



Cooperative Connections

The Annual Buffalo Round Up at Custer State Park is one of many activities of interest for visitors to South Dakota

SD Tourism continues steady pace

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Anglers in hot pursuit of cold fish

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The Most Beautiful Christmas Tree

By Lidia Dilley Jacobson

Guest Columnist

Growing up in South Dakota, my parents would spray a tumbleweed white (they get pretty big in SD) and then string lights on it. This was the “tree” the kids would decorate. We also had the more traditional one in the living room with the special and memorable ornaments. Seems sort of crazy now, but as kids we loved that tumbleweed tree. And, when I look around the stores, it’s sort of crazy too. There are so many types of trees one can buy: real trees, artificial trees with lights already on them, purple trees, ceramic trees..hmmm, I didn’t see tumbleweed in the store, though.

Yet, no matter the tree, the lights warm our winter nights and put the twinkle in our hearts. So, let’s make sure your tree decorating is done safely this year. The last thing we want is to create an unsafe condition in our homes.

If you are decorating your tree, or already have it in place, take a few minutes to answer these questions and then take any necessary actions to correct your unsafe condition.

- Are your electrical decorations purchased from reputable retailers and approved by a national recognized testing lab such as UL, Intertek, or CSA?
- Did you inspect your lights, decorations and extension cords for damage?
- Did you make sure to not connect more than three strings of incandescent lights together?
- Are you making it a habit to turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations before leaving home or going to sleep?
- Have you kept your tree and other decorations at least 3 feet away from heating equipment or an open flame?
- Who have you assigned to keep the Christmas tree watered? Note – the elf-on-the-shelf won’t do it.
- Are you overloading your electrical outlets? They can overheat and cause a fire. 973700

Let’s keep the warmth in your home, not from a fire, but from the joy your tree brings, whatever type of tree you have adorned, with its beautiful twinkling lights...and may the traditions continue.



Take a few minutes to answer these questions and then take any necessary actions to correct your unsafe condition.



Renville-Sibley

Cooperative Connections

(USPS 019-074)

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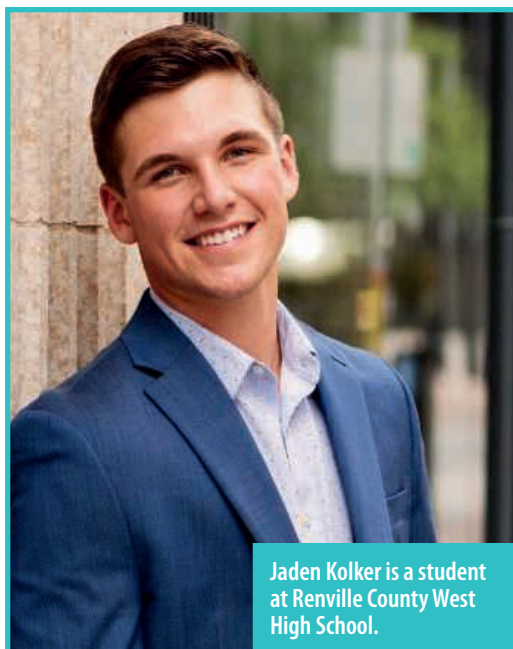
Scholar of the Month

Congratulations to Jaden Kolker from Renville County West High School for being selected as the November Scholar of the Month. He was nominated because he serves as a role model for younger students, demonstrating honesty and integrity in all that he does.

Jaden takes the most difficult classes offered and puts extra time into the extracurricular activities he participates in. He also served as a Sunday

School teacher and is involved in supporting the family business. Renville-Sibley Co-op Power salutes Jaden Kolker as the November Touchstone Energy Scholar of the month.

More information about the Scholar of the Month program can be found on our website www.renville-sibley.coop under the Customer Service tab.



Jaden Kolker is a student at Renville County West High School.

RECIPES NEEDED FOR THE COUNTRY COOKIN' COOKBOOK

Your recipe could be featured in the 37th volume of East River Electric's Country Cookin' cookbook!

Submit recipes via email to ahall@eastriver.coop, fax to 605-256-8057, or contact your local cooperative for more information. Submission deadline is Tuesday, January 12, 2021.

