley Co-op Power salutes Kaitlyn as the February Touchstone Energy® Scholar of the month.



Katelyn Hultgren

More information about 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.



# Springtime Electrical Safety Tips

Now that the weather is warmer and people are spending more time outside, it's important to make sure certain electrical components are functioning properly and you are practicing good habits around electrical items both inside and outside of the home.

Focusing on electrical safety awareness can help ensure you are not injured due to an electrical malfunction.

According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI), thousands of people in the United States are critically injured or electrocuted as a result of electrical fires and accidents in their own homes.

Here are some simple safety rules to remember:

- Ladders of every material should not come in contact with a power line, as it may result in a serious injury or death. Keeping a 10 feet distance from an overhead power line is a good rule of measure.
- If your power tools are not being used, make sure to unplug everything. If not, it's possible for the tools to overheat and cause a fire.
- Check for damaged cords on power tools. It is important to check if the cord is frayed or the plug is broken. This makes the tool dangerous to operate.
- Avoid wet areas while using any electrical item. Be aware of your surroundings, being sure to check for a running hose or sprinkler. Wet grass is particularly an issue.
- Teach kids to never fly a kite or climb a tree near a power line. If a kite gets tangled in overhead power lines, don't try to remove it yourself. Kite string can conduct an electrical current, which can cause serious injuries or death.
- Call 811 before you dig so underground utility lines can be properly marked. This free service is required by state law and should be done at least two business days before the digging begins.

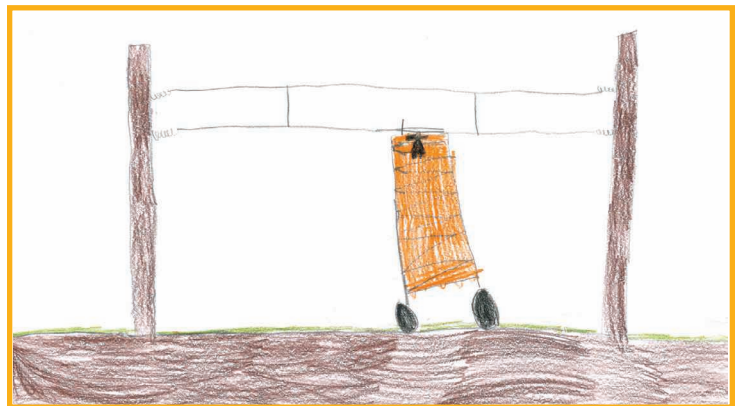
All electrical lines and equipment should be treated seriously and with caution.

Use these simple and easy to follow tips to stay safe this summer.

Source: [www.mrelectric.com](http://www.mrelectric.com)



## KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



**"Do not cut power lines in half."**

**Annette Tschetter, 6 years old**

Annette is the daughter of Ryan and Elaine Tschetter, Revillo, S.D. They are members of Whetstone Valley Electric Cooperative, Milbank, S.D.

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

# Appetizers and Beverages

## Pink Rhubarb Punch

8 cups chopped rhubarb	2 cups boiling water
8 cups water	2 cups pineapple juice
2 cups sugar	1/4 cup lemon juice
3 T. strawberry gelatin	Lemon-lime soda

In large saucepan, bring rhubarb and water to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer for 10 minutes. Drain, reserving liquid. In a large bowl, combine sugar, gelatin and boiling water until dissolved. Add pineapple and lemon juices. Stir in rhubarb liquid; chill. Just before serving, add soda or ginger ale as desired.

**Joyce Romkema, Springfield, S.D.**

## Jalapeño/Bacon Poppers

10 jalapeños	1-1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
1/2 tsp. garlic powder	
1/2 tsp. salt	1/2 lb. bacon, cooked and crumbled
1/4 tsp. pepper	1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened
1/4 cup sliced green onions	

Slice each jalapeño in half lengthwise and use spoon to remove seeds and veins. Combine garlic powder, salt, pepper, green onions, Cheddar cheese, bacon and cream cheese. Spoon the mixture evenly in jalapeños and place on baking sheet. Bake at 400°F. for 20 minutes or until jalapeños are tender. Very flavorful but not hot to taste.

