



# COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS



Clarence Kooistra of VFW Post 628 in Sioux Falls salutes military veterans interred at the South Dakota State Cemetery

## Honoring our Veterans

A new resting place for fallen soldiers  
Pages 8-9

First responders in rural South Dakota  
Page 12

# It's a matter of (Co-op) principles

ACE Hardware, State Farm, REI, Land O'Lakes, RS Fiber and Renville-Sibley Co-op Power all share something in common: we're all cooperatives.



**Lenae Wordes**  
Communications  
Manager

We may be in different industries, but we all share a passion for serving our members and helping our communities to thrive. In fact, all cooperatives adhere to the same set of seven principles that reflect our core values of honesty, transparency, equity, inclusiveness and service to the greater community good. October is National Co-op Month, so this is the perfect time to reflect on these principles that have stood the test of time but also provide a framework for the future. Let's take a look at the first three cooperative principles.

## **VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP**

Just like all co-ops, Renville-Sibley Co-op Power was created out of necessity—to meet a need that would have been otherwise unmet in our communities. So in 1938, a group of neighbors banded together and organized our electric co-op so everyone in our communities could benefit. For a modest membership fee to the co-op, any farmer could get electricity brought to his farm. Neighbors came together to tackle a problem that they all had but couldn't solve alone. They worked together for the benefit of the entire region, and the newly established electric lines helped power economic opportunity in our communities.

While this history may be forgotten, key parts of that heritage remain - the focus on our mission and serving the greater good. In this, we include everyone to improve the quality of life and economic opportunity for all. Membership is open to everyone in our service territory, regardless of race, religion, age, disability, gender, language, political perspective or socioeconomic status.

## **DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL**

Our co-op is well suited to meet the needs of our members because we are locally governed. Each member gets a voice and a vote in how the co-op

is run, and each voice and vote are equal. Renville-Sibley Co-op Power's leadership team and employees live right here in the area. Our board of directors, who help set long-term priorities for the co-op, also live on co-op lines. These board members have been elected by neighbors just like you. We know our members have a valuable perspective, and that's why we are continually seeking your input and encourage you to weigh in on important co-op issues and participate in co-op elections.

**Because we are guided by seven cooperative principles, it's not just about dollars - it's about opportunity for all and being fair when engaging with our members.**

Our close connection to this community ensures we get a first-hand perspective on members' priorities, thereby enabling us to make more informed decisions on long-term investments.

## **MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION**

As a utility, our mission is to provide safe, reliable and affordable energy to our members. But as a co-op, we are also motivated by service to the community, rather than profits. Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of Renville-Sibley Co-op Power. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative to be used for co-op programs, initiatives, capital investments and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

Because we are guided by seven cooperative principles, it's not just about dollars - it's about opportunity for all and being fair when engaging with our members. The cooperative way is a values-based business model.

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power is a reflection of our local communities and their evolving needs. We view our role as a catalyst for good and making our corner of the world a better place. And by the way, that sums up the seventh co-op principle, "concern for community," which I'll elaborate on next month.

## COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

### RENVILLE-SIBLEY CO-OP POWER

(USPS 019-074)

#### Board of Directors

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

#### Renville-Sibley Employees

Gene Allex – 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  
Clint Olson – Journeyman Lineman  
Kathy Ridl – Office Assistant  
Shane Suess – PT Janitor  
Lenae Wordes – Communications Manager

RENVILLE-SIBLEY COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS is published monthly by Renville-Sibley Co-op Power Association, 103 Oak Street, Danube, MN, 56230 for its members. Electric cooperative members devote 50 cents from their monthly electric payments for a subscription. Non-member subscriptions are available for \$6 annually. Periodicals Postage Paid at Danube Post Office, Danube, MN 56230 and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Renville-Sibley Cooperative Connections, PO Box 68, Danube, MN 56230; Telephone (320) 826-2593; Toll Free 1-800-826-2593; Fax (320) 826-2679.

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Lineman safety training

To most people, it may look like these linemen are standing around visiting. In reality, they are conducting a job briefing during this safety day training. The linemen are following OSHA standards when they conduct the job briefing. Per OSHA, the person conducting the job briefing needs to cover these five items:

1. Hazards associated with the job,
2. Work procedures involved,
3. Special precautions,
4. Energy-source controls, and
5. Personal protective equipment requirements.

More importantly, our crews conduct a job briefing because it is a critical task to engage all crew members in a conversation about the job they are about to start. In fact, anytime there is a change in the job the crew is doing, they will stop the job, gather the crew and do another job briefing. Our crews do job briefings to:

- discuss potential hazards unique to this job.
- describe the work that will be done and by whom, assign tasks.

