



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



RENVILLE-SIBLEY
MAY 2022 VOL. 23 NO. 1

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

Great Goats

**Goats gaining
in popularity**
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**Irrigators benefit
from load control**
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Bennett and Matea Gordon
of Whitewood are part of a
rising trend in teens choosing
to show goats at youth
exhibits and competitions



The Power Behind Your Power: Lineworker Appreciation Day was recognized April 11



DeeAnne Newville
CEO
320-826-2593 or
800-826-2593

You've likely noticed Renville-Sibley Co-op Power's crews out and about, working on power lines and other electrical equipment in our community. It's no secret that a lineworker's job is tough - but it's a job that's essential and must be done, often in challenging conditions. This month, as we celebrated Lineworker Appreciation Day on April 11, I thought I'd share some interesting facts about electric lineworkers with you.

The work can be heavy, in more ways than one. Did you know the equipment and tools that a lineworker carries while working on a utility pole can weigh up to 50 pounds? That's the same as carrying six gallons of water. Speaking of utility poles, lineworkers are required to work on poles ranging anywhere from 30 to 120 feet tall. Needless to say, if you have a fear of heights, this likely isn't the career path for you.

Lineworkers must be committed to their career - because it's not just a job, it's a lifestyle. The long hours and ever-present danger can truly take a toll. In fact, being a lineworker is listed in the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

Lineworkers often work non-traditional hours and outdoors in difficult conditions. While the job does not require a college degree, it does require technical skills, years of training and hands-on learning. Did you know to become a journeyman lineworker can take more than 7,000 hours of training (or about four years)? That's because working with high-voltage equipment requires specialized skills, experience and an ongoing mental toughness. Shortcuts are not an option, and there is no room for error in this line or work.

Despite the many challenges, Renville-Sibley's lineworkers are committed to powering our local community. During severe weather events that bring major power outages, lineworkers are among the first ones called. They must be ready to leave the comfort

of their home and families unexpectedly, and they don't return until the job is done, often days later. That's why the lineworker's family is also dedicated to service. They understand the importance of the job to the community.

Nationwide, there are approximately 120,000 electric lineworkers. Renville-Sibley has eight lineworkers who are responsible for keeping power flowing 24/7, 365 days a year. To do this, they maintain 1,046 miles of power lines across 32 townships. In addition to the highly visible tasks lineworkers perform, their job today goes far beyond climbing utility poles to repair a wire.

Renville-Sibley has eight lineworkers who are responsible for keeping power flowing 24/7, 365 days a year.

Today's lineworkers are information experts who can pinpoint power outages from miles away. Line crews now use laptops, tablets, drones and other technologies to map outages, survey damage and troubleshoot problems.

Being a lineworker may not seem like a glamorous job, but it is absolutely essential to the life and vitality of our community. Without the exceptional dedication and commitment of these hardworking men and women, we simply would not have the reliable and affordable electricity that we need for everyday life.

So, the next time you see a lineworker, please thank them for the work they do to keep power flowing, regardless of the time of day or weather conditions. Afterall, lineworkers are the power behind your power.

Please join us as we recognize them and follow "#ThankALineworker" on social media to see how others are recognizing lineworkers.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

RENVILLE-SIBLEY CO-OP POWER

(USPS 019-074)

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Web site: www.renville-sibley.coop

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Our Crews Are Working to Serve You

Help us keep them safe

To provide excellent service and keep our crews as safe as possible, please help us with the following:

- At a job site, do not stop to ask crews what they are working on or when power might be restored. Crew members need to give the repairs their full attention to ensure safety. Asking them questions can divert their attention and increase the amount of time it takes for the issue to be resolved.
- When driving by a utility truck (or any roadside vehicle with flashing lights), please move over and give them space. In a work zone, follow all signage, including speed limits. Drivers who travel through a work zone too fast can endanger workers on the ground and up in the bucket.

- If one of our employees is in your yard or on an easement to address service issues, be sure to secure your dogs. Please keep meters and padmount transformers (green boxes) free from obstructions.

Please be patient as we work on an outage or other issues. Safety is our top priority, for you and for our employees.