**Tina Haug, Pierre, S.D.**

## Spring Radish-Onion Spread

1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened	1/4 tsp. paprika
1/4 cup butter, softened	1 cup shredded radishes
1/2 tsp. celery salt	1/4 cup finely chopped green onions
1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce	Assorted crackers, chips or fresh veggies

Combine first 5 ingredients. Fold in radishes and onions. Cover and chill before serving.

**Elaine Rowett, Sturgis, S.D.**

## Jalapeño Cheddar Biscuits

2 cups flour	1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
1 T. baking powder	2 green onions, thinly sliced
1 tsp. baking soda	<b>Honey Butter:</b>
2 tsp. McCormick Gourmet™ Jalapeño Pepper, Ground	1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened
1 cup buttermilk	3 T. honey
1/2 cup (1 stick) cold butter, cut into chunks	

For the biscuits, mix flour, baking powder, baking soda and jalapeño pepper in large bowl. Cut in butter with pastry blender or 2 knives until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add buttermilk; stir to form a soft dough. Stir in cheese and green onions. Drop dough by rounded 1/4 cupfuls about 2 inches apart onto parchment paper-lined baking sheet, forming 12 biscuits. Bake at 375°F. for 18 to 20 minutes or until golden brown. Cool on wire rack. Meanwhile, for the honey butter, mix butter and honey in small bowl until smooth. Serve with biscuits. Makes 12 servings.

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 270, Total Fat 18g, Fiber 1g, Cholesterol 51mg, Sodium 414mg, Carbohydrates 22g, Protein 5g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Mocha Freeze

2 cups vanilla ice cream, softened	1 T. chocolate syrup
1/4 cup cold strong coffee	1/2 cup crushed ice

In blender, combine all ingredients. Cover; blend until of desired consistency. Pour into glasses and serve immediately. Makes 4 servings.

**Becki Hauser, Tripp, S.D.**

Please send your favorite casserole, dairy or dessert 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, phone number and co-op name.





Line Superintendent Gene Alex share information from the Operation Department with Renville-Sibley members in Danube.

# MEMBER INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS HELD

## Lenae Wordes

lwordes@renville-sibley.coop

Each February, CEO DeeAnne Newville, Line Superintendent Gene Alex and I take time to travel to four locations throughout our service territory to share information about the cooperative with our members. These meetings were held in Danube, Bird Island, Fairfax and Sacred Heart at varying times with the hope that at least one of these meeting days and times would work for our members to attend.

Topics shared at the meetings this year included:

- Operation Round Up
- Renewable Energy Credit (REC)
- review of 2019 projects
- plans for the 2020 construction season
- review of the December storm
- review of the various apps the linemen use on their iPads
- financial update
- information on Renville-Sibley's facility



District 3 Director Gary Peterson welcomes members to the Member Informational Meeting held in Sacred Heart.

- Minnesota legislative update
- federal legislative update

Members who have questions about any of the above topics are encouraged to call or stop in the office for more information.

## Reminder:

Renville-Sibley encourages any member planning on making changes to their service in 2020 to please contact our 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 material are received.



## 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, audiotope, 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](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;

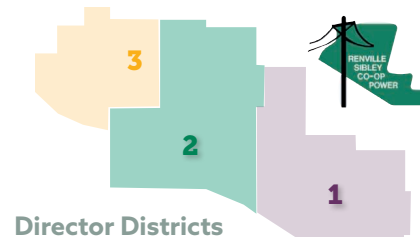
(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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# Renville-Sibley Director Candidate Information

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



### District 1:

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.



**David Firlle**



**Kylie Rieke**

### District 2:

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.



**Matt Haubrich**  
Incumbent



**Jerry Ludwig**

### District 3:

Townships of Roseland and Holland in Kandiyohi County, the township of Rheiderland in Chippewa County and the townships of Troy, Winfield, Emmet, Crooks, Sacred Heart, Hawk Creek, Ericson and Wang in Renville County.