- review emergency actions if something goes wrong.
- confirm everyone can give the location if there is an emergency.



- check over the personal protective equipment people have and if it is in good condition.
- give everyone on the crew a chance to ask questions.
- review the safety rules associated with the particular job.
- remind the crew they can stop the job anytime if they feel unsafe.

This is a safe work practice our linemen use every day to make sure they can all safely go home each night.

## Thank You to Renville-Sibley

Thank you for continued support for this program. Because of you, three children will receive weekend meals for this school year!

### Betsy – Renville County Back-the-Pack Program

Our sincerest thanks for your contribution in making Summerfest 2021 a memorable one! We couldn't bring a jammed packed weekend full of summer fun without the local support of our fantastic businesses, individuals and

organizations. You make us proud to call Sacred Heart our home! See you in 2022 – July 13 – 17!

### The Summerfest Committee

Thank you so much for supporting our event. Your event donation made it possible to get supplies to help support riders at pit stops and midday points. It really means a lot that y'all would help support in our inaugural year. Thank you so much! Respectfully,  
**Justice Walker, MN Gravel 160**

# A house full of Thanksgiving safety

Nearly every household uses extra electricity during the holidays - for cooking, decorating and heating. Take extra care to use electricity safely and to ask family members and house-guests to do the same. Here are some tips:

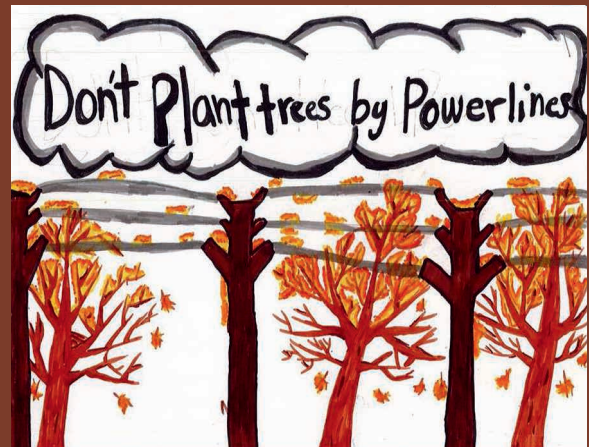
- Stay in the kitchen when broiling or doing any stovetop cooking.
- Keep children well away from cooking appliances while the appliances are in use.
- Keep towels, potholders and curtains away from hot surfaces in your kitchen.
- One of the riskiest holiday behaviors is overloading your electrical outlets. You will overload your wall outlets if you string strand after strand of holiday lights together and plug them into an extension cord that you plug into an outlet.
- Plugging multiple strands of cords into a power strip does not add any juice to the electrical circuit that powers the outlet you plug the strip into.
- Check decorative lights for damaged cords, plugs and sockets. Replace anything that's frayed, cracked or broken. Buy cords that are certified by UL; look for the UL symbol on the package.
- Don't run extension cords under rugs, carpets or baseboards, or anywhere they can be a tripping hazard.
- Only use decorations and cords outdoors that are properly rated for outdoor use.
- When you put up outdoor decorations, do not string lights in trees near power lines. Fasten outdoor lights carefully and securely with clips, never nails or tacks.
- Keep electric lights away from decorative metal trees.
- Keep all light strings and other decorations away from pets so they don't get tangled in them or chew the wires.
- Keep all decorations - and everything else - at least three feet away from heat sources such as fireplaces and space heaters.
- Always turn off your decorations when you leave home and when you're sleeping.
- Make sure smoke detectors are present and working properly.
- Use space heaters properly and safely. Keep them out of high-traffic areas and at least three feet from anything that can burn.
- Do not leave a space heater running unattended. Turn off space heaters and unplug them when you leave the room or go to sleep.
- Never leave an open flame, including your fireplace or a candle, unattended.

## GOVERNOR'S STUDENT ART COMPETITION



The Governor's Office and the South Dakota Arts Council invite students to participate in the Governor's Student Art Competition.

Students in K-12 will compete in four age divisions. Winning entries will be exhibited in the State Capitol from January through September 2022. Submission deadline is Nov. 12, 2021. All artwork is to be submitted electronically as a high-resolution jpeg image, along with the Artwork Submission Form and the Authorization Release Form. Competition guidelines, instructions and all necessary forms are accessible at [https://artscouncil.sd.gov/events/student\\_art\\_Main.aspx](https://artscouncil.sd.gov/events/student_art_Main.aspx). Contact Rebecca.cruse@state.sd.us or call 605-773-3301 for details.



### Don't plant trees by power lines

Jazzlyn Magera

Jazzlyn shares good advice to avoid planting trees near power lines. Jazzlyn attends Brandon Elementary School and is the daughter of Rachel Schettler. They are members of Sioux Valley Energy.

