



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

RENVILLE-SIBLEY
DECEMBER 2021 VOL. 22 NO. 8

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

Christmas at the Capitol

**Capitol Christmas
event turns 40**
Pages 8-9

**The wonders of
winter stargazing**
Pages 12-13

Thousands of visitors are expected to view the nearly 100 Christmas trees on display in Pierre during the Christmas season.



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



Lenae Wordes
Communications
Manager

For me, this is a time of year for reflection, and topping my list of things I'm grateful for is our wonderful community. I believe I speak for all Renville-Sibley Co-op Power employees when I say that we are thankful to be in such an incredible place. We are fortunate to live in the same place where we work, which makes our ties to this community that much stronger.

You may recall that last month, this column touched on the first three Cooperative Principles, so this month, I'd like to tell you about the remaining four principles. The Cooperative Principles are essential to the co-op business model and benefit all members of the co-op.

AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

The fourth principal, Autonomy and Independence, means that the co-op operates in an autonomous way that is solely directed and guided by its members, reflecting the values and needs of our local community. This means the co-op is not being influenced by leaders or shareholders several states away. Instead, the co-op is led by the local members it serves.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The fifth principle, Education and Training, focuses on enhancing the knowledge of co-op employees and board members, which enables them to contribute to the development of the co-op.

By investing in continuous learning for our employees and board members, our co-op is making a commitment not just to individual professional and personal growth, but to the future of the co-op and the high quality of service our members expect and deserve. It's a win-win situation.

We also strive to inform our members (that's you!) and the public about the mission and operations of the co-op. In fact, that's why you receive this magazine every month, so we can share the latest co-op news and updates, as well as energy efficiency and safety tips.

COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES

Cooperation among cooperatives is the sixth principle and fosters the way that co-ops work together to address bigger challenges. While this principle applies to all types of cooperatives, it is especially relevant in the energy industry. In our case, we put this principle in action after major storms and disasters that cause widespread power outages. When this happens, we call on nearby co-ops to come to our aid and assist with restoration efforts - and we of course extend the same help to them when they need us. I can't think of a better example of cooperation among cooperatives.

Because we are part of the national electric co-op network, we can connect and collaborate with other electric co-ops to tackle industry-related challenges.

In addition, because we are part of the national electric co-op network, we can connect and collaborate with other electric co-ops to tackle industry-related challenges, like cybersecurity and an ever-changing energy landscape.

CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

The seventh cooperative principle, Concern for Community, is essential to who we are as cooperative organizations. We serve our community not only by being an essential service, but by helping to power our local economy toward success and collective prosperity. Whether through economic development, volunteerism or donations to local causes, we invest in this community because it's our home too.

I think you'll find that most cooperatives bring good people together to make good things happen in the community. We hope you feel that way about us, your local electric co-op.

On behalf of everyone at Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power, we're thankful for your membership, and we hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving and holiday season.

COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

RENVILLE-SIBLEY CO-OP POWER

(USPS 019-074)

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Alan Neyers – Secretary/Treasurer
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Web site: www.renville-sibley.coop

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Payton Schueller named Scholar of the Month



Congratulations to Payton Schueller from Redwood Valley High School for being selected as the October Scholar of the Month.

Payton was nominated because she is a hardworking and very dependable student. She is not afraid to step up to help when needed. 879100

A few of the many school activities Payton is involved in include Robotics, Track and Field, Student Council, and National Honor Society. Outside of

school, Payton volunteers at her church and at her local animal shelter.

Renville-Sibley Co-op Power proudly salutes Payton Schueller as the October Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Month.

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

Comparative Report

	Current YTD through Sept. 30, 2021	One Year Ago YTD through Sept. 30, 2020	10 Years Ago YTD through Sept. 30, 2011
average # of Consumers	1,882	1,882	1,927
kWhs purchased	130,119,383	121,412,310	112,014,371
Cost of purchased power	\$8,455,255.59	\$7,675,417.95	\$5,073,922.77

Ready your home for a winter break during the holidays

If you're planning to be out of town for an extended period of time during the holidays, take heed of the following recommendations to save some energy and keep your home safe while you're away.