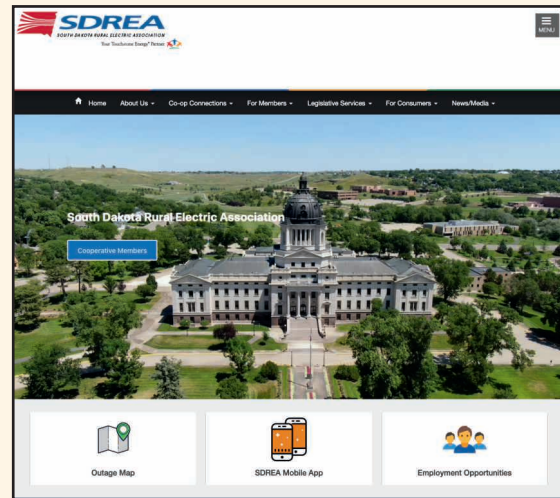
National Cut Your Energy Costs Day

If you resolved to spend less and save more in 2021, cutting back on a few regular expenses is a good place to start. Sunday, Jan. 10, is National Cut Your Energy Costs Day, so we've rounded up a few tips to help you trim your utility bills without making major lifestyle changes.

- **Cut heating and cooling costs.** We spend a great deal of energy heating our homes in the winter and keeping them cool in the summer, but are we really doing our best to minimize the cost of our comfort? A programmable thermostat can allow you to adjust the temperature when you're out of the house or sleeping. There's no reason to blast the heat when everyone is at work, and it's doubtful you need to sleep with the heat on high. So program your schedule into your thermostat, and it'll do all the work for you.
- **Watch out for energy draining appliances.** Big appliances like refrigerators, washers and dryers consume a lot of energy, so the next time you replace one of these appliances, upgrade to an energy-efficient Energy Star-certified model. These are designed to use much less energy than their older counterparts and often end up paying for themselves in savings over time. Keep these appliances clean and well maintained to ensure optimal performance and efficiency.
- **Pull the plug.** As we continue to be more and more "plugged in," it should come as no surprise that a greater proportion of our energy goes toward keeping our devices charged. To keep costs reasonable, plug electronics into a power strip and turn it off when they're not in use. This cuts off "phantom" usage and can save you a bundle. Some newer power strips even include an automatic shut-off feature.
- **Hit the lights.** As always, turn off the lights when leaving a room. You can also swap out light bulbs to increase your home's energy efficiency. Replace incandescent bulbs with LED versions for an easy and affordable way to save on electricity. Not only do LEDs last significantly longer, they also require much less energy.
- **Start with a simple home assessment.** Interested to know how your home's energy use compares to similar homes? Check out Energy Star's Home Energy Yardstick at energystar.gov to learn how much of your home's energy use is related to heating and cooling versus other appliance use, lighting and hot water.

Visit the new SDREA.coop

Want to know more about South Dakota's rural electric cooperative system? Check out our newly redesigned website at www.sdrea.coop. You'll find lots of useful information about our generation, transmission and distribution systems, energy efficiency ideas, legislative issues that impact electric rates, a statewide outage map and much more.



KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER



"Watch Out for Downed Power Lines!"

Gracie Richter, 9 years old

Gracie is a resident of Buffalo, S.D., and is the daughter of Jody Richter. They are members of Grand Electric Cooperative.

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

Warm and Cozy Soups

Tomato-Tortellini Soup

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 2 - 14 ounce cans
reduced-sodium chicken
broth | cheese spread with chive
and onion |
| 1 - 9 ounce package of
refrigerated tortellini | 1 - can tomato soup |
| 1 - 8 ounce tub cream | Fresh chives (optional) |

In a medium sauce pan bring broth to a boil. Add tortellini then reduce heat to simmer uncovered for 5 minutes. In a bowl whisk 1/3 cup of hot broth into the cream cheese spread. Whisk until smooth. Pour contents into sauce pan. Stir in tomato soup and heat through. Serve with fresh chives, if desired.

Family Features/Better Homes and Gardens

Slow Cooker Split Pea Soup

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1 lb. dried green split peas
(rinsed) | 2 cloves garlic, minced |
| 1 cup sliced carrots | 1 bay leaf |
| 2 stalks celery, diced, plus
leaves | 1/4 cup chopped parsley |
| 2 cups chopped onion | 6 cups chicken broth |
| | salt and pepper, to taste |

Layer ingredients in slow cooker in order given, adding broth last. DO NOT stir ingredients. Cover and cook on high for 4-5 hours or low for 8-10 hours until peas are very soft.

Gail Lyngstad, Pierre, SD

Baked Potato Soup

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2/3 cup butter | 6 slices of bacon, cooked
and crumbled |
| 2/3 cup flour | 1-1/2 cups shredded sharp
cheddar cheese |
| 7 cups milk | 1 cup sour cream |
| 4 to 6 baked potatoes,
peeled and cooled | 3/4 teaspoon salt |
| 4 green onions chopped | 1/2 teaspoon pepper |

Melt butter, add flour and stir until smooth. Add milk and stir. Add potatoes and onion. Cook until mixture comes to a boil. Turn to low heat immediately and add bacon, cheese, sour cream, salt and pepper. Stir well. Makes 1 crockpot full.