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.

# SLOW COOKING BRINGS OUT FLAVORS OF FALL

## BABY BACK RIBS

### Ingredients:

2-1/2 lbs. pork baby back ribs, cut into eight pieces  
 5 cups water  
 1 med. onion, sliced  
 2 celery ribs, cut in half  
 2 tsps. minced garlic, divided  
 1 tsp. whole peppercorns  
 1/2 cup barbecue sauce  
 1/4 cup plum sauce (Asian section of grocery store)  
 Dash of hot pepper sauce

### METHOD

Place ribs in a 5-qt. slow cooker. Add water, onion, celery, 1 tsp. garlic and peppercorns. Cover and cook on low for six hours or until meat is tender. In a small saucepan, combine the barbecue sauce, plum sauce, hot pepper sauce and remaining garlic. Cook and stir over medium heat for five minutes or until heated through. Remove ribs. Discard cooking juices and vegetables. Coat grill rack with nonstick cooking spray before starting grill. Brush ribs with sauce. Grill, uncovered, over medium low heat for 8-10 minutes or until browned, turning occasionally and brushing with remaining sauce. Can also be finished in the oven using the broil setting.

**Melissa Roerig, Sioux Falls**

## CHILI BEEF AND PASTA

### Ingredients:

2 lbs. lean ground beef  
 2 packages McCormick® Chili Seasoning Mix  
 1 can (14.5 oz.) diced tomatoes  
 2 cans (8 oz. each) tomato sauce  
 1 cup coarsely chopped bell pepper  
 1 cup frozen or canned whole kernel corn  
 1 cup elbow macaroni, cooked and drained (about 2.25 cups)  
 1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese

### METHOD

Cook ground beef in large skillet on medium-high heat until no longer pink; drain. Place in slow cooker. Stir in Seasoning Mix, tomatoes, tomato sauce, bell pepper and corn until well blended. Cover. Cook six hours on low or three hours on high. Stir in cheese and cooked macaroni during the last 10 minutes of cooking.

**mccormick.com**

## WHITE PHEASANT CHILI

### Ingredients:

3 boneless pheasants cooked and shredded  
 1 large onion chopped  
 4 Tbsps. butter  
 1/4 cup flour  
 3/4 cup chicken broth  
 2 cups half and half  
 2 cans Navy beans  
 1 tsp. Tabasco sauce  
 1-1/2 tsp. chili powder  
 1 tsp. cumin  
 1/2 tsp. salt  
 1/2 tsp. pepper  
 1-2 jalapeno peppers  
 1-1/2 cups Monterrey jack cheese  
 1/2 cup sour cream

### METHOD

Cook and shred pheasant. Set aside. Cook onion with 2 Tbsps. butter until soft, add flour and remaining butter, whisking constantly. Add broth and half and half while whisking. Bring to boil for 5 minutes, or until onions are tender. Put in crockpot and add remaining ingredients. Put on high heat for one hour then reduce to low heat for one to two hours.

**Alice DeHaai, Keystone**

**Please send your favorite holiday 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 December 2021. All entries must include your name, mailing address, phone number and cooperative name.**

# Jennifer Bratsch named Scholar of the Month

Congratulations to Jennifer Bratsch from Renville County West High School for being selected as the September Scholar of the Month. Jennifer was nominated because she is committed to learning and growing in her academic studies. She is a good listener and goes out of her way to help other students in the classroom. Jennifer is involved in three sports along with NHS, FFA and student council. Renville-Sibley Co-op Power salutes Jennifer Bratsch as the September 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](http://www.renville-sibley.coop) under the Customer Service tab. 940800



## Comparative Report

	Current YTD through August 31, 2021	One Year Ago YTD through August 31, 2020	10 Years Ago YTD through August 31, 2011
average # of Consumers	1,882	1,882	1,927
kWhs purchased	113,428,540	104,721,467	102,098,275
Cost of purchased power	\$7,352,675.00	\$6,572,837.36	\$4,598,235.37