**Roger Manthei**  
Incumbent



# COOPERATIVE CYBERSECURITY

Kaley Lockwood

NRECA

Digital technologies and smart devices are facilitating greater information sharing by allowing people (and devices) to more efficiently communicate with each other. Internet-connected devices not only better enable us to stay in touch with loved ones, they simplify and streamline our lives by communicating with each other.

But greater connectivity comes with a cost.

Addressing the persistent and evolving reality of cyber threats is important for individuals and organizations alike. As people become increasingly interconnected and reliant on digital technologies, there are more opportunities for cyber threats that need to be addressed.

To this end, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) launched RC3, the Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities program, to help electric cooperatives build stronger cybersecurity programs. With funding from the U.S. Department of Energy, RC3 is developing tools to help cooperatives develop a culture of cybersecurity.

Electric cooperatives, large and small, are investing time and

resources to build stronger cyber defenses and increase their resiliency to cyberattacks. As co-ops ramp up capabilities in the beneficial use of digital technologies, they are integrating best practices to safeguard consumer data and grid operations from cyberattacks.

Electric co-ops are responding to the challenge, but are you? Cybercrime affects everyone – organizations, businesses and even individuals. Taking steps to protect your home network and devices from cyberattacks now will save you time and money in the long run.

## Here are a few tips to beef up your personal cybersecurity:

- Make sure you have antivirus software installed on your computer, and remember to keep it updated.
- Don't send e-mails containing personal information, like your date of birth or Social Security Number, because that increases opportunities for mal-actors to steal your identity. Be careful when entering a credit card number into a website – if you do, make sure that it's a secure website. You can tell if it's secure by looking for the "s" at the beginning of the website address. Most begin with "http://." A secure site will begin with "https://."



- Attachments or links in an email can contain malware that can infect your computer. Never open an e-mail attachment or click a link unless you know the person sending it, and you were expecting them to send it to you (hackers can take over an account and make it look like it's from a friend.)
- Monitor children's online activity, and make sure they know how to practice good cyber security. Visit the U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team's (UC-CERT) website for security tips on how to keep children safe online (<https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/ST05-002>).

- Always use a different password for each account. Stick to longer passwords that include a combination of numbers, special characters, with both lowercase and capital letters.

*Kaley Lockwood writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.*

Everyone plays a role in their organization's online safety and security, whether that be at home, school or work. You are the first line of defense.

### Think Before You Click

- Always hover over a link first to be sure it is safe.
- Report suspicious emails or emails from an unknown sender to your spam filter and delete them from your inbox.



### Defend Your Computer

- The best defense against viruses, malware and other online threats is keeping your equipment up to date.
- Work with our IT staff (or provider) to keep your software, including your web browser, and operating systems current.



### Lockdown Your Log-in

- Create long and unique passwords. Use familiar phrases or song lyrics you'll remember.
- When possible, use 2-factor authentication as a second layer of defense.
- Change passwords regularly, and do not share them.



### Protect Sensitive Information

- Use encryption to protect sensitive data.
- Limit the spread of any attack by only accessing files and folders you need.
- Do not put confidential information in emails, or instant and text messages.



### Watch for Red Flags to Identify Potential Phish Attacks

- Phishing attempts seek to steal or compromise data and will often mimic a known sender.

#### Look for red flags:

1. the email is unexpected;
2. there is a sense of urgency conveyed;
3. there is an offer that seems too good to be true; and/or
4. there are typos and misspellings.



### Practice Good Cyber Hygiene On the Go

- Treat all public Wi-Fi networks as a security risk, and don't make financial or other sensitive transactions over public networks.



Want more tips to improve your cyber hygiene?  
**Visit [www.staysafeonline.org](http://www.staysafeonline.org).**

# February Board Meeting Highlights

The February board meeting was held on Monday, Feb. 24, at 9 a.m. All board members were present. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Newville, Gene Alex, Cindy Mertens and Lenae Wordes.