Terri Halstead, Sioux Falls, SD

Clam Chowder

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 4 slices thick bacon cut and
fried | 4 cans 6.5 oz. minced clams
(save juice) |
| 1 onion | 1 15-oz. can chicken broth |
| 1 cup celery | 2 potatoes |
| 1/3 cup flour | 2 cups cream |
| 1 tsp. pepper | 1 bay leaf |

Cut and fry bacon. Add diced onion and celery and cook about five minutes. Stir in 1/3 cup flour using the drained clam juice until slightly thick. Add 1 teaspoon pepper, one can broth, 4 cans clams, 2 diced potatoes and one bay leaf. Cook until potatoes are tender, about 10 minutes. Add cream. Enjoy!

Sharon Waltner, Freeman, SD

My Mother's Tomato Soup

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 2 cups tomato juice or
pureed canned tomatoes | 1 qt. milk |
| 1/2 tsp. soda | salt to taste |
| | 1 tbsp. butter |

Combine tomatoes or juice with soda in a saucepan. Let froth up. Add milk, salt and butter. Heat and serve.

Doris Ekberg, Hamill, SD

Please send your favorite recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in December 2021. 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 83rd Annual meeting of the membership. Three (3) directors will be elected during that time, each for a 3-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 Kylie Rieke. Alan Neyer's term will expire in 2021.

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. Helen Ruebel's term will expire in 2021.

The Third District, consisting of the townships of Roseland and Holland in Kandiyohi County; Rheidlerland in Chippewa County 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. Gary Peterson's term will expire in 2021.

As stated in the Renville-Sibley by-laws, 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 5 years following the end of the tenure as a Director.

As a Director, the member agrees to:

1. 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.

2. Attend regular and special Board meetings of the Cooperative.

3. Attend, when appointed, committee meetings of the Cooperative.

If anyone should decide to seek candidacy for the board of directors, there are many rewards to be enjoyed when elected. A director has the opportunity to demonstrate their leadership quality and increase their knowledge within the cooperative business environment and the electric industry. As a director, this person could play a significant role in the future development of 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 9:00 a.m. in December, January and February and beginning at 8:00 a.m. the rest of the year. Board meeting will be held in person or via Zoom. The estimated time needed to be committed annually is approximately 30 days which includes monthly meetings and committee assignments. Directors are compensated per diem for their time as well as all personal expenses.

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

Renville-Sibley Electric Cooperative seeks Nominating Committee Members

Renville-Sibley is looking for members who would like to serve on the cooperative's nominating committees. Nominating committees (one for each director district) will be meeting in March and will be looking for candidates to run for the board of directors.

Candidates chosen by the nominating committee will be put on the ballot. A member may also appear on the ballot by petition of 10 or more members residing in such district. The candidates for each district will be voted for at the annual meeting.

If you would like to be on one of the Nominating Committees, if you would like to be considered as a candidate or if you know of someone that would like to be considered as a candidate, please let us know by calling Lenae at 800-826-2593.

Hybrid and Electric and Plug-In, Oh My! Unpacking the Different Types of Electric Cars

Electric cars offer many benefits to both their owners and the environment. Driving an electric car emits 54 percent fewer carbon dioxide emissions per mile than the average new gasoline car. Moreover, the cost of "fueling" an electric vehicle averages \$1.20 per gallon, much less than the average cost of a gallon of regular gasoline (\$2.21 in September 2020; see "egallon" calculator at energy.gov).

With more than 1.5 million electric cars operating in the U.S., electric car sales are forecasted to surpass 3.5 million per year by 2030. But not all electric cars operate the same way. Four main types of electric cars exist on the roads today.

- Hybrid Electric Vehicles (HEVs) have been on the market the longest. HEVs include a small battery pack that is not charged by plugging in, but rather the batteries in hybrids are charged by the internal combustion engine and/or the braking process. HEVs function as battery-assisted vehicles and are not powered solely by batteries at any given time. Many modern HEVs are touted to make around 50 mpg for both city and highway.

- Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) (also known as EVs) do not rely on gasoline to power the vehicle and have zero tailpipe emissions. EV operators simply plug their vehicles into their home electric grid or a public charging station to charge. BEVs also generate electricity from braking, similar to