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

**Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation**

1. Publication Title: Renville-Sibley Cooperative Connections  
 2. Publication Number: 0 1 0 0 7 4  
 3. Filing Date: 09/29/2021  
 4. Issue Frequency: Monthly  
 5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 12  
 6. Annual Subscription Price: \$9.00  
 7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®):  
 Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association  
 103 Oak Street / PO Box 68, Danube, MN 56230  
 Contact Person: Lenae Wordes  
 Telephone (include area code): (320) 826-2593  
 8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer):  
 Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association  
 103 Oak Street / PO Box 68, Danube, MN 56230  
 9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank):  
 Publisher (Name and complete mailing address):  
 Lenae Wordes  
 103 Oak Street / PO Box 68, Danube, MN 56230  
 Editor (Name and complete mailing address):  
 Lenae Wordes  
 103 Oak Street / PO Box 68, Danube, MN 56230  
 Managing Editor (Name and complete mailing address):  
 Lenae Wordes  
 103 Oak Street / PO Box 68, Danube, MN 56230  
 10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as those of each individual owner. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.)  
 Full Name: Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association  
 Complete Mailing Address: 103 Oak Street / PO Box 68, Danube, MN 56230  
 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities. If none, check box  None  
 Full Name: Rural Utilities Service  
 Complete Mailing Address: 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, D.C. 20260  
 National Rural Utilities Finance Corp.: 2201 Cooperative Way, Herndon, VA 20171  
 CoBank: 5500 S Quebec St., Greenwood Village, CO 80111  
 12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at nonprofit rates) (Check one)  
 The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes:  
 Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months  
 Has Changed During Preceding 12 Months (Publisher must submit explanation of change with this statement)  
 13. Publication Title: Renville-Sibley Cooperative Connections  
 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: 10/15/2021  
 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation  

		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
<b>a. Total Number of Copies (Net press run)</b>			
(1)	Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	1570	1571
<b>b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail)</b>			
(2)	Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies)	0	0
(3)	Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution Outside USPS®	0	0
(4)	Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail®)	0	0
<b>c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4))</b>		1570	1571
<b>d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)</b>			
(1)	Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	96	94
(2)	Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	0	0
(3)	Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g., First-Class Mail)	0	0
(4)	Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	0	0
<b>e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3) and (4))</b>		96	94
<b>f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e)</b>		1666	1665
<b>g. Copies not Distributed (See instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))</b>		5	5
<b>h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)</b>		1671	1670
<b>i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100)</b>		94	94

		Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date
<b>16. Electronic Copy Circulation</b>			
a.	Paid Electronic Copies	0	0
b.	Total Paid Print Copies (Line 15c) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	1570	0
c.	Total Print Distribution (Line 15b) + Paid Electronic Copies (Line 16a)	1666	1665
d.	Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) (16b divided by 16c x 100)	94	94

 I certify that 50% of all my distributed copies (electronic and print) are paid above a nominal price.  
 17. Publication of Statement of Ownership  
 If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the 11/16/21 issue of this publication.  Publication not required.  
 18. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager, or Owner  
 Lenae Wordes, Communications Manager, Date: 09/29/2021  
 I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

# Are you interested in a new adventure?

Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association is beginning to plan for the 84th Annual meeting of the membership that will be held March 31, 2022 at the Redwood Area Community Center in Redwood Falls, Minnesota. Three (3) directors will be elected during that time, each for a 3-year term.

The First District, consisting of the townships of Cornish, 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. Whitey Hinderman's term will expire in 2022.

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 Zaské and Matt Haubrich. Wayland Zaské's term will expire in 2022.

The Third District, consisting of the townships of Roseland and Holland in Kandiyohi County; Rheiderland 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 Eekhoff's term will expire in 2022.

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:

- Abide by, promote and uphold the Articles of Incorporation and By-laws, both of

which can be found on our website, and Policies of Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association.

- Attend regular and special Board meetings of the Cooperative.
- Attend, when appointed, committee 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 a.m. in December, January and February at 8 a.m. the rest of the year. Meetings will be held in person or via Zoom. The estimated time needed to be committed annually is approximately 30 days which includes monthly meetings and committee assignments. Directors are compensated per diem for their time and all personal expenses.

If you are interested in becoming a candidate, contact the Renville-Sibley office at 1-800-826-2593 before Jan. 3 for further information.

# A PLACE TO REST



The South Dakota Veterans Cemetery located northeast of Sioux Falls provides a new resting place for U.S. military veterans and their families. *Photos by Billy Gibson*

## State Veterans Cemetery in Sioux Falls opens new options for military families

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

A dozen distraught family members surrounded the casket conspicuously draped with a bright, crisp American flag. The brilliant hues of red, white and blue stood in stark contrast to the slate gray sky hanging overhead and the slight chill that filled the air.

As the gathered mourners paid their last respects and turned back toward the administration building at the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery, the clouds suddenly burst open and a heavy rain began to fall.

“Well, your daddy was a rancher,” the grieving widow said to her son as they made their way down the hillside. “A good rain is exactly what he would have wanted. This would have made him smile.”

Erin Brown is director of the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery (SDVC) located northeast of Sioux Falls and she often hears stories that family members share about their loved ones who arrive at their final resting

place there. A military veteran herself, Brown said those stories bring added meaning and significance to her work.