- Set your home's thermostat to 50 degrees. This temperature is a happy midpoint that avoids wasting energy to warm an empty house while still preventing damage to your pipes and plants. If sub-20-degree days are forecast during the time you are away, drip faucets.
- Turn off your electric water heater at the breaker or set it to the lowest temperature possible.
- To avoid a potential fire hazard, unplug the washer and dryer before you leave your home. Disconnect the hoses leading to the washer to prevent them from freezing.
- Unplug all of your small appliances. You'll reduce the risk of a house fire and save a bit on your electric bill.
- Don't broadcast your travel plans on social media. Instead, share photos from your trip after you return.
- If you set a timer for your outdoor or indoor lights, make sure to switch up the times over the days you'll be gone so it's not obvious to any onlookers that the house is empty when lights go on at 6 p.m. every day like clockwork. If possible, stagger several timers that control different lights to approximate the natural movement of someone through a house.
- Close blinds and curtains. Don't advertise your belongings to any would-be house burglars.
- Be strategic about putting out post-holiday recycling and trash. If there are a lot of boxes from new gadgets or other expensive electronics, wait until you get back to put them out so they're not sitting outside in full view for days. Or have a trusted neighbor set them by the curb on the appropriate day.
- Place a hold on all mail and newspaper deliveries, and ask a neighbor or a friend to pick up any packages from your porch.

DID YOU KNOW?



On Christmas Eve 1923, President Calvin Coolidge began the country's celebration of Christmas by lighting the first National Christmas Tree decorated with electric lights.



Don't cut down trees by power lines

Milo Thompson

Milo reminds electric cooperative members that cutting down trees located near power lines can be hazardous. Milo is the child of Kurt and Rebecca Thompson of Hayti. They are members of H-D Electric.

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.



HOLIDAY DESSERTS

CRANBERRY CAKE**Ingredients:**

3 Tbsp. butter
1 cup sugar
1 egg
2 cups flour
1 cup milk
3 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt
2-3 cups raw cranberries

Butter Sauce

1 cup sugar

1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup evaporated milk or cream
1 Tbsp. flour
1 tsp. vanilla

METHOD

Grease and flour a bundt pan or 9 x 13 inch pan. Cream butter, sugar and egg. Beat in flour, milk, baking powder and salt. Fold in cranberries. Spread batter in pan. Bake at 350 degrees about 45 minutes. Bundt pan may need one hour. Serve with butter sauce. For butter sauce, mix flour and sugar. Place all ingredients except vanilla in saucepan. Heat, beating well over high heat until hot and bubbly. Add vanilla. Serve warm over cranberry cake.

Mary Jessen, Holabird

BAKED RICE PUDDING**Ingredients:**

2 cups milk
1 cup water
1/4 cup sugar
3 tbsp. rice
1 tbsp. butter
1/4 cup raisins
Pinch of salt

Topping

Sugar
Cinnamon
Milk

METHOD

In a 2-qt. baking dish, add milk, water, sugar and rice. Stir together. Add a pinch of salt and raisins. Bake at 350 degrees for one hour. Take out of oven and add butter. Let sit while you eat main meal. Dish up in bowls, sprinkle with sugar, cinnamon and add milk.

Deanna Dean, Artesian

FANCY CHRISTMAS CAKES**Ingredients:****Cakes**

1 pkg. (2-layer size) white cake mix
1 tbsp. McCormick® Red Food Color
1 tsp. McCormick® All Natural Pure Vanilla Extract
1 tbsp. McCormick® Green Food Color
1 pkg. (16 oz.) chocolate candy coating, such as CANDIQUIK®

Buttercream

1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened
1 tsp. McCormick® All Natural Pure Vanilla Extract
1 pkg. (16 oz.) confectioners' sugar, sifted
2 tbsp. milk
Pinch of salt