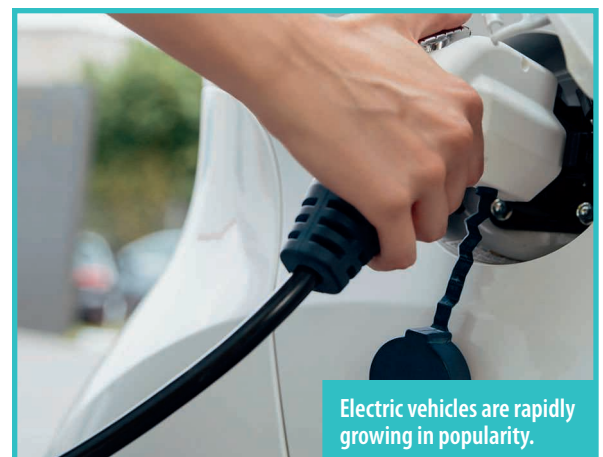
HEVs, and use this as a secondary energy source. Unfortunately, EVs are limited in how far they can drive on a single charge. Most EVs have all-electric ranges of 80-100 miles, while a few have ranges up to 250 miles. On longer road trips, these gas-free vehicles rely on the availability of charging stations to continue the trip, which are sometimes difficult to find. Depending on the model, it may take anywhere from 30 minutes to several hours to recharge a vehicle, much longer than the average stop at a gas station.

- Plug-in Hybrid EVs run on both battery power and gasoline, and have much smaller battery packs than BEVs. The all-battery range in these vehicles is typically between five and 30 miles, and then the internal combustion engine is responsible for anything beyond that. Plug-in hybrids effectively reduce operator emissions for short trips; longer trips are powered by gasoline.

- Range Extender Hybrid EVs (REHs) function the same as plug-in hybrids, but have higher battery ranges due to design differences. Examples include the BMWi3 and the discontinued Chevrolet Volt. Some REHs drive more than 50 miles on a single charge. In

addition to battery power, they also feature a traditional internal combustion engine, with some models making more than 40 miles per gallon once the battery is drained.

EV battery ranges can vary depending on weather conditions; for example, cars have to work harder to run in colder temperatures; also, using the defrost or heat is more likely, decreasing range. Also, at-home charging times depend on how you charge at home (120 volts versus 240 volts).



Electric vehicles are rapidly growing in popularity.

With technology constantly improving, vehicle manufacturers plan to debut electric pick-up trucks in 2021 and many cities are moving toward electric public transportation.

For more information about energy efficiency, as well as electrical safety, go to SafeElectricity.org.

Tourism in South Dakota has remained robust despite the impact of the global pandemic.
Photos courtesy of the SD Tourism Department.

SD TOURISM GOING STRONG

Tired of Being Shut In: Visitors Flock to South Dakota

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Probably the last time a member of the Hustead family was worried about going broke, it was back in the 1930s.

Ted and Dorothy Hustead had just purchased a small drug store in Wall and were having a hard time getting the business to grow in the middle of a severe drought and the Great Depression.

The business that went on to become known as Wall Drug has been named one of the busiest tourist attractions in the northern part of the country. The prospects of the Husteads going broke have been very slim since the store hit its stride.

That is until last March.

Third-generation owner Rick Hustead won't lie: he was downright worried that Wall Drug might bite the dust when COVID-19 prompted lockdowns and travel restrictions.

The entire operation – the stores, the restaurants, the galleries and even the free ice water – came grinding to a stop for 71 days just as the travel season was about to kick into gear.

"I was afraid we might go broke and we might not make it. They're projecting that half of the restaurants out there are going to close down permanently," Hustead said. "We were closed that whole time and had to cut back on our employees because we felt that trying to 'flatten the curve' was the right thing to do."

The business reported losses through the summer, but returned to the black in August due in part to traffic from the Sturgis motorcycle rally. Hustead reported that September and October also showed considerable increases over 2019 numbers.

"People just got tired of being shut in and they got in their cars and on their motorcycles and their RVs and came to South Dakota," he said, noting that even President Trump made his way to Mount Rushmore for a Fourth of July gathering.