Learn more:

 **Safe
Electricity.org®**

Notice to Co-Generators

In compliance with Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association's (RSCPA) adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, RSCPA is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers, whom satisfy the conditions as a qualifying facility. RSCPA is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members upon request regarding rates and interconnection requirements. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any dispute over interconnections, sales, and purchases are subject to resolution by the RSCPA Board. Interested members should contact RSCPA, PO Box 68, 103 Oak Street, Danube, MN 56230, or call 800-826-2593.

Budget-friendly efficiency upgrades

There are two ways to measure energy efficiency improvements.

There's the payback period - the amount of time it will take for the improvement to pay for itself. Then there's comfort.

Improvements can often increase the comfort level of a home - not easy to measure but one of the driving forces behind home weatherization efforts. There are several areas of the home that can be improved easily, without breaking your budget.

LIGHTING - There has been a steady decline in the price of LED bulbs for residential consumers. Nowadays, 60-watt-replacement LEDs can be purchased for \$5 or less. LEDs should save 60 percent or more on power costs compared to incandescent bulbs and last for many years. New LED fixtures are also an affordable option. They come with LED bulbs built in so you never need to change the bulbs.

HEATING AND AIR CONDITIONING - The Energy Information Administration estimates that heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems account for 22 percent of a typical home's annual electric bill. While newer systems can be 20-45 percent more efficient than older ones, the upfront cost is often a barrier to adoption.

But there are still ways to save. Simple solutions such as changing air filters at least every three months will increase airflow to rooms, increase the life of the HVAC unit's motor and improve air quality in the home. Sealing and insulating ductwork can be done in a weekend and results in energy savings of up to 20 percent.

To lessen the amount of work that heating and cooling systems need to do, it is important to find and seal air leaks. Look for leaks around exterior doors and windows, electric outlets, and entrance points for TV and phone cables. Also check dryer vents and any place with an opening in the wall. To seal leaks, apply caulk, spray foam or weather-stripping to these areas.

Simple acts such as cooking outdoors on a hot summer day or keeping curtains closed to keep out the summer sun will keep the interior of your home cooler and reduce the amount of time AC units need to operate.

EV REGISTRATIONS SEE SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE



According to the South Dakota Dept. of Revenue, the state experienced a boom in electric vehicle registrations in 2021.

At year-end, there were 1,313 electric vehicles registered in the state. That compares to just 242 from the year before. EV registrations saw a slight jump from 227 in 2015 to 236 in 2019.

Minnehaha County led the state with 406 registered EVs, followed by Pennington County with 228 and Lincoln with 151. Nine counties had no EVs registered.



Stay away from power lines

Naomi Goldade

Naomi Goldade likes to have outdoor fun in the spring and summer but reminds co-op members to stay away from power lines. Naomi is the daughter of Alex and Rachael Goldade of Timber Lake. They are members of Moreau-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.



SUPER CASSEROLES

CHICKEN AND CHEESE CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

2 cups uncooked elbow
macaroni
2 5-oz. cans of chicken chunks
2 cups shredded cheddar
cheese
2 cups milk
2 cans cream of chicken soup
4 oz. sliced mushrooms
1/4 cup chopped onion

METHOD

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
In a large bowl, mix all seven
ingredients together. Pour into a
9x13 baking pan. Bake at 350 for
45 minutes or until bubbly and
golden brown.

**Jeanette Kleinsasser,
Iroquois**

ONE DISH CHICKEN AND RICE

Ingredients:

1/2 to 1 cup onion, chopped
1/4 to 1/2 cup green and/or red bell
pepper
1 can cream of chicken soup (or
cream soup of your choice)
1/2 cup milk
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
1/3 cup mayonnaise
2 cups chicken, cooked and chopped
1 cup peas (frozen)
2 cups cooked white rice
1 cup shredded cheddar, divided

METHOD

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly
grease a 9-inch x 13-inch baking dish
and set aside. Sauté onion and bell
pepper in olive oil or butter. Blend
soup, milk, salt, pepper, and mayo in
a bowl. Add chicken, peas, sautéed
onions and peppers, and rice to the
prepared baking dish. Mix gently.
Pour soup over chicken mixture. Mix
gently. Fold in half of the cheddar.
Top with remaining cheese. Bake
until top is golden brown, about 25
minutes.