METHOD

Preheat oven and prepare batter as directed. Divide batter evenly into 2 bowls (about 1-1/2 cups of batter each). Stir red food color and vanilla into first bowl. Stir green color into second bowl. Pour red and green batter into greased 13 x 9-inch baking pans. Gently tap on counter to remove any air bubbles. (If you do not have 2 13 x 9-inch pans, bake one color cake first, then reuse the pan to bake the second.) Bake 6 minutes. Remove pans from oven and tap on counter to remove any air bubbles. Return pans to oven and bake 6-9 minutes longer. Cool in pans 10 minutes. Invert cakes onto wire rack. Cool completely. Refrigerate cakes until ready to assemble. For buttercream, beat butter in large bowl with electric mixer until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Add vanilla and mix. Gradually beat in confectioners' sugar on low speed, scraping sides and bottom of bowl after each addition. Add milk and salt; beat on medium-high until light and fluffy, at least 3 minutes. If frosting is too thick, beat in additional milk.

www.mccormick.com

Please send your favorite soup 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.

Consider an energy audit to save money on your bill

Most of the time, when we think of the word envelope, we think of the outer covering that our mail comes in. Or, to irritate our kids or co-workers, we might push the envelope.

However, your home's envelope consists of its outer walls, windows, doors and other openings. A well-sealed envelope, coupled with the right amount of insulation, can reduce your energy use - and, in turn, your utility bills. According to EnergyStar.gov, a whopping 9 out of 10 homes in the U.S. are under-insulated. Homeowners can save an average of 15 percent on heating and cooling costs (or an average of 11 percent on total energy costs) by air sealing their homes and adding insulation in attics, floors, over crawl spaces and basements.

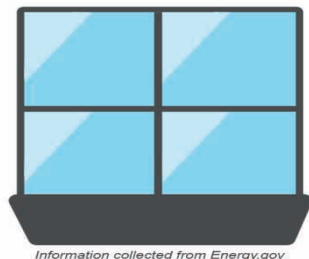
To determine if your home's envelope is in good shape, Renville-Sibley Co-op Power and Safe Electricity recommend having a home audit conducted to pinpoint any leaks. A qualified energy auditor will include an insulation check as part of a whole-house energy assessment and will identify areas of your home that need air sealing or insulation repairs. To help you create a more energy-efficient home, Renville-Sibley Co-op Power offers home energy audits. Call 800-826-2593 for more information.

DIY HOME ENERGY AUDIT

If you would like to complete your own DIY audit, find out the following:

- The type of insulation in your home.
- The R-value (rate of thermal resistance) of your insulation. Typically, the higher the R-value, the more effective it is at insulating.

About **30%** of a home's energy is lost through windows



SafeElectricity.org

- The thickness or depth (inches) of the insulation you have.

In a newer home, the builder can help identify the type of insulation used and where it is located. In an older home, you will need to perform the inspection yourself. To complete a DIY energy assessment, you will need to check the following items:

IN THE ATTIC

- A general rule of thumb when inspecting the attic insulation is that if the insulation is level with or below the attic floor joists, you probably need to add more insulation.
- If you cannot see any of the floor joists because the insulation is well above them, you probably have enough, and adding more insulation may not be cost-effective.
- Insulation should be evenly distributed with no low spots; be sure to check

throughout the attic to determine if there are any thin spots.

- Make sure the insulation in your attic has the appropriate R-value. Check the value printed on your existing insulation. If you cannot find the value, measure the depth of the insulation in inches. Multiply the depth by the following insulation type: 3.2 for fiberglass batting, for the loose fibers category, multiply by 2.5 for loose fiberglass, 2.8 for rock wool and 3.7 for cellulose. Then check EnergyStar.gov's recommended R-values. If your calculated value is less than the recommended levels for your region, then you should consider adding more insulation to your attic.

BEHIND THE WALLS

- Turn off the power to the outlet before beginning this check. Then use a voltmeter or voltage tester to confirm that there is no power at the socket before beginning work.
- Remove the outlet cover and shine a flashlight into the crack around the outlet box. You should be able to see if there is insulation in the wall and possibly how thick it is.
- Pull out a small amount of insulation if needed to help determine the type of insulation.
- Check outlets on all floors, as well as old and new parts of your home. Just because you find insulation in one wall does not mean that it is uniform throughout your home.