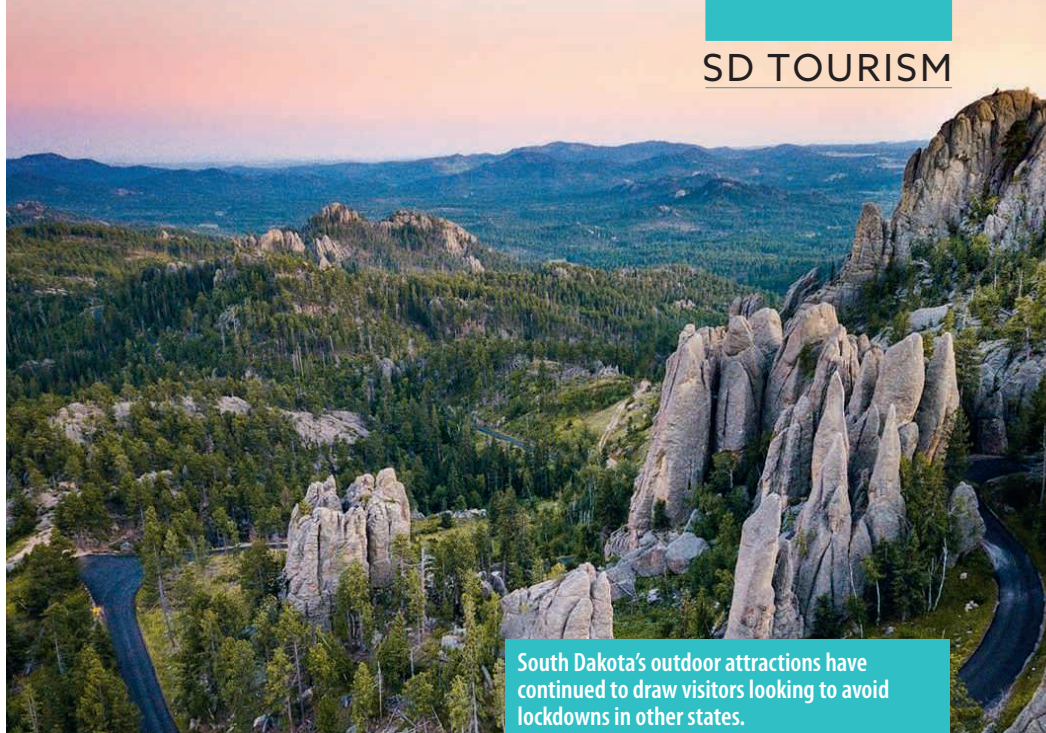


The annual Buffalo Round Up at Custer State Park continues to attract visitors from throughout the country.

The Thing I Love Most about Living in South Dakota is...

What do you love most about living in South Dakota? Share your thoughts with us (200 words or less) and you could win a \$25 gift card!

Send your response to editor@sdrea.coop by Jan. 4, and don't forget to include your contact information.



Hustead said he took public safety measures such as installing Plexiglas barriers, posting hand-sanitizer stations and requiring that employees wear masks. He said no employees have been known to contract the coronavirus. The bottom line also received a boost from some federal relief money.

Once the financial fog lifted, Hustead called his mother Marjorie – who is in a care facility in Rapid City but is “still involved in the business” – and told her he felt Wall Drug was going to make it through the crisis after all.

“I told her, ‘Mom, I think we’re going to make it.’ And that made her happy,” Hustead said.

He was quick to heap praise on the South Dakota Office of Tourism and leader Jim Hagen.

In assessing the state of tourism in South Dakota, officials paint a picture similar to Hustead. While many annual events have been canceled or postponed to a later date, outdoor events and activities such as Sturgis, walleye fishing, pheasant hunting and the many outdoor tourist attractions have led to a healthy industry performance and outlook.

Hagen’s office has also taken the initiative to develop innovative programs to ensure that South Dakota stays top-of-mind when people throughout the region and nation make their travel plans.

The department recently launched an on-line learning program for children and their families to learn more about South Dakota and experience the attractions of the state from the comfort of their homes or in a classroom setting. There are eight virtual pages that allow site visitors to learn more about the icons, wildlife, people and history of the state, each featuring games and activities for the entire family to explore.

“These online lessons provide an opportunity to educate children and adults alike about our state’s Great Faces and Great Places,” said Gov. Kristi Noem. “We hope that they are used as a tool to engage families

and inspire them to explore our great state.”

The department also partnered with Badlands National Park to promote its virtual Junior Ranger program. Once the virtual exploration is complete, kids can become official Badlands National Park Junior Rangers.

Last summer, the department teamed up with tourism officials in Wyoming to develop a program called “Black to Yellow” to entice travelers to explore scenic routes that wind from the Badlands National Park to Wyoming’s iconic Yellowstone National Park.

To help travelers plan their trip, the states put together itineraries that explore their most well-known attractions and lesser-known gems. From taking in roadside stops, like Wall Drug and Wyoming’s Devils Tower, to exploring the scenery of Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area and Badlands National Park, travelers were encouraged to explore the beauty of the states’ wide open spaces, unparalleled wildlife and the freedom of the open road.

State tourism leaders will meet in Pierre on Jan. 20-21 for the 2021 Governor’s Conference on Tourism. There will be limited in-person engagement as well as an online attendance option. The theme for this year’s meeting is, “Onward!” While 2020 could have been worse, leaders are hoping that travel will continue to be a significant economic driver in the state.



Attention Members Impacted by COVID-19?

Renville-Sibley encourages members to contact the office to make arrangements if they are not able to pay their electric bill in full due to the impact of COVID-19. Renville-Sibley employees will work with members to enter into reasonable payment arrangements based on their individual circumstances.



Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips to save energy. Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features that are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use (also known as phantom load).

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) estimates that the average home loses \$200 annually to energy wasted by phantom load.

Source:
www.nrel.gov



Where's the Number?

Last month Jim Hebrink found his member number in the newsletter. Congratulations! The credit will start over with a value of \$15. Another number has been hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number and call the office by the 4th of January, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck in your search!