Becky Walker, Sioux Falls

TUNA PASTA CASSEROLE

Ingredients:

4 oz. dried whole-wheat rotini
pasta (about 1-1/2 cups)
Nonstick cooking spray
16 oz. frozen mixed vegetables,
thawed
1 pouch (11 ounces) low-sodium
chunk light tuna
1 can (10-3/4 oz.) low-fat, low
sodium condensed cream of
chicken soup
1/2 cup chopped roasted red bell
peppers
1/2 cup fat-free half-and-half
1 tsp. all-purpose, salt-free sea-
soning blend
3/4 cup crushed low-sodium,
whole-grain crackers
1/4 cup shredded or grated
Parmesan cheese

METHOD

Prepare pasta according to
package directions, omitting
salt. Using colander, drain well.
Transfer to large bowl. Preheat
oven to 350 F. Lightly spray
2-quart glass baking dish with
nonstick cooking spray. Stir
mixed vegetables, tuna, soup,
roasted peppers, half-and-half
and seasoning blend into pasta
until combined. Transfer to
baking dish. Top with crackers
and Parmesan cheese. Bake,
uncovered, 25-30 minutes, or
until casserole is warmed through
and topping is golden brown.

familyfeatures.com

Please send your favorite dairy 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 2022.
All entries must include your name,
mailing address, phone number and
cooperative name.

Be safe: Plan ahead to call before you dig

Digging without locating underground utilities could leave neighborhoods in the dark, cause thousands of dollars in damages, or cause severe electrical shock. This is true regardless of how much area your project will cover or whether you consider the job to be large or small. To help stay safe, make use of the national underground utility locating service for free by calling 8-1-1.

The 811 “Call Before You Dig” number will route you to your local utility locating service. Make sure to tell the operator where and when you plan to dig and what type of work you will be doing. From there, it takes a few business days for a professional to come mark your public utilities with flags or spray paint.

There are different colors of paint and flags that mark the underground utilities, and each color is universal to what utility is buried.

Red – Electric

Orange – Communications, Telephone/CATV

Blue – Potable Water

Green – Sewer/Drainage

Yellow – Gas/Petroleum Pipe Line

Purple – Reclaimed Water

White – Premark site of intended excavation

Even if you previously had utilities located by calling 8-1-1, it is best to call before every digging project. Underground utilities can shift, and it is important to be certain of where they are before ever

...or go online at www.gopherstateonecall.org

Get the Dirt

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW NOW ABOUT EXCAVATION SAFETY

Welcome to the Excavator Safety Guide, Minnesota edition! 2016 brings a number of changes to Gopher State One Call (GSOC) that will provide excavators with new and easy to use technology for excavation ticket processing. These changes are intended to keep the basic goal of damage prevention in clear focus. See the custom pages in this guide for important information about both the new electronic ticket system and basic facts that will help you dig safely in Minnesota, this time and every time.

Inside You'll Find...

- ▶ An Overview of GSOC's Technology Suite
- ▶ Who Should Call 811? Don't Forget, Farmers!
- ▶ The Process for Safe Excavation
- ▶ What Doesn't Get Marked: Private Lines
- ▶ Get the Scoop on the GSOC Team

811 Know what's below. Call before you dig.

putting a shovel in the ground.

It is important to understand that 8-1-1 locators do not locate privately installed facilities. If you have any private utilities, you will need to hire a private utility locator. Examples of private utilities include underground sprinkler system, invisible fences, data communication systems, private water systems, or gas

pipng to a garage.

Once all of your underground utilities have been located, it is time to start digging, but be sure to wear all of the proper protective gear before putting the shovel into the earth.

For more information about 8-1-1 and digging safety, visit Call811.com and SafeElectricity.org.

Reminder: Let us know of any changes to your electric service

Renville-Sibley encourages any member planning on making changes to their service in 2022 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 project downpayments and material are received.

Elliott, Bryan selected Scholars of the Month

FEBRUARY SCHOLAR OF THE MONTH

Congratulations to Riley Elliott from Central Minnesota Christian School for being selected as the February Scholar of the Month. Riley was nominated because he is academically a strong student and has the gift of compassion.

Riley is very active in student council and often volunteers when help is needed. Renville-Sibley Co-op Power salutes Riley Elliott as the February Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Month.