“The veterans – and their families – are very important to us,” she said. “When I hear those kinds of stories and hear them describe a lifetime of memories and all the good times they had together, it reinforces the idea that there’s real value in what we’re doing here at the cemetery.”

The SDVC is the first federally funded, state-owned and operated veterans cemetery in the state, although there is no residency requirement for military veterans to be interred there. The Black Hills National Cemetery is located a few miles east of Sturgis.

The facility is located on 60 acres donated by the City of Sioux Falls and ultimately will have enough space for over 28,000 casket grave sites, cremation grave sites, a columbarium for cremated remains and a scattering garden. More than 600 in-ground crypts have already been installed. The facility was made possible by more

than \$7 million in federal money, state funds and private donations.

Since the ribbon-cutting ceremony last Memorial Day, the cemetery has seen a steady stream of burials. There were four on a recent Friday.

SDVC staff works with the families to arrange details of the burial services which typically include a final pre-service consultation with the families, a processional to the committal shelter, a 15-20 minute service, folding and presentation of the flag, and a rifle salute and Taps presented by local military-related volunteer organizations.







Members of the grounds crew are all veterans and can relate to military families in their time of grief.

Clarence Kooistra is one of those volunteers who donates his time to make sure veterans receive a proper burial and their families receive the proper respect. He's a member of the VFW Post 628 Honor Guard based in Sioux Falls.

"I just feel it's very important that these men and women are treated with the respect they deserve for the sacrifices they've made to preserve our freedoms and democracy in our country," Kooistra said. "It's a privilege for me to come out here and do this for the families."

While construction commenced on the cemetery two years ago, it took several years to bring the project to fruition. At the time the first federal grant application was submitted in 2017, Brown was serving as a veterans program manager in the State Department of Veteran's Affairs helping veterans navigate through the federal bureaucracy to receive their rightful benefits. She often found, however, that some of the former soldiers would balk at the benefits "so that someone they felt needed it more than them could get it."

When the cemetery director position opened up, she jumped at the chance to find another way to help veterans.

In performing her job, Brown

calls on her own military experience, which includes joining the Minnesota National Guard in high school and receiving advanced individual training at Fort Lee in Virginia. She returned and attended college for three years before getting deployed to Iraq for nearly two years.

She worked in supply management at a Marine base between Ramadi and Fallujah and eventually left the service as an E-5.

When she and her staff are interacting with veterans and their families, they have little difficulty relating to them on a personal basis.

"The military is the kind of experience that you don't know you want or need until you have it," she said. "All of those experiences have put me into one of the most rewarding jobs I've been able to do. Without it, I wouldn't be able to relate to the families and get the help they need and have earned. Once they realize I'm also a veteran, things change and they see me differently."

Brown and her staff - all of whom are veterans themselves - have

developed personal relationships with the families whose loved ones are interred at the facility. During their visits to the cemetery, family members often express their gratitude to the staff for their work in keeping the facility well maintained and give updates on how the family is faring and if they have any further needs.

Brown said she is looking toward the future with optimism for the



The Committal Shelter is the site of many outdoor funeral services for veterans.

cemetery and its mission, especially after the South Dakota Veterans Council last summer announced a \$2.1 million donation from philanthropist T. Denny Sanford, PREMIER Bankcard CEO Miles Beacom and his wife Lisa.

For more information, visit <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteranscemetery/>.

### Nominating Committee Members needed

Renville-Sibley is looking for members who would like to serve on the cooperative's nominating committees. Nominating committees (one for each director district) meet in January and will be looking for candidates to run for the board. 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 you would like to be considered as a candidate, please let us know by calling Lenae at 800-826-2593.

## Notice to Co-Generators

To comply with Minnesota Statutes 216B.164 and in compliance with RSCPA's adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, RSCPA is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from co-generators and small power producers who satisfy the conditions as a qualifying facility.

RSCPA is obligated to provide free information 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.

Contact our office at 103 Oak Street, PO Box 68, Danube MN, via email at [renville-sibley@renville-sibley.coop](mailto:renville-sibley@renville-sibley.coop) or by calling 800-826-2593 (320-826-2593).

## 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

## WHERE'S THE NUMBER?

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

## HOLIDAY CLOSURES

Renville-Sibley's office will be closed on Thursday, November 11 and Friday, November 12 in observance of Veteran's Day.

Renville-Sibley's office will be closed on Thursday, November 25 and Friday, November 26 in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

## FOR SALE

Firewood, also Northern Leader woodstove, wood splitter and buck saw.

