



# Renville-Sibley

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

May 2018 Vol. 19 No. 1

# Cooperative Connections



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# Rate Changes Announced at Annual Meeting



**DeeAnne Newville, CEO**

dnewville@renville-sibley.coop

Phone: 320-826-2593 or

Toll Free 800-826-2593

By the time you get this newsletter, we will have hosted our 80th annual meeting. This year's annual meeting was held a week later than usual due to the timing of Easter. Our newsletter deadline was the morning of our annual meeting, so we will include pictures and more information from our annual meeting in next month's newsletter. The director election results, voting results for the proposed bylaw changes and a list of prize winners, including the

winners of the coloring contest, can be found on our website.

The following is a recap of what I presented at the annual meeting.

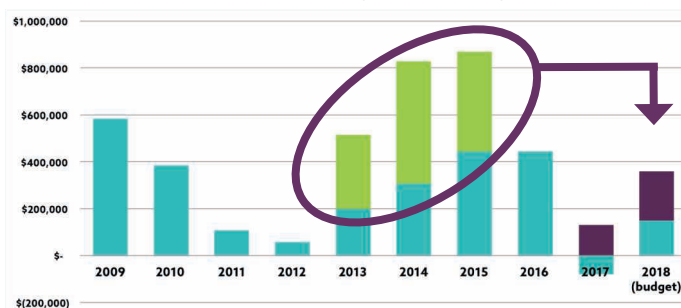
In celebration of our 80th annual meeting our leadership report was condensed to allow more time for our guest speaker. You are always welcome to call me or stop by the office anytime if you would like to have a more in-depth conversation on any topic.

Working with high-voltage electricity, linemen find themselves in potential life and death situations on a regular basis. We are happy the second Monday of April each year has been set aside to officially support and honor linemen.

I am proud of all our employees and appreciate their dedication to you, our members. They are the ones who bring you safe and reliable electricity, answer your questions, maintain your data and make sure we meet all our state and federal mandates. I am honored to work with such an amazing group of individuals and I am thankful for the opportunity I have been given to be a part of your cooperative.

The cost of wholesale power has the single largest impact on energy rates, representing an anticipated 73 cents of every dollar you will pay toward your electric bill in 2018. You may recall, Basin Electric implemented a 13 percent rate increase in August of 2016. We have been using revenue deferred from 2013, 2014 and 2015 to allow us to minimize the impact. We will bring in \$210,500 from our revenue deferral account again this year. An additional \$136,000 will be generated by a rate increase, representing an overall annual rate increase of approximately 2.6 percent.

## Revenue Deferral Impact Operating Margin



The 2018 residential rate increase, which will take effect in May, includes increasing our general service monthly charge to \$40 and increasing the small three-phase monthly charge to \$90. Controlled air conditioning, controlled grain drying, electric heat, and off-peak irrigation rates will increase to 5.9 cents per kilowatt-hour. The general service and small three-phase energy charge will remain unchanged at 12.02 cents per kilowatt-hour.

## Residential Rate Increase Effective May 1, 2018

(reflected on bills received in June)

Single-Phase General Service Rate		Small Three-Phase Rate	
Monthly Customer Charge		Monthly Customer Charge	
Previous	New	Previous	New
\$36/month	\$40/month	\$75/month	\$90/month

Controlled Air, Controlled Grain Drying and Electric Heat Rates		Off-Peak Irrigation Rate	
Energy Charge		Energy Charge	
Previous	New	Previous	New
5.4¢/ kWh	5.9¢/ kWh	5.25¢/ kWh	5.9¢/ kWh

All commercial rates are impacted by the rate increase. The Large 5/7 interruptible rate will increase to 4.4 cents per kilowatt-hour and the Small 5/7 interruptible rate will increase to 5.88 cents per kilowatt-hour. We will no longer have a different rate for controlled months, as East River Electric Power Cooperative, our wholesale power provider, does not charge us a different rate. The demand charge will remain unchanged for the 5/7 interruptible rates. The small demand and energy and large three-phase

accounts will see an increase of 50 cents per kilowatt on their monthly demand charges. The small demand and energy rate per kilowatt hour will increase to 5.85 cents and the large three-phase rate per kilowatt hour will increase to 5.38 cents.

## Commercial Rate Increase

Effective May 1, 2018 (reflected on bills received in June)

Large Power 5/7 Interruptible		
Monthly Customer Charge		
	Previous	New
Controlled Month	4.16¢/kWh	4.4¢/kWh
Uncontrolled Month	4.32¢/kWh	4.4¢/kWh

Small Power 5/7 Interruptible		
Monthly Customer Charge		
	Previous	New
Controlled Month	5.56¢/kWh	5.88¢/kWh
Uncontrolled Month	5.78¢/kWh	5.88¢/kWh

Small Demand and Energy		
Monthly Demand and Energy Charge		
	Previous	New
Peak Demand	\$13/kW	\$13.50/kW
Energy	5.67¢/ kWh	5.85¢/ kWh

Large Three-Phase		
Monthly Demand and Energy Charge		
	Previous	New
Peak Demand	\$13/kW	\$13.50/kW
Energy	5.2¢/ kWh	5.38¢/ kWh

Effective May 1, 2018, Renville Sibley will begin assessing a Grid Access Charge for all new distributed generation installations in excess of 3.5 kilowatts. Members who install single-phase wind or solar on our system will receive a monthly charge of \$5.76 per kilowatt not to exceed a total of \$57 per month. Small three-phase installations will be charged \$4.67 per month per kilowatt not to exceed \$135 per month. More details on the Grid Access Charge can be found in the April newsletter.

## New Grid Access Charge

Assessed to Distributed Generation (wind and solar) facilities for applications received after May 1 2018

No charge for the first 3.5 kW of installed generation.

Charges based on nameplate kilowatt (kW) rating.

Single-Phase General Service Rate	
Monthly Charge	Not to Exceed
\$5.76/kW	\$57/month

Small Three-Phase Rate	
Monthly Charge	Not to Exceed
\$4.67/kW	\$135/month

If you have any questions about how the rate increase or the Grid Access Charge impacts you specifically, please feel free to call me or stop by the office. We will run some numbers for you based on your historical usage.