Outage Report

Affecting 10 members or more:

Date: 10-06-20

Time off: 11:39 am

Time on: 11:54 am

Substation: Cairo

Cause: equipment failure

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

Notice

Notice: Renville-Sibley's office will be closed on Friday, January 1st in observance of New Year's Day.

Did You Know?

Electricity plays a role in the way your heart functions. Muscles in the heart are contracted by electricity in your body. Electrocardiogram machines measure the electricity in a patient's heart, displaying a line that spikes with each heartbeat.

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, P.O. 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

November Board Meeting Highlights

The November board meeting was held on Monday, November 30 at 8 am via Zoom. 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 October 26 board meeting
- Operating and disbursement reports for the month of October
- Capital credits to estates
- Work Plan Amendment
- Safety report for November
- Annual Meeting date of Thursday, June 24
- March board meeting rescheduled to March 29
- MREA Annual Certification of Voting Delegates and Alternates
- Cooperative Network Board of Director election
- 2021 Market rate

The board reviewed:

- Total new members
- Capital credits transferred
- Reports from staff members as to the activities in their department. Items in the reports include:
 - High level Statement of Operations review – YTD through October (unaudited)
 - Organization activities
 - Facilities update
 - East River update
 - Basin Electric update
 - NRECA update
 - MREA update
 - Linecrew work in progress, equipment update and outage update
 - Accounts receivable

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

Notice:

The December board meeting will be held on Monday, December 21st at 9 am. The January board meeting will be held on Monday, January 25 at 9 am.

Comparative Report

	Current YTD through October 31, 2020	One Year Ago YTD through October 31, 2019	10 Years Ago YTD through October 31, 2010
average # of Consumers	1,882	1,882	1,930
kWhs purchased	142,751,625	124,142,922	141,831,782
Cost of purchased power	\$9,030,309.60	\$7,342,254.67	\$5,799,388.65

Mission Statement

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

Happy Holidays to You and Yours

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association wishes you and your loved ones a joyous holiday season with many blessings to come in the new year ahead. It's an honor for us to have the responsibility of providing safe, reliable, affordable power for our community now and throughout the year.

2021 Annual Meeting Scheduled for June 24

At the November board meeting, the directors approved to hold the 2021 annual meeting on Thursday, June 24. The meeting will still be held at the Island Ballroom in Bird Island. The election of directors will also be moved to June. Continue to read future editions of this newsletter for more information.



Ice fishing is a pursuit that's enjoyed each winter by South Dakotans of every stripe.

Guys, Gals and Castles on Ice

South Dakotans Stay in Hot Pursuit of Cold Fish

Billy Gibson

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What happens if you hold an ice fishing tournament and it turns out there's no ice?

You improvise.

That's what organizers of the annual Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament had to do 10 years ago when Mother Nature refused to cooperate and left them scrambling to come up with a Plan B.

At that time, the tournament was just gaining traction as a main winter attraction for Mobridge. No one dreamed that what started as just a handful of anglers vying to win an ice auger has grown into a field that's capped at 525 two-person teams arriving from 16 different states.

Jeff Jackson is owner of the Wrangler Inn in Mobridge and one of the founders of the tournament marking its 20th anniversary this year. He remembers a bit of panic setting in when hundreds of fishermen were scheduled to descend on Mobridge and the ice on the Missouri River wasn't thick enough to ensure the safety of competitors. Fortunately, the organizing committee had scheduled enough attractions and activities around the one-day tournament that there was plenty for the eager visitors to do.

"We got the word out that the competition was canceled, but 420 out of the 450 teams that were registered showed up anyway," Jackson recalls. "They wanted to come and have a good time."

Those non-angling activities included raffles and prize drawings, an expo featuring all the latest fishing gear, gizmos and gadgets, and according to Jackson, lots of libations.

"People keep coming back year after year," Jackson said, noting that the town's population doubles in the second week of each January. "We've had to limit the number of participants so we have an Ebay auction for three spots that can go as high as \$3,000, and we have another lottery drawing for 26 spots where we usually have up to 800 names."

Instead of a simple ice auger as a grand prize, today the tournament gives away roughly \$225,000 in prizes, including Ice



Hundreds were in attendance at the Dakota Anglers Fishing Expo in Sioux Falls. Photo provided by Dakota Angler.



Castles, four-wheelers, a Polaris Ranger, \$5,000 worth of Scheel's gear, \$3,000 in Runnings gear, clam shacks and more.

The tournament is a boon for Mobridge, bringing an economic impact of \$500,000. According to Jesse Konold, chairman of the town's tourism committee, over the past four years proceeds paid for South Dakota's first climate-controlled indoor fish cleaning station, ADA compliant bathrooms, improvements to the town's rodeo grounds and more than \$100,000 in donations to local non-profits. This year's tournament will be held Jan. 7-9 at the Sherr-Howe Center in Mobridge.