For more information on energy efficiency and electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

How to report a power outage to your co-op

The weather can be challenging at times for our members as well as Renville-Sibley. While the cooperative hopes it will never happen, Mother Nature can cause damage to our power lines resulting in a power outage.

If you experience a power outage, please contact the office at 320-826-2593 or 800-826-2593.

During business hours, your cooperative will do our best to answer as many calls as our phone system allows. If the number of calls coming into the office is overwhelming, the calls will be transferred to

Cooperative Response Center (CRC) in Austin, MN. After hours, all calls are transferred to CRC. Depending on the extent of the storm and the volume of calls coming into CRC, you may reach a live operator, or you may go into their automated system.

It is helpful to your cooperative and CRC to have your phone number correct in Renville-Sibley's database when reporting an outage. Members are asked to review the phone numbers printed on the bill statement for accuracy and notify the cooperative if a change should be made to this contact information.

You also have the option to send a text message to report an outage. To sign-up for this feature, please visit our web site www.renville-sibley.coop and click on Outage Reporting at the top of the page. You will be asked a series of questions to get this service set-up. Contact the office if you have any problems.

Remember, during times of large power outages, tune in to the following radio stations for updates on the status of the power outage: KLGR, KOLV, Q102, KWLM and KDJS.

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 Zaske and Matt Haubrich. Wayland Zaske'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.

CHRISTMAS AT THE CAPITOL

Each year, musicians and other entertainers from across the state perform for the tens of thousands of visitors who travel to Pierre to see the “Christmas at the Capitol” displays and decorations. *Photo by Billy Gibson*

Christmas at the Capitol: Celebrating 40 years of yuletide splendor and dazzling displays

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

With all of its spectacular lights, familiar carols and colorful decorations, Christmas at the Capitol inspires thousands to become awash in the spirit of the season.

It's an especially magical and meaningful event for Moriah Gross, founder and director of the Pierre Youth Orchestra. Over the past decade, Gross and her students have performed in the Capitol Rotunda and added to the yuletide ambiance that more than 20,000 visitors travel from far and near to experience.

Gross is one of many performers slated to appear in the Rotunda as Christmas at the Capitol takes place from Nov. 23 through Dec. 26. Visitors to this year's celebration can expect to see brilliant hues of ruby, pink and pearl in recognition of the event's 40th anniversary.

“Winter Wishes” is the theme for 2021 as nearly 100 decorated trees will line the halls and fill the

historic structure. Local businesses and government agencies, non-profit organizations and other community groups from across the state will once again put their decorating skills to the test and give the Capitol and its environs a South Dakota Christmas flair.

This year's official lighting ceremony will take place on Tuesday, Nov. 23, at 7:30 p.m. The popular Pie Day is set for Saturday, Dec. 4, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., when complimentary slices of pie, cookies, coffee and ice cream will be offered along with live musical entertainment sure to spark the Christmas spirit.

Gross said she and her students look forward to the event each year, but one memory stands out for her among the rest. Two years ago, she accompanied a guest performer who sang the traditional carol Silent Night in the language of the Lakota Sioux.

“It was so spectacular and moving to be able to have that experience there inside the State Capitol and honoring the Lakota people and

culture, and also to have our students experience that as well,” said Gross, a member of Oahe Electric Cooperative outside of Pierre.

A native of Kansas and accomplished string instrumentalist, Gross relocated to Pierre 10 years ago and soon realized there was no educational string program for public school students. So, she started the Pierre Youth Orchestra, which has nearly 40 students who are set to perform at the Capitol on Sunday, Dec. 19, at 5 p.m.

THIS YEAR'S OFFICIAL LIGHTING CEREMONY WILL TAKE PLACE TUESDAY, NOV. 23, AT 7:30 P.M. THE POPULAR PIE DAY IS SET FOR SATURDAY, DEC. 4, FROM 11 A.M. TO 3 P.M.

Gross said while she calls the Capitol “one of my favorite places to perform,” the experience is also beneficial for her music students in many ways.