## The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the January board meeting
- Operating and disbursement reports for the month of January
- Capital credits to estates
- Safety report for February
- 2019 Financial Audit Report by Brady-Martz
- Close the membership list for annual meeting
- Director candidates recommended from Nominating Committee
- Facilities Direction

## The board reviewed:

- Total new members for the month of January

■ Reports from staff members as to the activities in their department. Items in the reports include:

- High level Statement of Operations review – January (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
- Member Informational Meetings
- Annual Meeting
- Youth Tour
- Scholarships

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

## Where's the Number?

Last month Brent Dahl did not find his member number in the newsletter. The credit will increase to a value of \$30. Another number has been hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number and call the office by April 3, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck in your search!



## Notice:

**The March board meeting will be held on Monday, March 23, at 8 a.m.**  
**The April board meeting will be held on Monday, April 27 at 8 a.m.**

## 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

**For Sale:** Jensen Kevlar canoe with paddles, lots of black walnut boards.

Claudia Kokesch, Franklin, MN  
 507-430-2852

**Wanted:** 1975 JDX 440 John Deere snowmobile.

Bob Johnson, Sacred Heart, MN  
 320-249-3179

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_

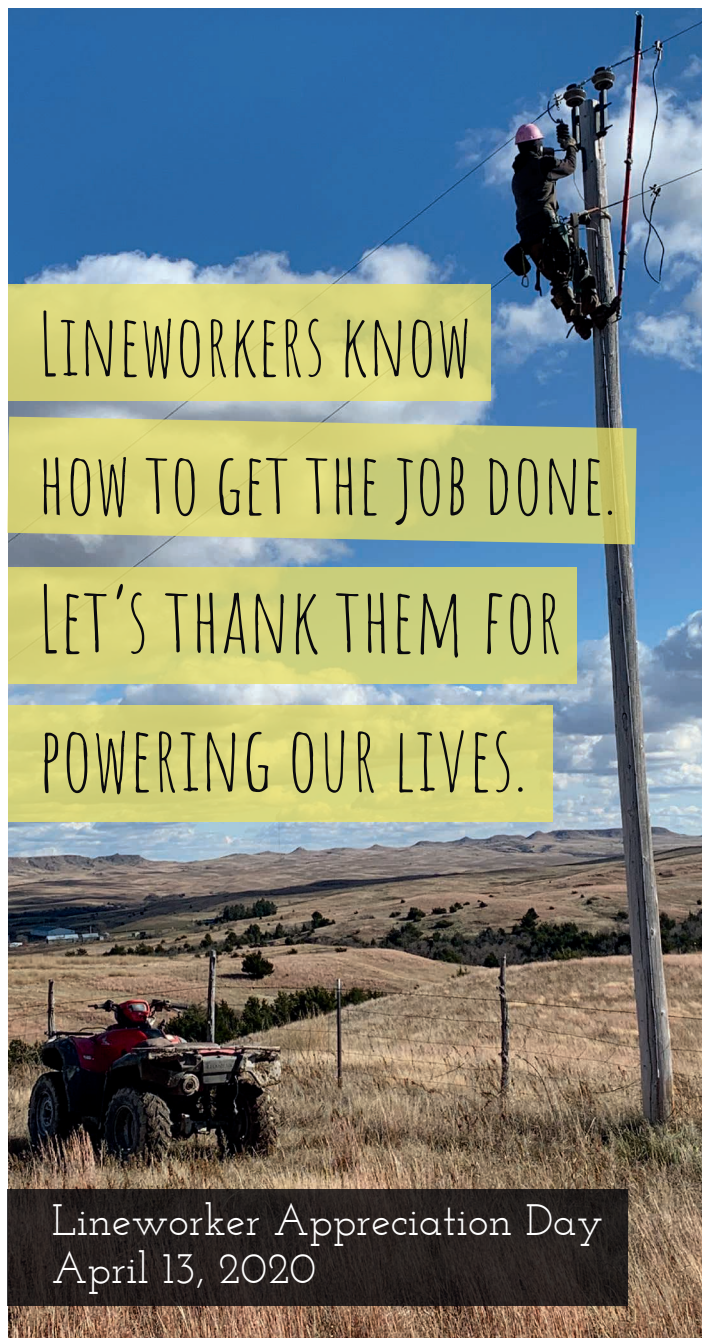
Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Ad to be placed (limit of 15 words per ad)