Riley Elliott

MARCH SCHOLAR OF THE MONTH:

Congratulations to Cale Bryan from Renville County West for being selected as the March Scholar of the Month. Cale was nominated because he is an honest and trustworthy student and very respectful to others in class or outside of class.

He volunteers his time to play taps during veteran's funerals and at Memorial Day services. Renville-Sibley Co-op Power salutes Cale Bryan as the March 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.



Cale Bryan

Kill-a-Watt Device

Have you ever wondered how to identify how much energy an appliance in your home is using? Renville-Sibley Cooperative has a tool called the Kill A Watt electricity usage monitor that lets members see how energy efficient their appliances actually are.

These units are small, lightweight and easy to use. Just plug the unit into any outlet and then plug the appliance into

the Kill A Watt monitor to view how much power is being consumed, whether the appliance is on or off.

The monitors are especially handy for members who have older appliances because the unit will help them decide if it might make economic sense to buy more efficient models that can save on annual energy costs.

The cooperative has these units

available for members to borrow on a first-come, first-serve basis. To check one out, call our office at 800-826-2593. We will let you know availability and when you can pick the unit up. There is a \$30 deposit required to check the units out, which will be returned when the unit is returned.

GOATS STEAL THE SPOTLIGHT



Anna Johnson and Jessemy Sharp groom at the 2021 Brown County Fair. *Photo by Donna Sharp*

Ag students show a fondness for working with goats at youth exhibitions and competitions

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Matea Gordon's goats always keep her guessing.

The 17-year-old is one of four Gordon siblings from Whitewood who have been highly active - and highly successful - on the 4-H and FFA competition scenes over the past decade.

She prefers to work with market goats because the animals force her to stay on her toes. She never knows what she's going to get.

"They tend to have big personalities. Sometimes they're shy and cute. Other times they can be pretty stubborn. You just never know," she said. "Plus, it's fun to see how much progress you can make with them throughout the year."

Her younger brother, Bennett, enjoys raising and feeding the goats daily.

"I've learned about genetics, animal health and feed nutrition. The goats kind of become your friend as you bring them up and take care of them."

The brother-sister duo are part of a

trend in ag exhibition circles that finds eager competitors opting to work with goats. Their mom, Kindra Gordon, said all four of her children have been fond of tending to goats.

She said the family started with two goats a decade ago, and their involvement grew from there. Today, they travel and compete at nearly a dozen shows throughout the year. Likewise, she has seen youth participation in goat exhibitions double over the past few years.

"When the kids joined 4-H, they wanted to do a project and the goats just seemed to fit our lifestyle," she said.

Regardless of what animals her children choose, she has found there's much to be gained in participating in the competitions and other opportunities that youth ag programs provide.

"The kids have learned about responsibility, life skills and the agriculture industry. They learn about sportsmanship and how to manage stress. We tell them to be happy for their friends when it's their time to win, and

they'll be happy for you when you win. We've met a lot of people and made a lot of friends along the way."

One of those friends is Tessa Erdmann, a freshman at SDSU from Groton who serves as president of the state FFA. She is long-time friends with Matea and her older sister, Danika, both of them winners of Butte Electric Cooperative's college scholarship program.

Tessa said her choice to work with goats mostly came down to a practical matter. She cites her smallish physical stature as one reason for channeling her focus on the species.

"I'm 5 feet tall and I came to the conclusion that I didn't want to hold on to something way bigger than me," she said.

At age 12, Tessa went with her father, Darrin, to an auction and brought home her first three animals: Buttercup, Sassy and Thunderbolt. She describes the event as "love at first sight." In her first year to show at the Brown County Fair, Tessa won ribbons in the breeding and showmanship divisions and has placed many times since then.

A former gymnast and a member of Northern Electric based in Aberdeen,

Moorse sees goat-breeding as a gift



Clockwise from top/left: FFA President Tessa Erdmann; Kylee Ellerton of Custer; Taylor, Tate and Tye McGraw of Raymond.



Tessa said she has also experienced a large measure of mutual support within the animal exhibition community.

"Everybody is always so nice and you can count on everyone to help one another," she said. "We're competitive inside the ring, but outside we're family and we don't hate each other. One year, someone's father was hurt and couldn't make it to the competition. Everyone chipped in to help the family out."

Becca Tullar is a 4-H advisor in Brown County. She explained what she believes is the reason for the rising interest in goats.