“It's just the opportunity to play for

DECKING THE CAPITOL HALLS



Nearly 100 trees are decorated by clubs, associations, non-profits and government agencies. *Photo by Travel South Dakota.*

an audience in this kind of setting. It's very intimate and not like playing on a stage in a large theater where the audience is sitting at a distance away from you," she said. "In the Rotunda, there are people all around, sometimes standing room only, and they're very close and intimate. It's an emotional time of year and you get to really connect with the audience. At the same time, they have to be disciplined and focused on what they're doing. It's a unique experience that a lot of students don't always get to have."

She said many students will return after they've graduated from the program and sit in on the performance and have their photos taken with the current crop of students at the Capitol.

Observing Christmas at the Capitol from behind the scenes, Gross noted the many individuals and volunteers who help make the event a success each year.

"I can't say enough about all the committees, greeters, volunteers, organizers and others around the

Approximate number
of annual visitors

20,000

to the Christmas at
the Capitol event.

community who make this possible for people coming in from all over the country and the world. You have the sights and sounds and scents of the pine trees, and it all adds up to a wonderful holiday experience," she said. "There are so many people who all work together to make this something special."

The annual holiday event started back in 1981 with a dozen decorated trees and has grown in popularity through the past 40 years. Visitors can look for some of the more popular recurring displays such as a set of hand-painted porcelain ornaments from the China Painters Organization and an old wooden nativity scene that the local Knights of Columbus group sets up on the second floor of the Capitol each year.

Those interested in serving as a volunteer for the event can contact rick.augusztin@state.sd.us.



The State Capitol grounds are also decorated to evoke the spirit of Christmas. *Photo by Travel South Dakota.*

Operation Round Up Board announces donations

The Operation Round Up Board of Trustees met on Oct. 13 to review applications for donations. The following organizations received donations:

Renville Area Ecumenical Youth

- Financial assistance for the area youth to take a mission trip to Quad Cities.

Santa's Closet

- Provide help to those that are having difficulty at Christmas time.

LeeMar Ranch Equine Center

- Buy 10 helmets for the therapeutic riding program and Special Olympic team.

MN Brain Injury Alliance

- Annual fundraising for brain injury awareness.

Danube Area Athletic Club - Danube Playground

- Financial assistance to finish the handicap accessible playground.

The next Board meeting will be Jan. 12, 2022. Applications for donations can be found at www.renville-sibley.coop under the Your Co-op tab. Applications are due Jan. 1 to be considered at this meeting.

THANK YOU NOTES

On behalf of Imagination Library for the Redwood County Area, we would like to THANK YOU for your generous donation to provide the most powerful opportunity for

children, to dream more, read and learn as they grow. Your donation supports more than 285 children ages 0-5 years old. One book per child, per month is 3,420 books reaching homes in our community alone in 1 year. Thank you!

Imagination Library Board Members:
Anna Thomes, Heidi van der Hagen, Sue Osborne

Thank you for your donation towards our Lee-Mar Ranch Equine Center programs. We have used our new helmets on over 75 riders participating in our therapeutic riding program, Special Olympic team, 6th grade YME class, YME unified group and a variety of lesson riders over the past month. We will continue to provide these services and support a variety of riders. Thanks again for your donation!

Lee-Mar Ranch Equine Center



Lee-Mar Ranch Equine Center

WHERE'S THE NUMBER?

Last month Dan Herfurth found his member number in the newsletter. Congratulations Dan! The credit will start over with a value of \$15. Another number has been hidden in this newsletter. If you find your number and call the office by the 3rd of December, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck in your search!

ENERGY SAVING TIP

Heading out of town for the holiday season? Remember to unplug electronics that draw a phantom energy load. Some gadgets like TVs, phone chargers, gaming consoles and toothbrush chargers use energy when plugged into an outlet--even when they're not in use.

FOR SALE

Insulated dog house with tinned roof, well built throughout. \$25

Karl Breitzkreutz

Redwood Falls, MN

507-641-3397

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

October board meeting highlights

The October board meeting was held on Monday, Oct. 25 at 8 a.m. All board members were present. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Newville, Cindy Mertens, Gene Allex and Lenae Wordes. Ryan Breitbach also joined the meeting.