Not Everyone is Hooked

Among the state's population of electric cooperative linemen, there are many who look forward to chasing walleye in winter. In Josh Lemburg's case, the term "chasing" walleye would be close to accurate.

Lemburg, operations foreman at Moreau-Grand Electric who lives in Timber Lake, prefers to stay on the move when he fishes on the ice. Eschewing the "ice castle" approach that calls for staking out a spot and staying put for the weekend, Lemburg uses a portable flip-over shack and keeps his auger close at hand.

"Ice castles are fun, but I'm not afraid to move around and dig holes," he said. "If I'm not catching fish in an hour, I'll 'run-and-gun' til I find them."

Even with his "move-and-groove" approach, Lemburg has failed to get his entire family sold on the merits of ice fishing. Even hooking a lunker walleye didn't

convince his son to swear a life-long oath to ice fishing.

Several years ago, Lemburg took his dad and his elementary-age kids, Landon and Kendal, out on the ice. His dad and daughter were in one shack and he and Landon were in the other. After a few hours, just as Landon was getting bored and ready to call it a day, a walleye snatched his bait.

"Landon had his line in the water and I saw a big mark on my Vexilar," Lemburg recalls. "I told him he had a big fish on the line but he just gave me his pole and said he wasn't interested. I kept trying to get him to reel it in, but he kept giving me the pole back. Finally, I got the fish to the surface I looked in the hole and there was nothing but fish. My dad reached down in the water to his armpits and it was a 12-pound walleye."

Brent Reilley is an electrician at Selby-based Cam Wal Electric, which serves the Mobridge area. Over the past 20 years, he has only missed the tournament twice - once when he had to decide between ice fishing and a week in Cancun.

He and his wife, Tandy, have actually both claimed titles at the prestigious Mobridge tournament. One particular year the husband-and-wife duo were on separate teams. Brent was on the first-place team and Tandy and her partner placed second. But Tandy believes she has her



Above, hundreds attend the Mobridge Ice Fishing Tournament each year. Below, "ice castles" bring comfort and convenience to the sport.



husband beat: her second-place finish was clinched by reeling in a 25-inch walleye while she was six months pregnant.

The two have always had pretty good luck with the raffles and random prize drawings as well. Tandy won a side-by-side one year and a family friend has won two four-wheelers.

"We just love being outdoors in the winter when there's nothing else to do," Reilley said. "You can get outside and enjoy the fresh air. It gets cold, but it beats sitting inside and it's something great to do with the family. My son is addicted. He'd love it if all he could do is fish all day."



BEATING SAD

Here's How to Treat and Beat Seasonal Affective Disorder

Billy Gibson

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For years, the mental disorder now known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) was given about as much credibility as Big Foot and the Loch Ness monster.

It was common folk knowledge that certain times of the year brought on what was passed off as the “winter blues” or the “winter doldrums.” But through considerable study and extensive research over the course of time, the psychiatric community eventually determined that SAD is not only a real affliction related to clinical depression, but according to the National Institute of Health it impacts an estimated 10 million Americans each year.

Women are more likely to contract the condition than men, and in most cases symptoms can begin appearing in early adulthood. Those with pre-existing mental conditions such as bipolar disorder, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, anxiety disorder and others are also at significantly greater risk.

And while so much attention has been given to the coronavirus since the spring of 2020, SAD is yet another health risk that continues to afflict the U.S. population and especially those residing in northern regions of the country.

Mental health professionals share a concern that those who are susceptible to SAD will experience an even greater struggle in

2021 and have more difficulty managing their symptoms during the winter months after nearly a year of dealing with the forced shutdowns and isolation caused by COVID-19.

Both employees and members of South Dakota's electric cooperative system are prone to experiencing the impact of SAD as the winter season sets in, according to Mark Patterson, Director of Safety and Loss Control at the South Dakota Rural Electric Association (SDREA) in Pierre.

Patterson and his accredited safety team at SDREA provide a variety of field and workplace training programs for the state's cooperative network, and they advise everyone to be aware of the signs and symptoms of SAD and to seek treatment if needed.

“These long South Dakota winters can be harsh,” Patterson said. “But in order for our cooperative employees to be at their best

and perform at the top of their game, we need to make sure we're mindful of our risk of experiencing not only physical ailments that can limit our capabilities but mental ailments as





Tracy Romey: "The good news is that SAD can be treated."

well. That also goes for all of our cooperative members that we serve. If you're feeling the onset of depression and having difficulty coping, don't hesitate to reach out and find the help you need."

The most commonly reported symptoms associated with SAD include significant fatigue, pervasively sad mood, loss of interest in activities, sleeping more hours than usual, difficulty concentrating and eating more starches and sweets.