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Type of ad: ☐ Giveaway ☐ For Sale ☐ For Rent ☐ Wanted





## Unruly Trees and Power Lines: We're On It

We love trees. They beautify our landscape, provide shade and are an essential part of nature.

When you see us out trimming trees, know that we are doing so to keep you safe and prevent service issues.

### Too close for comfort

Although most trees do not present a problem, some of them grow into or crowd power lines or other utility equipment. When greenery becomes too close for comfort, we have to address it because overgrowth can interfere with power distribution and create a fire hazard.

Power lines can give off a spark or arc that may land on a nearby branch and ignite. Additionally, the lights in your house may flicker when tree branches brush power lines during high winds. Stormy weather can also cause limbs to break off and land on lines.



It is our job to ensure trees, branches and limbs are a safe distance from power lines. Clear power lines make it easier and safer for line workers to access lines and fix problems that may occur. When clearing around lines, we make sure proper pruning techniques are used to preserve tree health as much as possible. Pruning is the first line of defense against unruly trees, although sometimes a tree must be removed. This is a last resort for certain scenarios: when a fast-growing tree is located directly under a power line or for trees that are leaning, in decline, or cracked or split. 819700

### In your own yard

When hiring someone to trim trees on your property, know that most tree-care workers are not qualified to work around energized power lines. By law, only OSHA-certified utility line clearance workers are allowed to work on trees or branches within 10 feet of a power line.

Contact Renville-Sibley Co-op Power at 800-826-2593 with questions about trees around power lines. For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

### Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

This spring, consider using a rain barrel to save energy. Rain barrels capture rainwater from a roof that can be used later for watering your lawn, garden or indoor plants.

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



# Are You Flood Ready?

**Brenda Kleinjan**

editor@sdrea.coop

Wisdom has it that April showers bring May flowers, but in much of South Dakota, April showers may bring more water woes to areas that exited 2019 with saturated soils.

In late February, the National Weather Service issued its spring flood outlook for rivers and streams in eastern South Dakota, portions of central South Dakota, and portions of west central Minnesota.

“Due to the very wet conditions across the area late last summer and into last fall, the chances for minor, moderate, or major flooding are above normal across the eastern and central parts of the area, with lesser chances across the west,” the NWS office in Aberdeen wrote in its release.

Of the 68 river gauges located in South Dakota, 37 show more than 50 percent chance of minor, moderate or major flooding in April and May. The areas shown at risk are in central and eastern South Dakota along the James, Big Sioux, Vermillion and White rivers. (View the map at [https://water.weather.gov/ahps/region\\_long\\_range.php?state=sd&percent=50](https://water.weather.gov/ahps/region_long_range.php?state=sd&percent=50))

The flood threat through this spring, both in location and severity, will be determined by future rain or snowfall, and how fast the melting of snowpack occurs. In late February, the 90-day outlook through the end of May contained no strong indication of any abnormally warm/cold or moist/dry trends.

The chances for river flooding are near to above normal, with well above normal chances for the James River and Big Sioux River basins.

There is a wide range of snow depths across the area. Most areas west of the Missouri River have a trace to 2 inches, while east of the James River Valley is a thicker snow pack generally ranging from 8 to 20 inches.

With wet conditions last fall heading into the freeze-up, the soils were fairly well saturated as they froze, which will make them much more impervious to soaking up much of the snow melt as it occurs.



Flooding in southeastern South Dakota last fall, which followed spring flooding, inundated roads and farmland.