Daryl Wendt, Gibbon, MN

507-327-8101

## September board meeting highlights

The September board meeting was held on Monday, Sept. 27 at 7 a.m. All board members, except Helen Ruebel, 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 Aug. 30 board meeting
  - Operating and disbursement reports for the month of August
  - Capital credits to estate
  - Facility budget
  - Safety report for August
  - Mid-West Electric voting delegates
  - Basin Electric Load Forecast
  - FERC matter
- 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 August (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
- Scholar of the Month program

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

## NOTICE:

The October board meeting will be held on Oct. 25 at 8 a.m.  
The November board meeting will be held on Nov. 29 at 8 a.m.

## HEAT CREDIT BEGINS

Members who have electric heat (metered with a separate sub-meter) pay only \$0.06/kWh for energy used to heat your home/shop during the months of October thru April. This lower rate will be reflected starting with the November statement. If you have a separate breaker for your heat meter, please remember to turn it on or you will be billed at the regular energy rate. If the majority of your home is heated with electric heat and you are not on our metered electric heat rate, please contact the office for more information.

## MISSION STATEMENT

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

## OUTAGE REPORT

Outage Report – affecting 10 members or more

**Date: 08-04-21**

Time off: 1:00 p.m.

Time on: 2:06 p.m.

Substation: Birch Cooley and Cairo

Cause: scheduled

**Date: 08-29-21**

Time off: 5:53 p.m.

Time on: 7:33 p.m.

Substation: Emmet

Cause: motor vehicle

**Date: 08-30-21**

Time off: 9:00 a.m.

Time on: 10:32 a.m.

Substation: Emmet

Cause: scheduled

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

# THE FIRST TO ACT



The state's emergency medical services workforce declined 30 percent last year, though some are still eager to serve.

## Though rural South Dakota is experiencing a shortage of first responders, some are still eager to bear the responsibility

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

The early morning fog had already settled in heavy and thick as a damp blanket when Joey Denison pulled out of his driveway in Lake Norden. He was headed to Lake Preston for his job as an electric lineman and just happened to be fresh off earning his paramedic license in his spare time.

Within just a few minutes of driving along Hwy. 81, the blurry image of a wrecked semi came into view through the haze. The rig was overturned and rested across the roadway. At first blush, the scene appeared to be a one-vehicle accident, but Denison soon saw the small pickup that was crushed beneath the trailer.

When he got close enough to peer inside the vehicle, he saw a young woman who had clearly sustained severe damage to her skull. His four years of training through EMT and paramedic school kicked into high gear.

"There were cars still running into the semi from the other side so I positioned

my truck where no one could run into her car," Denison recalled. "Then I pulled her car out from underneath the trailer with my truck. I could see her head was shattered and someone had already called 911 to report that she was dead. Eventually, we were able to get her out with the Jaws of Life and transport her to the hospital in Madison."

The young lady made a full recovery and she and Denison still stay in contact three years later.

Denison doesn't characterize his actions as heroic; he sees his response as something that neighbors and citizens simply do for one another. Spurred on by his passion for helping others, Denison began his EMT training seven years ago and now volunteers his services in Lake Norden and the surrounding area.

"I always kind of regretted not going into the military, so this is my way of being a community servant," he said.

These days he teaches classes in emergency training and notes a shortage of qualified volunteers to staff rural first responder operations.

According to the South Dakota Department of Health, over the past year the active EMS workforce has declined 30 percent.

Denison said assumptions sometimes depart from reality when it comes to EMS work, and he encourages those who have a penchant for serving others to consider first responder training.



Joey Denison says emergency response work is both challenging and rewarding.

"The physical act of rendering first aid is a lot of repetitive training and muscle memory, but people think it's too complex. If you can catch a baseball, you can put your hand over a cut. It's not that hard," he said. "We can't be afraid to help someone in need in an emergency situation. Someday it could be you who needs the help."

# A LIFETIME OF CO-OP SERVICE TO MEMBERS

*Co-op leaders recognized at SDAC Hall of Fame banquet*

**Billy Gibson**

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Harry Thomas still remembers turning on the “power switch” for the first time at his home when he was a youngster.

That was made possible by his local electric cooperative, and for Thomas it was a life lesson about the great things that can happen through co-op organizations. He went on to serve for nearly four decades on the board of Venture Communications and was one of four recent inductees into the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives Hall of Fame.

Thomas and Paul Symens were recognized as 2021 inductees at the ceremony held in Watertown Sept. 22, while Chuck Birkholt and Dan Lindblom were honored as 2020 inductees. Last year’s banquet was canceled due to the pandemic.

“I’ve been around cooperative systems all my life,” Thomas said. “I remember when the co-op brought power to the farm and when Sully Buttes built the first telephone line out there. Those things would not have happened if not for cooperatives. The Bell companies built in the towns, but they had no



Inducted into the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives Hall of Fame were Harry Thomas, Chuck Birkholt and Paul Symens. Not shown is Dan Lindblom, who was unable to attend the induction ceremony in Watertown.

interest in going into the country.”