As a not-for-profit cooperative our goal is to only bring in enough margin, or profit, to maintain modest financial ratios to meet all our mortgage covenants and assure financial stability both now and in the future.

We appreciate you attending all our events throughout the year and for being an active participant in your cooperative. On behalf of our board of directors, employees and leadership team, I would like to thank you for your patronage and support.



## Notice:

Renville-Sibley's office will be closed on Monday, May 28, in observance of Memorial Day.

# Renville-Sibley

## Cooperative Connections

(USPS 019-074)

### Board of Directors

Philip Nestande – Chair  
Roger Manthei – Vice Chair  
Alan Neyers – Secretary/Treasurer  
Steve Benson  
Randy Dolezal  
Matt Haubrich  
Whitey Hinderman  
Gary Peterson  
Wayland Zaske

### Board of Directors

Gene Alex – Line Superintendent  
Brian Athmann – Journeyman Lineman  
Shawn Beckler – Crew Chief  
Mike Benson – Journeyman Lineman  
Brad Braulick – Crew Chief  
Nick Bruns – Operations Assistant  
Anthony Carruth – Journeyman Lineman  
Amy Ervin – Consumer Accounts Representative  
Rick Ferguson – Warehouseman  
Brayden Fischer – Journeyman Lineman  
Cindy Mertens – Administrative Services Manager  
DeeAnne Newville – CEO  
Brandon Ochs – Journeyman Lineman  
Clint Olson – Journeyman Lineman  
Lenae Wordes – Communications Manager

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

### Fly Drones Safely

Drones are unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) that are increasingly being used recreationally and professionally. As a result, there is an increasing need to ensure these craft are flown safely and within regulations.

Keep drones away from overhead power lines. If a drone flies into a power line, it could cause power outages. It could also result in downed lines, which pose a dangerous electrical safety hazard. The falling debris could also endanger public safety.



Touching a downed line or anything it has fallen on, like a fence or a tree limb, could get you injured or even killed. Stay away and instruct others to do the same. If you come across downed power lines, call 911 to notify emergency personnel and the utility immediately.

Follow federal guidelines for registering your drone or getting business approval, and be aware of and abide by community and state-specific legislation. Also, keep these FAA safety guidelines in mind:

- Before flying the drone, check it for damage. Have a damaged drone repaired before use.
- Never fly drones higher than 400 feet.
- Do not fly the drone beyond your line of sight.
- Do not fly near airports, manned aircraft, stadiums or people.
- Do not fly for commercial purposes, unless specifically authorized by the FAA.
- Do not fly in bad weather conditions, such as low visibility or high winds.
- Never fly your drone recklessly. You could be fined for endangering people or other aircraft.

Source: [safeelectricity.org](http://safeelectricity.org)



## May is National Electrical Safety Month

This month, we encourage all members to take extra time to plug into safety.

## #ElectricalSafetyMonth



AMERICA'S ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVES

### KIDS CORNER SAFETY POSTER

**"If a power line is touching a car, stay in the car or jump out!"**

**JaeShawnia Iron Hawk**, Second-grader at Dupree Public School



JaeShawnia is the daughter of Lindsey Flying By, Dupree, S.D. She is a member of Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative, Timber Lake, S.D.

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



# Comforting Casseroles

Photo courtesy: McCormick

## Quesadilla Casserole

1 lb. ground beef	2 tsp. chili powder
1/2 cup chopped onion	1 tsp. ground cumin
2 (8 oz. each) cans tomato sauce	1 tsp. garlic, minced
1 (15 oz.) can black beans, drained and rinsed	1/2 tsp. oregano leaves
1 (8-3/4 oz.) can whole kernel corn, undrained	1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper
1 (4-1/2 oz.) can chopped green chiles, undrained	6 (8-inch) flour tortillas
	2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese

Brown beef and onion in large skillet on medium-high heat; drain. Add tomato sauce, beans, corn and green chiles; mix well. Stir in all seasonings. Bring to boil. Reduce heat to low; simmer 5 minutes. Spread 1/2 cup of the beef mixture on bottom of 9x13-inch baking dish sprayed with no stick cooking spray. Top with 3 of the tortillas, overlapping as needed. Layer with 1/2 of the remaining beef mixture and 1/2 of the cheese. Repeat with remaining tortillas, beef mixture and cheese. Bake at 350°F. for 15 minutes or until heated through. Let stand 5 minutes before serving. Makes 8 servings.

*Nutritional Information Per Serving: Calories 391, Total Fat 19g, Sodium 950mg, Cholesterol 63mg, Carbohydrates 31g, Protein 24g, Dietary Fiber 4g*

**Pictured, Cooperative Connections**

## Ham and Cauliflower Casserole

4 cups chopped fresh cauliflower	1/2 cup sour cream
1/4 cup butter, cubed	2 cups cubed cooked ham
1/3 cup flour	1 (4 oz.) can mushrooms, drained
2 cups milk	<b>Topping:</b>
1 cup shredded Cheddar cheese	1 cup soft bread crumbs
	1 T. butter, melted

In a large saucepan, cover cauliflower with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and simmer for 5 to 10 minutes or until tender. Meanwhile, in another large saucepan, melt butter; stir in flour until smooth. Gradually add milk. Bring to a boil; cook and stir until thickened. Remove from heat. Stir in cheese and sour cream until melted. Drain cauliflower. In large bowl, combine cauliflower, ham and mushrooms. Add cheese sauce and toss to coat. Transfer to a greased 2-quart baking dish. Combine topping ingredients; sprinkle over casserole. Bake, uncovered, at 350°F. for 40 to 45 minutes.