"They're a good starter animal and youngsters get used to them and many of the students stick with them. They kind of grow up together," she said. "They're easy to handle. Once you get them halter-broke they'll go wherever you want. They're fun animals to show.

They're almost like pets and they build easy bonds."

One competitor who has a way with his goats is Tate McGraw, a 17-year-old from Raymond who has Down syndrome. His father, Wade, said Tate has been showing since he was 8.

"It's been a real blessing. He's easy-going and just has a way with the animals. He can get them to do things that other handlers can't," he said.

His other son Tye, 14, and daughter Taylor, 13, also show goats and other animals and McGraw said they each have their individual strengths.

"The best thing as a father is to see the network of friends they've developed across the state. They all support each other and they've learned to respect one another because they know one day they could be on top and the next day they could be on the bottom."



Garret Moorse isn't sure if he chose goats or goats chose him. In 2004, Moorse received twin Nubian kids – a buck and a doe – as a birthday gift. That gift sparked an interest in goats that has led him to building a top breeding operation in southwest Minnesota.

By 2011, Moorse was ready to hit the show circuit with only marginal success in the early stages. It would take a couple of years to make it to the American Dairy Goat Association. National Show in St. Paul where Moorse-G Foxy was named Reserve Junior National Champion Recorded Grade. He saw it all as a learning process.

"When I started out I didn't win anything but I learned a lot, and not to mention I met so many great people that I now call close friends," he said. "When Foxy won, that's what really got us excited and dedicated to continue on this path with dairy goats."

Moorse raises and markets Alpines, Lamanchas, Saanens, Toggenburgs and Recorded Grade Seniors and Juniors.

He said he enjoys working with the animals and is especially appreciative of his "goat family."

"It's a tight community and we're always seeing each other at shows, exchanging information and sharing ideas," he said. "I couldn't do what I do without my family and friends."

For more information, Moorse can be contacted at 507.530.3175.

Memorial Day Notice

Renville-Sibley will be closed on May 30 in Observance of Memorial Day.



Comparative Report

	Current YTD through February 28, 2022	One Year Ago YTD through February 28, 2021	10 Years Ago YTD through February 28, 2012
average # of Consumers	1,883	1,882	1,924
kWhs purchased	36,858,951	39,063,632	34,364,425
Cost of purchased power	\$1,822,170.63	\$2,601,092.62	\$1,759,012.04

FREE Want Ad Service

Members can submit ads for the following categories: Giveaway, For Sale, For Rent, and Wanted. Ads should be or are limited to no more than 15 words and must be received by the first of the month to be included in the following month's newsletter. Renville-Sibley reserves the right to edit content or exclude ads due to space restrictions. Ads will be run one time only unless resubmitted. Please complete the following information and mail it to the Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power, PO Box 68, Danube, MN 56230.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone number: _____

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

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

WHERE'S THE NUMBER?

Last month Gregory Sather did not find his member number in the newsletter. The credit will continue to grow with a value of \$30. Another number has been hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number and call the office by the 2nd of May, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck in your search!

NOTICE

Chapman Metering will be testing meters across our service territory starting the end of April and going through the month of May. They will be driving a white van with Chapman Metering listed on the side. Renville-Sibley's name and logo will also be on the van. Your service will not be interrupted while the meter is being tested. Please contact the office at 800-826-2593 if you have any questions. 450100

March board meeting highlights

The March board meeting was held on Monday, March 28, at 8 a.m. All board members were present. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Newville, Cindy Mertens, Gene Alex, and Lenae Wordes.

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the February 28 board meeting
- Operating and disbursement reports for the month of February
- Safety report for February
- 2022 Budget

The board reviewed:

- Capital credits transferred
- Total new members
- Reports from staff members as to

the activities in their department. Items in the reports include:

- High-level Statement of Operations review – YTD through February (unaudited)
- Organization activities
- Facilities update
- East River update
- Basin Electric update
- NRECA update
- MREA update
- KRTA data
- Linecrew work in progress, equipment update, and outage update
- Accounts receivable
- Annual meeting

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

NOTICE:

The April board meeting will be held on Monday, April 25 at 8 a.m.