Symens served on the board at Lake Region Electric in Webster before he was elected to the state Legislature in 1987 and again in 1996. He was a board member for Farmers Union Marketing and Processing for 36 years.

“I’ve put in a lot of time with cooperatives and I know how co-ops work. I was raised in co-ops and it has been a pleasure to be a part of that process. The magic of co-ops is people working together to help each other, and as long as board and management do their jobs, it’s going to be successful.”

Symens said his advice for the younger generation of co-op leaders would be to learn about the history of cooperatives, how they were founded and why they exist.

“Learning from history will teach you a lot and keep you from making mistakes,” he said.

Birkholt started his cooperative career

as a laborer at Cam Wal Electric in Selby. He went to work “digging holes and setting poles” for 85 cents an hour until he discovered he could make more money as a lineman.

He worked at the co-op for 45 years, the last eight as general manager. He went on to serve on the board at Venture Communications for the past 21 years.

“I told my wife I always wanted to see



Hall of Fame inductee Chuck Birkholt addresses the audience at the Watertown Event Center.

what it was like on the other side of the board table,” he said. “But I think she just wanted me out of the house.”

Lindblom, a long-time board member at Black Hills Electric in Custer, was unable to attend the banquet.

# HUNTING FOR THE HUNGRY

Sportsmen Against Hunger is nearing one million pounds of game meat donated to food banks across the state since 1993.

## South Dakota hunters donate game meat for families in need through Sportsmen Against Hunger program

**Billy Gibson**

[billy.gibson@sdrea.coop](mailto:billy.gibson@sdrea.coop)

One million pounds of meat is an awful lot of protein...and a lot of goose burgers.

The organization Sportsmen Against Hunger is closing in on one million pounds of wild game donated to the needy since the program was founded in 1993 by Dr. Jeff Olson and Dr. Tom Kafka.

For nearly three decades, generous hunters throughout the state have given away a variety of game meat including deer, antelope, elk, pheasant, grouse and geese.

According to Olson, the goose meat has been quite a hit.

“Apparently, there are a lot of people who like to eat goose burgers,” he said. “It may not

sound too appetizing when you think about it, but it’s not bad and a lot of the people who receive our donations say it’s great. They’ve developed quite a taste for it.”

Olson recalls that even when he launched the program he was completely oblivious to how many people in the state were going to bed hungry every night.

“We’re reaching one million pounds of meat our hunters and processors have donated over the years, but there are so many who are food insecure in our state that we could use another several million and still not meet the need,” he said.

Olson is accustomed to working around a maze of regulations, restrictions and prohibitions, noting “there’s a new and different hurdle we have to jump every year.”

Presently, the program is facing the challenge of finding enough plants to process the donated animals. Just a few years ago, there were nearly 50 wild game processors on the list of licensed receiving plants. Today there are just 14.

Olson cites pandemic-related problems in the industry and a dearth of available workers. The plants have been forced to take domestic animals for production and push donated wild game to the back of the line.

Ron Fowler has served as field director for the program since 2005 when he retired from South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks as a game management specialist after 35 years. He works out the details of the operation, recruits processors and hunters to participate and sorts through the red tape of state and federal regulations, health precautions, quality control and the program’s certification system.

He explained that when a hunter

# SPORTSMEN AGAINST HUNGER



decides to donate a doe deer or antelope, they fill out a certificate and deliver it to any processor in the state that's on the prearranged receiving list. The certificate covers \$75 of the processing fee while the hunter is responsible for any balance, though some facilities will accept the certificate as full payment. In the case of bucks, the hunter is responsible for the entire balance, which could run to more than \$100. Processors collect the certificates



Ron Fowler, left, delivers a shipment of donated venison to a Feeding South Dakota warehouse facility.



Pictured at left, South Dakota fishermen donated 320 pounds of cleaned walleye in 2020. Above, Dr. Jeff Olson presents a plaque to Bruce Anderson, president of the Western Buffalo Company in Rapid City, for participating in the Sportsmen Against Hunger program. Shown far left is SAH Board Member Tom Weaver. Far right is SAH field director Ron Fowler.

and turn them in at the end of the season for payment.

Fowler said the policy is in place to help control and manage the state's deer population. He said some hunters will obtain more than one deer license, keep one for themselves and donate the others.

"When the program started, we had no funds to cover any of the hunter's cost, but then we created a foundation and now we can pay for does, plus we provide the casing for processors and pay for the cost of getting the meat to the food banks where it's distributed to those who need it."