**Rebecca Hauser, Tripp, S.D.**

## Chicken Crescent Casserole

4 cups cubed cooked chicken or turkey	1/2 cup chopped celery
1 can cream of chicken soup	1/2 cup chopped onion
1 can cream of celery soup	1/2 cup sour cream
1 (8 oz.) can sliced water chestnuts, drained	1 (8 oz.) can refrigerated crescent rolls
1 (4 oz.) can mushroom stems and pieces, drained	6 oz. shredded Swiss or American cheese
2/3 cup mayonnaise	2 to 4 T. butter, melted

In a large saucepan, combine first 9 ingredients. Cook over medium heat until hot and bubbly. Pour into an ungreased 12x8-inch baking dish. Place rolls on top of hot chicken mixture. Combine cheese and butter; spread over rolls. Bake at 350°F. for 20 to 25 minutes or until crust is deep golden brown. **Variation:** Substitute 4 cups of imitation crabmeat for the chicken or turkey and 1 can cream of shrimp soup in place of the cream of chicken soup.

**Mary Crane, Mitchell, S.D.**

## Jalapeno Tater Tot Casserole

1 (2 lb.) bag tater tots	1 lb. bacon, cooked and crumbled
2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened	6 jalapeno peppers, deseeded and diced
1 cup sour cream	6 green onions, thinly sliced
2 cups Mexican Cheddar jack shredded cheese, divided	

Line a casserole dish with tater tots. Bake at 425°F. for 15 minutes. In a medium bowl, combine cream cheese, sour cream, 1 cup Cheddar jack cheese, bacon (reserve some for topping), diced jalapeno peppers and sliced onions (save a few for the top). Stir to thoroughly combine ingredients. Spread the jalapeno mixture over the tater tots. Top with remaining cup of cheese. Sprinkle with reserved bacon pieces and onion. Bake for 20 minutes. Serves 12.

**Sandi Litschewski, Spearfish, S.D.**

Please send your favorite dairy, dessert and salad recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3).

Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in June 2018. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.



Get on the Bus! Join us July 25-27 and check out your power trail.

# TRAVEL WITH US!

## Visit Beautiful North Dakota with Renville-Sibley

### Lenae Wordes

[lwordes@renville-sibley.coop](mailto:lwordes@renville-sibley.coop)

Renville-Sibley invites you to join us on a great trip to North Dakota to learn all about the generation of your electricity. This adventure will include a tour of the Coteau Freedom Coal Mine, Antelope Valley Station and the Garrison Dam.

On this tour you will learn all about your electricity, all the way from taking the coal from the mine to generating the power that gets transmitted to your home. You will see the really LARGE trucks that haul the coal to the plant, experience the heat that is created when your electricity is generated and learn how it is moved over the power lines to your home. At the Garrison Dam, you will hear how the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers manages this multi-purpose project including hydroelectric power production, irrigation and flood damage reduction amongst a host of other projects. Even if you already know all about electricity, come join your neighbors and friends to see the sights of beautiful North Dakota.

The tour will take place July 25-27. The first and last day of the tour are travel days with a lot of fun mixed in. July 26 is a full day of absorbing “electrifying” information. We invite all members who have not taken this tour before to travel with us. The cost is \$15/ person or \$25/couple or family. Families with children over 8 years old are welcome to attend. More details will be included in upcoming issues of *Renville-Sibley Cooperative Connections*.

If you would like to sign-up for this tour, give Lenae a call at the office or e-mail her at [lwordes@renville-sibley.coop](mailto:lwordes@renville-sibley.coop).



Weather-permitting, tour participants will see one of Coteau Properties' three drag lines at work.



## Steve Benson CCD Certificate

Renville-Sibley congratulates Steve Benson for completing all the required training courses to become a Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD). To receive this status, he completed five courses and a learning assessment of each course. These training courses provide the foundation of knowledge needed for leadership as a Renville-Sibley board member. The courses completed include:

- Strategic Planning
- Financial Decision Making
- Director Duties and Liabilities
- Understanding the Electric Business
- Board Roles and Relationships

Completing these courses demonstrates the commitment he has to the success of your cooperative. Congratulations, Steve!



## Scholars Honored for Months of February and March

Renville-Sibley Co-op Power would like to recognize **Meghan Beckendorf** as February's Touchstone Energy® Scholar of the Month. Meghan is a senior at Renville County West High School. She was nominated because of her leadership ability both in and out of the classroom. In the classroom, she often lends a caring hand to her classmates in a kind, patient fashion. Outside of the classroom, she is involved in FFA and 4-H where she has won numerous awards and is passionate about sharing her knowledge with younger students. Meghan also teaches swimming lessons at the local pool. Renville-Sibley Co-op Power salutes Meghan as the February Touchstone Energy Scholar of the month.



Touchstone Energy®  
Cooperatives

*The power of human connections®*

Renville-Sibley also recognizes **Riley Cronen** as the March Touchstone Energy Scholar of the Month. Riley is a senior at MACCRAY High School. He was nominated because not only is he an excellent student, he also

has a great sense of humor, a wonderful personality and a good heart. Riley is willing to help anyone at any time, including tutoring other students in math and helping them to understand some difficult mathematical concepts. He is active in several different groups in school and is also active in his church. Renville-Sibley Co-op salutes Riley as the March Touchstone Energy Scholar of the month.

More information on the Scholar of the Month program can be found on our website under the Customer Service tab.

## Comparative Report

	Current (through Feb. 28)	One Year Ago (through Feb. 28)	10 Years Ago (through Feb. 28)
Average No. of Consumers	1,882	1,888	1,972
kWhs Purchased	39,537,865	32,150,734	37,430,687
Cost of Purchased Power	\$2,453,278.66	\$2,021,129.33	\$1,200,108.13

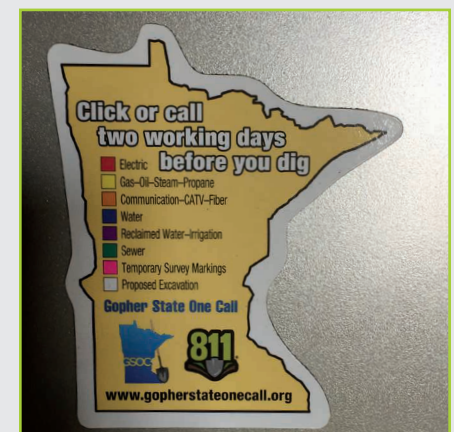
## Reminder:


Renville-Sibley encourages any member planning on making changes to their service in 2018 to please contact our office as soon as possible. In order to complete these projects on time, material may need to be ordered well in advance as often there is extended lead time to get the appropriate material. In addition, crew time will be scheduled in the order projects and material are received.