## Flooding 411

Flooding is the nation's most common natural disaster. Flooding can happen in every U.S. state and territory. However, all floods are not alike. Some can develop slowly during an extended period of rain, or in a warming trend following a heavy snow. Others, such as flash floods, can occur quickly, even without any visible signs of rain. Be prepared for flooding no matter where you live, but particularly if you are in a low-lying area, near water or downstream from a dam. Even a very small stream or dry creek bed can overflow and create flooding.

### Prepare for Flooding

- Elevate the furnace, water heater, and electric panel in your home if you live in an area that has a high flood risk.
- Consider installing “check valves” to prevent flood water from backing up into the drains of your home.
- If feasible, construct barriers to stop floodwater from entering the building and seal walls in basements with waterproofing compounds.
- Property insurance does not typically cover flood damage. Talk to your insurance provider about your policy and consider if you need additional coverage.
- Get a kit of emergency supplies and prepare a portable kit in case you have to evacuate.
- Familiarize yourself with the terms that are used to identify a thunderstorm hazard, including understanding the difference between a severe thunderstorm watch and a severe thunderstorm warning.
- A flood watch or flash flood warning means there is a possibility of flooding or a flash flood in your area.

### Be Prepared to Evacuate

- If time allows, bring in outside furniture and move your



# 3 SIMPLE STEPS FOR FLASH FLOOD SAFETY

During a flood, water levels and the rate at which the water is flowing can quickly change. Remain aware and monitor local radio and television.



[weather.gov/flood](https://www.weather.gov/flood)

## 1 GET TO HIGHER GROUND

Get out of the areas subject to Flooding

## 2 DO NOT DRIVE INTO WATER

Do NOT drive or walk into flooded areas. It only takes 6" of water to knock you off your feet.

## 3 STAY INFORMED

Monitor local radar, television, weather radio, internet or social media for updates.

valuables to higher places in your home. Unplug electrical appliances, moving them to higher levels, if possible. However, do not touch an electric appliance if you are wet or standing in water.

- If you have a car, fill the gas tank in case you have to evacuate.
- A flood warning means a flood is occurring or will likely occur soon. If you are advised to evacuate do so immediately.
- A flash flood warning means a flash flood is occurring. Seek higher ground immediately; do not wait for instructions.
- Visit NOAA Watch for more weather-related information.

### Plan to Evacuate

- Plan how you will leave and where you will go if you are advised to evacuate.
- If you do not have a car, plan alternate means of evacuating.
- Plan places where your family will meet, both within and outside of your immediate neighborhood.
- Identify several places you could go in an emergency, a friend's home in another town, a motel or public shelter.
- If you have a car, keep a half tank of gas in it at all times in case you need to evacuate.

- Become familiar with alternate routes and other means of transportation out of your area.
- Take your emergency supply kit.
- Lock the door behind you.
- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio for information.
- Take your pets with you, but understand that only service animals may be permitted in public shelters. Plan how you will care for your pets in an emergency.
- Call or email the "out-of-state" contact in your family communications plan.
- Tell them where you are going.
- Leave a note telling others when you left and where you are going.
- Check with neighbors who may need a ride.
- Do not walk through moving water, if possible. Look for areas where the water is not moving. What might seem like a small amount of moving water can easily knock you down.
- Do not drive into flooded areas. If your vehicle becomes surrounded by rising water, get out quickly and move to higher ground, if possible.

### Stay Informed

- Local authorities may not immediately be able to provide information on what is happening and what you should do. However,

you should listen to NOAA Weather Radio, watch TV, listen to the radio or check the Internet often for official news and instructions as they become available.

- If it has been raining hard for several hours or if it has been raining steadily for days there may be the potential for flooding. Use common sense and available information. If water is rising quickly or you see a moving wall of mud or debris, immediately move to higher ground.
- Stay out of flood waters, if possible. The water may be contaminated or electrically charged. However, should you find yourself trapped in your vehicle in rising water get out immediately and seek higher ground.
- Stay away from downed power lines to avoid the risk of electric shock or electrocution.
- Do not return to your home until local authorities say it is safe. Even after flood waters recede, roads may be weakened and could collapse. Buildings may be unstable, and drinking water may be contaminated.
- Use common sense and exercise caution.