The board reviewed and approved the following items:

- Minutes of the September 27 board meeting
 - Operating and disbursement reports for the month of September
 - Capital credits to estates
 - Safety report for September
 - 2022 Operations Work Plan Budget
 - New Renville-Sibley logo
 - Cooperative Network voting delegates
 - NISC Director Election
 - Capital Credit Retirement
 - 990 Report
- 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 September (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
 - Christmas Open House

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

NOTICE:

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

The December board meeting will be held on Monday, Dec. 20 at 9 a.m.

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.

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

None

NOTICES

Renville-Sibley's office will be closed on Friday, December 24 in observance of Christmas Day.

Renville-Sibley's office will be closed on Friday, December 31 in observance of New Year's Day.

The annual Christmas Open House has been canceled this year. Wall and pocket calendars are available at the office for members to pick up anytime. Renville-Sibley encourages members to stop by the other open houses that will be held in Danube.

SEARCHING FOR THE STARS

Badlands Observatory photographer Teresa Hofer captured this image of The Pleiades, also known as the Seven Sisters.

Badlands Observatory welcomes stargazers, researchers and others interested in pursuing the field of astronomy

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

For centuries, astronomers have sought to find a scientific explanation for the Star of Bethlehem, which is described in the Gospel of Matthew as the celestial sign that led the Magi into the presence of the Christ child.

Some have speculated that the object high in the night sky could have been a supernova, a comet or possibly a conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Venus.

Accomplished astronomer Ron Dyvig has views of his own. As a researcher who adheres to scientific methods, he's a bit hesitant to plow into topics where science and faith may collide.

But when pressed to offer an educated opinion on the Christmas Star, he replies, "There are several elements that make it challenging to address from a scientific standpoint and there are a

half-dozen theories beyond what's there in the Biblical accounts. But I think it could have been a nova or the planet Venus. Venus can be remarkably bright after sunset when it appears to descend in the west for several weeks. That may have been what the Magi saw and would be something they could follow. But a lot of people have strong religious beliefs about it, and if you believe it was a miracle, then science can't really explain it adequately."

Dyvig is founder of the Badlands Observatory, which he opened for his own private viewing and independent research in 2000. Two years ago, he began renovating the facility located in the small community of Quinn just north of I-90, with the goal of one day welcoming members of the public interested in astronomy.

While the renovation project is not fully complete and a grand opening is set for next spring, Badlands

Observatory is now welcoming visitors by reservation only.

"Since we got settled into this facility, there has just been so much public interest in it that we decided to go public. It's as simple as that," Dyvig said. "Right now we're taking it slow with small groups. During the winter months our activities will be curtailed a bit, then we'll expect a busy spring."

A native of Deadwood, the 79-year old Dyvig took a keen interest in astronomy at an early age when he was



Teresa Hofer and Ron Dyvig are long-time collaborators who have opened the Badlands Observatory to public access.

introduced to the discipline by his local Boy Scout troop leader. He created his first observatory as a youngster when he made a concrete pad and a cylinder to hold his telescope in place in the middle of a rancher's field. During his high school and college years, he spent late nights scanning the skies, marveling at the vastness of the universe and hoping to discover new heavenly bodies.

As a college student, Dyvig learned and taught the art of telescope-making and became president of the Black Hills Astronomical Society. He later designed and fabricated the optics for the Hidden Valley Observatory in Rapid City.

Dyvig spent time honing his craft as a research assistant at the University of Arizona where he worked under several mentors and utilized the advanced facilities at Kitt Peak National Observatory. He was chosen to help design and test image intensifier camera systems for Steward Observatory.

While through the decades he kept day jobs to support his avocation, his evenings were spent star gazing and pursuing new discoveries. His passion and dedication to astronomy paid off when he discovered - and aptly dubbed - Asteroid 26715 South Dakota just a year after opening the Badlands Observatory. It's just one of the 25



Photographer Bob Rossiter and Ron Dyvig are shown with the 26-inch Newtonian Reflector telescope at Badlands Observatory.

discoveries credited to Dyvig during the course of his astronomy work.