## Outage Report

affecting 10 members or more

Monday, March 5, and into the early morning hours of March 6, a storm passed through Renville-Sibley's system causing many members to experience power outages. Most of the outages were due to the strong winds and ice that had built up on the lines, which caused the power lines to gallop and slap together. There were also outages caused by equipment failure due to the weather conditions. At one point during this time frame, the Cairo substation was down due to the failure of Xcel's transmission line, which feeds the substation. Because of the number and various durations of these outages, they are not listed individually in this section. Please contact Renville-Sibley's office for more details about these power outages.





Boosting attic insulation is one way to cut energy bills.

# ENERGY UPGRADES FOR A HAPPIER HOME

## Boost Your Home's Comfort And Cut Energy Use

**Diane Veto Parham**

Contributing Writer

Imagine your house is not just the place you sleep, eat and store your stuff, but more like a part of your family, with its own unique needs. Ignore those needs and both you and your home suffer the consequences. But, pay closer attention, and you can find ways to enjoy a more pleasant – and efficient – living environment.

“It’s amazing how much comfort you can provide by spending a few dollars,” says Brian Sloboda, program manager for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Arlington, Va., “You’re going to increase your quality of life.”

Knowing what your house needs is job one. Your heating-and-air system, your appliances, your insulation and even your lightbulbs can affect not only how your home is behaving, but also how much you’re paying to keep it all running.

Need some ideas to get started? Here are seven smart ways to invest in a comfortable and energy-efficient house.

### 1. Get a professional home-energy audit

**Cost:** About \$250 to \$650.

**Benefit:** Making recommended improvements can cut energy use 10 percent to 40 percent.

**DIY potential:** None; use a certified professional.

A whole-house energy audit will take a few hours and evaluate household energy use, how the heating-and-air system is functioning and whether there’s adequate insulation. Using diagnostic

tools like a blower door and a thermal imaging camera, an auditor tests for leaks in ductwork and around windows and doors, plus other problems with the home’s “envelope” – essentially, the parts of the house that separate its insulated, air-conditioned interior from unconditioned spaces like attics and crawlspaces.

### 2. Seal your house

**Cost:** Ranges from a few dollars for weather stripping and caulk to thousands of dollars for whole-house weatherization.

**Benefit:** Annual energy savings of 10 percent to 20 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

**DIY potential:** You can do simple tasks; professionals should handle large-scale insulation or ductwork improvements

“Make sure your house is well insulated and well sealed,” says Alan Shedd, director of energy solutions for Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives. A handy do-it-yourselfer can tackle simple sealing tasks. Feel for drafts or look for cracks and gaps around windows and doors, around electrical outlets and light fixtures, where pipes and wires penetrate walls, floors or ceilings, around fireplaces and where ceilings meet walls. Basic DIY materials like weather-stripping tape, tubes of caulk and spray foam are available at home-improvement stores.

If you invested in a professional home-energy audit, you know exactly where air is leaking and what repairs are needed. For fixes outside your skill set – for example, adding insulation or repairing leaky ductwork – ask your co-op for a list of certified contractors or visit Building Performance Institute’s website.



### 3. Replace your HVAC system

**Cost:** Ranges from a few thousand dollars for a single-zone, mini-split system up to tens of thousands to install a geothermal system.

**Benefit:** Upgrading to ENERGY STAR®-certified heating and cooling equipment can deliver annual energy-bill savings of 10 percent to 30 percent, according to the Department of Energy; geothermal systems can cut energy use for heating and cooling by 25 percent to 50 percent.

**DIY potential:** You'll need a trained professional to properly size and install a system for your needs.

Heating and cooling account for about half of typical household energy costs. Minimize those expenses by upgrading to a more efficient system when your current unit ages out. Expect an HVAC system to last, on average, about 10 to 12 years.

Air-source heat pumps, which draw heat from the air and move it indoors or outdoors as needed, provide efficient heating and cooling from a single unit. Ground-source (geothermal) heat pumps are the most efficient, albeit more expensive, heating-and-cooling option. Drawing heat from stable ground temperatures rather than fluctuating air temperatures, geothermal heat pumps use about 25 percent to 50 percent less electricity than conventional HVAC systems.

Geothermal is "the gold standard" for peak efficiency in heating and cooling, Shedd says, where the property can accommodate an extensive vertical or horizontal underground-loop system.

For any heating-and-cooling system, proper installation is essential to reap full benefits of energy-efficient performance. A certified HVAC contractor will do a load calculation to determine what size HVAC unit is right for your house and whether any special adjustments are necessary for your location.

### 4. Modernize major appliances

**Cost:** Hundreds of dollars for major appliances; zero dollars for unplugging energy hogs that are not in use.

**Benefit:** Save anywhere from a few dollars up to hundreds of dollars a year.

**DIY potential:** You'll need a professional to install some appliances, but you can unplug small appliances around the house in minutes.

Among your appliances, the two biggest energy users are water heaters and refrigerators, which are nearly always on duty. After that, you might be surprised by another energy hog: consumer electronics.

"The fastest-growing user of electricity in your house is all the things you plug in," Shedd says.

### 5. Boost your attic insulation

**Cost:** National averages range from \$1,300 to \$2,000, depending on home location, attic size and type of insulation.

**Benefit:** Reduce your energy bills by keeping heated and cooled air in your living space.

**DIY potential:** Handy homeowners can add insulation with

proper tools, safety gear and precautions, but it's a job best left to professionals.