For more information on how you can be prepared for a flood, visit <https://www.floodsmart.gov/>.



White loose-fill fiberglass insulation is being blown into an attic. It must be installed properly to attain the desired R-value per inch thickness.

# ENERGY TAX CREDITS

## Tax Credits May Be Available for Your Projects

**Brenda Kleinjan**

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According to ENERGY STAR®'s website, the Non-Business Energy Property Tax Credits have been retroactively extended from Dec. 31, 2017, through Dec. 31, 2020.

The tax credit is 10 percent of the cost up to \$500 or a specific amount between \$50 and \$300, depending on the qualifying upgrade.

The credits expire Dec. 31, 2020, and must be made to an existing home and your principal residence.

The tax credits for residential renewable energy products are also still available through Dec. 31, 2021. This tax credit provides:

- 30 percent for systems placed in service by Dec. 31, 2019;
- 26 percent for systems placed in service after Dec. 31, 2019, and before Jan. 1, 2021;
- 22 percent for systems placed in service after Dec. 31, 2020 and before Jan. 1, 2022.

There are tax credits for certain:

- Geothermal Heat Pumps
- Small wind turbines (residential)
- Solar Energy Systems (including solar water heaters)
- Fuel Cells

The tax credit for builders of energy efficient homes and tax deductions for energy efficient commercial buildings have also been retroactively extended, through Dec. 31, 2020.





# Residential Energy Property Costs:

## Air-Source Heat Pumps

Heat pumps that are ENERGY STAR® certified meet the requirements for this tax credit.

Tax Credit Amount: \$300

### Requirements

- Split Systems:
  - HSPF  $\geq 8.5$
  - EER  $\geq 12.5$
  - SEER  $\geq 15$
- Package systems:
  - HSPF  $\geq 8$
  - EER  $\geq 12$
  - SEER  $\geq 14$

## Central Air Conditioning

Air conditioners recognized as ENERGY STAR® Most Efficient meet the requirements for this tax credit. To verify tax credit eligibility, ask your HVAC contractor to provide the Manufacturer Certification Statement for the equipment you plan to purchase.

Tax Credit Amount: \$300

### Requirements

- Split Systems:
  - SEER  $\geq 16$

- EER  $\geq 13$

### Package systems:

- SEER  $\geq 14$
- EER  $\geq 12$

## Electric Heat Pump Water Heater

Most ENERGY STAR certified water heaters meet the requirements of this tax credit. Water heaters account for 12 percent of the energy consumed in your home.

Tax Credit Amount: \$300

### Requirements

- Energy factor  $\geq 2.2$

## Advanced Main Air Circulating Fan

An Advanced Main Air Circulating Fan is an efficient fan, or blower motor which blows the air that your furnace heats up through the duct system.

Tax Credit Amount: \$50

### Requirements

Must use no more than 2 percent of the furnace's total energy.

# Qualified Energy Efficiency Improvements:

**Please note:** Tax credit DOES NOT INCLUDE INSTALLATION for the following products.

## Insulation

Adding adequate insulation is one of the most cost-effective home improvements that you can do.

Tax Credit Amount: 10 percent of the cost, up to \$500 (not including installation)

### Requirements

- Typical bulk insulation products can qualify, such as batts, rolls, blow-in fibers, rigid boards, expanding spray, and pour-in-place.
- Products that air seal (reduce air

leaks) can also qualify, as long as they come with a Manufacturer's Certification Statement, including:

- Weather stripping
- Spray foam in a can, designed to air seal
- Caulk designed to air seal
- House wrap

**NOTE:** Tax Credit does NOT include installation costs.

## Roofs: Metal and Asphalt

This tax credit is for ENERGY STAR certified metal and asphalt roofs with pigmented coatings or cooling granules designed to reduce heat gain. Certified roof products reflect more of the sun's rays, which can lower roof

surface temperature by up to 100° F, decreasing the amount of heat transferred into your home.