The May board meeting will be held on Monday, May 23 at 8 am.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint> and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

"This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

MISSION STATEMENT

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

THANK YOU

Thank you so much for selecting me as a recipient of your scholarship! I'm very grateful you took the time to consider my application and award me with this prestigious honor, and I will make sure that I better the community with my degree once I graduate.

Jennifer Bratsch

ANNUAL MEETING COVERAGE

Renville-Sibley's 84th Annual Meeting was held on Thursday, March 31. Annual meeting information will be in the next newsletter.



THE POWER OF LOAD MANAGEMENT

Chris Danielski monitors an irrigation pivot control panel from his phone app. Photos by Billy Gibson

Load control program reaps big rewards for both residents and large energy users

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Danielski Farms didn't become a blue chip producer over the past four decades by making boneheaded business decisions.

In 2013, the company was invited by Cherry-Todd Electric to participate in the cooperative's irrigation load management program. Load management is a term used to describe a co-op's ability to balance the system's electrical load by adjusting or controlling network demand.

Better balance brings greater efficiency and lower costs for all consumers on the system.

Len Danielski recalls pulling the leadership team together and weighing the pros and cons. The proposal included installing specialized equipment that would allow Cherry-Todd to temporarily interrupt power - when warranted - to any of roughly 200 irrigation pivots across 18,000 acres.

While different electric co-ops have their own load management policies, Cherry-Todd's guidelines call for a lower irrigation rate for participants and the right of the consumer to withdraw and return to the regular rate at any time.

The deliberation process was helped along by the fact that Danielski's General Manager Gary Garvin previously served as a board member at Cherry-Todd. He was aware the cooperative business model was designed and intended to produce "win-win" situations for both the co-op and its owner-members.

Danielski Farms ultimately decided to place all of its irrigation system under load management and Len Danielski reports the results have exceeded expectations.

"We found it was a winner all the way around. We have the choice to place one pivot, two pivots, or all pivots on the load control program, or none," he said. "We've analyzed the benefits over time and found that the company wins,

the cooperative wins and the co-op members win. It's a great partnership."

Chris Rahn, Cherry-Todd's primary key account contact, said load management is a tremendous benefit for members because it allows the cooperative - working in concert with both the member and the co-op's wholesale supplier Rushmore Electric - to distribute power more efficiently.

Rahn explained that one of the best ways to deliver power at the lowest possible cost is to "shave the peak" or to make sure supply and demand stay in a constant state of equilibrium as conditions such as weather, member consumption and market forces change constantly. Utilities are able to control supply but can find it challenging to project what consumer demand will be at any point in time.

Educated projections are important, but there are occasions when it helps for the co-op to have some control over demand. In the end, everyone benefits.

"We've had a residential water heater load control program for quite a while and it's been well-received by our

members,” Rahn said. “It enables us to get a better handle on the demand side and that’s a benefit for all the members on our lines.”

Garvin said another mitigating consideration for Danielski Farms is the fact that Cherry-Todd has done its part by making significant improvements to its infrastructure over time.

“We used to joke that we were always under load management because the power would go out a lot, but things have changed dramatically for the better and we hardly ever get bumped these days,” Garvin said. “I’ve also got load management on my water heater at home and it works for us.”

Len Danielski said that under the load control program power to his pivots rarely gets disrupted and typically only for a few hours when it does. He said the company is pleased to participate in a program that will ultimately benefit all co-op members across the system.



From left, Gary Garvin, Len Danielski, Chris Danielski and Chris Rahn discuss Cherry-Todd Electric’s load management program.

“We’ve found interruptions are usually during times when we don’t need to be irrigating anyway, like in the heat of the day when a lot of the water will only get evaporated,” he said. “And if it helps the cooperative and saves every member on the system some money, that’s great.”

Another element that makes the program work for Danielski Farms is the installation of a remote irrigation control system. All of Danielski’s pivots



All of the roughly 200 irrigation pivots at Danielski Farms are under Cherry-Todd Electric’s load management program.

are connected to the Ag Sense phone app that enables a user to turn the pivots on or off individually or in groups, and receive an abundance of electronic data.

Chris Danielski manages the app and said the telemetry allows him to track exactly when load control is being implemented, though he usually receives information from the co-op as well. He said efficiencies gained through both programs have resulted in net savings.

“If we have an hour or two of load management, once we get the notice that we’re back on I can restart the pivot from inside the office,” he said. “It used to take several hours to get someone to go out and restart the system.”