It's all about the R-value. That's the number assigned to insulating materials based on how well they resist the transfer of heat. Higher numbers mean more resistance to heat flow and more effective insulation. For attics, recommended R-values range from 30 in warmer climates to 60 in colder regions. To learn what's recommended for your climate zone, consult the R-values map at [www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=home\\_sealing.hm\\_improve-insulation\\_table](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=home_sealing.hm_improve-insulation_table).

Older homes are more likely to lack enough attic insulation for peak efficiency, because "energy-efficiency standards keep going up and getting higher," Shedd says. "Thirty years ago, R-19 was standard practice."

What you spend to upgrade your attic insulation will depend on multiple variables, including the type of insulation – for example, fiberglass or cellulose, batts or loose fill – as well as the size of the attic space and the contractor's labor costs.

### 6. Switch to efficient light bulbs

**Cost:** A few dollars per bulb.

**Benefit:** Save about \$50 per year by replacing 15 traditional incandescent bulbs with more efficient energy-saving light bulbs.

**DIY potential:** You can handle this.

You're going to change your light bulbs sooner or later. When you do, why not invest in bulbs that will save energy and create the lighting environment you want in your home?

When you're shopping, pay attention to lumens – the brightness of the bulb – rather than watts, which indicate how much energy it uses. Packaging often refers to the wattage a new bulb can replace – for example, an energy-saving 800-lumen bulb can replace a 60-watt bulb. Look at the lighting-facts label for details about the bulb's lumens, estimated yearly energy cost and lifespan and the lighting color. ENERGY STAR®-certified bulbs can deliver the brightness you want while using 70 percent to 90 percent less energy.

### 7. Install smart thermostats

**Cost:** Products range from about \$170 to \$250.

**Benefit:** Manufacturers estimate annual savings of 9 percent to 23 percent on heating and cooling costs.

**DIY potential:** Video and written instructions can guide you through installation and Wi-Fi set-up.

Early versions of programmable thermostats were hailed as tools that would help homeowners save energy and money and increase home comfort, all by tailoring thermostat settings to daytime, nighttime, weekend and vacation schedules. And they did – but only for those who bothered to manually program them.

Thanks to the internet connection and remote-control options, smart thermostats are ideal for use in electric cooperative load-control programs. Across the country, cooperatives are testing new programs that use this technology to help members save energy and help co-ops reduce demand.

# March Board Meeting Highlights

The March board meeting was held on Monday, March 26, at 8 a.m. All board members were present except Roger Manthei and Randy Dolezal. Others present were CEO DeeAnne Newville, Lenae Wordes, Cindy Mertens and Gene Allex.

## The following items were reviewed and approved by the board:

- Minutes of the February board meeting
- Operating and disbursement reports for the month of February
- Capital credits to an estate
- Safety report for March
- Form 219 – Inventory of Work Orders
- Revisions to Policy 537 – Dress and Grooming Standards
- Revisions to Policy 320 – Marketing
- 2018 budget
- 2018 rate increase
- Revisions to Policy 425 – Cogeneration and Small Power Production
- Distributed Generation Reports
- Grid Access Charge

## The board reviewed:

- List of new members and capital credits transferred
- Reports from staff members as to the activities in their department. Items in the reports include:
  - High level Statement of Operations review – YTD through February 2018 (unaudited)
  - Organization activities
  - East River update
  - NRECA update
  - MREA update
  - Line crew work in progress and pending work
  - Accounts receivable
  - Scholarship Program
  - Youth Tour
  - 80th annual meeting
  - Basin Electric tour
- Upcoming meetings were discussed.

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

## Notice:

The April board meeting will be held on Monday, April 30, 2018, at 8 a.m. The May board meeting will be held on Thursday, May 31, 2018, at 8 a.m.

## Where's the Number?

Last month, Marshall Hegg found his member number in the newsletter. Congratulations! Marshall will receive a \$20 credit on his next electric statement. The credit will start over at a value of \$10. A new number has been hidden somewhere in this newsletter. If you find your number and call the office by May 3, you will receive this credit on your electric statement. Good luck in your search!

## Mission Statement:

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

## For Sale:

**Firewood, you cut, you haul, \$30 a truckload.**

Virginia Sullivan, Sacred Heart, MN  
320-298-6514

**1,500 gallon water/fertilizer tank, fiberglass on skids, \$300 or BO**  
Chuck Haen, Renville, MN  
320-212-2572

**500 gallon fuel tank on running gear with 12 v pump, \$250**  
Phil Haen, Renville, MN  
320-979-0887

## Wanted:

**Older single-axle dump truck, gas or diesel.**  
Dan Marcus, Clara City, MN  
320-212-1828

## FREE Want Ad Service

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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# Hmmm, What Are They Up To?

## A Safety Note from Your Cooperative



**Gene Alex**

Line Superintendent  
gallex@renville-sibley.coop

**Have you ever seen our crews standing in a "huddle?" They are doing one of the most important tasks of their job: They are participating in a tailgate or job briefing.**

Sometimes what we see, is NOT what we see. Let me explain.

Have you ever seen our crews standing in a "huddle?" If so, did you think to yourself, "Why aren't they working instead of just standing around?" To a person driving by or looking out their window, it appears they aren't working. But, they are! In fact, they are doing one of the most important tasks of their job – they are participating in a tailgate or job briefing. So, why do they take the time to do this every day?

### To Follow OSHA Standards

Our crews are following OSHA standards when they conduct a job briefing. 29 CFR 1910.269(c) (1)(ii) states, "The employer shall ensure that the employee in charge conducts a job briefing that meets paragraphs (c)(2), (c)(3), and (c)(4) of this section with the employees involved before they start each job." Those sections then describe how the job briefing will be completed.

During the job briefing, OSHA then spells out that the person conducting the job briefing needs to cover these five items:

- hazards associated with the job,
- work procedures involved,
- special precautions,
- energy-source controls, and
- personal protective equipment requirements.

Also interesting, OSHA even describes how to do a job briefing when working alone.