Tax Credit Amount: 10 percent of the cost, up to \$500 (Not including installation.)

### Requirements

- "Metal roofs with appropriate pigmented coatings" and "asphalt roofs with appropriate cooling granules" that also meet ENERGY STAR requirements.

**NOTE:** Tax Credit does NOT include installation costs.

## Windows, Doors and Skylights

Windows, doors and skylights that earn the ENERGY STAR save energy, improve comfort and help protect the environment.

Tax Credit Amount: 10 percent of the cost, up to \$500, but windows are capped at \$200. (Not including installation)

### Requirements

- Must be ENERGY STAR certified.
- You do not have to replace all the windows/doors/skylights in your home to qualify. And it doesn't need to be a replacement either – installing a new window where there wasn't one previously (like in an addition) qualifies.

**NOTE:** Tax Credit does NOT include installation costs.



Photo Credit: Rare Form Properties

## March 19-21

SD State A High School Boys and Girls Basketball Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-224-9261

## March 19-21

SD State AA High School Boys and Girls Basketball Tournament, Sanford Premier Center, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-224-9261

## March 19-21

SD State B High School Boys Basketball Tournament, Barnett Center, Aberdeen, SD, 605-224-9261

## March 20-21

Danube Volunteer Firemen's Annual Smelt Feed, Danube, MN, 320-894-5645

## March 20-21, 27-28

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

## March 21-22

Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Gun Show, Gun Show, Codington County Ag Building, Watertown, SD, 701-361-9215

## March 28

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

## March 28

SD High School All-State Band Concert, Mitchell Fine Arts Center, Mitchell, SD, 605-224-9261

## April 3-4

Forks, Corks and Kegs Food, Wine and Beer Festival, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876 or 800-999-1876

**March 18,  
June 11,  
Aug. 13 and  
Oct. 8**

Kids Mystery  
Dinner Theater,  
Brookings, SD,  
605-692-6700



Photo courtesy: Children's Museum of S.D.

## April 4-5

Annual USD Wacipi, Vermillion, SD

## April 11

Eggstravaganza, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

## April 17-19

First Dakota Classic Archery Tournament, Yankton, SD, 605-260-9282

## April 18

Black Hills Gold & Treasure Show, Rapid City, SD

## April 25

River Rat Marathon, Yankton, SD, 605-660-9483

## May 5-6

Energy! Explore Innovative Rural Communities Conference, Milbank, SD, <https://extension.sdstate.edu>

## May 29-30

South Dakota Regional Senior Games, Sioux Falls, SD, Contact Nick Brady at 605-978-6924

## June 5-7

Regional Qualifying High School Rodeos:

- Rodeo Grounds, Wall, SD, 605-529-5868
- Rodeo Grounds, Highmore, SD, 605-529-5868
- Tipperary Arena, Buffalo, SD, 605-529-5868
- Heartland Arena, Huron, SD, 605-529-5868

## June 12-14

Regional Qualifying High School Rodeos:

- Tripp County Fairgrounds, Winner, SD, 605-529-5868
- Rodeo Grounds, Sturgis, SD, 605-529-5868
- Rodeo Grounds, Dupree, SD, 605-529-5868
- Derby Downs Arena, Watertown, SD, 605-529-5868

## June 16-21

SD State High School Finals Rodeo, Stanley County Fairgrounds, Fort Pierre, SD, 605-529-5868

## June 25-27

31st Annual Red Power Round Up, Fairgrounds, Huron, SD, 605-460-0197

## July 14

Rock Nobles Cattlemen 2020 Summer Beef Tour, Nobles County Fairgrounds, Register Before June 1: \$20, After June 1: \$40, Worthington, MN, 507-967-2380, [www.mnsca.org](http://www.mnsca.org)

## July 24-26

Catfish Derby Days, Franklin, MN, 507-557-2259

**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.**