Building the observatory was no small task. First, he found and converted an old medical building in Quinn to house the facility. Then he personally designed and fabricated all of the optics, including grinding and polishing the mirror for the 26-inch f/4.8 Newtonian Reflector telescope. West River Electric

Cooperative worked with Dyvig and the town of Quinn to install hoods over surrounding street lights to reduce "light pollution" and enhance the ability to scan the night sky.

Dyvig describes himself as fortunate to find a partner in Teresa Hofer, a career accountant who shares his passion for all things celestial.

There's always something to be done

at the observatory, Hofer said. Ongoing duties include maintaining and upgrading the optical and drive systems, control systems for the telescope and dome, facility management, designing and implementing new educational programs for visitors, website updates and keeping up-to-date on developments in the field of astronomy.

"There's plenty to do, especially since we decided to make the facility public after we figured people might like to see what we do," she said. "We had to make sure everything was comfortable for the public and do a lot of renovating and painting and upgrading."

Hofer said she is starting to promote the observatory as a destination for astronomy enthusiasts who might be interested in touring the facility and peering through one of seven telescopes on the observation deck. Dyvig is in the process of also building a radio telescope to add to his collection.

Those interested in experiencing the Badlands Observatory can call 605-381-1521 to set up a viewing time or visit www.badlandsobservatory.com.



The Orion Nebula has long captured the imaginations of star watchers as it has been associated with the Greek myth of a huntsman placed among the stars by Zeus.

BUILDING RURAL LEADERS

Minnesota Ag Rural Leadership Class IX members develop problem-solving skills during a “Building Strong Teams” session.

Working today to develop tomorrow’s rural community leaders in South Dakota and Minnesota

Billy Gibson

billy.gibson@sdrea.coop

Success in any endeavor calls for solid leadership. Don Norton of the South Dakota Agricultural and Rural Leadership Program (SDARL) is eager to build better leaders who envision a more prosperous future for individuals, families and businesses across the state.

Norton believes leadership skills don’t just materialize out of thin air. Those skills and abilities have to be taught. That’s the goal of SDARL, an 18-month program that takes participants through an intensive course of conferences, class time and state, national and international seminars all designed to prepare the students to return to their communities and make positive contributions.

“You don’t see SDARL graduates sitting on the sidelines,” Norton

said. “They’re stepping up to serve on commodity and corporate boards, in community organizations, in government and in their families, leading and taking action and inspiring others to do the same.”

SDARL Class VII graduate Mike Traxinger of Claremont is doing anything but sitting on the sidelines. Traxinger is a fifth-generation farmer and rancher who also serves as general counsel and director of governmental affairs for Agtegra Cooperative. He recently joined the board of directors at Northern Electric Cooperative based in Bath, is past president of the American Agricultural Law Association, co-chair of the Agricultural Law Committee of the State Bar of South Dakota and a member of the South Dakota Farm Bureau, Farmers Union and South Dakota Simmental Association.

“The SDARL program really helped hone my leadership skills and gave me more insight into ways that I could make a difference that I hadn’t thought of before,” said Traxinger, who also serves as president of the South Dakota Association of Cooperatives. “Leadership is vital to the continued success of rural America, farming and ranching operations, and our communities. And programs like SDARL are very effective in developing strong leaders who have a passion for service and a heart for helping others succeed in a way that’s beneficial for everyone.”

The SDARL Foundation was created in 1998 under the first Executive Director Dr. Dan Gee, who stepped into the role after retiring from the Animal Science Department at South Dakota State University. The first class started in 2000 with participants representing a range of backgrounds including ranching, farming, banking, media, government and private business.

Dr. Gee was the leader of SDARL



Leadership students take a field tour of a logging operation in northern Minnesota.

in 2008 when Olga Brouwer went through the curriculum. Brouwer was so impressed with Dr. Gee and the program that she later went on to become leader of the Minnesota Agriculture Rural Leadership (MARL) and has held that position for the past 10 years. She points out that both the MARL and SDARL programs were formed on the same day 21 years ago and have graduated a combined 600 students during that time.