### To Save a Life

Yet, 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. Our crews do job briefings:

- To discuss potential hazards unique to this job.
- To describe the work that will be done and by whom; assign tasks.
- To review emergency actions if something goes wrong.
- To confirm everyone can give the location if there is an emergency.
- To check over the personal protective equipment people have and if it is in good condition.
- To give everyone on the crew a chance to ask questions.
- To review the safety rules associated with the particular job.
- To remind the crew they can stop the job anytime if they feel unsafe.

Simply put, a job briefing is a safe work practice we use every day at the co-op to make sure we can all go home at night. It's a critical task that saves lives.

So, what do you see? You see safety!

*Prepared by Minnesota Rural Electric Association for our cooperative; Author, Lidia Dilley Jacobson*



# Make, Model, Capacity, Oh My!

## Tips for Purchasing New Appliances

By Paul Wesslund

NRECA Contributing Writer

**The No. 1 problem for homeowners is trying to determine which of the things actually presents value.**

The Sloboda family needed a new refrigerator so Brian volunteered to do the shopping. After all, he's a national expert on electric appliances.

He came home frustrated. There were just too many choices, even for the guy whose job title is program and product line manager for energy utilization, delivery, and energy efficiency at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, Arlington, Va.

"Just buy whatever you want," he told his wife, Sami Jo.

He finally got to use his in-depth knowledge when he looked over the model that Sami Jo brought home.

"Why didn't you get the version that has a camera inside, so you can use your smartphone in the grocery store to see if we need more milk?" he asked.

"Because it costs \$500 more," she said.

That, said Brian, was a good reason.

That's the kind of reasoning we're all going to be doing in the coming months and years as we grapple with the newest trend in appliances – connection to the internet.

"The No. 1 problem for homeowners is trying to determine which of the things

actually presents value," says Sloboda. For example, when you're on vacation you can use your smartphone to check whether you've left the oven on or the garage door open.

Sounds nice, but is it worth it?

"There's a Crock Pot® app," he says. "Does that have value to you? It might if you use a Crock Pot® a lot."

"There are infinite possibilities," says Sloboda. "They sound nice when you first hear about them, but you have to remember you are paying more for those features."

Web-connected appliances could also offer online diagnostics. There might not be strong everyday reasons for a washing machine to be hooked into cyberspace, but

## Understanding the ENERGYGUIDE Label

The ENERGYGUIDE label is a great tool that helps consumers compare the energy use and costs of new appliances. Use the sample below to better understand how to use the information found on the label.

Lists key features of the appliance and the similar models that make up the cost range below.

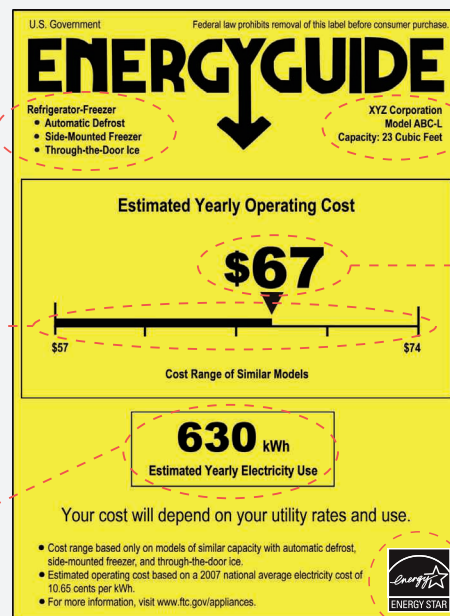
The make, model and size tell you exactly what product this label describes.

The cost range helps you compare the energy use of different models by showing you the range of operating costs for models with similar features.

What you might pay to run the appliance for one year, based on its electricity use and the national average cost of energy. The cost appears on labels for all models and brands so you can compare energy use.

An estimate of how much electricity the appliance uses in a year based on typical use. Multiply this by your local electricity rate on your utility bill to better judge what your actual operating cost might be.

If you see the ENERGY STAR logo, it means the product is better for the environment because it uses less electricity than standard models.



Source: Federal Trade Commission





Home owners have a wide array of choices when it comes time to upgrade major energy-using appliances.

if it broke, the manufacturer could log in to figure out what's wrong. That could help decide the best way to repair or replace the equipment. But is it worth the extra cost?

"It's a good feature," says Sloboda, "but one you're only going to use when the appliance breaks."

If you're longing for lower-tech help in decision-making, look to the yellow and black U.S. Department of Energy's EnergyGuide label on each appliance.

"It's one of the single greatest pieces of information that you can find when you buy an appliance," says Sloboda.

He says the most useful info is the big dollar figure right in the middle of the label, showing what it will cost to use that appliance for a year.

Sloboda cautions that the number doesn't tell you exactly what you will pay because it doesn't use your local utility's kilowatt hour rate. But it's a perfect way to compare appliances because every appliance's label is based on the same national average electric rate.

"You can stand in that aisle looking at all the washing machines and you can scan the entire row and narrow your options down from a dozen," says Sloboda, "down to the three or four that use the least amount of money."

## Taking charge of your appliances

Other especially useful parts of the label, he says, include the lower right corner – if you see an ENERGY STAR® logo it means the appliance will use less energy than one without. He also singles out the upper right corner that lists the manufacturer

and model number, which you can use for more detailed comparisons with other models.

Sloboda also advises to pay attention to the age of your major energy-using appliances. In addition to dramatic energy efficiency advances over the past several years, motors start degrading in refrigerators and in heating and air conditioning systems. He says to consider upgrading air conditioners and heat pumps older than 10 years and refrigerators older than eight years.

## Pay attention to the age of your major energy-using appliances.

The Department of Energy offers a handy way to check whether it's time to replace your refrigerator: visit the EnergyStar.gov website and in the search box, type "flip your fridge calculator." You'll find a link to a page where you can enter your type of refrigerator and its age to calculate how much you'd save buying a new one.

All these options mean more decisions for consumers. But help is on the way.

Sloboda says that electric co-ops are working with two national laboratories to study the most useful ways to connect appliances with the internet and with the utilities that provide the electricity. He says that over the next two years the study will report on how consumers can more easily make decisions on how to use appliances and even how to enhance cybersecurity for the growing number of internet-connected

devices in the home.