East River Electric, based in Madison, is a power supply cooperative that delivers wholesale electricity to 24 distribution co-ops in eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota. East River has offered its co-ops a load management option since 1985 and has saved members roughly \$260 million in avoided wholesale power costs.

More than 75,000 different electric loads in homes, farms and businesses are connected to the system, including water heaters, air conditioners, irrigation systems and other big energy users.

Chris Larson, general manager of Clay-Union Electric, said the co-op based in Vermillion offers end-use consumers a load control program for

LOAD MANAGEMENT

water heaters, irrigation systems, grain bins and other commercial processing equipment.

The cooperative has 320 irrigation systems under load management with requests for 10 more in the near future as drought conditions show no signs of abating.

Larson emphasized that every cooperative has its own unique rate structure and load management policies when it comes to discounts, demand charges, time-of-use, system peaks and other variables. He said it’s important for consumers to contact their local co-op for details and to work closely with staff to find the best solutions for the member.

He said co-ops are obligated to capture their costs of providing power but are also responsible for finding ways to accommodate their member-owners and helping them achieve their individual goals.

“Load management really is essential to maximizing system efficiency,” Larson said. “It’s a sophisticated process that ultimately leaves the member with plenty of choices. If we’re controlling irrigation or commercial operations at a time that’s not good for them or complicates their workflow, they need the ability to override the control system so they can make a good business decision that’s best for them.”



NATIVE SPECIES GARDENING

Southeastern Electric member Sue Nipe of Sioux Falls puts in a lot of work tending to her native species garden but also receives many rewards for her efforts. *Photos by Brett Snyders*

Native species gardens are good for the environment, diet and soul

Billy Gibson

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If you're a big fan of grass, you might not be too impressed with Sue Nipe's yard. That's because there's isn't a blade of grass to be found.

Nipe lives in a conventional middle-class subdivision in southeast Sioux Falls, but there's nothing conventional about her yard. She's a huge proponent and practitioner of native species gardening and her property stands out prominently from all the rest.

Diagnosed with celiac disease in 2013, Nipe decided to focus on eating healthy and growing much of her own food right there on her own plot of

suburban ground. She decided to pull out all the grass and weeds by their roots, plant some vegetables and herbs - along with a smattering of ornamentals - and before long her corner lot was bursting with native species from porch to curb.

Her key to maintaining a thriving native species garden? Well, there are several, but mulch appears somewhere at the top of the list. Ecologically friendly wood mulch, she explained, is necessary to keeping the weeds out and locking in the moisture.

"I put mulch around everything," Nipe said, noting that she purchased 150 bags of wood mulch last year and had just one weed-pulling session over

the entire spring and summer seasons

"Some try to use small rocks but most of the time they have them removed because during the summer they heat up and burn the plants from the bottom up," she cautioned.

Nipe said native species gardens are in many ways easier to maintain than exotics and are better for the local ecosystem because the plants have adapted to the climate and soil conditions over many generations, are largely resistant to pests and fit into the natural landscape both ecologically and aesthetically.

They are also better at preventing soil erosion, they help reduce air pollution in the local area, use less water, and they provide nectar, pollen and seeds for native butterflies, insects and birds to munch.



A visitor would be hard-pressed to find a blade of grass in Nipe's home landscape.

Moreau-Grand Electric member Doug Hofer is a horticulture teacher at the Cheyenne River School System in Eagle Butte. He said teaching students about the benefits of cultivating native species is important to the preservation and conservation of the landscape.

He uses the school's well equipped greenhouse to teach his students about the fundamentals of horticulture, including vegetables, ornamentals,

succulents and herbs. Toward the end of each semester, the students are instructed to choose a native species that they can find and identify on the prairie, conduct some research and produce a slide show on the topic. They also sell their plants at local markets in the spring and donate their proceeds to their FFA chapter.

Hofer also teaches a class on wildlife and fisheries at the school.

"Everything with the environment and landscape all tie in together," he said. "I think students need to learn about native species and working with those plants that have adapted to our climate and thrive in our part of the world. We also talk about how these plants and herbs have been cultivated and used by people who have inhabited the Great Plains for hundreds and thousands of years."