Fowler said these days most donated venison is coming from deer taken within, or close to, city limits. Several larger cities and towns have allowed deer to be taken in close proximity of their borders simply to hold the deer population down and keep them out of yards, gardens and streets. The cost of processing those animals is typically shared with the local government.

Sportsmen Against Hunger is also seeing more anglers getting in on the action. More than 300 lbs. of cleaned walleye has been donated in the past year. At this year's Governor's Cup Walleye Fishing Tournament, for instance, nearly 1,000 fish went to the needy.

Most of the cleaning is done by local volunteers and members of sportsmen clubs.

Thousands of pheasants are also donated each year, often by those who are visiting the state and can't take home their kill.

Fowler maintains a steady drum beat of encouraging hunters to donate their game even though he knows the incentives to do so are diminishing. He notes that in earlier times processors weren't hard to find, but now a hunter may have to drive some distance to the nearest facility.

"It used to be more convenient for hunters when you didn't have to drive across the state to find a processor, but people are still hungry," he said.

Fowler said his work can often be challenging, but he stays motivated by remembering that there's always a need.

"There are so many families in our state that struggle and they need help," he said. "It all comes down to a warm, fuzzy thing for me. The work is a little more than I first anticipated but I can't just ignore it when I see an opportunity to help someone who needs it. We get a lot of positive feedback from our processors and the people we help are very grateful."



**Thanksgiving**  
November 25, 2021

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.

**OCTOBER 22-23**

**Governor's South Dakota Showcase**  
1201 N West Avenue, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-773-3301

**OCTOBER 22-24, 28-30**

**A Little Piece of Heaven**  
Grand Opera House, Pierre, SD, call 605-224-7826 to purchase tickets

**OCTOBER 23**

**Aberdeen Oktoberfest**  
Aberdeen Civic Arena, Aberdeen, SD, 605-380-8448

**OCTOBER 29-30**

**Deadweird**  
Various Locations, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

**OCTOBER 30**

**16th Holiday Shopping Extravaganza**  
Davison County Fairgrounds, Mitchell, SD, call Cindy at 605-999-8563 for more info

**OCTOBER 30**

**Scare in the Square**  
Main Street Square, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

**OCTOBER 30**

**Yankton's Harvest Halloween**  
Downtown, Yankton, SD, email [mandi@bostonsyankton.com](mailto:mandi@bostonsyankton.com) for more info

**OCTOBER 31**

**Halloween Bash Weekend at Mazing Acres Pumpkin Patch**  
30851 433rd Avenue, Yankton, SD, 605-760-2759

**NOVEMBER 4**

**Chris Young Famous Friends Tour**  
Summit Arena, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

**NOVEMBER 6**

**Cyrus Steele Comedy Show**  
Homestake Opera House, Lead, SD, visit <https://www.homestakeoperahouse.org/> for more info and tickets

**NOVEMBER 5-7, 12-14, 19-21**

**Julius Caesar**  
Black Hills Playhouse, Rapid City, SD, visit <https://www.bhct.org/> for more info and tickets

**NOVEMBER 12-13**

**Sioux Empire Arts and Crafts Show**  
W.H. Lyon Fairgrounds, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-332-6000

**NOVEMBER 13**

**Christmas at the Homestead**  
Adams Homestead and Nature Preserve, North Sioux City, SD, 605-232-0873

**NOVEMBER 13**

**Deadwood's Big Whiskey Fest**  
Main Street, Deadwood, SD, 605-578-1876

**NOVEMBER 13**

**Sisseton Area Merchants and Crafters Holiday Open House Extravaganza**  
Sisseton, SD, call Beverly at 605-698-7425 for more info

**NOVEMBER 19-20**

**Holiday Arts Christmas Show**  
Masonic Hall, Mitchell, SD, 605-359-2049

**NOVEMBER 20**

**Little Norge Fest: A Taste of Scandinavia**  
Canyon Lake Activity Center, Rapid City, SD, 605-342-4226

**NOVEMBER 26**

**Parade of Lights**  
Dakota Avenue, Huron, SD, 605-352-0000

**NOVEMBER 26-28**

**Beautiful - The Carole King Musical**  
Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, visit <https://www.washingtonpavilion.org/> for more info and tickets

**NOVEMBER 27**

**Holiday Celebration and Winter Market/Festival of Lights Parade**  
Downtown, Rapid City, SD, 605-381-4204

**DECEMBER 2**

**Christmas on the Prairie**  
526 North Broadway Avenue Miller, SD, 605-853-3098

**DECEMBER 3**

**Handel's Messiah**  
First Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

**DECEMBER 4**

**Rapid City Garden Club's Wreath & Centerpiece Sale**  
Central States Fairgrounds, Rapid City, SD, 605-343-0710

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