Sloboda says the aim of the study is "to understand what the value of internet-connected devices is to the consumer. Then the manufacturers can start to build products that the consumer wants."

The study will also look for futuristic-sounding ways that co-op members can sign up for optional utility programs to help homeowners decide how they want to use electricity.

"The appliances would be networked together and they would talk to one another," says Sloboda. "In a very advanced scenario, the home could actually reconfigure the way appliances are being used depending on occupancy of the home at the moment and the weather conditions."

That setup could even let homeowners decide if they are a person who wants to save as much energy and money as possible or if they would rather the house be warmer or cooler.

"They won't have to figure out if they want to set the thermostat back," says Sloboda. "The homeowner would tell the system whether they wanted to maximize comfort or maximize savings, then the home would communicate to the utility. That way it won't be the utility controlling the system, it won't be the appliance manufacturer, but it will be the occupant of the house who is making the decisions."

*Paul Wesslund writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.*





Installing fiberglass batting should be done wearing gloves and a mask.

# WHAT'S IN YOUR ATTIC?

**Diane Veto Parham**

Contributing Writer

A peek in most attics will reveal the tried-and-true materials commonly used to insulate homes: fiberglass, cellulose, mineral wool or spray-foam insulation. Regardless of type, the keys to effective insulation are the same – getting the right R-value for your home's insulation, proper installation and air sealing.

**Fiberglass:** This is the insulation that looks like cotton candy, commonly seen in long strips – called batts or rolls – between wall studs and ceiling joists. It might be pink, white or yellow, and it also comes in a loose-fill form, often blown into attic spaces. Made of tiny glass fibers, it can be uncomfortable to touch; wear gloves and a mask while handling it.

**Cellulose:** Grayish in color, cellulose is a loose-fill insulation that can be blown in between attic joists. It chemically is treated to be resistant to moisture, fire, insects and nesting rodents. Over time, it can settle, reducing its insulation value and requiring an additional layer to bring it back to the recommended R-value for your home.

**Mineral wool:** Like fiberglass, this comes in batts, rolls or loose-fill forms. It's made from natural and recycled materials and often appears greenish-brown in color.

**Spray-in foam:** More expensive than other types of insulation, spray-in foam is becoming a more common choice because it provides more insulation and better air sealing, Touchstone Energy's Alan Shedd says. Sprayed on the interior of your roof, it wraps the attic into your home's envelope; if your HVAC unit is in the attic, it's going to

Spray-in foam insulation is a no-brainer for new construction.



operate more efficiently in that more temperate environment. "It's more expensive than blowing in another six inches of fiberglass or cellulose, but it's certainly worth getting prices," Shedd says. "For new construction, it's a no-brainer."

If you're climbing up to look at what you've got, be sure to protect yourself. Bring a flashlight, so you can check your insulation in every nook and cranny and also see where you are stepping. Only walk where you are sure of secure footing, so you don't drop through the ceiling below. Wear gloves, eye protection and a dust mask if you'll be handling any insulation. Limit your time up there if temperatures are very hot or cold.



# A Shopper's Guide to Heat Pumps

Baffled by the alphabet soup that greets you when you start looking at heat pumps? If an HVAC contractor starts spouting numbers for SEER, EER, HSPF and COP, just remember those terms are a handy shorthand for comparing the efficiency of one heat pump to another. A higher number indicates a more efficient system. That can save you money in energy costs over the life of the unit, but you may have to pay a little more for it up front.

**SEER:** Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio.

This rates the cooling efficiency of an air-source heat pump. To earn ENERGY STAR certification, heat pumps must have a SEER of at least 15; mini-split SEER ratings can be in the 30s. You can buy less expensive, traditional models with a SEER of 13, the NRECA's Brian Sloboda says. "The good news is, if you have an older unit, it's probably below that, so the lowest amount you spend on a new unit will still save you money," he says.

**EER:** Energy Efficiency Ratio.

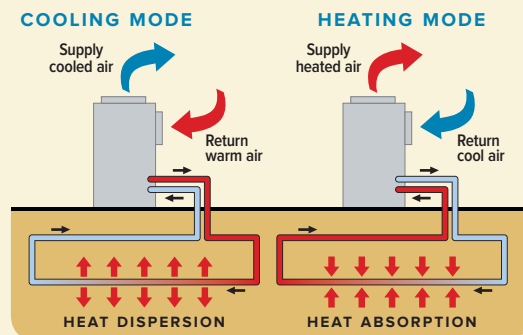
It's not tied to seasonal performance, but it is a measure of cooling performance. You'll find this on geothermal (ground-source) heat pumps, usually rated 18 and up.

**HSPF:** Heating Seasonal Performance Factor. The flip side of SEER, this rates an air-source heat pump's heating efficiency. Look for a rating of 8.2 or above for ENERGY STAR-certified models.

**COP:** Coefficient of Performance. If you're shopping for geothermal systems, watch for this measure of heating efficiency, and aim for a rating of 3.6 or higher for more efficient models.

## How ground-source heat pumps work

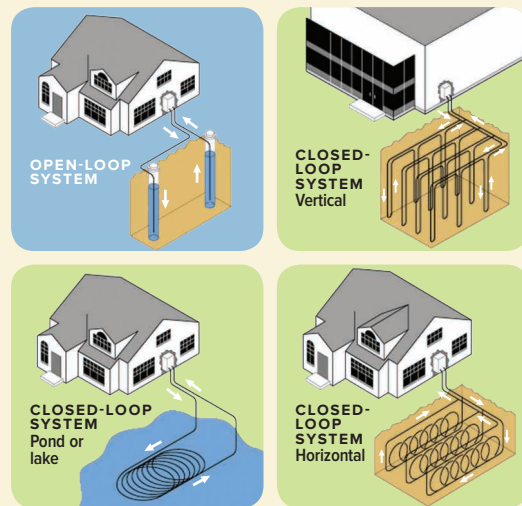
Geothermal heat pumps operate on the same heat-transfer principles seen in air-source heat pumps, but they use 25 to 50 percent less electricity than conventional HVAC systems.