Studer named winner of TSE's Distinguished Service Award



East River Electric's Chief Member and Public Relations Officer Chris Studer has been named the 2022 Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives Distinguished Service Award recipient. Touchstone Energy Board President Deb Mirasola presented Studer with the award at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's annual meeting in Nashville.

Studer was honored for promoting the cooperative difference and helping Touchstone Energy evolve into a strong brand with more than 650 members in 46 states.

"Chris exemplifies the values of our brand and provides unwavering support to his member systems and local community," Mirasola said.

PHOTO CONTEST: WINTER IN JULY

By the time the summer heat sets in, many South Dakotans will be looking back with fond memories of the winter season.

Readers of Cooperative Connections are invited to send us a photo of your favorite experience from the winter of 2022. The top selected photos will be published in the July edition. A \$50 gift certificate will go to the winning photographer.

Send your photo to billy.gibson@sdrea.coop with the subject line "Winter Memories." File format should be jpeg, PNG or PDF.

The deadline to enter is May 20. Good luck to all contestants.



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.

To view the publication's master event calendar, scan the QR code below:



Or visit <https://sdrea.coop/cooperative-connections-event-calendar> to view more upcoming events.

APRIL 27-30
45th Annual Kingswood Rummage Sales
 Southwest Sioux Falls, SD,
kingswoodrummage.com

APRIL 28
MercyMe: The Inhale (Exhale) Tour
 Denny Sanford Premier Center,
 Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-7288

APRIL 28-30
26th Annual Black Hills Dance Festival
 The Monument, Rapid City, SD,
blackhillsdancefestival.com

APRIL 29-MAY 1
State USBC Women's Bowling Tournament
 Village Bowl, Mitchell, SD,
 605-336-5583

APRIL 29-MAY 1, 5-7
Ordinary Days
 Grand Opera House, Pierre,
 SD, pierreplayers.com

APRIL 30
SDSO Centennial Finale
 Washington Pavilion, Sioux
 Falls, SD, sdsymphony.org

MAY 3-8
Come From Away
 Washington Pavilion, Sioux
 Falls, SD, www.washingtonpavilion.org/event/come-away

MAY 7
Cinco de Mayo Fiesta
 131 E Falls Park Drive, Sioux
 Falls, SD, 605-274-3735

MAY 8
Mother's Day Tours
 Historic Adams House and
 Days of '76 Museum,
 Deadwood, SD, 605-578-3724

MAY 14-15
AMA Coins and Sports Cards Show
 Denny Sanford Premier
 Center, Sioux Falls, SD,
 605-321-9195

MAY 14-15
Ellsworth Air and Space Show
 1940 EP Howe Drive, Ellsworth
 AFB, SD, ellsworthairshow.com

MAY 15
PAW Patrol Live!
 Swiftel Center, Brookings, SD,
www.swiftelcenter.com

MAY 17
Norwegian Independence Day
 Main Street, Vivian, SD,
 605-222-3296

MAY 20-22
Annual Sound of Silence Tesla Rally
 615 Washington Street, Custer,
 SD, 605-673-2244

MAY 20-22
Open House and Free Fishing Weekend
 Statewide, SD, 605-223-7660

MAY 21
Booth Day
 D.C. Booth Fish Hatchery,
 Spearfish, SD, dcboothfishhatchery.org

MAY 21
Frühlingsfest & Spring Market
 Main Street, Rapid City, SD,
 605-716-7979

MAY 28
Deadwood Live: Hank Williams Jr.
 Outlaw Square, Deadwood, SD,
www.deadwoodlive.com

MAY 28
Memorial Weekend in Mitchell
 Main Street, Mitchell, SD,
 605-292-4444

MAY 28-29
Black Hills Renaissance Faire
 Manuel Brothers Park, Lead,
 SD, www.blackhillsrenfest.com

MAY 29-30
Back When They Bucked Rodeo
 Days of '76 Arena, Deadwood,
 SD, 605-718-0810

MAY 30
Prairie Points Quilt Guild Show
 Harding County Memorial Rec
 Center, Buffalo, SD,
 605-641-5591

JUNE 2-5
Wheel Jam
 South Dakota State
 Fairgrounds, Huron, SD,
www.wheeljam.com

JUNE 3-5
Lake Andes Fish Days
 Citywide, Lake Andes, SD,
 605-487-7694

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