Experts also point out that the "seasonal" in SAD doesn't necessarily refer to winter, although symptoms occur most commonly in January and February. Clinical depression can also occur in the spring and summer months, a condition known as summer-pattern SAD.

For winter-pattern SAD, a gradual decrease in photoperiod – or daylight – is the primary trigger and the strongest predictor of daily mood swings in individuals. Researchers have identified a direct relationship with the number of cases that rise and fall depending on available sunlight and change in temperature in a particular year. Sunlight prompts the body to produce hormones, which has a direct impact on a person's mood. For instance, inconsistent levels of the neurotransmitter

Signs and Symptoms of SAD

- Feeling depressed most of the day, nearly every day
- Losing interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Experiencing changes in appetite or weight
- Having problems with sleep
- Feeling sluggish or agitated
- Having low energy
- Feeling hopeless or worthless
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Having frequent thoughts of death or suicide
- Oversleeping (hypersomnia)
- Overeating, particularly with a craving for carbohydrates

serotonin can alter moods while changes in melatonin levels can interrupt sleep cycles.

Mental health providers are bracing for an anticipated increase in cases of SAD this year due to the pandemic and lockdown. Those with underlying mental conditions who are especially sensitive to stress could face severe challenges.

According to Tracy Romey, a board certified psychiatric mental health nurse practitioner in Hot Springs, those susceptible to SAD should not despair; many forms of treatment are available.

"This is the time of year we start seeing more cases of SAD. Anxiety can be a component of SAD, which negatively impacts everyday functioning," she said. "The good news is that it can be treated and usually improves when spring arrives."

Romey added that treatment is often

tailored to the individual and can be directed toward certain prevailing symptoms.

"There is no specific test for SAD, however, the same treatments prescribed for a major seasonal depressive disorder may be effective for seasonal affective disorder, including light therapy, vitamin D replacement therapy and medications. Other options include spending more time outdoors and exercise. I encourage anyone who is negatively affected by seasonal change to see your mental health provider and receive an evaluation."

Those who find themselves in immediate distress can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline toll-free at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or the toll-free TTY number at 1-800-799-4TTY (4889). Also available is the Crisis Text Line (HELLO to 741741) and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline website, <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org>.

Visit Co-op Connections Plus

Take a moment to visit our new online companion to *Cooperative Connections*. Co-op Connections Plus is a YouTube channel that features a more in-depth treatment of stories appearing in this publication as well as other subjects of interest to rural South Dakotans.

Search for "Co-op Connections Plus" and you'll find videos on human trafficking, support programs for veterans, grain bin safety, the Co-ops Vote campaign and more. Be sure to "like" and "subscribe."



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

November 27-December 27

Trees and Trains at the South Dakota Railroad Museum, Weekends, Contact the Museum for Days and Times. Hill City, SD
605-574-9000

December 4-25

Fort Sisseton Drive Thru Christmas Light Display, Fort Sisseton Historic State Park, Lake City, SD
605-448-5474

December 5-January 1

Custer State Park Festival of Trees, Custer, SD
605-255-4515

December 5-January 6

Garden Glow, McCrory Gardens Education & Visitor Center, Evenings From 5-8 p.m., Brookings, SD
605-688-6707

December 16-19

Lakota Nation Invitational, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

December 17-20, 27

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

December 19

Cirque Dream Story, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

January 9

Dakota Ridgetop Toy Show, Codington County Extension Complex, Watertown, SD
712-261-0316



Black Hills Stock Show and Rodeo, Jan. 29-Feb. 6, 2021

January 14-17, 21-24

Elf The Musical, Area Community Theatre, Mitchell, SD
605-996-9137

January 15-17

BH Rapid Winter Classic Indoor Soccer Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
605-394-4115

January 16

Annual Burning Beetle Festival, 5 p.m., Pageant Hill, Custer, SD
605-673-2244

January 18-25

Chinook Days, Spearfish, SD
605-717-9294

January 29-February 6

Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center, Rapid City, SD
605-335-3861

January 29-30

Pro Snocross Races, Days of '76 Rodeo Grounds, Deadwood, SD
605-578-1976

January 29-31

Winterfest, Lead, SD
605-335-3861

February 5-6

Mardi Gras Weekend, Main Street, Deadwood, SD
605-578-1976

February 10-13

Watertown Winter Farm Show, Codington County Extension Complex, Watertown, SD
605-886-5814

February 18-25

Twelfth Annual Black Hills Film Festival, Virtual,
605-574-9454

February 20-27

SD State High School Wrestling Tournament, Rushmore Plaza Civic Center Barnett Arena, Rapid City, SD

March 13-14

Philip Area Annual 2021 Gun Show, American Legion Hall, Philip, SD
605-859-2280

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.