SOURCE: WATERFURNACE

## TYPES OF GEOTHERMAL HEAT PUMP SYSTEMS

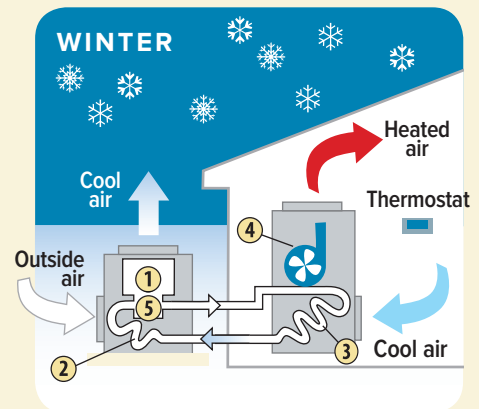
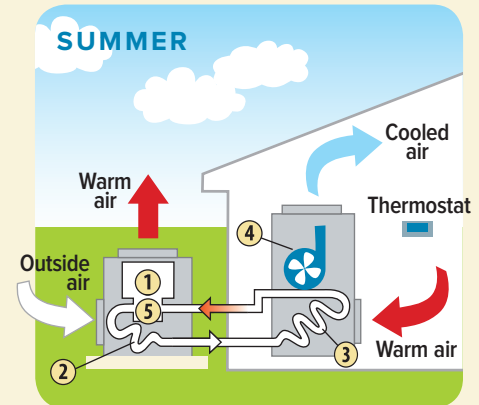
There are four basic configurations for geothermal heat pump ground loops. One is an "open-loop system," where ground water or well water is used. Three others are "closed-loop systems," where a water and antifreeze solution is continually moved through pipes.



SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, OFFICE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY

## How air-source heat pumps work

By transferring heat between a house and outside air, these devices trim electricity use by as much as 30 to 40 percent in moderate climates.



- 1 COMPRESSOR**  
Increases refrigerant pressure to accept the maximum heat from the air.
- 2 OUTSIDE COIL**  
Refrigerant moves through coils, absorbing heat from the outside air in winter or releasing heat to the outside air in summer.
- 3 INSIDE COIL**  
Refrigerant moves through coils, absorbing heat from the inside air in summer or releasing heat to the inside air in winter.
- 4 AIR HANDLER**  
Fan blows air over the inside coil and into a home's ducts.
- 5 REVERSING VALVE**  
Switches the direction of the refrigerant flow, changing the heat pump's output to hot or cold air (controlled by thermostat).

SOURCE: NRECA

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**April 25-29**

Black Hills Film Festival, Hill City, SD, 605-574-9454

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**April 28-29**

Bike Show, Ramkota Convention Center, Aberdeen, SD, 605-290-0908

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**May 4-6**

Naja Shrine Circus, Rapid City, SD, 605-342-3402

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**May 5**

Frühlingsfest and Spring Market, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

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**May 10**

Chris Young, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

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**May 12**

Art and Wine Festival, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

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**May 13**

1880 Train Mother's Day Express, Hill City, SD, 605-574-2222

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**May 18**

Turkey Races, Huron, SD, 605-352-0000

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**May 18-19**

Sioux Empire Film Festival, Sioux Falls, SD, 605-367-6000

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**May 18-20**

State Parks Open House and Free Fishing Weekend, Pierre, SD, 605-773-3391

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**May 18-20**

Tesla Road Trip Rally, Custer, SD, 605-673-2244

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**May 19-20**

Black Hills Mud Days, Lead, SD, 605-569-2871

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**May 19-20, May 26-27**

Northeast Area Pari-Mutuel Horse Racing, Aberdeen, SD, 605-715-9580



**May 5, 19; June 2, 16; July 7, 21; Aug. 25; and Sept. 8**  
Lawn Mower (Points) Races, Pukwana, SD, 605-680-1718 or 605-682-9781

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**May 25-September 30**

Legends in Light® Laser Light Show at Crazy Horse Memorial, Crazy Horse, SD, 605-673-4681

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**May 25-27**

South Dakota Kayak Challenge, Yankton, SD, 605-864-9011

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**May 26-27**

Annual SDRA Foothills Rodeo, Wessington Springs, SD, 605-770-4370

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**June 1-3**

Fort Sisseton Historical Festival, Lake City, SD, 605-448-5474

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**June 1-3**

Annual Black Hills Quilt Show & Sale, Rapid City, SD, 605-394-4115

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**June 1-3**

Wheel Jam, Huron, SD, 605-353-7340

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**June 1-3**

Fish Days, Lake Andes, SD, 605-487-7694

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**June 2**

Kids' Carnival, Rapid City, SD, 605-716-7979

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**June 2**

Annual Casey Tibbs Match of Champions, Fort Pierre, SD, 605-494-1094

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**June 2-3**

Spring Volksmarch at Crazy Horse Memorial, Crazy Horse, SD, 605-673-4681

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**June 7-9**

Senior Games, Sioux Falls, SD, Contact Nicole Tietgen at 605-665-8222

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**June 8-9**

Senior Games, Spearfish, SD, Contact Brett Rauterhaus at 605-772-1430

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**June 15-16**

Czech Days, Tabor, SD, [www.taborczechdays.com](http://www.taborczechdays.com), [taborczechdays@yahoo.com](mailto:taborczechdays@yahoo.com)

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**June 21-23**

Senior Games, Mitchell, SD, Contact Howard Bich at 605-491-0635

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**June 29**

Naja Shrine Circus, Wall, SD, 605-342-3402

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**June 30**

Naja Shrine Circus, Deadwood, SD, 605-342-3402

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**July 1**

Naja Shrine Circus, Lemmon, SD, 605-342-3402

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**July 10-15**

4th Annual 3 Wheeler Rally, Deadwood, SD, 605-717-7174, [www.d3wr.com](http://www.d3wr.com)

**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.**