“I learned so much from Dr. Gee,” said Brouwer, who once operated a dairy farm in Elkton. “He was super-educational and also provided a lot of insight into the political process, how to reach out. If you go and talk to legislators and staffers you find out there are reasons why things might not be working out so well. But in order to change things, you have to be at the table and be active, especially for cooperatives.”

While both programs have similar structures and operate in similar fashion, Brouwer said MARL is affiliated with the University of Minnesota Extension and places a bit more stress on the academic side in the learning material.

Kylie and Jake Rieke are both graduates of the MARL program and leaders in their community. Along with raising corn and bean crops, Jake is chairman and a founding organizer of the R-S Fiber Cooperative while Kylie serves on the board of Renville-Sibley Cooperative Power Association based in Danube, Minn.

Jake participated in MARL from 2018 to 2020 and was impressed with what he gained from the program. His group traveled to Cambodia and Taiwan to examine their agricultural practices.

“It was a great experience. For us, it blew open an entire network of connected individuals to draw off their expertise and bounce ideas off of,” he said. “Everybody in the group brings a unique background in different fields, so there are people you can call to ask questions or answer questions someone may have for you. It gives you a fast lane for networking and for getting your projects moving to accomplish whatever goals you have in front of you.”

Neither SDARL nor MARL receive direct funds from state or federal governments to support their programming. Participants pay

The number of years
SDARL and MARL

21

have been developing
community leaders.

a percentage of the cost of going through the program but most funding comes from individuals, businesses and partnering organizations whose goal is to improve and develop rural communities.

One of those organizations standing in full support of both programs and the concept of rural leadership development is East River Electric Power Cooperative, which provides transmission, substation and distribution services for electric cooperatives in both states.

Those interested in investing in rural leadership through these programs can visit www.sdagleadership.com and www.marlprogram.org.



Christmas Day
December 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.

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 26-28

DECEMBER 4-6, 10-23, 26-31

Christmas Nights of Lights

Storybook Island, Rapid City, SD, 1-605-342-6357

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 2

Yankton Holiday Festival of Lights

Downtown, Yankton, SD,
605-668-5231

DECEMBER 3

Handel's Messiah

First Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

DECEMBER 3-4

Christmas in The Hills – "Visions of Sugar Plums"

Various Locations, Hot Springs, SD, 605-890-0519

DECEMBER 3-5

Annual Christmas Tree Lighting & Cowboy Christmas

Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center, Fort Pierre, SD, 605-223-7690

DECEMBER 4

Rapid City Garden Club's Wreath & Centerpiece Sale

Central States Fairgrounds, Rapid City, SD, 605-343-0710

DECEMBER 5

Magical Medora Christmas

Homestake Opera House, Rapid City, SD, visit <https://www.homestakeoperahouse.org/> for more info and tickets

DECEMBER 10

for KING & COUNTRY – A Drummer Boy Christmas Tour

Denny Sanford Premier Center, Sioux Falls, SD, tickets available at <https://smarturl.it/DBSiouxFallsSD>

DECEMBER 11

Breakfast with Santa

Bramble Park Zoo, Watertown, SD, tickets go on sale after Thanksgiving, 605-882-6269

DECEMBER 11

Frontier Christmas

Fort Sisseton Historic State Park, Lake City, SD, 605-448-5474

DECEMBER 11-12

Christmas with the

Symphony: 'Tis the Season

Washington Pavilion, Sioux Falls, SD, tickets available at <https://www.bhsymphony.org/>

DECEMBER 11-12, 18-19

Christmas Tours of the Historic Adams House

22 Van Buren Street, Deadwood, SD, 605-722-4800

DECEMBER 15-18

Lakota Nation Invitational 45th Anniversary

The Monument, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

DECEMBER 16-19

25th Annual Christmas at the Cathedral

Cathedral of Saint Joseph, Sioux Falls, SD, visit <https://ccfesd.org/events/christmas-at-the-cathedral/>

DECEMBER 18

Vendor and Craft Market

Watertown Mall, Watertown, SD, 605-882-1734

DECEMBER 31

New Year's Eve with The Davis Sisters

601 Columbus Street, Rapid City, SD, tickets available at <https://www.bhsymphony.org/>

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